2. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy. There they were ordered to continue till the Spirit should be poured out upon them, and thither they went accordingly, though it was into the mouth of danger. Thither they went, and there they stood with great joy. This was a wonderful change, and an effect of the opening of their understandings. When Christ told them that he must leave them, sorrow filled their hearts; yet now that they see him, they are filled with joy, being convinced at length that it was expedient for them and for the church that he should go away, to send the Comforter. Note, The glory of Christ is the joy, the exceeding joy, of all true believers, even while they are here in this world; much more will it be so when they go to the new Jerusalem, and find him there in his glory.

3. They abstained in acts of devotion while they were in expectation of the promise of the Father, v. 53. (1.) They attended the temple-service at the hours of prayer; God had not as yet quite forsaken it, and therefore they continued in the temple; as their Master was when he was at Jerusalem. The Lord loves the gates of Zion, and so should we. Some think that they had their place of meeting, as disciples, in some of the chambers of the temple which belonged to some Levite that was well affected to them; but others think that it is not likely that either could be concealed from, or would be convicted at by, the chief priests and rulers of the temple. (2.) Temple-songs they knew, were superseded by Christ's sacrifice, but the temple-songs they joined in. Note, While we are waiting for God's promises, we must go forth to meet them with our praises. Praising and blessing God is work that is never out of season; and nothing better prepares the mind for the receiving of the Holy Ghost than holy joy and praise. Tears are silenced, sorrow sweetened and allayed, and hopes kept up.

The amen that concludes, seems to be added by the church and every believer to the reading of the gospel; signifying an assent to the truths of the gospel, and a hearty concurrence with all the disciples of Christ in praising and blessing God. Amen. Let him be continually praised and blessed.

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AN EXPOSITION,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. JOHN.

It is not material to enquire when and where this gospel was written; we are sure it was given by inspiration of God to John, the brother of James, one of the twelve apostles, distinguished by the honourable character of that disciple whom Jesus loved; one of the first three of the worthies of the Son of David, whom he took to be the witnesses of his retirements, particularly of his transfiguration and agony. The ancients tell us, that John lived longest of all the twelve apostles, and was the only one of them that died a natural death, all the rest suffering martyrdom; and some of them say that he wrote this gospel at Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the several churches of Asia, in opposition to the hierarchy of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, who held that our Lord was a mere Man. It seems most probable that he wrote it before his banishment into the isle of Patmos, for there he wrote his Apocalypse, the close of which seems designed for the closing up of the canon of scripture; and if so, this gospel was not written after. I cannot therefore give credit to those latter fathers, who say that he wrote it in his banishment, or after his return from it, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem; when he was ninety years old, saith one of them; when he was a hundred saith another of them. However, it is clear that he wrote last of the four evangelists, and, comparing his gospel with theirs, we may observe, 1. That he relates what they had omitted; he brings up the rear, and his gospel is as the reaped or gathering-host, it cleans up what they had passed by. Thus there was a collection of Solomon's wise sayings, (Prov. 25. 1.) and yet far short of what he delivered, 1 Kings 4. 25. 2. That he gives us more of the mystery of that which the other evangelists give us only the history of. It was necessary that the matters of fact should be first settled, which was done in their declarations of those things which Jesus began both to do and teach, Luke 1. 1. Acts 1. 1. But that being done out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, John goes on to perfection, (Heb. 6. 1.) not laying again the foundation, but building upon it; leading us more within the vail. Some of the ancients observe that the other evangelists wrote more of the spirituasthe bodily things of Christ; but John writes of the things—of the spiritual things of the gospel, the life and soul of it; therefore some have called this gospel the key of the evangelists. Here it is that a door is opened in heaven, and the first voice we hear, is, Come up hither; come up higher. Some of the ancients, that supposed the four living creatures in John's vision to represent the four evangelists, make John himself to be the flying-eagle, so high doth he soar, and so clearly doth he see into divine and heavenly things.
chap. i.

the scope and design of this chapter is to confirm our faith in christ as the eternal son of god, and the true messiah and saviour of the world, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him, as our prophet, priest, and king. and to proclaim to the world the death and resurrection of our saviour; and secondly, to declare the title of the son of god, and the office of the saviour. the son of god is the object of the text. he is the person that speaks, the chief and most natural indication of the mind. and thus christ is the word, for by him god has in these last days spoken to us. (heb. 1. 2.) and has directed us to hear matth. 17. 5. he has made known god's mind to us, as a man's word or speech makes known his thoughts, as far as he pleases, and no farther. christ is called that wonderful speaker, (dan. 8. 13.) the speaker of the hidden word. and christ is the word of the new covenant. and he is the word speaking from god to us, and to god for us. john baptist was the voice; but christ the word; being the word, he is the truth, the aman, the faithful witness of the mind of god.

i. in the beginning was the word, and the word was with god, and the word was god. 2. the same was in the beginning with god. 3. all things were made by him; and without him was not anything that was made. 4. in him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5. and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

austin saith (de civitate dei. lib. 10. cap. 29.) that his friend simplicius told him he had heard a platonian philosopher say that these first verses of st. john's gospel were worthy to be written in letters of gold. the learned francis junius, in the account he gives of his own life, tells how he was in his youth infected with loose notions in religion, and by the grace of god was wonderfully recovered by reading accidentally these verses in a bible which his father had designedly laid in his way. he says, that he observed such a divinity in the arguments of such an authority and majesty in the style, that his flesh trembled, and he was struck into such an amazement, that for a whole day he scarcely knew where he was, or what he did; and from thence he dates the beginning of his being religious. let us inquire what there is in those strong lines. the evangelist here lays down the great truth he is to prove, that jesus christ is god, one with the father. observe,

1. whom he speaks of—the word—is 

this is an idiom peculiar to john's writings. see 1 john 1. 1. ch. 5. 7. rev. 19. 13. yet some think that christ is meant by the word, acts 20. 32. heb. 4. 12. luke 1. 2.

the chaldee paraphrase very frequently calls the messiah mnemra—the word of jehovah, and speaks of many things in the old testament said to be done by the lord, as done by the word of the lord; even the vulgar jews were taught that the word of god was the same with god. the evangelist, in the close of his discourse (v. 18.) plainly tells us why he calls christ the word—because he is the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the father, and has declared him. word is twofold; 

v. 18. he is the word spoken by the father; so is the word of the father, which is in the bosom of the father, and declared him. v. 14. he is the word written in the book. word uttered. the word is the word of the saviour, and the word of scribes—intelligence and utterance.

1. there is the word conceived; that is, thought, which is the first and only immediate product and conception of the soul, (all the operations of which are performed by thought,) and it is one with the soul. and thus the second person in the trinity is thought, called the word; for he is the first-begotten of the father; that eternal, essential wisdom which the lord possessed, as the soul doth its thought, in the beginning of his way, prov. 8. 22. there is nothing we are more sure of than that we think, yet nothing we are more in the dark about than how we think; who can declare the generation of thought

in the soul? surely then the generations and births of the eternal mind may well be allowed to be great mysteries of godliness, the bottom of which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the depth.

there is the word written, and this is speech, the chief and most natural indication of the mind. and thus christ is the word, for by him god has in these last days spoken to us. (heb. 1. 2.) and has directed us to hear matth. 17. 5. he has made known god's mind to us, as a man's word or speech makes known his thoughts, as far as he pleases, and no farther. christ is called that wonderful speaker, (dan. 8. 13.) the speaker of the hidden word. and christ is the word of the new covenant. and he is the word speaking from god to us, and to god for us. john baptist was the voice; but christ the word; being the word, he is the truth, the aman, the faithful witness of the mind of god.

ii. what he said of him, enough to prove beyond contradiction that he is god. he asserts,

1. his existence in the beginning; in the beginning was the word. this speaks its existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time.

the beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal word in being. the world was from the beginning, but the word was in the beginning. eternity is usually expressed by being before the foundation of the world. the eternity of god is so described, (pro. 8. 24.) makes him.

5. in respect of essence and substance; for the word was god, a distinct person, who was with god, yet the same in substance, for he was one with god, Heb. 1. 3. (2.) in respect of complacency and felicity. there was a glory and happiness which christ had with god before the world was; (ch. 17. 5.) the son infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his father's bosom, and no less the father's delight, the son of his love, prov. 8. 30. (3.) in respect of counsel and design. the mystery of man's redemption by this word incarnate, was his in god, before all worlds, Eph. 3. 9. he that undertook to bring us to god, (1 pet. 3. 18.) was himself from eternity with god; so that this grand affair of man's reconciliation to god was concerted between the father and son from eternity, and they understand one another perfectly well in it, zech. 8. 13. matth. 11. 27. he was by him as one equal with another for his sonship, prov. 8. 30. he was with god, and therefore is said to come forth from the father.

3. his agency in making the world, v. 3. this is here, (1.) expressly asserted: all things were made by him. he was with god, not only so as to be acquainted with the divine counsels from eternity, but to be active in the divine operations in the beginning. he was the first-begotten of the father; god made the world by a word; (Ps. 33. 6.) and christ was that word. by him not as a subordinate instrument, but as a co-ordinate agent, god made the world; heb. 1. 2. not as the workman only by his axe, but as the body sees by the eye. (2.) the contrary is denied; without him was not anything
made, that was made, from the highest angel to the nearest worm: God the Father did nothing without him in that work. Now, [1] This proves that he is God; for he that built all things is God; Heb. 3. 4. The God of Israel often proved himself to be God, with this, that he made all things; (Isa. 40. 12, 25.—41. 4.) and see Jer. 10. 11, 12. [2] This proves the excellency of the christian religion; the Author and Founder of it is the same that was the Author and Founder of the world. How excellent thou art, Lord, even thou, which dost requite a man according to his work from him who is the Fount of all excellency! When we worship Christ, we worship him to whom the patriarchs gave honour as the Creator of the world, and on whom all creatures depend. [3] This shows how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation; help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed, for he not only redeemed him, but also exalted him, and all things in him. If we do not account the Author of our bliss, who was the Author of our being, the meanest man among us shall think himself the most blessed (!od; this in the world. [1] The world of mankind comprehended not the natural light that was in their understandings, but became vain in their imaginations concerning the eternal God and the eternal Word, Rom. 1. 21, 27. The darkness of error and sin overpowered and quite eclipsed this light. God speaketh, saith Moses, but man perceiveth not it, Job 33. 14. [2] The Jews, who had the light of the Old Testament, yet comprehended not Christ in it. As there was a vail upon Moses's face, so there was upon the people's hearts. In the darkness of the types and the shadows the light shone; but such was the darkness of their understandings, that they could not see it. It was therefore requisite that Christ should come both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world, and to improve the truths of the Jewish church.

6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9. That was the true Light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The evangelist designs to bring in John Baptist bearing an honourable testimony to Jesus Christ. Now in these verses, before he does that,

I. He gives us some account of the witness he is about to produce. His name is John, which signifies gracious; his conversation was austere, but he was not less in dread than in grace his message, both his credentials and his instructions. John wrought no miracle, nor do we find that he had visions and revelations; but the strictness and purity of his life and doctrine, and the direct tendency of both to reform the world, and to revive the interests
of God's kingdom among men, were plain indications that he was sent of God.  
2. We are here told what his office and business were (v. 3). To come was to be a witness, an eye-witness and a mouth-witness. He came, (a) to be a light— {v. 4.} for a testimony. The legal institutions had been long a testimony for God in the Jewish church, by them revealed religion was kept up; hence we read of the tabernacle of the testimony, the ark of the testimony, the law and the testimony; but now divine revelation is to be turned into another channel; now the testimony of the Messiah is the testimony of the Light.  
Cor. 1. 6—2. I. Among the Gentiles, God indeed had not left himself without witness, (Acts 14. 17.) but the Redeemer had no testimonies borne him among them. There was a profound silence concerning him, till John Baptist came for a witness to him. Now observe,  
(1.) The matter of his testimony; he came to be a witness of the light. Light is a thing which witnesses for itself, and carries its own evidence along with it; but to those who shut their eyes against the light, it is necessary there should be those that bear witness to it. Christ's light needs not man's testimony, but the world's darkness does. John was like the night watchman that goes round the town, proclaiming the approach of the morning light to those that have closed their eyes, and are not willing themselves to observe it; or like that watchman that was set to tell those who asked what of the night, that the morning comes, and if ye will inquire, inquire ye, Isa. 21. 11, 12. He was sent of God to tell the world that the long looked for Messiah was now come, who should be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel; and that dispensation at hand, which would bring life and immortality to light.  
(2.) The design of his testimony; that all men through him might believe; not in him, but in Christ, whose way he was sent to prepare. He taught men to look through him, and pass through him, to Christ; through the doctrine of repentance for sin, to that of faith in Christ. He prepared men for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his gospel, by awakening them to a sight and sense of sin; and that, their eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit those beams of divine light, which, in the person and doctrine of the Messiah, were now ready to shine in their faces. If they would but receive this witness of man, they should soon find that the witness of God was greater, 1 John 5. 10. 11. Our Lord, (a) told all men through him might believe, excluding none from the kind and beneficial influences of his ministry, that did not exclude themselves, as multitudes did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and so received the grace of God in vain.  
3. We are here cautioned not to mistake him for the Light, who only came to bear witness to it. (v. 8.) {v. 8.} He was not that Light that was expected and promised, but only was sent to bear witness of that great and ruling Light. He was a star, like that which guided the wise men to Christ, a morning-star; but he was not the Sun; not the Bridegroom, but a friend of the Bridegroom; not the Prince, but his harlot. There were those who rested in that Light; him, and looked no further, as in Ephesians, Acts 19. 3. To rectify this mistake, the evangelist here, when he speaks very honourably of him, yet shows that he must veil to Christ. He was great as the prophet of the Highest, but not the Highest himself. Note, We must take heed of undervaluing ministers, as well as of under-valuing them; they are not our lords, nor have they dominion over our faith; but ministers by whom we believe, stewards of our Lord's house. We must not give up ourselves by an implicit faith to their conduct, for they are not that light; but we must attend to, and receive, their testimony; for they are sent to bear witness of that Light; so then let us esteem them very highly. Had John pretended that he was the Light, he had not been so much as a faithful witness of that Light. Those who usurp the honour of Christ, forfeit the honour of being the servants of Christ; yet John was very serviceable as a witness to the Light, though he was not that Light. Those may be of great use to us, who yet shine with a borrowed light.  
II. Before he goes on with John's testimony, he returns to give us a further account of this Jesus to whom John bore record. Having showed, in the beginning of the chapter, the glories of his God-head, he here comes to show the graces of his incarnation, and his favours to man as Mediator.  
1. Christ was the true Light; (v. 9.) not as if John Baptist was a false Light, but in comparison with Christ, he was a very small light in comparison with the Light that is great Light that deserves to be called so. Other lights are but figuratively and equivocally called so: Christ is the true Light. The Fountain of all knowledge and of all comfort must needs be the true Light. He is the true Light; for proof of it he does not refer us to the enumerations of his glory in the visible world, but to those laws by which he enlightens that, but to these rays of his Light, which are darted downwards, and with which this dark world of ours is enlightened. But how did Christ lighten every man that comes into the world?  
(1.) By his creating power he lightens every man with the light of reason; that life which is the light of men, is from him; all the discoveries and directions of reason, all the beauties of the mind, and all the beauty it puts upon us, are from Christ.  
(2.) By the publication of his gospel to all nations he does in effect lighten every man. John Baptist was a light, but he enlightened only Jerusalem and Judea, and the region round about Jordan, like a candle that enlightens one room; but Christ is the true Light, for he is a Light to lighten the Gentiles. His everlasting gospel is to be preached to every nation and language, Rev. 14. 6. Like the sun which lightens every man that will open his eyes, and receive its light, (Ps. 19. 6.) to which the preaching of the gospel is compared, Rom. 10. 18. Divine revelation is not now to be confused, as it had been, to one people, but to be diffused to all people, Matth. 5. 15. 16.  
(3.) By the operation of his Spirit and grace he lightens all those that are enlightened to salvation; and those that are not enlightened by him, perish in darkness. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is said to be in the face of Jesus Christ, and is compared with that light which was at the beginning commanded to shine out of darkness, and which lightens every man that comes into the world, 2 Pet. 1. 19. Our Lord, (a) taught and trained any person to believe on Christ for it, whether it be natural or supernatural.  
2. Christ was in the world, (v. 10.) He was in the world, as the essential Word, before his incarnation, upholding all things; but this speaks of his being in the world when he took our nature upon him, and dwelt among us; see ch. 16. 28. I am come into the world. The Son of the Highest was here in this world; he who has the light has the life; he who believes into this holy Thing in this sinful, polluted world. He left a world of bliss and glory, and was here in this melancholy, miserable world. He undertook to reconcile the world to God, and therefore was in the world, to treat about it, and settle that affair; to satisfy God's justice for the world, and discover God's favour to the world. He was in the world, but not of it, and speaks with an air of triumph, when he says, Now I am no more in it, ch. 15. 11. The
greatest honour that ever was put upon this world, which is so mean and insconsiderable a part of the universe, was, that the Son of God was once in the world; and as it should engage our affections to think there that the Christ, and so it should reconcile us to our present abode in this world, that once Christ was here. He was in the world for a while, but it is spoken of as a thing past; and so it will be said of us shortly, We were in the world. O that when we are here no more, we may be where Christ is! Now observe here,

1. What reason Christ had to expect the most anch of all persons, and thereby it should become possible into this world; for the world was made by him. Therefore he came to save a lost world, because it was a world of his own making. Why should not he concern himself to revive the light that was of his own kindling, to restore a life of his own infusing, and to renew the image that was originally of his own impressing? The world was made by him, and therefore ought to do him homage.

2. What odd entertainment he met with, notwithstanding: The world knew him not. The great Maker, Ruler, and Redeemer of the world was in it, and few or none of the inhabitants of the world were aware of it. The ark knew his owner, but the more brutish world did not; they did not own him, did not bid him welcome, because they did not know him; and they did not know him, because he did not put himself in a proper favourable manner, as in external glory and majesty. His kingdom came not with observation, because it was to be a kingdom of trial and probation. When he shall come as a Judge, the world shall know him.

3. He came to his own, (v. 11.) not only to the world, which was his own, but to the people of Israel, that were peculiarly his own above all people; of them he came, among them he lived, and among them he died. They were a peculiar people, a father's son, for a father's sake, they were a mean, despised people, the crown was fallen from their head; yet, in remembrance of the ancient covenant, bad as they were, and poor as they were, Christ was not ashamed to look upon them as his own. This is his own things; not Caesar's: his own persons, as true believers are called ch. 13. 1. The Jews were his, as a man's house and lands and goods, in every sense, as his privy cares; but believers are his, as a man's wife and children are his own, which he loves and enjoys. He came to his own, to seek and save them, because they were his own. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for it was he whose own the sheep were. Now observe,

1. That the generality rejected him; His own received him not. He had reason to expect that those who were his own, should have hidden him welcome, considering how great the obligations were, which they lay under him, and how fair the opportunities were, which they had of coming to the knowledge of him. They had the oracles of God, which told them beforehand when and where to expect him, and of what tribe and family he should arise. He came among them himself, introduced with signs and wonders, and himself himself the greatest; and therefore it was not said of them, as it was of the world, (v. 16.) that they knew him not; but his own, though they could not but know him, yet they received him not; did not receive his doctrine, did not welcome him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against him. The chief priests, that were in a particular manner his own, (for the Levites were God's tribe,) were ringleaders in this contempt put upon him. Now this was very unjust, because they were his own, and therefore he might command their respects; and it was very unkind and ungrateful, because he came to them, to seek and save, and so to court their respect. Note, Many who in profession are Christ's own, yet do not receive him, because they will not part with their sins, nor have him to reign over them.

2. That yet there was a remnant, who owned him, and were true and faithful to him. Though his own received him not, yet there were those that received him; (v. 12.) But as many as received him. Though Israel were not gathered, yet Christ was glorious. Though the body of that nation persisted and persisted in unbelief, yet there were many of them that were wrought upon to submit to Christ, and many more that were not of that fold. Note, The persons disposed to Christ's parables and promises, and the assurance of his grace, were in the greatest variety; and therefore the nature of the gospel-discovery, and consent to the gospel-proposal, concerning him. 

[2.] The true christian's dignity and privilege are two-fold.

First, The privilege of adoption, which takes them into the number of God's children; To them gave he power to become the sons of God. Hitherto, the adoption pertained only to the Jews only; Israel is my son, my first born; but now, by faith in Christ, Gentiles are the children of God, and possess the spirit of adoption; for no man taketh this power to himself, but who is authorized by the gospel-charter. To them gave he a right; to them gave he this pre-eminence. This power have all the saints. Note, 1. It is the unspeakable privilege of all good christians, that they are become the children of God. They were by nature children of wrath; children of this world. If they be the children of God, they are not of the world, but of God, the children of the father's house; and not communioners, but persons. Persons are not born christians, but made such. Tertull. Behold what manner of love is this, 1 John 3. 1. God calls them his children, they call him Father, and are entitled to all the privileges of children; those of their way, and those of their home. 2. The privilege of adoption is entirely owing to Jesus Christ; he gave this power to them that believe on his name. God is his Father, and so ours; and it is a virtue of our consolations to him, and union with him, that we stand related to God as a Father. It was in Christ that we were predestinated to the adoption; from him we receive both the character and the Spirit of adoption, and he is the First-born among many brethren. The Son of God became a Son of man, that the sons and daughters of men might become the sons and daughters of God Almighty. Secondly, The privilege of regeneration; (v. 13.) which were born. Note, All the children of God are born again; all that are adopted, are regenerated. This real change evermore attends that relative one, Wherever God confers the dignity of children, he creates the nature and disposition of children. Men cannot do so, when they adopt. Now here we have an account of the original of this new birth. 1. Negatively. (1.) It is not from the flesh. It is this regeneration from our parents. It is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of corruptible seed, 1 Pet. 1. 23. Man is called flesh and blood, because thence he has his original; but we do not become the chil-
dren of God as we become the children of our natural parents. Note, Grace does not run in the blood, as corruption does. Man polluted begot a son in his own likeness; (Gen. 6:5.) but God does not begot a son in that likeness. The Jews gloried much in their parentage, and the noble blood that ran in their veins; We are Abraham's seed, and therefore to them pertained the adoption, because they were born of that blood; but this New-Testament adoption is not founded in any such natural relation. (2.) It is not produced by the natural man himself. Were this the case, he would be the true believer himself; for he himself can see the will of the flesh, and the will of the Spirit. (3.) But, 2. Positively: it is of God. This new birth is owing to the word of God as the means, (1 Pet. 1. 23.) and to the Spirit of God as the great and sole Author. True believers are born of God, 1 John 3. 9. and 5. 1. And this is necessary to their adoption; for we cannot expect the love of God, if we have not something of his likeness, nor claim the privileges of adoption, if we be not under the power of regeneration.

4. The word was made Flesh, v. 14. This expresses Christ's incarnation more clearly than what went before. By his divine presence he always was in the world, and by his prophets he came to his own. But now that the fulness of time was come, he was sent forth another manner, made of a woman, (Gal. 4. 4.) God manifested in the flesh, according to the faith and hope of holy Job, (ch. 19. 26.) Yet shall I see God in my flesh. Observe here,

1. The human nature of Christ with which he was vailed; and that expressed two ways.

1. The Word was made Flesh. Forasmuch as the children who were to become the sons of God, were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, Heb. 2. 14. The Socinians agree that Christ is both God and man, but they say that he was Man, and made God, as Moses, (Exod. 7. 1.) directly contrary to John here, who saith, one is—He was God, but say so—He was made Flesh. Compare v. 1. with this. This speaks not only that he was truly and truly man, but that he subjected himself to the miseries and limitations of the human nature. He was made Flesh, the meanest part of man. Flesh speaks man weak, and he was crucified through weakness, 2 Cor. 13. 4. Flesh speaks man mortal and dying, (Ps. 78. 39.) and Christ was put to death in the flesh, 1 Pet. 3. 18. Nay, flesh speaks man tainted with sin, (Gen. 6. 3.) and Christ, though he was perfectly holy and harmless, yet appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, (Rom. 8. 3.) and was made like unto his brethren, and was in all points tempted like as we are, Heb. 4. 15. God had sinned, God said to him, Dust thou art; not only because made out of the dust, but because by sin he was sunk into dust. His fall did, sustrin su 44 ναπηρ, turned him, as it were into body, made him earthly: therefore he that was made a Curse for us, was made Flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh, Rom. 8. 3. Wonder at this, that the eternal Word should be made like to us, when these were conceived in sin, and in ill humour; that he who made all things, should himself be made Flesh, one of the meanest things, and submit to that from which he was at the greatest distance. The voice that ushered in the gospel, cried, All flesh is grass; (Isa. 40. 6.) to make the Redeemer's love the more wonderful, who, to redeem and save us, was made Flesh, and withdrew as grass; but the Word of the Lord, who was made Flesh, endures for ever; when made Flesh, he ceased not to be the Word of God.

2. He dwelt among us. He came in this lower world. Having taken upon him the nature of man, he put himself into the place and condition of other men. The Word might have been made Flesh, and dwelt among the angels; but, having taken a body of the same mould with us, in it he came, and resided in the same world with us. He dwelt among us, as worms of the earth, us that had no need of us, Isa. 44. 21. Not that he was wounded by us, for we were depraved, and revolted from God. The Lord God came, and dwelt even among the rebellions, Ps. 68. 18. He that had dwelt among angels, those noble and excellent beings, came, and dwelt among us that are a generation of vipers, us sinners, which was worse to him than David's dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, or Ezekiel's dwelling among scorpions, and the church of Pergamos dwelling where Satan's seat is. When we look upon the upper world, the world of spirits, how mean and contemptible does this flesh, this body, appear, which we carry about with us, and this world in which our lot is cast; and how hard it is to a contemplative mind, to be reconciled to them! But that the eternal Word was made Flesh, was clothed with a body as we are, and dwelt among us as we do; and God will not cast us among them both, and should make us willing to abide in the flesh while God has any work for us to do, for Christ dwelt in this lower world, bad as it is, till he had finished what he had to do there, ch. 17. 4. He dwelt among the Jews, that the scripture might be fulfilled, He shall dwell in the tents of Shem, Gen. 9. 27. And see Zech. 2. 10. Though the Jews were unkind to him, yet he continued to dwell among them; though (as some of the ancient writers tell us) he was invited to better treatment by Abgarus king of Edessa, yet he removed not to any other nation.

He dwelt among us. He was in the world, not as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night, but he dwelt among us, made a long residence: the original word is observable, ξεκινησαν αναμεσαν—he dwelt among us, he dwelt as in a tabernacle, which intimates, First, That he dwelt here in very mean circumstances, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us as in a palace, but as in a tent; for he had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. Secondly, That his state here was a military state: soldiers dwell in tents, he had long since proclaimed war with the sword of the spirit, and now he fights the field in person; sets up his standard, and pitches his tent, to prosecute this war. Thirdly, That his stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home. The patriarchs, by dwelling in tabernacles, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and sought the better country, and so did Christ, leaving us an example. Heb. 13. 15. Those of God dwelt in the midst of the cherubim, and cherubim of that splendid state, the tabernacle between the cherubim, so now he dwells in the human nature of Christ; that is now the true Shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence. And we are to make all our addresses to God through Christ, and from him to receive divine oracles.

2. The beams of his divine glory, that darted through this vault of flesh; We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The sun is still the fountain of light, though eclipsed or clouded; so Christ was still the Brightness of his Father's glory, even then when he dwelt among us in this lower world. And how slightly soever the Jews thought of him, there were those that saw through the veil. Observe,

1. Who were the witnesses of this glory we,
his disciples and followers, that conversed most freely and familiarly with him; we among whom he dwelt. Other men discover their weaknesses to those that are most familiar with them, but it was not so with Christ; those that were most intimate with him, saw most of his glory. As it was with his disciples, the disciples knew the glories of his person while others saw the glories of his power; so it was with his person, they saw the glory of his divinity, while others saw only the veil of his human nature. He manifested himself to them, and not unto the world. These witnesses were a competent number, twelve of them, a whole jury of witnesses; men of plainness and integrity, and far from any thing of design or intrigue.

2. That every one of them had of it: We saw it; they had not their evidence by report, at second hand, but were themselves eye-witnesses of those proofs on which they built their testimony that he was the Son of the living God; We saw it. The word signifies a fixed, abiding sight, such as gave them an opportunity of making their observations. This apostle himself explains this, That we declare unto you of the word of life, is what we have seen with our eyes, and what we have looked upon. John 1:1.

3. What the glory was; the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father. The glory of the Word made Flesh, was such a glory as became the only begotten Son of God, and could not be the glory of any other. Note, First, Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. Believers are the children of God by the special favour of adoption, and the special way of regeneration; they are in a sense imitators of a like nature, (2 Pet. 1.4.) and have the image of his perfections; but Christ is in a sense —of the same nature, and is the express Image of his person, and the Son of God by an eternal generation. Angels are sons of God, but he never said to any of them, This day have I begotten thee, Heb. 1.5. Second, He was evidently declared to be the Only Begotten of the Father, by the whole church of the first, and by his disciples when he dwelt among them. Though he was in the form of a servant, in respect of outward circumstances, yet, in respect of graces, his form was as that of the fourth in the fiery furnace, like the Son of God. His divine glory appeared in the holiness and heaviness of his doctrine; in his miracles, which extorted from many this acknowledgment, that he was the Son of God: it appeared in the purity, goodness, and beneficence, of his whole conversation. God’s goodness in his glory, and how he went about doing good: he spake and acted in every thing as an incarnate Deity. Perhaps the evangelist had a particular regard to the glory of his transfiguration, which he was an eye-witness of; see 2 Pet. 1.16-18. God’s calling him his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, intimated that he was the Only Begotten of the Father; but that was not all this was at his resurrection.

4. What advantage they had from this, He dwelt among them, full of grace and truth. In the old tabernacle wherein God dwelt, was the law, in this was grace; in that were types, in this was truth. The incarnate Word was every way qualified for his undertaking as Mediator, for he was full of grace and truth, the two great things that fallen man stands in need of; and this proved him to be the Very Image of the Father, God, as much and more than any of his ancient mediators. First, He has a fulness of grace and truth for himself, he had the Spirit without measure. He was full of grace, fully acceptable to his Father, and therefore qualified to intercede for us; and full of truth, fully apprized of the things he was to reveal, and therefore fit to instruct us. He had a fulness of knowledge and a fulness of compassion. Secondly, He has a fulness of grace and truth for us. He received, that he might give, and God was well pleased in him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and this was the truth of the legal types.

15. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spoke, that cometh after me; for he was before me. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In these verses, 1. The evangelist begins again to give us John Baptist’s testimony concerning Christ, v. 15. He had said, v. 8. that he came for a witness; now he tells us that he did accordingly. Observe, There, 1. Observe how he expresses his testimony; he cried, according to the prediction, that he should be the voice of one crying. The Old-Testament prophets cried aloud, to show people their sins; this New-Testament prophet cried aloud, to show people their Saviour. This intimates, (1.) That it was an open public testimony, proclaimed, that all manner of persons might take notice of it; (2.) It was not concerned in it, that the person, in whose bosom, was not made known. The Old Testament prophets, spoke in the dark, but this New Testament prophet proclaims his testimony open and in the streets; (2.) That he was free and hearty in bearing this testimony. He cried as one that was well aware of, and well affected to, the truth he witnessed of. He that had leaped in his mother’s womb, for joy of Christ’s approach when newly conceived, does now with a like exultation of spirit, or rather, or come his public appearance. 2. What his testimony was. He appeals to what he had said at the beginning of his ministry, when he had directed them to expect one that should come after him, whose forerunner he was, and never intended any other than to lead them to him, and to prepare his way. This he had given them notice of from the first. Note, It is very comfortable to a minister, to have the testimony of his conscience for him, that he sets out in his ministry, with honest principles and solid views of the person and matters of his Christian profession, with a single eye on the glory and honour of Christ. Now what he had then said, he applies to this Jesus whom he had lately baptized, and who was so remarkably owned from heaven; This was he of whom I spake. John did not tell them that there would shortly appear such a one among them, and then leave them to find him out; but in this he went beyond all the Old-Testament prophets, that they did not particularly specify the person; This was he, the very man I told you of, and to him all I said is to be accommodated. Now what was it he said? (1.) He had given the preference to this Jesus, He that comes after me, in the time of his birth and public appearance, is preferred before me; he that succeeds me in preaching and making discipies, is a more excellent Person, upon all accounts, the prince or peer that comes after me. He was preferred before the heralds of old, and all the under-servitors that makes way for him. Note, Jesus Christ, who was to be called the Son of the Highest, (Luke 1.32.) was preferred before John Baptist, who was to be called only the prophet of the Highest, Luke 1.76. John was a minister of the New Testament, but Christ was the Mediator of the New Testament. And observe, though John was a great man, and had a great name and interest, yet he was forward to give the prefer
ence to him to whom it belonged. Note, All the
ministers of Christ must prefer him and his interest before themselves and their own interests; they will make an ill account, that seek their own things, not the things of Christ, Phil. 2: 21. He comes after man had preferred himself, Note, God dis-
penses his gifts according to his good pleasure, and many times crosses hands, as Jacob did, preferring the younger before the elder. Paul far outstripped those that were in Christ before him. (2.) He here gives a good reason for it; for he was before me, \( \tau \iota \rho \delta \iota \gamma \varepsilon \tau \iota \sigma \varepsilon \nu \sigma \iota \) He was my first, or first to me; he was my first Cause, my Original. This he reminds his hearers of to show how God before him; and how could he otherwise be before him but by an eternal existence? [2.] In respect of supremacy, for he was my Prince; so some princes are called the first; \( \tau \iota \rho \delta \iota \gamma \varepsilon \tau \iota \sigma \varepsilon \nu \sigma \iota \) “It is he for whose sake and service I am sent: he is my Master, I am his minister and messenger.” 11. He presently returns again to speak of Jesus Christ, and how he is the Gospel’s minister. Grace has been Baptist’s testimony till v. 19. The 16th verse has a manifest connexion with v. 14, where the immediate Word was said to be full of grace and truth. Now here he makes this the matter, not only of our admiration, but of our thankfulness, because from that fulness of his we all have received. He received gifts for men, (Ps. 68. 18.) that he might give gifts to men, Eph. 4. 8. He was filled, that he might fill all in all, (Eph. 1. 23.) might fill all our treasures, Prov. 8. 21. He has a fountain of fulness overflowing; \( \Pi \alpha \varepsilon \varepsilon \zeta \iota \zeta \alpha \upsilon \zeta \tau \iota \zeta \varepsilon \omicron \alpha \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \zeta \iota \varsigma \zeta \nu \zeta \nu \zeta \iota \rho \iota \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \zeta \iota \tau \iota \zeta \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma \varsigma 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(2.) Its connexion with truth; grace and truth. In the gospel we have the discovery of the greatest truths, to be embraced by the understanding, as well as of the richest grace, to be embraced by the will and affections. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation; it is grace and truth. The offers of grace are siner, and what we may venture on so, and to such as have so by the grace of God come to know the Lord, it is grace and truth. It is grace and truth, with reference to the law that was given by Moses. For it is, [1.] The performance of all the Old Testament promises. In the Old Testament we often find mercy and truth put together, that is, mercy according to promise; so here, grace and truth denote grace according to promise. See Luke 1:72. 1 Kings 8:5. 6. 7. 8. 18. 20. The Old Testament shows us, in its different times and shadows. Something of grace there was both in the ordinances that were instituted for Israel; and the provisions that occurred concerning Israel: but they were only shadows of good things to come, even of that grace that is to be brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the true paschal Lamb, the true scape-goat, the true Manna. They had grace in the picture, we have grace in the reality. Grace and truth came: 5. 6. made; the same word that was used v. 5, concerning Christ’s making all things. The law was only made known by Moses, but the being of this grace and truth, as well as the discovery of it, is owing to Jesus Christ; this was made by him, as the world at first was: and by him this grace and truth did consist.

19. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20. And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: what sayest thou of thyself? 23. He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27. He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to loose. 28. These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We have here the testimony of John, which he delivered to the messengers which were sent from Jerusalem to examine him. Observe here,

1. Who they were that sent to him, and who they were that were sent.

2. That they sent to him, were the Jews at Jerusalem; the great Sanhedrim or High-commission court, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the representative of the Jewish church, who took cognizance of all matters relating to religion. One would think that they who were the fountainsof learning, and the guides of the church, should have, by books,
and understood the times so well as to know that the Messiah was at hand; and therefore should presently have known him that was his forerunner, and readily embraced him; but, instead of that, they sent messengers to cross question with him. Secular learning, honour, and power, seldom dispose men’s minds to the reception of divine light.

2. They that were sent, were, (1.) Priests and Levites, (Mai. 3. 5.) and therefore they were jealous of him and his reformation. (2.) They were of the Pharisees, priests, such as thought that their own repenance, and therefore could not bear one that made it his business to preach repentance.

II. On what errand they went, it was to enquire concerning John and his baptism. They did not send for John up to them, probably because they feared the people, lest the people where John was, should be provoked to rise, or lest the people where they were, should be brought acquainted with him; also, it was good keeping him at a distance.

They enquire concerning him, 1. To satisfy their curiosity; as the Athenians inquired concerning Paul’s doctrine, for the novelty of it, Acts 17. 19, 20. Such a proud conceit they had of themselves, that the doctrine of repentance was to them strange doctrine.

2. It was to show their authority; they thought they were elected by God; when they called him to account, whom all men counted as a prophet, and arraigned him at their bar. 3. It was with a design to suppress him and silence him if they could find any colour for it, for they were jealous of his growing interest; and his ministry agreed neither with the Mosaic dispensation, which they had long been under, nor with the notions they had formed of the Messiah’s kingdom.

III. What was the answer he gave them, and his account, both concerning himself and concerning his baptism, in both which he witnessed to Christ.

1. Concerning himself, and what he professed himself to be. They asked him, St. and was Thirdly, 17.) them, 3. They (Matth. be. They 5.) and made Paul’s him with prising more been out. 146; his legally unjust. 185 that looked the seed of his, he had没关系 of the, for, keepmg to. 469 his. 539 be. 547 of the. 524 I. 579 great. 155 at. 194 than. 155 prophet, 1. 257 Messiah, 264 other. 265 Messiahs; 225 Old; 225 Samuel and. 225 with. 225 to. 225 that. 225 of. 225 Christ, 233 both. 235 to. 237 his. 238 the. 155 such. 249 him. 251 as. 253 that. 253 at. 259 as. 259 as. 260 they. 225 the. 225 that. 225 of. 225 Eliab, 227 prophecy. 249 he. 251 the. 254 to. 254 of. 255 Jerusalem, 257... 257. 146 as.

For, they are not Christ. Observe how emphatically this is here expressed concerning John: He confessed, and denied not, but confessed; it denotes his vehemence and constancy in making this protestation. Note, Temptations to pride, and assuming that honour to ourselves which doth not belong to us, ought to be resisted with a great deal of vigour and earnestness. When John was taken to be the Messiah, he did not, but confessed that he was not Christ, but a forerunner. He, thy—If the people will be deceived, let, 146. I am not the Christ, for. another is at hand, who is, but I am not. His disowning of himself to be the Christ, is called his confessing, and not denying Christ. Note, Those that humble and obey themselves confess not Christ, and give honour to him; but those that will not deny themselves, do in effect deny Christ.

[2.] He disowns himself to be Elias, v. 21. The Jews expected the person of Elias to return from heaven, and to live among them, and promised themselves great things from it; hearing of John’s character, doctrine, and baptism, and observing that he appeared as Elias to prepare the way of the Lord, in the same part of the country from which Elijah was taken to heaven, it is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this Elijah; but he disowned this honour too. He was indeed prophesied of under the name of Elijah, (Mal. 4. 5.) and he came in the Spirit and power of Elias, (Luke 1. 17.) and was the Elias that was to come; (Matt. 11.) but he was not the person of Elias, not that Elias that went to heaven in the fiery chariot, as he was that met Christ in his transfiguration; he was the Elias that God had promised, not the Elias that they foolishly dreamed of. Elias did come, and they knew him not, (Matt. 17.) nor did he make himself known to them as the Elias, because they had promised themselves such an Elias as God never promised them.

[3.] He disowns himself to be that prophet, or the prophet. First, He was not that Prophet which Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren, like unto him. If they meant that, they need not ask that question, for that Prophet was no other than the Messiah, and he had said already, I am not the Christ. Secondly, He was not such a prophet as they expected and wished for, who, like Samuel and Elijah, called and removed kings, and did it with authority, and to the putting an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he did not, as he desired, put an end to the prophecies which were in force at that time; but he}
a plain answer to a plain question: "What saiest thou of thyself?" And he did so, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Observe,

[1.] He gives his answer in the words of scripture, to show that the scripture was fulfilled in him, and that his office was supported by a divine authority. What the scripture saith of the office of the messiah, should be often thought of by those of that high calling, who must look upon themselves as that, and that only, which the word of God makes them.

[2.] He gives in his answer, in very humble, modest, self-denying expressions; he chose to apply that scripture to himself, which spake, not his dignity, but his duty and dependance, which speaks him little; I am the voice, as if he were vox, et praesidii sui degenerans; what I am, or what I am to do, is all that is in scripture's eye on this subject.

[3.] He gives such an account of himself as might be profitable to them, and might excite and awaken them to hear him: for he was the voice, (see Isa. 40. 3.) a voice to alarm, an articulate voice to instruct. Ministers are but the voice, the vehicle, by which God is pleased to communicate his mind. What are Paul and Apollos but messengers? Observe.

First, He was a human voice. The people were prepared to receive the law by the voice of thunders, and a trumpet exceeding loud, such as made them tremble; but they were prepared for the gospel by the voice of a man like ourselves, a still small voice, such as in that in which God came to Elijah, 1 Kings 19. 20.

Secondly, He was the voice of one crying; which denotes, 1. His earnestness and importunity in calling people to repentance; he cried aloud, and did not spare. Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things which they desire to affect others with. Those words are not likely to thaw the hearers' hearts, that freeze between the speaker's lips. 2. His open publication of the doctrine he preached: he was the voice of one crying; every manner of persons might hear and take notice. Dost not wisdom cry? Prov. 8. 1.

Thirdly, It was in the wilderness that this voice was crying; in a place of silence and solitude, out of the noise of the world, and the hurry of its business; the more retired we are from the tumult of secular affairs, the better prepared we are to hear from God.

Fourthly, That which he cried was, Make straight the way of the Lord; that is, 1. He came to rectify the mistakes of people concerning the ways of God: it is certain that they are right ways; but the Scribes and Pharisees, with their corrupt glosses upon the law, had made them crooked. Now John Baptist calls people to return to the original rule. 2. He came and prepare and dispose people for the reception of the entertainment of Christ and his gospel. It is prepare to the harbingers of a prince or great man, that cry, Make room. Note, When God is coming towards us, we must prepare to meet him, and let the word of the Lord have free course. See Ps. 2. 7.

2. Here is his testimony concerning his baptism. (1.) The inquiry which the committee made about it: (v. 23.) Whom baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet? (2.) They required and pressed him to give this account: he fulfilled a scriptural usage as a sacred rite or ceremony, for the Jewish church had used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state. That sign was made use of in the christian church, that it might be the more passable. Christ did not affect novelty, nor should his ministers. (2.) They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised the then there should be a fountain opened, (Zech. 13. 1.) and clean water sprinkled, Ezek. 43. 25. It is taken for granted, that Christ and Elias, and that prophet, would baptize, for they came to furnish a polluted world. Divine justice drowned the old world in its filth, but divine grace has provided for the cleansing of this new world from its filth. [3.] They would therefore know by what authority John baptized. His declaring of himself to be Elias, or that prophet subjected him to this further question, Why baptizest thou? Note, It is no new thing for a man's modesty to be turned against him, and improved to his prejudice; but it is better that men should take advantage of our low thoughts of ourselves, to trample upon us, than that the devil should take advantage of our high thoughts of ourselves, to tempt us to pride, and to draw us into his condemnation.

(2.) The account he gave of it, v. 26, 27. (1.) He owned himself to be only the minister of the outward sign: I baptize with water, and that is all: I am no more, and do no more, than what ye see; I have no other title than John the Baptist; I cannot confer the spiritual grace signified by it. Paul was in care that none should think of him above what the scripture speaks of him; (2 Cor. 11. 6.) so was John Baptist. Ministers must not set up for masters.

(2.) He directed them to one that was greater than himself, and would do that for them, if they pleased, which he could not do; I baptize with water, and that is the utmost of my commission; I have nothing to do but to this to lead you one that comes after me, and consign you to him. Note, The great business of Christ's ministers is to direct all people to him; we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. John gave the same account to this committee that he had given to the people, (v. 15.) This was he of whom I speak. John was constant and uniform in his testimony, not as areed shaken with the wind. The samburidin were jealous of his interest in the people, but he is not afraid to tell them that there is one at the door, that will go beyond him.

First, He tells them of Christ's presence among them now at this time: There stands one among you, at this time, whom you know not. Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them.

Note. 1. Much true worth lies hid in this world; obscurity is often the lot of real excellency. Saints are God's hidden ones, therefore the world knows them not. 2. God himself is not yet come away; the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. They were gazin in expectation of the Messiah: Lo he is here, or he is there, when the kingdom of God was abroad and already among them, Luke 17. 21.

Secondly, He tells them of his preference above himself; he comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. This he had said before; he adds here, Whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose. That was no flattery; I am not fit to be named the same day with him; it is an honour too great for me to pretend to he in the meanest office about him, 1 Sam. 25. 41. Those to whom Christ is precious, reckon his service, even the most despised instances of it, an honour to them, See Ps. 84. 10. If so great a man as John accounted himself unworthy of the honour of being near Christ, how unworthy then should his companions be? How, one of these chief priests and Pharisees, upon this intimation given concerning the approach of the Messiah, should presently have asked, who, and where, this excellent Person was; and who more likely to tell them than he who had given them this general notice, No, they did not think that was any part of their business concerning; they came to molest John, not to receive any instructions from him; so that their ignorance was wilful; they might have known Christ, and would not.
Lastly, Notice is taken of the place where all this was done, (v. 28.) In Bethabara beyond Jordan. Bethabara signifies the house of passage; some think it was the very place where Israel passed over Jordan into the land of promise under the conduct of Joshua; there was opened the way into the gospel-state by Jesus Christ. It was at a great distance from Jerusalem, and from the settled affairs of the world; and there, because what he did there, would be least offensive to the government. Amos must go prophesy in the country, not near the court; but it was said that Jerusalem should put so far from her the things that belonged to her peace. He made this confession in the same place where he was baptizing, that all those who attended his baptism, might be witnesses of it, and none might say that they knew not what to make of him.

29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abide upon him. 33. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35. Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; 36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

We have in these verses an account of John's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, which he witnessed to his own disciples that followed him. As soon as ever Christ was baptized, he was immediately hurried into the wilderness, to be tempted; there he was forty days; during his absence, John had continued his testimony to him, and to tell the people of him; but now at last, he sees Jesus coming to him, returning from the wilderness of temptation. As soon as that conflict was over, Christ presently returned to John, who, was preaching and baptizing. Now Christ was tempted for example and encouragement to us; and this teaches us, 1. That hardships of a tempted state should engage us to keep close to ordinances; to go into the sanctuary of God, Ps. 73. 17. Our combats with Satan should oblige us to keep close to the communion of saints; two are better than one. 2. That the honours of a victorious state must not engross us: Christ was baptized, condemned over Satan, and been attended by angels, and yet, after all, he returns to the place where John was preaching and baptizing. As long as we are on this side heaven, whatever extraordinary visits of divine grace we may have here at any time, we must still keep close to the ordinary means of grace and comfort, and walk with God in them. Now here are two testimonies borne by John to Christ, but those two agree in one. 1. Here is his testimony to Christ on the first day that he saw him coming from the wilderness; and here four things are witnessed by him concerning Christ, when he had him before his eyes. 1. That he is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, v. 29. Let us learn here, (1.) That Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, which speaks him the great Sacrifice, by whom atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all sacrifices that were made legal salt, because what that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be led as a lamb to the slaughter, (Isa. 53. 7,) but with a special reference, [1.] To the daily sacrifice, which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a lamb, (Exod. 29. 38,) which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting expiation, whose blood continually made atonement for sin. [2.] To the Pasch, of which the blood of which, being sprinkled upon the door-posts, secured the Israelites from the stroke of the destroying angel. Christ is our Passover, 1 Cor. 5. 7. He is the Lamb of God; he is appointed by him, (Rom. 3. 23;) he was devoted to him, (ch. 17. 19;) and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleased. The Lamb of God, which was offered for a sin-offering, is called the Lord's pasch; (Lev. 16. 8, 9,) so Christ, who was to make atonement for sin, is called the Lamb of God.

(2.) That Jesus Christ, as 'the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world.' This was his undertaking; he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. 9. 26. John Baptist had called him to be the Lamb of God; and John, that he would take away the sin of the world. Now here he shows how and by whom that remission was to be expected; what ground of hope have we that our sins shall be pardoned upon our repentance, though our repentance makes no satisfaction for them? This ground of hope we have—Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God.

[1.] He takes away sin. He, being Mediator between God and man, takes away that which is above anything, offensive to the holiness of God, and destructive to the holiness of man. He came, First, To take away the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, to vacate the judgment, and reverse the attainer, which mankind lay under, by an act of indemnity, which all prudent, obedient believers may claim the benefit of. Secondly, To take away the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace, so that it shall not have dominion over them, Rom. 6. 14. Thirdly, as the Lamb of God, washes us from our sins in his own blood; that is, he both justifies and sanctifies us: he takes away sin. He is a sinner—he is taking away the sin of the world, which speaks it not a single but a continued act; it is his constant work and office to take away sin, which is such a work of time, that it will never be completed till time shall be no more. He is always taking away sin, by the continual intercession of his blood in heaven, and the continual influence of his grace on earth.

[2.] He takes away the sin of the world; purchases pardon for all those that repent, and believe the gospel, of what country, nation, or language,soever they be. The legal sacrifices had reference only to the sins of Israel, to make atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a Propitiation for the sin of the whole world; see 1 John 2. 12. This is encouraging to our faith: if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army, struck at the root, and aimed at the overthrow, of that wickedness which the whole world lay in. God was in him reconciling the world to himself.

[3.] He does this, by taking it upon himself. He is the Lamb of God, that bears the sin of the world; so the margin reads it. He bore sin for us, and so bears it from us; he bore the sin of many, as the
scape-goat had he sins of Israel put upon his head. 

Lev. 16. 21. God could have taken away the sin, by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but he has found out a way of abolishing the sin, and yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son Sin for us.

(23.) That it is our duty, with an eye of faith, to behold the Lamb of God thus taking away the sin of the world. See him taking away sin, and let that increase our hatred of sin, and resolutions against it. Let us not hold that fast, which the Lamb of God came to take away: for Christ will either take our sins away, or take us away. Let it increase our love to Christ, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Rev. 1. 5. Whatever God is pleased to take away from us, if withal he take away our sins, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain.

2. That this was of whom he had spoken before; (p. 36. 31.) This is he, this Person whom I now point at, you see where he stands, this is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man. Observe, (1.) This honour John had above all the prophets, that he was not only the Forerunner of Christ, but the Forerunner of the Man whom he should be. (2.) John calls Christ a Man; after me comes a Man—ing, a strong man; like the Man, the Branch, or the Man of God’s right hand.

(3.) He refers himself to what he had said of him before; This is he of whom I said. Note, Those who have said the most honourable things of Christ, will never see cause to unsay them but the more they know him, the more they are confirmed in their esteem of him. John still thinks as meanly of himself, and as highly of Christ, as ever. Though Christ appeared not in any external pomp or grandeur, yet John is not ashamed to own, This is he I meant, that is preferred before me. And it was necessary that John should thus show them the Person, otherwise they could not have believed that one who made so mean a figure, should be he of whom John had spoken and given so great authority.

(4.) He protests against any confederacy or combination with this Jesus; And I knew him not. Though there was some relation between them, (Elisabeth was cousin to the Virgin Mary,) yet there was no acquaintance at all between them; John had no personal knowledge of Jesus till he saw him come to his baptism. Their manner of life had been different; John had spent his time in the wilderness, in solitude, for the purpose of preparation. There was no correspondence, there were no interviews between them, that the matter might appear to be wholly carried on by the direction and disposal of Heaven, and not by any design or concurrence of the persons themselves. And as he hereby disowns all collusion, so also all partiality and sinister regard, in it; he could not be supposed to favour him as a Friend, and yet not warn against the profundity and duplicity among them. Nay, as he could not be lessened to speak honourably of him, the less he was able to say anything of him but what he received from above, to which he appeals, ch. 3. 27. Note, They who are taught, believe, and confess one whom they have not seen, and blessed among men for that reason.

(5.) The great intention of John’s ministry and baptism was, to introduce Jesus Christ. That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. Observe, [1.] Though John did not know Jesus by face, yet he knew that he should be made manifest. Note We may know the certainty of that which we do not fully know the nature and intention of. We know that the happiness of heaven shall be made manifest to Israel; but we cannot describe it. [2.] John had, that Christ should be made manifest, served to carry him with diligence and resolution through his work, though he was kept in the dark concerning particulars; Therefore and I come. Our assurance of the reality of things, though they are unseen, is enough to quicken us to our cure. [3.] God reveals himself to his people by degrees. At first John understood it not, that the Lamb of God was to be made manifest; after this, that he should be made manifest; thus John continued, as in the work of his life, and at last, he came baptizing, and now he is favored with a sight of him. They who, upon God’s word, believe what they do not see, shall shortly see what they now believe. [4.] The ministry of the word and sacraments is designed for no other end than to lead people to Christ, and to make him more and more manifest. [5.] Baptism with water made way for the baptism with the Holy Ghost, that is, the supposing corruption and filthiness, and signified our cleansing by him who is the Fountain opened.

3. That this was he upon whom the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove. For the confirming of his testimony concerning Christ, he here vocees the extraordinary appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bare witness to him. John was the most eligible proof of Christ’s mission. Now, to assure us of the truth of it, we are here told, (p. 52. 53.)

(1.) That John Baptist saw it; he bare record; did not relate it as a story, but solemnly attested it, with all the seriousness and solemnity of witness-bearing. He made affidavit of it; I saw the Spirit descending from heaven. John could not see the Spirit, but he saw the dove, which was a sign and representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Christ, both to make him fit for his work, and to make him known to the world. Christ was notified, not by the descent of a crown upon him, or by a transfiguration, but by the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon him, to qualify him for his undertaking. Thus the first testimony given to the apostles was by the descent of the Spirit upon them. God’s children are by the Spirit’s power, and not by the evidence of their own abilities, that the mysteries are reserved for their future state. Observe, [1.] The Spirit descended from heaven, for every good and perfect gift is from above. [2.] He descended like a dove—an emblem of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness, which makes him fit to touch. The dove brought the olive-branch of peace, Gen. 8. 11. [3.] The Spirit that descended upon Christ, abroad upon him, as was foretold, Is. 11. 2. The Spirit did not move him at times, as Samson, (Judg. 13. 25.) but at all times. The Spirit was given to him without measure; it was his prerogative to have the Spirit always upon him, so that he could at no time find either unqualified for his work himself, or un furnished for the supply of those that see to him for his grace. [2.] That he was hiden to expect it, which very much conspireth to it. It was not John’s bare conjecture, that surely he on whom he saw the Spirit descending, was the Son of God; but it was an instituted sign given him before, by which he might know it for certain; (p. 33.) I knew him not. This he insists much upon, that he knew no more of him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation. But he that sent me to baptize, gave me this sign, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is he. [1.] See here what sure grounds John went upon, in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed

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with all imaginable satisfaction. First, He did not run without sending; God sent him to baptize. He had a warrant from heaven for what he did. When his minister's call is clear, his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. Secondly, He did not run without speaking; for when he was sent to baptize with water, he was directed that he should baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Under that notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as one who would give that repentance and faith which he called people to, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure which he was now laying the foundation of. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers, in their administration of the outward signs, that they have ministers that can communicate to them the unction of the Holy Ghost, and so put life and soul power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and breathe upon the dry bones on which they prophesy.

[2.] See what sure grounds he went upon, in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as he did to Samuel concerning Saul; "On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, that same is he." This not only prevented any mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony. When he had such assurance as this given him, he could speak with assurance. When John was told this before, his expectations could not but be very much raised; and when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be much confirmed: and these things are written that we may observe them.

4. That he is the Son of God. This is the conclusion of John's testimony, that in which all the particulars centre, as the quod erat demonstrandum—the fact to be demonstrated; (v. 34.) I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

(1.) The truth asserted is, That this is the Son of God. The voice from heaven proclaimed, and John subscribed to it, not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that he has a divine nature. This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God. (Matth. 16. 16.) and here is the first framing of it.

(2.) John's testimony to it: "I saw, and bare record. Not only I now bear record of it, but I did so as soon as I had seen it." Observe, 1. That he was forward to bear record of it, not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that he has a divine nature. This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God. (Matth. 16. 16.) and here is the first framing of it. 2. Here he was forward to bear record of it, not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that he has a divine nature. This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God. (Matth. 16. 16.) and here is the first framing of it.

11. Here is John's testimony to Christ, the next day after, v. 35, 36. Where observe,

1. He took every opportunity that offered itself, to lead people to Christ: John stood looking upon Jesus as he walked. It should seem, John was now retired from the multitude, and was in close conversation with two of his disciples. Note, Ministers should not only in their public preaching, but in their private converse, witness to Christ, and serve his interests. He saw Jesus walking at some distance, yet did not go to him himself, because he would shun every thing that might give the least colour to suspect a combination. He was looking upon Jesus: but he looked steadfastly, and fixed his eyes upon him. Those that would lead others to Christ, must be different and frequent in the contemplation of him themselves. John had seen Christ before, but now looked upon him. 1 John 1. 1.

2. He repeated the same testimony which he had given to Christ the day before, though he could have delivered some other great truth concerning him; but thus he would show that he was uniform and constant in his testimony, and consistent with himself. His doctrine was the same in private that it was in public, as Paul's was, Acts 20. 20, 21. It is good to have that repeated, which we have heard, Phil. 3. 1. The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for the taking away of the sin of the world, ought especially to be insisted upon by all good ministers; Christ, the Lamb of God, Christ and him crucified.

3. He intended this especially for his two disciples that stood with him; he was willing to turn them over to Christ, for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing, that they might leave all to follow him, even that they might leave him. He did not reckon that he lost these disciples who went over from him to Christ, any more than the schoolmaster reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples not for himself, but for Christ, to prepare them for the Lord, Luke 1. 17. So far was he from being jealous of Christ's growing interest, that there was nothing he was more desirous of. Humble, generous souls will give others their due praise without fear of diminishing themselves by it. What we have of reputation, as well as of other things, will not be the less for our giving every body their own.

37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, The Christ. 42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, A stone.

We have here the turning over of two disciples from John to Jesus, and one of them fetching in a third, and these are the first fruits of Christ's disciples; see how small the church was in its beginnings, and what the dawning of the day of its great things was.

1. Andrew and another with him were the two that John Baptist had directed to Christ, v. 37. Who the other was, we are not told; some think that it was Thomas, comparing ch. 21. 2. others, that it was John himself, the penman of this gospel, whose manner it is industriously to conceal his name, ch. 13. 23. and 20. 3. Here is their readiness to go over to Christ: they heard John speak of Christ as the Lamb of God, and they followed Jesus. Probably they had heard John say the same thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had; see the benefit of repetition, and of private personal converse. They heard him speak of Christ as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, and they flocked after him. Note, The strongest and most prevailing argument with a sensible awakened soul to follow Christ, is, that it is he, and he only, that takes away sin.

2. The kind notice Christ took of them, v. 55. They came behind him; but, though he had his
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back toward them, he was soon aware of them, and turned, and saw them following. Note, Christ takes early cognizance of the first motions of a soul toward him, and the first step taken in the way to heaven; see Isa. 64. 5. Luke 15. 20. He did not stay till they begged he should speak with him, but spoke first. What communion there is between a soul and Christ, it is he that begins the discourse. He saith unto them, What seek ye? This was not a reprimand for their boldness in intruding into his company; he that came to seek us, never checked any for seeking him; but, on the contrary, it is a kind invitation of them into his acquaintance, whom he saw bashful and modest. Come, what have you to say to me? What have you to do with me? Note, They whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls, should be humble, and mild, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. The question Christ put to them is, what we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Christ, and take upon us the profession of his holy religion; "What seek ye? What do you design and desire?" These that follow Christ, and know him, will understand themselves. "What seek we in seeking Christ, do we seek a Teacher, Ruler, and Reconciler? In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life?" If our eye be single in this, we are full of light.

3. Their modest inquiry concerning the place of his abode: Rabbi, where dwellest thou? (1.) In calling him Rabbi, they intimated that their design in coming to him was, to be taught by him; rabbi signifies master, a teaching master; the Jews called their doctors, or learned men, rabbies. The word comes from rab, multus, or magnus, a rabbi, a great man, and one that, as we say, hath much in him. Never was there such a rabbi as our Lord Jesus; such a great one, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These came to Christ, to seek him. It was his design to lead all those that applied to themselves to him. John had told them that he was the Lamb of God; now this Lamb's worthy to take the book, and open the seals as a rabbi, Rev. 5. 9. And unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by him, we will not take away our sins. (2.) In asking where he dwelt, they intimate a desire to be better acquainted with him. Christ was a Stranger in this country, so that they mean, where was his inn where he lodged, for there they would attend him at some seasonable time when he should appoint, to receive instruction from him; they would not press rudely upon him, when it was not proper. Civility and good manners well become those who follow Christ. And besides, they hoped to have more from him than they could have in a short conference now by the way. They resolved to make a business, not a by-business, of conversing with Christ. Those that live in and from Christ, may expect more and better desires. [1.] A farther communion with him; they follow on to know more of him. [2.] A fixed communion with him; where they might sit down at his feet, and abide by his instructions. It is not enough to take a turn with Christ now and then, but we must lodge with him.

4. The courteous invitation Christ gave them to his lodgings; He saith unto them, Come, and see. This was not made in a polite manner; and the communion with him be countenanced. (1.) He invites them to come to his lodgings: the nearer we approach to Christ, the more we see of his beauty and excellency. Deceivers maintain their interest in their followers by keeping them at a distance, but that which Christ desired to recommend him to the esteem and affection of his followers, was, that they would come, and see; "Come, and see what a mean lodging I have, what poor accommodations I take up with, that you may not expect any worldly advantage by following me, as they did who made their court to the scribes and Pharisees, and called them Rabbi, Come, and see what you must come upon if you follow me." See Matth. 8. 20. (2.) He invites them to come privately and with a delay. They asked him where he lodged, that they might not wait upon him at a more convenient season; but Christ invites them immediately to come, and see; never in better time than now. Hence learn, (1.) As to others, that it is best taking people when they are in a good mind; strike while the iron is hot. (2.) As to ourselves, that it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities; Now is the accepted time, 2 Cor. 6. 2.

5. Their cheerful and (n doubt) thankful acceptance of his invitation: They came, and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day. It had been more modesty and manners than had done them good if they had refused this offer. (1.) They readily went along with him; They came, and saw where he dwelt. Gracious souls cheerfully accept Christ's gracious invitations; as David, Ps. 22. 1. They inquire of whom the invitation is, and who is generously accommodated with him, but would put that to the venture, and make the best of what they found. It is good being where Christ is, wherever it is; (2.) They were so well pleased with what they found, that they abide with him that day; ("Master, it is good to be here") and he bid them welcome. It was about the tenth hour. Some think that John reckons according to the Roman computation, and that it was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him till night; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists did, according to the Jewish computation, and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him that night and the next day. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this next day that they spent with Christ, was a sabbath-day; and, it being late, they could not get home before that day was out; but he is not certain, Lewis are, to contrive to spend the sabbath as much as may be to our spiritual benefit and advantage; so they are blessed, who, by the lively exercises of faith, love, and devotion, spend their sabbaths in communion with Christ. These are Lord's days indeed, days of the Son of man.

II. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ. If Peter had been the first-born of Christ's disciples, the Papists would have made a prodigy of it. But Andrew indeed afterward came to be more eminent in gifts, but Andrew had the honour first to be acquainted with Christ, and to be the instrument of bringing Peter to him. Observe, 1. The information which Andrew gave to Peter, with an intimation to come to Christ. (1.) He found him; He first finds his own brother Simon; his finding implies his seeking of him. (2.) They went on an errand, and Peter was to set down with Andrew, and be with him; this ministry and baptism, and Andrew knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other disciple that was with him, went out to seek some friend of his at the same time, but Andrew sped first; He first foundeth Simon, who came only to attend on John, but has his expectations out-done, he meets with Jesus.

(2.) He told him whom they had found; We have found the Messiah, which was more than had yet been said. John had said, He is
the Lamb of God, and the Son of God, which Andrew compares with the scriptures of the Old Testament, and comparing them together, concludes that he is the Messiah promised to the fathers. For it is now that the fulness of time is come. Thus, by making God's testimonies his meditation, he speaks more clearly concerning Christ than ever his teacher had done, Ps. 119. 99.

He brought him to Jesus; would not undertake to instruct him himself, but brought him to the Fountain-head, persuaded him to come to Christ, and introduced him. Now this was, [1.] An instance of true love to his brother, his own brother, so he is called here, because he was very dear to him. Note, We ought with a particular concern and application, to endeavour the spiritual welfare of those we are concerned for our relation to them us adds both to the obligation and to the opportunity of doing good to their souls. [2.] It was an effect of his day's conversation with Christ. Note, The best evidence of our profiting by the means of grace, is, the piety and usefulness of our conversation afterward. Hereby it appeared that Andrew had been with Jesus, that he was so full of him, that he had been drawn by him from his father to be his Father. He knew there was enough in Christ for all; and, having tasted that he is gracious, could not rest till those he loved had tasted it too. Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone.

2. The entertainment which Jesus Christ gave to Peter, who was never the less welcome for his being influenced by his brother to come, v. 42. Observe, (1.) Christ called him by his name; When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah. It should seem that Peter was utterly a stranger to Christ, and if so, [1.] It was a proof of Christ's omniscience, that, upon the first sight, without any inquiry, he could tell the name both of him and of his father. The Lord knows them that are his, and their whole case. However, [2.] It was an instance of his condescending grace and favour, that he did thus freely and affably call him by his name, though he was of mean extraction, and vir nullius nominis—an obscure man. It was an instance of God's favour to Moses, that he knew him by name, Exod. 33. 17. Some observe the signification of these names, Simon—obedient, Jona—a dove. An obedient, dove-like spirit qualifies us to be the disciples of Christ.

(2.) He gave him a new name; Cephas. [1.] His giving of him a name, speaks Christ's favour to him. A new name speaks some great dignity, Rev. 2. 17. Isa. 62. 2. By this Christ not only wiped off the reproach of his mean and obscure parentage, but adopted him into his family as one of his own.

[2.] The name which he gave him, speaks his felicity to Christ. Thou shalt be called Cephas, that is Hebrew for a stone; which is by interpretation Peter; so it should be rendered, as Acts 9. 40. Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas; the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a young roe. Peter's natural temper was stiff, and hardly, and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him Cephas—a stone. When Christ afterward prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, that so he should be strong to the end, and at the same time bid him strengthen his brethren, and lay out himself for the support of others, then he made him what he here called him, Cephas—a stone. Those that come to Christ, must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant to him, like a stone, solid and steadfast; and it is by his grace they are so. His saying, Be thou steady, makes them so. Now this does no more prove that Peter was the singular or only rock upon which this church is built, than the calling of James and John, Boanerges, proves them the only sons of thunder; or the calling of Joses, Barnabas, proves them the only sons of consolation.

43. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 44. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

We have here the call of Philip and Nathanael. I. Philip was called immediately to Christ himself not as Andrew, who was directed to Christ by John, or Peter, who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones home to himself. But, whatever means he uses, he is not tied to any. 1. Philip was called in a preventing way; Jesus found Philip, and said to him, Follow me, before we made any inquiries after him. The name Philip is of a Greek original, and much used among the Gentiles, which some make an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, and their conformity to the nations; yet Christ changed not his name. 2. He was called the day following. See how closely Christ applied him to his business. When work is to be done for God, we must not lose a day. Yet observe, Christ now called one or two a day; but, after the Spirit was poured out, there were thousands a day effectually called, in which was fulfilled ch. 14. 12.

3. Jesus would go forth into Galilee, to call him. Christ will find out all those that are given to him, wherever they are, and none of them shall be lost. 4. He is brought to be a new rock; by the power of Christ going along with that word, Follow me. See the nature of true christianity; it is following Christ, devoting ourselves to his converse and conduct, attending his motions and treading in his steps. See the efficacy of the grace of Christ making the call of his word to prevail; it is the rod of his strength. 5. We are told, that Philip was of Bethsaida, and Andrew and Peter were so too, v. 44. These eminent disciples received not their honour from, but
reflected honour upon the place of their nativity. 
Bethesda signifies the house of nets, because inhabited mostly by fishermen; hence Christ chose disciples, who were to be furnished with extraordinary gifts, and therefore needed not the ordinary advantages of life. Old Bethsaida was a wicked place, (Matt. 11. 21,) yet even there was a remnant, according to the election of grace.

II. Nathanael was invited to Christ by Philip, and much is said concerning him. In which we may observe,

1. What passed between Philip and Nathanael, in which appears an observable mixture of pious zeal with weakness, such as is usually found in beginners that are yet but asking the way to Zelon. Here is,

(1.) The joyful news that Philip brought to Nathanael, v. 45. As Andrew before, so Philip here, having got some knowledge of Christ himself, rests not till he has made manifest the savour of that knowledge. Philip, though newly come to an acquaintance with Christ himself, yet steps aside to seek Nathanael. Note, When we have the fairest opportunities of getting good to our own souls, yet even then we must seek opportunities of doing good to the souls of others; remembering the words of Christ, It is more blessed to give than to receive, Acts 20. 35. O, saith Philip, we have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. Observe here,

[1.] What a transport of joy Philip was in, upon this new acquaintance with Christ: "We have found him; what have we so often talked of, so long wished and waited for; at last, he is come, he is come; and we have found him!"

[2.] What an advantage it was to him, that he was so well acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, which prepared his mind for the reception of evangelical light, and made the entrance of it much the more easy; him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. What is written entirely and from eternity in the book of the Old Testament, is a mixture of things distant at some times and in divers manners, copied out into the book of the divine revelations. Glorious things were written there concerning the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the Prophet like Moses, the Son of David, Emmanuel, the Man, the Branch, Messiah, the Prince. Philip had studied these things, and was full of them, which made him readily able to point them out, and to detect the weaknesses he laboured under; he called Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, whereas he was of Bethlehem; and the Son of Joseph, whereas he was but his supposed Son. Young beginners in religion are subject to mistakes, which time and the grace of God will rectify. It was his weakness to say, We have found him, for Christ found them before they found Christ. He did not yet apprehend, as Paul did, how he was the very person they had been seeking; and perhaps because he knew him to be a mendicant, if not a melancholy man, one that had hard and mean thoughts of himself, was ready to doubt his own sincerity; and Christ by his testimony put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had, more than any of the candidates, objected against Christ; but Christ hereby showed that he excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he said amiss, because he knew how his own heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? (Matt. 2.) an obscure town in Galilee? But kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance with Christ, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honourably of those who without cause have spoken slightly of us, and to give them their due praise.

(2.) The objection which Nathanael made against this; v. 46. Can there any good come out of Nazareth? Here, [1.] His caution was commendable, that he did not lightly assent to every thing that was said, but took it into examination; our rule is, Prove all things. But, [2.] His objection arose from ignorance. If he meant that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, it was owing to his ignorance of the divine goodness, and that we were less affected to one place than another, or tied itself to men’s foolish and ill-founded observations. If he meant that the Messiah, that great good thing, could not come out of Nazareth, so far he was right; (Moses, in the law, said that he should come out of Judah, and the prophets had assigned Bethlehem for the place of his nativity;) but then he was ignorant of the matter of fact, that this Jesus was born at Bethlehem; so that the blunder Philip made, in calling him Jesus of Nazareth, occasioned this objection. Note, The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers.

(3.) The short reply which Philip gave to this objection; Come and see. [1.] It was his weakness, that he could not give a satisfactory answer to it; but yet it is the counsel of young beginners in religion. We may know enough to satisfy ourselves, and yet not be able to say enough to silence the cavils of a subtle adversary. [2.] It was his wisdom and zeal, that, when he could not answer the objection himself, he would have him go to one that could; Come, and see. Let not us stand arguing here, and raising difficulties to ourselves, which we cannot get to an end; but let us set the facts before Christ himself, and these difficulties will all vanish presently. (Note, It is folly to spend that time in doubtful disputations, which might be better spent, and to much better purpose, in the exercises of piety and devotion, Come, and see; not, Go, and see, but, "Come, and I will go along with thee?" as Isa. 2. 3. Jer. 50. 5. From this parable between Philip and Nathanael, we may observe, First, That many people are kept from the ways of religion by the unreasonable prejudices they have conceived against religion, through the account of some foreign circumstances which do not at all touch the merits of the cause. Secondly, The best way to remove the prejudices they have entertained against religion, is, to prove themselves, and make trial of it. Let us not answer this matter before we hear it.

2. What passed between Nathanael and our Lord Jesus. He came, and saw, and was not in vain.

(1.) Our Lord Jesus bore a very honourable testimony to Nathanael’s integrity; Jesus saw him coming, and met him with favourable encouragement; he said of him to those about him, Nathanael himself being within hearing, Behold an Israelite indeed. Observe,

[1.] That he commended him; not to flatter him, or puff him up with a good conceit of himself, but perhaps because he knew him to be a man of the world, it not a melancholy man, one that had hard and mean thoughts of himself, was ready to doubt his own sincerity; and Christ by his testimony put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had, more than any of the candidates, objected against Christ; but Christ hereby showed that he excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he said amiss, because he knew how his own heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? (Matt. 2.) an obscure town in Galilee? But kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance with Christ, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honourably of those who without cause have spoken slightly of us, and to give them their due praise.

[2.] That he commended him for his integrity. Our Lord Jesus, Behold an Israelite indeed. It is Christ’s prerogative to know what men are indeed; we can but hope the best. The whole nation were Israelites in name, but all are not Israel that are of Israel; (Rom. 9. 6.) here, however, was an Israelite indeed.

1. A sincere follower of the good example of Israel, whose character it was, that he was a plain man, in opposition to Ezra’s character of a cunning man. He was a genuine son of honest Jacob, not only of a good family, but he was of a good heart. His sincerity of the faith of Israel; he was true to the religion he professed, and lived up to it; he was really as good as he seemed, and his practice of a piece with his profession. He is the Jew, that is one inwardly; (Rom. 2. 29.) so is he the Christian.

Secondly, He is one in whom is no guile—that is the character of an Israelite indeed, a Christian indeed; no guile toward men: a man without trick or design: a man that one may trust; no guile toward God, that is, sincere in his repentance for sin,
cre in his covenanting with God, in whose spirit is no guile, Ps. 32. 2. He does not say, without guilt, but, without guile. Though in many things he is foolish and forgetful, yet in nothing false, nor wickedly departing from God: there is no allowed, approved guile in him; not painted, though he have his spots; "Behold this Israelite indeed: 1. "Take note of him and his way, and believe like him.” 2. "Admire him; behold and wonder.”

The hypocrisies of the scribes and Pharisees had so softened the Jewish church and nation, and their religion was so degenerated into formality or state-policy, that an Israelite indeed was a man wondered at: a miracle of divine grace, like Job, ch. 1. 8

(2.) Nathanael is much surprised at this, though which, let it persuade you further proof of his holiness, and a kind memorial of his former devotion.

[1.] Here is Nathanael’s modesty, in that he was soon put out of countenance at the kind notice Christ was pleased to take of him; "Whence knowest thou me, me that am unworthy of thy cognizance; who am I, O Lord God?” 2 Sam. 7. 18. This was an evidence of his sincerity, that he did not catch or exaggerate the King of Israel; did not deprive Christ. He knows us better than we know ourselves; we know not what is in a man’s heart by looking in his face, but all things are naked and open before Christ, Heb. 4. 12, 13. Doth Christ know us? Let us covert to know him.

[2.] Here is Christ’s further manifestation of himself to him; Before Philip called thee, I saw thee. First, He gives him one which, he knew him, and so manifests his divinity. It is God’s prerogative infallibility to know all persons and all things; by this Christ proved himself to be God upon many occasions. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah that he should be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, that is, in judging the sincerity and degree of the fear of God in others, and that he should not judge after the sight of his eyes, Isa. 11. 2, 3. Here he answers that prediction. See 2 Tim. 2. 19.

Secondly, That before Philip called him, he saw him under the fig-tree; this manifests a particular kindness for him. 1. His eye was toward him before Philip called him, which was the first time that ever Nathanael was acquainted with Christ. Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of him, Isa. 4. 4. Gal. 4. 9. 2. His eye was upon him when he was under the fig-tree; this was a private token which nobody understood but Nathanael; “When thou wast retired under the fig-tree in thy garden, and thoughtest that no eye saw thee, I had then mine eye upon thee, and saw that which was very acceptable.” It is most probable that Nathanael under the fig-tree was employed, as Isaac in the field, in meditation, and prayer, and communion with God. Perhaps then and there it was that he solemnly joined himself to the Lord in an inviolate covenant. Christ saw in secret, and by this public notice of it did in part reward him openly. Sitting under the fig-tree notes quietness and composedness of spirit, which much befitted communion with God. See Mic. 4. 4. Zech. 3. 10. Nathanael the heir was an Israelitish, and that, like Israel, he wrestled with God alone, (Gen. 32. 24.) prayed, not like the hypocrites, in the corners of the streets, but under the fig-tree.

(3.) Nathanael hereby obtained a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ, expressed in that noble acknowledgment, (v. 49.) Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel: that is, in short, this is the Messiah.

[1.] How firmly he believed with the heart. Though he had lately laboured under some prejudices concerning Christ, they were now all vanished. Now, The grace of God, in working faith, casts down imaginations. Now he asks no more, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? For he believes Jesus of Nazareth to be the Chief Good, and embraces him accordingly.

[2.] How freely he confessed with the mouth. His confession is made in form of an adoration directed to our Lord Jesus himself; which is a proper way of worship, in which the name of God is acknowledged.

He confesses Christ’s prophetic office, in calling him Rabbi, a title which the Jews commonly gave to their teachers. Christ is the great Rabbi, at whose feet we must all be brought up. Secondly, He confesses his divine nature and mission, in calling him the Son of God; (that Son of God spoken of Ps. 2. 7.) though he had but a human form and aspect, yet, having a divine knowledge, the knowledge of the heart, and of things distant and secret, from hence he concludes him to be the Son of God. Thirdly, He confesses, Thou art the King of Israel; that King of Israel whom we have been long waiting for. If he be the Son of God, he is King of the Israel of God. Nathanael hereby proves himself an Israelite indeed, that he so readily owns and subscribes to the Messiah. 4. Christ hereupon raises the hopes and expectations of Nathanael to something further and greater than all this, v. 50, 51. Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings, though weak, Math. 12. 20.

[1.] He here signifies his acceptance, and (it should seem) his admiration, of the ready faith of Nathanael, in which he had great confidence. Note, 1. To him that hath, and maketh good use of what he hath, more shall be given. 2. Those who truly believe the gospel, will find its evidences grow stronger and stronger, and will see more and more cause to believe it. 3. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of himself to his people while they are here in this world, he hath still greater things than these to make known to them; a glory yet further to be revealed.

Secondly, In particular; Not thou only, but ye, all ye my disciples, whose faith this is intended for the confirmation of, ye shall see heaven opened: that is more than telling Nathanael of his being under the fig-tree. This is introduced with a solemn prefix, Verily, verily I say unto you. This command both a fixed attention to what is said as being very weighty, and a full assent to it, as undoubtedly true; I say it, whose word you may rely upon, amen, amen. None used this word at the beginning of a sentence but Christ, though the Jews often used it at the close of a prayer, and sometimes doubled it. It is a solemn asseveration. Christ is called the Amen, (Rev. 3. 14.) and so some take it here, I the Amen, the Amen, say unto you. I the faithful Witness. Note, The assurances we have of the glory to be revealed, are built upon the word of Christ.

Now what is it that Christ assures them of? Peace, grace, a renewal of his presence, if we are ever long, or far from henceforth, ye shall see heaven opened.

1. It is a mean title that Christ here takes to himself; the Son of man; a title frequently applied to him in the gospel, but always by himself. Na-
thanachad called him the Son of God, and King of Israel: he called himself Son of man. (1) To express his humility in the midst of the honour done him. (2) To teach his humanity, which is to be believed as well as his divinity. (3) To intimate his present state of humiliation, that Nathanael might not expect this King of Israel to appear in external pomp. The disciples, who were present, said to one another: Ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. 1. Some understand it literally, as pointing at some particular event. Father, (1) There was some vision of Christ's glory, in which this was exactly fulfilled, which Nathanael was an eye witness of, as Peter and James and John were of his transfiguration. There were many things which were not done by Christ and those in the presence of his disciples, which were not written; (ch. 20. 30.) and why not that? Or, (2) It was fulfilled in the many ministrations of the angels to our Lord Jesus, especially that at his ascension, when heaven was opened to receive him, and the angels ascended and descended, to attend him, and to do him honour, and this in the sight of the disciples. Christ's ascension was the great proof of his mission, and most confirmed the faith of his disciples, ch. 6. 6. 7. Or, (3) It may refer to Christ's second coming, to judge the world, when the heavens shall be open, and every eye shall see him, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend about him as attendants on him, every one employed; and a busy day it will be. See 2 Thess. 1. 10. 2. Others take it figuratively, as speaking of a state or series of things to commence from his forth; and so we may understand, (1) Christ's miracles. Nathanael believed, because Christ, as the prophets of old, could tell him things secret; but what is this? Christ is now beginning a dispensation of miracles, much more great and strange than this, as if heaven were opened; and such a power shall be exerted by the Son of man, as if the angels, which excelled in strength, were continually attending his orders. Immediately after this, Christ began to work miracles, ch. 2. 11. Or, (2) Of his mediation, and that blessed intercession which he hath settled between heaven and earth, which his disciples should by degrees be let into the mystery of. (1.) By Christ, as Mediator, they shall see heaven opened, that we may enter into the holiest by his blood; (Heb. 10. 19. 20.) heaven opened, that by faith we may look in, and at length may go in; a may now behold the glory of the Lord, and have a foretaste of joying in our Lord. And, (2.) They shall see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Through Christ we have communion with, and benefit by, the holy angels, and things in heaven and things on earth are reconciled and gathered together, Christ is to us as Jacob's ladder, (Gen. 28. 12.) by whom angels continually ascend and descend for the good of the saints.

CHAP. II.

In the close of the foregoing chapter, we had an account of the first disciples whom Jesus called, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael. These were the first fruits to God and to the Lamb, Rev. 14. 4. Now in this chapter, we have, 1. The account of the first miracle which Jesus wrought—turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee, (v. 1.) and his signifying at Capernaum, (v. 2.) The account of the first passer he kept at Jerusalem after he began his public ministry; his driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple; (v. 13.) and the sign he gave to them for a token of his power, (v. 22.) an account of some almost believers, that followed him, thereupon, for some time, (v. 23. 25.) but he knew them too well to put any confidence in them.

1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 2. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him. They have no wine. 3. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. 4. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it. 5. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 6. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 7. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 8. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom. 9. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 10. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

We have here the story of Christ's miraculous converting of water into wine, at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. There were some few so well disposed as to believe in Christ, and to follow him, when he did so miracle; yet it was not likely that many should be wrought upon till he had something whereby to answer those that asked, What sign showest thou? He could have wrought miracles before, could have made them the common actions of his life, and the common entertainments of his friends; but miracles being designed for the sacred and solemn seals of his doctrine, he began not to work any till he began to preach his doctrine. Now observe,

1. The occasiot of this miracle. Maimonides observes it to be to the honour of Moses, that all the signs he did in the wilderness, he did upon necessity; we needed food, he brought us manna, and so did Christ. Observe, 1. The time; the third day after he came into Galilee. The evangelist keeps a journal of occurrences, for no day passed without something extraordinary or remarkable. This miracle was wrought at Cana; and it showed his time better than his servants did, and never lay dormant at night complaining, as the Roman emperor did, that he had lost a day. 2. The place; it was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. 19. 28.) of which before, it was said that he shall yield royal dainties, Gen. 49. 20. Christ began to work miracles in an obscure corner of the country, remote from Jerusalem, which was the public scene of action, to show that he sought not honour from men, (ch. 5. 41.) but would put honour upon the lovely. His doctrine and miracles would not be so much opposed by the plain honest Galileans as they would be by the proud and prejudiced rabbins, politicians, and grandees, at Jerusalem. 3. The occasion itself was a marriage; probably, one or both of the parties were a-kin to our Lord
Jesus. The mother of Jesus is said to be there, and not to be called, as Jesus and his disciples were, which intimates that she was there as one at home. Observe the honour which Christ hereby put upon the ordinance of marriage, that he graced the solemnity of it, not only with his presence, but with his first miracle; because it was instituted and blessed in innocency, because by it he would still seek a goodly seed, because it resembles the mystical union between his body and his church, and because he foresaw that in the papal kingdom, while the marriage-ceremony would be unduly dignified, and advanced into a sacrament, the marriage state would be unduly vilified, as inconsistent with any sacred function. There was a marriage—sponsa, a marriage-feast, to grace the solemnity. Marriages were usually celebrated with festivities, (Gen. 29. 22. Judg. 14. 10.) in token of joy and friendly respect, and for the confirming of love.

4. Christ and his mother and disciples were principal guests at this entertainment; The mother of Jesus (that was her most honourable title) was there; no mention being made of Joseph, we conclude he was dead before this. Jesus was called, and he came, accepted the invitation, and feasted with them. Note, (1.) It is very desirable, when there is a marriage, to have Jesus Christ present at it; to have his spiritual, gracious presence, to have the marriage owned and blessed by him, the marriage is then honourable indeed; and they that marry in the Lord, (1 Cor. 7. 39.) do not marry without him. (2.) They that would have Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by prayer; that is the messenger that must be sent to heaven for him; and he will come; Thou shalt call, and I will answer. And he will turn the water into wine.

The disciples also were invited, those five whom he had called, ch. 1. for as yet he had no more; they were his family, and were invited with him. They had thrown themselves upon his care, and they soon find, though he had no wealth, he had good friends. Note, (1.) Those that follow Christ, shall feast with him, they shall find his flesh for food, and drink of his blood for refreshment, (ch. 6. 35.) Whence there shall my servant be. (2.) Love to Christ is testified by a love to those that are his, for his sake; our goodness extendeth not to him, but to the saints. Calvin observes how generous the maker of the feast was, though he seems to be but of small substance, to invite four or five strangers more than he thought of, because they were followers of Christ, with whom they were at school, in his house, with freedom, and liberty, and true friendship, in the conversation of some meaner persons than among many of higher rank.

II. The miracle itself. In which observe, 1. They wanted wine, v. 3. (1.) There was want at a feast; though much was provided, yet all was spent. While we are in this world we sometimes find ourselves in straits, even then when we think of our Drupal sufficiency. It is always spending, perhaps all is spent ere we are aware. (2.) There was want at a marriage-feast. Note, They who, being married, are come to care for the things of the world, must expect trouble in the flesh, and count upon disappointment. (3.) It should seem, the occasion of this want, was, Christ and his disciples, because there was more company than they expected when the provision was made; but they who straiten themselves for Christ, shall not lose by him.

2. The mother of Jesus solicited him to assist her friends in this strait. We are told (v. 3—5.) what passed between Christ and his mother upon this occasion.

(1.) She acquaints him with the plague they were at. (v. 5.) She saith unto him, They have no wine. Some think that she did not intend any miraculous supply, (he having as yet wrought no miracle,) but that she would have him make some decent excuse to the company, and make the best of it to save the bridegroom's reputation, and keep him in countenance; or (as Calvin suggests) would have him make up the want of wine with some holy, profitable discourse. But, most probably, she looked for a miracle; for she knew he was appearing as the great Prophet, like unto Moses, who so often seasonably supplied the wants of Israel; and though this was his first public miracle, perhaps he had sometimes relieved her and her husband in their low estate. The bridegroom might have sent out for more wine, but she was going to the Fountain-head. Note, (1.) We ought to be concerned for the wants and straits of our friends, and to seek our own thing only. (2.) In our own and our friends' straits it is our wisdom and duty to apply ourselves to Christ by prayer. (3.) In our addresses to Christ, we must not prescribe to him, but humbly spread our case before him, and then refer ourselves to him to do as he pleases.

(2.) He gave her a reprimand for it, for he saw more amiss in it than we do, else he had not treated it so. Here is, (1.) The rebuke itself; Woman, what have I to do with thee? As many as Christ loves, he rebukes and chastens. He calls her Woman, not Mother. When we begin to be assuming, we should be minded what we are, men and women, frail, foolish, and corrupt. The question, τι ἐχεις εἰς με, might be read, What is it to thee, and me? What is it to us, if they do want? But it is always used as we render it, What have I to do with thee? as Judges 11. 12. 2 Sam. 16. 10. Ezra. 4. 3. Matt. 8. 29. It therefore bespeaks a resentment, yet not at all inconsistent with the reverence and submission which he paid to his mother, according to the fifth commandment; (Luke 2. 51.) for there was a time when it was Levi's praise, that he said to his father, I have not known him, Dint. 35. 2. Now this was said to his master's father, as it were in interposing in a matter which was the act of his Godhead, which had no dependence on her, and which she was not the mother of. Though, as Man, he was David's Son, and hers; yet, as God, he was David's Lord, and hers, and he would have her know it. The greatest advancements must not make us forget ourselves and our place, nor the familiarity which the covenant of grace admits us to, yet there is a certain kind of presumption. Secondly, It was an instruction to others of her relations, (many of whom were present here,) that they must never expect him to have any regard to his kindred according to the flesh, in his working of miracles, or that therein he should gratify them, who in this matter were no more to him than other people. In the things of God we must not know, as of our own country, the things against that idolatry which he foresaw his church would in after-ages sink into, in giving undue honours to the virgin Mary; a crime which the Roman catholics, as they call themselves, are notoriously guilty of, when they call her the queen of heaven, the salvation of the world, their mediator, their life and hope; not only depending upon her merit and intercession, but beseeching her to command her Son to do them good; Monstra e tesae matrem
—show that thou art his mother. Jesus matris im- pune salvatoris—lay thy maternal commands on the
Servant. Does he not here expressly say, when a miracle was to be wrought, even in the days of his
humiliation, and his mother did but tacitly hint an
intercession, Woman, what have I to do with thee?
This was plainly designed either to prevent or urge
a refusal. (15.) The Son of God is appointed our Advocate with the
Father! but the mother of our Lord was never de-
signed to be our advocate with the Son.
[2.] The reason of this reproof; Mine hour is not yet come. For every thing Christ did, and that
was done to him, had his hour, the fixed time
and the fittest time, which was punctually observed.
First, it was his hour of grace, (John 11.)-"He came.
Yet afterwards he wrought this before, because he
foresaw it would confirm the faith of his infant-disciples, (v. 11.) which was the end of all his miracles;
so that this was an earnest of the many miracles he would work when his hour was come. Secondly, mine hour of working miracles openly is not yet come; therefore do not talk of it now. (4.) He intimated thereby, that no
exception from thine authority yet come, now that
I have begun to act as a Prophet! So Gregory Nyssen. Fourthly, mine hour for working this
miracle is not yet come. His mother moved him to
help them when the time began to fail; (so it may be,
read, v. 3.) but his hour was not yet come till it
was quite spent, and there was a total want; not
only to prevent any suspicion of mixing of some of
the wine, but of all wine; (2.) he taught us that man's extremity is God's opportunity to appear
for the help and relief of his people. Then his hour
is come, when we are reduced to the utmost strait,
and know not what to do. This encouraged those
that waited for him, to believe that though his hour
was not yet come, it would come. Note, The
 delays of mercy are not to be construed the denial of prayers. At the end it shall speak.
(3.) Notwithstanding this, she encouraged her-
self with expectation that he would help her friends
in this strait, for she bid the servants observe his
orders, v. 5.
[1.] She took the reproof very submissively, and
did not reply to it. It is best not to deserve repro-
from Christ, but next best to be meek and quiet
under it, and acquiesce in it, as a kindness, Ps. 143. 5.
She kept her heart, and her Christ's mercy, that he
would yet grant her desire. When we come to God
in Christ for any mercy, two things discourage us.
First, Sense of our own follies and infirmities;
"Surely such imperfect prayers as ours cannot speed." Secondly, Sense of our Lord's frowns and
reproves. Afflictions are continued, deliverances de-
layed, and God seems angry at our prayers; this
was the case of the mother of our Lord here; and
yet she encourages herself with hope that he will at
length give in an answer of peace; to teach us to
wrestle with God by faith and fervency in prayer,
even then when he seems in his providence to walk
carrying us. We must against hope believe in
hope, Rom. 4. 18.
[2.] She directed the servants to have an eye to
his immediately, and not to make their applications
to the effect is probably, they had done. She quite
all pretensions to an influence upon him, or interces-
sion with him; let their souls wait only on him, Ps.
62. 5.
[4.] She directed them punctually to observe his
orders, without disputing, or asking questions. Be-
ing conscious to herself of a fault in presuming to
him, she cautions the servants to take heed of the
same fault, and to attend both his time and his way
for supply; "Whatever he saith unto you, do it,
though you may think it ever so improper. If he
would, Give the guests water, when they call for
wine, do it. If he saith, Pour out from the bottoms
of the vessels that are spent, do it. He can make a
couple of the wine, multiply it to so many draughts;" Note, These that expect Christ's favours, must
with an implicit obedience observe his orders. The
way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's me-
cords must be the servants' commandments.
(4.) Christ did at length miraculously supply them;
for he is often better than his word, but never
worse.
[1.] The miracle itself was, turning water into
wine; the substance of water acquiring a new form,
and having all the accidents and qualities of wine.
Such a transformation is a miracle; but the papish
tenets substantiated, the substance changed, the acci-
dents remaining the same, is a monster. This
Christ showed himself to be the God of nature, who
maketh the earth to bring forth wine, Ps. 104. 14.
The extracting of the blood of the grape every
year from the moisture of the earth, is no less a
work of power, though, being according to the common
law of nature, it is not such a work of wonder, as
many suppose. This is shown by the Bible, which
turning water into wine; (Exod. 4. 9. ch. 7. 20.) the
beginning of Christ's miracles, was, turning wa-
ter into wine; which intimates the difference be-
tween the law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ.
The curse of the law turns water into blood, com-
mon comforts into bitterness and terror; the bless-
ings of the gospel turns water into wine. Christ
hereby showed that his erudite into the world was to
lighten men's hearts; to make them happy, and make
them comforts indeed. Shiloh is said to wash his garments in wine, (Gen. 19. 11.) the
water for washing being turned into wine. And
the gospel call is, Come ye to the waters, and
buy wine, Isa. 55. 1.
[1.] The circumstances of the miracle were—magnified it, and freed it from all suspicion of cheat or
concern; for, First, It was done in water-pots; (v. 6.) There
were set there six water-pots of stone. Observe.
For what use these water pots were intended—for
their legal purifications from ceremonial pollutions,
ensnared by the law of God, and many more by the
tradition of the elders. The Jews eat not; except
they wash often, (Mark 7. 3.) and they used much
water in their washing, for which reason there were
six large water-pots provided. It was a saving
character of that age, to set a great value on water
to them, and to make much of it. Quod non man-
mus consequetur in hoc mundo divinis—He who
uses much water in washing, will gain much wealth
in this world. 2. To what use Christ put them, quite
different from what they were intended; to be the
receptacles of the miraculous wine. Thus Christ
came to bring in the grace of the gospel, which is as
wine, that cheerceth God and man, (Judg. 9. 13.)
instead of the shadows of the law, which were as
water, weak and beggarly elements. These were
water-pots that had never been used to have wine in
them; and of stone, which is not apt to retain the
scents of former liquors, if ever they had had wine in
them. They contained two or three firkins apiece;
two or three measures, baths, or ephahs; the quan-
tity is uncertain, but very considerable. We may
be sure that it was not intended to be all drunk at
once, but for a further kindness to the newly
married couple, as the multiplied oil was to the poor
widow, out of which she might pay her debt, and
live of the rest, 2 Kings 4. 7. Christ gives him-
self; gives abundantly, according to his riches in
glory. It is the penman's language to say, They
contained two or three firkins, for the Holy Spirit
could have ascertained just how much; thus ch. 6.19.
to teach us to speak cautiously, and not con-
dently, of those things whereof we have not good
assurance.
Secondly. The water-pots were filled up to the brim by the servants at Christ’s word, v. 7. As Moses, the servant of the Lord, when God bid him, went to the rock, to draw water; so these servants, when Christ bid them, went to the water, to fetch wine. Note, Since no difficulties can be opposed to the arm of God’s power, no improbabilities are to be objected against the word of his command.

Thirdly. The miracle was wrought suddenly, and in such a manner as greatly magnified the power and goodness of God. As soon as he had filled the water-pots, presently he said, Draw out now; (v. 8.) and it was done.

1. Without any ceremony, in the eye of the spectators. One would have thought, as Naaman, he should have come out, and stood, and called on the name of God, 2 Kings 5. 11. No, he sits still in his place, says not a word, but with the thing, and so works it. Note, Christ does great things, and manifests changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Christ in working miracles, used words and signs, but it was for their sakes that stood by, ch. 11. 47.

2. Without any hesitation or uncertainty in his own breast. He did not say, Draw out now; and let me taste it, questioning whether the thing were done as he willed it or no; but, with the greatest assurance, willed it to be done, and would have it done instantly. The moment he said, draw out now, he recommends it to the master of the feast first. As he knew what he would do, so he knew what he could do, and made no essay in his work; but as was very, good, very, even in the beginning.

Our Lord Jesus directed the servants,

(1.) To draw it out; not to let it alone in the vessel, to be admired, but to draw it out, to be drank. Note, [1.] Christ’s works are all for use; he gives no man a talent to be buried, but to be traded with.

Has he turned thy water into wine, given thee knowledge and grace? It is to profit withal; and therefore, draw out now. [2.] Those that would know Christ, must make trial of him, must attend upon him in the use of ordinary means, and then may expect extraordinary influences. That which is laid up for all that fear God, is wrought for them that trust in him, (Ps. 31. 19.) that by the exercise of faith draw out what is laid up.

(2.) To present it to the governor of the feast. Some think that this governor of the feast was only the chief guest, that sat at the upper end of the table; but if so, surely our Lord Jesus should have that place, for he was, upon all accounts, the principal Guest; but it seems another had the upper place. Naaman, though he was healed, sat on none of these (Matth. 23. 6.) and chose it, Luke 14. 7. And Christ, according to his own rule, sat down in the lowest room; but, though he was not treated as the Master of the feast, he kindly approved himself a Friend to the feast, and if not its Founder, yet its best Benefactor. Others think that this governor was the inspector and monitor of the feast; the same with Phutarch’s Commissary of the feast; so Hymettus filled it. (Matth. 24. 41.)

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Fourthly. The wine which was thus miraculously provided, was of the best and richest wine, which was acknowledged by the governor of the feast; and that it was really so, and not his fancy, is certain, because he knew not whence it was, v. 9, 10. It was certain that this was wine. The governor knew that when he drank it, though he knew not whence it was; the servants knew whence it was, but had not yet tasted it. If the taster had seen the drawing of it, or the drawers had had the tasting of it, something might have been impputed to fancy; but now no room is left for suspicion. 2. That it was the best wine. Note, Christ’s works commend themselves to those that know not their Author. The products of nature are all for the best in their kind. This wine had a stronger body and better flavour, than ordinary. This the governor of the feast takes notice of to the bridegroom, with an air of pleasantness, as uncommon. (1.) The common method was otherwise. Good wine is brought out to the best advantage at the beginning of a feast, when the guests have their heads clear, and their appetites fresh, and can relish it, and will commend it; but when they have well drunk, when their heads are confused, and their appetites pall’d, good wine is but thrown away upon them, worse will serve them. See the vanities of all the pleasures of sense; they soon surfeit, but never satisfy; the longer they are enjoyed, the less pleasant they grow. (2.) This bridegroom obliged his friends with a remarkable testimony of the wine; as when the wine was kept the good wine until now, not knowing whom they were indebted to for this good wine, he returns the thanks of the table to the bridegroom. She did not know that I gave her corn and wine, Hos. 2. 8.

Now, (1.) Christ in providing thus plentifully for the guests, though he hereby allows a sober, cheerful use of wine, especially in times of rejoicing, (Ch. 4. 17.) yet he does not invalidate his own caution nor injure it, in the least, which is, that our hearts be not at any time, no at a marriage feast, overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, Luke 21. 34. When Christ provided so much good wine for them that had well drank, he intended to try their sobriety, and to teach them how to abound, as well as how to want. Temperance her force, is a thankless virtue; but if Divine Providence gives us abundance of the delights of sense, and Divine Grace enable us to use them moderately, this is self-denial that is praise-worthy. He also intended that some should be left for the confirmation of the truth of the miracle, to the faith of others. And we have reason to think that the guests at this table were so well taught, or, at least, were now so well awed by the presence of Christ, that none of them abused this surfeit feast. Theos, in the express terms, drawn from this story, may be sufficient at any time to fortify us against temptations to intemperance. First, That our meat and drink are the gifts of God’s bounty to us, and we owe our liberty to use them, and our comfort in the use of them, to the mediation of Christ; it is therefore ungrateful and impious to abuse them. Secondly, That, wherever we are, Christ has his eye upon us; we should eat bread here and drink wine of his grace, (Exod. 18. 12;) and then we should not feed ourselves without fear.

(2.) He has given us a specimen of the method he takes, in dealing with those that deal with him, which is to reserve the best for the last, and therefore they must deal upon trust. The recompense of their services and sufferings is reserved for the other world; it is a glory to be revealed. The pleasures of the world are temporary, but the last one; but the pleasures of religion will be pleasures for evermore.

In the conclusion of this story, v. 11. we are told, First, That this was the beginning of miracles which Jesus did. Many miracles had been wrought concerning him at his birth and baptism, and he himself was the greatest miracle of all; but this was the first that was wrought by him. He could have wrought miracles when he disputed with the dec-
tors, but his hour was not come. He had power, but there was a time of the hiding of his power. 

Secondly. That herein he manifested his glory; hereby he proved himself to be the Son of God, and his glory to be that of the only-begotten of the Father. He also discovered the nature and end of his office; the power of a God, and the grace of a Saviour, appearing in all his miracles, and particularly in this, he manifested the glory of the long expected Messiah. 

Thirdly. That his disciples believed on him. These whom he had called, (ch. 1,) who had seen no miracle, and yet followed him, now saw this, shared in it, and had their faith strengthened by it. Note, 1. Even the faith that is true, at first is but weak. The strongest men were once babes; the weakest Christians. 2. The manifesting of the glory of Christ is the great confirmation of the faith of Christians. 

12. After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. 

13. And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 

14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 

15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables: 

16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 

17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. 

18. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou dost these things? 

19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 


22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Here we have, 

1. The short visit Christ made to Capernaum, v. 12. 

It was a large and populous city, about a day's journey from Cana; it is called his own city, (Matth. 9. 1.) because he made it his head-quarters in Galilee, and what little rest he had, was there. It was a place of concourse, and therefore Christ chose it, that the fame of his doctrine and miracles might from thence spread to the further. Observe, 

1. The company that attended him thither; his mother, his brethren, and his disciples. Wherever Christ went, (1.) He would not go alone, but would take those with him, who had put themselves under his conduct, that he might instruct them, and they might attest his miracles. (2.) He could not go alone, but they would follow him, because they liked the sweetness either of his doctrine or of his wine, ch. 6. 26. His mother, though he had lately given her to understand that in the works of his ministry he should pay no more respect to her than to any other person, yet followed him: not to interfere with him, but to learn of him. His brethren also and relations were in time weakened in their attachment to his usefulness to one place, because many needed him. And he would teach his followers to look upon themselves but as sojourners in this world; and his ministers to follow their opportunities, and so where their work led them. We do not now find Christ in the synagogues, but he privately instructed his friends, and thus entered upon his work by degrees. It is good for young ministers to acquire themselves to do public edifying discourse in private, that they may with the better preparation, and greater awe, approach their public work. He did not stay long at Capernaum, because the passover was at hand, and he must attend it at Jerusalem; for every thing is beautiful in its season. The less good must give way to the greater, and all the dwellings of Jacob must vail to the gates of Zion. 

2. The passover he kept at Jerusalem; it is the last after his baptism, and the remotest takes notice of all the passovers he kept henceforward, which were four in all, the fourth, that at which he suffered, (three years after this,) and half a year was now past since his baptism. Christ, being made under the law, observed the passover at Jerusalem; see Exod. 23. 17. Thus he taught us by his example a strict observance of divine institutions, and a diligent attendance on religious assemblies. 

He went up to Jerusalem when the passover was at hand, that he might be there with the first. It is called the Jews' passover, because it was peculiar to them; (Christ is our Passover,) and shorty God will no longer own it for his. Christ kept the passover at Jerusalem yearly, ever since he was twelve years old, in obedience to the law; but now that he is entered upon his public ministry, we may expect something more from him than before; and two things we are here told he did there. 

1. He purified the temple, v. 14—17. Observe here, 

(1.) The first place we find him in at Jerusalem, was, the temple, and it should seem, he did not make any public appearance till he came thither; for his presence and preaching there, were that glory of the latter house, which was to exceed the glory of the former, Hag. 2. 9. and was foretold. (Mal. 3. 1.) I will send my messenger, John Baptist; he never preached in the temple, but the Lord, whom we seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, suddenly after the appearing of John Baptist; so that this was the time, and the temple the place, when, and where, the Messiah was to be expected. 

(2.) The first work we find him at in the temple, was, the purging of it; for so it was foretold there, (Mal. 3. 2, 3.) to whom shall be as a Reformer to the soul of Levi. Note, It is the time of reformation, Christ came to be the great Reformer; and, according to the method of the reforming kings of Judah, he first purged out what was amiss, and that used to be passover-work too, as in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. 30. 14, 15. and Josiah's, 2 Kings 23. 4, &c. and then taught them to do well. First purge out the old leaven, and then keep the feast.
Christ's design in coming into the world, was, to reform the world; and he expects that all who come to him, should reform their hearts and lives, Gen. 3:5. And this he has taught us by purging the temple.

See here, [1.] What were the corruptions that were to be purged out. He found a market in one of the courts of the temple, that which was called the court of the Gentiles, within the mountain of that house. There, First, They sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, for sacrifice; we will suppose, not for commercial use, but for the convenience of the strangers that came out of the country, and could not bring their sacrifices in specie along with them; see Deut. 14. 24—26. This market perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda, (ch. 5. 2.) but was admitted into the temple by the chief priests, for filthy lucre; for, no doubt, the rents for standing there, and fees for searching the beasts sold there, and certifying that they were without blemish, would be a considerable revenue to them. Great corruptions in the church owe their rise to the love of money, 1 Tim. 6. 5, 10. Secondly, They changed money, for the convenience of those that were to pay a half-shelik in specie every year by way of poll, for the service of the tabernacle; (Exod. 30. 12.) and, no doubt, that was by it.

[2.] What course our Lord took to purge out those corruptions. He had seen these in the temple formerly, when he was in a private station; but never went about to drive them out till now, when he had taken upon him the public character of a Prophet. He did not complain to the chief priests, for he knew they countenanced those corruptions both of himself.

First, Drive out the sheep and the oxen, and those that sold them, out of the temple. He never used force to drive any into the temple, but only to drive those out that profaned it. He did not seize the sheep and oxen for himself, did not restrain and impound them, though he found them damage suissant—actual tresspasses upon his Father's ground: he only drove them out, and their owners with them. He made a scourge of small cords, which, probably, they had let their sheep and oxen with, and thrown them away upon the ground, hence Christ gathered them. Sinners prepare the scourges with which they themselves will be driven out from the temple of the Lord. He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders, (his punishments are of another nature,) but only to drive out the cattle; he aimed no further than at reformation, see Rom. 13. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 10. 8.

Secondly, He poured out the changers' money, *σίγνια*—the small money—the *Nummorum Familia*.

In pouring out the money, he showed his contempt of it: he threw it to the ground, to the earth, as it was. In overthrowing the tables, he showed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain. Money-changers in the temple are the *nummorum familia* of that day. Note, In reformation, it is good to make thorough work; he had thrown them all out and not only threw out the money, but, in overturning the tables, threw out the trade too.

Thirdly, He said to them that sold doves, (sacrifices for the poor.) *Take these things hence.* The doves, though they took up less room, and were a less nuisance than the oxen and sheep, yet must not be suffered; their sparrow and swallow wings were welcome, that were left in God's house, see Ps. 84. 3.) but not the doves, that were appropriated to man's profit. God's temple must not be made a pigeon-house. But see Christ's prudence in his zeal. When he drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when he poured out the money, they might gather it up again; but if he had turned the doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved; therefore to them that sold doves, he said, *Take these things hence.* Note, Discretion must always guide and govern our zeal, that we do nothing unseasonable, nor expose ourselves to the censure of others.

Fourthly, He gave them a good reason for what he did; *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.* Reason why conviction should accompany force for correction.

1. Here is a reason why they should not profane the temple; because it was the house of God, and not to be made a house of merchandise. Merchandize is a bad thing, in the exchange, but out of the temple. This was, (1.) To atone that which was dedicated to the honour of God: it was sacrilege; it was robbing God. (2.) It was to disoblige that which was solemn and awful, and to make it mean. (3.) It was to disturb and distress those services in which men sought to be most solemn, serious, and intent. It was particularly an affront to the souls of the strangers in the temple. Here is the case of the prodigal son in the parable.

2. Here is a reason why he was concerned to purge it; because it is my Father's house. And, (1.) Therefore he had authority to purge it, for he was lawful heir, and Son, over all, he had power and authority as heir, and Son, over all, he had power and authority as Son, and an unimpeachable right to rule as a King to this day. In calling God his Father, he intimates that he was the Messiah, of whom it was said, *He shall build a house for my name,* and I will be his Father, 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13. (2.) Therefore he had a zeal for the purging of it; it is my Father's house, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and him dishonoured. Note, If God be our Father in heaven, and it be therefore our desire that his house be sanctified, it cannot but be our grief to see it polluted.

Christ's purging of the temple thus may justly be reckoned among his wonderful works. *Inter omnia signa qua fact Dominus, hic mihi subturit esse mirabilia.—*Of all Christ's wonderful works, this appears to me the most wonderful. Heaven. Considering, [1.] That he did it without the assistance of his friends; probably, it had been no hard matter to have raised the mob, who had a great veneration for the temple, against these profaners of it; but Christ never countenanced any thing that was tumultuous or disorderly. There was none to uphold, but his own arm did it. [2.] That he did it without the resistance of any of his enemies, either the market-people themselves, or those that had interest in the temple, and had the *Pax Temporis*—Temple force at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justifiable; sinners' own consciences are reformers' best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, a power over the spirits of men; and in this non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled, (Mal. 1. 2, 3.) Who shall stand when he is come? Lastly, the mark which his disciples made upon it; (v. 17.) They remembered that it was written, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* They were somewhat surprised at first, to see him whom they were directed to as the *Lamb of God,* in such a heat, and him whom they believed to be the *King of Israel*; take so little state upon him as to do this himself; but one scripture came to their
thoughts, which taught them to receive this action both with the meekness of the Lamb of God, and with the honour of the King of kings; for when speaking of the Messiah, he takes notice of his zeal for God's house, as so great, that it even ate him up, it made him forget himself, Ps. 69. 9. Observe, 

(1.) The disciples came to understand the meaning of what Christ did, by remembering the scriptures; They remembered now that it was written. Note, The word of God and the works of God do naturally explain and illustrate each other. Our scriptures are expanded by their accomplishment in providence, and difficult providences are made easy by comparing them with the scriptures. See of what great use it is to the disciples of Christ, to be ready and mighty in the scriptures, and to have their memories well stored with scripture-truths, by which they will be furnished for every good work. 

(2.) The scripture they remembered was very proper; The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. David was in this a type of Christ, that he was zealous for God's house, Ps. 132. 2, 3. What he did for it, was with all his might; see 1 Chron. 29. 2. The latter part of that verse, (Ps. 69. 9.) is applied to Christ, (Rom. 15. 5.) as the former part of it here. All the graces that were to be found among the Old Testament saints, were eminently in Christ, and particularly this of zeal for the house of God, and in him were all the divine graces in spiritual types of him. Observe, [1.] Jesus Christ was zealously affected to the house of God his church, loved it, and was always jealous for its honour and welfare. 

[2.] This zeal did even eat him up; it made him humble himself, and spend himself, and expose himself. My zeal has consumed me, Ps. 119. 59. Zeal for the house of God forbids as to consult our own credit, ease, and safety, when they come in competi
tion with the honour of God's house and service, and sometimes carries in our souls in our duty so far and so fast, that our bodies cannot keep pace with them, and makes us as deaf as our Master was to those who suggested, Spare thyself. The grievances here redressed might seem but small, and such as should have been commended at; but such was Christ's zeal, that he could not bear even them that sold and bought in the temple. [St. John 2. 17.] Our Christ is re
evred zeal for the temple, as his father Jesus, Psalm 69. 9. If he had found drunkards in the temple, how much more would he have been displeased? 

2. Christ, having thus purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it, to prove his authori
ty for so doing. Observe here, 

(1.) Their demand of a sign; Then answered the Jews, that is, the multitude of the people, with their leaders. Being Jews, they should rather have stood by him, and assisted him to vindicate the honour of their temple; but, instead of that, they objected against it. Note, They who apply themselves in good earnest to the work of reformation, must expe
ct to meet with opposition. And when they could object nothing against the thing itself, they questioned his authority to do it; What sign showest thou unto us, to prove thyself authorized and com
missioned to do these things? It was indeed a good work to purge the temple, but what had lie to do to undertake it, who was in no office there? They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that he must prove himself a prophet, or, more than a prophet. But was not the thing itself sign enough? His ability to drive so many from their posts, without opposition, was a proof of his authority; he that was armed with such a divine power, was surely armed with a divine commission. What aided these buyers and sellers, that they fled, that they were driven back? Surely it was at the presence of the Lord, Ps. 114. 5, 7.) no less a presence. 

(2.) Christ's answer to this demand, v. 19. He did not immediately work a miracle to convince them, but gives them a sign in something to come, in his death and resurrection, which shall appear by the event, according to Den. 18. 21. 

Now, [1.] The sign that he gives them is, his own death and resurrection. He refers them to that which would be. First, His last sign. If they would not be convinced by what they saw and heard, let them wait. Secondly, The great sign to prove him to be the Messiah; for, concerning him it was fore
told that he should be bruised, (Isa. 53. 5.) cut off; (Dan. 9. 26.) and did he not suffer much? See Ps. 16. 10. These things were fulfilled in the blessed Jesus, and therefore, truly he was the Son of God, and had authority in the temple, his Father's house. 

[2.] He foretells his death and resurrection, not in plain terms, as he often did to his disciples, but in figurative expressions; as afterward, when he gave this for a sign, he called it the sign of the pro
phets, Is. 61. 11. In three days I will raise it up. This spoke he to them who were willingly ignorant in parables, that they might not perceive, Mat. 13. 13, 14. They that will not see, shall not see. Nay, this figurative speech used here, proved such a stumbling-block to them, that it was produced in evidence against him, at his trial, to prove him a blasphemer, Mat. 26. 69, 61. Had they humbly asked him the meaning of it, he would have told them, and it had been a savour of life unto life to them, and they were resolved to cavil, and it proved a savour of death unto death. They that would not be convinced, were hardened, and the manner of the expres
sion of this prediction occasioned the accomplish
ment of the prediction itself. 

First, He foretells his death by the Jews' malice, in these words, Destroy ye this temple; that is, Ye have built the temple, and now I will destroy it. Note, Christ, even at the beginning of his ministry, had a clear foresight of all his sufferings at the end of it, and yet went on cheerfully in it. It is good, at setting out, to expect the worst. 

Secondly, He foretells his resurrection by his own power; In three days I will raise it up. There were others that were raised, but Christ raised himself resumed his own life. How does he express this by destroying and re-building the temple? Because he was now to justify himself in purging the temple, which they had profaned; as if he had said, You that defile one temple, will destroy another; and I will prove my authority to purge what you have defile, by raising what you will destroy. The profaning of the temple is the destroying of it, and its reformation its resurrection. 2. Because the death of Christ was indeed the destruction of the Jewish temple, the procuring cause of it; and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel-church, Zech. 6. 12. The ruins of their place and nation (ch. 11. 48.) were the riches of the world. See 

Ames 9. 11, Acts 15. 16. } 

(5.) Their cavil at this answer; (v. 20.) Forty 
and six years was this temple in building. Temple
work was always slow work, and canst thou make such quick work of it? Now here, [3.] They show some knowledge; they could tell how long the temple was in building. Dr. Lightfoot computes that it was just 46 years from the founding of Zerubbel
el's temple, in the second year of Cyrus, to the complete settlement of the temple-service, in the 32d year of Artaxerxes; and also, that from Herod's beginning to build this temple, in the 15th year of his reign, to this very time, when the Jews said that this was just 46 years; Forty and six years did the temple 
—both this temple been built. [2.] They show more ignorance, First, Of the meaning of Christ's words. Note, Men often run into gross mistakes by under
standing that literally which the scripture speaks
nugatively. What abundance of mischief has been
done by interpreting, This is my body, after a cor-
poral and carnal manner! Secondly, Of the al-
mighty power of Christ, as if he could do no more
than another man. Had they known that this was
he who built all things in six days, they would not
have made it such an absurdity, that he should build
a temple in three days. So the weakness of Christ’s answer from their
civil. The difficulty is soon solved by explaining the terms: He spake of the temple of his body, v. 21.
Though Christ had discovered a great respect for
the temple, in purging it, yet he will have us
know that the holiness of it, which he was so jealous
for, was but tropical, and leads us to the considera-
tion of another temple, which that was but a shadow
Some think, when he said, Destroy this tem-
ple, he pointed to his own body, or laid his hand
upon it; however, it is certain that he spake of the
temple of his body. Note, The body of Christ is
the true temple, of which that at Jerusalem was a type.
[1.] Like the temple, it was built by immediate divi-
sion direction; "A body hast thou prepared me," 1 Chron. 29: 19. [2.] Like the temple, it was a holy
habitation for God, and had within it, the image of
the temple: the habitation of God’s glory; there
the eternal Word dwelt, the true Shechinah. He is Emmanuel—God with us. [3.] The temple
was the place and medium of intercourse between
God and Israel; there God revealed himself to
them, they presented themselves and their
services to him. Thus by Christ God speaks to us,
and we speak to him. Worshipers looked toward
that house, 1 Kings 8: 50. 33. So we must worship
God with an eye to Christ.
(5.) A reflection which the disciples made upon
this, long after, inserted here, to illustrate the story;
(v. 22.) When he was risen from the dead, some
years after, his disciples remembered that he had said
this. We found them, v. 17, remembering what had
been written before him, and here remembering
what they had heard from him. Note, The mem-
ories of Christ’s disciples should be like the treasure
of the good householder, furnished with things both
new and old, Matt. 13: 52. Now observe,
[1.] When they remembered that saving; when
he was risen from the dead. It seems, they did not
at this time fully understand Christ’s meaning, for
they were as yet but babes in knowledge; but they
laid it in their hearts, and afterward it became
both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to hear
for time to come, Isa. 42: 23. The juniors in years
and profession should treasure up those truths which
at present they do not well understand either the
meaning or use of, for they will be serviceable to
them hereafter, when they come to greater profi-
ciency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras,
that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they
were melted in their hearts, and afterward it became
both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to hear
for time to come, Isa. 42: 23. The juniors in years
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ciency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras,
that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they
were melted in their hearts, and afterward it became
both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to hear
for time to come, Isa. 42: 23. The juniors in years
government, if Christ would have committed himself to them, and put himself at the head of them; but he would not, for his kingdom is not of this world. We should be shy of turbulent, unjust persons, for our Master here was, though they profess to believe in Christ as these did.

IV. That the reason why he did not commit himself to them, was, because he knew them, (v. 25.) he knew the wickedness of some, and the weakness of others. The evangelist takes this occasion to assert Christ's omniscience.

1. He knew all men, not only their names and faces, but he was capable of knowing all the defects and excellencies of them. It is possible for us to know many, but their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, so as we do not know any man, sincerely ourselves. He knows all men, for his powerful hand made them all, his piercing eye sees them all, and sees into them. He knows his subtle enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends, and their true characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be.

2. He knew what was in man; in particular persons, in their nature and race of man. We know what is done by men, Christ knows what is in them, the heart and the reins. This is the prerogative of that essential, eternal Word, Heb. 4. 12, 13. We invade his prerogative, if we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the Saviour of men, very fit to be the Physician, who has such a perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper; knows what is in him? How fit also to be the Judge of all? For the judgment of him who knows men, all men, must needs be according to truth.

Now this is all the success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, in this journey. The Lord comes to his temple, and none come to him, but a parcel of weak, simple people, that he can neither have credit from, nor put confidence in; yet he shall at length score of the travail of his soul.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter, we have, I. Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, concerning the great mysteries of the gospel, which he bore privately to him, v. 1, 21. II. John Baptist's discourse with his disciples concerning Christ, upon occasion of his coming into the neighbourhood where he was, (v. 23, 24,) in which he fairly and fully resigns all his honour and interest to him.

1. THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? 13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven. 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. 19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved: 21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

We found, in the close of the foregoing chapter, that few were brought to Christ at Jerusalem; yet here was one, a considerable one; it is worth while to go a great way for the salvation thereof, out of one soul. Observe,

1. Who this Nicodemus was. Not many mighty and noble are called; yet some are, and here was one. Not many of the rulers, or of the Pharisees; yet 1. This was a man of the Pharisees, bred to learning, a scholar. Let it not be said that all Christ's followers are unlearned and ignorant men. The principles of the Pharisees and the peculiar
ties of their sect, were directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity; yet there were some in whom even those high thoughts were cast down, and brought into obedience to Christ. The grace of Christ is able to subdue the greatest opposition. 2. He was a ruler of the Jews, a member of the great sanhedrin, a senator, a privy-councillor, a man of authority in Jerusalem. Bad as things were, there were some rulers well inclined, who yet could do little good, because the stream was so strong against them; they were ruled by the majority, and yoked with those that were corrupt, so that the good work of God would do, they could not do; yet Nicodemus continued in this place, and did what he could, when he could not do what he would.

II. Is solemn address to our Lord Jesus Christ, v. 2. See here, 1. When he came; He came to Jesus by night. Occupied his station in life, and was acquainted with the lowest of the people, and the world of wickedness. He made a private and particular address to Christ, and did not think it enough to hear his public discourses. He resolved to talk with him by himself, where he might be free with him. Personal converse with skilful, faithful ministers about the affairs of our souls, would be of great use to us, Mat. 2. 7.

(2.) He made his address by night, which must be considered, either, [1.] As an act of prudence and discretion. Christ was engaged all day in public work, and he would not interrupt him then, nor expect his attendance then, but observed Christ's hour, and waited on him when he was at leisure. Note, Private advantages to ourselves and our own families, must give way to those that are public and of more general use. The greater good must be preferred before the less. Christ had many enemies in the Pharisees and rulers. Yet to Nicodemus he showed some delicacy, he gave him, lest, if the chief priests had known it, they should have been the more enraged against Christ. [2.] As an act of zeal and forwardness. Nicodemus was a man of business, and could not spare time all day to make Christ a visit, and therefore he would rather take time from the diversions of the evening, or the rest of the night, than not converse with Christ. When others were sleeping, he was getting knowledge, as David by meditation, Ps. 1. 1-2, 6, and 119. 148. Probably, it was the very next night after he saw Christ's miracles, and he would not slip the first opportunity of pursuing his convictions. He knew not how soon Christ might leave the town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another feast, and therefore would lose no time. In the night, his converse with Christ would be more free, and less liable to disturbance. These are Noctes Christianæ.—Christian nights; much more instructive than the Noctes Atticæ.—Attic nights. Or, [3.] As an act of fear and cowardice. He was afraid, or ashamed, to be seen with Christ, and therefore came in the night. When religion is out of fashion, there are many Nicodemites, especially among the rulers, who have a better affec tion to Christ than is used to be observable in the power of Christ. But observe, First, Though he came by night, Christ bid him welcome, accepted his integrity, and pardoned his infirmity; he considered his tender, which perhaps was timorous, and the temptation he was in from his place and office; and hereby taught his ministers to become all to all men, and to encourage good beginnings, though they are weak. Paul fenced them warsly to them of reputation, Gal. 2. 3. Secondly, Though now he came by night, yet afterward, when there was occasion, he owned Christ publicly, ch. 7. 50.—19. 39. The grace which is at first but a grain of mustard-seed, may grow to be a great tree.

2. What he said. He did not come to talk with Christ about politics and state-affairs, (though he was a ruler,) but about the concern of his own soul and its salvation, and, without circumlocutions, comes presently to the business; he calls Christ Rabbi, which signifies a great Man; see Isa. 19. 23. He shall send them a Saviour, and a Rabbi; so the word is. There are hopes of those who have a respect for Christ, and think and speak honourably of him. He tells Christ how far he had attained; we know that thou art a Teacher. Observe,

(1.) His assertion concerning Christ; Thou art a Teacher. Are you so? Teacher; he conceives, there is great inspiration and divine authority. He that was to be the sovereign Ruler, came first to be a Teacher; for he would rule with reason, not with rigour, by the power of truth, not of the sword. The world lay in ignorance and mistake; the Jewish teachers were corrupt, and caused them to err; it is time for the Lord to work. He came a Teacher from God, as the Father of mercies, in pity to a dark, deceived world; from God as the Father of lights, and Fountain of truth; all the light and truth which we may venture our souls upon.

(2.) His assurance of it; We know, not only I, but others; so he took it for granted, the thing being so plain and self-evident. Perhaps he knew that there were divers of the Pharisees and rulers with whom he had talked, and who were become his disciples, but not the grace to own it. Or, we may suppose that he speaks in the plural number, (We know,) because he brought with him one or more of his friends and pupils, to receive instructions from Christ, knowing them to be of common concern. *Mastcr,* saith he, we come with a desire to be taught by thy scholars, for we are fully satisfied that they are educated in the same school, and have the same master. (3.) The ground of this assurance; No man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him. Here, [1.] We are assured of the truth of Christ's miracles, and that they were not counterfeit. Here was Nicodemus, a judicious, sensible, inquisitive man, one that had all the reason and opportunity imaginable to examine them, and was fully satisfied that they were real miracles, that he was taught among by them to go contrary to his interest, and the stream of those of his own rank who were prejudiced against Christ.

[2.] We are directed what inference to draw from Christ's miracles; Therefore we are to receive him as a Teacher come from God. His miracles were his credentials. The course of nature could not be altered but by the power of the God of nature, who, we are sure, is the God of truth and goodness, and would never set his seal to a lie or a cheat.

[3.] The discourse between Christ and Nicodemus hereupon, or, rather, the sermon Christ preached to them; the contents of it, and that perhaps an abstract of Christ's public preaching; see v. 11, 12. Four things our Saviour here discourses of.

1. Concerning the necessity and nature of reformation and the new birth, v. 3—8.

Now we must consider this, 1. As pertinently answered to Nicodemus's address. Jesus answered, v. 3. This answer was either, [1.] A rebuke of what he saw defective in the address of Nicodemus. It was not enough for him to admire Christ's miracles, and acknowledge his mission; it was plain that he expected the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of the Messiah, now shortly to appear; he is betimes aware of the dawning of that day; and, according to the common notion of the Jews, he expects it to appear in external pomp and power; he doubts not but this Jesus who works these miracles, is either the Messiah, or his Prophet, and
therefore makes his court to am, complaints him, and so hopes to secure a share to himself of the advantages of that kingdom. But Christ tells him that he can have no benefit by that change of the state, unless there be a change of the Spirit, of the principles and dispositions, equivalent to a new birth. Nicodemus came by night; "But this will not do," saith Christ. His religion must be owned before men; » Dr. Hammond. Or, (2.) A reply to what he saw designed in his address. When Nicodemus owned Christ a Teacher come from God, one intrusted with an extraordinary revelation from heaven, he plainly intimated a desire to know what it was, and a readiness to receive it; and Christ gives it him.

2. We may consider this as positively and vehemently asserted by our Lord Jesus; Verily, verily, I say unto thee, I, the Amen, the Amen, say it; so it may be read, "I the faithful and true Witness." The matter is settled irreversibly, that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. "I say it to thee, though a Pharisee, though a master in Israel." Observe,

(1.) What it is that is required; to be born again; that is, [1.] We must live a new life. Birth is the beginning of life, and the end of the old, as those that have hitherto lived either much amiss, or to little purpose. We must not think to patch up the old building, but begin from the foundation.

[2.] We must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims. We must be born anew, which signifies both denuevo—again, and de novo—
from above. First, We must be born anew; so the word is taken, Gv. 4. 9, and ab initio—
from beginning, Luke 1. 3. By our first birth we were corrupt, shaped in sin and iniquity; we must therefore undergo a second birth, our souls must be fashioned and enlivened anew. Secondly, We must be born from above, (so the word is used by the evangelist, ch. 3. 31—19. 11.) and I take it to be especially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be born from above, supposes being born again. But this new birth has its rise from heaven, (ch. 1. 13.) and its tendency to heaven; it is to be born to a divine and heavenly life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and, in order to this, it is to partake of a divine nature, and bear the image of the heavenly.

(2.) The indispensable necessity of this; "Except a man (any one that partakes of the human nature, and, consequently, of the corruptions of that, except he be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; the kingdom of the Messiah begin in grace, and perfected in glory." Except we be born from above, we cannot see this. That is, [1.] We cannot understand the nature of it. Such is the nature of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (in which Nicodemus desired to be instructed,) that the soul must be new-modelled and moulded; the soul that is of the Spirit of Christ, and before he is capable of receiving and understanding them, 1 Cor. 2. 14. [2.] We cannot receive the comfort of it; cannot expect any benefit by Christ and his gospel, absolutely necessary to our happiness here and hereafter. Considering what we are by nature, how corrupt and sinful; what God is, in whom alone we can be happy, and what heaven is, to which the perfection of our happiness is reserved; it is not possible to partake of the nature of the things, that we must be born again; because it is impossible that we should be happy, if we be not holy; see 2 Cor. 6. 11, 12.

This great truth of the necessity of regeneration being thus solemnly laid down,

First, It is objected against by Nicodemus, (v. 4.) How can a man be born when he is old, old as I am; yea, &c.—being an old man? Can he enter the second

2. To expound and clear what he had said concerning regeneration; for the explication of which he further shows,

(1.) The Author of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again is to be born of the Spirit. It is done by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 1. 2. And the Spirit is the deposits of God's wisdom and power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace. It is the sanctification of the Spirit, (1 Pet. 1. 2.) and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5. The word he works by, is his inspiration, and the heart to be wrought on, he has access to.

(2.) The nature of this change; and what that is which is wrought; it is spiritus. This is a new birth, a new birth, and refined from the dross and dregs of sensuality. The dictates and interests of the rational and immortal soul have reversed the way they ought to have over the flesh. The Pharisees placed their religion in external purity, and external performances; and it would be a mighty change indeed with them, no less than a new birth, to become spiritual.

(3.) The necessity of this change.
ST. JOHN, III.

[1.] Christ here shows that it is necessary in the nature of the thing, for we are not fit to enter into the kingdom of God till we be born again; (v. 6.) That which is born of the flesh, is flesh. Here is our malady, and the causes of it, which are such as prove to us that there is no remedy but we must be born again.

First, We are here told what we are; we are flesh, not only corporeal, but corrupt. Gen. 6. 3. The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the will of the flesh, so in love with the delights of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is justly called flesh; it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God, who is a Spirit, and a soul in this condition?

Secondly, How we came to be so; by being born in the bone with us, and therefore we cannot have a new nature, but we must be born again. The corrupt nature, which is flesh, takes rise from our first birth; and therefore the new nature, which is Spirit, must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spake of entering again into his mother's womb, and being born; but, if he could do so, to what purpose? If he were born of his mother a hundred times, that would not mend the matter, for still that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; a clean thing cannot be put upon an unclean; so, cannot one original, another original, must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The case is, in short, this; though man is made to consist of body and soul, yet his spiritual part had then so much the dominion over his corporeal part that he was denominated a living soul; (Gen. 2. 7.) but by indulging the appetite of the flesh, in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted that dominion of the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a man, but a beast; Dust thou art. The living soul became dead and inactive; thus in the day he sinned, he surely died, and so he became earthly. In this degenerate state, he begat a son in his own likeness, he transmitted the human nature, which had been entirely deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and deprived; and in the same plight it is still propagated. Corrupt nature begets corrupt nature, which is shaped in vanity, which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat, or a new face, but we must put on the new man, we must be new creatures.

[2.] Christ makes it farther necessary, by his own word; (v. 7.) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. First, Christ hath said it, and as he himself never died, nor ever will, ansa it, so all the world cannot gainsay it; that we must be born again. He who is the great Lawyer, whose will is a law; he who is the great Mediator of the new covenant, and has full power to settle the terms of our reconciliation to God and happiness in him; he who is the great Physician of souls, knows their case, and what is necessary to their cure; he hath said, Ye must be born again. Second, We are not to marvel at it; for, when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the great design of our redemption, the depravity of our nature, and the destruction of our happiness which is laid upon this as the one thing needful, that we must be born again.

(4.) This change is illustrated by two comparisions.

[1.] The regenerating work of the Spirit is compared to water; v. 5. To be born again is to be born of water, and of the Spirit, that is, of the Spirit working like water; (as Matth. 3. 11.) with the Holy Ghost and with fire, means, with the Holy Ghost as with fire.

First, That which is primarily intended here, is to show that the Spirit, in sanctifying a soul, 1. Cleanses and purifies it as water; takes away its filth, by which it was unfit for the kingdom of God. It is the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3. 5. Ye are washed, 1 Cor. 6. 11. See Ezek. 36. 25. 2. Cools and refreshes it, as water doth the heated hart and the weary traveller. The Spirit is compared to water, Isa. 44. 3. ch. 7. 38. 59. In the first creation, the fruits of the heavens were born of water, (Gen. 1. 20.) in allusion to which, perhaps, they that are born from above, are born of water.

Secondly, It is probable that Christ had an eye to the ordinance of baptism, which John had used, and as he himself had begun to use. You must be born again of the Spirit, which regeneration by the Spirit should be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of that spiritual grace: not that all they, and they only, that are baptized, are saved; but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the protected, privileged subjects of the kingdom of heaven. The Jews cannot partake of the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom they had so long promised, must be washed in the water of regeneration, Tit. 3, 5. In being justified by the works of the law, and submit to the baptism of repentance, the great gospel-duty, for the remission of sins, the great gospel-privilege.

[2.] It is compared to wind; (v. 8.) The wind bloweth where it listeth, so every man that is born of the Spirit. The same word (epeueo) signifies both the wind and the Spirit. The Spirit upon an obedient and receptive soul, is as the wind upon the waters. 2. His strong influence on the hearts of sinners are compared to the breathing of the wind, (Ezek. 37. 9.) and his sweet influences on the souls of saints, to the north and south wind, Cant. 4. 16. This comparison is here used to show,

First, That the Spirit, in regeneration, works arbitrarily, and as a free Agent. The wind bloweth where it listeth, just as the Spirit worketh. Or, as in the next clause, God directs it, it fulfilleth his word, Ps. 148. 8. The Spirit dispenses his influences where and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree, he pleases; dividing to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. 12. 11.

Secondly, That he works powerfully, and with evident effects; Thou hearst the sound thereof, though its causes are hidden, its effects are manifest. When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burden of corruption, to breath after Christ, to cry Aber—Father, then we hear the sound of the Spirit; we find he is at work, as Acts 9. 11. Behold, he prayeth.

Thirdly, That he works mysteriously, and in secret, hidden ways: Thou canst not tell whence it comes, or what manner of spirit it is. He whom Nicodemus, how great his strength, is a riddle to us; so the manner and methods of the Spirit's working are a mystery.

[3.] What is the way to work? 2 Kings 22. 24. See Exq. 11. 5. and compare it with Ps. 139. 14. 11. Here is a discourse concerning the certainty and sublimity of gospel-truths, which Christ takes occasion for from the weakness of Nicodemus.

Here is, 1. The objection which Nicodemus still made, and before which those things be? Christ's explanation of the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration, it should seem, made it never the clearer to him. The corruption of nature, which makes it necessary, and the way of the Spirit, which makes it practicable, are as much mysteries to him as the thing itself; though he had in general owned Christ a divine Teacher, yet he was unwilling to receive
his teachings, when they did not agree with the notions he had imbibed. Thus many profess to admit the doctrine of Christ in general, and yet will neither believe the truths of Christianity, nor submit to the laws of it, further than they please. Christ shall be their Teacher, provided they may choose their lesson. Now here,

(1.) Nicodemus himself ignorant of Christ's meaning, after all; "How can these things be? They are things I do not understand, my capacity will not reach them." Thus the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man. He is not only estranged from them, and therefore are they foolishness; but prejudiced against them, and therefore are foolishness to him. 

(2.) That the reproof which Christ gave him for his doubt and unbelief on this subject was a master in Israel. Addressed to a teacher, a tutor, one who sits in Moses' chair, and yet not only unacquainted with the doctrine of regeneration, but incapable of understanding it. This word is a reproof, (1.) To those that undertake to teach others, and yet are ignorant and unskilful in the word of righteousness themselves. (2.) To those that spend their time in hearing and teaching notions and ceremonies in religion, niceties and learning of things which are not necessary to the knowledge, which is practical, and tends to reform the heart and life. Two words in the reproof are very emphatical. [1.] The place where his lot was cast; in Israel, where there was such great plenty of the means of knowledge, where divine revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Testament. [2.] The things he was thus ignorant in; these necessary things, these great things, these divine things; had he never read Ps. 50, 5. Ezek. 18. 13. 36. 25, 26.

3. Christ's discourse, hereupon, of the certainty and sublimity of gospel-truths; (v. 11-13.) To show the folly of those who make strange of these things, and to recommend them to our search. Observe here,

(1.) That the truths Christ taught, were very certain, and what we may venture upon; (v. 11.) We speak that we do know, we, whom does he mean beside himself? Some understand it of those that bore witness to him, and with him, on earth, the prophets and John Baptist; they spake what they knew, and had seen, and were themselves abundantly satisfied in; divine revelation carries its own proof along with it. Others, of those that bore witness from heaven, the Church and the Holy Ghost; the Father was with him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; therefore he speaks in the plural number, as ch. 14. 23. We will come unto him. Observe. [1.] That the truths of Christ are of undoubted certainty. We have all the reason in the world to be assured, that the sayings of Christ are faithful sayings, and such as we may venture our souls upon, as he himself and the Holy Witness, who would not go about to deceive us, but carefully with the devout Witnes, who could not himself be deceived; We testify that we have seen. He spake not upon hearsay, but upon the clearest evidence, and therefore with the greatest assurance. What he spake of God, of the invisible world, of heaven and hell, of the divine will concerning us, and the counsels of peace, was what he knew and had seen, for he was by himself, as one brought up with him, Prov. 8, 30. Whatever Christ spake, he spake of his own knowledge. [2.] That the unbelief of sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible certainty of the truths of Christ. The things are thus sure, thus clear, and yet we receive not our witness. Multitudes to be unbelivers of that, which yet (sergeants are the motives of credulity) they cannot disbelieve.

(2.) The truths Christ taught, though communicated in language and expression borrowed from the common and vulgar, were yet sublime and heavenly; this is intimated, v. 12. "If I have told them earthly things, have told them the great things of God, in similitudes taken from earthly things, to make them the more easy and intelligible, as that of the new birth and the wind, if I have thus accommodated myself to your capacities, and spake to you in your own language, and you cannot understand me, and what will you do?" Thus the things of the gospel are heavenly, things, out of the reach of the inquiries of human reason, and much more out of the reach of its discoveries. [2.] To acknowledge with thankfulness the condensation of Christ, that he is pleased to suit the manner of the gospel-revelation to our capacities; to speak to us in children. He considers our frame, that we are of the earth, and our place, as we are creatures of this lower order, us earthly things, and makes things sensible the vehicle of things spiritual, to make them the more easy and familiar to us. Thus he has done both in parables and in sacraments. [3.] To lament the corruption of our nature, and our great unaptness to receive and entertain the truths of Christ. Earthly things are despised because they are vulgar, and heavenly things because they are abstruse; and whatever method is taken, Still some fault or other is found with it; (Matt. 11. 17.) But Wisdom is, and will be, justified of her children, notwithstanding.

(3.) Our Lord Jesus, and he alone, was fit to reveal to us a doctrine thus certain, thus sublime; (v. 13.) No man besides hath ascended up into heaven.

[1.] None but Jesus Christ was able to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation. Nicodemus addressed Christ as a Prophet; but he must know that he is greater than all the Old-Testament prophets, for none of them had ascended into heaven. They wrote by divine inspiration, but we of our own knowledge; see ch. 1. 18. Moses ascended into the mount, but not into heaven. No man hath attained to the certain knowledge of God and heavenly things so as Christ hath; see Matt. 11. 27. It is not for us to send to heaven for instructions, we must wait to receive what instructions Heaven will send to us; see Prov. 30. 4. Deut. 30. 12.

[2.] Jesus Christ is able, and fit, and every way qualified, to reveal the will of God to us; for it is the that came down from heaven, and is in heaven. He had said, (v. 12.) How shall we believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? He adds, that he gives an instance of those heavenly things which he could tell them of, when he tells them of one that came down from heaven, and yet is the Son of Man; is the Son of man, and yet is in heaven. If the regeneration of the soul of man was such a mystery, what then is the incarnation of the Son of God? These are divine and heavenly things, in which we have here an intimation of Christ's human nature, in that he became down from heaven; his human nature, in that he is the Son of man; and that union of these two,
in that, while he is the Son of man, yet he is in heaven. Secondly, He gives them a proof of his ability to speak to them heavenly things, and to lead them into the arcanum of the kingdom of heaven, by telling them,

1. That he came down from heaven. The intercourse settled between God and man, began after; this information towards, it did not arise from this earth, but came down from heaven. We love him, and send to him, because he first loved us, and sent to us. Now this speaks, (1.) Christ's divine nature. He that came down from heaven, is certainly more than a mere Man; he is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. 15. 47. (2.) His intimate acquaintance with the divine counsels; for, coming from the court of heaven, he speaks to eternity conversant with them. (3.) It speaks God manifest. Under the Old Testament God's favours to his people are expressed by his hearing from heaven, (2 Chron. 7. 14.) looking from heaven, (Ps. 80. 14.) speaking from heaven, ( Neh. 9. 13.) sending from heaven, Ps. 57. 3. But the New Testament shows us God coming down from heaven, to teach and save us. That he, thus descended from heaven, for God's glory cannot change places, nor did he bring his body from heaven; but that he thus condescended for our redemption, is a more admirable mercy; herein he commended his love.

2. That he is the Son of man, that Son of man spoken of by Daniel, (7. 13.) by which the Jews always understand to be meant the Messiah. Christ, in calling himself the Son of man, shows that he is the Son of Man, he is the Son of man by his divine nature, was now every where present, and particularly in heaven. Thus the Lord of glory, as such, could not be crucified, nor could God as such shed his blood; yet that person who was the Lord of glory, was crucified, (1 Cor. 2. 8.) and God purchased the church with his own blood, Acts 20. 28. So close is the union of the two natures in one person, that there is a communication of power, and glory, between them, but not of life; thus, God is the Lord of glory. And that he is in heaven is the habitation of his holiness.

III. Christ here discourses of the great design of his own coming into the world, and the happiness of those that believe in him, v. 14–18. Here we have the very narrow and quintessence of the whole gospel; that faithful saying, (1 Tim. 1. 15.) that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those that were lost, and to recover them to life. Now sinners are dead men, upon a twofold account, 1. As one that is mortally wounded, or sick of an incurable disease, is said to be a dead man, for he is dying; and so Christ came to save us, by healing us, as the bruised serpent healed the Israelites, v. 14. 2. As one that is justly condemned to die for an unpardonable crime, is a dead man; he is dead in a very real sense, to the confusion of the enemies of Christ, he came to save as a Prince or Judge, publishing an act of indemnity, or general pardon, under certain provisions; this saving here is opposed to condemning, v. 16–18.

(1.) Jesus Christ came to save us by healing us, as the children of Israel that were slain with fiery serpents, were cured and lived by looking up to the brazen serpent; we have the story of it, Num. 21. 6–9. It was the last miracle that passed through the hands of Moses before his death.

Now in this type of Christ we may observe,

[1.] The deadly and destructive nature of sin, which is implied here. The guilt of sin is like the pain of the biting of a fiery serpent; the power of corruption is like the venom diffused thereby. The devil is the old serpent, subtle at first, (Gen. 3. 1.) ever since, fiery, and fiery serpents are described to give us a picture. He assails terrified minds, and by the power of his words, stings the conscience, and when he awakens consciences, asks damned sinners, and they will tell you, how harming soever the allurements of sin are, at the last it bites like a serpent, Prov. 23. 30–32. God's wrath against us for sin is a those fiery serpents which God sent among the people, to punish them for their murmuring. The serpents that were used are as fiery serpents, so are all the tokens of divine wrath added to them. For, whenever Christ is coming, as a Judge, and as a mediator, he, in a way, is attended with those fiery serpents which we have described above.

[2.] The powerful remedy provided against this fatal malady. The case of poor sinners is deplorable; but is it desperate? Thanks be to God, it is not; there is balm in Gilead. The Son of man is lifted up, as the serpent of brass was by Moses, which cured the stung Israelites. First, it was a serpent of brass, that cured them. Brass is bright; it is a name of Christ, and in the type of Christ to be lifted up, is bright. Second, it was made in the shape of a fiery serpent, and yet had no poison, no sting; fifty representing Christ, who was made Sin for us, and yet knew no sin; was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and yet not sinful; as harmless as a serpent of brass. The serpent was a cursed creature, Christ was made a Curse. That which was evil, and abhorred, and condemned, is mingled with him. The Son of man is set before us most fiery and formidable. Secondly, It was Lifted up upon a pole, and so must the Son of man be lifted up; thus it behoved him, Luke 24. 26, 46. No remedy now. Christ is lifted up. 1. In his crucifixion; he was lifted up upon the cross. His death is called his being lifted up, ch. 12. 32, 33. He was lifted up as a Spectacle, as a Mark; lifted up between heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy, or rather, and abominated by all. 2. In his exaltation: he was lifted up to the Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission; he was lifted up to the cross, to be further lifted up to the crown. 3. In the publishing and preaching of his everlasting gospel, Rev. 41. 6. The serpent was lifted up, that all the thousands of Israel might see it. Christ in the gospel is exhibited to us, evidently for this: that sin is often an indifferent, Isa. 14. 19. Thirdly, It was lifted up by Moses. Christ was made under the law of Moses, and Moses testified of him. Fourthly, Being thus lifted up, it was appointed for the curse of those that were bitten by fiery serpents; he that sent the plague provided the remedy; none could redeem and save us but he whose justice had condemned us. It was God himself that found the ransom, and the effect of it dependeth upon his victory, the first serpents were sent to punish them for their tempting Christ; (so the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 10. 9.) and yet they were healed by virtue derived from him. He whom we have offended, is our Peace.

[3.] The way of applying this remedy, and that is by believing; which plainly alludes to the Israelites looking up to the brazen serpent, in order to their deliverance, and by it. Faith is that, as it were so little sensible of his pain and peril, or had so little confidence in the word of Moses, as not to look up to the brazen serpent, justly did he die of his wound; but every one that looked up to it, did well, Num. 21. 9. If any so far slight either their disease by sin, or the method of cure by Christ, as not to embrace Christ upon his own terms, their blood is upon their own head. He hath said, Look, and be saved, (Isa. 45. 22.) look, and live. We who have a complacency in, and give consent to, the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken of saving a guilty
world, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the great Sacrifice and Intercessor.

[14.] The great encouragements given us by faith to look up to him. First, It was for this end that he was lifted up, that his followers might be saved; and he will pursue his end. Secondly, The offer that is made of salvation by him, is general, that whosoever believes in him, without exception, might have benefit by him. Thirdly, The salvation offered is complete. 1. That he is purchased, shall not fail of making them happy, etc. And therefore they very much desire to be united to him, but that is not all. 2. They shall have eternal life. They shall not only not die of their wounds in the wilderness, but they shall return. (16.) Therefore, they were then ready to enter into, they shall enjoy the promised rest.

(2.) Jesus Christ came to save us by a pardoning law, that we might not die by the sentence of the law, v. 16. 17. Here is gospel indeed, good news, the best that ever came from heaven to earth. Here is much, here is all in a little; the word of reconciliation in miniature.

[1.] Here is God's love, in giving his Son for the world, (v. 16.) where we have three things:

First, The great gospel-mystery revealed: God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son. Secondly, The means appointed by the Spirit, and our reconciliation by the Spirit, and our reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. This magnifies his love in giving him for us, in giving him to us; now know we that he loves us, when he has given his only-begotten Son for us, which speaks not only his dignity in himself, but his dearness to his Father; he was always his delight. 2. In order to the redemption and salvation of man, it pleased God to give his only-begotten Son. He not only gave him, sent him into the world with full and ample power to negotiate a peace between heaven and earth, but he gave him, he gave him up to suffer and die for us, as the great Propitiation or expiatory Sacrifice. It comes in here as a reason why he must be lifted up; for so it was determined and designed by the Father, who gave him for this purpose, and prepared him a body in order to his taking of sin. So it was the condition of his Father had not given him. Though he was not yet crucified, yet in the determine counsel of God he was given up. Acts 2. 23. Navy further, God has given him, that is, he has made an offer of him, to all, and given him, to all true believers, to all the intents and purposes of the new covenant. He has given him to be our Prophet, a Witness to the people; the High-Priest of our profession; to be our Peace; to be the Head of the church. He has given him to head over all things to the church; to be to us all we need. 3. Herein God has commanded his love to the world; God so loved the world; so really, so richly. Now his creatures shall see that he loves them, and wishes them well. He so loved the world of fallen man, as he did not love that of fallen angels; see Rom. 5. 8. 1 John 4. 10. Behold, and wonder, that the great God should love such a worthless world! That the holy God should love such a wicked world with a love of good will, when he could not look upon it with any complacency! This was a time of love indeed, Ezek. 16. 6. 8. The Jews vainly conceived that the Messiah should be sent only in love to their nation, and to advance that upon the ruins of their neighbours; but Christ tells them that he came in love to the whole world. Gentiles as well as Jews, 1 John 2. 2. Though many of the old covenant of God's covenants, his only-begotten Son was an instance of his love to the whole world, because through him there is a general offer of life and salvation made to all. It is love to the revolting, rebellious province, to issue our proclamation of pardon and indemnity to all that will come in, place it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So far God loved the people of this apostate, perjured world, that he sent his Son with this fair proposal, that whosoever believed in him, one or other, shall not perish. Salvation has been of the Jews, but now Christ is known as Salvation to the ends of the earth, a common Salvation.

Secondly, Here is the great gospel-duty, and that is believe in Jesus Christ, whom God hath thus given, given to us, given to us, to accept the gift, and answer the intention of the Giver. We must yield an unfeigned assent and consent to the record God hath given in his word concerning his Son, God having given him to us to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, we must give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved, by him.

Thirdly, Here is the great gospel-benefit. That whosoever believes in Christ, shall not perish. This he had said before, and here he repeats it. It is the unpeakable happiness of all true believers, which they are eternally indebted to Christ for, 1. That they are saved from the miseries of hell, delivered from going down to the pit, they shall not perish. God has taken away their sin, they shall not die; a pardon is purchased, and so the attendant is reversed. 2. They are entitled to the joys of heaven; they have built a city of refuge here below. The convicted traitor is not only pardoned, but consecrated to be a favourite, and treated as one whom the King of kings delights to honour. Out of person he cometh to reign, Ecles. 4. 14. If believers, then children; and if children, then heirs.

[2.] Here is God's design in sending his Son into the world; it was, that the world through him might be saved. He came into the world with salvation in his Saviour; he came into the world with a Law of life, and Salvation. Therefore the aforementioned offer of life and salvation is sincere, and shall be made good to all that by faith accept it; (v. 17.) God sent his Son into the world, this guilty, rebellious, apostate world; sent him as his Agent or Ambassador; not as sometimes he had sent angels into the world, as visitants, but as resident. Ever since man sinned, he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being a bearer of guilt, and looking for judgment. It is well said, Acts 13. 47. If therefore the Son of God himself come, we are concerned to inquire on what errand he comes; Is it peace? Or, as they asked Samuel trembling, Cometh thou to plead? And this scripture returns the answer, Peaceably.

First, He did not come to condemn the world. We had reason enough to expect that he should, for it is a guilty world; it is corrupt, it. What cause can be shown why judgment should not be given, and execution awarded, according to law? That one blood of which all nations of men are made, (Acts 17. 26.) is not only tainted with a hereditary disease, like Gehazi's leprosy, but it is tainted with a hereditary guilt, like that of the Amalekites, with whom God had war from generation to generation; and lusty may such a world as this be condemned; and if God would have sent to condemn it, he had his angels at command, to pour out the vials of his wrath; a cherubim with a flaming sword, ready to do execution. If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have sent his Son among us. He came with full powers indeed to execute judgment, (ch. 5. 22, 23.) but did not begin with a judgment of condemnation, but did not proceed upon the outward, nor take advantage against us for the breach of the covenant of nature, but puts us upon a new trial before a throne of grace.

Secondly, He came that the world through him might be saved; that a door of salvation might be opened to the world, and whoever would might enter...
God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and so saving it. An act of indemnity is performed, not through Christ a remedial law made; and the world of mankind dealt with, not according to the rigours of the first covenant, but according to the riches of the second: that the world through him might be saved, for it could never be saved but through him; there is no salvation in any other. This is good news to a convinced conscience, healing to broken bones and bleeding wounds, that Christ is the divine ransom, not to condemn, but to save.

They are condemned already: this is their condemnation. The light shines in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is come into all the world: Col. i. 6, and not confined to one corner of it, as the Testament light was.

(3.) From all this is inferred the happiness of true believers; (v. 18.) He that believeth on him, is not condemned. Though he has been a sinner, a great sinner, and stands convicted, (habit soleniment enim—by his own confession,) yet, upon his believing, process is stayed; judgment is arrested, and he is not condemned. This speaks more than a re-venge; he is not condemned, that is, he is justified; he stands upon his deliverance, (as we say,) and if he be not condemned, he is discharged; kai sintas he is not judged, not dealt with in strict justice, according to the desert of his sins. He is excused, and he cannot plead not guilty to the indictment, but he can plead in bar, can plead a null process upon the indictment, as blessed Paul does, 2 Cor. xii. 15. This is that condemnation which is inflicted, chastened of God, persecuted by the world; but he is not condemned. The cross perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is saved from the curse: condemned by the world, it may be, but not condemned with the world, Rom. viii. 1. 1 Cor. i. 32.

IV. Christ, in the close, discourses concerning the deplorable condition of those that persist in unbelief and wilful ignorance: v. 18—21.

1. Read here the doom of those that will not believe in Christ; they are condemned already. Observe, (1.) How great the sin of unbelievers is; it is aggravated from the dignity of the Person they slight; they believe not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God, who is infinitely true, and deserves to be believed; infinitely good, and deserves to be embraced. God sent one to save us, that was nearest to himself; and shall not he be dearest to us? Shall we not believe on his name, who has a name above every name? (2.) How great the misery of unbelievers is; they are condemned already; which speaks, [1.] A certain condemnation. They are as sure to be condemned in the judgment of the great day as if they were condemned already. [2.] A present condemnation. The curse has already taken hold, they are under the judgment, and are affected with it. They are condemned already, for their own hearts condemn them. [3.] A condemnation grounded upon their former guilt; he is condemned already, for he lies open to the law for all his sins; the obligation of the law is in full force, power, and virtue, against him, because he is not by faith interested in the gospel-deference; he is condemned already, because he is a sinner, and is called the great dammed sin, because it leaves us under the guilt of all our other sins; it is a sin against the remedy, against our appeal.

2. Read also the doom of those that would not so much as know him, v. 19. Many inquisitive people had knowledge of Christ and his doctrine and miracles, but they were prejudiced against him, and would not believe in him, which is as much as if they had despised the gospel, and would not know him. And this is the condemnation, the sin that ruined them, that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather. Now here observe, (1.) That the gospel is light, and, when the gospel came, light came into the world. Light is self-evidencing, so is the gospel, it proves its divine original. Light is discovering, and truly the light is sweet, and rejoices the heart. It is a light shining in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is come into all the world: Col. i. 6, and not confined to one corner of it, as the Testament light was.

(2.) It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men, that they loved darkness rather than light, rather than this light. The Jews loved the dark shadows of their law, and the instructions of their blind guides, rather than the doctrine of Christ. The Gentiles loved their superstitious services of idols, and ignorantly worshipped, rather than the reasonable service the gospel enjoins. Sinners that were wedded to their lusts, loved their ignorance and mistakes, which supported them in their sins, rather than the truths of Christ, who would have parted them from their sins. Man's apostacy began in an affectation of forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by an affectation of forbidden ignorance. Wretched man is in love with his sickness, in love with his slavery, and will not be made free, will not be made whole. (3.) The true reason why men love darkness rather than light is, because their deeds are evil. They love darkness because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds, and they hate the light, because it rob them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by showing them their sinfulness and misery. Their consciences are so hardened that they will not meditate, they are resolved that they will not see it. (4.) Wilful ignorance is so far from excusing sin, that it will be found, at the great day, to aggravate the condemnation; This is the condemnation, this is it that ruins souls, that they shut their eyes against the light, and will not so much as admit a parley with Christ and his gospel; they set God and Christ at defiance, that they desire not the knowledge of his ways, Job 21. 14. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we had, and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had, and would not; not only for the knowledge we sinned against, but for the knowledge we sinned away.

For the further illustration of this, he shows, (v. 30, 31.) that according as men's hearts and lives are good or bad, accordingly they stand affected to the light. Christ has brought into the world.

[1.] It is not strange, if those that do evil, and resolve to persist in it, hate the light of Christ's gospel; for it is a common observation, that every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, v. 20. Evil-doers seek concealment, out of sense of shame, and fear of punishment; see Job 24. 13, &c. Sinful works are works of darkness, they hate the light, so that the light is a terror to the wicked world; They come not to this light, but keep as far off as they can, lest their deeds should be reproved.

Note, First, The light of the gospel is sent into the world, to reprove the evil deeds of sinners; to make them manifest, (Eph. 5. 13,) to show people their transgressions, to show them how they are in sin, and act in sin; to show them the evil of their transgressions, that sin by the new commandment might appear exceeding sinful. The gospel has its convictions, to make way for its consolations. Secondly, It is for this reason that evil-doers hate the light of the gospel. There were those who had done evil, and were sorry for it, who bade this light welcome, as the psalmist bade the pure light. They that delight in light, delight in the light, and resolveth to go on in it, hateth the light, cannot bear to be told of his faults. All that opposition which the gospel of Christ has met with in the world, comes from the wicked heart, influenced by the wicked one. Christ is hated because sin is loved. Thirdly, They who do not come to the light, thereby evidence a secret hatred of the light. If they had not an antipathy to saving knowledge, they would not sit down so contentedly in damming ignorance.
[2.] On the other hand, upright hearts, that approve themselves to God in their integrity, bid this light welcome; (v. 21.) He that doeth truth, cometh to the light. It seems, then, though the gospel had many enemies, it had some friends. It is a common observation, that truth seeks no corners. They who mean, and act honestly, dread not a scrutiny, but desire it rather; now this is applicable to the gospel-light: as it convalesces and terrifies evil-doers, so it confirms and comforts those that walk in their integrity. Observe here, 1. The character of a good man. 1. He is one that doeth truth; that is, he acteth truly and sincerely in all he doeth. Though sometimes he come short of doing good, the good he would do, yet, he doeth truth; he aims honestly, he has his infirmities, but holds fast his integrity; as Gains, that did faithfully; (3 John 5.) as Paul, (2 Cor. 1. 12.) as Nathanael, (ch. 1. 47.) as Asi, 1 Kings 15. 14. 2. He is one that cometh to the light. He is ready to receive and entertain divine revelation, as far as it appears to him to be so, what unanswerable power it may create him. He that doeth truth, is willing to know the truth by himself, and to have his deeds made manifest. A good man is much in trying himself, and desires that God would try him, Ps. 26. 2. He is solicitous to know what the will of God is, and resolves to do it, though ever so contrary to his own will and interest. Secondly, Here is the character of a good work; it is wrought in God, in union with him by a coaction of faith, and in communion with him by divine affections. Our works are then good, and will bear the test, when the will of God is the rule of them, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake, to him, and not to men; and if by the light of the gospel it be manifest to us that our works are thus wrought, then shall we have rejoicing, Gal. 6. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 12. Thus far we have Christ's discourse with Nicodemus; it is probable that much more passed between them, and it had a good effect, for we find, ch. 19. 39. that Nicodemus, though he was puzzled at first, yet afterward became a faithful disciple of Christ.

22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized: 24. For John was not yet cast into prison. 25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying. 26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29. He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30. He must increase, but I must decrease. 31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him. In these verses, we have, 1. Christ's removal into the land of Judea; (v. 22.) and there he tarried with his disciples. Observe, 1. Our Lord Jesus, after he entered upon his public work, travelled much, and removed often, as the patriarchs in their sojournings. As it was a good part of his humiliation, that he had no certain dwelling-place, but was, as Paul, in journeyings often, so it was an instance of his unwearied industry in the work of gospel faith and knowledge. But for his followers, there was no going about in prosecution of it: many a weary step he took to do good to souls. The Son of righteousness took a large circuit to diffuse his light and heat, Ps. 19. 6. 2. He was not wont to stay long at Jerusalem, though he went frequently thither; yet he soon returned into the country; as here; after these things, He that cometh from above is above all. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. Here he came into the land of Judea; not so much for greater privacy, (though mean and obscure places best suited the humble Jesus in his humble state,) but for greater usefulness; his preaching and miracles, perhaps, made most noise at Jerusalem, the fountain-head of news, but did least good there, where the most considerable men of the Jewish church had so much the ascendant. When he came into the land of Judea, his disciples came with him; for these were they that continued with him in his temptations. Many that flocked to him at Jerusalem, would not follow his motions into the country, they had no business there, but his disciples attended him. If the ark remove, it is better to remove and go after it (as they did, Josh. 3. 3.) than sit still without it, though it be in Jerusalem itself. 3. There he tarried with them, ibid. He conversed with them, discoursed with them. He did not retire into the country for his ease and pleasure, but for more free conversation with his disciples and followers. See Cant. 7. 11. 12. Not, Those that are ready to go with Christ, shall find him as ready to stay with them. It is supposed that he now tarried five or six months in this country. 4. There he tarried; he admitted disciples, such as believed in him, and had more honesty and courage than those that had at Jerusalem, ch. 2. 24. John began to baptize in the land of Judea, (Matth. 3. 1.) therefore Christ began there, for John had said, There cometh one after me. He baptized not himself, with his own hand, but his disciples by his order and directions, as appears, ch. 4. 2. But his disciples' baptizing was his baptizing. Holy ordinances are Christ's, though administered by weak men. II. John's continuance in his work, as long as his opportunities lasted, v. 23, 24. Here we are told,
1. That John was baptizing. Christ's baptism was, for substance, the same with John's, for he bore witness to Christ, and therefore they did not at all love this that came from another. But (1.) Christ began to preach and baptize before John did and it is probable he might be ready to receive John's disciples when he should be taken off, and so the wheels might be kept going. It is a comfort to useful men, when they are going off the stage, to see those rising up, who are likely to fill up their room. (2.) John continued to preach and baptize, though Christ had taken it up; he would still, according to the measure given to him, advance in the kingdom of God. There was still work for John to do. For Christ was not yet generally known, nor the minds of people thoroughly prepared for him by repentance. From heaven John had received his command, and he would go on in his work till thence he came, led his countermand, and would have his dismissal from the same hand that gave him his commission. He does not come in to Christ, lest what had formerly passed, should look like a combination between them; but he goes on with his work, till Providence lays him aside. The greater gifts of some do not render the labours of others, there is work short of them needless and useless; there is work enough for all hands. They are sullen, that will sit down, and do nothing, when they see themselves cut-shone. Though they have not the same talent, we must account for that; and when we see ourselves going off, must yet go on to the last.

2. That he baptized in Enon near Salim, places we find no where else mentioned; and therefore the learned are altogether at a loss where to find them; whenever it was, it seems that John removed from place to place, he did not think that there was any virtue in Jordan, because Jesus was baptized there, which should engage him to stay there; but, as he saw cause, removed to other waters. Ministers must follow their opportunities; and he chose a place where there was much water: 

3. That thither people came to him, and were baptized. Though they did not come in such vast crowds, as they did when he first appeared, yet now had he a coming without encouragement, but there were still those that attended him and owned him. Some refer this both to John and to Jesus; They came, and were baptized; that is, some came to John, were baptized by him, some to Jesus, and were baptized by him, and, as their baptism was one, so were their hearts.

4. It is noted, (v. 24.) that John was not yet cast into prison, to clear the order of the story; and to show that these passages related here, (ch. 2. and 3. in the harmonies,) come to complete what is gone before. (Matth. 4.)

12. John never desisted from his work as long as he had his liberty; nay, he seems to have been the more industrious, because he foresaw his time was short; he was not yet cast into prison, but he expected it ere long, ch. 9. 4.


1. Who were the disputants; some of John's disci-iples, and the Jews who had not submitted to his baptism of repentance. Penitents and impatient men divide this sinful world. In this contest, it should seem, John's disciples were the aggressors, and gave the challenge; and it is a sign that they were no

vices, who had more zeal than discretion. The truth of God have often suffered by the rashness of some that have undertaken to defend them before they were able to do it.

2. What was the matter in dispute; about purifying, or religious washing. (1.) We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, his purifying, as an instancing of his SON to others, and gave the preference to that as purifying and superseding all the purifications of the Jews; and they were in the right; but young converts are too apt to boast of their attainments, whereas he that has found the treasure, should hide it till he is sure that he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. (2.) Do not suppose that the Jews with as much assurance applauded the purifying of Moses, and that they were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. Now it is very likely that the Jews in this dispute, when they could not deny the excellent nature and design of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from Christ's baptism. (a.) First occasion for the complaint that follows here; (v. 26.) "Here is John baptizing in one place," (say they,) "and Jesus at the same time baptizing in another place; and therefore John's baptism, which his disciples so much applaud, is either," (b.) 1. At best, it is defective and imperfect. If John's baptism, which you cry up thus, have any good in it, yonder the baptism of Jesus goes beyond it, so that for your parts you are shaded already by a greater light, and your baptism is soon gone out of fashion. Thus objections are made against the gospel, from the advancement and improvement of gospel-light, as if childhood and malice were contrary to each other, and the superstructures were against the foundation. There was no reason to object Christ's baptism against John's, for they consisted very well together.

IV. A complaint which John's disciples made to their master concerning Christ and his baptizing, v. 27. The distributing non-plussed by the fore-mentioned objection, and passed and put into a heat by it, come to their master, and say, "Rabbi, he that was with thee, and was baptized of thee, is now set up for himself; he baptizeth, and all men come to him; and wilt thou suffer it?" Their itch for disputing occasioned this. It is common for men, when they find themselves run aground in the heat of dispute, to fall foul upon those that do no harm. If these disciples of John had not undertaken to dispute about purifying, they might have answered the objection without being put into a passion. In their complaint, they speak respectfully to their own master, Rabbi; but speak very slightly of our Saviour, though they do not name him.

3. They suggest that Christ's setting up a bat-ism of his own was a piece of presumption, very unaccountable; as if John having, before this rite of baptizing he must have the monopoly of it, and, as it were, a patent for the invention; "He that was with thee beyond Jordan, as a disciple of thine, beheld, and wonder, the same, the very same, baptizeth, and takes the work out of thy hand." This was the voluntary censures of the Lord Jesus, as that of being baptized by John, are often unjustly and very mindingly put down.

2. They suggest that it was a piece of ingratitude to John. He to whom thou bearest witness, baptism, as if Jesus owed all his reputation to the humble
character: John gave of him, and yet had very unwillingly improved it to the prejudice of John. But Christ needed not John's testimony, ch. 3. 36. He reflected more honour upon John than he received from him; yet thus it is incident to us to think that others are more indebted to us than really they are.

And besides, Christ's baptism was not in the least an impeachment, but indeed the greatest improvement, of John's baptism; which was but to lead the way to Christ's. John was just to Christ, in bearing witness to him; and Christ's answering of his testimony did rather enrich than impoverish John's ministry.

They conclude that it would be a total eclipse to John's baptism; "All men come to him; they that used to follow with us, now flock after him, it is therefore time for us to look about us." It was not indeed strange that all men came to him. As far as Christ is manifested, he will be magnified; but why should John's disciples grudge at that? Note, Aiming at the monopoly of honour and respect, has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers; also seeking of interests, and a jealousy of rivalship and competition.

We mistake if we think that the excelling gifts and graces, and labours and usefulness of one, are a diminution and disparagement to another that has obtained mercy to be faithful; for the Spirit is a free Agent, dispensing to every one severally as he will. Paul reproved in the usefulness even of the life of the friends of the ministry, 2 Tim. 4. 9, 10. He doth enjoin his disciples to use it to God's honour, employ, and honour his own instruments as he pleaseth, and not covet to be plac'd alone.

V. Here is John's answer to this complaint which 1 s disciples made, v. 27, &c. His disciples expected that he should have resented this matter as they did; but Christ's manifestation to Israel was manifest to John, but what he looked for; it was no diminution of his honour, no less respect for him; therefore checked the complaint, as Moses, Exod. 4. "Exceed that for my sake? And took this occasion to confirm the testimony he had formerly borne to Christ as superior to him, cheerfully consigning and turning over to him all the interest he had in Israel. In this discourse here, the first minister of the gospel (for so John was) is an excellent pattern to all ministers, to humble themselves and to exalt the Lord Jesus.

VI. John now proceeds to his own testimony to Christ, v. 27—30. The more others magnify us, the more we must humble ourselves, and fortify ourselves against the temptation of flattery and applause, and the jealousy of our friends for our honour, by remembering our place, and what we are, 1 Cor. 3. 5.

(1.) John acquires in the divine disposal, and satisfies himself with that (v. 27). A man can receive no grace except it be given him from heaven, where every good gift comes; (James 1. 17.) a general truth very applicable in this case. Different employments are according to the direction of Divine Providence; different endowments according to the distribution of the Divine Grace. A man can take any true honour to himself, Heb. 5. 4. We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of God, as all the faculties and our souls to the spiritual life, as we have upon the providence of God in all the motions and actions of the natural life: now this comes in here as a reason, [1.] Why we should not envy those that have a larger share of gifts than we have, or move in a larger sphere of usefulness. John reminds his disciples that Jesus had not thus excelled him, except he had received it from heaven, for, Matt. and Mediator, he received all this from God, and all the blessings of God give him his measure, (v. 34.) shall they grudge at it? The same reason will hold as to others. If God is pleased to give others more ability and success than to us, shall we be displeased at it, and reflect upon him as unjust, unwise, and partial? see Matth. 26. 15. [2.] Why should we not be discontented, though we be inferior to others in gifts and usefulness, and be eclipsed by their excellencies. John was ready to own that it was the gift, the fit thing, he had received from heaven to make him a preacher, a prophet, a Baptist: it was God that gave him the interest he had in the love and esteem of the people, and if now his interest decline, God's will be done. 1 Thess. 1. 10. What we receive from heaven we must take as it is given. Now John never received a commission for a standing, perpetual office, but only for a temporary and occasional one. John foresees, before, when he has fulfilled his ministry, he can contentedly see it go out of date. Some give quite another sense of these words; John had taken pains with his disciples, to teach them the reference which his baptism had to Christ, who should come after him, and yet he preferred before him, and doth for them, which he could not do; and yet, after all, they deare upon John, and gladly this preference of Christ above him: Well, saith John, I see a man can receive, that is, perceive, nothing, except it be given him from heaven. The labour of ministers is always lost honour, unless the grace of God make it effectual. Men do not understand that which is made most plain, nor believe that which is made most evident, unless it be given them from heaven to understand and believe it.

(2.) John acquires to the testimony he had formerly given concerning Christ: (v. 18.) You can hear me witness, that I said again and again, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. So how steady and constant John was in his testimony to Christ, and not as a reed shaken with the wind; neither the frowns of the chief priests, nor the flatteries of his own disciples, could make him change his note, nor the exemple of the multitudes here. As John, so his disciples, of the unreasonableness of their complaint. They had spoken of the witness which their master bore to Jesus; (v. 26.) "Now," saith John, "do you not remember what the testimony was that I did bear? Call that to mind, and you will see your own caviar answered. Did I not say, I am not the Christ? Why then do you set me up as a rival with him that is? Did I not say, I am sent before him? Why then do you think me to have the same gift and give way to him? [2.] 1 It is a comfort to himself, that he had never given his disciples any occasion thus to set him up in competition with Christ: but, on the contrary, had particularly cautioned them against this mistake, though he might have made a hand of it for himself. It is a satisfaction to faithful ministers, if they have done what they could in their places to prevent any extravagances that their people ran into. John had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the Messiah, but had plainly told them the contrary; which was now a satisfaction to him. It is a common excuse for those who have undue honour paid them, St. Paulus vult decipi, decipiparet— If the people will be deceived, let them; but that is all amiss for them to go by whose business it is to undeceive people.

The life of Christ. (v. 31.) John now proceeds to the great satisfaction he had in the advancement of Christ and his interest. He was so far from regretting it, as his disciples did, that he rejoiced in it. This he expresses (v. 28.) by an elegant similitude. [1.] He compares our Saviour to the bridegroom; "He that has the bride, is the Bridegroom? Do all men come to him?" It is well, whither else should they go? Has he the bride alone? What do they come in for? He is the bridegroom. It is his right: to whom should the bride be brought but to the Bridegroom? Christ was the preferred of the Old Testament as a Bridegroom, Ps.
Christ's person; (v. 31.) He that cometh from above, that cometh from heaven, is above all. Here, [1.] He supposes his divine original, that he came from above, from heaven, which speaks not only his divine descent, but his divine nature. He had a being before his conception; a heavenly being before he came but that came from heaven, was fit to show us the will of heaven, or the way to heaven. When God would save man, he sent from above. [2.] Hence he infers his sovereign authority; he is above all, above all things and all persons, God over all, blessed for evermore. It is daring presumption to dispute precedence with him. When we come to speak of the honours of the Lord Jesus, we find they transcend all conception and expression, and we can say but this, He is above all. It was said of John Baptist, There is not a greater among them that are born of women. But the descent of Christ from heaven put such a dignity upon him as he was not divested of by his being made Flesh; still he was above all.

This he further illustrates by the meanness of those who stood in competition with him; He that is of the earth is earthly, &c. [2.] He that is of the earth, is of the earth; he that has his original of the earth, has his food out of the earth, has his converse with earthly things, and whose concern is for them. Note, First, Man's constitution is therefore earthly; not only his body frail and mortal, but his soul corrupt and carnal, and its bent and bias strong towards earthly things. The prophets and apostles were of the same mould with other men; they were but earthy vessels, in which they had a rich treasure, and so we also see there are for rivals with Christ? Let the prophets strive with the prophets of the earth; but let them not cope with him, that came from heaven.

(2.) Concerning the excellency and certainty of his doctrine. His disciples were displeased that Christ's preaching was admired and attended upon, more than his; but he tells them that there was reason enough for that. First, [1.] He, for his part, spoke of the earth, and so did all those that are of the earth. The prophets were men, and spake like men; of themselves they could not speak but of the earth, [2 Cor. 3.] The preaching of the prophets and of John was but low and flat compared with Christ's preaching; as heaven is high above the earth, so were his thoughts above theirs. By them God spake on earth, but in Christ he speaketh from heaven.

[2.] But he that cometh from heaven, is not only in his person, but in his doctrine, above all the prophets that ever lived on earth; none teacheth like him. The doctrine of Christ is here recommended to us, [1.] Clearly, As infallibly sure and certain, and to be entertained accordingly; (v. 32.) What he hath said and heard, that he testifieth. See here, 1. Christ's divine knowledge; he testifieth nothing but what he had seen and heard, what he was perfectly apprized of, and thoroughly acquainted with. What he discovered of the divine nature and of the invisible world, was what he had seen; what he revealed of the mind of God, was what he had heard. 2. Christ's divine authority; he speaks from heaven, and not at second hand. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams and visions by the mediation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the crier's voice, that said, 'Make room for the witness, and keep silence while the charge is given,' but then leaves it to the witness to give in his testimony himself, and the judge to give the charge himself. The
gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like a hypothesis, or new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God, which is of eternal truth in itself, and of finite concern to us. 2. His doctrine is plain and obvious; that which he had seen and heard, because he knew it nearly concerned us, he was pleased to make known to us. What Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens, he could not testify; (2 Cor. 12. 4.) but Christ knew how to utter what he had seen and heard. Christ's preaching is here called his testifying, to denote, (1.) The convincing evidence of it; it was not reported as news by hearsay, but it was testified as evidence given on oath. (2.) The affectionate earnestness of the delivery of it; it was testified with concern and importunity, as Acts 18. 5.

From the certainty of Christ's doctrine, John takes occasion, [1.] To lament the infidelity of the most of men; though he testifies what is infallibly true, yet no man receiveth his testimony, that is, very few, next to none, none in comparison with those that receive it. They receive it not, they will not hear it, they do not heed it, or give credit to it. This he speaks of, not only as matter of wonder, that such a testimony should not be received; (Who hath believed our report? How stupid and foolish are the greatest part of mankind, what enemies to themselves?) but as matter of grief; John's disciples grieved that all men came to Christ, (v. 28.) they thought his followers too many. But John grieves that no man came to him, he thought them too few. Note, The unbelief of sinners is the grief of saints. It was for this that St. Paul had great heaviness, Rom. 9. 2. [2.] He takes occasion to commend the faith of the chosen remnant; (v. 33.) He that hath received his testimony, (and some such there were, though very few,) hath set to his seal that God is true. God is true, though we do not set our seal to it, he be true. But John grieves that no man came to him, he thought them too few. Note, The disbelief of the truth of Christ is our greatest grief and reproach. God's promises are all yea and amen, by faith we put our amen to them, as Rev. 22. 20. Observe, He that receives the testimony of Christ, subscribes not only to the truth of Christ, but to the truth of God, for his name is the word of God; the connecting faith with great caution and assurance, when the faith of Christ are put together, Rev. 12. 17. By believing in Christ we set to our seal, First, That God is true to all the promises which he has made concerning Christ, that which he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets; what he sauceth to our fathers, is all accomplished, and not one iota or tittle of it fallen to the ground, Luke 1. 70. &c. Acts 13. 32, 33. Secondly, That he is true to all the promises he has made to his church, that is, that God is true to the great covenant and assurance, being satisfied that he is true; we are willing to deal with him upon trust, and to quit all in this world for a happiness in reversion and out of sight. By this we greatly honour God's faithfulness. Whom we give credit to, we give honour to. Secondly, It is recommended to us as a divine doctrine; not his own, but his that sent him; (v. 34.) For though I had no right in God, which he which sent me to speak, and enabled to speak, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure into him. The prophets were as messengers that brought letters from heaven; but Christ came under the character of an Ambassador, and treats with us as such; for, 1. He spake the words of God, and nothing he said, savoured of human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He proved himself set of God, (ch. 3. 2.) and therefore his words are to be receiv'd as the words of God. By this rule we may try the spirits; those that speak as the oracles of God, and prophecy according to the proportion of faith, are to be received as sent of God. 1. He spake so as no other prophet did; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure into him. NewcanspeakthewordsofGod,withouttheSpiritofGod, 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10. The Old-Testament prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees, 2 Kings 2, 9, 10. But whereas God gave them the Spirit by measure, (1 Cor. 12. 4.) he gave him to Christ without measure; all fulness dwelt in him, the fulness of the Godhead, an unmeasurable fulness. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless current. John speaks of a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spake of themselves; but he that had the Spirit always residing in him without stint, always spake the words of God." So Dr. Whitby.

(3.) Concerning the power and authority he is invested with, which gives him the pre-eminence above all others, and a more excellent name than they.

[1.] He is the beloved Son of the Father; (v. 35.) The Father loveth the Son. The prophets were faithful as servants, but Christ as a Son; they were employed as Servants, but Christ beloved as a Son, always his Delight, Prov. 8. 30. The Father was well pleased in him; not only did he love him, but he doth love him; he continued his love to him even in his estate of humiliation, loved him nevertheless for his poverty and sufferings.

[2.] He is Lord of all. The Father, as an evidence of his love to him, hath given all things into his hand. Love is generous. The Father took such a complacency and had such a confidence in him, that he constituted him the great Fridge in trust for mankind. Having given him the Spirit without measure, he gave him all things; for he was thereby qualified to be Master and Manager of all. Note, In the honour of Christ, and the unspeakable comfort of all Christians, that the Father hath given all things into the hands of the Mediator. First, All power; so it is explained, Matt. 28. 18. All the works of creation being put under his feet, all the affairs of redemption are put into his hand; he is Lord of all. Angels are his servants, devils are his captives. He has power over all flesh; the heathen is given him for his inheritance. The kingdom of God is his. All power in heaven and earth is given to him. He has power to settle the terms of the covenant of peace as the great Plieniitontiary, to govern his church as the great Legiscolor, to dispense divine favours as the great Almoner, and to call all to account as the great Judge. Both the golden sceptre and the iron rod are given into his hand. Secondly, All grace is given into his hand as the channel of conveyance; all things, all those good things which God has power to give to the children of men; eternal life, and all its preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father should give those things into our hands, for we have made ourselves the children of his wrath; he hath therefore appointed the Son of his love to be Trustee for us, and the things he intended for us he gives into his hands, who is worthy, and has merited both honours for himself, and for his people. He is to give us all things for which he became a sacrifice on our behalf, to be given to him to be given into ours. This is a great encouragement to faith, that the riches of the new covenant are deposited in so sure, so kind, so good a hand, the hand of him that purchased them for us, and us for himself; who is able to keep all that which both God and believers have agreed to commit to him.

[5.] He is the Object of that faith which made the great condition of eternal happiness, and wherein he has the pre-eminence above all others; (v. 56.)
I. WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciple than John, 2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3. He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

We read of Christ's coming into Judea, (ch. 3. 22.) after he had kept the feasts at Jerusalem; and now he left Judea four months before harvest, as is said here; (v. 35.) so that it is computed that he stayed in Judea about six months, to build upon the foundation John had laid there. We have no particular account of his sermons and miracles there, only in general, v. 1.

1. That he made disciples; he prevailed with many to believe his doctrine, and to follow him as a Teacher come from God. His ministry was successful, notwithstanding the opposition it met with; (Ps. 110. 2, 3.) μανθανεῖν τινι; it signifies the same with μαθητάς— to disciple. Compare Gen. 12. 5. The souls which they had gotten; which they had made, (so the word is,) which they had made provincitors. Note, It is Christ's prerogative to make disciples, and to send them forth from him in his own image, and to form and fashion them to his will. Fit, non nascitur, Christianus—The Christian is made such, not born such. Terruitian.

II. That he baptized these whom he made disciples; admitted them by washing them with water; not himself, but by the ministry of his disciples, v. 2. 1. Because he would put a difference between his baptism and that of John, who baptized all himself, for he baptized as a servant, Christ as a Master. 2. He would apply himself more to preaching-work, which was the more excellent, 1 Cor. 1. 17. 3. He would put honour upon his disciples, by empowering and employing them to do it; and so train them up to further services. 4. If he had baptized some himself, they would have been apt to value themselves upon that, and despise others, which he would prevent, as Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 13, 14. 3. He would reserve himself for the honour of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, Acts 1. 5. 6. He would teach us that the efficacy of sacraments depends not on any virtue in the hand that administers them; as also, that what is done by his ministers according to his direction, he owns as done by himself.

III. That he made and baptized more disciples than John, which was more than John did at this time, but more than he had done at any time. Christ's converse was more winning than John's. His miracles were convincing, and the cures he wrought gratis, very inviting.

IV. That the Pharisees were informed of this; they heard what multitudes he baptized, for they had, from his first appearing, a jealous eye upon him, and wanted not secrets to give them notice and concern for him. Observe, 1. When the Pharisees thought they had got rid of John, (for he was by this time clapped up,) and were pleasing themselves with that, Jesus appears, who was a greater vexation to them than ever John had been. The witnesses will rise again. 2. That which grieved them, was, that Christ made so many disciples. The success of his gospel exasperates its enemies, and it is a good sign, that it is getting ground, when the powers of darkness are enraged against it.

V. That our Lord Jesus knew very well what informations were given in against him to the Pharisees. It is likely that the informers were willing to have their names concealed, and the Pharisees both to have their designs known; but none can do so deep as to hide their counsels from the I.ord. (Isa. 29. 15.) and Christ is here called the Lord. He knew what was told the Pharisees, and how much
it is likely, it exceeded the truth; for it is not likely that Jesus had yet baptized more than John; but so the thing was represented, to make him appear the more formidable; see 2 Kings 6. 12.

VI. That, hereupon, our Lord Jesus left Judea, and departed again, to go to Galilee.

1. He left Judea, because he was likely to be persecuted there even to the death; such was the rage of the Pharisees against him, and such their impious politics to devour the Man-child in his infancy. To escape their designs, Christ quitted the country, and went thither, where what he did would be less provoking than just under their eye. For, (1.) His hour was not yet come, (ch. 7. 30.) the time fixed in the counsels of God, and the Old-Testament prophecies, for Messiah's being cut off. He had not finished his testimonies, and therefore would not surrender or expose himself. (2.) The disciples he had gathered in Judea, were not able to bear hardships, and therefore he would not expose them. (3.) Hereby he gave an example to his own rule; When they persecute you in one city, flee to another. We are not called to suffer, while we may avoid it without sin; and therefore, though we may not, for our own preservation, change our religion, yet we may change our place. Christ secured himself, not by wrath, but in a way common to men, for the direction and encouragement of his suffering people.

2. He departed into Galilee, because he had work to do there, and many friends and few enemies. He went to Galilee now, (1.) Because John's ministry had now made way for him there; for Galilee, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, was the last scene of John's baptism. (2.) Because John's imprisonment had now made room for him there. That light being now put under a bushel, the minds of people would not be divided between him and Christ. Thus both the liberties and restraints of good ministers are for the furtherance of the gospel, Phil. 1. 12. But to what purpose does he go into Galilee for safety? Herod, the persecutor of John, will never be the protector of Jesus. Chemistus here notes, Pau in hac viea quos fugient habent; ad quos vero fugiunt ut in tuto sint, non habent, nisi ad Deos, qui solus refugium nostrum esse----The pious have those, in this life, to whom they can fly, but they have none to fly to, who can afford them refuge, except thee, 0 God.

4. And he must needs go through Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. 7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8. (For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.) 9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 13. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

We have here an account of the good Christ did in Samaria, when he passed through that country, in his way to Galilee. The Samaritans, both in blood and religion, were mongrelized; the posterity of those colonies which the king of Assyria planted there after the captivity of the ten tribes, with whom the poor of the land that were left behind, and many other Jews afterward, incorporated themselves. They worshipped the God of Israel only, to whom they erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in competition with that at Jerusalem. There was a great enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans; the Samaritans would not admit Christ, when they saw he was going to Jerusalem, Luke 9. 53. The Jews thought they could not give him a worse name than to say, He is a Samaritan. When the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed kindred to them, (Ezra 4. 2.) but when they were in distress, they were Medes and Persians; see Joseph. Antiqu. li. 11. chap. 8. lib. 12. chap. 7. Now observe,

1. Christ's coming into Samaria. He chanced the disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans,
(Matth. 10. 4.) not to preach the gospel, or work miracles; nor did he here preach publicly, or work any miracle, his eye being to the last sheets of the house of Israel. What kindness he here did them, was accidental; it was only a crumb of the children's bread that casually fell from the master's table.

1. His road from Judea to Galilee lay through the county of Samaria; (v. 4.) He must needs go through it, and therefore was present near where he would have fetched a compass on the other side Jordan, a great way about. The wicked and profane are at present so intermixed with God's Israel, that, unless we will go out of the world, we cannot avoid going through the company of such, 1 Cor. 5. 10. We have therefore need of the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may stand against the wiles of the devil, Eph. 6. 11. This was our only way, and therefore we travelled this way. It was happy for Samaria, that it lay in Christ's way, which gave him an opportunity of calling on them. When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live, Ezek. 16. 6.

2. His bating place happened to be at a city of Samaria. Now observe,

(1.) The place described. It was called Sychem; probably you may see with Sichem, or Shechem, a place which we read much of in the Old Testament. Thus are the names of places commonly corrupted by tract of time. Shechem yielded the first proselytes that ever came into the church of Israel, (Gen. 34.) and now it is the first place where the gospel is preached out of the commonwealth of Israel; so Dr. Lightfoot observes; as also that the valley of Jehor, which was given for a door of hope, hope to the poor Gentiles, ran along by this city, Hos. 2. 15. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; but the evangelist, when he would give us the antiquities of the place, takes notice of Jacob's interest there, which was more its honour than its crowned heads. [1.] Here lay Jacob's ground, the parent of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, where his bones were buried in it, Gen. 48. 22. Josh. 24. 3. Probably, here is mentioned, to intimate that Christ, when he reposed himself hard by here, took occasion from the ground which Jacob gave Joseph, to meditate on the good report which the elders by faith obtained. Jerome chose to live in the land of Canaan, that the sight of the places might affect him the more with scripture-stories. [2.] Here was Jacob's well which he digged, or at least used, or he himself and his family. We find no mention of this well in the Old Testament; but the tradition was, that it was Jacob's well.

(2.) The posture of our Lord Jesus at this place: Being wearied with his journey, he sat thus on the well. We have here our Lord Jesus,

[1.] Labouring under the common fatigue of travellers. He was wearied with his journey. Though used to hunt the and his canines. We had performed but half his day's journey, yet he was weary; or, because it was the sixth hour, the time of the heat of the day, therefore he was weary. Here we see, First, That he was a true Man, and subject to the common infirmities of the human nature. Toil came in with sin, (Gen. 3. 19.) and therefore Christ, having made himself a Curse for us, submitted to it. Secondly, That he was a poor Man, else he might have travelled on horseback, or in a chariot. To this instance of meanness and mortification he humbled himself for us, that he went all his journeys on foot. When servants were on horses, princes velled as servants on the earth, Eccl. 10. 7. When we are carried easily let us think on the weariness of our Master. Thirdly, It should seem, he was but a tender Man, and not of a robust constitution; it should seem, his disciples were not tired, for they went into the town with no difficulty, while their Master sat down, and could not go a step further. Riches and honour are more sensible of fatigue, and can worst bear it.

[2.] We have here him betaking himself to the common relief of travellers; Being wearied, he sat thus on the well. First, He sat on the well, an easy place, cold and hard; he had no couch, no easy chair to repose himself in, but took to that which was next hand, to teach us he may be nice and curious in the means by which this life, and that he will spares no means, and that he is come to do things. Secondly, He sat thus, in an uneasy posture; sat carelessly—incertue et neglectue; or, he sat so as people that are wearied with travelling, are accustomed to sit.

II. His discourse with a Samaritan woman, which is here recorded at large, while Christ's dispute with the doctors, and his discourse with Moses and Elias on the mount, was told in silence. This discourse is reducible to four heads:

(1.) They discourse concerning the water, v. 7—15. Notice is first taken of the circumstances that gave occasion to this discourse.

First, There comes a woman of Samaria to draw water. This intimates her poverty, she had no servant to a draw water; and her industry, she could not find it in her power to buy water. 1. How God owns and approves of honest, humble diligence in our places. Christ was made known to the shepherds when they were keeping their flock. 2. How the Divine Providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuneous and accidental. This woman's meeting with Christ at the well, may remind us of the stories of Rebekah, Rachel, and Joseph's daughter, who all met with husbands, good husbands, no worse than Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, when they came to the wells for water. 3. How the preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought him not. Secondly, His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. Hence learn a lesson, 1. Of justice and honesty. The men of the world and people for Paul, 2 Thess. 3. 8. 2. Of daily dependence upon Providence; Take no thought for the morrow. Christ did not go into the city to eat, but sent his disciples to fetch his meat thicker; not because he scrupled eating in a Samaritan city, but, (1.) Because he had a good work to do at that well, which might be done while they were eating. It is wisdom, to fill up our vacant minutes with that which is excellent, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was getting ready, fell into a trance, Acts 10. 10. (2.) Because it was more private and retired, more cheap and homely, to have his dinner brought him thicker, than to go into the town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and he would teach us good husbands; to spend according to what we have, and not go beyond it. However, he only himself and his family. The meat Christ and he have been eating in this place is so good, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was getting ready, fell into a trance, Acts 10. 10. (2.) Because it was more private and retired, more cheap and homely, to have his dinner brought him thicker, than to go into the town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and he would teach us good husbands; to spend according to what we have, and not go beyond it. However, he only himself and his family. The meat Christ and he have been eating in this place is so good, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was getting ready, fell into a trance, Acts 10. 10.
rous achievement it is, to help to save, though but one soul, from death.

Let us observe the particulars of this discourse.

[1.] Jesus begins with a modest request for a draught of water; *Give me to drink.* He that for our sakes became poor, here becomes a Beggar, that they who are in want, and cannot die, may not be told to beg; and yet expected by them, where he needed it, and needed her help, to come at it, but because he would draw on further discourse with her, and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meanest when there is occasion. Christ is still begging in his poor members, and a cup of cold water, like this here, given to them in his name, shall cause his reward.

[2.] There is an attempt made, though she does not deny his request, yet quarrles with him because he did not carry on the humour of his own nation; (v. 9.) *How is it?*

Observe, First, What a mortal feud there was between the Jews and the Samaritans; *The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* The Samaritans were the adversaries of Judah, (Exod. 3, 1.) were upon no account reconciled to them. The Jews were extremely malicious against them, *looked upon them as having no part in the resurrection,* excommunicated and cursed them by the sacred name of God, by the glorious writing of the tables, and by the curse of the upper and lower house of judgment; with this law, That no Israelite eat of any thing that is a Samarit's, for it is as if he eat a dog's flesh. So Dr. Lightfoot, out of Rabbi Tanchum. Note, Quarrles about religion are usually the most implacable of all others. Men were made to have dealings one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple, and another at another, will deny the offices of humanity, and charity, and common civility, will be morose and unnatural, sourful and censorious, and this under colour of zeal in religion, they plainly show that however their religion may be true, they are not truly religious; but, pretending to stickle for religion, subvert the design of it.

Secondly, How ready the woman was to upbraid Christ with the haughtiness and ill nature of the Jewish nation; *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?* Be his dress or dialect, or both, she knew him to be a Jew, and thinks it strange that he should ask for it, as if she thought he would make no request to the Samaritans with other Jews. Note, Moderate men of all sides, are, like Joshua and his fellows, (Zech. 3, 8.) men wondered at. Two things this woman wonders at, 1. That he should ask this kindness; for it was the pride of the Jews, that they would endure any hardship rather than be beholden to a Samaritan. It was part of Christ's humiliation, that he was born of the Jewish nation, which was not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations. With what disdain did Pilate ask, *Am I a Jew?* Thus he made himself not only of no reputation, but of ill reputation; but herein he has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on goodness and kindness, though it should be ever so much the genius of our country, or the humour of our party, we are not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations.

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What with disdain did Pilate ask, *Am I a Jew?* Thus he made himself not only of no reputation, but of ill reputation; but herein he has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on goodness and kindness, though it should be ever so much the genius of our country, or the humour of our party, we are not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations. With what disdain did Pilate ask, *Am I a Jew?* Thus he made himself not only of no reputation, but of ill reputation; but herein he has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on goodness and kindness, though it should be ever so much the genius of our country, or the humour of our party, we are not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations.

3. That she should expect to receive this kindness from her that was a Samaritan; *You Jews could deny it to one of your own nation, and should we grant it to one of yours?* Thus quarrles are propagated endessly by revenge and retaliation.

[3.] Christ takes this occasion to instruct her in divine things; (v. 10.) *If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked. Observe, First,* he wades her objection of the feud between the Jews and Samaritans, and takes no notice of it. Some differences are best healed by being sighted, and by avoiding all occasions of entering into dispute about them. Christ will convert this woman, who has left all to countenance her. When he had done that, he proceeds upon something moreatical, (though really it was so,) but by showing her her own ignorance and iniquities, and her need of a Saviour. Secondly, He possesses her with an apprehension that she had now an opportunity (a fairer opportunity than she was aware of) of gaining that which would be of unspeakable advantage to her. She had not the helps that the Jews had to discern the spirit of Christ before; for before Christ tells her expressly, she had now a season of grace; this was the day of her visitation.

1. He hints to her what she should know, but was ignorant of; *If thou knewest the gift of God, that is, the next words explain it, who it is that saith, Give me to drink.* This she knew not who he was. She saw him to be a Jew, a poor weary Traveller; but she should have known something more concerning him than did yet appear. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is the Gift of God, the richest Token of God's love to us, and the richest Treasure of all good for us; a Gift, not a Debt which we could demand from God; not a Loan, which he will demand from us again, but a Gift, a free Gift, ch. 3, 16. (2.) It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift of God, which is proposed, and offered to us; to his own endowment of embracing it; *He who is the Gift of God is now set before thee, and addresses himself to thee; it is he that saith, Give me to drink; this Gift comes a begging to thee.* (3.) Though Christ is set before us, and sues to us, in by his gospel, yet there are multitudes that know him not. They know not what it is that speaks to them in the gospel, that it is the Lord that calls them.

2. His hopes concerning her, what she would have done if she had known him; to be sure, she would not have given him such a rude and uncivil answer; nay, she would have been so far from affronting him, that she would have made her addresses to him; *Thou wouldest have asked.* Note, (1.) Those that would have any benefit by Christ, must make use of the means he offers to him. (2.) Those that have a right knowledge of Christ, will seek to him, and if we do not seek unto him, it is a sign that we do not know him, Ps. 9, 10. (3.) Christ knows what they that want the means of knowledge, would have done, if they had had them, Matth. 11, 21.

3. He assures her what he would have done for her if she had applied herself to him; *He would have given thee (and not have upbraided thee, as thou dost me) living water.* By this living water is meant the Spirit, who is not like the water in the bottom of the well, which he asked for some of, but like living or running water, which was much more valuable. Note, (1.) The Spirit of grace is as living water, see ch. 7, 38. Under this similitude the blessings of the Messiahs had been promised in the Old Testament, Jer. 12, 3, 13, 7, 8, 3, 55.

1. Zech. 14, 8. The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul, that knows its own nature and necessity. (2.) Jesus Christ and will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; for he received, that he might give.

[4.] The woman objects against, and cavils at the gracious intimation which Christ gave her; (v. 11.) *They have said of thee, The Messiah shall come.* It is a precious and blessed.

*Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* What he spake figuratively, she took literally; *Nicodemus did so too.* See what confused notions they have of...
spiritual things, who are wholly taken up with the
things that are sensible. Some respect she pays to
his person, in calling him Sir, or Lord; but little
respect to what he said, which she does but bunter:
She does not think him capable of being in-
ning her with any water, no, not this in the well
that is just at hand: Thou hast nothing to draw
with, and the well is deep. This she said, not knowing
the power of Christ; for he who causeth the vapoors
to ascend from the ends of the earth, needs nothing
to draw. But there are those who will trust Christ
no farther than they can see him, and will not believe
his word, unless we may observe from it the
power and providence of God in the continuance of
the fountains of water from generation to genera-
tion, by the constant circulation of the rivers, like
the blood in the body, (Eccl. 1. 7.) to which circu-
lation perhaps the flux and reflux of the sea, like
the pulses of the heart, contribute. (2.) The plain-
ness of the patriarch Jacob; his drink was water,
and he and his children drank of the same well with
his cattle.

2. Yet, allowing that to be true, she was out in
several things; as, (1.) In calling Jacob father.
What authority had the Samaritans to reckon them-
selves of the seed of Jacob? They were descended
from that mix multitude which the king of Assyria
had placed in the cities of Samaria; what have they
do to do then with Jacob? Because they were the
invaders of Israel's rights, and the unjust possessors
of Israel's huds, were they therefore the inheritors
of Israel's blood and honor? How absurd were
those pretensions! (2.) She is out in claiming this
well as Jacob's gift, whereas he did not give it
themanmna, ch. 6. 32. But thus we are apt to call
the messengers of God's gifts the donors of the
gifts, and the hand to whom the gift, is given, the
hand that passes through, as to forget the hand they
come from. Jacob gave it to his sons, not to them.
Yet thus the church's enemies not only usurp, but
monopolize, the church's privileges. (3.) She was out
in speaking of Christ as not worthy to be compared
with our father Jacob. An over-fond veneration for
antiquity makes God's graces, in the good people of
countries distant from the gospel, less estimable.
[5.] Christ answers this cavil, and makes it out
that the living water he had to give, was far better
than that of Jacob's well, v. 13, 14. Though she
spoke perversely, Christ did not cast her off, but
instructed and encouraged her. He shows her,
First, That the water of Jacob's well yielded but
a little water, &c. (v. 14.) And supply: [4.] And
drinketh of this water, shall thirst again. It is no
better than other water: it will quench the present thirst,
but the thirst will return, and in a few hours a man
will have as much need, and as much desire, of
water as ever he had." This speaks, 1. The immi-
rities of our bodies in this present state; they are still
imperfections, and ever craving. Life is a fire, a lump,
which will soon go out, without continual supplies of
fuel and oil. The natural heat presys upon itself.

2. The imperfections of all our comforts in this
world; they are not lasting, nor our satisfaction in
them remaining. Whatever waters of comfort we
drink of, we shall thirst again. Yesterday's meat
and drink will not do to-day's work.

Secondly, That the living waters he would give,
should yield a lasting satisfaction and bliss, v. 14.
Christ's gifts appear most valuable, when they come
to be compared with the things of this world; for
there will appear no comparison between them.
Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the
comforts of the everlasting gospel, 1. He shall never
thirst; he will find that which will abundantly
satisfy his soul's desires, they are not long
lasting, but not languishing. A desiring thirst he has,
nothing more than God, still more and more of God:
but not a despiring thirst. 2. Therefore he shall
never thirst, because this water that Christ gives,
shall be in him a well of water. He can never be
reduced to extremity, that has in himself a foun-
data of supply and satisfaction. (1.) Ever ready, for
it shall be in him. The principle of grace planted
in him, is the spring of his comfort; see ch. 7. 38.
A good man is satisfied from himself, for Christ
dwells in his heart. The anointing abides in him;
he needs not speak to the world for comfort; the
work, and the witness of the Spirit in the heart fur-
nish him with a firm foundation of hope, and an
everlasting spring of that which satisfies him. And
when he drinks of this water, it shall be in him a well
of water. He that has at hand but a bucket of water, needs not thirst as long
as that lasts, but that will soon be exhausted; belie-
vers have in them a well of water, overflowing,
ever flowing. The principles and affections which
Christ's holy religion forms in the souls of those
that are captivated to the power of it, are this well
of eternal refreshment. It is springing up, ever in motion,
which speaks the acting of grace strong and
vigorou.

If good truths stagnate in our souls, like
standing water, they do not answer the end of our
receiving them. If there be a good treasure in
the heart, we must thence bring forth good things.
(2.) It is springing up unto everlasting life; which speaks,
First, the arms of gracious actings. A sanctified
soul has its eye upon heaven; means that, designs
that, does all for that, will take up with nothing short
of that. Spiritual life springs up towards its
own perfection in eternal life. Secondly, The con-
stancy of those actings; it will continue springing up
till it come to perfection. Thirdly, the crown
of them, eternal life at last. The living water rises
from heaven, and therefore rises toward heaven; see
Eccl. 1. 7. Is this water better than that of Jacob's well.
[6.] The woman (whether in jest or earnest is
hard to say) begs of him to give her some of
this water; (v. 13.) Give me this water, that I thirst not.
First, Some think that she speaks tauntingly, and
ridicules what Christ had said as mere stuff; and, in
decision of it, not desires but challenges him to give
her some of the living water. If he does not, he shall
save me a great deal of pain if I thirst not, and
a deal of pains if I never come hither to draw." But
Secondly, Others think that it was a well-meant,
but weak and ignorant desire. She apprehended
that he meant something very good and useful, and there-
therewith Amen, at a venture. Whatever it be, let
me have it; which is well, but saving of a quick
is a valuable good to poor labouring people.
Note, 1. Even those that are weak and
ignorant may yet have some faint and fluctuating
desires towards Christ and his gifts, and some good
wishes of grace and glory, 2. Carnal hearts, in
their best wishes, look no higher than carnal ends.
Give it me," says she, "not that I may have ever-
lasting life," (which Christ proposed,) "but that I
may come hither to draw."
(2.) The next subject of discourse with this woman, is concerning her husband; v. 16—18. It was not to let fall the discourse of the water of life, that Christ started this, as many who will bring in any unimportance in conversation, that they may dismiss a serious subject; but it had with a gracious design that Christ mentioned it. What he had said concerning his grace and eternal life, he found, had made little impression upon her, because she had not been convinced of sin; therefore, waving the discourse about the living water, he sets himself to awaken her conscience, to open the wound of guilt, and then she would more easily apprehend the remedy by grace. And this is the method of dealing with souls; they must first be made sorry and sincerely-laden under the burden of sin, and then brought to Christ for rest; first pricked to the heart, and then healed. This is the course of spiritual physic; and if we proceed not in this order, we begin at the wrong end.

Observe, First, How discreetly and decently Christ introduces this discourse; (v. 16.) Go, call thy husband, and come hither. Now, 1. The order Christ gave her, had a very good colour; "Call thy husband, that he may teach thee, and help thee to understand these things, which thou art so ignorant of." The wives that will learn, must ask their husbands, (1 Cor. 14. 35.) who must dwell with them, as men of knowledge, 1 Pet. 3. 7. "Call thy husband, that he may learn with thee; that then ye may be heirs together of the grace of life." Call thy husband, that he may be witness to what passes between us. Christ would thus teach us to provide things honest in the sight of all men, and to study that which is of good report. 2. As it had a good colour, so it had a good design; for from hence he would take occasion to call her sin to remembrance. There is need of art and prudence in giving reproves; to fetch a compass, as the woman of Tekoa, 2 Sam. 14. 26.

Secondly, How insidiously the woman seeks to evade the conviction, and yet insensibly convicts herself, and, ere she is aware, owns her fault; she said, I have no husband. Her saying this intimated no more than that she did not care to have her husband spoken of nor that matter mentioned any more. She would not have her husband come thither, lest, in further discourse, the truth of the matter should come out, to her confusion and the cutting of the thing in pieces. She says, I have no husband; she would be thought a maid or a widow, whereas, though she had no husband, she was neither. The carnal mind is very ingenious to shift off convictions, and to keep them from fastening; careful to cover the sin.

Thirdly, How closely our Lord Jesus brings home the conviction to her conscience. It is probable that he said more than this at the first, but that which is here recorded, is concerning her husband. Here is, 1. A surprising narrative of her past conversation; Thou hast five husbands. Doubtless, it was not her affection, (the burying of so many husbands,) but her sin, that Christ intended to upbraid her with; either she had eloped, (as the law speaks,) had run away, from her husbands, and married others; or she had so often been unfaithful, unlucky, joyless, and dejected, had provoked them to divorce her, or by indirect means had, contrary to law, divorced her. Those who make light of such scandals practices as these, as no more but nine days wonder, and as if the guilt were over as soon as the talk is over, should remember that Christ keeps account of all. To see a reproof of her present state of life; He whom thou hast hated, is not thy husband. Either she was never married to him at all, or he had some other wife; or, which is most probable, her former husband or husbands were living; so that, in short, she lived in adultery. Yet observe how mildly Christ tells her of it; he doth not call her a strumpet, but tells her, He with whom thou hast lived, is not thy husband. Christ approaches to a person with a view to her peace. The greatest presumptuousness is ordained and profitable to persons, when they are endeavoring to say the rest. Note, Reprods are ordinarily most profitable when they are least proceeding. Yet in this he puts a better construction than it would well bear, upon what she said by way of shuffle and evasion; Thou hast well said, I have no husband; and again, In that saidst thou truly. What she intended as a denial of the fact, (that she had none with whom she lived as a husband,) he favourably interpreted, or at least turned upon her as a confession of the fault. Note, Those who would win souls, should make the best of them, whereby they may hope to work upon their good-nature; for if they make the worst of them, they certainly aggravate their ill-nature.

(3.) The next subject of discourse with this woman, is concerning the place of worship, (v. 19—24,) where we may observe,

First, A case of conscience proposed to Christ by the woman, concerning the place of worship, v. 19, 20. And there,

1. The inducement she had to put this case; Sir, I perceive that thou art a Prophet. She does not deny the truth of what he had charged her with, but by her silence owns the justice of the reproof; nor is she put into a passion by it, as many are when they are touched in a sore place; does not impute injustice to its messenger, nor does she, as some of the Samaritans; but (which is a rare thing) can hear to be told of a fault. But that is not all, she goes further, (1.) She speaks respectfully to him, calls him Sir. Thus should we honour those that deal faithfully with us. This was the effect of Christ's meekness in reproving her; she gave her no ill language, and then she gave him none. (2.) She acknowledges her duty, to be a Prophet; one that had a correspondence with Heaven. Note, The power of the word of Christ in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret sins, is a great proof of his divine authority. 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. (3.) She desires some further instruction from him. Many that are not angry at their reprovers, nor fly in their faces, yet are afraid of them, and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have me more discourse with him. She did not tell him of her faults. 2. The case itself that she proposed concerning the place of religious worship in public. She thinks that she started this, to shift off further discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prove great prejudices to serious godliness; but, it should seem, she proposed it with a good design: she knew she must worship God, and desired to do it aright; and therefore, meeting with a Prophet, begs his direction. Note, It is our wisdom to preserve all our queries about the things of God. When we are in company with those that are fit to teach, let us be forward to learn; and have a good question ready to put to those who are able to give a good answer.

It was agreed between the Jews and the Samaritans, that God is to be worshipped; (even those who were such fools as to worship false gods, were not such brutes as to worship none;) and that religious worship is a mixture of great importance, we should not contend about it, if we were not concerned about it. But the matter in variance was, where they should worship God. Observe how she states the case.

(1.) As for the Samaritans; Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, near adjoining to this city, and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sambath; in favour of which she insinuates, [1.] That, whatever the temple was, the place was holy;
it was mount Gerizim, the mount on which the blessings were pronounced; and, some think, the same on which Abraham built his altar, (Gen. 12, 6, 7.) and Jacob his, Gen. 33. 18. [2.] That it might plead prescription; Our fathers worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition, and succession, on their side. A vain conversation often supports itself with this, that it was received by tradition, and therefore it is true. But she had little reason to boast of their fathers; for, in Antiochus, persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, and called by his name. Joseph. Antiq. lib. 12. cap. 7.

(2.) As to the Jews: Ye say, that in Jerusalem is the temple of God, and in Jerusalem, the temple of Mount Zion. The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and (some think) received them only as canonical. Now, though they found frequent mention there of the place God would choose, yet they did not find it named there; and they saw the temple at Jerusalem stripped of many of its ancient glories, and therefore think themselves at liberty to set up another place, altar against altar.

Josephus first answers this, by the case of conscience, v. 21, &c. Those that apply themselves to Christ for instruction, shall find him meek, to teach the meek his way. Now here,

1. He puts a slight upon the question, as she had proposed it, concerning the place of worship; (v. 21.) "Woman, believe me as a prophet, and mark what I say. Thou art expecting the hour to come, when either by some divine revelation, or some signal providence, this matter shall be decided in favour either of Jerusalem or of mount Gerizim; but I tell thee, the hour is at hand, when it shall be no more a question; that which thou hast been taught to lay so much weight on, shall be set aside as a thing indifferent." Note. It should cool us in our contests, to think that these things which now fill us, and which we make such a noise about, shall shortly vanish, and be no more; the very things we are striving about, are passing away; The hour comes when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. (1.) The object of worship is supposed to continue still the same,—God, as a Father; under that notion the very heathen worshipped God, the Jews did so, and, probably, the Samaritans. (2.) But a period shall be put to all niceness and all differences about the place of worship. The approaching destruction of the Jewish edifice, and the erecting of the evangelical state, shall set this matter at large, and lay all in common, so that it shall be a thing perfectly indifferent, whether in either of these places, or any other, men worship God, for they shall not be tied to any place; neither here nor there, but both, and any where, and everywhere. Note, The worship of God is not now, under the gospel, appropriated to any place, as it was in the law, but it is God's will, that men should worship him everywhere, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Mal. 1. 11. Our reason teaches us to consult decency and convenience in the place of our worship; but our religion gives no preference to one place above another, in respect of holiness and acceptableness to God. They who prefer any worship merely for the sake of the house or building in which it is performed, (though it be well calculated and as well suited to the order of God's temple was,) forget that the hour is come, when there shall be no difference put in God's account; no, not between Jerusalem, which had been so famous for sanctity, and the mountain of Samaria, which had been so infamous for impiety.

2. He lays a stress upon other things, in the matter of religious worship. When he made so light of the place of worship, he did not intend to lessen our concern about the thing itself, which therefore he takes occasion to discourse of more fully. (1.) As to the present state of the controversy, he determines against the Samaritan worship, and in favour of the Jews, v. 22. He tells her here,

[1.] That the Samaritans are certainly in the wrong; not merely because they worshipped in this mountain, though, while Jerusalem's choice was in force, they were guilty, but because they were out of the object of their worship; if the worship itself had been as it should be, its separation from Jerusalem might have been convicted as the high places were in the best reigns; But ye worship ye know not what, or that which ye do not know; they worshipped the God of Israel, the true God, (Ezra 4. 2. 2 Kings 17. 32.) but they were sunk into grave religious mistakes, is testified of them, 2 Kings 17. 27, 35.) as a local deity, like the gods of the nations, whereas God must be served as God, as the universal Cause and Lord. Note, Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the murderer of it. Those that worship God ignorantly, offer the blind for sacrifice, and it is the sacrifice of fools. [2.] That the Jews were certainly in the right. For, First, "We know what we worship. We go upon sure grounds in our worship, for our people are catechised and trained up in the knowledge of God, as he has revealed himself in the scripture." Note, Those who by the scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God, (a certain though not a perfect knowledge,) may worship him comfortably to themselves, and acceptably to him, for they know what they worship. Christ elsewhere came against the corruptions of the Jews' worship, (Matt. 15. 9.) and yet here defends the worship itself; the worship may be true where yet it is not pure and entire. Observe, Our Lord Jesus was pleased to reckon himself among the worshippers of God; We worship. Though he were a Son, (and then are the children free,) yet learned he this obedience, in the days of his humiliation. Let not the greatest of men think the worship of God below them, when the Son of God himself did not.

Secondly, Salvation is of the Jews; and therefore they know what they worship, and what ground they go upon in their worship. Not that all the Jews were saved, or that it was not possible but that many of the Gentiles and Samaritans might be saved, for in every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him; but, 1. The author of eternal salvation comes of the Jews, appears among them, (Rom. 9, 8.) and is sent first to bless them. 2. The means of eternal salvation are afforded to them. The word of Salvation (Acts 13. 28.) was of the Jews. It was delivered to them, and was through them derived to other nations. This was a sure guide to them in their devotions, and the good fellowship and communion thereof before what were worshipped. To them were committed the oracles of God, (Rom. 3. 2.) and the service of God, Rom. 9. 4. The Jews therefore being thus privileged and advanced, it was presumption for the Samaritans to vie with them.

(2.) He describes the evangelical worship, which alone God would accept of, and be well pleased with; having showed that the place is indifferent, he now proceeds to the form of worship. The form is the manner in which we worship God in spirit and in truth, v. 23, 24. The stress is not to be laid upon the so_de where we worship God, but with what mind we worship him. Note, The most effectual way to take up differences in the lesser matters of religion is to be more zealous in the greater. They who daily make it the matter of their care to worship in the spirit, care would
him. should not make it the matter of their strife, whether he should be worshipped here or there. Chris had just preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan: yet here he intimates the imperfection of that. The worship was ceremonial: and sometimes part of the new covenant and much strangers to the inward part of divine worship. Note, It is possible that we may be better than our neighbours, and yet not as good as we should be. It concerns us to be right, not only in the object of our worship, but in the manner of it; and that is which Christ here instructs us in.

Observe, 1. The great and glorious revolution which should produce this change: The hour cometh, and now is—was, the stated time, concerning which it was of old determined when it should come, and how long it should last. The time of its appearance is fixed to an hour, so punctual and exact are the divine counsels; the time of its continuance is limited to an hour, so close and pressing is the opportunity of divine grace, 2 Cor. 6. 2. This hour cometh, it is coming in its full strength, last, and perfection it now doth in the embryo and infancy. The perfect day is coming, and now it doth. [2.] The blessed change itself. In gospel-times the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. As creatures, we worship the Father of all; as christians, we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus. Now the change shall be,

First, In the nature of the worship. Christians shall worship God, not in the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic institution, but in spirit and in truth, consisting less in bodily exercise, and animated and invigorated more with divine power and energy.

The way, of worship which Christ has instituted, is rational and intellectual, and refined from these external rates and ceremonies with which the Old-Testament worship was both clouded and clogged. This is called true worship, in opposition to that which was typical. The legal services were figures of the true, Heb. 9. 24. They that revolted from Judaism to Christianity, are said to have begun in the spirit, and end in the flesh, Gal. 3. 3. Such was the difference between Old-Testament and New-Testament institutions.

Secondly, In the temper and disposition of the worshippers; and so the true worshippers are good christians, distinguished from hypocrites: all should, and they will, worship God in spirit and in truth. And, as spoken of, (v. 24.) as their character, and, (v. 23.) as their concern. Note, It is required of all that worship God, that they worship him in spirit and in truth. 1. We must worship God in spirit, Phil. 3. 3. We must depend upon God's Spirit for strength and assistance, laying our souls under his influences and operations: we must devote our own spirits to, and employ them in, the service of God; (Rom. 8. 2.) must worship him with fixedness of thought, and a flame of affection, with all that is grateful, sweet, and sublimity, in opposition to the flesh, which is the corrupt nature; and so to worship God with our spirit, is to worship him with our graces, Heb. 12. 28. 2. In truth, that is, in sincerity; God requires not only the inward part in our worship, but truth in the inward parts. Ps. 31. 6. We must mind the power more than the form; must aim at God's glory, and not be seen of men; draw near with a true heart, Ps. 101. 1.

(3.) The reason why God must be thus worshipped.

[1.] Because in gospel-times they, and they only, are accounted the true worshippers. The gospel erects a spiritual way of worship, so that the professors of the gospel are not true in their professions, do not live up to gospel-light and laws, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth.

[2.] Because the Father seeketh such worshippers of him. This intimates, First, That such worshippers are very rare, and seldom met with, Jer. 29. 21. The gate of spiritual worshiping is strait. Secondly, That such worship is necessary, and what the God of all grace does open. When God can inspire neither inquirers for worshippers, the question will be, "Who worshipped at Jerusalem?" but, "Who worshipped in spirit?" That will be the touchstone. Thirdly, That God is greatly well pleased with, and graciously accepts of such worship and such worshippers. I have desired it, Ps. 52. 13, 14. Cant. 2. 14. Fourthly, That there has been, and will be to the end, a remnant of such worshippers; his work being so much more than the right knowledge of God. Note, First, God is a Spirit, for he is an infinite and eternal Mind; an intelligent Being, incorporeal, immaterial, invisible, and incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not, than what he is; a spirit has not flesh and bones, but who knows the way of a spirit? If God were not a Spirit, he could not be perfect, nor infinite, nor eternal, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits. Secondly, The spirituality of the divine nature is a very good reason for the spirituality of divine worship. If we do not worship God, who is a Spirit, in the spirit, we neither give him the glory due to his name, and so do not perform the act of worship: nor can we hope to obtain his favor and acceptance, and so we miss of the end of worship, Matt. 15. 8. 9. (4.) The last subject of discourse with this man, is, concerning the Messias, v. 25, 26. Observe here, First, The faith of the man, by which she expected the Messiah: I know that Messias cometh—and he will tell us all things. She had nothing to object against what Christ had said; his discourse was, for ought she knew, what might become the Messiah then expected: but from him she should receive it, and in the mean time she thinks it best to suspend her belief. Thus many have no heart to hear the word of Christ, (Matt. 13. 19.) and of those that do, think they have a better in their eye, and deceive themselves with a promise that they will learn that hereafter, which they neglect now. Observe here, 1. Whom she expects: I know that Messias cometh. The Jews and Samaritans, though so much at variance, agreed in the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Samaritans received the writings of Moses on the same terms as the prophets, nor were the Jewish hopes of the Jewish nation; those who knew least, knew this, that Messias was to come: so general and uncontested was the expectation of him, and at this time more raised than ever; (for the scepter was departed from Judah, Daniel's weeks were near expiring;) so that she concludes not only, He will come, but it is I; he, he comes, he is just at hand! Messias, which is called Christ. The Greek word Messias, (which the woman used in honour to the holy language, and to the Jewish church, that used it familiarly,) yet, writing for the use of the Gentiles, he takes care to render it by a Greek word of the same signification, which is called Christ—Anointed; giving an example to the apostle's rule, that, whatever is spoken in a less vulgar tongue, should be interpreted, 1 Cor. 14. 27. 28.
2. What she expects from him: "He will tell us all things relating to the kingdom of God which are necessary for us to know, and tell us that which will supply our defects, rectify our mistakes, and put an end to all our disputes. He will tell us the mind of God fully and clearly, and keep back nothing." Now this implies an acknowledgment, (1.) Of the deficiency and imperfection of the discovery they now had of the divine will, and the rule they had of the divine worship; it could not make the sense thereof perfectly; and therefore they expected some great advance and improvement in matters of religion, a time of reformation. (2.) Of the sufficiency of the Messiah to make this change; "He will tell us all things which we want to know, and about which we wrangle in the dark. He will introduce peace, by leading us into all truth, and dispelling the mists of error." It seems this was the comfort of good people in those dark times, that light would arise; if they found themselves at a loss, and run a-ground, it was a satisfaction to them to say, When Messiah comes, he will tell us all things; as it may be to us now with reference to his second coming; now we see through a glass, but then face to face.

Secondly, The favour of our Lord Jesus in making himself known. (v. 26.) He that speaketh to thee, saith he, and the Spirit did not make himself known so express to any as he did here to this poor Samaritan, and to the blind man; (ch. 9. 37.) no, nor to John Baptist, when he sent to him; Matth. 11. 4, 5.) no, not to the Jews, when they challenged him to tell them whether he was the Christ, ch. 10. 24. But, 1. Christ would thus put an honour upon such as were poor and despised; 2. It was an angled of God, who had never had an opportunity of seeing Christ's miracles, which were then the ordinary method of conviction. Note, To those who have not the advantage of the external means of knowledge and grace, God hath secret ways of making up the want of them; we must therefore judge charitably concerning such; God can make the light of grace shine into the heart, even where he doth not make the light of the gospel shine in the face. 3. This woman was better prepared to receive such a discovery than others were; she was big with expectation of the Messiah, and ready to receive instruction from him. Christ will manifest himself to those who with an honest, humble heart desire to be acquainted with him; I that speak to thee, am he. See here, (1.) How near Jesus Christ was to her, when she knew not who he was, Gen. 28. 16. Many are lamenting Christ's absence, and longing for his presence, when at the same time he is speaking to them. (2.) How Christ makes himself known to us by speaking to us; I that speak unto thee so closely, so convincingly, with such assurance, with such authority, I am he.

27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 28. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men. 29. Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ? 30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. 31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? 34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. 38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. 39. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified. He told me all that ever I did. 40. So when the Samarians were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41. And many more believed because of his own word; 42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

We have here the remainder of this story of what happened when Christ was in Samaria, after the long conference he had with the woman.

I. The interruption given to this discourse by the disciples coming. It is probable that much more was said than is recorded; but just when the discourse was brought to a head, when Christ had made himself known to her as the true Messiah, then came the disciples. The daughters of Jerusalem shall not stir up, nor awake my love till he please. 1. They wondered at Christ's converse with this woman; marvelled that he talked thus earnestly (as perhaps they observed at a distance) with a woman, a strange woman, alone, he used to be more reserved; especially with a Samaritan woman, that was not of the house of Israel; see Matt. 15. 22. The Samaritans should be as shy of the Samaritans as the other Jews were, at least, that he should not preach the gospel to them. They wondered he should so descend to talk with such a poor, contemptible woman, forgetting what despicable men they themselves were when Christ first called them into fellowship with himself. 2. Yet they acquiesced in it; they knew it was for some good reason, and some good end, which he was not bound to give them an account of, and therefore none of them asked, What seest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? Thus when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves with this in general, that all is well which Jesus Christ saith and doeth. Perhaps there was something amiss in the discourse, or marvelling that Christ should speak with the woman, and that it was something like the Pharisees being offended at his eating with publicans and sinners. But, whatever they thought, they said nothing; If thou hast thought evil, at any time, lay thy hand upon thy mouth, to keep that evil thought from turning into an evil word, Prov. 30. 33. Ps. 39. 1-3.

II. The notice which the woman gave to her neighbours, of the extraordinary person she had happily met with, v. 28, 29. Observe here.

1. How she forgot her errand to the well, v. 28.
Therefore the disciples were come, and broke up the discourse, and perhaps she observed them not, but went her way. She withdrew, in civility to Christ, that he might have leisure to eat his dinner. She delighted in his discourse, but would not be rude; every thing is beautiful in its season. She supposed that Jesus when he had dined, would go forward in his journey, and therefore hastened to tell her neighbours, that they might come quickly; Yet a little while is the light, says she, which thou hast; work the works of him that sent thee, for there is night coming on, and thou must work; every work was done, she applied herself to another. When opportunities of getting good cease, or are interrupted, we should seek opportunities of doing good: when we have done hearing the word, then it is a time to be speaking of it.

Notice is taken of her leaving her water-pot, or pud. (1.) She left it in kindness to Christ, that he might have to drink with his dinner; and her water was his drink; he turned water into wine for others, but not for himself. Compare this with Rebecca's civility to Abraham's servant. (Gen. 24. 19.) and see that promise, Matt. 10. 42. (2.) She left it, that she might make the more haste into the city, to carry tidings these good tidings. Those whose business it is to publish the name of Christ, must not cumber or entangle themselves with anything that might hinder them thereto. When the disciples were to be made fishers of men, they must forsake all. (3.) She left her water-pot, as one careless of it, being wholly taken up with better things. Note, Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ, will show it by a holy contempt of this world, and the things of it. And those who are newly acquainted with the things of God, must be earnest, but first they so taken up with that new world into which they are brought, that the things of this world seem to be for a time wholly neglected. Mr. Hildersham, in one of his sermons on this verse, from this instance, largely justifies those who have their worldly business on week days, to go to hear sermons.

How she minded her errand to the town, for her heart was upon it; she went into the city, and said to the men, probably the inhabitants, the men in authority, whom, it may be, she found met together upon some public business; or to the men, that is, to every man she met in the streets; she proclaimed it in the chief places of concourse, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ? Observe,

(1.) How solicitous she was to bring her friends and neighbours acquainted with Christ. When she had found that treasure, she called together her friends and neighbours, (as Luke 15. 9.) not only to rejoice with her, but to share with her; knowing there was enough to enrich herself and all that would partake with her. Note. They that have been themselves with Jesus, and have found comfort in him, should do all they can to bring others to him. Has he done us the honour to make himself known to us? Let us do him the honour to make him known to others; nor can we do ourselves a greater honour. This woman becomes an apostle. Quae scortum fiscrat egressa, regreditus magistra evangeliæ—She went forth, a specimen of impiety, returns, a teacher of evangelical truth, saith Arment. Christ had bid her call her husband, which she thought was warrant enough to call every body. She went into the city, the city where she dwelt, among her kindred and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbour, that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most opportunity, and therefore lie under the most obligations, to do good to those that live near me. Where the tree falls, there let it be made useful.

(2.) How fair and ingenuous she was in the notices she gave them concerning the stranger she had met with. [1.] She tells them plainly what induced her to admire him: He has told me all things that ever I did. No more is recorded than what he told her of her husbands; but it is not improbable that he had told her of more of her faults. Or, his telling her of that which she knew he could not by any ordinary means come to the knowledge of, convinced her that he could have told her of all that ever she did. If he had so done, she would have been a divine creature of consciencen. He told her that which none knew but God, and her own conscience. Two things affected her, First, The extent of his knowledge. We ourselves cannot tell all things that ever we did; (many things pass unheeded, and more pass away and are forgotten;) but Jesus Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions, of all the children of men; see Heb. 4. 13. He hath said, As the man sows, so shall he reap; Serenæus, The power of his word. This made a great impression upon her, that he had told her her secret sins with such an unaccountable power and energy, that, being told of these, she is convinced of all, and judged of all. She does not say, Come, see a man that has told me strange things concerning religious worship, and the laws of it, that has decided the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem, a man that calls himself the Messiah, and makes his claim to be the propitiation of my sins. She fastens upon that part of Christ's discourse, which one would think she should have been most shy of repeating; but experimental proofs of the power of Christ's word and Spirit are of all others the most cogent and convincing; and that knowledge of Christ into which we are led by the conviction of sin and humiliation, is most likely to be sound and sincere.

[2.] She invites them to come, and see him whom she had conceived so high an opinion of. Not barely, "Come, and look upon him," (she does not invite them to him as a show;) but, "Come, and converse with him; come, and hear his wisdom, as I have done, and you will be of my mind." She would not undertake to manage the arguments which had convinced her, in such a manner as to convince others; all that see the evidence of truth themselves are not able to make others see it; but, "Come, and talk with him, and you will find such a power in his words as far exceeds all other evidence." Note. Those who can do little else toward the conviction and conversion of others, may and should bring them to those means of grace which they themselves have found effectual. Jesus was now at the town's end; "Now come see him." When opportunities of getting the knowledge of God are brought to our doors, we are insecure if we neglect them; shall we not go over the threshold to see him, whose day prophets and kings desired to see?

[3.] She resolves to appeal to themselves, and their own sentiments upon the trial; Is not this the Christ? She does not peremptorily say, He is the Messiah; how clear soever she was in her own mind, and is, of the Messiah, when otherwise they would not have thought of, and then refers it to themselves; she will not impose her faith upon them, but only propose it to them. By such fair, but forcible appeals as these, men's judgments and consciences are sometimes taken hold of ere they are aware.

(3.) What success she had in this invitation; (2.) They went out of the city, and came to him. Though it might seem very improbable that a woman of so small a figure, and so ill a character, should have the honour of the first discovery of the Messiah among the Samaritans, yet it pleased God to incline their hearts to take notice of her report, and not to slight it as an idle tale. Time was, when lepers were the first that brought tidings to Samaria.
of a great deliverance, 2 Kings 7. 3, &c. They came unto him; did not send for him into the city to them; but, in token of their respect to him, and the earnestness of their desire to see him, they went out to him. Those that would know Christ, must meet him where he records his name.

III. Christ's discourse with his disciples, while the woman was absent, p. 31-34. See how industrious our Lord Jesus was to redeem time, to husband every minute of it, and to fill up the vacancies of it. When the disciples were gone into the town, he remained with the woman. He was not good to the souls of them that would not think of it, and suited to her case; when she was gone into the town, his discourse with them was no less edifying, and suited to their case; it were well if we could thus gather up the fragments of time, that none of it may be lost.

Two things are observable in this discourse: 1. How Christ expresses the delight which he himself had in his work. His work was to seek and save that which was lost, to go about doing good. Now this work we here find him wholly taken up with.

For, (1.) He neglected his meat and drink for his work. When he sat down upon the well, he was weary, and needed refreshment; but this opportunity of saving souls made him forget his weariness and hunger. And he minded his food so little, that, [1.] He forewent himself. He did not sit down to eat at all. Thus they prayed him, they pressed him, saying, Master, eat. It was an instance of their love to him, that they invited him, lest he should be faint and sick for want of some support; but it was a greater instance of his love to souls, that he needed invitation; let us learn hence a holy indifference even to the needful supports of life, in comparison with spiritual things. [2.] He minded it so little, that he suspected that he had brought him in his absence; (v. 33.) Has any man brought him ought to eat? He had so little appetite to his dinner, that they were ready to think he had dined already. They that make religion their business, when any of its affairs to be attended, will prefer them before their food; as Abraham's servant, that would not eat till he had told his errand, (Gen. 24. 33.) and Samuel, who would not sit down till David was announced, 1 Sam. 16. 11.

(2.) He made his word his meat and drink. The work he had done in instructing the woman; the work he had to do among the Samaritans; the prospect he now had of doing good to many, this was meat and drink to him; it was the greatest pleasure and satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry man, or an epicure, expect a plentiful feast with so much desire, nor feed upon its dainties with so much delight, as our Lord Jesus expected and improved an opportunity of doing good to souls. Concerning this he saith, [1.] That it was such meat as the disciples knew not of. They did not imagine that he had any design or prospect of planting his gospel among the Samaritans; this was a piece of uselessness they never thought of. Note, Christ by his gospel has done more to the souls of men than his own disciples knew of or expect. This may be said of good Christians too, who live by faith, that they have meat to eat which others know not of; joy which a stranger does not intermeddle with. Now this word made them ask, Has any man brought him ought to eat? So apt were even his own disciples to understand him after a corporal and carnal manner, when he spoke to them in a spiritual manner. But the work he did was his meat and drink, was, because it was his Father's work, his Father's will; (v. 34.) My meat is to do the will of him that sent me. Note, First, The salvation of sinners is the will of God, and the instruction of them in order thereunto is his work. See 1 Tim. 2. 4. There is a chosen remnant whose salvation is in a particular manner his will. Secondly, Christ was sent into the world on this errand, to bring people to God; to know him, and to be happy in him. Thirdly, He was not only sent, but he brought his business thither himself. He who needed food, his mind was so taken up with this, that he forgot both hunger and thirst, both meat and drink. Nothing could be more grateful to him than doing good; when he was invited to meat, he went, that he might do good, for that was his meat always. Fourthly, He was not only ready upon all occasions to go to his work, but he was earnest and in earnest in going to his work. He was in all the parts of it. He resolved never to quit it, or lay it down, till he could say, It is finished. Many have zeal to carry them out at first, but not zeal to carry them on to the last; but our Lord Jesus was intent upon finishing his work. Our master has herein left us an example, that we may learn to do the will of God as he did; 1. With diligence and these applications, as those that make a business of it. 2. With delight and pleasure in it, as in our element. 3. With constancy and perseverance; not only willing to do, but aiming to finish, our work.

2. See here, how Christ, having expressed his delight in his work, excites his disciples to diligence in their work; they were workers with him, and therefore should be workers like him, and make harvest-work the work of their life. This was what they had to do, to preach the gospel, and by it to set up the kingdom of the Messiah. Now this work he here compares to harvest-work, which is the gathering in of the fruits of the earth; and this similitude he prosecutes throughout this discourse, p. 35-38. Note, Gospel-time is harvest-time, and gospel-work harvest-work. The harvest is before appointed and expected; so was the gospel. Harvest-time is busy time, and so is gospel-time. Much must be done in it; for the harvest is great, the laborers few. And, in gospel-time, all must work for himself, that he may reap of the graces and comforts of the gospel: ministers must work for God, to gather in souls to him. Harvest-time is opportunity, a short and limited time which will not last always; and harvest-work is work that must be done then, or not at all; so the time of the enjoyment of the gospel is a particular season, which must be improved for its proper purposes; and, once past, it cannot be recalled. The disciples were to gather in a harvest of souls for Christ. Now he here suggests three things to them to quicken them to diligence.

(1.) That it was necessary work, and the occasion for it very urgent and pressing; (p. 35.) Ye say, It is four months to harvest; but I say, The fields are already white. Here is, [1.] A saying of Christ's concerning his disciples concerning the corn-harvest; there are yet four months, and then comes harvest, which may be taken either generally; "You say, for the encouragement of the sower at seed-time, that it will be but four months to the harvest." With us it is but about four months between the barley-season, and the barley-harvest, probably it was so with them as to other grain; "It is said generally now at this time, that the harvest will be four months off, or according to the ordinary course of Providence." The Jews' harvest began at the passover, about Easter, much earlier in the year than ours; by which it appears that this journey of Christ from Judea to Galilee was in the winter, about the end of November, or he travelled all weather, to do good. God has not only promised us a harvest every year, but he has appointed us to the harvest; so that we know when to expect it, and take our measures accordingly. [2.] Here is a saying of Christ's concerning the gospel-harvest; his heart was as much upon the fruits of his gospel as the hearts of others were upon the fruits of the earth; and to that he would lead the thoughts of his disciples; Look, the fields are already white unto the harvest.
First. Here in this place where they now were, there was harvest-work for him to do. They would have him to eat, v. 31. "Eat!" saith he, "I have other work to do, that is more needful; look how crowds of Samaritans are coming out of the town over the fields, that are ready to receive the gospel," probably, there were many now in view. People's readiness to hear the word, is a great encouragement to ministers' diligence and liveliness in preaching it.

Secondly. In other places, all the country over, there was harvest-work enough for them all to do. "Consider the regions; think of the state of the country, and you will find there are multitudes as ready to receive the gospel as a field of corn that is fully ripe, is ready to be reaped." The fields were now made white to the harvest. 1. By the decree of God revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Now, John shows the gathering of the people should be to Christ, (Gen. 44. 16.) when great ascensions should be made to the church, and the bounds of it shuld be enlarged, and therefore it was time for them to be busy. It is a great encouragement to us to engage in any work for God, if we understand by the signs of the times that this is the proper season for that work, for then it will prosper. 2. By the gathering of the people already. Christ has ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke 1. 17. Since he began to preach the kingdom of God, every man pressed into it, Luke 16. 16. This therefore was a time for the preachers of the gospel to apply themselves to work with the utmost vigour; to thrust in their sickle, when the harvest was ripe, Rev. 14. 13. It was necessary to work now; pity that such a season should be let slip. If the corn that is ready to be reaped he lost, and the fowls will pick it up. If souls that are under convictions, and have some good inclinations, be not helped now, their hopeful beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a prey to pretenders. It was also easy work now; when the people's hearts are prepared, the work will be done suddenly, 2 Chron. 29. 56. It cannot but quicken ministers to take pains in preaching the word, when they know that it is easy work. (2.) That it was profitable and advantageous work, which they themselves would be gainers by; (v. 36.) "He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and so shall you." Christ has undertaken to pay those well whom he employs in his work; for he will never do as Jehovah did, who used his neighbours' service without wages, (Jer. 22. 13.) or those who by fraud kept back the hire of those particularly who reaped down their own fields, (1. Kings 4. 2.) Christ's love is open; though they cry to him day and night, shall never have cause to cry against him, nor to say that they served a hard Master. He that reapeth, not only shall receive wages, but daub receive it. There is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is in its own wages. [1.] Christ's reapers have few; He gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that is, he shall both save himself and those that hear him. And if the faithful reaper save his own soul, that is fruit abounding to his account, it is fruit gathered to life eternal.

And if, over and above this, he be instrumental to save the souls of others too, there is fruit gathered; souls gathered to Christ are good fruit, good fruit, the fruit that Christ seeks for; (Rom. 1. 13.) it is gathered for Christ, (Cant. 8. 11. 12.) it is gathered to life eternal. And if the faithful reaper save his own soul, that is fruit abounding to his account, it is fruit gathered to life eternal.

And if, over and above this, he be instrumental to save the souls of others too, there is fruit gathered; souls gathered to Christ are good fruit, good fruit, the fruit that Christ seeks for; (Rom. 1. 13.) it is gathered for Christ, (Cant. 8. 11. 12.) it is gathered to life eternal. This is the comfort of faithful labour, that their efforts and tendency to the eternal salvation of precious souls.

[2.] They have joy; that he that sows, and they that reap, may rejoice together. The minister who is the happy instrument of beginning a good work, is he that sows, as John Baptist was; he that is employed to carry it on and perfect it, is he that reaps; and both shall rejoice together. Note, First. Though God is to have all the glory of the success of the gospel, yet faithful ministers may themselves take the comfort of it. The reapers share in the joy of harvest, though the profits belong to the master. 2 Thess. 2. 19. 2. Those ministers who are variously gifted and employed, should be so far from envying one another, that they should rather mutually rejoice in each other's success. Those ministers, who on Christ's errand gather the same harvest, are not alike serviceable, nor alike successful, yet, if they have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, they shall all enter together into the joy of their Lord at last.

(3.) That it was easy work, and work that was half done to their hands by those that were gone before them; (v. 37, 38.) One soweth, and another reapeth. This sometimes speaks a grief to the hearer, that God has left upon him that sowed, Mic. 6. 13. Or, more properly, Thou shalt sow, and another shall reap; as Deut. 26. 11. House full of all good things which thine fathers did not. So here, Moses and the prophets and John Baptist had paved the way to the gospel, had sown the good seed which the New-Testament ministers did in effect but gather the fruit of. Send men to reap that which ye have sown; here designing comparison, as before, but in a different sense.

[1.] This speaks two things concerning the Old-Testament ministry. First, That it was very much short of the New-Testament ministry. Moses and the prophets sowed, but they could not be said to reap, so little did they see of the fruit of their labours. Their writings have done much more good since they left us than ever their preaching did.

Secondly. That it was very much serviceable to the New-Testament ministry. Their writings and sermons, the writings of the prophets, which were read in the synagogues every sabbath-day, raised people's expectations of the Messiah, and so prepared them to bid him welcome. Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, We know that the Messias cometh. The writings of the Old-Testament are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those whom they were written, because better understood by the accomplishment of them. See 1 Pet. 1. 12. Heb. 4. 2. Rom. 16. 25. 26.

[2.] This also speaks two things concerning the ministry of the apostles of Christ. First. That it was a fruitful ministry; they were reapers that gathered in a great harvest of souls to Jesus Christ, and did more in seven years towards the setting up of the kingdom of God among us, than the prophets of the Old Testament had done in twice so many ages. Secondly. That it was much facilitated, especially among the Jews, to whom they were first sent, by the writings of the prophets. The prophets sowed in tears, crying out, We have laboured in vain; the apostles reaped in joy, saying, Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph. Note, From the labours of ministers that are dead and gone, much good fruit may be gathered, that surpasse them, and the ministers that succeed them. John Baptist, and those that assisted him had laboured, and the disciples of Christ entered into their labours, built upon their foundation, and reaped the fruit of what they sowed. See what reason we have to bless God for those that are gone before us; for their preaching and their writing; for what they did and suffered in their day, for we are entered upon their labours, to value and study and make our work the easier. And when the ancient and modern labourers, those that came in to the vineyard at the third hour, and those that came in at the eleventh, meet in the day of account, they will be so far from envying one another the honour of their respective services, that both
they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the harvest shall be glorified in the midst of them.

IV. The good effect which this visit Christ made to the Samaritans (en passant) had upon them, and the fruit which was now presently gathered among them, v. 39—42. See what impressions were made on them.

1. By the woman's testimony concerning Christ, though a single testimony, and of one of no good repute, yet it was very much more than this. He told me all that ever I did; yet it had a good influence upon many. One would have thought that his telling the woman of her secret sins, should have made them afraid of coming to him, lest he should tell them also of their faults; but they will venture that, rather than not be acquainted with one that had reason to think was a prophet. And two things they were brought to.

(1.) To credit Christ's word; (v. 39.) Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman. So far they believed on him, that they took him for a Prophet, and were desirous to know the mind of God from him; this is favourably interpreted a believing on him. Now observe, [1.] Who they were that believed; many of the Samaritans, who were not of the house of Israel. Their faith was not only an aggravation of the unbelief of the Jews, from whom better might have been expected, but an earnest of the faith of the Gentiles, who would welcome that in which the Jews rejected.

[2.] Upon what inducement they believed, for the saying of the woman. See here, First, How God is sometimes pleased to use very weak and unlikely instruments for the beginning and carrying on of a good work. A little maid directed a great prince to Elisha, 2 Kings 5. 2. Secondly, How great a matter a little fire kindles. Our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either careless in their preaching, or discouraged in it, because their hearers are few and mean; for, by doing good to them, good may be conveyed to more, and those that are more considerable. If they teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, a great number may learn at second hand. Philip preached the gospel to a simple gentleman in his chariot upon the road, and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. See how good it is to speak everywhere of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke feelingly; He told me all that ever I did. Those are most likely to do good, that can tell what God has done for their souls, Ps. 66. 16.

(2.) They were brought to court his stay among them; (v. 40.) When they were come to him, they begged him to tarry with them. Upon the woman's report, they believed him to be a Prophet, and came to him; and when they saw him, the meanness of his appearance, and the manifest poverty of his outward condition, did not lessen their esteem of him, and expectations from him, but still they respected him as a Prophet. Note, There are hopes of those who are got over the vulgar prejudices against the gospel. Upon the first sight. So far were they from being offended in him, that they begged he would tarry with them; [1.] That they might testify their respect to him, and treat him with the honour and kindness due to his character. God's prophets and ministers are welcome guests to all those who sincerely embrace the gospel; as to Lydia, Acts 16. 13. [2.] That they might receive instruction from him. Those that are taught of God, are truly desirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Christ. Many would have welcomed to that one that would tell them of their sin, and that one that would tell them of their faults; tell them of their need of duty. The historian seems to lay an emphasis upon their being Samaritans; as Luke 10. 33.—17. 16. The Samaritans had not that reputation for religion that the Jews had; yet the Jews, who saw Christ's miracles, drove him from them, while the Samaritans, who saw not his miracles, nor shared in his favours, are more willing to receive him. Christ's gospel's success is not always according to the probability, nor what is experienced according to what is expected either way. The Samaritans were taught by the custom of their country to be shy of conversation with the Jews. There were Samaritans that refused to let Christ go through their town, (Luke 9. 52.) yet these begged him to tarry with them. Note, It is no small comfort to the praise of our love to Christ, and his word, if it conquers the prejudices of education and custom, and sets light by the censures of men.

Now we are told that Christ granted their request. First, He abode there. Though it was a city of the Samaritans near adhering to their temple, yet, when he was invited he tarry'd there; though he was upon business, yet further to go, yet, when he had an opportunity of doing good, he abide there. That is no real hindrance, which will further our account. Yet he abide there but two days, because he had other places to visit and other work to do, and those two days were as many as came to the share of this city; out of the few days of our Saviour's sojourning upon earth.

Secondly, We are told what impressions were made upon them by Christ's own word, and his personal converse with them; (v. 41, 42.) what he said and did there, is not related, whether he healed their sick or no; but it is intimated, in the effect, that he said and did that which convinced them that he was the Christ; and the labours of a minister are best told by the good fruit of them. Their hearing of him had a good effect, but now their eyes see him; and the effect of that was,

1. Their number grew; (v. 41.) Many more believed: many that would not be persuaded to go out of the town to him, were yet wrought upon when he came among them, to believe in him. Note, It is comfortable to see the number of believers; and sometimes the zeal and forwardness of some may be a blessing to others. The one is used to stir up, and to stir them up to a holy emulation, Rom. 11. 14.

2. That their faith grew. Those who had been wrought upon by the report of the woman, now saw cause to say, Now we believe, not for thy saying, v. 42. Here are three things in which their faith grew.

(1.) In the matter of it, or that which they did believe. Upon the testimony of the woman, they believed he was a Prophet. Be assured, He is an anointed Messenger from heaven; but now that they have conversed with him, they believe that he is the Christ, the Anointed One, the very same that was promised to the fathers, and expected by them; and that being the Christ, he is the Saviour of the world; for that was the work to which he was anointed, to save his people from their sins. They believed him to be a Prophet, or some such, but that he was the Christ. This is the very thing, which they hoped would take them in, though Samaritans, for it was promised that he should be Salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. 49. 6.

(2.) In the certainty of it; their faith now grew up to a full assurance; We know that this is indeed the Christ; x. 48—2. truly; not a pretended Christ, but a real one; not a typhical Saviour, as many under the Old Testament, but truly one. Such assurance as this of divine truths is what we should labour after; not only, We think it probable, and are wil
ing to suppose that Jesus may be the Christ, but, We know that he is indeed the Christ.

(3.) In the ground of it, which was a kind of spiritual sensation and experience; Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves. They had been before believing her saying, and it was well, it was a good step; but now they find that further and much firmer footing for their faith; "Now we believe, because we have heard him ourselves, and have heard such excellent and divine truths, accompanied with such commanding power and evidence, that we are abundantly satisfied and assured that this is the Christ." This is like what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon; (1 Kings 10. 6, 7.) The one half was not told me. The Samaritans, who believed for the woman's saying, now gain further light; for to him that shall be given he that is faithful in a little shall be trusted with more.

In this instance we may see how faith comes by hearing. [1.] Faith comes to the birth by hearing the report of men. These Samaritans for the sake of the woman's saying, believed so far as to come and see, and come and make trial. Thus the instructions of parents and preachers, and the testimony of the cases and effects of communion, and examples, will recommend the doctrine of Christ to our acquaintance, and incline us to entertain it as highly probable, &c. [2.] Faith comes to its growth, strength, and maturity, by hearing the testimony of Christ himself; and this goes further, and recommends his doctrine to our acceptance, and obliges us to believe it as undoubtedly certain. We were induced to look into the scriptures, by the saying of those who told us that in them they had found eternal life; but when we ourselves have found it in them too, have experienced the enlightening, convincing, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting power of the word, now we believe, not for their saying, but because we have searched them ourselves; and our faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. 2. 5. 10. 11. 12. 13.

This was the seed of the gospel sown in Samaria; what effect there was of this afterward, does not appear, but we find that four or five years after, when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, he found such blessed remains of this good work now wrought, that the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake, Acts 8. 5, 6, 8. But as some were pliable to good, so were others to evil, when Simon Magus beheld with his sorceries, v. 9, 10, 11.

43. Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45. Then, when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went unto the feast. 46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49. Then the nobleman said unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. 51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house. 54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

In these verses, we have,

1. Christ's coming into Galilee, v. 43. Though he was as welcome among the Samaritans as he could be any where, and had better success, yet after that he had left them, not for that reason only, but also because they were Samaritans, and he would not confirm those of their prejudices against him, who said, He is a Samaritan, (ch. 8. 48.) but because he must preach to other cities, Luke 4. 43. He went into Galilee, for there he spent much of his time. Now see here,

1. Whither Christ went; into Galilee, into the country of Galilee, but not to Nazareth, which was strictly his own country; he went among the villages, and the country, and the Jews; and the disciples going to Nazareth, the least likely place for a reason here given, which Jesus himself testified, who knew the temper of his countrymen, the hearts of all men, and the experiences of all prophets, and it is this, That a prophet hath no honour in his own country. Note, (1.) Prophets ought to have no honour, because God hath put honour upon them, and we do or may receive benefit by them. (2.) The honour due to the Lord's prophets hath very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. (3.) This doth show is most frequently denied them in their own country; see Luke 4. 24. Matth. 13. 57. Not that it is universally true, (no rule but has some exceptions,) but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren: David was disowned by his brother; (1 Sam. 17. 28.) Jeremiah was malign'd by the men of his own country; (Jer. 20. 2.) and by his countrymen, the Jews; and Christ's near kinsman spake most slightly of him, ch. 7. 5. Men's pride and envy make them seem to be instructed by those who once were their school-fellows and play-fellows. Desire of novelty, and of that which is far-fetched, and dear-bought, and seems to drop out of the sky to them, makes them despise those persons and things which they have been long used to, and know the least. (4.) It may be instructive to such as prefer minister to going among a people that have no value for him or his labours. Christ would not go to Nazareth, because he knew how little respect he should have there. (5.) It is just with God to deny his gospel to those that despise the ministers of it. They that mock the messengers, forfeit the benefit of the message. Matth. 21. 33, 41.

2. What seasons he met with among the Galileans in the country, (v. 43.) They received him, bade him welcome, and cheerfully attended on his doctrine. Christ and his gospel are not sent in vain; if they had not honour with some, they shall have with others. Now the reason given why these Galileans were so ready to receive Christ is, because they had seen the miracles he did at Jerusalem, v. 43. Observe, (1.) They went up to Jerusalem at the feast, the feast of the passover. The Galileans
very remote from Jerusalem, and their way thither lay through the country of the Samaritans, which was troublesome for a Jew to pass through, worse than Bacchus's valley of old; yet, in obedience to God's command, they went up to the feast, and there they became acquainted with Christ. Note, They that are diligent and constant in attending on public ordinances, some time or other meet with more spiritual benefit than they expect. (2.) At Jerusalem they saw Christ's miracles, which recommended him and his doctrine very much to their faith and affections. The miracles were wrought for the benefit, and not for the display, of the divine power. As they were accidentally there, got more advantage by them than they did for whom they were chiefly designed. Thus the word preached to a mixed multitude may perhaps edify occasional hearers more than the constant auditory.

3. What city he went to: when he would go to a city, he chose to go to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the water pure; (v. 46.) either he went, to see if there were any good fruits of that miracle remaining; and, if there were, to confirm their faith, and to water what he had planted. The evangelist mentions this miracle here, to teach us to keep in remembrance what we have seen of the works of Christ.

II. His curing of the nobleman's son that was sick of a fever. This story is not recorded by any other of the Gospels.

Observe, 1. Who the petitioner was, and who the patient; the petitioner was a nobleman, the patient was his son; there was a certain nobleman. Regulus, (so the Latin,) a little king; so called, either for the largeness of his estate, or the extent of his power, or the royalties that belonged to his manor. Some understand it as bespeaking his prerogative, he was a count, in some office about the king; others, as bespeaking his petty, he was a Herodian, a royalist, a prerogative-mon, one that espoused the interest of the Herods, father and son; perhaps it was Chusai, Herod's steward, (Luke 8. 3.) or Munen, Herod's foster-brother, (Acts 15. 1.) There were saints in Casar's household. The father a nobleman, and yet the son sick; for dignities and titles of honour will be no security to persons against sickness; it was in the world's flesh. It was fifteen miles from Capernaum where this nobleman lived to Cana, where Christ was; yet this affliction in his family sent him so far to Christ.

2. How the petitioner made his application to the Physician. Having heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa to Galilee, and finding that he did not come toward Capernaum, but turned off toward the other side of the country, he went to him himself, and besought him to come and heal his son, v. 47. See here, (1.) His tender affection to his son, that when he was sick he would spare no pains to get help for him. (2.) His great respect to our Lord Jesus: that he would come himself to wait upon him, when he might have sent a servant; and that he besought him, when, as a man in authority, some would think he might have ordered his attendants. The greatest men, when they come to God, must be beggars, and sinners, and forms of penitent penitents.

As to the ground he came upon, we may observe a mixture in his faith. [1.] There was sincerity in it; he did believe that Christ could heal his son, though his disease was dangerous. It is probable that he had physicians to him, who had given him over; but he believed that Christ could cure him when the case seemed deplorable. [2.] Yet there was a mixture of unbelief; he was disappointed, he could not heal his son, but as it should seem, he thought he could not heal him at a distance, and therefore he besought him that he would come down and heal him, expecting, as Naaman did, that he would come and strike his hand over the patient, as if he could not cure him but by a physical contact. Thus are we apt to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to stint him to our forms. The curenta, a Gentle, a soldier, was so strong in faith, as to say, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, Matt. 8. 8. This nobleman, a Jew, must have Christ to come down, though it was a good day's journey, and desairs of a cure unless he come down, as if he must teach Christ how to work. We are encouraged to pray, but we are not allowed to prescribe; Lord, heal me; but whether with a word or a touch, it is his own. [3.] The gentle rebuke he met with in this address; (v. 48.) Jesus said to him, "I see how it is; except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe, as the Samaritans did, though they saw no signs and wonders, and therefore I must work miracles among you." Though he was a nobleman, and now in grief about his son, and had shown great respect to Christ in coming so far to him, yet Christ gives him a reproof; man's dignity in the world shall not exempt them from the rebukes of the word or providence; for Christ reproves not after the hearing of his ears, but with equity, Isa. 11. 3. Observe, Christ first shows him his sin and weakness, to prepare him for mercy, and then grants him his request. Christ humbles those first with his favours, whom he intends to honour with his favours. The Con- fessor for sinners, to make them sensible of their unworthiness, and suit them for the consideration of what he will do for them. He that would be made illustrious in the sight of God, must first be sensible of his unworthiness in the sight of men. [4.] So much the more he must have the better of the miracle. I have a little greater respect for a man that does not expect but believes, than for a man that expects but believes not. The case was a more difficult one; and to a man who had been brought to a great degree of ignorance, the miraculous cure was more apparently wrought, to give a more peculiar evidence of the divine power. 5. How the miracle was wrought. (v. 51.) Christ said to the servant, go to such and such a house, and give this word, and the servant went, and gave the word, and the son was healed. It is probable he had no sooner gone in, than Christ had given the word; or that some other person had the effect of the word without the presence of Christ. The word was to be given to the father; if to the servant, he was a messenger to give the word; and if to the son, it was he that Christianly offered the word, 'I believe, and am made whole.' It shows a miracle wrought in a manner peculiar to the divine appointment.
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my unbelief, he will cure his fever. This is the method Christ takes, first to work upon us, and then to work for us; and there is hope, if we find him entering upon this method, that he would have this effect: that was his infirmity; for, [1.] He seems to take no notice of the reproach of Christ gave him, says nothing to it, by way either of confession or of excuse, for he is so wholly taken up with concern about his child, that he can mind nothing else. Note, The sorrow of the world is a great prejudice to our profiting by the word of Christ. Inordinate care and grief at the sight that choke the good seed, (Exod. 6. 2.) [2.] He still discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ. First, He must have Christ to come down, thinking that else he could do the child no kindness. It is hard to persuade ourselves that distance of time and place are no obstructions to the knowledge and power of our Lord Jesus; yet so it is, he sees afar off, for his eyes run to and fro; and he acts afar off, for, his word, the word of his power, runs very swiftly. Secondly, He believes that Christ could heal a sick child, but not that he could raise a dead child, and therefore, O come down, ere my child die: as if when it would be too late; whereas Christ has the same power over death that he has over bodily diseases. He forgot that Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children; and is Christ's power inferior to theirs? Observe, None can come down and heal my child; as there were danger of Christ's slipping his time. He that believeth, doth not make haste, but refers himself to Christ: Lord, what and when and how thou pleasest.

5. The answer of peace which Christ gave to his request at last: (v. 50.) Go thy way, thy son liveth. Christ here gives us an instance, (1.) That Christ's power not only could heal, but could heal with so much ease, without the trouble of a visit. Here is nothing said, nothing done, nothing ordered to be done, and yet the cure wrought: Thy son liveth. The healing beams of the Sun of righteousness dispense benign influences from one end of heaven to another, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Though Christ is now in heaven, and his church on earth, he can send from his name the greatest power; and the son came down and heal his son; Christ will heal his son, and not come down. And thus the cure is the sooner wrought, the nobleman's mistake rectified and his faith confirmed; so that the thing was better done in Christ's way. When he denies what we ask, he gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, he gives patience. Observe, His power was exerted by his word. In saying, Thy son liveth, he showed that he has life in himself, and power to quicken whom he will. Christ's saying, Thy son lives, makes it alive.

(2.) Of his pity: he observed the nobleman to be in pain about his son, and his natural affection discovered itself in that word, Ere my child, my dear child, die; and therefore Christ dropped the reproach, and gave him assurance of the recovery of his child; for he knows how a father feels his children.

6. The nobleman's belief of the word of Christ; he believed, and went away. Though Christ did not gratify him so far as to go down with him, he is satisfied with the method Christ took, and reckons he has gained his point. How quickly, how easily, is that which is lacking in our faith, perfected by the word and power of Christ. Now he sees no wonder, nor any danger to the wonder done.

(1.) Christ said, Thy son liveth, and the man believed him; not only believed the omniscience of Christ, that he knew the child recovered, but the omnipotence of Christ, that the cure was effectuated by his word. He left him dying; yet, when Christ said, he liveth, like the father of the faith, against all he believed in hope, and staggered not through unbelief. (2.) Christ said, Go thy way; and, as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, he went his way, and gave neither Christ nor himself any further disturbance. He did not press Christ to come down, did not say, If he do recover, yet a visit will be acceptable; no, he seems to further his desires, but, like Hannah, he goes with his wish fully satisfied, he made no great haste home; did not hurry home that night, but returned leisurely, as one that was perfectly easy in his own mind.

7. The further confirmation of his faith, by comparing notes with his servant at his return.

(1.) His servants met him with the agreeable news of the child's recovery; (v. 51.) They met him not far from, but at, home, and, knowing what their master's cure was, they were willing as soon as they could to make him easy. David's servants were loath to tell him when the child was dead. Christ said, Thy son liveth; and now the servants say the same. Good news will meet those that hope in God's word.

(2.) He inquired what hour the child began to recover; (v. 52.) not as if he doubted the influence of his word; for he was Desirous to have his father's cure confirmed, that he might be able to satisfy any to whom he should relate it; for it was a material circumstance. Note, [1.] It is good to furnish ourselves with all the corroborating proofs and evidences that may be, to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that it may grow up to a full assurance. Show me a taken for good. [2.] The diligence of the nobleman, who will be of great use to us for the confirming of our faith. That was the cause this nobleman took: He inquired of the servants the hour when he began to amend; and they told him, Yesterday at the seventh hour. (at one o'clock in the afternoon, or, as some think thceven o'clock, at seven o'clock at night.) The fever left him not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a sudden. He was not only restored to health, but at the same time restored to life; when Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth.

As the word of God, well studied, will help us to understand his providences; so the providence of God, well observed, will help us to understand his word, for God is every day fulfilling the scripture. Two things would help to confirm his faith. First, That the child's recovery was sudden, and not gradual. They name the precise time to the hour, Yesterday, not about, but at, the seventh hour, the fever left him; not it abated, or began to decrease, but it left him in an instant. The word of Christ did not work like physic, which must have time to operate, and produce the effect, and perhaps cure by expectation only; no, with Christ it was instant f
taction—he spoke, and it was done; not, He spoke, and it was set a doing. Secondly, That it was just at the same time the child spoke to him; at that hour. The conjunctions and coincidences of events add very much to the beauty and harmony of Providence. Observe the time, and the thing itself will be more illustrious, for every thing is beautiful in its time; at the very time when it is promised, as Israel's deliverance, (Exod. 12. 41.) at the very time when it is prayéd for, as Peter's deliverances, Acts 12. 12. In men's works, distance of place is the delay of time, and the sparing of business; but it is not so in the works of Christ. The pardon and peace, and comfort, and spiritual healing, which he speaks in heaven, is, if he pleases, at the same time effected, and wrought in the souls of believers; and when these two come to comfort...
in the great day, Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

6. The humble and brotherly love of this. The bringing of the cure to the family brought salvation to it.

(1.) The nobleman himself believed. He had before believed the word of Christ, with reference to this particular occasion; but now he believed in Christ as the Messiah promised, and became one of his disciples. Thus the particular experience of the power and efficacy of one word of Christ, may be a powerful introduction and evidence of the authority of Christ's dominion in the soul. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart, and by the grant of a temporal mercy may make way for better things.

(2.) His whole house believed likewise. [1.] Because of the interest they all had in the miracle, which preserved the blossom and hopes of the family; this affected them all, and encouraged Christ to them, and recommended him to their best thoughts. [2.] Because of the influence the master of the family had upon them all. A master of a family cannot give faith to those under his charge, nor force them to believe, but he may be instrumental to remove external prejudices which obstruct the operation of the evidence, and then the work is more rapid. After Abraham was favored with this, (Gen. 18. 19.) and Joshua, ch. 24. 13. This was a nobleman, and, probably, he had a great household; but when he comes into Christ's school, he brings them all along with him. What a blessed change was here in this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! This should reconcile us to afflictions, we know not what good may follow from them. Probably, the conversion of this nobleman and his family at Capernaum might invite Christ to come afterward, and settle at Capernaum, as his head-quarters in Galilee. When great men receive the gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

Lastly, Here is the evangelist's remark upon this cure; (v. 54.) This is the second miracle: referring to ch. 2. 11. where the turning water into wine is said to be the first; that was soon after his first return out of Judea, this soon after his second. In Judea he had wrought many miracles, ch. 3. 2. 4. 45. They had the first offer; but, being driven thence, he wrought miracles in Galilee. Somewhere or other Christ will find a welcome. People may, if they please, shut the sun out of their own house, but it is not out of the world. This is not to be the second miracle. 1. To remind us of the first, wrought in the same place some months before. Fresh mercies should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of further mercies. Christ keeps account of his favours, whether we do or no. 2. To let us know that this cure was before those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, Matth. 4. 23. Mark 1. 34. Luke 4. 40. Probably, this cure (the patient being a person of quality) was the more talked of for that reason, and sent him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men!

CHAP. V.

We have in the gospels a faithful record of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, Acts 1. 1. These two are interwoven, because what he taught, explained what he did, and what he did confirmed what he taught. Accordingly, we have this chapter of a miracle and a sermon. The miracle was the cure of an impotent man that had disenabled thirty-eight years, with the circumstances of that cure, v. 1. 16. 11. The sermon was Christ's vindication of himself before the Sanhedrim, when he was prosecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the sabbath-day; in which.

1. He asserts his authority as Messiah, and Mediator between God and man, v. 17, 20. 2. He proves it by the testimony of his Father, of John Baptist, of his miracles, and of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief, v. 30. 47.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2. Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5. And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jesus saw him he, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 14. Afterward Jesus foundeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

This miraculous cure is not recorded by any other of the evangelists, who confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem. Concerning this observe, I. The time when this cure was wrought; it was at a feast of the Jews, that is, the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, yet went up to Jerusalem at the feast, v. 1. 1. Because it was an ordinance of God, which, as a Subject, he would observe, being made under the law; though, as a Son, he might have pleaded an
exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies, Heb. 10. 25.

2. Because it was an opportunity of good; for,

(1.) There were great numbers gathered together there at that time; it was a general rendezvous, at least, of all serious, thinking people from all parts of the country, beside prosectyes from other nations; and wisdom must be very in the places of concourse, Prov. 1. 21. (2.) It was to be hoped that they were in a good frame, for they came together to worship God and to spend their time in religious exercises. Now a mind, inclined to devotion, and sequestering itself to the exercises of piety, loves very often to the further discoveries of divine light and love, and to it Christ will be acceptable.

11. The place where this cure was wrought; at the house of Bethsaida, which had a miraculous healing virtue in it, and is here particularly described, v. 2-4.

1. Where it was situated; at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market; in νασαίων; it might as well be rendered, the sheep-cote, where the sheep were kept; or the sheep-gate, which we read of, Neh. 3. 1. through which the sheep were brought, as the sheep-market, where they were sold. Some think it was a place called the sheep-cottage, and so it yielded a meagrely, but profitable, spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

2. How it was called; it was a pool, (a pond, or bath,) which is called in Hebrew, בֵּיתוֹ; The house of mercy; for therein appeareth much of the mercy of God to the sick and diseased. In a world so much misery as this is, it is well that there are some Bethesdaes—Houses of mercy, (remedies against these maladies,) that the scene is not all melancholy. An almshouse, so Dr. Hammond. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this was the upper pool, (Isa. 7. 3.) and the old pool, Isa. 22. 11. That it had been used for washing from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which, the porches were built to dress and adorn in, but it was lately become medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up; it had five porches, cloisters, piazzas, or roofed walks, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided remedies, but men must provide hospitals.

4. How it was frequented with sick and cripples; (v. 3.) In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk. How many are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world? How full of complaints are all places, and what multitudes of impotent folk! It may do us good to visit the hospitals sometimes, that we may take occasion, from the calamities of others, to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist specifies three sorts of diseased people that lay here, blind, halt, and withered, or sinew-shrunken, either in one particular part, as the man with the withered hand, or of all parts.

These are mentioned, because, being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest waiting in the porches. Those that were sick of those bodily diseases, took the pains to come far, and had the patience to wait long, for a cure; any of us would have done the same, and we ought to do so; but that men were as wise for their souls, and as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed. We are all by nature impotent folk in spiritual things, blind, halt, and withered; but effectual provision is made for our cure, if we will but observe orders.

5. What virtue it had for the cure of these impotent folk; (v. 4.) In angel went down, and troubled the water; and whose first stepped in was made whole. That this strange virtue in the pool was natural, or artificial rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with 110w what healing virtue even for blind people; and that this angel was a messenger, a common person, sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifice in. Expositors generally agree, that the virtue this pool had, was supernatural. It is true, the Jewish writers, who are not sparing in repeating the praises of Jerusalem, do none of them make the least mention of this healing pool; of which silence in this matter, perhaps this was the reason, that it was taken for a preserve of the near approach of the Messiah, and therefore, they who denied him to be come, industriously concealed such an indication of his coming; so that this is all the account we have of it. Observe, (1.) The first person of the medicine by an angel, who went down into the pool, and stirred the water. Angels are God's servants, and friends to mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases, (as evil angels in the inflicting of them,) than we are aware of. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies medicine—God's physic, or physician rather. See what mean offices the holy angels confederate to, for the good of their brethren. Christ's brethren may, nor others at his bidding do it, we must think nothing below us but sin. The troubling of the water was the signal given of the descent of the angel; as the going upon the top of the mulberry tree was to David, and then they must bestir themselves. The waters of the sanctuary are then healing, when they are put in motion. Ministers must stir up the gift that is in them. When they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters settle, and are not apt to heal. The same angel descended, to stir the water, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but at a certain season; some think, at the three solemn feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, now and then; as Infinite Wisdom saw fit. God is a free Agent in dispensing his favours.

(2.) The operation of the medicine; Whosoever first stepped in, was made whole. Here is, [1.] A miraculous extent of the virtue, as to the disease cured; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as hurtful in some cases as they are useful in others, but this was a remedy for every malady, even for those that came from contrary causes. The power of miracles succeeds, where the power of nature succumbs. [2.] A miraculous limitation of the virtue, as to the persons cured; he that first stepped in, had the benefit; any one after him, or sitting by, should have waited, but to he that stepped in, the others, that were cured, not those that lingered and came in after. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to look about us, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel stirred the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to get in. God has put virtue into the scriptures and ordinances, for he would have healed us; but if we do not make the discoveries of them, it is our own fault, we would not be healed.

Now this is all the account we have of standing miracles; it is uncertain when it began, and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Elisah the High-Priest began the building of the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance, by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began new only at Christ's birth; others, (as above,) at Jerusalem, Dr. Lightfoot, finding in Josephus, Antiq. Bk. 15. cap. 7. mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposed, since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended to stir this water. Some think it ceased with this miracle, others at Christ's death; however, it is certain that it had a gracious signification,
First, It was a token of God's good will to that people, and an indication, that, though they had been long without prophets and miracles, yet God had not forsaken them, though they were now an oppressed despised people, and many were ready to say, Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of? God did hereby let them know that he had still a kindness for the city of their solemnities. We may from hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's power and goodness in the midst of our waters, that contribute so much to the health of mankind, for God made the fountains of water, Rev. 14. 7. 

Secondly, It was a type of the Messiah, who is the Fountain opened; and was intended to raise people's expectations of him, who is the Sun of righteousness, that arises with healing under his wings. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing, to signify both the cleansing and curing virtue of the blood of Christ, that incomparable bath, which heals all our diseases. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ the Son of David; (Isa. 8. 6.) fitly therefore have they now this sovereign virtue put into them. The laver of regeneration is so, as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times. Whoever will, let him come.

III. The patient on whom this cure was wrought; (v. 5.) one that had been infirm thirty-eight years. 1. His disease was grievous; he had an infirmity, a weakness; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least, on one side, as usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled, that, instead of being the soul's instrument, it becomes, even in the affairs of this life, its burden. What reason have we to thank God for bodily strength, to use it for him, and to pity those who are his prisoners? 2. The duration of it was tedious; thirty-eight years: he was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled for the offices of life, that, as the psalmist complaineth, they seem to be made in vain; for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one wearsome night, or one ill fit, who perhaps for many years have scarcely known what it has been to be a day sick, when many others, better than we, have scarcely known what it has been to be a day well? Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting: How great mercy was it, saith he, that in thirty-eight years God's way of discipline, Oh my God, saith he, I thank thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure! IV. The cure and the circumstances of it briefly related, v. 6—9. 1. Jesus saw him lie. Observe, When Christ came up to Jerusalem, he visited not the palaces, but the poor, because he is an instance of his humility, and condescension and tender compassion; and an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. There was a great multitude of poor cripples here at Bethesda, but Christ fastened his eye upon this one, and singled him out from the rest, because he was senior of the house, and in a manner was the focus of regard; and this he did not for any benefit to the man himself; but Christ delights to help the helpless; and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Perhaps his companions in tribulation insulted over him, because he had been often disappointed of a cure, therefore Christ took him for his patient; it is his honour to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom he sees run down. 2. He knew, and considered how long he had lain in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction, may comfort themselves with this, that God keeps account how long, and knows our frame. 3. He asked him, Wilt thou be made whole? A strange question to be asked one that had been so long ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by, and serve them for an excuse for idleness; but this poor man was as unable to go a begging as to work, yet Christ put it to him, (1.) To exhibit his own power and condescension for him, by satisfying the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know what is their petition; "What shall I do for you?" (2.) To try him whether he would be beholden to him for a cure, whom the great people were so prejudiced against, and sought to prejudice others. (3.) To teach him to value the mercy, and to excite in him desires after it. In spiritual cases, people are not willing to be cured of their sins, are loath to part with them. If this point therefore were but gained, if people were willing to be made whole, the work were half done, for Christ is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed, Matth. 8. 3. 4. The poor impotent man takes this opportunity to renew his complaint, and do set forth the very case which makes his cure the more illustrious; (v. 7.) Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool. He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness and neglect; "If thou hadst a mind to be healed, thou wouldst have looked better to thy hits, and have got into the healing waters long before now." "No, Master," saith the poor man, "it is not for want of a good will, but of a good friend, that I am unhealed; I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me." (1.) He does not think of any other way of being cured than by these waters, and desires no other friendship than to be helped into them; therefore, when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing. (2.) He complains for want of friends to help him in; "I have no man, no friend, to do me that kindness." One would think that some of those who had been themselves healed, should have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; no man careth for thy soul. To the sick and impotent, it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to be rich and able to do good to another, and being charitable to one another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame. (3.) He bewails his infelicity, that very often when he was coming, another stepped in before him. But a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. None had the charity to say, "Your case is so grateful to you go in now, and I will stay till the next time;" for there is no getting over the old maxim, Every one for himself. Having been so often disappointed, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come in to his relief; he delights to help in desperate cases. Observe, How mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections. As it is should be thankful for the least kind, so we should be patient under the greatest contempt; and, let our resentment be ever so just, yet our expressions should ever be calm. And observe further, to his praise, that though he had waited so long in vain, yet still he continued lying by the pool-side, hoping that some time or other help would come, Hab. 2. 5. 5. Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it, nor thought of it.
Here is, (1.) The word he said, (v. 8.) Rise, take up this bed. [1.] He is bidden to rise and walk; a strange command to be given to an impotent man, that had been long disabled; but this divine word was to be the vehicle of a divine power; it was a command to the disease to be gone, to nature to be strong, but it is expressed as a command to him to affect himself. He was bidden to rise and walk, and he is in the essay he should receive strength to do it. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronic disease; this is ordinarily done by the word, a word of command; Arise, and walk; turn and live; make ye a new heart; which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, dunsting and subdue grace, than this supposed a power in the impotent man. But if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and he must have borne the blame; yet it does not therefore follow, that, when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. Observe, Christ did not bid him rise, and go into the waters, but rise and walk. Christ did that for us, which the law could not do for itself. [2.] He is bidden to take up his bed. First, To make it to appear that it was a perfect cure, and purely miraculous; for he did not recover strength by degrees, but from the extremity of weakness and impotency he suddenly stepped into the highest degree of bodily strength; so that he was able to carry as great a load as any porter that had been as long used to it as he had been disabled. He, who this moment was sick, and the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy (Matth. 9. 6.) was bidden to go to his house, but probably this man had no house to go to, the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to rise, and walk. Secondly, It was to proclaim the cure, and make it public; for, being the sabbath-day, whoever carried a burden through the streets, made himself very remarkable, and every one would inquire what was the meaning of it; whereby the notice of the miracle would spread, to the honour of God. Thirdly, Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise show that he was Lord of the sabbath, and had power to make what alterations he pleased about it, and to recreate the law. Jesus, and the house, are here to denote the sabbath, for the sabbath-day, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed, in obedience to a command. The case may be such, that it may become a work of necessity, or mercy, to carry a bed on the sabbath-day; but here it was more, it was a work of power, being designed purely for the glory of God. Fourthly, He would hereby try the faith and obedience of his patient. He by carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to the-censure of the ecclesiastical court, and was liable, at least, to be scourged in the synagogue. Now, will he run the venture of that, in obedience to Christ? Yes, he will. Those that have been healed by Christ's word, should be ruled by his word, whatever it cost them. [2.] The efficacy of this word; (v. 9.) a divine power going along with it, and immediately he was made whole, to take up his bed, to walk. [1.] He felt the power of Christ's word healing him; Immediately he was made whole. What a joyful surprise was this to the poor cripple, to find himself all of a sudden so easy, so strong, so able to help himself; what a new world was he in, in an instant! Nothing is too hard for Christ to do. [2.] He obeyed the power of Christ's word commanding him. He took up his bed, and walked, and did not care who blamed him, or threatened him, for it. The proof of our spiritual cure, is our rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our spiritual diseases? Let us go whithersoever he sends us, and take up whatever he is pleased to lay upon us; and walk before him. V. What came of the poor man after he was cured. We are here told, 1. What passed between him and the Jews, who saw him carry his bed on the sabbath-day. If that day his cure was wrought, and it was the sabbath that fell within the passover-week, and therefore a high day, ch. 12. 31. Christ's work was such, that he needed not make any difference between sabbath-days and other days, for he was always about his Father's business; but he wrought many remarkable cures on that day, perhaps to encourage his church to expect these spiritual favours from him, in their observance of the christian sabbath, which was typified by his miraculous cures. Now here, (1.) The Jews quarrel with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, telling him that it was not lawful, v. 10. It does not appear whether they were magistrates, who had power to punish him, or common people, who could only inform against him; but thus the sabbath was contended against, and common councillors were used to try the sincerity of those who professed to observe it, not by what authority he did it, they were jealous for the honour of the sabbath, and could not unconcernedly see it profaned; like Nehemiah, ch. 13. 17. (2.) The man justifies himself in what he did, by a warrant that would bear him out, v. 11. 'I do not do it in contempt of the law and the sabbath, but in obedience to mine, he, bidding me to carry my bed, that I might greater than either. He that could work such a miracle as to make me whole, no doubt might give me such a command as to carry my bed; he that could create the powers of nature, no doubt might overrule a positive law, especially in an instance not of the essence of the law. He that was so kind as to make me whole, would not be so unkind as to bid me do what is sinful.' Christ, by curing another patient, proved his power to forgive sin, here to give life; if his pardons are valid, his edicts are so, and his miracles prove both. (3.) The Jews inquire further, who it was that gave him this warrant; (v. 12.) What man is that? Observe, How industriously they overlooked that which might be a ground of their faith in Christ. They inquire not, who, nor for curiosity, "Who is this man that made me whole?" While they industriously catch at that which might be a ground of reflection upon Christ; (What man is that who said unto thee, Take up thy bed?) they would fain subjoin the patient to be witness against the Physician, and to be his betrayer. In their question, observe, (1.) They resolve to look upon Christ as a mere man; What man is that? For though he gave ever such confirming proofs of it, they were resolved that they would never own him to be the Son of God. (2.) They resolve to look upon him as a bad man, and take it for granted that he who bid this man carry his bed, whatever divine commission he might produce, was certainly a delinquent, and as such they resolve to prosecute him. What man is that who durst give such orders? (4.) The poor man was unable to give them any account of it, and to justify himself; (v. 13.) He wist not who he was. [1.] Christ was unknown to him, when he healed him. Probably, he had heard of the name of Jesus, but had never seen him, and therefore could not tell that this was he. Note, Christ doth many a good turn for these that know him not, Isa. 43. 4, 5. He enlightens, strengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we wist not who he is; nor are we aware how much we receive daily by his mediation. This man, being unacquainted with Christ, could not actually believe
in him for a cure; but Christ knew the dispositions of his soul, and suited his favours to them, as to the blind man, be it known, ch. 9. 36. Our covenant and communion with God take rise, not so much from our knowledge of him, as from his knowledge of us. We know God, or, rather, are known of him, Gal. 4. 9.

[2.] For the present, he kept himself unknown; for as soon as he had wrought the cure, he conversed himself away; and (so some read it) a multitude being in that place. This is mentioned, to show, either, First, How Christ conveyed himself away—by retiring into the crowd, so as not to be distinguished from a common person. He that was the chief of ten thousand, often made himself one of the throng. It is sometimes the lot of those who have by their services signalized themselves, to be sold to God, and be looked upon. Or, Secondly, Why he conveyed himself away; because there was a multitude there, and he industriously avoided both the applause of those who would admire the miracle, and cry that afar, and the censure of those who would censure him as a Sabbath-breaker, and ran him down. Those that are active for God in their generation, must expect to pass for false friends, and must not be surprised if it is with them as much as may be, to keep out of the hearing of both; lest by the one we be exalted, and by the other depressed, above measure. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought to justify it.

2. What passed between him and our Lord Jesus at their next interview; v. 14. Observe here,

(1.) Where Christ found him; in the temple, the place of worship, public worship; in our attendance on public worship we may expect to meet with Christ, and improve our acquaintance with him. Observe, [1.] Christ went to the temple; though he had many enemies, yet he appeared in public, because there he bore his testimony to divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. [2.] The man that was cured, went to the temple; there Christ found him the same day, as it should seem, that he was healed; thither he straightforward went. First, Because he had, by his infirmity, been so long detained there; perhaps he had not been there for thirty-eight years, and therefore as soon as ever the embargo is taken off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be; (Isa. 38. 22.) What is in the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord? Secondly, Because he had, by his recovery, a good errand thither; he went up to the temple, to return thanks to God for his recovery. When God has at any time restored us our health, we ought to attend him with solemn praises; (Ps. 116. 18, 19.) and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. Thirdly, Because he had, by carrying his bed, seemed to put a contempt upon the sabbath; he would thus show that he had an honour for it, and made conscience of sabbath-sanctification, in that on which the chief stress of it is laid, which is the public worship of God. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed; but, when they are ever, we must go to the temple.

(2.) What he said to him. When Christ has cured us, he has not done with us, he now applies himself to the healing of our souls; and this by the word too.

[1.] He gives him a memorandum of his cure; Behold, thou art made whole. He found himself made whole, yet Christ calls his attention to it. Behold, consider it seriously, how sudden, how strange, how cheap, how easy the cure was; admire it; behold, and wonder hereover; and never be lost, Isa. 58. 9.

[2.] He gives him a caution against sin; in consideration hereof, Being made whole, sin no more. This implies that his disease was the punishment of sin; whether of some remarkably flagrant sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell; but we know that sin is the procuring cause of sickness, Ps. 107. 17, 18. Some observe that Christ did not make mention of sin to any of his patients, but only to this impotent man, and to one other who was in like manner diseased, Mark 2. 5. While those chronic diseases lasted, they prevented the outward acts of ordinances, and hindered the performance of services; but when the disease was removed, they had the more need to be watchful. Christ intimates to him, that those who are made whole, who are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of returning to sin, when the terror and restraint are over, unless divine grace dry up the fountain. When the trouble which only dammed up the current is over, the waters will return to their old course; and therefore there is need of great watchfulness, lest after healing mercy we return again to folly. The misery we were made whole from, warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin; the mercy we were made whole by, is an engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, Go, and sin no more. Chirst, as he is exalted, so highly signalized, and was greatly beloved, in the temple, yet Christ saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people, when they are sick, to promise much, when newly recovered, to perform something, but after a while to forget all.

[3.] He gives him warning of his danger, in case he should return to his former sinful course; Let a good thing come to thee. Christ, who knows all men's hearts, knew that he has one of those that must be frightened from sin. Thirty-eight years' lameness, one would think, was a thing bad enough; yet there is something worse that will come to him if he relapse into sin after God has given him such a deliverance as this, Ezra 9. 13, 14. The hospital where he lay, was a melancholy place, but hell much more so; the doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years' lameness.

Now, after this interview between Christ and his patient, observe in the two following verses,

First, The notice which the poor simple man gave to the Jews concerning Christ, v. 15. He told them it was Jesus that had made him whole. We have reason to think he intended this for the honour of Christ, and the benefit of the Jews, little thinking but he who was to be a benefactor to the public, should have any enemies; but those who wish well to Christ's kingdom, must have the wisdom of the servants, lest they do more hurt than good with their zeal, and not cast pearls before swine.

Secondly, The rage and enmity of the Jews against him; Therefore did the rulers of the Jews persecute Jesus, Sec. 1. How absurd and unreasonable their enmity to Christ was. Therefore because he had made a poor sick man well, and so eased the public charge, upon which, it is likely, he had subsisted; therefore they persecuted him, because he did good in Israel. 2. How bloody and cruel it was; They sought to slay him; nothing less than his blood, his life, would satisfy them. 3. How it was vanished over with a colour of zeal for the honour of the sabbath for his healing on the sabbath-day; as if that circumstance were enough to vitiate the best and most divine actions, and to render him obnoxious whose deeds were otherwise most meritorious. Thus hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the power of godliness, with a pretended zeal for the form of it.

17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18
Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condensation; but is passed from death unto life.

25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

26. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, into the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, into the resurrection of damnation.

29. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of my Father which hath sent me.

We have here Christ's discourse upon occasion of his being accused as a Sabbath-Breaker; and it seems to be his vindication of himself before the Sanhedrim, when he was arraigned before them; whether on the same day, or two or three days after, does not appear; probably, the same day. Observe,

1. The doctrine laid down, by which he justified what he did on the sabbath-day; (v. 17.) He answered them. This supposes that he had something laid to his charge; or what they suggested one to another, when they sought to slay him; (v. 16.) he knew, and gave this reply too, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. At other times, in answer to the like charge, he had pleaded the example of David's eating of the shew-bread, of the priest's slaying of the sacrifices, and of the people's watering of their cattle, on the sabbath-day; but here he goes higher, and alleges the example of his Father and his divine authority; having all other pleas, he insists upon that which was incontestable—equivalent to the whole, and abides by it, which he had mentioned, Matth. 12. 8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day;* but he here enlarges on it.

1. He pleads that he was the Son of God, plainly intimated in his calling God his Father; and so, his holiness was unquestionable, and his sovereignty uncontestable, and he might make what alterations he pleased of the divine law. *Surely they will reverence the Son, the Heir of all things.*

2. That he was a Worker together with God.

(1.) My Father worketh hitherto. The example of God's resting on the seventh day from all his works is, in part, the ground of our observing it as a sabbath, or day of rest. Now God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before; otherwise he worketh hitherto, he is every day working, sabbath-days and week-days; upholding and governing all the creatures, and concurring by his common providence to all the motions and operations of nature, to his own glory; therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath-day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency to the glory of God; as the man's carrying of his bed had.

(2.) I work; not only therefore I may work, like him, in doing good on sabbath-days as well as other days, but I also work with him. As God created all things by Christ, so he supports and governs all by him. Heb. 1. 3. This sets what he doeth: all exceptions: he that is so great a Worker, must needs be an uncontrollable Governor: he that does all, is Lord of all, and therefore Lord of the sabbath; which particular branch of his authority he would now assert, because he was shortly to show it further, in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

II. The offence that was taken at his doctrine; (v. 18.) The Jews sought the more to kill him. His mission was made his offence, as it by justifying himself he had made bad worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ, will be enlightened and exasperated by it; and nothing more vexes the enemies of Christ than his asserting of his authority; see Ps. 2. 3–5. They sought to kill him,

1. Because he had broken the sabbath: for let his say what he would, in his own justification, they are resolved, right or wrong, to find him guilty of sabbath-breaking. When malicious and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may even he silent at the bar, for whatever they can say, will undoubtedly be overruled.

2. Not only so, but he had said also, That God was his Father. Now they pretend a jealousy for God's honour, as before for the sabbath-day, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime, that he made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been, if he had not really been so. It was the sin of Lucifer, I will be like the Most High.

(1.) This was justly inferred from what he said; that he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father, &c. and his own Father; his, so as he was no one's else. He had said that he worked with his Father, by the same authority and power, and hereby he made himself equal with God. Ezra, intelligent Judæi, quad non intelligent Ariani—Behold, the Jews understand what the Arians do not.

(2.) Yet it was unjustly imputed to him as an offence, that he equalled himself with God, for he was, and is, God equal to God. Yet and though Christ, in answer to this charge, does not except against the immodo as strained or forced, but makes out his claim, and proves that he is equal with God in power and glory.
III. Christ's discourse upon this occasion, which continues without interruption to the end of the chapter; in these verses he explains, and afterward confirms, his commission, as Mediator, and Plenipotentiary in the treaty between God and man. And as the honours he is hereby entitled to, are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work he is hereby entrusted with, is such as it is not possible for any man to undertake, and therefore he is God equal with the Father.

1. In general. He is one with the Father in all he does as Mediator, and there was a perfect good understanding between them in the whole matter. It is ushered in with a solemn preface, (v. 19.) "Ferde, verily, I say unto you: The Amen, the Amen, say it. This speaks what is said to be, (1.) Very awful and great, and such as God only should speak to; a very serious attention. (2.) Very sure, and such as commands an unfeigned assent. (3.) It intimates that they are matters purely of divine revelation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise have come to the knowledge of. Two things he saith in general, concerning the Son's oneness with the Father in working.

2. In particular. He proves his equality with the Father, by specifying some of those works which he does, that are the peculiar works of God. This is enlarged upon, v. 21—50. (1.) He does, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's almighty power—namely, to raise the dead, and giving life, v. 21, 25, 26, 27. (2.) He does, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion and jurisdiction—judging, and executing judgment, v. 22—24, 27. These two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is said once, is repeated and inculcated; put both together, and they will prove that Christ said not amiss, when he said himself equal to God.

1. Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's power to raise the dead, and give life. See,

First, His authority to do it; (v. 21.) As the Father raiseth up the dead, so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

1. It is God's prerogative to raise the dead, and give life, even his who first breathed into man the breath of life, and made him a living soul; see Deut. 32. 39. 1 Sam. 2. 6. Ps. 68. 20. Rom. 4. 17. This God had done by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and it was a confirmation of their mission. A resurrection from the dead never lay in the common road of nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only, the compass of nature's power, one of whose received axioms, was point-blank against of life, I fear, was made habituating said; resurrection—Existence, when once extinguished, cannot be rekindled. It was therefore ridiculed at Athens as an absurd thing, Acts 17. 32. It is purely the work of a divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by divine revelation. This the Jews would own.

2. The Mediator is invested with this prerogative; He quickeneth whom he will; raises whom he will, and to whom he will. He does not pen the things by natural necessity, as the sun does whose beams revive of course; but he acts as a free
1. It is certain that the Father has life in himself. Not only he is a self-existent Being, who does not derive from, or depend upon, any other, (Exod. 3, 14.) but he is a sovereign Giver of life: he has the disposal of life in himself, and of all good: (for so life sometimes signifies:) it is all derived from him, and dependent upon him. He is the fountain of life, and all life. Author of their being and well-being: the living God, and the God of all living.

2. It is as certain that he has given to the Son to have life in himself. As the Father is the Original of all natural life and good, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the Original of all spiritual life and good: it is that to the church, that the Father is to the world; see 1 Cor. 8, & Col. 1, 19. The kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Redeemer, as fully and absolutely in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised himself to life by his own power, ch. 10, 18.

Thirdly, His acting according to his authority and ability. Having life in himself, and being authorized to quicken whom he will, by virtue hereof there are, according to his will, and as he pleased, as in his powerful word; both which are here spoken of.

1. A resurrection that now is, (v. 29.) a resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace. The hour is coming, and now is. It is a resurrection begun already, and further to be carried on: when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. This is plainly distinguished from that, v. 28, which speaks of the resurrection of the dead. The hour now is, as that does, of the dead in their graves, and of all of them, and their coming forth. Now, (1.) Some think this was fulfilled in these whom he miraculously raised to life, James's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable, that all whom Christ raised, were spoken to, as, Daniel, arise, Young man, arise, Lazarus, come forth: whereas, those raised under the Old Testament, were raised to life, at a word, but other applications.

1 Kings 17, 21. 2 Kings 4, 34.—13, 21. Some understand it of those saints that rose with Christ; but we do not read of the voice of the Son of God calling them. But, (2.) I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ, for the recovering and quickening of those that were dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2, 1. The hour was coming, when dead souls of graver, and of the life breathing of the gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it; nay, it then was, while Christ was upon earth. It may refer especially to the calling of the Gentiles, which is said to be as life from the dead, and, some think, was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision, (ch. 37, 1.) and foretold, Isa. 26, 19. Thy dead men shall live. But it is to be applied to all the wonderful success of the gospel, among both Jews and Gentiles; and to all who are to be brought to a new life, that shall be raised by Christ. The hour now is.

2. A resurrection yet to come; this is spoken of, v. 28, 29. introduced with, Marvel not at this, which I have said of the first resurrection, do not reject it as incredible and absurd, 'for at the end of time you shall see a more sensible and amazing proof of the power and authority of the Son of man.' As his own resurrection was reserved to the final and concluding proof of his personal commission, so the resurrection of all men is reserved to be a like proof of his commission to be executed by his Spirit. Now observe here.

(1.) When this resurrection shall be: the hour is coming, it is fixed to an hour, very punctual fixed. It is to be a fearful resurrection, for those come up, whom the dead have pierced; a rising of the body, and every hour to its home. The grave is the prison of dead bodies, where they are detained; their furnace, where they are consumed; (Job 24, 19.) yet, in prospect of their resurrection, we may call it their bed, where they sleep to be awakened, again; their treasury, where they are laid up to be used again. Even those that are not put into graves, shall arise: but because most are put into graves, Christ uses this expression, all that are in the grave. The Jews used the word shod for the grave, which signifies the state of the dead; all that are in that state, shall hear.

(2.) Who shall be raised; all that are in the graves, all that have died from the beginning of time, and all that shall die to the end of time. It was said, (Dan. 12, 2.) Many shall arise; Christ here tells us these many shall be all; all must appear before the Judge, and therefore must be raised; every person, and the whole of every person; every moment of every moment, every hour to its home. The grave is the prison of dead bodies, where they are detained; their furnace, where they are consumed; (Job 24, 19.) yet, in prospect of their resurrection, we may call it their bed, where they sleep to be awakened, again; their treasury, where they are laid up to be used again. Even those that are not put into graves, shall arise: but because most are put into graves, Christ uses this expression, all that are in the grave. The Jews used the word shod for the grave, which signifies the state of the dead; all that are in that state, shall hear.

(3.) How they shall be raised. Two things are here told us.

1. The efficient of this resurrection: They shall hear his voice; that is, they shall cause them to hear it, as Lazarus was made to hear it, who said, Come forth, a dead soul; power shall go along with the voice, to put life into them and enable them to obey it. When Christ rose, there was no voice heard, not a word spoken, because he rose by his own power; but at the resurrection of the children of men we find three voices spoken of, 1 Thess. 4, 16. The Lord shall descend with a shout, the shout of a king, with the voice of the archangel; either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or the commander in chief, under him, of the heavenly host; and with the trumpet of God; the soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court.
The effect of it: They shall come forth out of their graves, as prisoners out of their prison-house; they shall arise out of the dust, and shake themselves from it; see Isa. 52. 1, 2, 11. But that is not all; they shall appear before Christ's tribunal; shall come forth as those that are to be tried; come forth to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

To what they shall be raised: to a different state of existence, and to a character, to their different character; to a state of retribution, according to what they did in the state of probation.

The resurrection of the body will be a resurrection of life to all those, and those only, that have been sincere and constant in doing good. They shall not only be publicly acquitted, as a pardoned criminal, we say, has his life; but they shall be admitted into the presence of God, and that is life, it is better than life, Ps. 4:3. The resurrection of the body is the 'raising up' of it, 'to be clothed upon' or 'united with' the soul, Rom. 8:11. To live is to be happy, and they shall be advanced above the fear of death; that is life indeed, in which mortality is for ever swallowed up.

They that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation; they shall live again, to be for ever dying. The Pharisees thought that the resurrection pertained only to the just, but Christ here rectifies their mistake, 'not my doers, what they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as evil men.' Secondly, The resurrection will be to evil doers, who did not by repentance undo what they had done amiss, a resurrection of damnation. They shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly condemned to everlasting punishment; to be sentenced to it, and immediately sent to it without reprieve. Such will be the resurrection.

Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's authority to execute judgment, v. 22—24, 27. So he has an almighty power, so he has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life, as he who is the Father and fountain of life? Here is, First, Christ's commission or delegation to the office of a Judge, which is twice spoken of here: v. 22. He hath committed all judgment to the Son: and again, v. 27. He hath given him authority. 1. The Father judges no man; not that the Father has resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but has the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. The Father judges no man; (1.) He does not rule us by the decree of divine justice, as a Judge, which is twice spoken of here: v. 22. He hath committed all judgment to the Son: and again, v. 27. He hath given him authority. 2. He has committed all judgment to the Son, has constituted him Lord of all, Acts 10. 36, Rom. 14. 9. as Joseph in Egypt, Gen. 41. 40. This was prophesied of, Ps. 72. 2, Isa. 11. 3, 4, Jer. 23. 3, Mic. 5. 3—4. Ps. 72. 8—9, 13—18. 9. All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus; for, (1.) He is trusted with the administration of the presidential kingdom; is Head over all things, Eph. 1. 22. Head of every man, 1 Cor. 11. 3. All things consist by him, Col. 1. 17. (2.) He is empowered to make laws immediately to bind conscience. I say unto you, is now the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of heaven are; Be it enacted by the Lord Jesus, and by his authority. All the acts now in the law of Moses stand on our Lord's power and authority, and his apostles authorized to appoint and settle the terms of the new covenant, and to draw up the articles of peace between God and man; it is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and to him he has given power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. (4.) He is commissioned to award and complete the final judgment of the world, which he has done on that which is pleasing to God and profitable to others. Secondly, One judgment is committed to the Son of man; the tribunal is his, it is the judgment-seat of Christ; the retinue is his, his mighty angels; he will try the causes, and pass the sentence, Acts 17. 31. 3. He has given him authority to execute judgment also, v. 27. Observe. (1.) What the authority is, which our Redeemer is invested with; an authority to execute judgment; he has not only a legislative and executive authority in this respect, but also a judicial authority too. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, Jude 15. to execute judgment upon all: the same with his taking vengeance, 2 Thess. 1. 8. The ruin of impotent sinners comes from the hand of Christ; he that executes judgment upon them, is the same that would have wrongfully salvation for them, which makes the sentence unexceptionable; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer; salvation itself cannot save those whom the Saviour condemns, which makes the ruin remediless. (2.) Whence he has that authority; the Father gave it him. Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated and derived: he acts as the Father's Viceregent, as the Lord's anointed, the Lord's Christ. Now all this redounds very much to the honour of Christ; putting him into the guilt of blasphemy, in making himself equal with God; and very much to the comfort of all believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands. Secondly, Here are the reasons (reasons of state) for which this commission was given him. He has all judgment committed to him for two reasons.

Because he is the Son of man, and speaks these three things, (1.) His humiliation and gracious condescension. Man is a worm, the son of man a worm; yet this was the nature, this the character, which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; this low estate he stooped to, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was his Father's will; in recompense for the devices of the enemy, which he thus dignified him. Because he condescended to be the Son of man, his Father made him Lord of all, Phil. 2. 8, 9. (2.) His affluence and alliance to us. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to him, because, being the Son of man, he is of the same nature with those whom he is set over, and therefore the more unexceptionable, as a Judge. Their government shall proceed from the midst of them, Jer. 30. 21. Of this legal text was typical; One of thy brethren shall thou set King over
he, Deut. 17, 15. (3.) His being the Messiah proclaimed in that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, Dan. 7, 13, 14, he is called the Son of man; and, Ps. 89, 28, 36, has been invested with the works of thy hands. He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with all this power. The Jews usually called the Christ the Son of David; but Christ usually called himself the Son of man, which was the more humble title, and speaks him a Prince and Saviour, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind.

2. That Christ is here spoken of, (1.) As God's great design. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, ch. 16, 15. (2.) As man's great duty, in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the duty of all these to honour him, to whom he is made known. Observe him, (1.) The dignity that is to be done to our Lord Jesus. We must honour the Son, must look upon him as one that is to be honoured, both upon the account of his transcendent excellences and perfections in himself, and of the relations he stands in to us, and must study to give him honour accordingly; must confess that he is Lord, and worship him; must honour him who was dishonoured for us. The Son is henceforth the glory of the Father. This supposes it our duty to honour the Father; for revealed religion is founded upon natural religion, and directs us to honour the Son, to honour him with due honour; we must honour the Redeemer with the same honour that we honour the Creator with. So far was it from blasphemy that he made himself equal with God, that it is the highest exaltation that can be for us to make him otherwise.

The truths and laws of the Christian religion, so far as they are revealed, are as sacred and honourable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the Author of our well-being, that we lie under to the Author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient reason for this law—honour the Son as we honour the Father.

To enforce this law, it is added, He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent him. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak honourably of him, who make light of their Redeemer, and speak contemptuously of him; but let such know that the honours and interests of the Father and Son are inseparably twisted and interwoven, that the Father never reckons himself honoured by any that dishonour the Son. Note, First, Indignities due to the Lord Jesus reflect upon God himself, and will be so construed and reckoned for in the court of heaven. The Son having so far exposed the Father's honours as to take to himself the reproaches cast on him, (Rom. 15, 3.) the Father does not reproach him in his turn, but can hardly count himself struck at through him. Secondly, The reason of this is, because the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is the Father who hath sent him. Affronts to an ambassador are justly resented by the prince that sends him. And by this rule, those who truly honour the Son, honour the Father also, see Philip. 2, 11.

Thirdly, Here is the rule by which the Son goes in the world. What is said of him in this commission, so those words seem to come in, (v. 21.) He that heareth and believeth, hath everlasting life. Here we have the substance of the whole gospel; the preface commands attention to a thing most weighty, and essential to a thing most certain: "Go, ye, publish, I say unto you, 1. to whom ye shall hear all judgment is committed, in whose lips is a divine sentence; take from me the Christian's character and charter.

1. The character of a Christian; he that heareth and believeth; and who he is, the Father hath sent him. Take a psalm, and find, (1.) To hear the word of Christ. It is not enough to be within hearing of it, but we must attend on it, as scholars on the instructions of their teachers; and attend to it, as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and obey it, must abide by the gospel of Christ as the fixed rule of our faith and practice. (2.) To believe or accept; for Christ's design is to bring us to God, and he is the last Original of all grace, so is he the last Object of all faith. Christ is our Lord, God is our Rest. We must believe on God as having sent Jesus Christ, and recommended himself to our faith and love, by manifesting his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4, 6.) as his Father and our Father.

2. The charter of a Christian; all those who are interested in that are Christians indeed. See what we get by Christ: (1.) A charter of pardon; He shall not come into condemnation. The grace of the gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not lie under condemnation eternally, but not come into condemnation now; nor come into the danger of it, (Rom. 8, 1.) but into the just judgments of it, which is a promise of a future bliss. (2.) A charter of life; He shall not be put to death for a moment. He lives now, though a little life. Sheep's life, that is, a life not dying out of death to life, is invested in a present happiness in spiritual life, and entitled to a future happiness in eternal life. The tenor of the first covenant was, Do this, and live; the man that doeth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father, that he has power to propose the same benefit to the hearers of his word, that had been proposed to the keepers of the old law, that is, the Ten Commandments; Hence, if a man's life is to be put in danger by doing evil, he may venture our souls upon, when we are disabled to do and live; see ch. 17, 2.

Fourthly, Here is the righteousness of his proceedings pursuant to this commission, v. 30. All judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask how he manages it. And here he answers, My judgment is just. All Christ's acts of government, both legislative and judicial, are exactly agreeable to the rules of equity; see Prov. 8, 8. There can be no exceptions against any of the determinations of the Redeemer, and therefore as there shall be no repeal of any of his statutes, there can be no appeal from any of his sentences.

His judgments are certainly just, for they are directed.

1. By the Father's wisdom: I can of myself do nothing, nothing without the Father, but as I hear, I judge, as he had said before, v. 19. The Son can do nothing but what he sees the Father do; so here, nothing, but what he hears the Father say, as he here. Is he there? (1.) From the secret, eternal counsels of the Father; So I judge. Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? Hear the Word of Christ. (2.) From the divine command, those secret things which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed dictates of Christ's government and judgment, and those will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged, is an exact copy or counterpart of what the Father has decreed. (2.) From the published records of the Old Testament. Christ, in all the execution of his undertaking had an eye to those, and made it his business to conform to that, and fulfil that; as it was written in the volume of the book. Thus he taught us to do nothing of ourselves, but as we hear from the word of God, so to judge of things, and act accordingly.

2. By the Father's will; My judgment is just, and cannot be otherwise, because I seek not mine...
own will, but his who sent me. Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, as the flesh is contrary to the spirit in us, but, (1.) Christ had, as Man, the natural and inherent affections of the human nature, sense of pain and pleasure, an inclination to life, an aversion to death; yet he pleased not himself, did not consult these, nor consult these, when he was to go on in his undertaking, but acquiesced entirely in the will of his Father. (2.) What he did as Mediator, was not the result of any peculiar, particular purpose and design of his own; what he did seek to do, was not for his own mind’s sake, but he was therein guided by his Father’s will, and the purpose which he had purposed to himself. Thus our Saviour did upon all occasions refer himself to, and govern himself by. Thus our Lord Jesus has opened his commission, (whether to the conviction of his enemies or not,) to his own honour, and the everlasting comfort of all his friends, who here see him able to save to the uttermost. 31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36. But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37. And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41. I receive not honour from men. 42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44. How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? 45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? In these verses our Lord Jesus proves and confirms the commission he had produced, and makes it out that he was sent of God to be the Messiah. 1. He sets aside his own testimony of himself; (v. 31.) “If I bear witness of myself, though it is infallibly true, (ch. 8. 14.) yet, according to the common rule of judgment among men, you will not admit it as legal proof, nor allow it to be given in evidence.” Now, 1. This reflects reproach upon the sons of men, and their veracity and integrity. Surely we may say deliberately, what David said in haste, "All men are base, else it would never have been such a matter, it would have been done otherwise; if it was so base, it would be discovered, it would not be secret, it would be known, and we would not be at a loss to make it our business to vindicate ourselves.” And yet, 2. It reflects honour on the Son of God, and speaks his wonderful condescension, that, though he is the faithful Witness, the Truth itself who may challenge to be credited upon his honour, and his own single testimony, yet he is pleased to leave his Father and his own Spirit, and the words of judgment, and he gets his bare testimony to stand by itself. Were the pure essence of this testimony to be spoken, (as it is understood by those who have the fulness of the Spirit,) it would be an infinite testimony, yet it is beseeching you, and longing to be believed. 2. He produces other witnesses that bear testimony to him, that he was sent of God. 1. The Father himself bore testimony to him; (v. 32.) There is another that beareth witness; which I take to be meant of God the Father, for Christ mentions his testimony with his own, (ch. 8.) 18. I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me. Observe, (1.) The seal which the Father put to his commission; He beareth witness of me, not only hath done so by a voice from heaven, but still doth so by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness. [1.] To those whom he sends and employeth; where he gives commissions, he will vouchsafe to vouchsafe testimony. [2.] To those who hear witness to him; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. [3.] To those who decline bearing witness of themselves; so Christ did. God will take care that these who humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, shall not lose by it. (2.) The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony; “I know the testimony which he witnesseth of me, is true. I am very well assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it” thus he had the witness in himself. The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded. 2. John Baptist witnessed to Christ, (v. 35.) &c. John came to bear witness of the light; (ch. 1. 7.) his business was, to prepare the way, and direct people to him; Behold the Lamb of God. Now the testimony of John was, (1.) A solemn and public testimony; “Ye sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say; it was not a popular but a judicial testimony. (2.) It was a true testimony, He bore witness to the truth, as a witness ought to do; the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Christ doth not say, He bore witness to me, (though every one knew he did,) but, like an honest man, He bore witness to the truth. Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture as to say what he did concerning Christ, if it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it. Two things are added concerning John’s testimony; [1.] That it was a testimony, ex abundanti­more than he needed to vouch; (v. 34.) I receive not testimony from man. Though Christ saw fit to quote John’s testimony, it is with a protestation that it shall not be deemed or construed so as to prejudice the prerogative of his self-sufficiency. Christ receives no testimony that man’s testimony of himself brings with him; why then did Christ here urge the testimony of John? Why, these things I saw, that ye might be saved. This he aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but the souls of
I have a testimony greater than that of John; for if I were to believe the works of men, I would be a sinner. 1 John 5. 9. Observe, though the witness of John was a less cogent and less considerable witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration. We must not vitiate any, under pretence that there are others more cogent; we have occasion for them all.

Now this greater witness was the works which his Father had given him to finish. That is,

1. In general; the whole course of his life and ministry—his revealing of God and his will to us, setting up his kingdom among men, reforming of the world, destroying of Satan's kingdom, restoring of fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity, and shedding abroad in men's hearts of the love of God and one another—all that work, of which he said when he died, It was finished, it was all from first to last, 

after Deo dignum—a work worthy of God; all he said and did, was holy and heavenly, and a divine purity, power, and grace shone in it, and proved abundantly that he was sent of God. 

2. In particular. (1.) To provide an evidence for the proof of his divine mission, witnessed of him. Now it is here said, (1.) That these works were given him by the Father, that is, he was both appointed and empowered to work them; for, as Mediator, he derived both commission and strength from his Father. (2.) They were given him to finish; he must do all those works of wonder which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before been done; and his finishing of them proves a divine power: for, as for God, his work is perfect. (3.) These works did bear witness of him, did prove that he was sent of God, and that what he said concerning himself, was true; see Heb. 2. 4. Acts 2. 22. That the Father had sent him as a Father, not as a master sends his servant on an errand, but as a father sends his son to take possession for himself; if God had not sent him, he would not have ascended him, would not have waded him, as he did by the works he gave him to do; for the world's Creator will never be his Deceiver.

4. He produces, more fully than before, his Father's testimony concerning him; (v. 57.) The Father that sent me, hath borne witness of me. The prince is not accustomed to follow his ambassador himself, to confirm his commission: but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son himself by a voice from heaven at his baptism, (Matt. 3. 17.) This is my beloved Son. The Jews reckoned Ruth-kil—

the daughter of a voice, a voice from heaven, one of the ways by which God made known his mind; in that way he had owned Christ publicly and solemnly, and repeated it, Matt. 17. 5. Note, (1.) No such voice was heard when he was circumcised—by which he makes a commission; for they where he gives a commission, he will not fail to seal it; he that never left himself without witness, (Acts 14. 17.) will never leave any of his servants so, who go upon his errand. (2.) Where God demands belief, he will not fail to give sufficient evidence, as he has done concerning Christ. That which was to be witnessed concerning Christ, was chiefly this, that the God he had offended, he was willing to accept of; so when the Father said this he has himself (and he was fittest to do it) given us full satisfaction, declaring himself well pleased in him: if we be so, the work is done.

Now it might be suggested, if God himself thus bears witness of Christ, how came it to pass that he was not universally received by the Jewish nation and their rulers? To this, Christ here answers, that
it was not to be thought strange, nor could their in-
idelity weaken his credibility, for two reasons.

[1.] Because they were not acquainted with such
extraordinary revelations of God and his will; ye
have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen
his shape, or appearance. They showed themselves
to be as ignorant of God, though they professed
relation to him, as we are of a man we never either
saw or heard. 'But why do I talk to you of God's
testimonies, when you have not the Father's testi-
mony, of, nor have any acquaintance or communion
with him?' (John 3:33.)

Note, Ignorance of God is the true reason of men's
rejecting of the record he has given concerning his
Son. A right understanding of natural religion
would discover to us such admirable congruities in the
catholic religion, as would greatly dispose our minds
to the entertainment of it. Some give this sense
here: It means, I believe not; and hence, we may
properly judge of a man's ignorance of God, from
the contempt he shows of his testaments.

The descent of a dove, which is such an
extraordinary thing, that you never saw or heard
the like; and yet for my sake there was such a
voice and appearance; yea, and you might have
heard that voice, you might have seen that appear-
ce, as others did, if you had closely attended the
ministry of John, but by slighting it you missed of
that testimony.'

For they were not affected, no not with the
ordinary ways by which God had revealed himself
to them; (v. 38.) Ye have not his word abiding
in you. They had the scriptures of the Old Testa-
ment; might they not by them be disposed to re-
ceive Christ? Yes, if they had had their due in-
fluence upon them. But, First, The word of God
was not in them; it was among them, in their country,
in their hands, but not in them, in their hearts; not
ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes,
and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them
that they had the oracles of God committed to them,
(Prov. 3:2.) when they had not those oracles com-
manding in them? If they had, they would really
have embraced Christ. Secondly, It did not abide.
Many have the word of God coming into them, and
making some impressions for a while, but it does
not abide with them. It is not constantly in them,
as a man at home, but only now and then and then
as a wayfaring man. If the word abide in us, if we converse
with it by frequent meditation, consult it upon
every occasion, and conform it to in our conversation,
we shall then readily receive the witness of the
Father concerning Christ; see ch. 7. 17.

But how did it appear that they had not the word
of God abiding in them? It appeared by this,
When he went out, he believed not. There was
so much said in the Old Testament concerning
Christ, to direct people when and where to look for
him, and so to facilitate the discovery of him, that,
if they had duly considered those things, they could
not have avoided the conviction of Christ's being
sent of God; so that their not believing in Christ,
was a certain sign that the word of God did not
abide with them. The impressions of the Holy
Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by
the effects of it, particularly by our receiving of
what he sends; the commands he sends, the mes-
sengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ,
whom he hath sent.

5. The last witness he calls, is the Old Testa-
ment, which witnessed of him, and to it he appeals;
(c. 59, ecc.) Search the scriptures, search; it may
be you do well to do so; ye read them daily in your
scourges, ye have rabbis, and doctors, and scribiles,
that make it their business to study them, and
 criticize upon them." The Jews boasted of the
flourishing of scripture-reading in the days of
Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth,
and reckoned some of those who were then mem-
bers of the Sanhedrim, the beauties of their wisdom,
and the glories of their laws; and Christ owns that
they did indeed search the scriptures, but it was in
search of their own glory; "Ye do search the
scriptures; and therefore, if ye were not willfully blind,
ye would believe in me," Note, It is possible for
men to be very studious in the letter of the scripture,
and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of
it. Or, (2.) As he reads it, Search the scriptures;
and, says, what do these things mean? (v. 27.) They
affirm; 'Ye profess to receive and believe the
scripture; there will I join issue with you, let that
be the judge, provided you will not rest in the let-
ter," (hacere in corice,) "but will search into it." Note,
when appeals are made to the scriptures, they
must be searched. Search the whole book of scrip-
ture throughout, compare one passage with another,
and compare many one by another. We must then
search particular passages to the bottom, and see not
what they seem to say forma facie—at the first
appearance, but what they say indeed. (2.) It is spoken
to us in the nature of an advice, or command to all
christians to search the scriptures. Note, All those
who would find Christ, must search the scriptures;
not only read them and hear them, but search them.
Which denotes, First, Diligence in searching, labor;
and, Second, to search upon the occasion of them.
Hence, (a) Desire and design of finding. We must aim at
some spiritual benefit and advantage in reading and
studying the scripture, and often ask, 'What am
I now searching for?' We must search as for hid
treasures, (Prv. 2. 4.) as those that sink for gold
or silver, or that draw for pearl, Job 28. 1—11.
This enabled the Bereans, Acts 17. 11.
Now the other two things which we are here di-
rected to, look in our eye, in our searching of the
scripture: heaven our end, and Christ our Way.
1. We must search the scriptures for heaven as
our great end; For in them ye think ye have eternal
life. The scripture assures us of an eternal state
set before us, and offers to us an eternal life in that
state; it contains the chart that describes it, the
charter that conveys it, the direction in the way that
leads to it, and the foundation upon which the hope
of it is built: and this is worth searching for, there
where we are sure to find it. But to the Jews Christ
saith, Be it known unto you, and to your children,
The heavens have eternal life; they thought they were
sure of heaven, if they could say by heart, or rather by
rote, such and such passages of scripture as they
were directed to by the tradition of the elders; as
they thought all the vulgar cursed, because they did
not thus know the law, (ch. 7. 49.) so they concluded
all the learned and nobly blessed. We will make use of
these verses for Christ, as the new and living Way,
that leads to this end. Those are they, the great and principal witnesses that testifi-
y of me. Note, (1.) The scriptures, even those of the
Old Testament, testify of Christ, and by them
God bears witness to him. The Spirit of Christ in
the prophets testified beforehand of him, (1 Pet. 1.
11.) the purposes and promises of God concerning
him, and the previous notion, or types, of him. The Jews
likewise very distinctly, and more particularly in the
Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks
upon the passages that looked that way; and yet
were careless, and wretchedly overshot, in the appli-
cation of them. (2.) Therefore we must search
the scriptures, and may hope to find eternal life in
that search, because they testify of Christ; for this
is life eternal, to know him; see 1 John 5. 11. Christ
is the Treasure hid in the field of the scriptures, the Water in those wells, the Milk in those breasts.

In this testimony he annexes a reproof of their infidelity and wickedness in four instances, particularly,

[1.] Their neglect of him and his doctrine; (v. 40.) Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. Ye believe not, because ye believe not His words, which, ye cannot but see, testify of me; and yet ye will not come to me, to whom they direct you.

Their estrangement from Christ was the fault, not so much of their understanding as of their wills. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it would not be accepted. Note, First, There is life to be had with Jesus Christ for persons who believe on him. He is life, and life indeed. Life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our Life. Secondly, Those that would have this life, must come to Jesus Christ for it; we must have it for the coming for. It supposes an asent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ, and the record given concerning him; it lies in the consent of the will to his government and grace, and it is a necessary consequence in the adjustments and actions. Thirdly, The only reason why sinners die is, because they will not come to Christ for life and happiness; it is not because they cannot, but because they will not. They will neither accept of the life offered, because spiritual and divine; nor will they agree to the terms on which it is offered; nor apply themselves to the use of the appointed means, because they will not come to the sinner, nor observe the methods of cure. Fourthly, The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners in rejecting the tenders of grace, are a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and what he complains of.

Those words, (v. 41.) I receive not honour from men, come in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the Head of a party, in obliging all to come to him, and applaud him. Note, 1. He did not covet or court the applause of men; did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendour which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear in. He charged them he cured, not to make him known, and withdrew from these that would have made him King. 2. He had not the applause of men. Instead of receiving honour from men, he rejected it. The soul of charity, he believeth that as the sinner is brought to Christ, he made himself of no reputation. 3. He needed not the applause of men; it was no addition to his glory, whom all the angels of God worship, nor was he any otherwise pleased with it, than as it was according to his Father's will, and for the happiness of those who, in giving honour to him, received much greater honour from him.

[2.] Their want of the love of God; (v. 42.) I know that ye do not have the love of God in you. Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of natural religion, which is the love of God? Note. The reason why people slight Christ is, because they do not love God; for if we did indeed love God, we should love him who is his express Image, and hasten to him by whom alone we may be received into a part of God's favour. He had charged them, (v. 37.) with ignorance of God, and here with want of love to him; therefore men have not the love of God, because they desire not the knowledge of him.

Observe, First, The crime charged upon them: You have not the love of God in you. They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple, and the sabbath; and yet they were really without the love of God. Note. There are many who make a mock profession of religion, who yet show they want the love of God by their neglect of Christ and their contempt of his commandments; they hate his holy lines, and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God in us, the love that is seated in the heart, and is a living, acting principle there, that God will accept; the love shed abroad there, Rom. 5. 5.

Secondly, The proof of this charge, by the personal knowledge of Christ, who knows what is in man; I know you. Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, I know thee. 1. Christ knows men better than their neighbours know them. The people thought that the scribes and Pharisees were very devout and good men, but Christ knew that they had nothing of the love of God in them. 2. Christ knew their very objections to him; No man can come to me without the Father's will, (v. 37.) Those Jews had a very good opinion of themselves, but Christ knew how corrupt their inside was, notwithstanding the plausible shews of their outside; we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive him. 3. Christ knows men who do not, and will not know him; he looks on those who industriously look off him, and calls by their own name, their true name, those who have not known him.

[3.] Another occasion of their will to obey the law and grace, is, their readiness to entertain false christs and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed him who was the true Messiah; (v. 43.) I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive. It is added, Observe, at this; (Deb. 2. 13, 13.) for my people have committed two evils, great evils indeed. First, They have forsaken the law of living; for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. Secondly, They have torn our broken cisterns, they hearken to every one that will set up in his own name. They forsake their own mercies, that is bad enough, and it is for living vani-ties, that is worse. Observe here, 1. These are false prophets who come in their own name, who run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. 2. It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets, who receive not the truth in the love of it, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. The errors of Antichrist are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light, are by the judgment of God given up to wonder endlessly, their Faith being turned to their judgment, Rom. 1. 21, 22. 3. It is the gross folly of many, that, while they nauseate ancient truths, they are fond of upstart errors; they love the manna, and at the same time feed upon ashes. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with false christs and false prophets, (Matth. 24. 24.) and their proneness to follow such occasions of these distractions and seditions that hastened their ruination.

[4.] They are here charged with pride and vain glory, and unbelief, the effect of it, v. 44. Having sharply reproved their unbelief, like a wise physician, he here enters into the cause, lays the axe to the root. They therefore slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and over-valued themselves. Here is

First, The error of worldly honour. Christ despised it, v. 41. They set their hearts upon it; ye receive honour one of another; that is, Ye look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and premise yourselves worldly honour by him. Ye receive honour; 1. Ye desire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do, 2. Ye give honour to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and may applaud you. Petitus dubiumque virilis—He ask and we bestow. It is the proud man's art to thro' himself the honour upon others only that it may rebound upon
himself. 3. "Ye are very careful to keep all the honours to yourselves, and confine them to your own party, as if ye had the monopoly of that which is honourable." 4. "What respect is shewn you, ye receive yourselves, and do not transmit it to God, as Herod." Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them and their approaches, are pieces of idolatry, as directly contrary to christians' constitution.

Secondly, Their neglect of spiritual honour, called here the honour that comes from God only; this they sought not, nor minded. Note, 1. True honour is that which comes from God only, that is real and lasting honour; those are honourable indeed, whom he takes into covenant and communion with himself. 2. This honour have all the saints. All the saints are of Christ, though through his grace the honour that comes from God. He is not partial, but will give glory wherever he gives grace. 3. This honour that comes from God, we must seek, must aim at it, and act for it, and take up with nothing short of it; (Rom. 2. 29.) we must account it our reward, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. 4. Those that will not come to Christ, and receive the excellency of heavenly honour, make it appear that they seek after that which comes from God, and it is their folly and ruin.

Thirdly, The influence this had upon their infidelity. How can ye believe, who are thus affected? Observe here, 1. The difficulty of believing arises from ourselves and our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. 2. The ambition and affectation of worldly honour are a great hindrance to faith in Christ. How can they believe, who make the praise and applause of men their idol? When the profession and practice of serious godliness are fashionable, are every where spoken against, when Christ and his followers are men wondered at, and to be a christian, is to be like a sputterel bird, (and this is the common case,) how can they believe, the top of whose ambition is to make a fair show in the flesh.

6. The last witness here called is, Moses, v. 45, &c. The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon their being the disciples of Moses, and pretended to adhere to Moses, in their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shows them, (1.) That Moses was a witness against the unbelief of Jews, and accused them to the Father. There is one that accuses you, even Moses. This may be understood either, 1. As showing the difference between the law and the gospel, Moses, that is, the law, accuses you, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it condemns you, it is to those that trust to it a ministarion of death and condemnation; but it is not the design of Christ's gospel to accuseless. Think not that I will accuse you. Christ did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save the whole world. Jerome finds fruit and pick quarrels with every body, or as a spy upon the actions of men, or a promoter, to fish for crimes; no, he came to be an Advocate, not an Accuser: to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance; what fonts were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and desired to be accusers? (Gal. 4. 21.) Or, [2.] As showing the manifest unbelief of the Jews in this case. Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's, and challenge you to answer there for what you do against me, as injured innocence usually does: no, I do not need, you are already accused, and cast, in the court of heaven; Moses himself says enough to convict you of, and condemn you for, your unbelief. Let them not mistake concerning Christ; though he was a Prophet, he did not improve his interest in heaven against those that per

In this chapter, we have, 1. The miracle of the loaves, v. 1. . . . 14. 11. Christ's walking upon the water, v. 15. . . . 21.
The people's robbing him to Capernaum, v. 22, 23. W. His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproves them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food, v. 26, 27; showing them how they must labour for spiritual food, v. 28, 29; and what that spiritual food is, v. 30, 31. Their discretion at what he said, and the refusal he gave them for it, v. 36, 36. VI. The apostacy of many from him, and his discourse unto his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion, v. 66, 71.

I. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. 5. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7. Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13. Therefore they gathered together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world.

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; which miracle is in this respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of Christ's life, that is recurred to by all the four evangelists. John, who does not usually relate what had been recorded by those who were present before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it. Observe,

1. The place and time where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, nobody knows where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be inquired into.

1. The country that Christ was in; (v. 1.) He went over the sea of Galilee, called elsewhere the lake of Gennesareth, here the sea of Tiberias, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and, probably, had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over, crosses this inland sea, but made a coasting voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God, to choose to go by easier water when it is more convenient for it, even to those places whither he was going; for Christ never tempted the Lord his God, Matth. 4. 7.

2. The company that he was attended with; a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, v. 2. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus, while he went about doing good, lived continually in a crowd, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of any difficulty of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to enjoy our selves, when we come to that world where we shall enjoy God. (2.) Christ's miracles drew many after him, that were not effectually drawn to him. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ postling himself advantageously to entertain them; (v. 3.) He went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples, that he might the more conveniently be seen and heard by the multitude that crowded after him; this was a natural pulpit, and not, like Ezra's, made for the purpose. Christ was now driven to be a Field-preacher; but his gospel was never the worse, nor the less acceptable, for that, to those who knew how to value him, who followed him still, not only when he went out to a desert place, but when he went up to a mountain, though up-hill be against heart. He sat there, as teachers do in cathedra—in the chair of instruction; he did not sit at ease, nor sit in state, yet he sat as one having authority; sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him: whoever would, might come, and find him there. He sat with his disciples; he condescended to take them to sit with him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to sit with him, Eph. 2. 6.

4. The time when it was. The first words, After these things, do not signify that this immediately followed what he said in the preceding chapter, for it was a considerable time after, and there was no more than, in process of time; but we are told, (v. 4.) that it was when the passover was nigh; which is here noted, (1.) Because, perhaps, that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem, to keep the feast. (2.) Because it was a season when the Jews, religiously to observe the approach of the passover thirty days before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before, they had it in their eye, repaired the roads, mended bridges, if there was occasion, and discussed of the passover and the institution of it. (3.) Because, perhaps, the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him, and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities should quicken us to improve them with double diligence; and when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the word of Christ.

III. The miracle itself. And there observe,

1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him; (v. 5.) He lift up his eyes, and saw a
great company come to him, poor, mean, ordinary people, no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country; yet Christ showed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare; he taught us to do good to them of low estate, and not to set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ hath set with the hands of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The enquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had scarce a shilling, and not a dish to set before him. But Christ turned the matter to the purpose, and taught us to teach them of low estate, and not to set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ hath set with the hands of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

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the guests; (v. 10.) *Make the men sit down, though you have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that.* This was like the gospel given to men in the days of Christ, to go about doing good without money; Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, (1.) The furniture of the dining room; there was much grass in that place, though a desert place; see how beautiful nature is, it makes grass grow upon the mountains, Ps. 147. 8. The grass was uncut; God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was plenty of grass where Christ was present, and other blessings flow with it. *Then shall the earth yield her increase,* Ps. 67. 6. This plenty of grass made the place more commodious for them that must sit on the ground, and served them for cushions, or beds; (as they said what they sat on at meat, Ex. 1. 6.) and considering what Christ says of the grass of the field, (Matt. 6. 29, 30;) these beds excelled those of Abraham’s; nature’s pomp is the most glorious. 2. The number of the guests; about five thousand; a great entertainment, representing that of the gospel, which is a feast for all nations, (Isa. 25. 6.) a feast for all comers.

7. The distribution of the provision, v. 11. Observe, (1.) It was done with thanksgiving; *He gave thanks.* Note, [1.] We ought to give thanks to God for all providences, and for all his favours, we have it from the hand of God, and must receive it with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with matter, and give us occasion for that excellent duty of thanksgiving. [2.] Though our provision be coarse and scanty; though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have. This was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, v. 11. Note, [1.] All our comforts come to us originally from the hand of Christ; whoever brings them, it is he that sends them, he distributes to them who distribute to us. [2.] In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministration of his disciples; they are the servants at Christ’s table, or rather rulers in his household, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

8. It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had as much as they would; not a short allowance, but a full meal; and, considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to be, above common food, it was not a little that served them, when they ate as much as they would, and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life, he does not stint, Ps. 81. 10. There were but two small fishes, and yet they had of them too, as much as they would. He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated all alike, for they were all his. They who call feeding upon fish fasting, reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a full feast.

9. The care that was taken of the broken meat. (1.) The orders Christ gave concerning it; (v. 12.) *When they were filled,* and every man had with him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ said to the disciples, the servants he employed, *Gather up the fragments.* Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of any of God’s good creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, *wasteful waste only excused.* It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, or let it fall to the ground, to be trodden upon. Quodnam communicat, in granum mecum pauco restat.—He who despairs bread, falls into the depth of poverty, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled, we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be charitable, must be provident. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and birds would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men, is wasted and lost, if it be thrown to the beasts. It is, therefore, the duty of all, even the broken meat to be gathered up, till all are filled, we must not begin to board and lay up, till all is laid out that ought to be for, that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, *How much less should we lose God’s word, or helps, or our time, or such greater mercies!* (2.) The observance of these orders; (v. 13.) *They gathered twelve baskets with the fragments;* which was an evidence not only of the truth of the miracle, that they were fed, not with fancy, but with real food, (witness those remains,) but of the greatness of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above. See how large the divine bounty is; it not only fills the cup, but makes it run over; bread enough, and to spare, in our Father’s house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple, and a part of them reserved, and one kind of meat given to all, with another of an interest for their willingness to part with what they had for public service; see 2 Chron. 31. 10. The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves, when they have eaten their meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest, for it is a curse upon the wicked man, (Job 20. 21,) that there shall none of his meat be left.

11. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people who tasted of the benefit of it; (v. 14.) *They said,* This is of a truth that Prophets. Note, [1.] Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a great Prophet. They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as not knowing the law; but, it should seem, they knew more of him that is the End of the law, than they did of Moses. Is it possible that Christ, which Christ wrought, did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a Teacher come from God, the great Prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was he that should come. There were many who were convinced he was that Prophet which should come into the world, who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt, unsanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that Prophet, and yet to turn a deaf ear to him.

15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew. 19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship, and they were afraid. 20. But he saith
unto them. It is 1; be not afraid. 21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Here is, 1. Christ's retirement from the multitude. 1. Observe what induced him to retire; because he perceived that they who acknowledged him to be that Prophet that should come into the world, would come, and take him by force, to make him a King, v. 13. Now here we have an instance, (1.) Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers; nothing would serve but they would make him a King. 

Now, [1.] This was an act of zeal for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned so great a Benefactor to the world so little esteemed in it; and therefore, since royal titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a King, knowing that the Messiah was to be a King, and if a prophet, like Moses, then a sovereign Prince and Lawgiver, like him; and if they cannot set him up upon the holy hill of Zion, a mountain in Galilee, shall serve for the present. Thus a King Christ has feasted with the royal dignities of heaven, should, in return for his favour, make him their King, and set him upon the throne in their souls; let him that has fed us, rule us. But, [2.] It was an irregular zeal; for, First, It was grounded upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be of this world, and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his feet; such a king as this they would have, and would take him, which was as great a disarray as his glory as it would be to lacker gold, or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for the advancing of it. Secondly, It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make him their King, who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of eating their bread in the sweat of their face. Thirdly, It was intended to carry on a secular design; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them, who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served, only to serve a turn, Rom. 16. 18. 

Fix quiver Jesus propter Jesum; sed propter alud—Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake. August. Nay, Fourthly, It was a tumultuous, sedition attempt, and a disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentment of the Roman power, and its antagonist, the Papacy. Fifthly, It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him by force, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ, which he has not required at their hands, displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. They that say, I am of Christ, in opposition to those that are of Apollo and Cephas, (so making Christ the Head of a party,) take him by force, to make him a King, contrary to his own mind. 2. Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that, when they would have made him a King, he departed; so far was he from contending the design, that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony, [1.] Against ambition and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force, and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more industrious to assent than he was when they would make him a King. Let us then covet to be the wise of the cross, nor be desirous of vain-glory. [2.] Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears that he was no enemy to Caesar, nor would have his followers he so, but the quiet in the land; that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition; he would turn away from it, and improve their interest only for their work's sake. —

2. Observe whither he retired; he departed again into a mountain, a v. 14—into the mountain, the mountain where he had preached, (v. 3.) whence he came down into the plain, to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls; and never less alone, says the serious Christ-tian, then when alone. Public services must not justly cut private devotions.

II. Here is the disciples' distress at sea. They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord, for he rauseth the stormy wind, Ps. 107. 24. 1. Apply that to these disciples. Here is the stormy wind arising, and fulfilling the word of God. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them; and yet they were in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table; but after the sun-shine of comfort expect a storm. (1.) It was now dark; this made the storm more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be. (2.) Jesus was not come to them. When they were in that storm, (Matth. 8. 21.) Jesus joined with them; but now their Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians. (3.) The sea arose by reason of a great wind. It was calm and fair when they put to sea, (they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm,) but it arose when they were at sea. In times of tranquillity we may take our ease; but for it may arise when we little think of it. I am convinced, when people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea; though in a storm, and in the dark, they are no worse off than Christ's disciples were. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light.
And when they were got off a good way at sea, they "saw Jesus walking on the sea." See here, (1.): They have a paper or parchment that says and establishes a certain course, to control and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked upon the water as upon dry land which was more than Moses's dividing of the water, and walking through the water.

(2.) The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress; "He drew near to the ship;" for therefore he walked upon the water, as Solomon upon the beams of the house. Deut. 33. 26. He will not leave them comfortless when they seem to be tossed with tempests, and not comforted. When they are abashed, as John, into remote places, or shut up, as Paul and Silas, in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them. (3.) The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. They were afraid, more afraid of an apparition (for so they supposed him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, [1.] Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy. [2.] Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often made by storms, with the noise and the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only worse frightened than hurt, but then most frightened when we are ready to be helped. But when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word, (v. 20.) In it I, be not afraid! Nothing is more powerful to convince sinners than that word, I am Jesus, whom thou seekest, nothing is more powerful to comfort saints of any minds and dispositions than that word, I know whom thou bearest, it is I that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of me, nor of the storm. When trouble is nigh, Christ is nigh. 4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, (v. 17.) (1.) They welcomed Christ into the ship; they willingly received him. Note, Christ's absencing himself for a time, is but so much the more to endear himself; at his return, to his disciples, and to all mankind. Cant. 3. 4. (2.) Christ landed them safe at the shore; immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. Note, [1.] The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have embarked themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; tossed at sea, but not lost; cast down, but not destroyed; the bush burning, but not consumed. [2.] The power and presence of the church's King shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was done suddenly. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, we shall be at length, and nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware. 

22. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, save that one wherein his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone: 23. (How) if there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks;) 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In these verses, we have,

1. The careful inquiry which the people made after Christ, v. 23, 24. They saw the disciples go to sea, they saw Christ retire to the mountains and into the night, and that he did not return, and in the morning; therefore they supposed that he desired to be private some time; but, their hearts being set upon it to make him a King, they waylaid his return: and, the day following, the hot fit of their zeal still continuing,

1. They are here much at a loss for him; he was gone, and they were not what became of him; they saw there was no other boat there, but that in which the disciples went off, Providence so ordaining it. They supposed the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also, that Jesus did not go with his disciples, but that they went off alone, and had left him among them on their side of the water. Note, Those that would find Christ, must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence, that they may steer accordingly.

2. They are very industrious in seeking him. They searched the places thereabouts, and when they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, (neither he, nor any one that could give tidings of him,) they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those that would find Christ, must accomplish a diligent search; must seek till they find; must go from sea to sea, to seek the word of God, rather than live without it. And those when Christ has feasted them with the bread of life, should have their souls carried out in earnest desires toward him. Much would have more in communion with Christ. Now, (1.) They resolved to go to Capernaum, in quest of him; there were his head-quarters, where he usually resided. There his disciples were, and they knew he would not long absent from them; they that would find Christ, must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. (2.) Providence favored them with an opportunity of getting thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for there came other boats from Tiberias, that his further off upon the same shore, nigh, though not so much to the place where they did eat bread, in which they might seem to make a trip to Capernaum, and, probably, the boats were bound for that part. Note, Those that sincerely seek Christ, and seek opportunity of conversing with him, are not hard to find, and are assisted in these pursuits. The vessel, having occasion to mention their arrival, to the much filled bread, adds, after that the Lord had given
thanks, v. 11. So much were the disciples affected with their Master's giving thanks, that they can never afterwards mistake this expression made upon them by it; but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. That was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable; their hearts burned within them.

3. They had hold on the opportunity that offered itself, and they also took shipping, and came to Caper- naum seeking for Jesus. They did not defer, in their regard to this expression made upon them by their, their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crush'd, and come to nothing, for want of being prosecuted in time. They came to Capernaum, and, for aught that appears, these unsound hypocritical followers of Christ had a calm and pleasant passage, while his sincere disciples had a rough and stormy one. It is not strange if it fare worse with the best men in this evil world. They went seeking Jesus. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and, as those here, compass sea and land, to seek and serve him who came from heaven to earth, to seek and save us.

II. The success of this inquiry; (v. 25.) They found him on the other side of the sea. Note, Christ was not everywhere found, but was only found where they sought for him. Yet it is worth while to cross a sea, nay, to go from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. Those people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not actuated by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have no more to show for their love to Christ, than their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect: themselves no better than this eager crowd. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him; if he could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them from communion, much less when we do not know their hearts.

III. The question they put to him when they found him; Rabbi, when comest thou hither? It should seem by v. 39, that they found him in the synagogue. They knew that was the likeliest place to see Christ in, for it was his custom to attend public assemblies for religious worship. Luke 4. 16. Note, Christ must be sought, and will be found, in the congregations of his people, and in the administra- tion of his ordinances; public worship is what Christ chooses to own, and grace with his presence, and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him, was, Rabbi, when comest thou hither? They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of that, but call him Rabbi, their Teacher. Their inquiry respect only to his coming, not concerning conveying himself thither; not only When, but, How, comest thou hither? for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

IV. The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question. What was it to them, when and how, he came thither? But such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the corrupt principle that they acted from, in their following of him; (v. 26.) If you will not believe, yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, I that search the heart, and know what is in man, I the Amen, the faithful Witness, Rev. 3. 14, 15. To seek me, that is the heart, but it is not from a good principle. Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it. These followed Christ, (1.) Not for his doctrine's sake; not for his grace and truth. The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine; Nicodemus sought for him, for the sake of them, (ch. 3. 2.) and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these here were so stupid and mindless, that they never considered that. But, (2.) It was for their own bellies' sake; because ye did eat of the leaves, and were filled; not because he taught them, and said, This is my body, and do this in remembrance of me. He had given them, (1 Thess. 4. 6.) A full meal's meat; They did eat, and were filled, and some of them perhaps were so poor, that they had not known for a long time before now, what it was to have enough, to eat and leave. (2.) A dainty meal's meat; it is probable that, as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food more than usually pleasant. (3.) A cheap meal's meat, that cost them nothing; no reckoning was had with them. Note, Many follow Christ for bellies, and not for love. Thus they do, who aim at secular advantage in their profession of religion, and follow it, because by this craft they got their preferments. Quanti praeferit nobis hoc fabula de Christo—This false respecting Christ, what a gainful concern we have made of it.' said one of the popes; these people complimented Christ with Rabba, and showed a great respect for him or their own; but his ministry was cut short by the suspicions of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be bribed by fair words, but to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them; nor cry peace to all that cry rabbi to them.

2. He directs them to better principles; (v. 27.) Labour for that meat which endures to everlasting life. He had discoursed with the woman of Samaria, under the similitude of water, here he speaks of the same things under the similitude of meat, taking occasion from the leaves they had eaten. His design is,

(1.) To moderate our worldly pursuits; Labour not for the meat that perishes. This does not forbid honest labour for food convenient, 2 Thess. 3. 12. But we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note, (1.) The things of the world are meat that perishes. Worldly wealth, honour, and pleasure, these are meat; they feed the fancy, and many times that is all, and fill the belly, things which men hunger after as meat, and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart, as long as they last, may make a shift to live upon; but they perish, are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to the queries of those that have the largest share of them, are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them and lose them when they die. (2.) It is therefore folly for us inordinate labour after them. First, We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, for this perish- ing meat, with an eye to this: must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at secular advantages and success by it. We do not at all labour for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our chief good, nor make our care and pains about them our chief business; not seek those things first and most, Prov. 23. 45.

(2.) To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits; Bestow your pains to better purpose, and labour for that meat which belongs to the soul. Of which he speaks,

[1.] That it is unspeakably desirable; it is meat which endures to everlasting life; it is happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our preservative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.
32. It is undoubtedly attainable. Shall all the treasures of the world be man'sacked, and all the
fruits of the earth gathered together, to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No, The
sea saith, It is not in me; among all the treasures hid
in the sea, it cannot be gotten for gold; but it is that
which the Son of man shall give; a 42-47, either
which meat, or which life, the Son of man shall give.
Observe here, First, Who gives this meat; the
Son of man, and the Son of man only. These are
the things which the Son of man shall give. The
Son of man is the name of Jesus Christ. The stores,
who is intrusted with the administration of the
kingdom of God among men, and the dispensa-
tion of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that king-
dom, and has power to give eternal life, with all
the means of it, and preparations for it. We are bid
to labour for it, as if it were to be got by our own
industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration,
as the heathen said, Di laboribus omnium venturi.
The gods sell all advantages to the industrious.

When we have laboured over so much for it, we have
not merited it as our hire, but the Son of man gives it.
What more free than gift? It is an encour-
agement, that he who has the giving of it, is the
Son of man, for then we may hope the sons of men
that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it.
Secondly, What authority he has to give it; for
him the Father has sealed, as proves (1 John 3:32),
so once read it; he has declared him to be the Son of God
with power. He has sealed him, that is, has given him
authority to deal between God and man, as God's
Ambassador to man, and man's Intercessor with
God; and has proved his commission by miracles;
having given him authority, he has given us assur-
ance of it; having intrusted him with unlimited
power, he has satisfied us with unanswerable proofs
of them; so that as he might go on with confidence
in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resig-
nations to him. God the Father sealed him with the
Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven,
by the testimony he bore to him in signs and won-
ders. Divine revelation is perfected in him; in him
the vision and prophecy is sealed up, (Deut. 18:22.)
to him all believers seal that he is true, (John. 3:32.)
and in him they are all sealed, (2 Cor. 1:22.)

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we
do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto
them, This is the work of God, That ye
believe on him whom he hath sent. 30. They said therefore unto him, What sign
shewest thou them, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert;
as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32. Then Jesus said unto
them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses
gave you not that bread from heaven; but
my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
33. For the bread of God is he
which cometh down from heaven, and giv-
eth life unto the world. 34. Then said they
unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.
35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the
bread of life: he that cometh to me shall
never hunger; and he that believeth on me
shall never thirst. 36. But I said unto you,
that ye also have seen me, and believe not.
37. All that the Father giveth me shall
come to me; and him that cometh to me
I will in no wise cast out. 38. For I came
down from heaven, not to do mine own will,
but the will of him that sent me. 39. And
this is the Father's will which hath sent
me. That of all which he hath given me I
should lose nothing, but that should raise it up
again at the last day. 40. And this is the
will of him that sent me, that every one
which seeth the Son, and believeth in him,
may have everlasting life: and I will raise
him up at the last day. 41. The Jews then
murmured at him, because he said, I am
the bread which came down from heaven.
42. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the
son of Joseph, whose father and mother we
know? How is it then that he saith, I came
down from heaven? 43. Jesus therefore
answered and said unto them, Murmur not
among yourselves. 44. No man can come
to me, except the Father which hath sent
me draw him: and I will raise him up at
the last day. 45. It is written in the pro-
phets, And they shall be all taught of God. 
Every man therefore that hath heard, and
hath learned of the Father, cometh unto
me. 46. Not that any man hath seen the
Father, save he which is of God: he hath
seen the Father. 47. Verily, verily, I say
unto you, He that believeth on me hath
everlasting life. 48. I am that bread of
life. 49. Your fathers did eat manna in
the wilderness, and are dead. 50. This is the
bread which cometh down from heaven, that
a man may eat thereof, and not die.
51. I am the living bread which came
down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread,
he shall live for ever: and the bread that I
will give is my flesh, which I will give for
the life of the world. 52. The Jews there-
fore strove among themselves, saying, How
can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53.
Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily,
I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of
the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye
have no life in you. 54. Whoso eateth my
flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal
life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my
blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth
my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth
in me, and I in him. 57. As the living
Father hath sent me, and I live by the
Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall
live by me. 58. This is that bread which
cometh down from heaven: not as your
fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that
catcheth of this bread shall live for ever.
59. These things said he in the synagogue,
as he taught in Capernaum.
Whether this conference was with the Caper-
nates, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with
tose who came from the other side of the sea, is
certain, or material; however it is an instance
of Christ's confidence, that he gave them leave to
ask him questions, and did not resent the interrup-
tion as an affront, no not from his common hearers,
though not his immediate followers. Those that
would be apt to teach, must be swift to hear, and
ready to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when
they are asked even imperceptive, unprofitable ques-
tions, from them to take occasion to answer that
which they desire, that the question may be reject-
ed, but not the request. Now,
I. Christ having told them that they must work
for the meat he spoke of, must labour for it, they
inquire what they must do, and he answers them,
\textit{v}. 29, 29.

1. Their inquiry was pertinent enough; \textit{(v. 28.)}
\textit{What shall we do, that we may work the works of
God?} Some understand it as a pert question;
\textit{"What works of God can we do more and better
than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses?"}
But I rather take it as a humble, serious question,
speaking them to be, at least for the present, in
a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty;
and I take it that they who asked this question How
and What, \textit{(v. 30.)} and made that request, \textit{(v. 34.)}
would be apt to do something which involves the
\textit{works of God}; hence we may suppose, that those
which are exactly \textit{called the Jews}, which came out of
Judea (for those were strictly called Jews) to civil,
whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught.
This question here intimates that they were convinced
that they who would obtain this everlasting meat,
\textit{(1.)} They must aim to do something great. They
who look high in their expectations, and hope to en-
joy the works of God must aim high in those endeav-
ours, and study to do \textit{the works of God}, works
which he requires, and will accept of, \textit{works of God}
distinguished from the works of worldly men in their
worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the
words of God, but we must do the works of God.
\textit{(2.)} That they must be willing to do anything;
\textit{What shall we do? Lord, I am ready to do what-
soever thou appointest through even so dispelling to
flesh and blood, Acts 9. 6.}

2. Christ's answer was plain enough; \textit{(v. 29.)}
\textit{This is the work of God, that ye believe. Note, (1.)}
The work of faith is the work of God. They in-
quire after the \textit{works of God}, \textit{(in the plural number,)}
being careful about many things, but Christ directs
them to one work, which includes all, the one thing
needful, that ye believe, which surpasses all the
\textit{works of the ceremonial law}; the work which is
necessary to the acceptance of all the other works,
and which produces them, for without faith you
cannot please God. \textit{It is God's work, for it is of his
working in us, it subjects the soul to his working on
us, and quickens the soul in working for him. (2.)}
That faith is the \textit{work of God}, which closes with
Christ's \textit{statement of the work of God.} What
\textit{works of God} are these which \textit{God hath sent}, as God's Commissioner,
in the great affair of peace between God and man,
and as such to rest upon him, and resign ourselves
to him. \textit{See ch. 14. 1.}

II. Christ having told them that the \textit{Son of man}
\textit{would give them this meat,} they inquire concerning
him, and he answers their inquiry.

1. Their inquiry is after a sign; \textit{(v. 30.)} \textit{What
signs shall we see from thee?} What signs except
two, that since he required them to give him credit, he
should produce his credentials, and make it out by miracle,
that he was sent of God. Moses having confirmed
his mission by signs, it was requisite that Christ,
who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in
like manner confirm his: \textit{"What dost thou do at?
What lasting characters of a divine power dost thou design to leave upon thy
doctrine?" But herein they missed it, (1.) That
they overestimated the many miracles which they
had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an
abundant proof of his divine mission. Is this a
time of day to ask, \textit{What sign showest thou?}
especially at Capernaum, the staple of miracles,
where he had done so many mighty works, signs
so significant of his office and undertaking? Were
not these very persons but the other day miracu-
iously fed? and as they that will not see; for they may be so blind, do not know
whether he be day or night, when the sun shines in
their faces. (2.) That they preferred the miraculous
feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the
miracles Christ wrought; \textit{(v. 51.) Our fathers
did eat manna in the desert; and to strengthen the
election, they quote a scripture for it; He gave
them bread from heaven; (taken from Ps. 78. 24.) he
gave them of the corn of heaven. What a good use
might be made of this story which they here refer
to! It was a memorable instance of God's power
and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God;
( Neh. 9. 20, 21.) yet see how these people perverted
it, and made an ill use of it.

[1.] Christ reproved them for their fondness of
the miraculous bread, and bid them not set their
hearts upon meat which perisheth; \"Why? say they,
"meat for the belly was the great good thing,
that God gave to our fathers in the desert; and why
should we not then labour for that meat? If God
made much of them, why should not we be these
that will make much of us.\" [2.] Christ had fed five
thousand men with five
leaves, and had given them that as one sign, to
convince them of his power. But, understanding all
the miracles of Moses, they think undervalue
that miracle of Christ, and evade the evidence
of it. Christ fed his thousands; but Moses his
hundred thousands: Christ fed them but once, and then
reproved those who followed him in hope to be still
ditto, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual
food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and
miracles were not the rarities, but their daily
bread. Christ fed them with bread out of the bar-
ley-loaves, and fishes out of the sea; but Moses
fed Israel with bread from heaven, angels' food.
Thus big did these Jews talk of the manna
which their fathers did eat; but their fathers had slighted
it, as much as they did now the barley-leaves, and
called it \textit{light bread}, Numb. 21. 5. Thus apt are we
to slight and overlook the appearances of God's
power and grace in our own times, while we tend
to admire the wonders which our fathers told
us of. \textit{Suppose this miracle of Christ was out-done
by that of Moses, yet there were other instances in
which Christ's miracles out-shone his; and besides,
all true miracles prove a divine doctrine, though not
equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were
ever diversified according as the occasion did require.
As the\textit{ barley-leaves,}\textit{ turned into fish and loaves},
some much, and much more, did the doctrine of
Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly
institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensa-
tion.}

2. Here is Christ's reply to this inquiry; wherein,
(1.) He rectifies their mistake concerning the
typical manna. It was true, their fathers did eat
manna in the desert. But it is another question,
whether this gave it them, nor were they obliged to him for
it; he was but the instrument, and therefore they
must look beyond him to God. We do not find that
Moses did so much as pray to God for the manna;
and he spake unadvisedly, when he said, \textit{Must we
fetch water out of the rock?} Moses gave them not
either that bread, or that water.\textit{ [3.] He was not
given them, as they imagined, from heaven, from the highest heavens, but only from the clouds, and therefore not so much excelling that which had its rise from the earth, as they thought. The scripture saith, He gave the bread from heaven, do not follow that it was heavenly bread, or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding scripture-language occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

(2.) He informs them concerning the true Manna, of which that was a type; But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; that is, the heavenly Bread, from heaven, of which that was but a shadow and figure, is now given, not to your fathers, who are dead and gone, but to you of the present age, for whom the better things were reserved: he is now giving you that Bread from heaven, which is truly so called. As much as the throne of God’s glory is above the clouds of the air, so much hath the spiritual Bread of the everlasting God excel the manna. In calling God his Father, he speaks himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a Son, Heb. 3, 5.

Now this objection of theirs concerning the manna, gave further occasion to Christ to discourse of himself under the similitude of bread, and of believing under the similitude of eating and drinking; to which, together with the eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood, and with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

[1.] Christ, having spoken of himself as the great Gift of God, and the true Bread, (v. 32.) largely explains and confirms this, that we may rightly know him.

First, He here shows that he is the true Bread; so the repeats again and again, v. 33, 55, 42—51.

Observe,

1. That Christ is Bread; is that to the soul, which bread is to the body, nourishes and supports the spiritual life, (is the Staff of it,) as bread does his bodily life; it is the staff of life. The doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ; that he is the Mediator between God and man, that he is our Peace, our Righteousness, as well as our Peace; is the same complaint, by these things, to feed all our spiritual wants. Our bodies could better live without God than our souls without Christ. Bread-corn is bruised; (Isa. 28, 28.) so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, the house of bread, and typified by the shea-bread.

2. That he is the Bread of God, (v. 33.) divine Bread; it is he that is of God. (v. 46.) Bread which my Father gives, (v. 33.) which he has made to be the Food of our souls; the Bread of God, namely, his children’s Bread. The Levitical sacrifices are called the bread of God, (Lev. 21, 21, 22.) and Christ is the great Sacrifice; Christ, in his words and ordinances, the Feast upon the sacrifice.

3. That he is the Bread of life. (v. 35. and again, v. 48.) that Bread of life, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, which was to Adam and his posterity. That Bread is life, of which he might eat, and live. Christ is the Bread of life, for he is the Fruit of the tree of life. (1.) He is the living Bread; (so he explains himself, v. 51.) I am the living Bread. Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourishes not but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is himself living Bread, and nourishes by his own power. Manna was a dead thing; if kept too long, it grew mouldy, and bred worms; but Christ is everliving; everlasting Bread, that never moulds, or waxes old. The doctrine of Christ crucified, is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was, and his mediation still of so much value and efficacy as ever. (2.) He gives life unto the world, (v. 35.) spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The manna did not preserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ gives life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the life of the world; none are excluded from the benefit of this Bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to give life into the minds of men; principles productive of acceptable performances.

4. That he is the Bread which came down from heaven; this is often repeated here, v. 33, 50, 51, 58. This denotes, (1.) The divinity of Christ’s person. As God, he had a being in heaven, whence he came to take our nature upon him; I came down from heaven; whence we may infer his antiquity, he was in the beginning with God; his being in heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, he came with a divine commission. (2.) The divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He comes not only that came down, (v. 51.) but that came down; that is descending, denoting a constant communication of light, life, and love, from God to believers through Christ, as the manna descended daily. See Eph. 1, 3. Omnia deaerat—All things from above.

5. That he is that Bread of which the manna was a type and figure, (v. 58.) that Bread, the true Bread, v. 32. As the Rock that they drank of, was Christ, so was the Manna they ate of, spiritual Bread, 1 Cor. 10, 4, 5. Manna was given to Israel; so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was manna that was for their body; so in Christ a fulness of grace for all believers; he that gathers much of this manna, will have none to spare, when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find, that he has no lack. Manna was to be gathered in the morning; and those that would find Christ, must seek him early. Manna was sweet, and, as the author of the Wisdom of Solomon tells us, (ch. 16, 26.) was sweet and pleasant to the taste. Manna is not a metaphor, Christ is precious. Israel lived upon manna till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our Life. There was a memorial of the manna preserved in the ark; so of Christ in the Lord’s supper, as the Food of souls.

Secondly, He here shows what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no parable, but makes an account of his business among men, v. 38—40.

1. He assures us, in general, that he came from heaven upon his Father’s business; (v. 38.) not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. He came from heaven, which speaks him an intelligent active Being, who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great work of love, concerning the souls of men, to whom he came, and the calamities of the world he came to; we may well ask with wonder, “What moved him to such an expedition?” He tells us here, that he came to do, not his own will, but the will of his Father, not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but they to whom he spoke, suspected he might; “No,” saith he, “my Father wills it; it is the spring of it from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to do the will of him that sent me.” That is, (1.) Christ did not come into the world as a private person, that acts for himself only, but under a public character, to act for others as an Ambassador, or Plenipotentiary, authorized by a public commission; he came into the
world as God's great Agent, and the world's great Physician. It was not any private business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties no less considerable than the great Creator, and the whole creation. (2.) Christ, when he was in the world, did not carry on any private design, nor had any separate interest at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God, and do good to men; he therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet; but, when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature which started at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will as Man into the will of God; Not as I will, but as thou wilt.

He appoints us, in particular, with the will of his Father, which he came to do; he here declares the decree, the instructions he was to pursue.

(1.) The private instructions given to Christ, that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son; (v. 36.) "This is the Father's will, whom he hath sent me; this is the charge I am intrusted with, that all which he had given me I should bring to fruitage."

Note. [1.] There is a certain number of the children of men, given by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise: given him for an inheritance, for a possession. Let him do all that for them, which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debts, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

[2.] Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will lose none of those that were thus given him of the Father. The many sons whom he was to bring to glory, shall all be forthcoming, and none of them missing, Matt. 18. 14. None of them shall be lost for want of sufficiency in the power and providence of the all-sufficient grace to sanctify them. If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me bear the blame for ever, Gen. 43. 9.

[3.] Christ's undertaking for those that are given him, extends to the resurrection of their bodies; I will raise it up again at the last day; which supposes all that goes before, but this is to crown and complete the undertaking; the body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it shall not be lost. The undertaking is not only that he shall lose none, no person, but that he shall lose nothing, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the undertaking are gathered together.

Behold, I and the children that thou hast given me, Heb. 2. 13. 2 Tim. 1. 12.

[4.] The spring and original of all this, is the sovereign will of God; the counsels of his will, according to which he works all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son, when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

(2.) The public instructions which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the covenant of grace between God and man. Who the particular persons were, that were given to Christ, is a secret; The Lord knows them that are his, we do not, nor is it fit we should; but, though their names are concealed, their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel-terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left insecure. He revealed the will, of him that sent me; the method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the children of men, that every one, Jew or Gentile, that sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up." This is the gospel, indeed, good news; but it not reviving to hear this? [1.] That eternal life may be had, if it be not our own fault; that, whereas upon the sin of the first Adam, the way of the tree of life was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again. The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. [2.] Every one may have it. This gospel is to be preached, this offer made to all, and none can say, It belongs not to me," Rev. 22. 17. [3.] This everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that sees the Son, and believes on him, shall be saved. Some understand this saying as a limitation of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves that so well as to believe on him, shall have eternal life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief, (however they may be for other sins,) but those who have had the gospel preached to them, who, like these Jews here, (v. 36.) have seen, and yet have not believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in him. But I rather understand seeing here to mean the same thing with believing, for it is bapx,v, which signifies not so much the sight of the eye, (as v. 35.) but the seeing of the heart, and the contemplation of the mind. Every one that sees the Son, that is, believes on him, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be truly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stiff Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a blind faith that Christ speaks of; such a faith as we should have, when our eyes are shut, and then follow him, but that we should see him, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is then right, when it is not taken up upon hear-say, (believing as the church believes,) but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility; Now mine eye sees thee; He have heard him ourselves. [4.] Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had it in charge as his Father's will, (v. 35.) and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking, I will raise him up, which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the whole man into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

When Christ discourseing thus concerning himself, as the Bread of life that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it. First, When they heard of such a thing as the Bread of God, which gives life, they heartily prayed for it; (v. 34.) Lord, evermore give us this Bread. I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it. For he was a\th?kord, and of course must have fed them with bread. And yet let us be fed with it; not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but evermore; as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But I take this re
quest to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him Lord, and desire a share in what he gives, whatever he means by it. General and confused notions of divine things produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires toward them, and wishes of them; like Babian's wish, to die the death of the righteous. Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see much, yet cannot form a clear idea of all they see, are full of irritable prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favour of God a good thing, and heaven a fine place, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value or desire at all for that holiness which is necessary both to the one and the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the word of God, and Christ in the word, let us say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread; let the Bread of life be our daily Bread, the heavenly Manna our continual Feast, and let us never know the want of it.

Secondly, But when they understood, that by this Bread of life Jesus meant himself, then they desisted. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it, (v. 34.) or some others of the company, does not appear; it seems to be some others, for they are called Jews. (v. 43.) They murmured at him. This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration which Christ had made of God's will, and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation, (v. 33, 40.) which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all approbation; one would think that, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus provided for them, they should have bowed their heads, and worshipped, but, on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, (their faith is weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced,) yet say in their heart, that they do not like it.

Now, 1. That which offended them, was, Christ's asserting his original to be from heaven, v. 41, 42. How is it that he saith, I came down from heaven? They had heard of angels coming down from heaven, but never of a man. (Note, Karn, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, (their faith is weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced,) yet say in their heart, that they do not like it.

2. That which they thought justified them herein, was, that they knew his extraction on earth; Is this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? They took it amiss, that he should say that he came down from heaven, when he was one of them. They speak slightly of his blessed name, Jesus; Is not this Jesus? They take it for granted that he is the son of his mother, and think only to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with the other sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction, and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus provided for them, they should have bowed their heads, and worshipped, but, on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, (their faith is weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced,) yet say in their heart, that they do not like it.

[2.] Christ, having spoken of faith as the great work of God, (v. 29.) discourses largely concerning this work, instructing and encouraging us in it. First, He shows what it is to believe in Christ. 1. To believe in Christ, is to come to Christ; He that comes to me, is the same with him that believes in me; (v. 35.) and again, (v. 37.) He that comes unto me; so v. 44, 45. Repentance toward God is coming to him, (Jer. 3, 22.) as our chief Good and highest End; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to him as our Prince and Saviour, and our Way to the Father. It denotes the out-givings of our affection toward him, for these are the conditions that he sets to us, that we come to him, and come off from all these things that stand in opposition to him, or competition with him, and to come up to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth, it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now, more than coming to his word and ordinances.

2. It is to feed upon Christ; (v. 34.) If any man eat this Bread, (the former means applying ourselves to Christ, this denotes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life and strength and comfort from him. To feed on him as the Bracteates on the manna, having quitted the flesh-foots of Egypt, and not depending on the labour of their hands, (to eat of that,) but living purely on the bread given them from heaven. Secondly, Feed upon Christ, means that we should be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of those comforts, we have enough; now these two are here secured to true believers.

They shall never want, never hunger, never thirst, v. 35. Desires they have, earnest desires, but these shall be supplied, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which is uneasy and painful. Those that eat manna, and drank of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards. Manna surfeited them, water out of the rock failed them, but there is such an overflowing fulness in Christ as can never be exhausted, and there are such overflowings of communications from him as can never be interrupted.

2. They shall never die, not the eternally; for, (1.) He that believes on Christ, has everlasting life, (v. 47.) he has the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and first-fruits. Union with Christ and communion with God in Christ, are everlasting life begun. (2.) Whereas they that did eat manna, died, Christ is such Bread as a man may eat of, and never die, v. 49, 50. Observe here,

[1.] The insufficiency of the typical manna; Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers; their graces speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest plenty of the most dainty food will neither prolong the thread of life, nor put by the stroke of death. The manna, which God gave to Israel, died like the other manna. There could be nothing amiss in their diet, to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life; (for they neither sowed nor reaped;) and yet they died. First, Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for, though they did eat that spiritual meat, yet with many of them God was not well pleased, but they were driven out of the wilderness. Their eating manna was no security to them from the wrath of God, as believing in Christ is to us. Secondly, The rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcasses fell, under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did eat manna. In that very age when miracles were daily bread, was the life of men re-
duced to the sight it now stands at, as appears, Ps. 90. 10. Let them not boast so much of manna then.

[2.] The all-sufficiency of the true Manna, of which the other was a type; This is the Bread that cometh down from heaven, that truly divine and heavenly Food, that a man may eat thereof, and not die; nor fall under the wrath of God; for His eye is upon it, the Saviour was there, dying for the second Adam’s death; no, nor the first death finally and irrecoverably; not die, not perish, nor come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of faith, though they had manna.

This is further explained by that promise in the next words, If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, v. 53. That is the meaning now of the word. He shall pass through it to that world where there shall be no more death. To live for ever, is not to be for ever, (the damned in hell shall be for ever, the soul of man was made for an endless state,) but to be happy for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water split upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too: (as it is written, at the last day;) and even that shall live for ever.

Thirdly, He shows what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who had seen him, and yet believed not, v. 36. They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection; How welcome soever this word be to our souls, which bids us believe to Christ! Him that cometh; it is in the singular number, speaking favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, (1.) The duty required is a pure gospel-duty; to come to Christ, that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractions, must draw us to him; sense of necessity must make us choose him, and shall be the first thing to bring us to Christ. (2.) The promise is a pure gospel-promise; I will in no wise cast out—so in the LXX.; there are two negatives, I will not, no, I will not. [1] Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should cast us out; considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming; we may justly expect that he should shun us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he will not do it; will not disdain us though we are mean, will not reject us though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him, to be taught? Though they be dull and slow, he will not cast them out. Do poor patients come to him, to be cured, poor clients come to him, to be advised? Though their case be bad, and though they cannot pay, he will in no wise cast them out. But, [2.] More favour is implied than is expressed; when it is said that he will not cast them out, the meaning is, He will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for. As he will not refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterward, upon every dis-pleasure, cast them out. His gifts and callings are without repentance.

2. That the Father will, without fail, bring all these to him in due time, that were given him. In the federal transactions between the Father and the Son, relating to man’s redemption, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation, of all that should come to him; (Let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me;) so the Father, the Fountain and Original of being, life, and grace, undertook to bring all those who were given him, and bring them to him.

Now, (1.) He here assures us that this shall be done; (v. 57.) All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. Christ had complained, (v. 36.) of those, who, though they had seen him, yet would not believe on him; and then he adds this, [1.] For their conviction and awakening, plainly intimating that they were, and were not, by his will, to believe on him; yet they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ, if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? 2 Pet. 1.10. [2.] For his own comfort and encouragement; Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall be glorious. The election has obtained, and shall, though multitudes be blinded, Rom. 11.7. Though he lose many of his creatures yet none of his charge; All that the Father giveth him, shall come to him, notwithstanding. Here we have,

First, The election described; All that the Father giveth me, shall be saved:—every thing which the Father giveth to me; the persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests; as all that he has, is theirs, so all that is his is given to him; they were given him in full recompense of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things, are gathered together in Christ, (Eph. 1.10.) and reconciled, Col. 1.20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of, (v. 39.) as a thing done; he hath given them; here it is spoken of as a thing in the doing, he giveth them; because, when the First-believers were brought into the world, it should seem, there was a renewal of the grant; see Heb. 10.5. &c. God was now about to give him the heathen for his inheritance, (Ps. 2.8.) to put him in possession of the desolate heritages, (Isa. 49.8.) to divide him a portion with the great, Isa. 53.12. And though the Jews, who saw him, believe not on him, yet these (sixth he) shall come to me; the other sheep, which are not of his fold, shall be brought, ch. 10.15. See Acts 13.45—46.

Secondly, The effect of it secured; They shall come to me. This is a prediction, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life, shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are scattered, are mingled among the nations; yet none of them shall be forgotten; not a grain of God’s corn shall be lost, as is promised, Amos 9.9. They are of the dark, and none of them are hid; and should come to Christ, and are destitute; and yet they shall come. As God’s omniscience is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not, they shall be driven to me, but, They shall come freely, shall be made willing.

(2.) He here acquaints us how it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ, be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it.

[1.] Their understandings shall be enlightened; that is promised, v. 45, 46. It is written in the prophets, who spake of these things before, And they shall be all taught of God; this we find, Isa. 54.13. and Jer. 41.5. They shall all know me. Note, In order to our believing in Jesus Christ, it is necessary that we be taught of God; that is, First, That the Scriptures must be abundantly understood by us, that we may be able to compute both what we are to believe concerning Christ, and why we are to believe it. There are some things which even nature teaches, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. Secondly
That there be a divine work wrought in us, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths, and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teaches us more than the beasts of the earth; but in giving us faith, he teaches us more than the natural man. Thus all the church's children, all that are genuine, are taught of God; he hath undertaken their education. This is often done by way of inference from this, that every man that has heard and learned of the Father, comes to Christ, v. 45. 1. It is here implied that none will come to Christ but those that have heard and learned of the Father. We shall never be brought to Christ, but under a divine conduct: except God by his grace enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes: and not only tell us, that we may hear, but teach us, that we may hear; the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ. 2. That this divine teaching does so necessarily produce the faith of God's elect, that we may conclude that those who do not come to Christ, have never heard or learned of the Father, for, if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be taught of God, if they believe not in Christ, for he teaches no other lesson, Gal. 1. 8. 9. See how God deals with men's eyes, and teaches them the things of God, with the cords of a man, opens the understanding first, and then by that in a regular way, influences the inferior faculties; thus he comes in by the door, but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way. But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men, (to teach them these things,) and entertain any gross conceptions about the hearing and learning of the Father, he adds, v. 46. As that any one can tell what the Father is, it is implied, nor can see him, with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him as Moses did, to whom he spake face to face; but God, in enlightening men's eyes and teaching them, works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon, men's spirits, unsnared. Those that have not seen his face, have felt his power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he speaks of God, Christ, whom he hath seen the Father, ch. 1. 18. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, Light of Light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. (2.) It is the prerogative of Christ to have seen the Father, perfectly to know him and his counsels. (3.) Even that illumination which is preparative to faith, is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that learn of the Father, forasmuch as they cannot approach to see him, have a deeper learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all divine powers are exerted. 1. Their wills shall be bowed. If the soul of man had now its original rectitude, there needed no more to influence the will, than the illumination of the understanding: but in the depraved soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a carnal will, which is contrary to the divine light and law; it is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called drawing: v. 44. Ye man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ; not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did; Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said, (v. 55.) Ye man can come to me, except the Father lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine upon another, as if it is because you find it generally distasteful; no, it is owing to yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a moral impotency; your antipathies to the truths of God and prejudices against them are so strong, that nothing less than a divine power can conquer them. And this is the case of all mankind: Ye man can come to me, can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the gospel, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him, v. 44. Observe, First, The nature of the work; it is drawing, which speaks not a force put upon the soul, whereby we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul, by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than a moral suasion, for by that it is in the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the reach of nature; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashioneth the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new-shape the soul, and to alter its bent, temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; Draw us, and we will run after thee. Secondly, The necessity of it: no man, in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. We cannot do any natural action with out the concurring operation of God's grace. Whatever we do, we do not of ourselves, but God doth prevails upon me to do that thing, we do not of ourselves, but Jesus Christ, the spirit of man, will do this, and thus prevents the operation of sin. If we undertake this, surely he can do any thing, and will do everything, that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be carried up towards a happiness reserved for the last day, when all the years of life shall be fully completed and ended. 3. Christ, having thus spoken of himself as the Bread of life, and of faith as the work of God, comes more particularly to show what of himself is this Bread, namely, his flesh, and that to believe, is to eat of that, v. 51—58, where he still presumes the metaphor of food. Observe, First, The preparation of this food; The bread that I will give is my flesh; v. 51. The flesh of the Son of man and his blood, v. 55. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, v. 56. Secondly, The participation of this food; we must eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, v. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, and the same words, v. 56, 57,) he that eateth this. This is certainly a parable, or figurative discourse, wherein the actions of the soul upon things spiritual and divine, are represented by bodily actions, and by these actions are included the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, Mark 4. 12. Now let us see, 1. How this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that men might see, and not perceive.
(1.) It was misconstrued by the carnal Jews, to whom it was first delivered; v. 52. They strove among themselves; they whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction; How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Christ spake (v. 51.) of giving his flesh for us, to suffer and die; but they, without due consideration, understood it of his giving it to us, to be eaten; which gave occasion to Christ to tell them, that, however what he said was otherwise intended, yet such was his doctrine of Transubstantiation, that there was no such absurd thing (if rightly understood) as, prima facie—in the first instance, they took it to be.

(2.) It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome for the support of their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation, which gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, ch. 3. 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a spiritual eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a sacramental.

(3.) It is misunderstood by many ignorant, carnal people, who from hence infer that, if they take the sacramental bread and wine, they shall live eternally in the kingdom of heaven; which as it makes many that are weak causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked causelessly easy if they have it. Let us see therefore,

2. How this discourse of Christ is to be understood.

(1.) What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ. It is called, (v. 53.) The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his as Messiah and Mediator; the flesh and blood which he assumed in his incarnation, (Heb. 2. 14.) and which he gave up in his death and sufferings; my flesh which I will give to be crucified and slain. It is said to be given for the life of the world, that is, (1.) Instead of the life of the world, which was forfeited by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counter-price. Christ was our Ralli, bound body for body, (as we say,) and therefore his life must go for ours, that ours may be spared. Here am I, let these go their way. [2.] In order to the life of the world, to purchase a general offer of eternal life to all the world, and the special assurances of it to all believers. So that the flesh and blood, when offered as the Redeemer's incarnate and dying; Christ will be justified, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption; pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons, access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life; these are called the flesh and blood of Christ. First, because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. He may well compare the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them premitam sanguinis— the price of blood. Secondly, Because they are meat and drink to our souls. Flesh with the blood was prohibited; (Gen. 9. 4.) but the privileges of the gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment and the strengthening of our souls. He died before and left himself to be broken, which is necessary food; here to flesh, which is delicious. It is a feast of fat things, Isa. 25. 6. The soul is satisfied with Christ as with marrow and fatness, Ps. 63. 5. It is meat indeed, and drink indeed; truly so, that is spiritually; so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the true Vine, or truly Meat, an opposition to the shows and shadows with which人事世界 are loaded; that feed upon it. In Christ and his gospel are real supply and solid satisfaction; that is meat indeed, and drink indeed, which satiates and replenishes, Jer. 31. 25. 26.

(2.) What is meant by eating this flesh, and drinking this blood, which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain that it means neither more nor less than believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: and believing in Christ includes these four things, which eating and drinking do. [1.] It implies an appetite to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with hungering and thirsting after Christ; that is, the soul is a creature desires after Christ, not willing to take up, with any thing short of an interest in him; "Give me Christ or else I die." [2.] An application of Christ to ourselves. Meat looked upon will not nourish us, but meat fed upon, and so made our own, and as it were one with us. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to ourselves; my Lord and my God, ch. 20. 28. [3.] A partake in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be meat and drink to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feed upon the dainties of the New Testament in the blood of Christ, taking as great a complacency in the methods which infinite wisdom has taken to redeem and save us, as when we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of the Old Testament. [4.] A partake in Christ and his sufferings. From him, and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To feed upon Christ is to do all in his name, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our lives are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that we are so we know and find; so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor, (as very significant and expressive,) that, when afterward he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our communicativeness of the benefits of his death, he chose those of eating and drinking, and made them sacramental actions. Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads.

First, The necessity of our feeding upon Christ; (v. 53.) Except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in you. That is, 1. It is a certain sign that you have no spiritual life in you, if you have no desire toward Christ, nor, desiring him, any dependence from him. hunger and thirst, certainly it does not live; it is a sign that we are dead indeed, if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When artificial bees, that by curious springs were made to move and fro, were to be distinguished from natural ones, (they say,) it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only loked to, but the artificial ones minded it not, for they had no life in them. 2. It is certain that you can have no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing." Faith in Christ is the primun vivens—the first living principle of grace; without it we have not the truth of spiritual life, nor any title to eternal life; our bodies may as well live without meat, as our souls without Christ.

Secondly, The benefit and advantage of it, in two things.

1. We shall be one with Christ, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested; (v. 56.) He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, that lives by faith in Christ crucified, (it is spoken of as a continued act,) he dwelleth in me, and I him. By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; it is a strong hold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the Master of the house, to rule it, and provide for it. Such
is the union between Christ and believers, that he 

sours in their griefs, and they share in his graces 

and joys; he suffers with them upon their bitter herbs, 

and they with him upon his rich dainties. It is an 

inseparable union, like that between the body and 

the digested food. Rom. 8. 35. 1 John 4. 13. 

13. 61. If he were 

shall live by the Father, as our 

bodies live by our food. (1.) We shall live by 

hym; (v. 37.) As the living Father hath sent me, 

I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even 

he shall live by me. We have here the series and 

order of the divine life. [1.] God as the living 

Father hath life in and of himself. I am that I am, 

is his name for ever. [2.] Jesus Christ, as Mediator. 

Jesus saith unto him, I am he that liveth, and 

shall live; he that eateth me, even he that liveth 

shall live by me. [3.] True believers receive this 

divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is 

inferred from the union between the Father and their own, as it 

is compared to it, ch. 17. 21. For therefore he 

that eateth me, or feeds on me, even he shall live by me; 

those that live upon Christ, shall live by him. 

The life of believers is had from Christ; (ch. 1. 16.) it 

is hid with Christ; (Col. 3. 4.) we live by him 

as the members by the head, the branches by the root; 

because he lives, we shall live also. (2.) We shall 

live by him as Christ's body, the members of which 

are one portion with Christ. (v. 34.) Whoso eateth my 

flesh and drinketh my blood, as it is prepared in the 

gospel to be the food of souls, hath eternal life, 

he hath it now, v. 49. He hath that in him, 

which eternal life began; he hath the earnest and 

foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live for 

ever, v. 54. His happiness shall run parallel with 

the longest line of eternity itself. 

The history of this account where Christ had this discourse with the Jews, (v. 39.) In 

the synagogue as he taught; implying that he taught 

them many other things besides these, but this was 

that in his discourse, which was new. He adds this, 

that he said these things in the synagogue, to show, 

[1.] The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths 

sought no corners, but were publicly preached in 

mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe 

and impartial test. Christ hath externally this upon his 

trial; (ch. 18. 30.) I ever taught in the synagogue. 

[2.] The credibility of his narrative of it. To 

assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, 

he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where 

it might be examined. 

60. Many therefore of his disciples, when 

they had heard this, said, This is an hard 

saying: who can hear it? 61. When 

Jesus knew in himself that his disciples 
murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth 

this offend you? 62. What and if ye shall 

see the Son of man ascend up where he 

was before? 63. It is the Spirit that 

quicketh: the flesh profiteth nothing: 

the words that I speak unto you, they are 

spirit, and they are life. 64. But there are 

some of you that believe not. For Jesus 

knew from the beginning who they were 

that believed not, and who should betray 

him. 65. And he said, Therefore said I 

unto you. That no man can come unto me, 

except it were given unto him of my Fa-

ther. 66. From that time many of his dis- 

ciples went back, and walked no more 

with him. 67. Then said Jesus unto the 

twelve, Will ye also go away? 68. Then 

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom 

shall we go? Thou hast the words of 

eternal life. 69. And we believe and are 

sure that thou art that Christ, the Son 

of the living God. 70. Jesus answered them, 

Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of 

you is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas 

Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was 

that should betray him, being one of the 

twelve. 

We have here an account of the effects of Christ's 
discourse, some were offended, and others edified by 
it; some driven from him, and others brought nearer 
to him. 1. To some it was a savour of death unto death; 

not only to the Jews, who were prepossessed enemies 
to him and his doctrine, but even to many of his dis- 
ciples, such as were disciples at large, who were his 
frequent hearers, and followed him in public; a 
mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began 
all the discontent. Now here we have, 

1. Their murmurings at the doctrine he had said; 

(v. 60.) not a few, but many of them were offended 
at it. Of the several sorts of ground that received 
the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See 
what they say to it; (v. 60.) This is a hard saying, 

who can hear it? (1.) They do not like it them-

selves. "What stuff is this? But the flesh and 

drink the blood of the Son of man? If it he un-

derstood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, 

not practicable. What! must we turn Cannibals? 

Can we not be religious, but we must be barbarous?"

St. christiani adorant quod convalidat, (said Aver-

aces,) si anima mea cum philosophis—If christians 

adore what they eat, my mind shall continue with 

the philosophers. Now, when they found it a hard 
saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have 
disclosed unto them this parable, he would have 
opened it, and their understandings, by the drift of 
his union and life, would have been willing to accept 
Christ's sayings explained to them, because they 
would not lose this pretence for rejecting them 
that they were hard sayings. (2.) They think it 

impossible that any one else should like it; "Who 
can hear it? Surely none can." Thus the scoffers at 
religion are ready to undertake that all the intelli-
gent part of mankind concur with them; they con-
clude with great assurance that no man of sense will 

admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any man of spirit 
submit to his laws; because they cannot hear to be 
so tutored, so tied up, themselves, they think none 
else can; Who can hear it? Thanks be to God, 
thousands have heard these sayings of Christ, and 
have found them not only easy, but pleasant, as their 
necessary food. 

2. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurs. 

(1.) He well enough knew their murmuring, v. 61. 

Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, 
or whispered among themselves in a corner. But, 

[1.] Christ knew them; he saw them, he heard 

them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the 

bold and open defiance that are done to his name 

by others, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; 

he knows that which the foot with in his heart, and 

cannot for shame speak out; he observes how his 
document is received by those to whom it is preached;
who rejoice in it, and who murmur at it; who are reconciled to it, and bow before it, and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though ever so secretly. [2.] He knew it in himself, not by any information given him, or any external indication of the thing, but by his own consciousness. He knew it by divine inspiration, by a divine revelation made to him, (that which the prophets desired to know, was sometimes hid from them, as 2 Kings 4. 27.) but by a divine knowledge in him. He is that essential Word that discerns the thoughts of the heart, Heb. 4. 13, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think. 2. He well enough knew how to answer them; "Dost thou offend me? Is this a stumbling-block to you?" See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves; they take offence where there is none given, and make it even there where there is nothing to make it. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ; for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder; "Dost thou offend me? How unreasonable are your quarrels."

Now, in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure. (Si non vos intelligi, debeat neglegi.If you are unwilling to be understood, you ought to be neglected.)

(1.) He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as a sign and evidence of the truth of his doctrine; (v. 62.) What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before, and what then? [1.] If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying, that you cannot hear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning to my father's house, as an eye witness? Now, understand this: They were too much in difficulties, should consider how they will get over greater. [2.] When you see the Son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it;" so Dr. Whitby. Or, [3.] "When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You shall have then the ascent itself, you shall hear me, when I say, I came down from heaven, for that was it that you quarrelled with;" (v. 42.) but will you think so when you see me return to heaven?" If he ascended, certainly he descended, Eph. 4. 9, 10. Christ did often refer himself thus to subsequent proofs, as ch. 1. 50, 51.—2. 14. Matth. 12. 40.—36. 64. Let us wait a while, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see that there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

(2.) He gives them a general key to this, and all such parabolical discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner; (v. 63.) It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing. As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and move, if not they are lost to a dead man. So food would profit nothing; (what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit?) so it is with the soul. [1.] The bare participation of ordinances, unless the spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, profiteth nothing; the word and ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as food to a living man, if not they are food to a dead man. For the flesh of Christ, the Sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and inforce the powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. [2.] The doctrine of Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, profiteth nothing, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense and meaning of it quicken the soul, make it alive and lively; for so it follows, The words thus. I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. It is a noble doctrine, it is a sure doctrine, but to believe that Christ died for me, and to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, my opposition of sin, and preparations for a future state; this is the spirit and life, of that saying, and construing it thus, it is an excellent saying. The reason why men mistake Christ's sayings, is, because they mistake them. The literal sense of a parable does not go good; we are never wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. [3.] The flesh, that is, those that are in the flesh, (so some understand it,) that are under the power of a carnal mind, they profiteth nothing by Christ's discourses; but the Spirit, that is, those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, they are quickened and enlivened by them; for they are received as medium recipients—so as to correspond with the state of the receiver's mind. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to sensual minds that spiritual things are senseless and senseless, spiritual minds rebuke them; see 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15.

(3.) He gives them an intimation of his knowledge of them, and that he had expected no better from them. "It is not only the word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith, Heb. 4. 2. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine he preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it dark and hard to be understood. Operet discretum credere—Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teacher's word."

Note, First, All those who are nominal christians there are many who are real infidels. Secondly, The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knew from the-beginning who they were of the multitudes that followed him, that believed, and who of the twelve should betray him; he knew, from the beginning of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pan of their zeal, who were sincere, as Nathanael, (ch. 1. 47.) and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by an overt act, he could infallibly distinguish who believed, and who did not; whose love was counterfeit, and whose cordial. We may gather hence, 1. That the apostacy of those who have long made a plausible profession of reli-...
yet to come; but if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are often deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and his judgment is according to truth.

(3.) The reason why they did not believe his report, was, that he said unto them, the Lord was not revealed unto them; (v. 39, 40.) He says here, I am not going to tell you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father; referring to v. 41. Christ therefore could not but know who believed, and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said that none could come to him, or any one go to him, that he did not call; therefore he saith, except it were given him of my Father: which shows that God draws souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come; without which, such is the moral impotency of man in his fallen state that he cannot come.

3. We have here their final apostacy from Christ happen (v. 66.) From that time many of his disciples went back to their former Judaism; and a great many of those who were under the reformation, returned to the harlotry which they had forsaken; and many others, who had never been to Christ, were among those that now returned. When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then entering into temptation; it is as the letting forth of water, it is looking back, which, if infatuate mercies prevent not, will end in withdrawing back; therefore Observe principles—Take heed. (1.) See here the backsliding of these disciples. Many of them went back to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; went back, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; went back, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, Ruth 1. 13. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they went back, because they could not play truant for once, but they left of him, and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostacy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing, that we need not think strange at it. Here were many that went back. It is often so; when some backside, many backside with them; the disease is infectious.

(2.) The occasion of this backsliding: From that time many of his disciples went back to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; went back, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; went back, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, Ruth 1. 13. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they went back, because they could not play truant for once, but they left of him, and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostacy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing, that we need not think strange at it. Here were many that went back. It is often so; when some backside, many backside with them; the disease is infectious.

(3.) The decree of their apostacy: They went back no more with him, returned no more to him, and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for theUna libertad de Dios, que si dejan de regresar, la verdadera palabra de Dios, si se hacen a la vez, se les volverá al final a recordar. (Heb. 6. 1-6.)

II. This discourse was to others a savour of life unto life. Many went back; but, thanks be to God, all did not; even then the twelve stuck to him. Though the faith of some be overthrown, yet the foundation of God stands sure. Observe here.

1. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve (p. 67.) Will ye also go away? He saith nothing to them who went back. If the unbecoming depart, let them depart; it was no great loss of those whom he never had; light come, light go; but he takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their steadfastness the more to fix them. Will ye also go away? (1.) It is at your choice whether ye will or no; if ye will forsake me, now is the time when so many do: it is an hour of temptation; if you will go back, go. Note, There are no such apostates but their own enemies; as Joshua 24. 1. Remember your character, and say, Whatever others do, we will never go away. Should such a man as I fler? Neh. 6. 11. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ, and the longer we have been with him, the more mercies we have received from him, and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him, the greater will be our sin if we depart from him. (2.) The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, v. 68, 69. Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice when they should serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect. Now, but we will serve the Lord. Peter was upon all occasions the mouth of the rest; not so much because he had more of his Master's character, but because he was more lively of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved, and sometimes reprimanded; (Matt. 16. 17. 23.) the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well! and, probably, he said it by the direction, and with the express assent, of his fellow-disciples; at least, he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best of them. (1.) Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and so expressed, as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him; Lord, to whom shall we go? It was folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to mend ourselves; no, Lord, we like our choice too well to change. (2.) Those who left Christ, would do well to consider whom they would join; and the best and restful place may be anywhere but in his service. Ps. 73. 27. 28. Hos. 2. 9. Whither shall we go? Shall we make our heart to the world? It will certainly destroy us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us. Shall we leave the Fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a Guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their Guide, for they can never have a better. Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vair
in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the Scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us, who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee." Note, Christ is very religious and very learned; he was as learned in the greatest and most approved schools as any of the greatest and most approved schools. He was sound in the Gospels, very true to the Gospels, and had all the advantages which men could have, and yet in the highest degree religious and learned. If we have so much more than he had, we must consider how much more we should have thereby; and the best way to do this is to have a faith of the gospel of Christ, as boldly to venture our souls upon it, knowing whom we have believed, than, and not till then, shall we be willing to venture everything else for it.

3. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's; (v. 70. 71.) Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a traitor? And because he trusted his disciples, he tells Peter he should betray him. Judas Iscariot. Peter had undertaken for them all, that they would be true to their Master. Now Christ does not condemn his charity, (it is always good to hope the best,) but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Observe here,

(1.) Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only had a devil, but he was a devil. One of you is a false accuser; so saith our Lord. And it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to be so bad a man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, He is a devil; a devil incarnate; a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, did his lusts, was in his interests, as Cain, 1 John 3. 12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil, and not called devils (demons, but not devils;) but Judas, into whose heart Satan entered, and filled it, is called a devil.

(2.) Many that are seeming saints, are real devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles: his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He cast out devils, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet himself a most unconquerable devil. Not only he might be one short time, but he is one now. It is strange, and to be wondered at: Christ speaks of it with wonder: Have not I told you? It is sad, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism.

(3.) The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eyes see through every disguise and counterfeit. There is nothing which he cannot perceive, in the character of a christian, like the prophet's greeting to Jerusalem's wife, when she came to him in masquerade; (1 Knes. 14. 6.) Come in, thou wife of Jereboam. Christ's divine sight, far better than any double sight, can see spirits.

(2.) There are those who are chosen by Christ to special service, who yet prove false to him. We have chose nation to the office of responsibility, and he expressly said, Judas was not chosen to eternal life, (1. 13. 18.) and yet one of you is a devil. Note, Advance ment to places of honour and trust in the church, is no certain evidence of saving grace, We have pronounced in thy name.

(3.) In the most select societies on this side heaven, it is no new thing to meet with those that are chosen above the rest. Of Christ it was said, he had chosen apostles, but his own heart knew, and he expressed it, that Judas was not chosen to eternal life, and then, after the same service was done, he was chosen to be an apostle, and for the very same reason. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was one of the twelve that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the twelve, because one of them is a devil, nor say that they are all cheats and hypocrites, because one of them was so; let these that are so, bear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorperately with them. There is a society within the veil, into which no nucleum thing shall enter; a church of first-born, in which are no false brethren.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter, we have, 1. Christ's declining for some time to appear publicly in Judea, v. 1. 11. His design to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, and his discourse with his kindred in Galilee, concerning his going up to this feast, v. 3. 13. 11. His preaching publicly in the temple at Jerusalem, in the midst of the multitude, and his reasons for it, and the reception he met with: (1.) Concerning his doctrine, v. 16. 18. (2.) Concerning the crime of Sabbath breakers, v. 19. 24. (3.) Concerning himself, his going, his being what he was going, v. 25. 36. 2. On the last day of the feast. (1.) His gracious invitation to poor souls to come to him, v. 37. 39. (2.) The reception that it met with. (1.) Many of the people disputed about it, v. 40. 44. The chief priests would have brought him into trouble for it, but were first,
AFTER these things, Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou dost. 4. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. 10. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

We have here,

1. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judæa; (v. 1.) because the Jews, the people in Judæa and Jerusalem, sought to kill him, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, ch. 5. 16. They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult, or by a legal prosecution: in consideration of this, he kept a distance in another part of the country, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication. It is not said, He durst not; but, He would not, walk in Jewry; it was not through fear and cowardice that he declined it, but in prudence, because his hour was not yet come.

Note. 1. Gospel-light is justly taken away from those that endeavour to extinguish it, and blow it out. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, and hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those that spurn at them. 2. In times of imminent peril, it is not only allowable, but advisable, to withdraw, and abscond for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, Matth. 16. 23. Then, and not till then, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 3. If the providence of God casts persons of merit into places of obscurity and little note, it must not he thought strange, it was the lot of our Master himself; he who was fit to have sat in the highest of Messes' seats, willingly walked in Galilee among the ordinary sort of people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but walked; he went about doing good. When we cannot do what and where we would, we must do what and where we can.

11. The approach of the feast of tabernacles, (v. 2.) one of the solemnities which called for the personal attendance of all the males at Jerusalem; see the institution of it, Lev. 23. 44. &c. and the revival of it after a long disuse, Neh. 8. 14. It was intended to be both a memorial of the tabernacle-state of Israel in the wilderness, and a figure of the tabernacle-state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, which was instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date, by length of time: nor must wilderness-mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the Jews' feast, because it was now shortly to be abolished, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that served the tabernacle.

It is Christ's discourse with his brethren; some of his kindred, whether by his mother or his supposed father, is not certain; but they were such as pretended to have an interest in him, and therefore interposed to advise him in his conduct. And observe,

1. Their ambition and vain-glory in urging him to make a more public appearance than he did, (v. 3.) Depart hence; (said they,) and go up to the feast; (said they,) where thou wilt make a better figure than thou dost here. Two reasons they give for this advice.

1. That it would be an encouragement to those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for him; for, expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples there to be particularly esteemed, and thought the time of his appearance more illustrious if he were not so many of his miracles thrown away, and his miracles turning to no account unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, That the disciples, all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may see thy works, and not, as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.

2. That it would be for the advancing of his own name and honour; There is no man that doeth any thing in secret, if he himself seeks to be known openly. They take it for granted, that Christ sought to make known himself, and therefore thought it absurd for him to conceal his miracles: If thou do these things, if thou be so well able to gain the applause of the people, and the approbation of the rulers, by thy miracles, venture abroad, and show thyself to the world. Supported by these credentials, thou canst not fail of acceptance, and therefore it is his own discourse to set up for an interest, and think of being great.

Now one would not think there were any harm in this, and yet the evangelist notes it as an evidence of their infidelity, for neither did his brethren believe in him; (v. 5.) if they had, they would not have said this. Observe, [1.] It was an honour to be of the kindred of Christ, but no saving honour; they that hear his word and keep it are they that endure the values. Surely none came run in no blood in the world, when not in that of Christ's family. [2.] It was a sign that Christ did not aim at any secular interest, for then his kindred would have struck in with him, and he would have secured them first. [3.] There were those who were akin to Christ according to the flesh, who did believe in him, (three of the twelve were his brethren,) and yet others, as nearly allied to him as they, did not believe on him. Many that have these some external privileges and advantages, do not make the same use of them.

But what was there amiss in this advice which they gave him? I answer, First, It was a piece of presumption for them to prescribe to Christ, and to teach him what measures to take. It was a sign
that they did not believe him able to guide them, when they did not think him sufficient to guide himself. Secondly. They discovered a great carelessness of his safety, when they would have he gone to Judea, where they knew the Jews sought to kill him. They that believed in him, and loved him, dissuaded him from Judea, ch. 11. 8. Thirdly. Some think they hoped that if his miracles were wrought at Judea, those Pharisees and rulers would try them, and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. Fourthly. Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee, (for are not those that speak, Galileans?) and this was, in effect, a desire that he would depart out of their coasts. Fifthly. They necessarily imagine that he neglected his disciples, and denied them such a sight of his works as usually made in the courses have often been turned to the reproach of both him and it. Sixthly. They seem to question the truth of the miracles he wrought, in saying, "If thou do these things; if they will bear the test of a public scrutiny, in the courts above, produce them there." Eightly. They think Christ altogether such a one as themselves, as subject as they to the politics of the world, and as desirous as they to make a fair show in the flesh; whereas he sought not honour from men. Ninthly. Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himself as great as he might, they, being his kinsmen, should share in his honour, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note. 1. Many carnal people go to public ordinances, to worship at the feast, only to show themselves, and all their care is to make a good appearance, to present themselves handsomely to the world. 2. Many that seem to seek Christ's honour, do really therein seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

2. The prudence and humility of our Lord Jesus, which appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave him, v. 6—8. Though there were so many base insinuations in it, he answered them mildly. Note. Even that which is said in reason, should be answered without passion; we should learn of our Master to reply with meekness even to that which is most impertinent and injurious; and where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and wink at the affront. They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping he would bear their charges. But Christ comes to the point.

(1.) He shows the difference between himself and them, in two things.

[1.] His time was set, so was not theirs; My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. Understand it of the time of his going up to this feast. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do, either where they were, to detain them there, or where they were going, to hasten them thither, but every minute of Christ's time was precious, and its own particular business allotted to it. He had some work yet to be done in Galilee before he left the country; in the harmony of the gospels betwixt this motion made by his kindred and his going up to this feast, comes in the story of his sending forth his seventy disciples, which was an affair of very great consequence; his time is not yet yet, for that must be done first. Those who live useless lives have their time always ready, they can come and go when they please; but those whose time is filled up with duty, will often find themselves straitened, and they have not yet time for that which others can do at any time. Those who are made the servants of God, as all men are, and who have made themselves the servants of all, as all useful men have, must not expect nor covet to be masters of their own time. The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or, it may be, the time of the appearance public of Jerusalem; Christ, who knows all men, and all things, knew that the best and most proper time for it would be about the middle of the feast. We, who are ignorant and short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to him, and to think he should deliver his people, and so show himself now, just now; the present time is as good as any other. Christ, who is a judge, and may be, his time is not yet come; his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin; let us therefore wait with patience for his time, for all he doth, will be most glorious in its season.

[2.] His life was sought, so was not theirs, v. 7. They, in showing themselves to the world, did not expect to be sought for; but Christ was not the less sought for, for ye are of the world, its children, its servants, and in with its interests; and, no doubt, the world will love its own," see ch. 15. 19. Unholy souls, whom the holy God cannot love, the world that lives in wickedness cannot hate; but he, in showing himself to the world, laid himself open to the greatest danger; for me it hateth. Christ was not only neglected, but neglected of the world. (The world knew him not,) but hated, as if he had beenservile to the world; thus ill was he required for his love to the world; reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ.

But why did the world hate Christ? What evil had he done it? Had he, like Alexander, under colour of conquering it, laid it waste? "No, but because" (saith he), "I testify of that, the works of it are evil." Note. First, The works of an evil world are evil works; as the tree is, so are the fruits; it is a dark world, and an apostate world, and its works works of darkness and rebellion. Secondly, Our Lord Jesus, both by himself and by his ministers, did and will both discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. Thirdly, It is a great uneasiness and provocation to the good to be tried by the works of such an evil world. Fourthly, Whatever is pretended, the real cause of the world's enmity to the gospel, is, the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. Christ's witnesses by their doctrine and conversation torment them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated so barbarously, Rev. 11. 10. But it is better to incur the world's hatred by our testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good will by going down the stream with it.

(2.) He dismisses them, with a design to stay behind for some time in Galilee; v. 8. Go ye up to this feast; go ye there. [1.] He allows their going to the feast, though he knew it was not the most politic and hypocritical in it. Note. Even those who go not to ordinances with right affections and sincere intentions, must not be hindered or discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? [2.] He denies them his company when they went to the feast, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those who go to ordinances for ostentation, or to serve some secular purpose without Christ, and will speed accordingly. How sad is the condition of that man, though he reckon
himself akin to Christ, to whom he saith, "Go up, to such an ordinance, Go pray, Go hear the word, Go receive the sacrament, but I go not up with thee; Go thou and appear before God, but I will not appear for thee," as Exod. 33. 1, 3. But if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? Go ye up, I go not up. When we are going up to the feast, it concerns us to be careful what company we have and choose, and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, lest the coals of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication. I will not go up yet to this feast; he does not say, I will not go up at all, but yet. There may be reason for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted or laid aside. 9. He went up. His time is not yet full come. Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his time, and as it was the time fixed, so it was the last time.

3. Christ's continuance in Galilee till his full time was come, v. 9. He, saying these things to them, (πάντες Ἰησοῦν, abode still in Galilee, because of this discourse he continued there; for, (1.) He would not depart from the people, nor go away from them to seek honour from men, nor go along with those who put him upon making a figure; he would not seem to contemn the temptation. (2.) He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said upon a clear foresight, and a mature deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this feast, and therefore he abode still in Galilee. It becomes the followers of Christ, that they be not to keep them; and (3.) He had a spiritual regard to the interest of those with whom yet we should decline an intimate acquaintance and converse with; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up first, and then he went. Note, In the external dispensations of religion it is possible that formal hypocrites may get the start of those that are sincere and upright; but this brought thither by vain-glory, and go therefore unjustified, as he, Luke 10. 10. It is not who comes first, that will be the question, but, Who comes fittest? If we bring our hearts with us, it is no matter who gets before us.

(2.) How he went, v. 9, 10.—as if he were biding himself: not openly, but as was in secret, rather for fear of being offended, than of regarding others. He went up to the feast, because it was an opportunity of honouring God and doing good; but he went up as it were in secret, because he would not provoke the government. Note, Provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when it is done with least noise. The kingdom of God needs not come with observation, Luke 17. 20. We may do the work of God privately, and yet do it deservedly.

The great expectation that there was of him among the Jews at Jerusalem, v. 11—13. Having formerly come up to the feasts, and signified himself by the miracles he wrought, he had made himself the Subject of much discourse and observation. (1.) They could not but think of him; (v. 11.) The Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? The common people longed to see them, there, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him Galilee, though, if they had, they would not have lost their labour, but they hope the feast will bring him to Jerusalem, and then they shall see him. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ come to their door, they can like it well enough. They sought him at the feast. At we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them, seek him at them, as at the gospel-feasts. Those who would see Christ at a feast, must seek him there. Or, (2.) Perhaps it was his enemies that were thus waiting an opportunity to seize him, and, if possible, to give an effectual stop to his progress. They said, Where is he? It seemed, perhaps, they thought he would not come, but they were determined to find him out, if they could. Thus secretly and contemptuously do they speak of him. Or it intimates how his heart were with the rights of him, and their town with talk of his abode, they wanted not name him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ. Thus Saul hoped to say David at the new moon, 1 Sam. 20. 27. Those who seek opportunity to see in solemn assemblies for religious worship, profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and the laws of God's kingdom; it is like striking within the verge of the court.

(2.) The people differed much in their sentiments concerning him; (v. 12.) There was much murmuring, or murmuring rather, among the people concerning him. The vanity of the rulers against Christ, and their inquiries after him, made him to be so much the more talked of and observed among the people. This ground the gospel of Christ has its way in the world by the methods of the world; it is more inquired into, and by being everywhere spoken against, it has come to be everywhere spoken of; and by that means has been spread the further, and the merits of his cause have been the more searched into. This murmuring was not against Christ, but concerning him; some murmured at the rulers, because they did not reverence and encourage him; others murmured at them, because they did not silence and restrain him. Some murmured that he had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that he had so little interest in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be, the subject of much controversy and debate, Luke 12. 31, 32. If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace; but when some receive the light, and others resist and annoy it, it will be murmuring and strife.

The brethren of Jesus were troubled, and draw near; but when it was said unto them, Live, there was a noise and a shaking, Ezek. 37. 7. But the noise and rencontre of liberty and business are preferable, surely, to the silence and agreement of a prison.

Now what were the sentiments of the people concerning him?

[1.] Some said, He is a good Man. This was a truth, but it was far short of being the whole truth. He was not only a good Man, but more than a man, he was the Son of God. Many who have no ill thoughts of Christ, have yet but thoughts of him, and scarcely honour him, even when they speak well of him, because they do not say enough; yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those who persecuted him, that even they who would not believe him to be the Messiah, could not but own he was a good Man.

[2.] Others said, Now, but he deceiveth the people; if that had been true, he had been a very bad man. The doctrine he preached, was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles real, and could not be disproved; his conversation manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, in writing, that there is some undiscovered error at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief
priests to oppose him and ran him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ, there is still among us: the Socinians say, He is a good Man, and farther they say not; the divines will not allow this, but say, He deceived the people. Thus some diminish him, others abuse him, but great is the truth.

[3.] They were frightened by their superiors from speaking much of him. (v. 13.) No man speak openly of him, for fear of the Jews. Either, First, They durst not openly speak well of him. While any one was at liberty to censure and reprove him, none durst vindicate him. Or, Secondly, They durst not speak at all of him openly. Because nothing could justly be said against him, they would not suffer anything to be said of him. It was a crime to mind him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under colour of silencing disputes about it, and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion itself.

14. Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that speaketh of his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

22. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision: (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man. 23. If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken: are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? 24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26. But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27. Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? 32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. 34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he be gone unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come!

Here is,

I. Christ's public preaching in the temple; (v. 14.) He went up into the temple, and taught, according to his custom when he was at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and he did it in every place of conourse. His sermon was a new thing; because, probably, it was to the same purport with the sermons he had preached in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists. For the gospel is the same to the plain and to the polite. But that which is observable here, is, that it was about the midst of the feast; the fourth or fifth day of the eight. Whether he did not come up to Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, or whether he came up at the beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, Query, Why did he not go to the temple sooner, to preach? Answer, Because the people would have more leisure to hear him, and it might be hoped, would be better disposed to hear him, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because he would choose to appear then, when both his friends and his enemies had done looking for him; and so give a specimen of the method he would observe in his appearances, which is to come at midday, Matt. 25. 6. But why did he appear thus publicly now? Surely it was to shame his persecutors, the chief priests and elders, (1.) By shewing that, though they were very bitter against him, yet he did not fear them, nor their power. See Isa. 50. 7, 8. (2.) By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the feast of tabernacles, Neh. 8. 17, 18. But they either did not teach them at all, or taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and therefore he goes up to the temple, and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock, it was time for the chief shepherd to appear, as was promised, Ezek. 34. 22, 23. Mal. 3. 1.

II. His discourse with the Jews hereupon; and the conference is reducible to four heads.

1. Concerning his doctrine. See here,

(1.) How the Jews admired it; (v. 15.) They marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (2.) Observation, [1.] That Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbins; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the schools and academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning
of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews; having received the Spirit without measure, he needed not receive any knowledge from man, or by man. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished both in the Roman empire and in the Jewish church, more than in any age before or since, and in such a time of inquiry Christ chose to establish his religion, not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world; yet he himself studied not the learning then in vogue. [2.] That Christ had letters, though he had never learned them; was mighty in the scriptures, though he had never any doctor of the law; and it is expressly said, that Christ's ministers should have learning, as he had; and since they cannot expect to have it as he had, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. [3.] That Christ's having learning, though he had not been taught it, made him truly great and wonderful; the Jews speak of it here with wonder. First, Some, it is likely, took notice of it to his honour: He that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a divine knowledge. Secondly, Others, probably, mentioned it in diminution and contempt of him: Whatever he seems to have, he cannot really have any true learning, for he was never at the university, nor took his degree. Thirdly, Some perhaps suggested that he had got his learning by magic arts, or some unlawful means or other; since they know not himself would be a scholar, they will think him a conjurer.

(2.) What he asserted concerning it; three things. [1.] That his doctrine is divine; (v. 16.) My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. They were offended, because he undertook to teach, though he had never learned. In answer to which he tells them, that his doctrine was such as was not to be learned. For now was the product of the holy Spirit, and he was a natural and powers enlarged and elevated by reading and conversation, but it was a divine revelation. As God equal with the Father, he might truly have said, My doctrine is mine, and his that sent me; but being now in his estate of humiliation, and being, as Mediator, God's Servant, it was more congruous to say, My doctrine is not mine, not mine only, or mine originally, as Man and Mediator, but his that sent me. He was a divine guide to himself, and no more immediately to himself, but to him that sent me. God had promised concerning the great Prophecy, that he would put his words into his mouth, (Deut. 18. 18.) to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is a divine doctrine, it is of God, not of man. [2.] That the most competent judges of the truth and the authority of Christ's doctrine, are those that with a sincere and upright heart desire and endeavour to do the will of God; (v. 17.) If any man be willing to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Observe here, First, What the question is, concerning the doctrine of Christ: Whether it be of God or not; whether the gospel be a divine revelation, or an imposture. Christ himself was willing to have his doctrine inquired into, whether it were of God or no, much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon, for if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived. Secondly, Who are likely to succeed in this search; those that do the will of God, at least are desirous to do it. Now see, whether there are, that will do the will of God; they are such as are impartial in their inquiries concerning the will of God, and are not biased by any lust or interest; and such as are resolved by the grace of God, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it. They are such as have an honest principle of regard to God, and are truly desirous to glorify and please him. Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. (1.) Christ has promised to give knowledge to such; he hath said, He shall know, and he can give an understanding. Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by divine grace from destructive mistakes. (2.) They are disposed and prepared to receive that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rule of the divine law, and to the instruction of the divine commandments, to that he has been sufficiently furnished. To him that has been given those have a good understanding, that do his commandments. Ps. 111. 10. Those who resemble God, are most likely to understand him. [3.] That hereby it appeared that Christ, as a Teacher, did not speak of himself, because he did not seek himself, v. 18. First, See here the character of a deceiver: he seeketh his own glory, which is a sign that he speaks of himself, as the false christs and false prophets did. Here is the description of the cheat; they speak of themselves, and have no commission or instructions from God; no warrant but their own will, no inspiration but their own imagination, their own politics and artifice. Ambassadors speak not of themselves; those ministers who speak of themselves, that they speak of themselves. But see the discovery of the cheat; by this their pretensions are disproved, they consult purely their own glory; self-seekers are self-speakers. They who speak from God, will speak for God, and for his glory; they who aim at their own preeminence and interest, make it to appear that they had no commission from God.

Secondly, See the contrary character Christ gives of himself and his doctrine; He that seeks his glory that sent him, as I do, makes it to appear that he is true. 1. He was sent of God. Those teachers, and those only, who are sent of God, are to be received and entertained by us. Those who bring a divine message, must prove a divine mission, either by special revelation, or by regular institution. 2. He sought the glory of God. It is God who sends his doctrine, to be the teacher of his whole conversation, to glorify God. 3. This was a proof that he was true, and there was no unrighteousness in him. False teachers are most unrighteous; they are unjust to God whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impede upon. There cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that he was true, that he was really what he said he was, that there was no unrighteousness in him; no falsehood in his doctrine, no falsehood in his dealings with us. 2. They discourse concerning the crime that was laid to his charge for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath-day, for which they had formerly prosecuted him; and which was still the pretence of their enmity to him.

(1.) He argues against them by way of retort, they themselves were such notorious breakers of it. Did not Moses give you the law? And it was their privilege that they had the law, no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness that none of them kept the law, that they rebelled against it, and lived contrary to it. Many that have the law driven them, when they do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal; None of you keepeth it; neither of those of them that were in posts of honour, who should have been most knowing, nor those who were
in post of substraction, who should have been most obedient. They boasted of the law, and pretended a zeal for it, and were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it; and yet none of them kept it: like those who say that they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It was an aggravation of their wickedness in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it; "Ye keep not the law; why then do ye about to kill me?" Note. These are commonly most censorious of others, who are most faulty themselves. Thus hypocrites, who are forward to pull a mote out of their brother's eye, are not aware of a beam in their own. Why go ye about to kill me? Some make this to be the instance of their not keeping the law; "Ye keep not the law; if ye did, ye would understand yourselves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good work." Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend, (though they may call themselves custodes urinique tabulæ— the guardians of both tables,) are not keepers of the law of God. Chemnitz understands this as a reason why it is time to supersede the law of Moses by the gospel, because the law was found insufficient to restrain sin; and yet they could see that it was good, but you do not keep it, nor are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of a clearer light and better law to be brought in; why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?"

Here the people rudely interrupted him in his discourse, and contradicted what he said; (v. 20.) Thou hast a devil: who goest thou to kill?" This speaks [1.] The good opinion they had of their rulers, who, they think, would never attempt so atrocious a thing as to kill him: no such a notion as that could enter into their heads; but you do not keep it, and are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of a clearer light and better law to be brought in: why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?"

The ill opinion they had of our Lord Jesus; "Thou hast a devil, thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and art a mad man for saying so;" so some; or rather, "Thou art melancholy, and art a weak man;" thou finitest thyself with causeless fears, as hypochondriacal people are apt to do. Not only open enemies, but silent men of woe, were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan. Their ideas, hast a deranged, a diseased brain. Let us note well that it is strange if the best of men be put under the worst of characters.

To this vile calumny our Saviour returns no direct answer, but seems as if he took no notice of it. Note. Those who would be like Christ, must put up with affronts, and pass by the indignities and injuries done them: must not regard them, much less revansce, neither alter or change them. I would like a deaf man, heard not. When Christ was reviled, he reviled not again.

[2.] He argues by way of appeal and vindication. He appeals to their own sentiments of this miracle; (v. 21.) I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Ye cannot choose but marvel at it as truly great, and altogether supernatural: ye must all marvel at it. "Though I have done but one work that you have any faith in, yet with fault with, yet ye marvel, you are offended and displeased as if I had been guilty of some horrid or enormous crime."

He appeals to their own practice in other instances: I have done one work on the sabbath, and it was done easily with a word's speaking, and ye all marvel, ye make a mighty strange thing of it, that a religious man should dare to do such a thing, whereas ye yourselves many a time do that which is a much more servile work on the sabbath-day, in the case of circumcision: if it be lawful for you, nay, and your duty, to circumcise a child on the sabbath-day, when it happens to be the eighth day, as no doubt, it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day." Note. First, the rise and original of circumcision; Moses gave you circumcision, gave you the law concerning, the专项整治, and the circumcision of the Jews was not given you, and ye are said to receive it: it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred upon them as a favour. Note. The ordinances of God, and particularly these which are seals of the covenant, are gifts given to men, and are to be received as such. 2. Moses is said to give it, because it was a part of that law which was given by Moses; yet as Christ said of the manna (ch. 6. 32.) Moses did not give it them, but God's may, and it was not of Moses first, but of the fathers, v. 22. Though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before, for it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and therefore commenced with the promise four hundred and thirty years before, Gal. 3. 17. The church-membership of being circumcised was not a part of the law of Moses, and therefore did not fall with it; but was of the fathers, belonging to the patriarchal church, and was part of that blessing of Abraham, which was to come upon the Gentiles, Gal. 3. 14.

Secondly, The respect had to the law of circumcision above that of the sabbath, in the constant practice of the Jewish church. The Jewish confessors frequently take notice of it, Circumcision et ejus sacra est, a petit sobrietatem—Circumcision and its cure drive away the sabbath; so that if a child was born on a sabbath-day, it was without fail circumcised the next. If then, when the sabbath-rest was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed which were in ordine ad spiritualia—for the keeping up of religion, much more are they allowed now under the gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the sabbath-work.

Thirdly, The inference Christ draws from hence in justification of himself, and of what he had done; (v. 23.) A man-child on the sabbath-day receiveth circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken; or, as the margin reads it, without breaking the law, namely, of the sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. "Now, if this be allowed by yourselves, how much more is it allowable by me, because I have made a man every whith whole on the sabbath-day?" I am Christ; the word is used only here, from χριστός—Christ. They were angry at him with the greatest indignation: it was a spiteful anger, anger with gall in it. Note. It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that which we justify ourselves in. Observe the comparison of the sabbath-day with circumcision, a work of nature, and circumcision, a work of grace. 1. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was of the fathers indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Christ did was a good work by the law of nature, a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and made sore; but what Christ did was a good and a wholesome. The law works pain and if that work make we do it, much more the sabbath-day, much more a gospel-work, which works peace. Especially, considering that whereas, when they had circumcised a child, yet their care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done, and yet the child remain under other infirmities, Christ had made this man every whole, was ἐγώ ὦ θεός—I have made the whole man healthful and sound.
whole body was healed, the disease affected the whole body; and it was a perfect cure, such as left no relics of the disease behind; nay, Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, Go, and sin no more, and so indeed made the whole man. The soul is the man; it was intended for the good of the soul, and to make the whole man as it should be; but they had perverted it, and turned it into a mere carnal ordinance, but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the whole man.

He concludes this argument with that rule, (v. 24.) Judge not according to the appearance, but according to the heart. This may be applied, either, (1.) In particular to this work which they quarrelled with as a violation of the law. Be not partial in your judgment; judge not a servant, (2.) In general to Christ's person and preaching, which they were offended at and prejudiced against. These things are false and designed to impose upon men, commonly appear, when they are judged of according to the outward appearance; they are often more merciful, more prudent, and more pleasing, yea, often more merciful, at the first glance. This it was that gained the Pharisees such an interest and reputation; at they appeared right unto men; (Matt. 23. 27, 28.) and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. "But," saith Christ, "Be not too certain that all are real saints, who are seeming ones. With reference to himself, his sound, inward, and true, appearance, his Circumcision, his dignity and excellency, for he took upon him the form of a servant, (Phil. 2. 7.) was in the likeness of sinful flesh, (Rom. 8. 3.) had no form or comeliness, Isa. 53. 2. So that they who undertook to judge whether he were the Son of God or no by his outward appearance, were not likely to judge righteous judgment. The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be pompous and magnificent, and attendant with the appearance of certain grandeur; and judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was from first to last a continual mistake, for the kingdom of Christ was not to be of this world, nor to come with observation. If a divine power accompanied him, and God bare him witness, and the scriptures were fulfilled in him, though his appearance was ever so mean, they ought to receive him, and to judge by faith, and not by the sight of his outward appearance."

Christ and his doctrine and doings nothing but righteous judgment; if truth and justice may but pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance, not by their titles, the figure they make in the world, and their flattering show, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces that God has given them to their credit.

Christ discourses with them here concerning himself, whence he came, and whether he was going, v. 25—36.

(1.) Whence he came, v. 25—31. In the account of this, observe,

[1.] The objection concerning this, stated by some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who seem to have been of all others most prejudiced against him, v. 25. One would think that they who lived at the fountain-head of knowledge and religion, should have been most ready to receive the Messiah: but it proved quite contrary; those that have plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, they are not made better by them, are commonly made worse; and our Lord Jesus has often met with the least welcome from those that one would expect the best from. But it was not without some just cause that it came into a proverb, the nearer the church, the farther from God.

These people of Jerusalem showed their ill-will to Christ.

First, By their reflecting on the rulers, because they let him alone; Is not this he whom they seek to kill? The multitude of the people that came up to the feast, (v. 26.) were no such importunate or angry people, there was any design on foot against him, and therefore they said, Who goes about to kill this man? But they of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it in execution. "Is not he whom they seek to kill? Why do they not do it then? Who hinderers them? They say that they have a mind to get him out of the way, and yet, he, spoken boldly, and they say nothing to him, do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? " v. 27. Here they slyly and maliciously insinuate two things, to exasperate the rulers against Christ, who indeed they needed no spur. 1. That by concluding at his preaching they brought their authors into contempt. "Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrim as a deceiver, be permitted to speak boldly, without any check or contradiction? This is their practice. They set the common minded up in high mince; if our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus trampled upon, they may think themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws."

Note, The worst of persecutions have often been carried on under colour of the necessary support of authority and government. 2. That hereby they brought their judgment into suspicion. Do they know that this is Christ? So speak maliciously, with how much more cause they should change their ways? What which they have discovered have they lighted on? They give people occasion to think that they believe him to be the Christ, and are concerned to act vigorously against him, to clear themselves from the suspicion. Thus the rulers, who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them seven times more the children of hell than themselves, Matt. 23. 13. When religion and the practice of it is an abomination, and consequently out of repute, many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose them, only that they may not be thought to favour them and incline to them. And for this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, as it were to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange that the rulers, thus irritated, did not seize Christ; but his hour was not yet come; and God can turn his hand to admiration, though he do not turn their hearts.

Secondly, By their exception against his being the Christ; in which appeared more malice than matter, v. 27. "If the rulers think him to be the Christ, we neither can nor will believe him to be so, for we have this argument against it, that we know this Man, whence he is; but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is." Here is a folly in the argument, for the propositions are not both as well adapted to the same view of the subject. 1. If they speak of his divine nature, it is true, that when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is, for he is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was without descent, and his going forth have been of old from everlasting, Mic. 5. 2. But then it was not true, that as this Man they know whence he is, and how the Word was made flesh. 2. If they speak of his human nature, it is true that they knew whence he was, who was his mother, and where he was
I judge not, that I have not known him. He knew him, because he was his own child, for which reason they should the rather have loved him; and been thankful that their nation and their age were honoured with his appearance. (2.) How they endeavoured unjustly to fasten the ground of their prejudice upon the scriptures, as if they contemnated them, when there was no such thing. There were many objections concerning Christ, because they knew not the scriptures. [2.] Christ's answer to this objection, v. 28, 29. He spoke freely and boldly, he cried in the temple, as he taught, he spoke this louder than the rest of his discourse. First, To express his earnestness, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts; there may be a vehemency in contending for the truth, where yet there is no intemperate heat or passion. We may instruct gain-sayers with warmth, and yet with meekness. Secondly, The priests, and those that were prejudiced against him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore he must speak louder than ordinary what he will have them to hear. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear them that speak. Now Christ's answer to their cavil, is, 

1. By way of concession, granting that they did or might, know his original as to the flesh; "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am. Ye know I am of your own nation, and one of yourselves." It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ, that there is that in it which is level to the capacities of the meanest; plain truths discovered even by natural lights without which we can only see darkness, and when they be, "Ye know me, ye think ye know me; but ye are mistaken; ye take me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth, but it is not so." 

2. By way of negation, denying that that which they did see in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known; and therefore if they looked no farther, they may judge of him by their own appearance only. They know whence he came perhaps, and where he had his birth, but he will tell them what they know not, from whom he came. (1.) That he did not come of himself; that he did not run without sending, nor come as a private person, but with a public character. (2.) That he was sent of his Father; this is twice mentioned; "He hath sent me." And again, "He hath sent me, not to do my will, but what I say, and do what I do." This he was himself well assured of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and it is well for us that we are assured of it too, that we may with holy confidence go to God by him. (3.) That he was "from his Father," &c.; I am from him; not only sent from him as a servant from his master, but chosen of him, and sent out from his presence, his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. (4.) That the Father who sent him, is true; he had promised to give the Messiah, and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise, is true, and has performed it; he had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and though the Gentiles are of the Jews, and as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. (5.) That the Father who sent him, is true; he had promised to give the Messiah, and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise, is true, and has performed it; he had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and though the Gentiles are of the Jews, and as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. (6.) That these believing Jews did not know the Father; He that sent me, whom ye know not. There is much ignorance of God, even with many that have a form of knowledge; and the true reason why people reject Christ, is, because they do not know God; for there is such a harmony of the divine attributes in the work of redemption, and such an admirable agreement between natural and revealed religion, that the right knowledge of the former would not only admit, but introduce, the latter. (6.) Our Lord Jesus was in integrity acquainted with the Father that sent him; but I know him. He knew him so well, that he was not at all in doubt concerning his mission from him, but perfectly assured of that; nor at all in the dark concerning the work he had to do, but perfectly apprized of that, Matt. 11. 27.

[3.] The provocation which this gave to his enemies, who therefore hated him, because he told them so plainly, and so accurately, that in the work that he was to lay violent hands on him, not only to do him a mischief, but some way or other to be the death of him; but by the restraint of an invisible power it was prevented, nobody touched him, because his hour was not yet come; that was not their reason why they did it not, but God's reason why he hindered them from doing it. Note, First, The faithful preachers of the truths of God, though they behave themselves with ever so much prudence and meekness, must expect to be hated and persecuted by those who think themselves tormented by their testimony, Rev. 11. 10. Secondly, God has wicked men in a chain, and whatever mischief they would do, yet they can do no more than God will suffer them to do. The malice of persecutors is ineffectual, when it is in vain insinuated and wrought, and Satan fills their hearts, yet God ties their hands. Thirdly, God's servants are sometimes wonderfully protected by inscrutable, unaccountable means. Their enemies do not do the mischief they designed, and yet neither they themselves nor any one else can tell why they did not. Fourthly, Christ had his hour set, which was to put a period to his day, and work on earth so have all his prophets, and all his ministers, and till that hour comes, the attempts of their enemies against them are ineffectual, and their day shall be lengthened as long as their Master has any work for them to do; nor can all the powers of hell and earth prevail against them, until they have finished their testimony. [4.] The good effect which Christ's discourse has upon some of his hearers, upon some of his hearers; (v. 31.) Many of the people believed on him. As he was set for the full of some, so for the rising again of others. Even there where the gospel meets with opposition, yet there may be a great deal of good done. 1 Thes. 2. 2. Observe here, First, Who they were; that believed: not a few, but many; more than one would have expected when such storms ran so strong the other way. But these were of the people, &c.; of the multitude, the crowd, the inferior sort, the mob, the rabble, some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the gospel by its success among the great ones; nor must ministers say that they labour in vain, though none but the poor, and those of no figure, receive the gospel, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Secondly, We must not reckon these believing Jews, and this not a little number of them, as miracles which he did. Which were not only the accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies, (Isa. 53, 5, 6,) but an argument of a divine power. He that had an ability to do that which none but God can do, an ability to control and over-rule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact that which none but God can enact, a law that shall bind and loose; and yet such enactments, miracles, he gave to them. Thirdly, How weak their faith was: they do not positively assert, as the Samaritans did. This is indeed the Christ, but they only argue, When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than these? They take it for granted that Christ will come, and when he comes, will do many miracles. "Is not this he
then? In him we see, though not all the worldly pomp we have foreseen, yet all the divine power we have believed, the Messiah should appear in; and therefore why may not this be he? They believe it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so accommodated, so accepted by the Lord Jesus, who despises not the day of small things.

(2.) Whether he was going, r. 32—36. Where observe,

[1.] The design of the Pharisees and chief priests against him, r. 32.

First, The provocations given them, was, they had information brought them by their spies, who insinuated themselves into the conversation of the people, and gathered stories to carry to their jealous masters, that the people murmured such things concerning him; therefore, the men who had a respect for him, notwithstanding all they had done to make him odious, though the people did but whisper these things, and had not courage to speak out, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly suspected by others, which is so suspicious of itself, as to take notice of, or be influenced by, the secret, various, and uncertain mutterings of the common people. The Pharisees seem to have been the chief sufferers in the respect of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus increase, they must decrease.

Secondly, The project they had hereupon, was, to seize Jesus, and take him into custody; They sent officers to take him, not to take up those who murmured concerning him, and frighten them; no, the most effectual way to dispose the flock is, to slaye the shepherd. The Pharisees seem to have been the chief sufferers, but they, as such, had no power, and therefore they got the chief priests, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do so. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to learning, and the chief priests to sanctity. As the world by wisdom knew not God, but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion; so the Jewish church by their wisdom knew nothing of Christ, that of greatest rabbins were the greatest fools concerning him, nay, they were the most inconstant enemies to him. These wicked rulers had their officers, officers of their court, church-officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their errand, though it was an ill errand. If Sam's men will not go, he has a herdsman that will turn and fall upon the priests of the Lord. See Rom. 2. 3. The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon; (r. 34, 35.) Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me: ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire, have a bright side and a dark side.

First, They have a bright side towards our Lord Jesus himself, and speak abundance of comfort to him and all his faithful followers, that are exposed to difficulties and dangers, for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted himself with.

1. That he had but a little time to continue here in this troublesome world. He sees that he is never likely to have a quiet day among them; but the best of it is, his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then he shall be no more in this world, ch. 17. 21. Whosoever we are with this world, the friends of this world, are but a little while with them. And it is matter of comfort to those who are in the world, but not of it, and therefore are hated by it and sick of it, that they shall not be in it always, they shall not be in it long. We must be a while with those that are prickling briers and grieving thorns; but, thanks be to God, it is but a little while, and we shall be out of their reach. Our days being evil, it is well they are few.

2. That, when he should quit this troublesome world, he should go to him that sent him. I go: it, I am driven away by terror, but, I voluntarily go; having finished my embassy, I return to him who first and farewell I came. Then, when they have done work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him that sent me, and will receive me, will receive me, and I will come again, and bring my sheep together. I am come against him would not only not hinder him from, but would hasten him to, the glory and joy that were set before him. Let those who suffer for Christ, comfort themselves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going space, to be for ever with him.

3. That though they persecuted him here, whereas the worse, yet none of their persecutions could follow him to heaven; Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me. It appears by their cunnings to his followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him, they would have persecuted him; But ye cannot come into that temple, as ye do into this. Where I am, that is, where I then shall be: but he expresses it thus, because even when he was on earth, by his divine majesty and divinity, they could not reach him. See 1. 43. Or it denotes, that he shall be so soon there, that he was as good as there already. Note, It adds to the happiness of glorified saints, that they are out of the reach of the devil and all his wicked instruments.

Secondly, These words have a black and dark side toward these wicked Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of him, Jesus with him from the earth; but let them not know

1. That according to their choice, so should their doom be. They were industrious to drive him from them, and their sin shall be their punishment; he will not trouble them long, yet a little while and he will depart from them. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burden. They that are weary of Christ, need no more to make them miserable than to have their wish.

2. That they would certainly repent their choice when it was too late. (1.) They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah; Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me. Ye shall expect the Christ to come, but your eyes shall fail with looking for him, and ye shall never find him. They who rejected the true Messiah when he did come, were justly abounds with a miserable and endless expectation of one that should never come. Or, it may refer to the final rejection of sinners from the favour and grace of Christ at the great day; these who now seek Christ, shall find him, but the day is coming, when those who now refuse him, shall seek him, and shall not find him. See Prov. 1. 29. They will in vain cry, Lord, to us. Or, perhaps these words might be fulfilled in the despair of some of the Jews, who possibly might be convinced, and not converted, who will not take advantage of the grace of God as others do, but the day of grace is over; (Luke 17. 22.) yet that is not all. (2.) They should in vain expect a place in heaven; Where I am, and where all believers shall be with me, thither ye cannot come. Not only because they are excluded, by the just and irreversible sentence of the Judge, and the sword of the angel at every gate of the new Jerusalem, to keep the way of the tree of life against them; but that they are disabled by their own iniquity and infidelity; Ye cannot come, because ye will not. These that hate to be where Christ is, in his word and ordinances on earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his glory in heaven; for indeed heaven would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an unsanctified soul to the felicities of that state.
ST. JOHN, VII.

37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40. Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. 41. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42. Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43. So there was a division among the people because of him. 44. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In these verses, we have,

1. Christ's discourse, with the explication of it, v. 37—39. It is probable that these are only short hints of what he enlarged upon, but they have in them the substance of the whole gospel; here is a gospel-invitation to come to Christ, and a gospel-promise of comfort and happiness in him. Now observe,

1. When he made this invitation; on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, that great day. The eighth day, which concluded that solemnity, was to be a holy convocation, Lev. 23. 36. Now on this day Christ published this gospel-call. Because, (1.) Much people were gathered together, and if the invitation was given to many, it might be hoped that some would accept of it, Prov. 1. 21. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. (2.) The people were now returning to their homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here it is affecting to think, that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world, and therefore if we can say or do anything to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer on the last day of the feast; [1.] To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this sacred week; he will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his voice, they shall be saved. [2.] To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this; it would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves. Behold, now is the accepted time.

2. How he made this invitation; Jesus stood, and cried; which denotes (1.) His great earnestness and importance. His heart was upon it, to bring poor souls in to himself. The elevation of his body and the elevation of his voice were indications of the intense-ness of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. (2.) His desire that all might take notice, and take hold of this invitation. He stood, and cried, that he might the better be heard; for this is what every one that hath ears, is concerned for. They will come to the gospel and Gospel, if they can but be heard. He stood and cried, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered clandestinely by them that peeped and muttered; but the oracles of the gospel were proclaimed by one that stood, and cried. How sad is the case of man, that he must be importuned to be happy, and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will impor-tune him! No one, Isa. 35. 1. The persons invited are such as thirst, which may be understood, either, First, Of the indigence of their cases; either as to their outward condition; if any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his poverty and afflictions draw him to Christ for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away; or, as to their inward state; "If any man want spiritual blessings, he may be thirsty." Or, Secondly, Of the inclination of their souls and their desires towards a spiritual happiness. If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly...
The church a well of living water, Cant. 4. 15. And therefore may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel’s temple, Ezek. 47. 1. Compare Rev. 21. 1, and Zech. 14. 8. Dr. Lightfoot and others tell us, it was a custom of the Jews, which they received by tradition, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, to go to a well, called which the Arabs call Lutbanah.

—The fountain out of water. They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Siloam, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and, upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify the law, and refer to Isa. 14. 5, 35. 1. Others, that the Holy Spirit, or the Saviour might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water fetched from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified that, are not to be compared with the joy of the gospel in the wells of salvation.

3. Here is the evangelist’s exposition of this promise (v. 39.) This take he of the Spirit; not of any outward advantages accruing to believers, (as perhaps some misunderstood him,) but of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit. See how scripture is the best interpreter of scripture.

Observe, (1.) It is promised to all that believe on Christ, that they shall receive the Holy Ghost. Some received his miraculous gifts: (Mark 16. 17, 18.) all receive his sanctifying grace. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the blessings annexed to the new covenant, (Acts 2. 39.) and, if promised, no doubt performed to all that have an interest in that covenant.

(2.) The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is a fountain of living, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water, making them fruitful, and all others joyful; see ch. 3. 3. Where the apostles spoke so fluently of the things of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance, (Acts 2. 4.) and afterward preached and wrote the gospel of Christ with such a flood of divine eloquence, then this was fulfilled, Out of his belly shall flow rivers.

(3.) This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of a promise; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. See here, (1.) That the Holy Ghost was not yet given; it was necessary that he should be glorified, and he was ever worthy of all honour; but he was as yet in a state of humiliation and contempt. He had never forfeited the glory he had before all worlds, nay, he had merited a further glory, and beside his hereditary honours, might claim the achievement of a mediatorial crown; and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now ascended (Isa. 42. 1.) now satisfied, (Isa. 53. 11.) is now justified, (1 Tim. 3. 16.) but he is not yet glorified. And if Christ must wait for his glory, let us not think much to wait for ours.

[2.] That the Holy Ghost was not yet given. Into your souls for the Holy Ghost was not yet given. The Spirit of God was from eternity, for in the beginning he moved upon the face of the waters, he was in the Old Testament promised and seals, and Carey and Fothergill, both filled with the Holy Ghost. This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful, and general effusion of the Spirit which was promised, Joel 2. 28. and accomplished, Acts 2. 1. The Holy Ghost was not yet given, in that visible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves, after that dead interval of time, we have such a grace and work as now, we shall understand in what sense the Holy Ghost was not yet given; the earnest and first-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the full harvest was
not yet come. That which is most properly called the dispensation of the Spirit, did not yet commence. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in such rivers of living water as should issue forth to water the whole earth, even the Gentile world; not in the gifts of tongues, to which perhaps this promise principally refers.

[3.] That the reason why the Holy Ghost was not yet given, was, because Jesus was not yet glorified. First, The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification; (ch. 13. 31.) for in his cross he conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ, that was the valuable consideration upon which the grant was grounded, and therefore till that price was paid, (though many other gifts were bestowed upon its being secured to be paid,) the Holy Ghost was not given. Secondly, There was not so much need of the Spirit while Christ was himself here upon earth, as there was when he was gone, to supply the want of him. Thirdly, The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, (ch. 14. 16.) and an act of his dominion; and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. Fourthly, The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to inquire after Christ, he said, Now is the Son of man glorified, ch. 12. 23. Now the time for that was not yet come, when the gospel should be propagated in the nations, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the gift of tongues, that river of living water. But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given, yet he was promised; it was now the great promise of the Father, Acts 1. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are long deferred, yet they are well secured; and while we are waiting for the good promised, we have the promise to live upon, which shall speak and shall be fulfilled.

11. The consequences of this discourse; what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences; (v. 43.) There was a division among the people because of him. There was a schism, so the word is; there were diversities of opinions, and those managed with heat and contention; various sentiments, and those such as set them at variance. We fear, when the Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his gospel? No, the effect of the preaching of his gospel would be division, for while some are gathered to it, others will be gathered against it; and this will put things into a ferment, as here; but this is no more the fault of the gospel, than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine, that it stirs up the frequent humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was:

1. Some were taken with him, and well affected to him; Many of the people, when they heard this saying, heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make them happy, that they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them said, This is the prophet, yea, this is the Christ, (v. 41.) and the Messiah himself. The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers; a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word, that give him no more. These here said, This is the Prophet, and this is the Christ, but could not persuade themselves to leave sin and follow him; and to this testimony to Christ was but a testimony against themselves. 2. Others were prejudiced against him. No sooner was this great truth started, that Jesus is the Christ, than immediately it was contradicted and argued against; and this one thing, that his rise and original were (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ. (v. 42.) Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the scripture said, that Christ comes of the seed of David?

See here, (1.) A laudable knowledge of the scripture. They were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, (Isa. 11. 1.) that out of Bethlehem should arise the Governor, Mic. 5. 2. This even the common people knew by the traditional explications which their scribes gave them. Perhaps these people, who had these scriptures so ready to object against Christ, were not alike knowing in other parts of holy writ, but had these put into their mouths by their leaders, to fortify their prejudices against Christ. Many that expuse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the scriptures, when indeed they knew little more than these scriptures which they have been taught to pervert. (2.) A culpable ignorance of our Lord Jesus. They speak of it as certain and past dispute, that Jesus was of Galilee, whereas by inquiring of himself, or his mother, or his disciples, or by consulting the genealogies of the family of David, or the register at Bethlehem, they might have known, that he was the Son of David, a native of Bethlehem; but this they willingly are ignorant of. Thus gross falsehoods in matters of fact concerning persons and things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial men, and great resolves founded upon them, even in the same place and the same age wherein the persons live and the things are done, while the truth might easily be found out.

3. Others were engaged against him, and they would have taken him, v. 44. Though what he said was most sweet and gracious, yet they were exasperated against him for it. Thus did our Master suffer ill for saving and doing well. They would have taken him; they hoped somebody or other would seize him, and if they had thought no one else would, they would have done it themselves. They would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him, being restrained by an invisible power, because his hour was not come. As the malice of Christ's enemies is always unreasonable, so sometimes the suspension of it is unaccountable.

45. Then came the officers to the Chief Priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46. The officers answered. Never man spake like this man. 47. Then answered them the Pharisees. Are ye also deceived? 48. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52
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clares that none were ever more shamefully deceived, or put a greater cheat upon themselves,
than those who promised themselves worldly wealth
and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe
what a com/iliment the Pharisees put upon these officers; ".'Ire ye aliio deceTi<ed? \\ hat men of your
sense, and thought, and figure ; men that know better th;ui to be imposed upon by every pretende • and
upstiiit teacher
They endeavour to prej idice
them against Christ, by pei-suading them to think
well of themselves.
Most
(2.) That they will dinfiarage Ihemaeivea.
men, even in their religion, art willing to be governed by the exani])le of those of theyfrs' rank
these officers therefore, whose preferments, such as
they were, gave them a setue of honour, are desiied to consider,
[1.] That, if thev become disciples of Christ,
they go contrary to tViOsc who were persons of (|ualitv and reputation ; " Have any of the rulers, or of
the J'/iarisees, helui'ed on him ? Vou know they have
not, and you ought to be bound uj) by their judgment, and to believe and do in religion according to
the w ill of your supcrioi-s ; will you be wiser than
thev .'" Some'of the rulers did eml)race Christ,
(Miitt. 9. 18. ch. 4. 53.) and more believed in him,
but wanted courage to confess him; {ch. 12. •12.)
but when the interest of Christ inins low ii, the
world, it is common for its adversaries to represent
it as lower than really it is. But it was too true, that
few, very few, of them did. Note, First, The cause
of Christ has seldom had rulers and Pharisees on
its side.
It needs not secular supjioits, nor proposes
secular advantages, and therefore neither courts,
nor is coiirteil by the great men of this world, ^elfdenial and the cross are hard lessons to rulers and
Pharisees.
Secondly, This has confirmed many in
their prejudices .against Christ and his gospel, that
the riders and Pliarisees have been no friends to
them. Shall secular men jjretend to be more concerned about s/iiritual things than spiritual n>en
themsehes, or to see further into religion than those
who make its study their pi-ofession If rulers and
Pharisees do not believ c in Christ, they that do believe in him will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungentcel jie' pic in the world, and quite out of
the wav of jireferment thus are peoijle fotilishly
swayed bv e.r'ernal mofrvrs in matters of eternal
moment, are willing to be damned for fasliion-s;ike,
and to go to hell in compliment to the rulers and
Pharisees.
[2.] That they will link themselves with the
des])irable vulgar soit of people; (t. 49.) Tint this
/leo/ile who knoiv not the law are cursed ; meaning
especiallv those that were well-afTectcd to the docObserve,
trine of Christ.
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and

are lierc in a close
cabal, contiiviiig how to siiijprcss Christ ; though
this was the greal day of the jcuit, tlicy attended not
the religious services of the day, but left that to the
vulgar, to whom it was common for those great ecclesiastics t<i consign and turn over the business of
devotion, while they thought themselves better employed in the attairs of churrli polic\
They sat in
the council-chamber, ex|)ecting Christ to be brought
prisoner
to
them,
having
issued
out
warrants
a
thev
Now here we
for the apprehending of him, v. 32.
are told,
I. What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him, re infectd
having
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done nothing.

Observe,
1. The reproof they gave the officei-s for not executing the warrant they gave them; tl'ht/ have ye
not brought him ? He appeared puljlicly, tVie people
were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him
this was the lust day of
ihefeuKt, and they would not have such another opportunity " Why then did you neglect your dut\ r"
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F.t

that those who were their own creawho depended on them, and on whom thev

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tures,

them

depended, into whose n:inds they have

instilled

pre-

judices against Christ, should thus disappoint them.
Note, Mischievous men fret that thev cann(n do the
mischief they would, Ps. li:!. 10. Neh. 6. 16.
2. Tlie reason which the officers gave f irthenoncxecut'.on of their warrant; (t. ACt.') A'evcr man
Now, (1.) This was a verv
s/iake like this Man.
greal truth, that Jir\>er any man s/iake '.•jith that
wisdom, and power, and gi'ace, that con\incing
cleaniess, and that charming sweetness, whciewith
Christ spake ; none of the prophets, no, not Moses
himself.
(2.) The very officers that were sent to

take him, were taken with him, and acknowledged
Though it is probable that they were n>en
who had no quick sense of reason or eliujuence, and.
It is certain, had no inclination to tliink well of Jesus, yet so much self-evulence was there in what
Christ said, that they could not but prefer him before all those that s;it in Moses's scat. Thus Christ
was [)rescr\ed by the power Ciod has upon the
consciences even of bad men.
(3.) They said this
to their lords and mastci-s, who could not endure to
hear any thing that tended to the honour of Christ,
and yet could not avoid hearing this. Providence ordered it sn, that this should be said to them, that it
might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation
of their sin. '["heir own officers are witnesses against
them, who could not be suspected to l)c biassed in
favour of Christ. This testimony of their's should
have made them reflect upon themselves, with this
thou'^ht, " Do we know what we are doing, when
we :ire hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirablv well ."'
3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to beget in them prejudices against Christ, whom thev saw them begin
to be well affected to; to prevent which they sug-

this.

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two things

(1.) That, if they embrace the gospel of Christ,
they will deceive themselves ; (f 47.') jtre ye also

decerned? Christianity has, from its first rise, been
represented to the world as a great cheat upon it,
and the\' that cmbi-ace it as men deceived, then
when they began to he vndecehfed.
They that
looked fir a Messiah in external pomp, thought
them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace: b it the e\ent de-

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How

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this /leo/ile.
It is not, x««, X\\\s tay-fieoftlr,
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distinguished from them that were the clei-gy, but

them

"T®-, this rabhle-fieofile, this pitiful scandalous
scoiindrel-iicople, whom they disdained let set tiuh
the dogs of iheir /lock, thi<u)::h Cod had set tf em
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of the .Tenish nation, they were the seed of
.\braham, and in covenant with God, and not to be
spoken of with such cf ntempt The church's common interests are betrayed, when any one part of it
studies to render the other mean and des])ic.able.
If thev mean the followers of Chntt, though they
were generally persons of small figure and fortune,
\et bv owning Christ they discovered such a sagji
citv, inteeritv, and interest in the favours of Heaven,
Note,
as made them tnilv great and considerable.
.\s the wisdom of fiod has often clKsen base things,
and things which are despised, so the folly of men
has commonly debased and despised those whom

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God has

chosen.


Secondly, How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the word of God; [They know not the law; as if none knew the law but those that knew it from them; and no scripture-knowledge were current but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions.] It is a great reproach, of those whom they themselves accused, knew the law, and the prophets too, better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the word of God, than some great scholars with all their wit and learning. Thus David came to understand more truth and experience, Ps. 99, 106. If the common people did not know the law, yet the chief priests and Pharisees, of all men, should not have upbraided them with it: for whose fault was it but their's, who should have taught them better; but instead of that, took away the key of knowledge? Luke 11. 52.

Thirdly, How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are cursed; hateful to God and to all men, miserable people. It is well that their saying they were cursed, did not make them so, for the curse causeless shall not come. It is an usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reproached. We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our rule is, Bless, and curse not men, that you may not be judged. Matthew 5. 9. Perhaps many of them, ascribed it to be deserved, and made fools of; but they use this odious word, They are cursed, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having anything to do with them; thus the language of hell, in our primitive age, calls every thing that is displeasing, cursed, and damned, and confounded. Now, for ought that appears, those officers had their convictions stilled and suffocated by those suggestions, and they never inquire further after Christ; or word from a ruler or Pharisee will sway more with many than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

11. What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, v. 30, &c. Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked Sanhedrim, God left not himself quite without witness against his enmity; nor was the vote against Christ carried nemine contradicente—unanimously. Observe,

(1.) Who it was, that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus, he that came to Jesus by night, being one of the Pharisees. Matthew 26. 48. Observe, concerning him. [1.] That, though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for a Teacher, yet he retained his place in the counsel, and his vote among them. Some impute this to his weakness and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him, Follow me, else he would have done as others, that left all to follow him; therefore it seems rather to have been his weakness and pertinacity, that perhaps he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to turn their counsels into foolishness. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity to turn to the best advantage. God has his remnant among all sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies. There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. [2.] That, though at first he came to Jesus by night, for fear of being known, and still continued in his post; yet, when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole counsel that were set against him. Thus many believers, who at first were timorous, and ready to flee at the shaking of a leaf, have cut length, by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to laugh at the shaking of a spear. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless, like him, they be ready upon the first occasion openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it, for so Nicodemus did here, and ch. 39. 30.

(2.) What is alleged against their proceedings, (v. 51.) Dost our law judge any man before he hear him, ( offenses 2 and 3—hear from himself,) and know what he doth? By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe,

[1.] He prudently argues from the principles of their own law, and an uncontestable rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned unheard. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the excellency of Christ's miracles, or that they had been in cloistered discourse with him, (ch. 3.) It had been but to cast pebbles before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and would turn again, and read him; therefore he waves them.

[2.] Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ, as ignorant of the law, he here tactily retorts the charge upon themselves, and makes the ignorant of them some of the first principles of the law, so unfit were they to give law to others.

[3.] The law is here said to judge, and hear, and know, when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, judge, and hear, and know; for they are the mouth of the law, and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law, is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law. Observe, it was the manner of Roman law, Acts 25. 16. The method of our law is Guilty and Terminis, first to hear and then to determine.

[5.] Persons are to be judged, not by what is said of them, but by what they do; our law will not ask what men's opinions are of them, or outcries against them, but, What have they done? What overt acts can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, secundum allegata et probata,—according to what is alleged and proved. Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the scale of justice be used before the sword of justice.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it; but, when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in reason they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause, when men cannot bear to hear reason, and take it as an affront to be made manifest by maxims. Especially, when opposed to reason, give cause to be surprised that reason is against them. See how they taunt him; Art thou also of Galilee? v. 52. Some think he was well enough served for continuing among
woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what saest thou? 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple; how often would he have gathered them! Observe, 1. His retirement in the evening out of the town; (v. 1.) He went into the mount of Olives; whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, it is certain whether he rested there, or, as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps, because he had never a friend there, that had either kindness or courage enough to give him a night's lodging, while his persecutors had houses of their own to go to; (ch. 7. 53.) he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile out of town for. He retired, (as some think,) because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night. It is prudence to go out of the way of danger, whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the daytime, when he had work to do in the temple, he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection. Jos. 49. 2. But in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

II. His return in the morning to the temple, and to his work thence, v. 2. Observe, 1. What a diligent Preacher Christ was; Early in the morning he came again and taught. Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to-day. Christ was a constant Preacher, in season and out of season. These things are taken to be of concern to Christ's preachers. (1.) The time; early in the morning. Though he lifted up his voice, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came early. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. (2.) The place; in the temple: so much because it was a consecrated place, for then they would have chosen it at other times, as because it was a place of public concourse. And he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and
encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet let it desolate. (3.) His posture; he sat down; it was one having authority, and as one that intended to abide by it for some time. 2. How diligently his preaching was attended upon; All the people came unto him; and perhaps many of them were country-people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of him who had returned. They came to him, though he came early. They that seek him early shall find him. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and he taught them, though they were angry at him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure, yet Christ bid them welcome, and taught them.

1. His dealing with those that brought to him the woman taken in adultery, tempting him. The Scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here, the case proposed to him by the Scribes and Pharisees, who herein contrived to pick a quarrel with him, and bring him into a snare, v. 3-6. (1.) They set the prisoner to the bar; (v. 3.) they brought the woman taken in adultery; perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when, it may be, their dwelling in booths, and their feasting and joy, might, by wicked minds, corrupt the best things he made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery, were by the Jewish law to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed them the execution of, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, She was taken in adultery: though adultery is a work of darkness, which the criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet sometimes it is strangely brought to light. Those that presume themselves secure in sin, deceive themselves. The Scribes and Pharisees bring her to Christ, and set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, he having sat down, as a Judge upon the bench. (2.) They prefer an indictment against her; (v. 4.) Master, this woman was taken in adultery. Here they call him Master, whom but the day before they had called a Dceiver; in hopes with their flatteries to have ensured him, as those, Luke 20. 20. But there seems to be an imposition upon them, as he that stretches a right hand. [1.] The crime for which the prisoner stands indicted, is no less than adultery; which even in the patriarchal age, before the law of Moses, was looked upon as an iniquity to be punished by the judges, Job 31. 9, 11. Gen. 34. 24. The Pharisees, by their vicious prosecution of this offender, seemed to have a great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterwards, that they were in the case themselves. [2.] She was perhaps in adultery; though she might have left it, till her heart had been perfectly hardened; but sometimes it proves a mercy to sinners, to have their sin brought to light, that they may do no more preemptiously. Better our sin should shame us than damn us; and be our sin so ordered in order before us for our conviction than for our admonition. (3.) They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted, v. 5. Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned. Moses commanded that they should be brought to judgment, Deut. 22. 22. but not that she should be stoned. She was not espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, Deut. 22. 21. Note, Adultery is an exceedingly sinful sin, for it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant of our God. It is the violation of a divine institution in innocence, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts that defile the soul. (4.) They pray his judgment in the case; But what sayest thou, who pretendest to be a Teacher of the law, how should she be dealt with? He might have been an accuser in the case, v. 6. [1.] If he should confirm the sentence of the law, and let it take its course, they would censure him as inconsistent with himself, (he having received publicans and harlots,) and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek, and have salvation, and proclaim a year of release; and perhaps they would accuse him of bringing the Roman government among them, the Jewish is the exception of a judicial power. But, [2.] If he should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed, (as they expected he would,) they would represent him, First, As an Enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority to correct and control it, and would confirm that prejudice against him, which his enemies were so impatient to propagate, that he came to destroy the law and the prophets. Secondly, As a friend to sinners, and, consequently, a Favourer of sin; if he should seem to connive at such wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent him as countenancing it, and being a Patron of offences, if he were a Protector of offenders; than which no reflection could be more injurious upon one that professed the strictness, purity, and business, of a Prophet. 2. The method he took to resolve this case, and so to break this snare. (1.) He seemed to slight it, and turned a deaf ear to it; he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. It is impossible to tell, and therefore needless to ask, what he wrote; but it is the only mention made in the gospels of Christ's writings; Eusebius indeed says he had a book writing to record his sayings. Some think they have a liberty of conjecture as to what he wrote here. Grotius says, It was some grave weighty saying, and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful concerning any thing, to do so. Jeron. and Ambrose suppose he wrote, Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust. Others this, The earth accuses the earth, but the judgment was to come. He begins by giving them a hint to speak, when difficult cases are proposed to us, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are hasted, to pause and consider before we reply; think twice before we speak once; The heart of the wise studies to answer. Our translation farsome Greek copies, which add, eis kai skenon. (though the most copies have it not,) give this account of our Saviour's answer, though he heard them not. He did as it was looked another way, to show that he was not willing to take notice of their address, saving, in effect, Who made me a Judge or a Diviner? It is safe in many cases to be deaf to that which it is not safe to answer, Ps. 88. 15. Christ would not have his ministers to be entangled in secular affairs, let them rather employ themselves in many lawful studies, and fill up their time with writ-
ing on the ground, (which nobody will heed,) than bury themselves in that which does not belong to them. But when Christ seemed as though he heard, he turned and made it appear that he not only heard their words, but knew their thoughts.

(2.) When they importunately or rather imperti-
nently pressed him for an answer, he turned the
conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors, r. 7.

[1.] They continued asking him, and his seeming not to take notice of them, made them the more ve-
ment, for now they thought sure enough that they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid
the imputation of condoning or exculpating any of
Moses, if he should acquit the prisoner, or his own
docline of mercy and pardon, if he should condemn
her; and therefore they pushed on their appeal to
him with vigour; whereas they should have con-
strued his disregard of them as a check to their de-
sign, and an intimation to them to desist, as they ten-
dered their own reputation.

[2.] At last, he put them all to shame and silence
with a word: He lifted up himself, awakening as one
out of sleep, (Ps. 78. 65.) and said unto them. He
that is without sin among you, let him first cast a
stone at her.

First, Here Christ avoided the snare which they had laid for him, and effectually saved his own re-
putation. He neither reflected upon the law, nor
excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he on the other
hand condemn her with severity; but he relieved
their heat; see the good effect of consideration.
When we cannot make our point by steering a direct
course, it is good to fetch a compasse.

Secondly, In the net which they spread is their own
foot taken. They came with design to accuse him,
but they were forced to accuse themselves. Christ
owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted,
but appeals to their consciences, whether they were
fit to be the judges of others, without sin, without
sin of this nature, that has not some time or other been guilty of for-
nication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at
her." Not that magistrates, who are conscious of
their guiltiness, should therefore come at others'
guilt. But therefore, (1.) Whenever we find fault
with others, we ought to reflect upon ourselves, and
to be more severe against sin in ourselves than in
others. (2.) We ought to be favourable, though
not the persecutors of persons that offend, and to restore them with a spirit of meekness,
considering ourselves and our own corrupt nature.

Ant. sumus, aut simus, vel possimus esse no vi
es—We either are, or have been, or may be, what
he is. Let this restrain us from throwing stones at
our brethren, and proclaiming their fault.

Let him

that is without sin, begin such discourse as that,
and then those that are truly humbled for their sins,
will blush at it, and be glad to let it fall. (3.) Those
that are any way obliged to animadver upon
the faults of others, are concerned to look well to them-
selves, and keep themselves pure; (Matt. 5. 7.) Qua
alterum muniat pueris, yasum in animo offert.
The snufflers of the tabernacle, (Ex. 25. 27.) Their
mouth of brass, (Ps. 12. 1.) Perhaps he refers to the trial of the suspected
wife by the jealous husband, with the waters of jeal-
ousy. The man was to bring her to the priest, (Num. 5. 15.) in the Scribres and Pharisees brought
this woman to Christ. Now it was a received op-
inion among the Jews, and confirmed by experience,
that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial,
had himself been at any time guilty of adultery,
no such woman as she, he, who had been her hus-
bond, had no effect upon the wife. "Come then," saith
Christ, "according to your own tradition will judge
you; if you are without sin, stand to the charge, and
let the adulteress be executed; but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her, are equally so,
according to your own rule she shall be free." 4.
In this he attended to the great work which he came into the world about, and that was to bring
sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but to save.
He aimed to bring, not only the prisoner to repen-
tance, by shewing her his mercy, but the prosecu-
tors, too, by shewing them their sins; they thought
to instaure him, he sought to convince and convert
them. Thus the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but
the just seek his soul.

[3.] Having given them this startling word, he let them to consider of it, and again staid down,
kindly to them, v. 8. As when they made their address, he seemed to slight their question,
so now that he had given them an answer, he slighted their resentment of it; not caring what they
said to it; may, they needed not to make any reply:
the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them
make the best of it there. Or, he would not seem to
wait for an answer, lest they should in a sudden;
justify themselves, and then be refuted in their
own mouth, in the trial; but gives them time to
pause, and to commune with their own hearts. God
said, I heardken and heard, Jer. 8. 6. Some
Greek copies here read, He wrote on the ground,
"incusus, i.e. wrote in the stones, the sins of every one
of them; this he could do, for he sets our iniquities be-
fore him; and this he will do, for he will set them
in order before us too; he seals up our transgres-
sions into a book, Job 13. 28; he writes it in the
sand; so they are written as with a pen of iron and
the point of a diamond, (Jer. 17. 1.) never to
be forgotten till they are forgiven.

[4.] The Scribres and Pharisees were so strangely
thunderstruck with the words of Christ, that they
let fall their persecution of Christ, whom they durst
no further tempt; and their prosecution of the
woman whom they durst no longer accuse; (v. 9.)
They went out one by one: First, Perhaps his writ-
ign on the ground frightened them, as the hand-
writing on the wall frightened Belshazzar.
They concluded he was writing bitter things against them,
writing their doom. Happy they who have no rea-
son to be afraid of Christ's writing! Secondly, How-
ever, what he said, frightened them, by sending
them to their own consciences; he showed them
unto themselves, and they were afraid. He lifted
up himself again, his last word would shew them to
the world, and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to with-
draw. They went out one by one, that they might
go out softly, and not be a noisy flight disturb Christ: they gat them away by stealth, as people being
ashamed steal away when they fear in heart, 2 Sam.
19. 3. The order of their departure, (a) shows us,
beginning at the elders, because they were most guilt,
or first aware of the duties they were in of being put to the blush. And if the elders shut the
field, and retreat indecisively, no marvel if the
younger follow them. Now see here.
1. The force of the word of Christ for the conviction of sinners. They which heard it, were convicted by their own consciences. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from Him will set it on work, Heb. 4. 12. Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, the eldest even of them, were here startled by the word of Christ; even Scribes and Pharisees, who were most convicted of themselves, but every letter of Christ's word are made to retire with shame.

2. The folly of sinners under these convictions, which appears in these Scribes and Pharisees. (1.) It is folly for those that are under convictions, to make it their principal care to avoid shame, as Judah, (Gen. 38. 25.) lest we be ashamed. Our care should be more to save our souls than to save our credit. Soul evidenced his hypocrisy, when he said, I have sinned, yet now honour me, I pray thee. There is no way to get the honour and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents.

(2.) It is folly for those that are under conviction, to contrive how to shift off their convictions, and to get rid of them. The Scribes and Pharisees had the wound opened, and now they should have been desirous of their healing, but they may have been healed, but that was the thing they dreaded and declined. (3.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to get away from Jesus Christ, as these here did, for he is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences, will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their answer; and will they then go from him? To whom will they go?

5. When the self-conceited prosecutors quitted the field, and fled for the same, the self-condemning prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of our Lord Jesus; Jesus was left alone from the company of the Scribes and Pharisees, free from their misbeliefs, and the woman standing in the midst of the assembly that were attending on Christ's preaching, where they set her, v. 5. She did not seek to make her escape, though she had opportunity for it; but her prosecutors had appealed unto Jesus, and to him she would go, on him she would wait for her doom. Note, Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus, will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for he is the highest and best Judge of all. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the gospel of Christ made to withdraw, its demands are answered, and its clamours silenced, by the blood of Jesus. Our cause is lodged in the gospel-court; we are left with Jesus alone, it is with him only that we have now to deal, for to him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in him, and we are sure of our doom. Let his gospel rule us, and it will infallibly save us.

[6.] Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to; (v. 10, 11.) Jesus lifted up himself, and he saw none but the woman. Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the contending sons of men to deal it among themselves, yet, when the hour of his appearing is come, he will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, Lift up thyself, Ps. 7. 6. and 94. 2. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was without sin, and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely compassionate and merciful; he will find him so, now that she stands upon her deliverance.

Here is the method of the courts of judicature observed: First, The prosecutors are called: Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? Not but that Christ knew where they were; but he asked, that he might shame them who declined his judgment, and encourage her who resolved to abide by it. St. Paul's challenge is like this, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Where are these their accusers? The accuser of the brethren shall be fairly cast out, and all iniquities legally and justly, and without quittance, removed.

Secondly, They do not appear when the question was asked; Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. She speaks respectfully to Christ, calls him Lord, but is silent concerning her prosecutors, says nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, Where are those thine accusers? She does not triumph in their retreat, or insult over them as witnesses against themselves, or accuse them against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our Judges, we must forgive our accusers: and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awaking our consciences, we may easily forgive them this wrong. But she answered the question which concerned herself, Hath no man condemned thee? True penitents find it enough to give account of their consciences, and will not undertake to give account of other people.

Thirdly, The prisoner is therefore discharged; Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more. Consider this,

1. As her discharge from the temporal punishment; "If they do not condemn thee to be stoned to death, neither do I."

Not that Christ came to confirm the administration of his Sword of Justice, or that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted on malefactors; so far from that, the administration of public justice is established by the gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom.

By me kings reign. But Christ would not condemn this woman. (1.) Because it was none of his business, he was no judge or divider, and therefore would not intermediate in secular affairs. His kingdom was not of this world. Tractant fabrilia fabe—Let every one act in his own province. (2.) Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she, and could not for shame insist upon their demand of justice against her. This law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterward the hands of all the people, so that if they could not bring in the criminal, they had no hand in his sending off. But the Son of man, who sits in judgment, will send them off. The justice of God, in inflicting temporal judgments, sometimes takes notice of a comparative rightness, and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious, when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse than they, Deut. 32. 26, 27. But when Christ dismissed her, it was with this caution, Go, and sin no more. Impunity emboldens malefactors to commit more crimes, and they will be worse, since they have found means to escape the edge of the law, need to double their watch, lest Satan get advantage; for the fairer the escape was, the fairer the warning was to go and sin no more. They who help to save the life of a criminal, should, as Christ here, help to save the soul with this caution.

2. As her discharge from the eternal punishment of Christ, Life and Death. life, is, in effect, to say, I do forgive thee; and the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and could upon good grounds give this absolution; for as he knew the hardness and iniminitive hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them, so he knew the tenderness and sincere repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort, as he did to that woman who was a sinner, such a sinner as this, who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee: (Luke 7. 48.) Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace. So here
Neither do I condemn thee. Note, (1.) They are truly happy, whom Christ doth not condemn, for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges, they are all coram non judice—before an unauthorized judge. (2.) Christ will not condemn those, who, though they have sinned, will go and sin no more, Ps. 85. 8. Isa. 55. 7. He will not take the advantage he has against us for our former rebellions, if we will but lay down our arms and return to our allegiance. (3.) Christ’s favour to us in the remission of the sins that are past, should be a prevailing argument with us to go and sin no more, Rom. 6. 1, 2. Will not Christ condemn thee? Go then and sin no more.

12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with debates between Christ and contradicting sinners, who calumniated the most gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. It is not certain whether these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged, it is probable that they were, for the evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice (v. 2.) how early Christ began that day’s work. Though those Pharisees that accused the woman, were absconded, yet there were other Pharisees, (v. 13.) to confront Christ, who had brass enough in their foreheads to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to such a shameful retreat; nay perhaps that made then the more industrious to pick quarrels with him, to retrieve, if possible, the reputation of their bailed party.

In these verses, we have,
1. A great doctrine laid down, with the application of it.
2. The doctrine is, That Christ is the Light of the world; (v. 12.) Then spake Jesus again unto them; though he had spoken a great deal to them, to little purpose, and what he had said was opposed, yet he spake again, for he spaketh once, ye take. They had turned a deaf ear to what he said, and yet he spake again to them, saving, I am the Light of the world. Note, Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. One of the nubbins of Light, the Messiah, is as it is written, Dan. 2. 22. And Light dwelleth with him. God is Light, and Christ is the Image of the invisible God; God is light, Light of lights. He was expected to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, (Luke 2. 32.) and so the Light of the world, and not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the Sun of righteousness. Observe, he enlightens the whole world, so does one Christ, he enlightens the whole world, no more. Christ’s being the Light, speaks,
(1.) What he is in himself—most excellent and glorious. (2.) What he is to the world—the Fountain of light, enlightening every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun? So would it be without Christ, by whom light came into the world, ch. 1. 9.

2. The inference from this doctrine is, He that followeth me as a traveller follows the light in a dark night, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. If Christ be the Light, then,
(1.) It is our duty to follow him, to submit ourselves to his conduct, and in every thing take direction from him, in the way that leads to happiness. Men follow false lights—ignes servus, that lead them to destruction. Christ is the Light of the world. It is not enough to look at this Light, and to seize upon it, but we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for it is a light to our feet, not our eyes only.
(2.) It is the happiness of those who follow Christ, that they shall not walk in darkness. They shall not be left destitute of these instructions in the way of truth, which are necessary to keep them from disordering error and those directions in the way of duty, which are necessary to keep them from dangerous sin. They shall have the light of life, that knowledge and enjoyment of God, which will be to them the light of spiritual life in this world, and of everlasting life in the other world, where there will be no death nor darkness. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds. Follow Christ, and they shall follow him to heaven.

3. The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, and it was very trilling and frivolous; (v. 13.) Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. In this objection they went upon the suspicion which we commonly have of men’s self-commendation, which is concluded to be the native language of self-love, such as we are all ready to commend in others, but few are willing to commend in themselves. But in this case the objection was very unjust, for, 1. They were their own witnesses, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which in the case of one who introduced a divine revelation was necessary and unavoidable. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves, when they avouched themselves to be the God’s messengers? Did not the Pharisees avouch John Baptist, What saist thou of thyself? (v. 2.) They overlooked the testimony of all the other witnesses, which corroborated the testimony he bore of himself. Had he only borne record of himself, his testimony would indeed been suspicious; and the belief of it might have been suspended; but his doctrine was attended by more than two or three credible witnesses, enough to establish every word of it.

3. Christ’s reply to this objection, v. 24. He does not retort upon them, as he might, (v. 2.) You profess yourselves to be deeply convinced, and yet your witness is not true,” but plainly vindicates himself, and though he had waved his own testimony, (ch. 31.) yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the credibility of his other proofs, but was necessary to shew the force of them. He is the Light of the world, and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing. First principles prove themselves.

He urges three things, to prove that his testimony, though of himself, was true:—
1. He was moved, sent, and directed by the Father, to whom he evidenced himself in a heavenly manner, and spoke as he did, with authority and power. 
2. He was vindicated as the true Messiah, and the Son of God. 
3. He was confirmed and authorized by the Father; which showed the eternal light was in him and the everlasting power of the Father was in him.
1. That he was conscious to himself of his own authority, and abundantly satisfied in himself concerning it. He did not speak as one at uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion, which he himself hesitated about, but declared a decree, and gave such an account of himself as he would abide by; I know whence I come and whither I go. He was fully abroad of his own undertaking from first to last; knew whose errand he went upon, and what his success would be; he knew what he was before his manifestation to the world, and what he should be after; that he came from the Father, and was going to him, (ch. 16. 28.) came from glory, and was going to glory, (ch. 17. 5.) This is the same with good Christians, that though the world know them not, as it knew him not; yet they know whence their spiritual life comes, and whither it tends, and go upon sure grounds.

2. That they were very incompetent judges of him, and of his doctrine, and not to be regarded. (1.) Because they were ignorant, willingly and resolvedly false; Ye cannot tell whither I come, and whither I go. To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing of the matter, nor desire to know? He had told them of his coming from heaven and returning to heaven, but it was foolishness to them, they received it not, it was what the brutish man knows not, Ps. 92. 6. They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand, which lay quite out of the reach of their acquaintance.

3. Because the Father’s counsels, and the Saviour’s disciples and friends, speak evil of what they know not, Jude 8, 10.

(2.) Because they were partial; (v. 13.) Ye judge after the flesh. When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward shows and appearances only are given in evidence, and the case decided according to them, then men judge after the flesh, and when the consideration of a secular interest turns the scale in judging of spiritual matters, when we judge in favour of that which pleases the carnal mind, and recommends us to a carnal world, we judge after the flesh; and the judgment cannot be right, when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his gospel by outward appearances, and because he appeared so mean, thought it impossible he should be the Light of the World; as if the sun under a cloud were no sun.

(3. Because they were partial and unfair toward him, intimated in that, I judge no man; I neither make nor meddle with your political affairs, nor does my doctrine or practice at all entrench upon, or interfere with, your civil rights or secular powers, he thus judged no man; now if he did not war after the flesh, it was very unreasonable for them to judge him after the flesh, and to treat him as an offender against the civil government. Or, I judge no man, that is, not now in my first coming, that is deferred till I come again, ch. 3. 17. Prima deputato Christi medicinale est, non judicatæ: The first coming of Christ was for the purpose of administering, not justice, but medicine.

3. That his testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and corroborated by the testimony of his Father, with him, and upon him, (v. 16.) And if I judge, mine own judgment is true, (ch. 8. 16.) though not politically. Consider him then, (1.) As a Judge, and his own judgment was valid: If I judge, I who have authority to execute judgments, to whom all things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, my judgment is true, of incontestable rectitude and uncontrollable authority. Rom. 2. 29. If I should judge myself, my judgment is true, and then you would be condemned; but the judgment-thy is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemned, but saved, and therefore now I judge no man; so Chrysostom.

Now that which makes his judgment unexceptionable, is, [1.] His Father’s concurrence with him; I am not alone, but I and the Father, He had the Father’s concurring counsels to direct; as he was with the Father he was here on the earth, in turning the counsels, so the Father was with him in the world, in giving and executing those counsels, and never left him in a state of conclave without advice, Isa. 11. 2. All the counsels of finite (and of war too) were given him both, Zech. 6. 13. He had also the Father’s concurring power to authorize and confirm what he did; see Ps. 109. 21, 22. He had not the executive power, nor the personal act, but he had the Father’s, and by the authority aforesaid, ch. 3. 17, and 14. 26.

[2.] His Father’s commission to him; I am the Father that sent me. Note, God will go along with them that he sends; see Exod. 3. 10, 12. Come, and I will send thee, and certainly, I will be with thee. Now, if Christ had a commission from the Father, and the Father’s presence with him in all his administrations, no doubt his judgment was true and valid; no exception lay against it, no appeal lay from it.

(2.) Look upon him as a Witness, and now he appeared no otherwise, having not as yet taken the throne of judgment, and as such his testimony was true and unexceptionable: this he shews, v. 17, 18, where.

First, he quotes a maxim of the Jewish law, v. 17. that the testimony of two men is true. Not as if it were always true in itself, for many a time a hand was joined in hand to bear a false testimony, 1 Kings 21. 10. But it is allowed as sufficient evidence, upon which to ground a verdict, (verum dictum,) and if nothing appear to the contrary, it is taken for granted to be true. Reference is here had to that law, (Deut. 17. 6.) If the mouth of two witnesses shall bear testimony against a man, he is worthy of death, he shall be put to death. And see Deut. 19. 15. Numb. 35. 30. It is in favour of life, that in capital causes two witnesses were required, as well as in case of treason. See Heb. 6. 18.

Secondly, He applies this to the case in hand; (v. 18.) I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me. Behold two witnesses! Though in human courts, where evidence is nearly required, the criminal or candidate is not admitted to be a witness, but in a matter purely divine, which can be proved only by a divine testimony, and God himself must be the Witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the testimony of two distinct persons, that are men, and therefore may deceive, or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning him, to command assent; see 1 John 5. 7, 8—11.

Now this proves, not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct Persons, (for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several persons,) but that these two are one, not only in their testimony, but equal in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the persons in the Godhead, and Ariusism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. Alius est Filius, et alius patern, non tanum altius, sed hoc ipsum est et patet, et filius, scilicet Deus Patris. The Son is one Person, and the Father is another; they do not, however, constitute two Beings, but the Father is the same Being that the Son is, that is, the only true God. Tract. 36. in Ioann.

Christ here speaks of himself and the Father 2
Witnesses to the world, giving in evidence to the reason and conscience of the children of men, whom he deals with as men. And these Witnesses to the world now, will in the great day be witnesses against those that perish in unbelief, and their word will judge them. This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews; in the conclusion of which, we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied.

1. How their tongues were let loose, (such was the malice of hell,) to cavil at his discourse, v. 19. Though in what he said there appeared nothing of human policy or artifice, but a divine sincerity, yet they set themselves to cavil against him, and vex him with such insinuations as none so incurably blind, as those that resolve they will not see. 

Observe, (1.) How they evaded the conviction with a cavil; Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? They might easily have understood, by the tenor of this and his other discourses, that when he spake of his Father, he meant no other than God himself; yet they pretend to understand him in a common person; and since he appealed to his testimony, they bid him call his witnesses, and challenge him, if he could, to produce them. Where is thy Father? Thus, as Christ said to them, (v. 15.) they judge after the flesh. Perhaps they thereby intend a reflection upon the meanness and obscurity of his family; Where is thy Father? that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this? Thus they turn it off with a taunt, when they could not read the wisdom and spirit with which he spake.

(2.) How he evaded the cavil with a further correction; he did not tell them where his Father was, but charged them with wilful ignorance; Ye neither know me, nor my Father. It is no purpose to discourse to you about divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colours. Poor creatures! ye know nothing of the matter.

[1.] He charges them, with ignorance of God: Ye know not my Father. In Judah was God known, (Ps. 76. 1.) they had some knowledge of him as the God that made the world, but their eyes were darkened, that they could not see the light of his glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The little children of the christian church knew the Father, knew him as a Father; (1 John 2. 13.) but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not, so know him.

[2.] He shows them the true cause of their ignorance of God: If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. The reason why men are ignorant of God, is, because they are unacquainted with Jesus Christ. Did we know Christ, First, In knowing him we should know the Father, whose Person he is the express image of, ch. 14. 9. Christoformus proves hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with his Father. We cannot say, (He that knoweth a man, knoweth his angel,) or, He that knows a creature, knows the Creator; but we may say, (He that knows Christ, knows the Father.) Secondly, by him we shall be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with him. If we knew Christ better, we should know the Father better; but where the christian religion is slighted and opposed, natural religion will soon be lost and laid aside. Deism makes way for theism, which in time may become vain in the imaginations concerning God, that will not learn of Christ.

2. See how their hands were tied, though their tongues were thus let loose; such was the power of Heaven to restrain the malice of hell. These words spake Jesus, these bold words, these words of conviction and reproof, in the treasury, an apartment of the temple, where, to be sure, the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ taught in the temple, sometimes in the part, sometimes in another, as he saw occasion. Now the priests who had so great a concern in the temple, and he fed upon it as their nourishment, might easily, with the assistance of their prejudices that were with their backs, either have seized him, and exposed him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the stoning of the rebel; or, at least have silenced him, and stopped his mouth there, as Amos, though threatened in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel. Amos 7. 12, 13. Yet even in the temple, where they fed him in their wealth, We men laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come. See here, (1.) The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power; none of them durst meddle with him. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as he does to the waves of the sea; let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty. For God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. (2.) The reason of this restraint: His hour was not yet come. The frequent mention of this, intimates how much the time of Christ's departure out of the world depended upon the fixed counsel and decree of God. It will come, it is coming; not yet come, but it is at hand. Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer, than the time appointed of the Father; which is very comfortable to every good man, who can look up and say with pleasure, My times are in thy hands; and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes there is a time.

21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whether I go, ye cannot come. 22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? Because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 25. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26. I have many things to say and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true: and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28. Then said Jesus unto them, when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself: but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30. As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Christ here gives fair warning to the careless unbelieving Jews, to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he spake words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,
I. The wrath threatened; (v. 21.) Jesus said again unto them that which might be likely to do them good. He continued to teach in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, though there were many that resisted it, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work, notwithstanding opposition, because he was weak. Note, Christ was loud in his voice; he had pity to them in the offers of his grace, and they had not danced; now he mourns to them in the denunciations of his wrath, to try if they would lament. He said, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go ye cannot come. Every word is terrible, and speaks spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all others; worse than war, pestilence, and famine, which the Old Testament prophets denounced.

Four things are here threatened against the Jews. 1. Christ's departure from them: I go my way, that is, "It shall not be long before I go; you need not take so much pains to drive me from you, I shall go of myself." They said to him, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy sayings, and he takes it for granted they understood him but ill, and left him, from whom Christ departs. Ichabod, the glory is gone, our defence is departed, when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them; he bid often farewell, as one loath to depart, and willing to be invited, and that would have them stir up themselves to take hold on him.

2. Their enmity to the true Christ, and their forsaking and mistrustfulness in the mind of the other Messiah when he was gone away, which were both their sins and their punishments: Ye shall seek me, which speaks either, (1.) Their enmity to the true Christ; "Ye shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my doctrine and followers, with a fruitless design to root them out." This was a continual vexation and torment to themselves, made them incurably ill-natured, and brought wrath upon the other (God's and our own) to the utmost. Or, (2.) Their enmity to each other. And (3.) Their enmity to the Gentiles. Christ, hither, the glory is departed, our defence is gone, when Christ departs. Ichabod, the glory is gone, our defence is departed, when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them; he bid often farewell, as one loath to depart, and willing to be invited, and that would have them stir up themselves to take hold on him. 2. 31, 32.

3. Their final impenitency: Ye shall die in your sins, as an error in all our English Bibles, even in the old bishops' translation, and that of Geneva, (the Rhenishs only excepted,) for all the Greek copies have it in the singular number, is tis |gravitas in your sins, so all the Latin versions; and Calvin has a note upon the difference between this and v. 24, where it is plural, tis |gravitas, that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief, in |pudicitia, in this sin of yours. Note, Christ that live in unbelief, are for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. Or it may be understood in general, Ye shall die in your iniquity, as Ezek. 3, 19. and 33. 9. Many that have long lived in sin, by a timely repentance, through grace, are saved from dying in sin; but for those who go out of this world of probation into that of retribution under the guilt of sin unpardoned, and the power of sin unbroken, there is none in whom to repent; salvation itself cannot save them. Job 20. 11. Ezek. 32. 37.

4. Their eternal separation from Christ and all happiness in him: Whither I go, ye cannot come. When Christ left the world, he went to a state of perfect happiness; he went to paradise, thither he took the penitent thief with him, that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only shall not come to him, but be eternally excluded; it is a woeful, and for heaven would not be heaven to those that die insanctified, and hence for it. Ye cannot come, because we have no right to enter into that Jerusalem, Rev. 22. 14. Whither I go, ye cannot come, to fetch me there, so Dr. Whitby; and the same is the comfort of all good Christians, that, when they are got to heaven, they will be out of the reach of their enemies' malice.

II. The way they made of this threatening. Instead of trembling at this word, they bantered it, and turned it into ridicule; (v. 22.) Will he kill himself? See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings; they could make themselves and one another merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the barthen of the word of the Lord into a byword, and jests upon jests, line upon line, into a merry song. Is. 30. 8. 9. Whither I go ye shall seek me, and I will not be there to be seen. Now let those who are in any circumstances to mock at the threats and promises of God, remember this.

2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if he had an inhuman design upon his own life, to avoid the indignities done him, like Saul. This is indeed (say they) to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never kill ourselves. Thus they make him not only such a one as themselves, but worse; yet in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews, many of them in discontent and despair did kill themselves. They had put a much more favourable construction upon this word of his; (ch. 7. 34, 35.) Will he go to the dispersed Gentiles? But see how indulged madness grows more and more malicious.

III. The conclusion of what he said. 1. He had said, Whither I go, ye cannot come, and here he adds another reason for it. (v. 23.) Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. Ye are of the earth, earthy;—of those things which are beneath; noting, not so much their rise from beneath, as their affection to these lower things: Ye are in with these things, as those that belong to them; how can ye come where I go, when your spirit and disposition are so directly contrary to mine? See here, (1.) What the Son of God was—of this world, but from above. He was perfectly dead to the wealth of the world, the ease of the body, and the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly things; and none shall be with him but those who are born from above, and have their conversation in heaven. (2.) How contrary to this his spirit was; Ye are from beneath, and I am from above. The Pharisees, who had a carnal worldly spirit; and what communion could Christ have with them?

2. He had said, Ye shall die in your sins, and here he stands to it: "Therefore I said, Ye shall die in your sins, because ye are from beneath;" and he gives this further reason for it, If ye believe not that I am He, we shall die in your sins, v. 24. See here, (1.) What we are required to believe, that I am the Son of God, that I am, which is one of God's names, Exod. 3. 14. It was the Son of God that there said, Else had I given them ears to hear. I will be what I will be; for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now he saith, I am He; he that should come, he that ye expect the Messias to be, that ye would have me to be to you. I am more than the bare name of the Messias; I do not only call myself, but I declare myself to be, that I am the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ. If you suppose me to be in the soul with an empty sound of words, but affects it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation, as a real thing that has real effects. (2.) How necessary it is that we believe this; if we have not this faith, we shall die in our sins; for the matter is so settled, that without this faith, [1.] We cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue eternally damned. No such generations as ever did, not so many as were saved, between the fall and the coming of Christ, were saved for Christ's grace will be an argument at powerful enough, and none but the Spirit of Christ's grace will be an agent powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God,
and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine given, to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ: so that if Satan be not by faith displeas'd, he has a lease of the soul for its life; if Christ do not cure us, our case is desperate, and we shall die in our sins.

[2.] Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin when we die, for the wrath of God remains upon them that believe not, Mark 16. 16. Unbelief is the damning sin, it is a sin against the remedy. Now this implies the great gospel-promise. If we believe that Christ is he, and receive him accordingly, we shall die in our sins. The Last Saviour's words (Acts 17. 31) it shall die in your sins, for we are all sinners against God; but the gospel is a dispensation of the obligation, upon condition of believing; the curse of the law is revoked and annulled to all that submit to the grace of the gospel; believers die in Christ, in his love, in his arms, and so are saved from dying in their sins.

IV. Here is a further discourse concerning himself, occasion'd by his requiring faith in himself as the condition of salvation, p. 23—29. Observe,

1. The question which the Jews put to him; (ver. 25.) Who are thou? They this asked tauntingly, and not with any desire to be instructed. He had said, Ye must believe that I am he. By his not saying expressly who he was, he plainly intimat'd that in his person he was such a one as could not be describ'd by any, and in his office such a one as was ex-pected by all that looked for intimation of the Father in Israel; yet this awkward manner of speaking, which had so much significance in it, they turned to his reproach, as if he knew not what to say of himself: Who art thou, that we must with an implicit faith believe in thee, that thou art some mighty He: we know not who, or what, nor are worthy to know?

2. His answer to this question, wherein he directs them to look at what he hath done. (Ver. 28.) He refers himself to what he had said all along: Do you ask who I am? Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. The original here is a little intricate, ἡ ἀρχὴ ἡ ἐν τοῖς σταυροῖς τοῦ ὁλοκληρου ἡμῶν, which some read thus; I am the Beginning, which also I speak unto you. So Austin takes it. Christ is called ἀρχή—the Beginning, (Col. 1. 18. Rev. 1. 8.—21. c. 5,—14.) and so it agrees with v. 24. I am he, and that which I have said is the Beginning. Those who object that it is the accusers' temper, and therefore not properly answering to ὁ ἀρχή, must undertake to construe by grammatical rules that parallel expression, Rev. 1. 8, 18. But most interpreters agree with our version. Do you ask who I am?

[1.] I am the same that I said unto you from the beginning of time in the scriptures of the Old Testament, the same that from the beginning was said to be the Saviour of the world, that should break the en- mity's head, the same that in all the ages of the church was the Mediator of the covenant, and the Faith of the patriarchs.

[2.] From the beginning of my public ministry. The account he had already given of himself, he resolve to while by by: he had declared himself to be the Son of God, (ch. 5. 17.) to be the Christ, (ch. 4. 26.) and the Lord of life, and had propos'd himself, as it were, to be his Saviour, which is necessary to conviction, and to this he refers himself in an an-swer to their question. Christ is one with himself, what he had said from the beginning, he saith still. His is an everlasting gospel.

[3.] He refers himself to his Father's judgement, and the instructions he had from him; (ver. 26.) I have many things to say and to judge of you. But who should I trouble myself with any further with you? I know very well, that he who sent me, is true, and will stand by me, and bear me out, for I speak to the world (to which I am sent as an Ambassador) those things, all those, and those only, which I have heard of him.

Here,

1. He suppresses his accusations of them. He has many things to charge them with, and many evidences to produce against them, but for the present he had said enough. Note, Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, he that searches the heart has more to judge of us, 1 John 3. 20. How much better let sinners with sinners in this world, there is still a further reckoning yet behind, Deut. 32. 35. Let us learn hence not to be forward to reproach, or to proffer any thing we can say, even against the worst of men; we may have many things said against us by our enemies, which yet is better to be kept silent, for what is it to us?

2. He enters his appeal against them to his Father: he that sent me. Here two things comfort him.

First, That he had been true to his Father, and to the trust reposed in him: I speak to the world (for his gospel was to be preached to every creature) those things which I have heard of him; therefore given for a Witness to the people, (Isa. 55. 4.) he was, Amen, a faithful Witness, Rev. 3. 14. He did not conceal his doctrine, but spake it to the World: being of common concern, it was to be of common notice; nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the instructions he received from him that sent him.

Secondly, That his Father would be true to him; true to the promise, that he would make it work a sharp sword, true to his word, which was a decree, (Ps. 2. 7.) true to the threatening of his wrath against those that should reject him. Though he should not accurse them to his Father, yet the Father, who sent him, would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be true to what he had said, (Deut. 18. 19.) that whosoever would not hearken to that Prophet whom God sent, and raise up he would reject of him, his Father would not accurse them; "For," saith he, "he that sent me, is true, and will pass judgment on them, though I should not demand judgment against them.

Thus when he left, and the present persecution, he binds them over to the judgment day, when it will be too late to dispute what they will not now be persuaded to believe. 1. as a deaf man, heard not, for those will not hear, Ps. 14. 35. 36. Upon the words of the Saviour's discourse the evangelist has a melancholy remark; (ver. 27.) They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. See here, 1. The power of Satan to blind the minds of them who believe not. Though Christ spake so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand whom he meant, but thought he spake of some father he had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles and paradoxes to those who have no soul to be saved; in that the night are alike to the blind. 2. The reason why the threatenings of the word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners; it is because they understand not what the wrath is, that is revealed in them. When Christ told them of the truth of that sent him, as a warning to them to prepare for his judgment, which is according to truth, they slighted the warning, because they understood not what the judgment was, that they made themselves obnoxious to.

3. He refers himself to their own convictions hereafter, ver. 28, 29. He finds they will not understand him, and therefore adjourns the trial till further evidence should come in; they that will not see, they shall see, Isa. 6. 11. Now observe here,

[1.] When they should ere long be convinced of; Whether you will own it or no before men, you shall be made to know it in your own con-
First, the assurance which Christ had of his Father's presence with him, which included both a divine power going along with him to enable him for his work, and a divine favour manifested to him to encourage him in it. He that sent me is with me, Isa. 42. 1. Ps. 89. 21. This greatly embodies our faith in Christ and our reliance upon his word, that he had, and knew he had, his Father with him, to confirm the word of his Servant, Isa. 44. 26. The whole undertaking is called the mission of his Son, which he had come to execute his mission, and assist his management, and never left him alone, either solitary or weak; it also aggravated the wickedness of those that opposed him, and was an intimation to them of the prematurity they run themselves into by resisting him, for thereby they were found fighters against God. How easier soever they might think to crush him and run him down, let them know that he had one to back him, with whom it is the greatest madness that can be to contend.

Secondly, the ground of this assurance; For I do always those things that please him. That is, 1. That great affair which our Lord Jesus was continually engaged in, was an affair which the Father that sent him was highly well pleased with. His whole undertaking is called the pleasure of the Lord, Isa. 53. 10) because of the counsels of the eternal mind about it, and the completness of the eternal mind in it. 2. His management of that affair was in nothing displeasing to his Father; in executing his commission he punctually observed all his instructions, and did in nothing vary from them; no mere man since the fall could say such a word as this (Isa. 53. 10), that he who was to be God's Servant had not the management according to the counsels of the eternal mind about it, because we as was perfectly pure and spotless. We may likewise learn hence, that God's servants may expect God's presence with them, when they choose and do those things that please him, Isa. 56. 4, 5.

V. Here is the good effect which this discourse of Christ had upon some of his hearers; (v. 50.) To his disciples was there unlooked for a return of faith. Note. 1. Though multitudes perish in their unbelief, yet there is a remnant according to the election of grace, who believe to the saving of the soul. If Israel, the whole body of the people, be not gathered, yet there are those of them, in whom Christ will be glorious, Isa. 49. 5. This the apostle insists upon, to reconcile the Jews' rejection with the promises made unto their fathers. There is a remnant, Rom. 11. 5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his threaten-
ing words, are made effectual by the grace of God, to bring in poor souls to believe in him. When Christ told them that if they believed not, they should die in their sins, and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. i. 16, 18. Sometimes there is a wide door opened, and an effectual one, even there where there are many adversaries. Christ will carry on his work, though the heathen rage. The gospel gains great victories, sometimes, there where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage God's ministers to preach the gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labour in vain. Many, may be secretly brought home to God by those en- debted flesh, who are hardened, deceived and misled by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words, Usum, et, me, quoque multi credunt, non in me, sed mecum in eo—I wish that when I speak, many may believe, not on me, but with me on him.

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever cometh unto me, is the servant of sin. 35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed: but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

We have, in these verses,

I. A comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the spiritual liberty of Christ's disciples, intended for the encouragement of those Jews which believed. Christ, knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue began to arise in them, warned the proud Pharisees, and addressed himself to those weak believers; then when he had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief, then he spake comfort to those few feeble Jews which believed in him. See here, 1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that tremble at his word, and are ready to receive it; he has something to say to those who have hearing cars, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way, without speaking to them. 2. How carefully he cherishes the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming toward him. Those Jews that believed, were yet but weak; but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for he gathers the lambs in his arms. When faith is in its infancy, he has knees to prevent its breaths for it to sink, that it may not die from the ground.

In what he said to them, we have two things, which he saith to all that should at any time believe.

(1.) The character of a true disciple of Christ; If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. When they believed on him, as the great Prophet, they gave up themselves to be his disciples. Now, at their entrance into his school, he lays down this for a settled rule, that he would own none for his disciples but those that continued in his word.
of their liberty, and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. [2.] How foolish the application was. Christ had spoken of a liberty wherewith the truth would make men free, which must be meant of spiritual liberty, for truth, as it is the enriching, so it is the enfranchising, of the mind, and the enlarging of that from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead against the offer of spiritual liberty, that they were never in corporal thrall; as if because they were never in bondage to any man, they were never in bondage to any lust. Note, Carnal hearts are no less enslaved than those that molest the body, and distress their secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon their civil liberty and property; tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you very well, and can give you a sensible answer, the thing touches them, and affects them; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and a liberty by Christ; tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, and you bring certain strange things to their ears; they say of it, as they did, Ezek. 20. 49. Doth he not speak parables? This here was much like the blinder Nicodemus made about being born again.

III. Saviour’s vindication of his doctrine from those objections, and the further explanation of it, v. 34—37. where he does these four things.

1. He shews that, notwithstanding their civil liberties, and their visible church-membership, it was possible that they might be in a state of bondage; (v. 34.) Whosoever commits sin, though he be of Abraham’s seed, and never in bondage to any man, yet he is the servant of sin. Observe, Christ does not upbraid them with the falsehood of their plea, or their present bondage, but further explains what he had said for their edification. Thus ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may recover themselves, not with passion provoke them to entangle themselves yet more. Now here,

(4.) The preface is very solemn; Verily, verily, I say unto you, an awful asseveration, which our Saviour often used, to command a reverent attention and a ready assent. The style of the prophets was, Thus saith the Lord, for they were faithful as servants; but Christ, being a Son, speaks in his own name, I say unto you, I the Amen, the faithful Witness; he pawns his veracity upon it. “I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you.”

(2.) The truth is of universal concern, though here delivered upon a particular occasion: Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin, and sadly wants to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage.

[1.] See who it is on whom this brand is fastened — in him that committeth sin, and he is the servant of sin. There is not a just man upon earth, that lives, and sins not; yet every one that sins, is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that makes sin, that makes choice of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness; (Jer. 43. 16, 17.) that makes a covenant with sin, enters into league with it, and makes a marriage with it; that makes conformity with sin, and the communion of sin; that consorts with sin, and keeps fellowship with it, that practices and permits it; that brings in sin, and lives with sin, and makes sin the advantage of sin; that makes a custom of sin, that walks after the flesh, and makes a trade of sin.

[2.] See what the brand is, which Christ fastens upon them that thus commit sin—he stigmatizes them, gives them a mark of servitude. They are servants of sin; imprisoned under the guilt of sin, under an arrest, in held for it, condemned under sin, and they are subject to the power of sin. He is a
servant of sin, he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he has sold himself to work wickedness; his lusts give law to him, he is at his beck, and is not his own master. He does the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, Rom. 6. 16.

2. He saws them that being in a state of bondage, having a room in the house of God would not entitle them to the inheritance of sons: for (v. 33.) the servant, though he be in the house for a while, yet being but a servant, abideth in the house for ever; services (we say,) are no inheritances, they are but temporary, and not for a perpetuity; but the son of the family abideth ever. Now, (1.) This points primarily at the rejection of the Jewish church and nation. Israel had been God's son, his first-born; but they wickedly degenerate into a servile disposition, ensnared to the world and the flesh, and therefore, by virtue of their last birthright, thought they had the sonship of their church-membership. Christ tells them that having thus made themselves servants, they should not abide in the house for ever. Jerusalem, by opposing the gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai-covenant, which tended to bondage, after its term was expired, came to be in bondage with her children, (Gal. 4. 24, 25,) and therefore was unchurched and disfranchised, for liberty's sake. The bond-woman, whose sonship was cast out as the son of the bond-woman, Gen. 21. 10. Chrysostom gives this sense of this place, "Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church, which the Son had; but if the Son make you free, it is well," v. 36. But (2.) It looks further, to the rejection of all that are the servants of sin, and not receive not the adoption of the sons of God; though these unprofitable servants may be in God's house a while, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming, when the children of the bond-woman and of the free shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the promise and of the covenant, are accounted free, and shall abide for ever in the house, as Isaac: they shall have a seat in the holy place, on earth, (Heb. 10. 21,) and mansions in the holy place in heaven, ch. 14. 2.

3. He shews them the way of deliverance out of this state of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. 8. 21. The case of those that are the servants of sin, is sad, but thanks be to God it is not helpless, it is not hopeless. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the rest, thought they the house for ever; so he who is the Son, the First-born among many brethren, and the Heir of all things, he has a power both of manumission and of adoption; (v. 36.) If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Note. (1.) Jesus Christ in the gospel offers us our freedom; he has authority and power to make free. (1.) To discharge prisoners; this he does in justification, her charter satisfaction for our goods, on which the gospel-offer is grounded, which is to all a conditional act of indemnity, and to all true believers, upon their believing, an absolute charter of pardon; moreover he makes satisfaction for our debts, for which we were by the law arrested and in execution. Christ, as our Surety, or rather our Bail, (for he was not originally bound with us, but upon our insolvency bound for us,) compacts with the Creditor, answers the claim of all injured justice with more than an equivalent, takes the bond and judgment into his own hands, and gives them up cancelled to all that by faith and repentance give him (if I may so say) a counter security to save his honour harmless, and so they are made free; and from the debt, and every part thereof, they are for ever acquitted, exonerated, and discharged, and a general release sealed of all actions and claims; while against those who refuse to come up to these terms, the securities lie still in the Redeemer's hands, in full force. (2.) He has a power to rescue bondslaves, and this he does in sanctification; by the powerful arguments of his grace, and the powerful operation of his Spirit, he breaks the power of corruption in the soul, raffles the snares of sin and bondage, of reason and virtue, and confirms God's interest against sin and Satan, and so the soul is made free. (3.) He has a power to naturalize strangers and foreigners, and this he does in adoption. This is a further act of grace; we are not only forgiven and healed, but preferred, there is a charter of privileges as well as pardon, and thus the Son makes us free dispensers of the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, to whom Jesus was given.

(2.) Those whom Christ makes free, are free indeed. It is not "free," the word used, v. 31, for distinctions indeed, but free really. It notes, (1.) The truth and certainty of the promise; the liberty which the Jews boasted of, was an imaginary liberty, they boasted of a false gift; but the liberty which Christ gives, is a certain thing, it is real, and has real effects; the servants of sin promise themselves liberty, but they are intended for the slavery of the flesh, and have been delivered into the hands of sin, and are not free indeed; but those whom Christ makes free, v. 32. It notes the singular exclaiming of the freedom promised; it is a freedom that deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are no better than slaveries, so much does it turn to the honour and advantage of these that are made free but it is a glorious liberty. It notes that the power of the flesh is put down; therefore the liberty is real. (2.) It is a substance; (Rom. 8. 21,) while the things of the world are shadows, things that are not.

4. He applies this to these unbelieving church. In answer to their boasts of relation to Abra- ham; (v. 57.) "I know very well that ye are Abraham's seed, but now ye seek to kill me, and therefore have forfeited the honour of your relation to Abraham, because my word hath its place in you." Observe here, (1.) The dignity of their extraction allowed them; "I know that ye are Abraham's seed, every one knows it, and it is your honour." He grants them what was true, and in what they said that was false, (that they were never in bondage to any,) he does not controvert them, for he studied to fit them, and not to provoke them, and therefore said that Abraham would bless them; I know that ye are Abraham's seed. They boasted of their descent from Abraham, as that which aggrandized their names, and made them exceeding honourable, whereas really it did but aggravate their crimes, and make them exceeding sinful. Out of their own mouths will he judge vain-glorious hypocrites, who boast of their parentage and education; "Are ye Abraham's seed? Who then did you not treat in the stature of his faith and obedience?" (2.) The disagreeableness of their practice with this dignity: But ye seek to kill me. They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared, (v. 59,) when they took up stones to cast at him. Christ knows all the wickedness, not only which men do, but which they seek and design, and endeavour to do. To seek to kill any innocent man, is a crime black enough, but to contemn and imagine the death of him that was King of kings, is a crime which we want words to express the heinousness of.

(3.) The reason of this inconsistency; why were they that were Abraham's seed, so very invertebrate against Abraham's promised Seed, in whom they
Here Christ and the Jews are still at issue; he sets himself to convince and convert them, while they still set themselves to contradict and oppose him.

I. He here traces the difference between his sentiments and their's to a different rise and original; (ver. 38.) *I speak that which I have seen with my Father.* A parallel in nature and another world are not grounded upon guess and hearsay, but upon ocular inspection; so that he was thoroughly aspersed of the nature, and ascertained of the truth, of all he said. He that is given to be a Witness to the people, is an Eye-wit ness, and therefore unacceptable. (2.) It is what I have seen with my Father. The doctrine of Christ sets not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments, but it is an exact counterpart of the incontrovertible truths lodged in the eternal mind. It was not only what he had heard from his Father, but what he had seen with him, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Moses spake what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen he would not utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have seen what he spake, and to speak what he had seen.

II. Their doings were from hell; *Ye do that which ye have seen with your father.* Ye do, by your own works, father yourselves, for it is evident whom ye resemble, and therefore easy to find out your original. As a child that is trained up with his own father, learns his father's words and manners, and grows like him by an affected imitation as well as by a natural image, so these Jews, by their malignant opposition to Christ and the gospel, made themselves as like the devil as if they had indiscreetly set him before them for their pattern.

1. They pleaded relation to Abraham, and he replied to that plea. They said, Abraham is our father, ver. 39. In this they intended, (1.) To do honour to themselves, and to make themselves look great. They had forgotten the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them. (Deut. 28. 5.) a Sinar ready to perish was my father; and the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors (whose steps they tred in, and not those of the first founder of the family,) *thu father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite.* Ezek. 16. 3. As it is common for those families that are sinking and going to decay, to boast most of their pedigree, so is it common for these churches that are corrupt and depraved, to value themselves upon their antiquity, and the eminence of their first planters, *Futumus Trees, fuit Ilum—We have been Trojans, and there once was Troy.* (2.) They designed to cast an odium upon Christ, as if he reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, in speaking of their father, as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with him.

2. They overthrow this plea, and discovers the vanity of it by a plain and cogent argument; *Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but ye do not do Abraham's works, therefore ye are not Abraham's children.*

1. The proposition is plain; "If ye were Abra
hun's children, such children of Abraham as could
claim an interest in the covenant made with him and
his seed, which would indeed put an honour upon
you, then ye would do the works of Abraham, for to
those only of Abraham's house, who kept the way
of the Lord, as Abraham did, would God perform
what he had spoken, Gen. 18. 19. Those only are
reputed his children, who walk in the steps of his faith
and obedience, Rom. 4. 12. Though the Jews had their
genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not
by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as
to take the benefit of the old entail, (per for-
mum dom—according to the form of the gift,) un-
less they walked in the same spirit; good women's
relations and genealogies would avail them nothing.

2. Sojourners they were, as the Ishmaelites were;
they were not the sons of the bond-women, as the
Abraham's children were; nor begotten in incest, as the
Moabites and Ammonites were; (Deut. 23. 3.) nor were they
a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of
the Hebrews: and being born in happy Weld, they
might call God Father, who instituted that
honourable estate in innocency; for a legitimate
seed, not tainted with divorces or the plurality of
wives, is called a seed of God, Mal. 2. 13.

(2.) Others take it figuratively. They begin to
be aware now, that Christ spoke of a spiritual not a
carnal fatherhood, of the father of their religion:
and so,

1. They deny themselves to be a generation
of idolaters: "We are not born of formation, are not
the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been
in idolatry," &c. (1. Cor. 1. 12, as spoken of an
spiritual salvation, and idolatry as children of
whoredoms, Hos. 2. 4. 3. Isa. 57. 3.) Now if they
mean that they were not the posterity of idolaters,
the allegation was false; for no nation was
more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before
the captivity; if they mean no more than that they
themselves were not idolaters, what then? A
man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another
sin, and be shut out of Abraham's covenant. If
they commit no idolatry, (apply it to this spiritual
formation,) yet if they kill, they are become a
transgressor of the covenant. A rebellious prodigal
son will be disinherited, though he be not born of
formation.

(2.) They boast themselves to be true worshippers
of the true God. We have not many fathers, as
the heathen had, gods many, and lords many,
and yet were without God as Figurative son of
the people has many fathers, and yet none certain:
no, the Lord our God is one Lord and one Father,
and therefore it is well with us. Note, Those
flatter themselves, and put a damming cheat upon
their own souls, who imagine that their professing of the
true religion, and worshipping of the true God, will
save them, though they worship not God in spirit
and in truth, nor are true to their profession, even
in some obscure place, (v. 42, 43.) and proves, by two arguments,
that they had no right to call God Father.

First, They did not love Christ; If God were
your Father, you would love me. He had dis-
proved their relation to Abraham by their going
about to kill him; (v. 46.) but here he disproofs
their relation to Christ, and gives them to under-
stand, A man may pass for a child of Abraham, if
he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross
sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God, unless
he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note,
All that have God for their Father, have a true love
to Jesus Christ, an esteem of his person, a grateful
sense of his love, a sincere affection to his cause
and kingdom, a complacency in the salvation wrought
out by him, and in the method and terms of it,
and a care to keep his commandments, which is the
so to explain himself; which teaches us to treat
even bad men with civility and respect, and not to
be forward to say that of them, or to them, which,
though true, sounds harsh. He tried whether they
would suffer their own consciences to infer from what
he said, that they were the devil's children; and it
is better to hear it from them now that we are cal-
ing, for it will be worse the day of our change our father, and change
our family, by changing our own way, than
hear it from Christ in the great day.

2. So far were they from owning their unworth-
iness of relation to Abraham, that they plead relation
to God himself as their father; "We are not born
of formation, we are not bastards, but legitimate
sons; we have one Father, even God."

(3.) They claim to have been Abraham's children
literally. They were
not the children of the bond-women, as the
Ishmaelites were; nor begotten in incest, as the
Moabites and Ammonites were; (Deut. 23. 3.) nor were they
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[40.]
[41.]
I. He was the Son of God; I proceeded forth from God. *Exod.* this means his divine ។, or original from the Father, by the communication of the divine essence, and also the union of the divine գ, to his human nature; so Dr. Whibley. Now this could not but recommend him to the affections of all that were born of God. Christ is called the Beloved, because, being the beloved of the Father, he is certainly the Beloved of all the saints, Eph. 1. 6.

II. He was sent of God, came from him as an Ambassador to the world of mankind. He did not come of himself, as the false prophets, who had not either their mission or their message from God, Jer. 23. 21. Observe the emphasis he lays upon this, I came from God, and not of myself, but he sent me: he had both his credentials and his instructions from God; he came to gather together in one the children of God, (ch. 11. 52.) to bring many sons to glory, Heb. 2. 10. And would not all God's children embrace with both arms a messenger sent from their Father on such errands? But these Jews made it appear that they were nothing akin to God, by their enmities, their malignities, their poison, their venom, their hatred, and all the other signatures of the devil. (C.) You will do the devil's lusts. The more there is of the will in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed of choice, and not by surprise, with pleasure, and not with reluctance, when it is persisted in with a daring presumption and a desperate resolution, like their's that said, We have loved strangers, and not the children of the covenant, Jer. 3. 13, then the sinner will do the devil's lusts. "The lusts of your father you delight to do," so Dr. Hammond; they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

2. By two particular instances, wherein they manifestly resembled the devil—murder and lying. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life, and life is the happiness of man; and an enemy to truth, because God is the God of truth, and truth is the bond of human society.

(1.) He was a murderer from the beginning, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first estate, which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostacy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was גֹּזֵר-רַשָּׁה—הומְיָרָה—a man-slayer: [1] He was a hater of man, and so in afflicting and disposing of mankind, he was a murderer of him. He has his name Satan, from סָדָן—Hatred. He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the whole race. [2] He was man's tempter to that sin which brought death into the world, and so he was effectually the murderer of all mankind, which in Adam had but one estate, good, for all the sons of men, being sons of Adam, were sons of God. He does not go out of man, but into him, and by it slay them; (Rom. 7. 11.) poisoned man with the forbidden fruit, and, to aggravate the matter, made him his own murderer. Thus he was not only at the beginning, but from the beginning, which intimates that thus he has been

III. Having thus disproved their relation both to Abraham and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly that they were as enemies to Christ as to Adam; they were not the children of God, but the children of the devil, v. 44. If they be not God's children, they are the devil's, for God and Satan divide the world of mankind; the devil is therefore said to work in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. All wicked people are the devil's children, children of Belial, (2 Cor. 6. 15.) the serpent's seed, (Gen. 3. 15.) children of the wicked one, Matt. 13. 38. They make God's name vain, and disobey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters said to a stock, Thou art my father, Jer. 2. 57.

This is a high charge, and sounds very harsh and horrid, that any of the children of men, especially the church's children, should be called children of the devil, and therefore our Saviour fully proves it.

1. By a general argument: The lusts of your father you will do, says our Saviour. (C.) You will do the devil's lusts, the lusts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and please him, and comply with his temptations, and are led captives by him at his will: nav, you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils. Fleshly lusts and worldly lusts the devil tempts men to; but, being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are propagation of his species, and that by false and wicked arts, his innovations upon the words and powers, and their corrupt reasonings; pride and envy, and wrath and malice; eminently to that which is good, and enticing others to that which is evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils, and these who are under the dominion of these lusts, resemble the devil, as the child does the parent. The more there is of contemplation, and contrivance, and secret complacency, in sin, the more it becomes the mark of the devil. (C.) You will do the devil's lusts. The more there is of the will in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed of choice, and not by surprise, with pleasure, and not with reluctance, when it is persisted in with a daring presumption and a desperate resolution, like their's that said, We have loved strangers, and not the children of the covenant, Jer. 3. 13, then the sinner will do the devil's lusts. "The lusts of your father you delight to do," so Dr. Hammond; they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

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ever since; as he began, so he continues, the murder of men by his temptations. The great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil, the angel of death. [3.] He was the first wheel in the first murder that ever was committed by Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, 1 John 3. 12. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have done such an unnatural thing as to kill his own brother. Cain killing his brother by the instigation of the devil, the devil is called the murderer, which does not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments, we have reason to think, will be the greater when the time comes, for all that wickedness which he has drawn men into. See what mischief the devil is ever doing against the wheels of the devil, and never to hearken to him, (for he is a murderer, and certainly aims to do mischief, even when he speaks fair,) and to wonder that he who is the murderer of the children of men, should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master.

Now herein these Jews were followers of him, and murderers like him; murderers of souls, which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the children of hell; sworn enemies to Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murderers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. These Jews were that seed of the serpent, that were to bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman; Now ye seek to kill me.

12. He was a liar. A lie is opposed to truth, (1 John 2. 22,) and, accordingly, the devil is here described to be,

1. An enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ.
   First, He is a deserter from the truth; he abode not in the truth, did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness, he departed from truth, for his apostasy was founded in a lie. The angels were the hosts of the Lord; those that fell, were not true to their Commander and Sovereign, they were not to be trusted, being charged with folly and delusion, Job 4. 18. By the truth here we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth of which Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed; herein they did like their father the devil, who, seeing the honour put upon the human nature in the first Adam, and foreseeing the much greater honour intended it in the second Adam, would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, nor stand in the truth concerning it, but, from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it; and so did these Jews here, as his children and agents.

Secondly, He is destitute of the truth; There is no truth in him. His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary, being a sworn enemy in it. His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary, being a sworn enemy in it. His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary, being a sworn enemy in it.

2. He is a friend and patron of lying; When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own. Three things are here said of the devil, with reference to the sin of lying.

First, That he is a liar; his oracles were lying oracles, his prophecies lying prophecies, and the images in which he was worshipped, teachers of lies: he tempted our first parents with a doubtful lie; all his temptations are carried on by lies, calling evil good, and good evil, and promising impunity in sin; in which he knows them to be lies, and suggests them with an intention to deceive, and so to destroy. When he now contradicted the gospel in the Sarvets and Pharsars, it was by lies, and when afterward he corrupted it in the name of sin, it was by strong delusions, and a great complicated lie.

Secondly, That when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, is τις του φησιν. It is the proper object of his persuasions, but when he speaks a lie, the model of it is of his own framing, the motives to it from himself, which speaks the desperate depth of wickedness into which these apostate spirits are sunk, as in their first defection they had no tempter, they are their own. That is his character.

Thirdly, That he is the father of every lie; not only of the lies which he himself suggests, but of those which others speak; he is the author and founder of all lies; when men speak lies, they speak from him, and as his mouth, they come originally from him, and bear his image. 2. He is the father of every lie; so it may be understood. God did not create a lie in the world, but gave to it a deep stir to truth, it is congruous to reason and natural light, to the order of our faculties, and the laws of society, that we should speak truth; but the devil, the author of sin, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, has so corrupted the nature of man, that the wicked are said to be estranged from the womb, speaking lies; (Ps. 58. 3,) he has taught them with their tongues to use deceit, Rom. 3. 15. He is the father of every lie, in the other sense, who begat them, who truths them up in the way of lying, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all liars shall have their portion for ever. Christ having thus proved all murderers and all liars to be the devil's children, he leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say,

Then art thou the man.

But he comes in the following verses to assist them in the application of it to themselves; he does not call them liars, but shews them that they were no friends to truth, and therein resembled him who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in them.

Two things he charges upon them.

1. That they would not believe the word of truth, (v. 45.) ελθεις ἀπόλυτος, διδάσκαλος λόγων, καὶ σωτήριον μοι. Two ways it may be taken. (1.) Ye thought I was the truth, yet ye will not believe me, (υ. 29.) Though he gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to the children of men, yet they would not believe that he told them the truth. Now was truth fallen in the street, and could not enter, Isa. 39. 14, 15. The greatest truths with some gained not the least credence; for they rebelled against the light, Job 24. 15. Or, (2.) Because ye believe me not. They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some unpleasing truths, which they did not care to hear of; told them the truth concerning themselves and their own case, shewed them their faces in a glass that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he said. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of divine truth is become a torment.

Now, to shew them the unreasonableableness of their infidelity, he condescends to put the matter to this fair issue, v. 46. He and they being contrary, either he was in an error or they were. Now take it either way.

1. If he were in an error, why did not they confess him? The falsehood of pretending prophets was discovered either by the ill tendency of their doctrines, (Deut. 13. 2,) or by the ill tenor of their conversation; Ye shall know them by their fruits;
but (saith Christ) which of you, you of the Sanhedrim, that take upon you to judge of prophets, which of you convictest me of sin? They accused him of some of the worst of crimes—gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and what not. But they were all malicious groundless calumnies, and such as even he that knew him, knew to be utterly false. When they had done their utmost by trick and artifice, subornation and perjury, to prove some crime upon him, the very judge that condemned him, owned he found no fault in him.

The sin he here challenges them to convict him of, is, First, An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard him announce death and sword to come, and from any thing in it absurd or unworthy to be believed, any contradiction, either of himself or of the scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners insinuated by his doctrine? ch. 18. 20. Or, Secondly, An incongruous conversation. "Which of you can justly charge me with any thing, in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet? See the wonderful condensation of our Lord Jesus, that he demanded not credit any further than the allowed motives of credibility support his demands. See Jer. 2. 5. 31. Mic. 6. 3. Ministers may from hence learn, 1. To walk so circumspectly, as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convict them of sin, that the ministry be not blamed. The only way not to be convicted of sin, is, not to sin. 2. To be willing to admit a scrutiny; though we are confident in many things that stand right, yet we should be willing to have it tried whether we be not in the wrong. See Job 6. 24.

[2.] If they were in an error, why were they not convinced by him? "If I say the truth, why do you not believe me? If you cannot convict me of error, you must own that I say the truth, and why do you not then give me credit?" Why will you not deal with me faithfully? We not of the christian religion, because we would not indeed be of any, and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

2. Another thing charged upon them, is, that they would not hear the words of God; (v. 47.) which further shews how groundless their claim of relation to God was. Here is,

(1.) A doctrine laid down; He that is of God, heareth God's words; that is, [1.] He is willing and ready to hear them, is sincerely desirous to know what the mind of God is, and cheerfully embraces whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and such an agreeableness with, all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did, with, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Let the word of the Lord come. [2.] He apprehends and discerns them, he so hears them, as to perceive the voice of God in them, which the natural man does not, 1 Cor. 2. 14. He that is of God, is soon aware of the discoveries he makes of himself, of the nearness of his name; (Ps. 75. 1.) as they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and open to him immediately, (Luke 12. 36.) as the sheep know the voice of their shepherd, to come to the green pastures, and the still waters. (Ps. 23.)

(2.) The application of this doctrine, for the conviction of these unbelieving Jews; Ye therefore hear him not; that is, Ye heed not, ye understand not, ye believe not, the words of God, nor care to hear them, because ye are not of God. Your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God, is a plain evidence that ye are not of God." It is in his word that God manifests himself, and is present among us; we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are well or ill affected to his word; see 2 Cor. 4. 18. Or, their not being of God, was the reason why they did not profitably hear the words of God which Christ spake; therefore they did not understand and believe him, not because the things themselves were obscure, or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were not of God, were not born again. If the word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is in the hearers, not in the seed. (Matt. 13. 23.)

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is,

1. The malice of hell breaking out in the base language which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord Jesus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine, and had made vicious remarks upon that; but, now he was upon the point of manifesting himself. They appear by the parable of the souls, Matt. 13. 3, 36. 49. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is,

1. That he was a Samaritan, that is, that he was an enemy to their church and nation, one that they hated, and could not endure. Thus they exposed all to the ill-will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name, than to call him a Samaritan. If he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the beating of the rebels, (as they called it,) for coming into the temple. They had often called him a Galilean—a mean man; but, as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have him a Samaritan—a bad man. The Jews to this day call the Christians, in approbation of the Samaritans. Note, Great endeavours have in all ages been used to make good people edious by putting them under black characters, and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry, which is once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ justly inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that he aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at its reformation, and was failing away to the Samaritans.

(2.) That he had a devil. Either, [1.] That he was in league with the devil; having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, [2.] That he was possessed with a devil, that he was a melanchooly man, whose brain was clouded, or a mad man, whose brain was heated, and that which he said was no more to be believed than the extravagant rambles of a distracted man, or one in a delirium. Thus the divine revelation of those things which are above the dis
covered of reason, have been often branded with the charge of enthusiasm, and the prophet was called a mad fellow, 2 Kings 9. 11. Hosea 9. 7. The inspiration of the Pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a wonder in men's eyes that lived in heathen lands; but it was not in their own hearts, but that which was truly divine was not so. Wisdom is justified of her children, as wisdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion; Say we not well that thou art so? One would think that his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of him; but, on the contrary, they denied the very doctrine of that, their hearts were more hardened, and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves on their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken better than when they spoke the worst they could of Jesus Christ. These have arrived at the highest pitch of wickedness, who avow their impurity, repeat what they should retract, and justify themselves in that for which they ought to condemn themselves. It is bad to say and do ill, but it is worse to stand to it; I do well to be angry. When Christ spake with so much boldness against the sins of the great men, and thereby incensed them against him, they who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual, concluded him beside himself, for they thought that none but a madman would lose his preference, and hazard his life, for his religion and conscience.

11. Here is the meekness and meekness of Heaven shining in Christ's reply to this vile calumny, ch. 49. 50.

1. He denies their charge against him; I have not a devil; as Paul, (Acts 26. 23.) I am not mad. The imputation is unjust; "I am neither actuated by a devil, nor in compact with one," and this he evidenced by what he did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a Samaritan, because it was a calumny that disproved itself, it was a personal reflection, and not worth taking notice of; but saying he had a devil, reflected on his commission, and therefore he answered that. St. Augustine gives this descent upon his not saying anything to their calling him a Samaritan—that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, Luke 10. 35.

2. He asserts the sincerity of his own intentions; But I honour my Father. They suggested that he took undue honours to himself, and derogated from the honour due to God only, both which he denies here, in saying that he made it his business to honour his Father, and him only. It also proves that he had not a devil, for, if he had, he would not honour God. Note, They who can truly say that they make it their constant care to honour God, are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

3. He complains of the wrong they did him by their calumnies; Ye do dishonour me. By this it appears that, as Man, he had a tender sense of the disgrace and indignity done him, reproach was a stinging wound to his heart, and they underwrite it. It is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son, yet there are many that dishonour him; such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honoured his Father so as never man did, and yet was himself dishonoured so as never man was; for though God has promised that those who honour him he will honour, he never promised that men should honour them.

4. He clears himself from the imputation of vainglory, in saying this concerning himself, v. 50. See here.

(1.) His contempt of worldly honour; I seek not mine own glory. He did not aim at that in what he had said of himself, or against his persecutors; he did not court the applause of men, nor covet preferment in the world, but inhumanly declined both. He did not seek his own glory distinct from his Father's, nor had any separate interest of his own. For men to search their own glory, is not glory indeed, (Prov. 27. 25.) but their shame rather, to be too much out in their aim. This comes in here as a reason why Christ made so light of their reproaches; "You do dishonour me, but cannot disturb me, shall not dishonour me, for I seek not mine own glory." Note, Those who are dead to men's praise, can safely bear their contempt.

(2.) His endearing the Father's honour; There is one that seeketh and judgeth. In two things Christ made it appear that he sought not his own glory; and here he tells us what satisfied him as to both. [1.] He did not court men's respect, but was indifferent to it, and in reference to this he saith, "There is one that seeketh, that will secure and advance, my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it." Note, God will seek their honour, that do not seek their own; for before honour is humility.

[2.] He did not revenge men's affronts, but was unconcerned at them, and in reference to this he saith, "There is one that judgeth, that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it." Probably, he refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the nation of the Jews for the indignities they did to the Lord Jesus. See Ps. 38. 13-15. I heard not, for thou wilt hear. If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our amends is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants and patient expectants, we shall find, to our comfort, there is one that judgeth.

51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom maketh thou thyself? 54. Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56. Your father Abra- ham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Je- sus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

In these verses, we have,

I. The doctrine of the immortality of believers laid down, v. 51. It is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, Verily, verily, I say unto you, which commands both attention and assent, and this
is it he saith, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Where we have,

The character of a believer: he is one that keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus, ἐξερέαστα τοῦ λεγόντος—my word; that word of mine which I have delivered to you; this we must not only receive, but keep; not only have, but hold. We must keep it in mind and memory, keep it in love and affection, so keep it as in nothing to violate it, or go contrary to it, keep it without spot, (1 Tim. 6. 14.) keep it as a trust committed to us, keep in it as our way, keep to it as our rule.

The privilege of a believer: He shall by no means see death for ever; so it is in the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from the stroke of death, no, even the children of the Most High must die like men, and the followers of Christ have been, more than other men, in deaths often, and killed all the day long; how then is this promise made good, that they shall not see death? Ans. (1.) The promise of death is so altered to them, that they do not see it as death, they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight does not terminate in death, as their's does who live by sense; no, they look so clearly, so comfortably, through death, and beyond death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side death, that they overlook death, and see it not. (2.) The power of death is so broken, that though there is no remedy, but they must see death, yet they shall not see death for ever. They shall see death, and the day will come when death shall be swallowed up in victory. (3.) They are perfectly delivered from eternal death, shall not be hurt of the second death. That is the death especially meant here, that death which is for ever, which is opposed to everlasting life, this they shall never see, for they shall never come into condemnation; they shall have their everlasting lot where there will be no more death, where they cannot die any more, Luke 20. 36. Though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it too, yet they shall shortly be there where it will be seen no more for ever, Exod. 14. 13.

The Jews' cavil at this doctrine. Instead of having held on this precious promise of immortality, which the nature of man has an ambition of; (who is there that does not love life, and dread the sight of death?) they lay hold on this occasion to reproach him, and make him to them so kind an offer, saith, I knew that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead. Observe here, 1. Their railing: "Now we know that thou hast a devil, that thou art a madman; thou ravest, and sayest that thou knowest not what." See how these swine trampled under the feet the precious pears of gospel-promises. If now at last they had evidence to prove him mad, why did they say, (v. 48.) before they had that proof, Thou hast a devil? But this is the method of malice, first to fasten an invidious charge, and then to fish for evidence of it; Now we knew that thou hast a devil. If he had not abundantly proved himself a Teacher come from God, his promises of immortality to his acedulous followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity itself would have imputed them to a crazed fancy; but they were confirmed in it, and the Jewish religion taught them to expect such a Prophet, and to believe in him; for them therefore thus to reject him, was to abandon that promise to which their twelve tribes hoped to come, Acts 26. 7.

2. Their reasoning, and the colour they had to run him down thus. In short, they look upon him as a prophet; they look upon him as one that made himself greater than Abraham and the prophets; Abraham is dead, and the prophets they are dead too; very true, by the same token that these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. Now, (1.) It is true, Abraham and the prophets were great men, great in the favour of God, and great in the esteem of all good men. (2.) It is true, they kept God's sayings, and were obedient to them; and yet, (3.) It is true, they died, they never pretended to have, much less to give infinite life, but every one in his own order was gathered to his people. It was their honour that they died in faith, but die they must. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead? They have tracked the way through that darksome valley, which should reconcile us to death, and help us to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks lightly of death, when he saith, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste death. Tasting death means the same thing with seeing it; and well may death be represented as grievous to several of the senses, which is the destruction of them all. Now their argu ing goes upon two mistakes:

[1.] They understood Christ of an immortality in this world, and that was a mistake. In the sense that Christ spake, it was not true that Abraham and the prophets were dead, for God is still the God of Abraham, and the God of the holy prophets; (Rev. 22. 6.) now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and, as Christ meant it, they had not seen no tasted death.

[2.] They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets. whereas they could not but know that the Messiah was greater than Abraham or any of the prophets, who did virtuously, but he excelled them all; nay, they borrowed their greatness from him. It was the honour of Abraham, that he was the Father of the Messiah, and the honour of the prophets, that they testified beforehand concerning him; so that he certainly obtained a far more excellent name than they. Therefore instead of infringing from Christ's making himself greater than Abraham, that he had a devil, they should have inferred from his proving himself so, (by doing the works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did,) that he was the Christ; but their eyes were blinded.

They scornfully asked, Whom maketh thou thyself? As if he had been guilty of pride and vainglory; whereas he was so far from making himself greater than Abraham, that he emptied himself, his own glory, emptied himself, and made himself less than he was, and was the greatest Example of humility that ever was.

III. Christ's reply to this cavil; still he vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. No doubt, he could have struck them dumb or dead upon the spot, but this was the day of his patience.

1. In his answer he insists not upon his own testimony concerning himself, but waves it as not sufficient or conclusive; (v. 54.) If I honour myself, my honour is nothing, κακὸν ἐγκαθίσταται; if I glorify myself. Note, Self-honour is no honour; and the affectation of glory is both the fornication and the defiance of it; it is not glory, (Prov. 23. 27.) but so great a reproach, that there is no sin which men are more ingenuously glad to hide than this; even he that most affects praise, would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a mere chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is called vain-glory. Self-admirers are self-deceivers. Our Lord Jesus was not one that honoured himself, as they represented him; he was crowned by him who is the Fountain of honour, and glorified not himself to be made a High-Priest, Heb. 5. 5.

2. But he refers himself to his Father, God; and to their father, Abraham.

(1.) To his Father, God; It is my Father the
honoureth me. By this he means, [1.] That he derived from his Father all the honour he now claimed; he had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his word, all which put an honour upon him, but it was the Father that had helped upon him, that burdened all his sins in him, that sustained him, and sealed him, and sent him into the world to receive all the honours due to the Messiah, and all the delight in the world, which he had himself purchased, and all for the Father before the world was. He named it at an advancement with the Father, and the Father said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I have well pleased to dwell. He was the Father's Son, and he was to be given him. Phil. 2:6, 9. Note, Christ and all that are his depend upon God for their honour; and he that is sure of honour where he is known, cares not though he be slighted where he is in disguise.

Appealing to this often to his Father, and his Father's testimony of him, which yet the Jews did not admit or give credit to,

First, He here takes occasion to shew the reason of his being so sure of his own honour, notwithstanding this testimony — and that was, their unacknowledgedness with God; as if he had said, "But why should I talk to you of my Father's honouring me, when he is one you know nothing of? You say of him, that he is your God, yet you have not known him." Where observe,

1. The profession they made of relation to God; "Ye say that he is your God, the God ye have chosen. You could not have chosen a better God than Israel; but all are not so indeed, that are of Israel," Rom. 9:6. Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God, and say that he is their's, who yet have no just cause to say so. They who called themselves the temple of the Lord, having professed the excellency of Jacob, did but trust in lying words. What will it avail us to say, He is our God, if we be not in sincerity his profest, nor such as he will own?

2. Their ignorance of him, and estrangement from him, notwithstanding this profession; Yet ye have not known him. (1.) Ye know him not at all. These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions concerning things foreign and trifling, that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who wasted people to cursed God's name by their dreams. Jer. 23:27. Or, (2.) Ye know him not aright, but mistake concerning him; and that is as bad as not knowing him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtly concerning God, and yet may think him such a one as themselves, and not know him. Ye say that he is your's, and it is natural to us to desire to know our own, yet ye know him not. Note, There are many who may be said to be near to God, and to have no distant from him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of, and to erect with; but for the nature of God, his attributes and perfections, and relations to his creatures, they know nothing of the matter; we speak this to their shame. 1 Cor. 15:34. Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves, with a titular relation to an unknown God.

This Christ changes upon the Jews here. [1.] To show how vain and groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. "Ye say that he is your's, but ye give yourselves the lie, for it is plain that you do not know him;" and we reckon that a cheat is effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to. [2.] To shew the true reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles. They knew not God, and therefore perceived not the image of God, nor the voice of God in Christ. Note, The reason why most of the world are strangers to Christ, because they have not the knowledge of God. Men therefore submit not to the righteousness of Christ, because they are ignorant of God's righteousness, Rom. 10:3. "They that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, are put together, 2 Thess. 1:8.

Secondly, He gives them the reason of his assurance, that his Father would honour him and own him; But I know him; and again, I know him; which bespeaks, not only his acquaintance with him, having him in his bosom, but his confidence in him, to stand by him, and bear him out in his whole undertaking; as was prophesied concerning him; (Isa. 50, 7, 8.) "I know that I shall not be ashamed, for He is near that justifies me;" and as Paul, I know whom I have believed, Tit. 1:13. I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the cause which I know to be his own." Observe,

1. How he professes his knowledge of his Father, with the greatest certainties, as one that was neither afraid, nor ashamed to own it. If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you. He never differed from the Jews, and to avoid their reproaches, and prevent further trouble; nor would he retract what he had said, nor confess himself either deceived or a deceiver; if he should, he would be found a false witness against God and himself. Note. They who disown their religion and relation to God, as Peter, are liars, as much as hypocrites are, who pretend to know him when they do not. See 1 Tim. 6:13, 14.

Mr. Clark observes well upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us.

2. How he proved his knowledge of his Father; I know him and keep his sayings or his word. Christ, as Man, was obedient to the moral law, and, as Redeemer, to the mediatorial law; and in both he kept his Father's word, and his own word with the Father. Christ requires of us, (v. 31.) that we keep his sayings; and he has set before us a copy of obedience, a copy without a blemish, he kept his Father's sayings; well might he who learned obedience, teach it; see Heb. 5, 8, 9. Christ by this evidences that he knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to him. Those only know God aright, that keep his word; it is a ruled case, 1 John 2:5. Whereby we know that we know him, (and do not only fancy it,) if we keep his commandments.

(2.) Christ refers them to their father, when they boasted so much of a relation to, and that was Abraham, and this closes the discourse.

[1.] Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of him, and respect to him; (v. 36.) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. And by this he means, that he was not at all out of the way, when he made himself greater than Abraham.

Two things he here speaks of as instances of that patriarch's respect to the promised Messiah.

First, The ambition he had to see his day; he rejoiced, 8:57.—he leaped at it. The word, though it commonly signifies rejoicing, must here signify a transport of desire rather than delight, otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tolerancy; he saw it, and was glad. He reached out, or stretched himself forth, that he might see my day.
As Zaccheus, that ran before and climbed the tree, to see Jesus. The notices he had received of the Messiah to come, had raised in him an expectation of something great, which he earnestly longed to know more of. The dark intimation of that which is considerable, puts men upon inquiry, and makes them earnestly ask Who? and What? and Where? and When? and How? And thus the prophets of the Old Testament, having a general idea of a grace that was to be manifested, and of a Redeemer to be provided; (1 Pet. 1:10;) and Abraham was as industrious herein as any of them. God told him of a land that he would give his posterity, and of the wealth and honour he designed them; (Gen. 15. 14.) but he never leaped thus to see that day, as he did to see the day of the Son of man. He could not look with so much indifference upon the promised Seed as he did upon the psionic seed of Abraham; (Gen. 15.) and especially after Christ's day, though it was at a great distance; but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, nor bid it welcome when it came. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love and long for, carnal hearts dread and loathe.

Secondly, The satisfaction he had in what he did see of it; He saw it, and was glad. Observe here, 1. How astonished Abraham was by the glorious design of Christ; he longed to see Christ's day, and he saw it. Though he saw it not so plainly and fully and distinctly as we now see it under the gospel, yet he saw something of it, more afterward than he did at first. Note, To him that has, and to him that asks, shall be given; to him that asks and improves what he has, and that desires and prays for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? (1.) Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world. The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions this sense of it, and does not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ will be fully satisfied, when they come to heaven, and not till then. But, (2.) It is most probably of the sight he had of Christ's day in this world. They that received not the promises yet saw them after off. Heb. 11. 13. Balaam saw Christ, but not now, not nigh. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day, for his own private satisfaction, which is not, nor must be, recorded in his story, like that of Daniel's, which must be when he is, and stated, into the time of the end. Dan. 12. 4. Christ knew what Abraham saw better than Moses did. But there are divers things recollected, in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see, than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchisedek, one made like unto the Son of God, and a priest for ever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, and stated, into the time of the end. In the prevalence of his intercession for Sodom he seems to see Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel-day, which is Christ's day, for these things were an allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great Sacrifice; and his calling the place Jehovah-jireh, It shall be seen, intimates that he saw something more in it than others did, which he could produce; and in making his servant put his hand under his thigh, when he swore, he had a regard to the Messiah.

3. How Abraham entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bid them welcome; he saw, and was glad. He was glad of what he saw of God's favour to himself, and glad of what he foresaw of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah; (Gen. 17. 16, 17.) for that was not contrary to the promise. It was after he had seen in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it filled him with joy unspeakable. Thus he embraced the promises. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day will put gladness into the heart. No joy like the joy of faith: we are never acquainted with true pleasure, till we are acquainted with Christ.

[2.] That the Jew's, if at this, and reproach him. (Gen. 17. 8.) Thou art not yet fifty years old. They might as well have said, Thou art not forty; for he was now but thirty-two, or thirty-three years old. As to this, Irenaeus, one of the first fathers, with this passage supports the tradition which says he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for, Advers. Heres. lib. 2. cap. 39. 40. See what little credit is to be given to tradition; and as to this here, the Jews speak at random; some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought he was far enough short of; he did not look to be forty, but they were sure he could not be fifty, much less contemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty, (Num. 4. 47.) so that they mean no more than, Thou art not to be reckoned an old man; many of us are much thy seniors, and yet pretension not to be old men. But the Apostle's argument was, his countenance was so altered with grief and watching, that, together with the gravity of his aspect, it made him look like a man of fifty years old; his visage was so marred, Isa. 52. 14.

[3.] Our Saviour gives an effectual answer to this cau, by a solemn assertion of his own seniority even to Abraham himself, (v. 58.) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am; and before Abraham was made or born, I am. The change of the word is observable, and speaks Abraham a creature, and himself the Creator; well therefore might he make himself the Mediator of the promise to Abraham; before Abraham was, I am; First, as God, I am; and the name of God; (Exod. 3. 14.) it speaks his self-existence; he does not say, I was, but, I am, for he is the First and the Last, inmutably the same; (Rev. 1. 8.) thus he was not only before Abraham, but before all worlds, Prov. 8. 23. ch. 1. 2. Secondly, As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah, long before Abraham; the Law was from the foundation of the world; (Rev. 13. 8.) the channel of conveyance of light, life, and love, from God to man. This supposes his d
18. They now thought they had him sure, and yet he passed through the midst of them, either their eyes being blinded, or their hands tied, and thus he left them as, like a lion disappointed of his prey. But, from the examination of his prudent provision for his own safety, whom he knew his work was not done, nor his testimony finished; thus he gave an example to his own rule, When they persecute you, in one city, flee to another; nay, if occasion be, to a wilder-ness, for so Elijah did, (1 Kings 19. 3, 4.) and the woman, the church, Rev. 12. 6. When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, he could have commanded the fixed stones, which did ever one out of the wall against his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them; thus he chose to accommodate himself to the state he was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers, without a miracle. (3.) It was a righteous deserting of those who (worse than the Gibeonites, who forced him to depart) stoned him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those who bid him be gone. Christ did again visit the temple after this; as one bethathat do, but after he abandoned it for ever, and left it desolate. Christ now went through the midst of the Jews, and none of them counted his stay, or stirred up themselves to take hold on him, but were even content to let him go. Note, God never forsakes any till they have first provoked him to withdraw, and will have none of him. Calvin observes, that these chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves on the possession they kept of it: "But," (says he,) "those deceive themselves, who are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken. Longe falsitatur, cam templum, si habeat Deo vacuum." When Christ left them, it is said that he passed by silently and unobserved; qui nescit, so that they were not aware of him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul, are often secret, and not soon taken notice of. And the kingdom of God comes not, so it goes not with observation. See Judg. 16. 20. Samuel said not that the Lord was departed from him. Thus it was with these forsaken Jews,—God left them, and they never missed him.

CHAP. IX.

After Christ's departure out of the temple, in the close of the foregoing chapter, therefore we here record in this chapter, what was recorded in that chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country; it is supposed about two or three months; in which interval of time Dr. Lightfoot and other harmonists place all the passages that occur from Luke 16. 17. to Luke 18. 17. What is recorded, chapter 7. and 8. were at the feast of tabernacles in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter, was at the feast of dedication, in December; chapter 10. 22. Mr. Clarke and others place this last into the beginning of the following; but in this chapter, we have, I. The miraculous cure of a man that was born blind, v. 1. 7. II. The discourse which were occasioned by it. 1. A discourse of the neighbours among themselves, the Pharisees and the Phari-ssees, v. 13. 34. 3. Between Christ and the poor man, v. 35. 38. 4. Between Christ and the Pharisees, v. 39. ad finem—unto the end.

1. AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man...
can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

We have here sight given to a poor beggar that had been blind from his birth. Observe 1. The case was such that it took of the piteous case of this poor blind man; (v. 1.) As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. The first words seem to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance their opinion, who in the harmony place this story immediately after that. There it was said, απεστη λαίτως ἀματὸς, and here, without so much as repeating his name, (though our translators supply it,) καὶ ἀπεστη ἀματὸς, and as he passed by. 1. Though the Jews had so basely abused him, and both by word and deed gave him the highest provocation imaginable, yet he did not slip any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, as justly he might have done, never to have favoured them with any good offices. The care of this blind man was a kindness to the Jews, in showing them the work for his living, who before was a charge and burden to the neighbourhood. It is noble, and generous, and Christ-like, to be willing to serve the public, even when we are slighted and disoblige by it, or think ourselves so. 2. Though he was in his flight from a threatening danger, and escaping for his life, yet he willingly halted and stayed a while to show mercy to this poor man. We may more easily get good than to do good, when we have many opportunities of doing good. 3. When the Pharisees drove Christ from them, he went to this poor blind beggar. Some of the ancients make this a figure of the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles, who sit in darkness, when the Jews had rejected it, and driven it from them. 4. Christ took this poor blind man in his way, and cured him in transitu—as he passed by. Thus should we take occasion of doing good, even as we pass by, whatever we are.

Now, (1.) The condition of this poor man was very sad; he was blind, and had been so from his birth. If the light be sweet, how melancholy must it needs be for a man, all his days, to eat in darkness? He that is blind, has no enjoyment of the light, but he that is born blind, has no idea of it. Most minds, such a one would give a great deal to have his curiosity satisfied with but one day's sight of light and colours, shapes and figures, though he were never to see them more. Whos is the light of life given to one that is in this misery, that is deprived of the light of the sun; whose way is thus hid, and whom God hath thus hedged in? Job 3. 20, 23. Let us bless God that it was not our case. The eye is one of the most delicate parts, and to lose it is to lose a treasure exceeding nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part that appears distinctly discernible. What a mercy it is that there was no miscarriage in the making of our's. Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here he cured one that was born blind. [1.] That he might give an instance of his power to help in the most desperate cases, and to relieve where none else can. [2.] That he might give a specimen of the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

(2.) The compassions of our Lord Jesus toward them were very tender. He saw him; that is, he took cognizance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, he is said to see the affliction; so Christ saw this poor man. Others saw him, but not as he did. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations with a surprising cure. Christ is often found of those that seek him not, nor see him, Isa. 65. 1. If God doth not appear in mercy, Christ, is because we were first known of him, (Gal. 4. 9.) and apprehended by him, Phil. 3. 12.

1. The question which the disciples put to their Master upon this blind man's case, v. 2. When Christ looked upon him, they had an eye to him too; Christ's compassions should kindle our's. It is probable that Christ told them that this poor man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not make Christ to hinder them of that, they started a very odd question concerning him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Now this question of their's was, (1.) Uncharitably censorious. They take it for granted that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some extraordinary sin committed by this man or his parents. Thus this is a very common doctrine among those who dwell at Jerusalem, Luke 18. 4. For the barbarous people to infer, Surely this man is a murderer, was not so strange, but it was inexcusable in them who knew the scriptures, who had read that all things come alike to all, and knew that it was adjudged in Job's case, that the greatest sufferers are not therefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. Christ here, in the name of his apostles, calls our own afflictions punishments, but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident. (2.) It was unnecessarily curious. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask, Who were the criminals, this man, or his parents. And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? We may be quite mistaken in our own observation of other people's sins than concerning our own; whereas, it is more our concern to know wherefore God contends with us, than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge our brother is our sin.

They enquire, [1.] Whether this man was punished thus for some sin of his own, either committed or unpunished before his birth. Some think that the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the pre-existence of souls, and their transmigration from one body to another. Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body, to punish it for some great sin committed in another body which it had before animated? The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, Thou knowest nothing concerning my Lord. Perhaps the disciples asked this, not as believing that this was the punishment of some actual sin of his own, or his parents, but Christ having intimated to another patient that his impotency was the cause of his sin, ch. 5. 14. "Mastcr," say they, "whose sin is the cause of this impotency?" Being at less what construction to put uper
This providence, they desire to be informed. The equity of God's dispensations is always certain, for his righteousness is as the great mountains, but not always to be accounted for, his judgments are a great depth.

2. Christ's answer to this question. He was always aft to teach, and to rectify his disciples' mistakes.

(1.) He gives the reason of this poor man's blindness; "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but therefore he was born blind, and hath continued so to this day, that now at last the works of God should be made manifest in him," v. 3.

Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the divine counsels, has told two things concerning such unmerited calamities, which are:

[1.] That they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the whole race of mankind does indeed justify God in all the miseries of human life; so that they who have the least share of them, must say that God is kind; and they who have the largest share, must not say that he is unjust; but many are made much more miserable than others in this life, who are not at all more sinful. Not that God maketh sinners, but it was not any uncommon guilt that God had an eye to in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners, merely because they are great sufferers, lest we be found, not only persecuting those whom God has smitten, (Ps. 69. 26.) but accusing those whom he has justified, and condoning those for whom Christ died, which is a very dangerous error, Rom. 3. 33, 34.

(2.) That they are sometimes intended presence for the glory of God, and the manifesting of his works. God has a sovereignty over all his creatures, and a propriety in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory in such a way as he thinks fit, in doing or suffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made in vain. This man was born blind, and it was worth while for him to be so, and to continue thus long dark, that the works of God might be manifest in him.

That is, First, That the attributes of God might be manifested in him: his justice in making sinful man liable to such grievous calamities; his ordinary power and goodness in supporting a poor man under such a grievous and tedious affliction; especially, that his extraordinary power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of Providence, otherwise unaccountable, may be resolved into this: God's calamities tend in them to show himself, to declare his glory, to make himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard him not in the ordinary course of things, are sometimes alarmed by things extraordinary. How contentedly then may a good man be a loser in his comforts, while he is sure that thereby God will be one way or other a gainer in his glory! Secondly, That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer might be manifested in him. He was a second Adam, his Lord Jesus might have the honour of curing him, and might therein prove himself sent of God to be the Light of the world. Thus the fall of man was permitted, and the blindness that followed it, that the works of God might be manifest in opening the eyes of the blind. It was not a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now who he was. Note, The intended presence and effects of God's grace are great, and after the event, perhaps many years after. The sentences in the book of Providence are sometimes long, which you must read a great way before you can apprehend the sense of.

(2.) He gives the reason of his own forwardness and readiness to help and heal him. v. 4, 5. It was not for ostentation, but in pursuance of his under-taking: I must work the works of him that sent me, (of which this is one,) while it is day, and working time; the night cometh, the period of that day, when no man can work. This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, but why particularly he did this, through it was an apparent abridgment, on which work and necessity might be done, and he proves this to be a work of necessity.

[1.] It was his Father's will: I must work the works of him that sent me. Note, First, The Father, when he sent his Son into the world, gave him work to do; he did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; when God sends he employs, for he sends none to be idle. Secondly, The works Christ had to do were such that he could not do them alone; he was a Worker together with God. Thirdly, He was pleased to lay himself under the strangest obligations to do the business he was sent about; I must work. He engaged his heart, in the covenant of redemption, to draw near, and to appear to God as Mediator, Jer. 30. 21. Shall we be willing to be losers, when Christ was willing to be bound? Fourthly, Christ had to do many hard and dangerous things, which he could not do his work, laid out himself with the utmost vigour and industry in his work. He worked the works he had to do; did 15. 27-29.; made a business of that which was his business. It is not enough to look at our work, and talk over it, but we must work it.

[2.] Now was his opportunity; I must work while it is day; while the time lasts, which is appointed to work in, and while the bright hours, which is given to work by Christ himself had his day. First, All the business of the mediatorial kingdom was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world; for at the end of the world, when time shall be no more, the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, and the mystery of God finished. Secondly, All the work he had to do in his own person here on earth, was to be done before his death; the time of his living in this world, is the day here spoken of. Note, The time of our life is our day, in which it concerns us as to do the work of the day. Day-time is the proper season for work; Ps. 104. 22, 23. during the day of life we must be busy, not waste day-time, nor play by day-light; it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, for it is but a day.

The period of his opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be busy: The night cometh, when no man can work. Note, The consideration of our death approaching should quicken us to improve all the opportunities of life, both our doing and getting good. The night comes, it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how nigh our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise ourselves a twilight between the day of life and the night of death. When the night comes we cannot work, because the light afforded us to work by is extinguished; the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done in the dark. And besides, our time allotted us for our work will then be expired; when our Master tied us to duty, he tied us to time too; when night comes, call the labourers; we must then show our work, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer in that uncertainty, for the pound of an inch of candle is due. Christ uses this argument with himself, to the different, though he had no opposition from within to struggle with; much more need have we to work man our hearts those and like considerations to quicken us.

[4.] His business in the world was to enlighten it: (v. 5.) As long as I am in the world, and that will
not be long, I am the Light of the world. He had said this before, ch. 8. 12. He is the Sun of righteousness, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but [heating in his wings, or beams, for those that are blind and cannot see], therein far exceeding in virtue that great light which rules by day. Christ would therefore cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be the Light of the world, not only to give light, but to guide the blind. So saith he, First, A great encouragement to come to him, as a guiding, quickening, refreshing Light. To whom should we look but to him? Which way should we turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace, without money, and without price. Secondly, A good example of usefulness in the world. What Christ saith of himself, he saith of his disciples; Ye are light in the world, and if so, Let your light shine. What were candles made for but to burn? III. The manner of the cure of the blind man, v. 6, 7. The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and, no doubt, significant. When he had thus spoken for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, then he addressed himself to the opening of the blind man's eyes. He did not, as was usual, cure his blindness privately, for his greater safety, or more publicly, for his greater honour, or till the sabbath was past, when it would give less offence; what good we have opportunity of doing, we should do it quickly; he that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work for ever undone, Ezech. 11. 4. In the cure observed, v. 8. The preparation of the eye-salve. Christ spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle. He could have cured him with a word, as he did others, but he chose to do it this way, to shew that he is not tied to any method. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be too curious, but, when we have at any time occasion, to be willing to take up with that which is next hand, if it will but be made to serve the turn. Why should we go about for that which may as well be had and do a nearer way? Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ; clay made of Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead. 2. The application of it to the place; He anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay, and laid his hands on him. Matthew has it, He laid his hands on him, and the margin reads it, He spread (stirred) he daubed the clay upon the eyes of the blind man, like a tender physician; he did it himself with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this, (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would close them up, but never open them, and it was more likely to hinder than to make men see; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight. (2.) To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of the clay; for by him God made the worlds, both the great world, and man the little world. Man was formed out of the clay, and moulded like the clay, and here Christ used the same materials to give sight to the body, that he had used to give life to the soul. (3.) To represent and typify the healing and opening the eyes of the mind by the grace of Jesus Christ. The design of the gospel is to open men's eyes, Acts 26. 18. Now the eye-salve that does the work, is of Christ's preparing; it is made up, not as this, of his spittle, but of his blood, the blood and water that came out of his pierced side; we must come to Christ for the eye-salve, Rev. 3. 18. He only is able, and he only is appointed to make it up, Luke 4. 18. The means used in this work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the power of Christ; when a dark world was to be enlightened, and nations of blind souls to have their eyes opened, God chose the foolish things, and weak, and despised, for the doing of it. And the method Christ takes, is, first to make men feel themselves blind, as this poor man did, whose eyes were in the dust, but then to give them sight. Paul in his conversion was struck blind for three days, and then the scales fell from his eyes. The way prescribed for getting spiritual wisdom, is, Let a man become a fool, that he may be wise, 1 Cor. 3. 18. We must be made uneven with our blindness, as this man here, and then healed. 3. The directions given to the patient, v. 7. His Physician said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. Not that this washing was needful to effect the cure; but, (1.) Christ would hereby try his obedience, and whether he could with an implicit faith obey the orders of one he was so much a stranger to. (2.) He would likewise try how he stood affected to the tradition of the elders, which taught, no person should wash his eyes before the Sabbath, for (many that are blind are very knowing) that it is an advantage to wash the eyes, no not with spittle, medicinally, on the sabbath-day, much less to go to a pool of water to wash them. (3.) He would hereby represent the method of spiritual healing, in which, though the effect is owing purely to his power and grace, yet there is duty to be done by us. Go, search the scriptures, attend upon the ministry, converse with the Saviour, this is like washing in the pool of Siloam. Premised graces must be expected in the way of instituted ordinances. The waters of baptism were to them who had been trained up in darkness, like the pool of Siloam, in which they might not only wash, and be clean, but wash, and have their eyes opened. Hence they that were baptized, are said to be regenerate, enlightened; and the ancients called baptism conversionem illuminationis. Concerning the pool of Siloam, observe, [1.] That it was supplied with water from mount Zion, so that there were the waters of the sanctuary, (Ps. 46. 4) living waters which were healing, Ezek. 47. 9. [2.] That the waters of Siloam had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah, (Isa. 8. 6) and the Jews who refused the waters of Siloam, Christ's doctrine and law, and rejected his work, did hereby show that Christ would try this man, whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. [3.] The evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name, its being interpreted Sent. Christ is often called the Sent of God; the Messenger of the covenant; (Mal. 3. 1) so that when Christ sent him to the pool of Siloam, he did in effect send him to himself, for Christ is sent, in all, to the healing of souls. Christ, as a Prophet, directs his disciples and his work to the fountain opened, a Fountain of life, not a pool. 4. The patient's obedience to these directions; he went his way therefore, probably led by some friend or other; or perhaps he was so well acquainted with Jerusalem, that he could find the way himself; nature often supplies the want of sight with an uncommon sagacity; and he washed his eyes. Probably he daubed it on his eyes, and some hours after, he saw and he knew him. Or he daubed it on, and then put it upon his eyes, and found that he who bid him do it, was that Jesus whom he had heard so much of, else he would not havecome, at his bidding, on that which looked so like a fool's errand. In confidence of Christ's power, as well as in obedience to his command, he went, and washed. 5. The cure effected; he came running, There is more glory in this concise narrative, He went, and washed, and came running, than in Cæsar's Vest, with
vich—I came, I saw, I conquered. When the clay
was faced, fir sitt's eyes, all the other elements
were drenched with water; so when the pains
and struggles of the new birth are over, and the
pains and tears of conversion past, the bands of
silly, off with them, and we know light and liberty
seem. Here is an instance, (1.) Of the power
of Christ. What cannot he do, who could not only
devil, but cast them also? With a bump of clay laid
on either eye, and washed off again, he touched the
scars ataract immediately, which the most skilful
lyrist, with the finest instrument and the most curious
hand, could not remove. No doubt, this is he that
should come, by the gift of sight, and who is
able to do all things. This is an instance of the virtue of
faith and obedience. This man let Christ do what he
pleased, and did what he appointed him to do, and
so was cured. They that would be healed by
Christ, must be ruled by him. He came back from
the pool to his neighbours and acquaintance, wonder-
ing, and wondered at, he came seeing. This
represents the benefit gracious souls find in attending
on instituted ordinances, according to Christ's ap-
pointment: they have gone to the pool of Siloam,
and have come away strengthened; have gone
dbbing, and come away satisfied; have gone
railing, and come away rejoicing; gone trembling,
and come away triumphant; have gone blind,
and come away seeing, come away singing, Isa. 32. 8.

8. The neighbours therefore, and they
which before had seen him that he was
blind, said, Is not this he that sat and beg-
ged? 9. Some said, This is he; others
said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.
Therefore said they unto him, How
were thine eyes opened? 11. He answer-
ed and said, A man that is called Jesus
made clay, and anointed mine eyes; and
said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam,
and wash: and I went and washed, and I re-
ceived sight. 12. Then said they unto him,
Where is he? He said, I know not.

Such a wonderful event as the giving of sight to a
man born blind, could not but be the talk of the town,
and many begged it no more than they other
town-talk, that is but nine days wonder; but here
we are told what the neighbours said of it, for the
confirmation of the matter of fact. That which
at first was not believed without scrutiny, may after-
ward be admitted without scruple.

Two things are debated in this conference about it.
1. Whether this was the same man that had
before been blind, v. 8. The neighbours that lived
near the place where he was born and bred, and
knew that he had been blind, could not but be amaz-
ed when they saw that he had his eyesight, had it
on a sudden, and perfectly; and they said, Is not this
he that sat and begged? It seems, this blind man
was a common beggar, being disabled to work for
his living; and so discharged him the obligation of
the poor man, if any would not work, neither
should he eat. When he could not go about, he sat; if we
cannot work for God, we must sit still quietly for
him. When he could not labour, his parents not
being able to maintain him, he begged. Note,
Those who cannot otherwise subsist, must not, like
the unjust steward, be ashamed to beg; let no man
be ashamed of any thing but sin. There are some
common beggars, that are objects of charity, that
should be distinguished: and we must not let the
bees starve for the sake of the drones or wasps that
are among them.

As to this man, 1. It was well ordered by Prov-
dence, that he on whom this miracle was wrought,
should be a common beggar, and sepulchral known
and remarkable, by which means the truth of the
miracle will be the better attested, and there will
be no witness against these infidel Jews who would
not believe that he had been blind, than if he had
been maintained in his father's house. 2. It was
the greatest instance of Christ's condemnation, that
he seemed (as I may say) to take more pains about
the cure of a common beggar than others. When
it was for the advantage of his miracles that they
should be wrought on these that were remarkable,
he made no such haste. 3. It was a demonstration
so holy, and so necessary, that poverty and misery, not by their
dignity.

In answer to this inquiry, (1.) some said, This is
he, the very same man; and these are witnesses
to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known
him stone-blind. (2.) Others, who could not think
it possible that a man born blind should thus on a
sudden receive his sight, for that reason, and no
other, said, He is not he, but is like him, and so,
by their confession, if he be, it is a great miracle that
is wrought upon him. Hence we may take occa-
sion to think, (1.) Of the wisdom and power of pres-
ence in ordering such a universal variety of the
fates of men and women, so that no two are so like,
that they may be distinguished, which is necessary
to society, and commerce, and the administra-
ion of justice. And, (2.) Of the wonderful change
that the commonest in the world may undergo,
especially some who before were very wicked and vile,
but are thereby so universally and visibly altered, that
one would not take them to be the same persons.

This controversy was soon decided by the man
himself; he said, (2.) I am he, the very man that so
lately sat and begged; I am he that was blind,
and was an object of the charity of men, but now see,
and am not so; I am not such a man as is called
God." We do not find that the neighbours applic-
ed to him in this matter, but he, hearing the debate,
interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of
justice owing to our neighbours, to rectify their
mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we
are able, in a true light. Applying it spiritually, it
 teaches us that those who are sparingly enlightened
by the grace of God, should be ready to own what
we believe to be that blessed change was wrought,
1 Tim. 1. 13, 14.

11. How he came to have his eyes opened, v. 10
—12. They will now turn aside, and see the great
sight, and inquire further concerning it. He did not
sound a trumpet when he did these alms, nor per-
form his cures upon a stage; and yet, like a city
upon a hill, they could not be hid.

Two things these neighbours inquire after.
1. The manner of the cure: How were thine eyes
opened? The works of the Lord being great, they
ought to be sought out, Psalm 111. 2. It is good
to observe the way and method of God's works, and
they will appear the more wonderful. We may
apply it spiritually; it is strange that blind eyes
should be opened, but more strange when we con-
sider how they are opened; how weak the means
are, that are used, and how strong the opposition
that is conquered.

In answer to this, he gives them a plain and full
account of the matter; (v. 11.) A man that is called
Jesus, made clay,—and I received sight. Note,
Those who have experienced special instances of
God's power and goodness in temporal or spiritual
things, should be ready upon all occasions to com-
municate their experiences, for the glory of God
and the encouragement of others. See David's collec-
tion of his experiences, his own and others', Ps. 34.
4—6. It is a debt we owe to our benefactor, and to our brethren. God's favours
are lost upon us, when they are lost with us, and go no further.

2. Concerning the Author of it; (v. 12.) Where is he? Some perhaps asked this question out of curiosity; "Where is he, that we may see him?" A man that did such cures as these, might well be a show, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others, perhaps, asked out of ill will; "Where is he, that we may seize him?" There was an appearance, not for the discovering and apprehending of him; (ch. 11. 57.) and the unthinking crowd, in spite of all reason and equity, will have ill thoughts of those that are put into an ill name. Some, we hope, asked this question out of good will; "Where is he, that we may be acquainted with him?" Where is he, that we may come to him, and share in the favours he is so free of? In answer to this he could say nothing; I know not. As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool of Siloam, it should seem, he withdrew immediately, (as he did, ch. 5. 13.) and did not stay till the man returned, as if he either doubted of the effect, or waited for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in doing good than in hearing of it again; it will be time enough to hear of it in the 

event of the past. The man had never seen Jesus, for by the time he had gained his sight he had lost his Physician; and he asked, it is probable, Where is he? None of all the new and surprising objects that presented themselves, could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ, but as yet he knew no more of him than that he was called, and rightly called, Jesus—a Saviour. Thus in the work of grace wrought upon the soul we see the change, but see not the hand that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hear'st the sound of, but canst not tell whence it comes, or whether it goes.

13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17. They say unto the blind man again. What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? 20. His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age: ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. 24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26. Then said they to him again. What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? 27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? 28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. 30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

One would have expected that such a miracle as Christ wrought upon the blind man, should have settled his reputation, and silenced and shamed all opposition, but it had the contrary effect: instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal.

1. Here is the information that was given in to the Pharisees concerning this matter; (v. 13.) They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. They brought him to the great Sanhedrin, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, at least the Pharisees in the Sanhedrin were most active against Christ.

1. Some think that they who brought this man to the Pharisees, did it with a good design, to shew them that this Jesus, whom they persecuted, was not what they represented him, but really a criminal and one that gave considerable proofs of a divine mission. What hath convinced us of the truth and excellency of religion, and hath removed our prejudices against it, we should be forward, as we have opportunity, to offer to others for their conviction. 2. It should seem rather, that they did it with an ill design, to exasperate the Pharisees the more against Christ, and the more to confound them, for they were bitter enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that, (ch. 11. 47, 48.) If ye let him thus alone, all men will believe on him. Note, Those rulers that are of a persecuting spirit, shall never want ill instruments about them, that will blow the coals, and make them worse.

11. The ground which was pretended for this in
formation, and the colour given to it. That which is good, was never maligne but under the imputation of something evil. And the crime objected here, (r. 14.) was that, \textit{It was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.} The profanation of the sabbath-day is certainly wicked, and gives a man a very ill character; but the traditions of the Jews had in it that to be a violation of the sabbath, which was far from being so. Many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews, that it might be settled for the benefit of the church in all ages. But it may be asked, \textit{Why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath-day, but work them in such a manner as he knew would give offence to the Jews?} When he had healed the important man, why should he bid him carry his bed? Could he not have cured him more safely by some medical advice, and by the last of the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glasses, and so teach us, both, that a weekly sabbath is to be perpetually observed in the church, one day in seven; (for what need was there to explain that law, if it must be presently abrogated?) and that it is not to be an ceremonially observed by us as it was by the Jews. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath itself to be kept, not so much for its own sake, as in order to the sabbath work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath-day, to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath-day. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel, that blessed eye-salve, on the Lord's day; how many important souls cured on that day! 1. They interrogated him concerning the cure itself. 

(1.) They doubted whether he had indeed been born blind, and demanded proof of that, which even the prosecutors had acknowledged; (v. 18.) They did not mean that, they would not, that he was born blind. Many of the clearest teeth, may find it if they please; and they that resolve to \textit{hold fast deceit}, will never want a handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity. However, it was a good way that they took for the clearing of this: \textit{They called the parents of the man that had received his sight.} They did, in hopes to disprove the miracle, and they were not disappointed, for if they had said that they could not be sure that this was their son, and that it was only some weakness or dimness in his sight that he had been born with, which, if they had been able to get him for him, might have been cured long since, or otherwise we might, for fear of the court, the Pharisees had gained their point, had robbed Christ of the honour of this miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest. But God so ordered and overruled this counsel of theirs, that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded.

Now in this part of the examination we have,

[1.] The questions that were put to them: (v. 19.) They asked them in an imperious threatening way, \textit{Is this your son?} Did you swear it? \textit{Do you say he was born blind? Are you sure of it? Or did he pretend to be so, to have an excuse for his begging? How then doth he now see? That is impossible, and therefore you had better deny it.} Those who cannot bear the light of truth, do all they can to eclipse it, and hinder the discovery of it. And who can suppose the parents, or mismanagers, rather, lead witnesses out of the way to teach them how to conceal or disguise the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Je roboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin. 

[2.] Their answers to these interrogatories, in which, 

First, They fully attest that which they could safely say in this matter; safely, that is, upon their own knowledge; we know not how they taught themselves into a perjurer; (r. 20.) \textit{We know that this is our son;} (for they were daily conversant with him, and had such a natural affection to him as the true mother had,) (1 Kings 3. 26.) which made them know it was their own; and we know that he was born blind. They had reason to know it, insomuch as it had cost them many a sad thought, and many a careful troublesome hour, about him. How often had they looked upon him with grief, and lamented their child's blindness more than all the burdens and inconveniences of their poverty, and wished he had never been born, rather than he born to such an uncomfortable life! Those who are ashamed of their children, or any of their relations, because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from these parents, who freely owned, This is our son, though he was born blind, and lived upon alms.

Secondly, They cautiously decline giving any evidence concerning his cure; partly, because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it, and could say nothing to it of their own knowledge; and partly, because they found it was a tender point, and would not bear to be meddled with. And therefore having owned that he was their son, and was born blind, further these dependents say, (r. 21.) \textit{By what means he now sees, we know not, or who has opened his eyes, we know not, otherwise than by hearsay: we can give no account, either by what means or by whose hand it was done.} See how the wisdom of this world teaches men to trim the matter in critical junctures. Christ was accused as a sabbath-breaker, and as an impostor. Now these parents, if they were not eye-witnesses of the cure, were yet fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to have borne their testimony to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who had done their son so great a kindness; but they had not courage to do it, and then though it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him, that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas in the day of trial, he that is not of the world speaks, even as Christ speaks against him, Luke 11. 23, Mark 8. 58. That they might not be further urged in this matter, they refer themselves and the court to him: \textit{He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.} This implies that while children are not of age, (while they are infants, such as cannot speak,) it is incumbent upon their parents to speak for them,
speak to God for them in prayer, speak to the church for them in baptism; but when they are of age, it is fit that they should be asked whether they will be willing to stand to that which their parents did for them, and let them speak for themselves. This man, though he was born blind, seems to have been of quick understanding above many, which enabled him to speak for himself better than his friends could speak for him. And therefore, and because he has made his answer makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body, 1 Cor. 13: 24, 25. His parents turning them over to him, was only to save themselves from trouble, and expose him; whereas they that had so great an interest in his mercy, had reason to embark with him in his hazards for the honour of that Jesus who had done so much for them.

Here is, (1.) The late law which the Sanhedrim had made. It was agreed and enacted by their authority, That if any man within their jurisdiction did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Observe,

[1.] The crime designed to be punished, and so prevented by this statute, and that was embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah, and discovering this by any overt act, which amounted to a confessing of him. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jesus should be he, nor admit the question whether he were or no, for two reasons. First, Because his miracles were all so contrary to their traditional laws. The spiritual worship he proscribed, overthrew their formalities; nor did any thing more effectually destroy their singularity and narrow-spirituedness than that universal charity which he taught; humility and mortification, repentance and self-denial, were lesseens new to them, and sounded harsh and strange in their ears. Secondly, Because his promises and appearances were so contrary to those of other messiahs in the Old Testament. They expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendour, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but advance the grandeur of the Sanhedrim, and make all the members of it princes and peers: and now to hear of a Messiah, whose outward circumstances were all mean and poor, whose first appearance and principal residence were in Galilee, a despised province, who never made his defence in courts, but to the people, nor sought their favour, whose followers were neither sword-men, nor gowmen, nor any men of name, but contemptible fishermen, who proposed and promised no redemption but from sin, no consolation of Israel but what is spiritual and divine, and at the same time bid his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution; this was such a reception in Israel as they could not think of, could not reconcile the minds of their people with such a blow to their power and interest, and such a disappointment to all their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, nor so much as give it a fair or patient hearing, but, right or wrong, it must be crushed.

[2.] The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be deprived and taken as an apostate from the faith of the Jewish church, and a rebel and traitor against the government of it, and should therefore be put out of the synagogue, as one that had ren- dered himself unworthy of the honours, and incapable of the privileges, of their church; he should be excommunicated, and expelled the commonwealth of Israel. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man that made no conscience of their authority, might slight, but it was, in effect, an outlawry, which excluded a man from civil company, and made his name odious, and execrated among all mankind. Note, First, Christ's holy religion, from its first rise, has been opposed by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if men's consciences would otherwise naturally embrace it, this unnatural force has been put upon them. Secondly, The church's artifices, when the command of it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself, and employed to serve a curious and secular interest. It is no new thing to see these cast out of the synagogue, that were the greatest beauties and blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them say, The Lord be glorified, Isa. 66: 5.

Now of this edict it is said, 1. That the Jews had agreed it, or conspired it. Their consultation and communion herein, were a perfect conspiracy against the Messiah, and against the Lord and his Anointed. 2. That they had hereby agreed it. Though he had been but a few months in any public character among them, and one would think, in so short a time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus early were they aware of his growing interest, and already agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had lately made his escape out of the temple, and he saw them thus hale the assault upon their interests, they presently took this course, to make it penal for any body to own him. Thus unanimous, and thus expedi- tions are the enemies of the church, and their counsels; but he that sits in heaven, laughs at them, and has them in derision, and so may we.

(2.) The influence which this law had upon the parents of the blind man. They declined saying any thing of Christ, and shunned him off to their son, because they feared the Jews. Christ had incurred the frowns of the government, to do their son a kindness, but they would not incur them, to do him any honour. Note, The fear of man brings a snare, (Prov. 29: 25.) and often makes people deny and disown Christ, and his truths and ways, and act against his consciences. Well, the parents have thus disentangled themselves, and are discharged from any guilt in it. But pattern to us, in the examination of the man himself; the doubt of the Pharisees, whether he was born blind, was put out of doubt by them; and therefore,

2. They inquired of him concerning the manner of the cure, and made their remarks upon it, v. 15, 16.

[1.] The same question which his neighbours had put to him, now again the Pharisees asked him, how he had received his sight. This they inquired, not with any sincere desire to find out the truth, by tracing the report to the original, but with a desire to find an occasion against Christ; for if the man should relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; if he should vary from his former story, they would have some colour to suspect the whole course of his mission and prophecies.

[2.] The same answer, in effect, which he had before given to his neighbours, he here repeats to the Pharisees; He put upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. He does not here speak of the making of the clay, for indeed he had not seen it made. That circumstance was not essential, and might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he omits it. In the former account, I washed, and received sight; but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present,
which a heated imagination might fancy itself to have, he now says, "I do see: it is a complete and lasting cure." [s.]
The remarks made upon this story were very different, and occasioned a debate in the court.

v. 16.

First, Some took this occasion to illustrate and condemn Christ for what he had done. Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not of God, as he pretends, because he doth not observe the sabbath-day. 1. Thus he was accused by the Pharisees themselves, as well as their enemies. Again, the Pharisees are so like the tithe-givers of the present day, that they are ready to view with jealousy any man who challenges or tends to prophecy not sent of God; nay, those pretenders to sanctity not born of God, who do not keep the sabbath-day. They that are of God, will keep the commandments of God; and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the sabbath. They that are of God, keep up communion with God, and delight to hear from him, and speak to him, and therefore will of God, and which is the appointed for intercourse with heaven. The sabbath is called a sign, for the sanctifying of it is a sign of a sanctified heart, and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, 2. The application of it to our Saviour is very unjust, for he did religiously observe the sabbath-day, and never in any instance violated it, nor did otherwise than well on the sabbath-day. He did not keep the sabbath according to the traditions of the elders, but he kept it according to the command of God, and therefore, no doubt, he was of God, and his miracles proved him to be Lord also of the sabbath-day.

Note, Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by men making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God's appointments, as the Jews have, in the case of sabbath-sanctification. We ourselves may forfeit such and such things, on the sabbath-day, as we find a distraction to us, and we do well, but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness. Everything that we take for a rule of practice, must not presently be made a rule of judgment.

Secondly, Others spoke in his favour, and very pertinently urged, How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles? It seems that even in this council of the ungodly there were some that were capable of a free thought, and were witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain, that this was a true miracle, the more it was searched into, the more it was cleared; and this brought his former like works to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them, praising great signs, so many, so many, as so evident. And the inference from it is very natural; such things as these could never be done by a man that is a sinner, that is, not by any mere man, in his own name, and by his own power; or rather, not by one that is a cheat or an impostor, and in that sense a sinner; such a one may indeed shew some signs and hang wonders, but not such signs and true wonders, as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such divine credentials, if he had not a divine commission? Thus there was a division among them, a schism, so the word is; they clashed in their opinion, a warm debate arose, and the house divided upon it. Thus God defeats the counsels of his enemies by dividing them; and by such testimonies as these given against the malice of persecutors, and the rubs they meet with, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual, and always insurmountable.

3. After their inquiry concerning the cure, we must observe their inquiry concerning the Author of it. And here observe,

1. The man said of him, in answer to their inquiry, They ask him, (v. 17.) "What saith this man of thee, seeing that he hath opened thine eyes? What dost thou think of his doing this?" And what shall I answer? This is a most solemn question. If he should speak slightingly of Christ, in answer to this, he must be tempted to do, to please them, now that he was in their hands, as his parents had done; if he should say, "I know not what to make of him, he may be a mountebank; or some mountebank," they would have triumphed in it. Nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to him, so much as when they are taunted by those that have passed for his friends. But if he should speak honourably of him, they would prosecute him upon their new law, which did not except, no, not his own patient; would make him an example, and so deter others from applying themselves to him for cures, which, though they came cheap from Christ, yet would make them pay dear. Or perhaps Christ's friends pretend to have the man's own sentiments concerning his Physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a sensible man, what he thought of him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened, know best what to say of him, and have great reason, upon all occasions, to say well of him. What think we of Christ?

To this question the poor man makes a short, plain, and direct answer; He is a Prophet, he is a Prophet; he is a Prophet. We may desire to know, and work miracles, and deliver the world quacks, and do what shall please it. There had been no prophets among the Jews for three hundred years; yet they did not conclude that they should have more, for they knew that he was yet to come, who should seal inspiration and prophets, Dan. 9. 24. It should seem, this man had not any thoughts that he was the Messiah, the great Prophet, of the same rank with the other prophets. The poor blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the thing, perspicuous to the kingdom of God, and saw him more clearly than the masters in Israel, that assumed an authority to judge of prophets.

(c.) What they said of him, in reply to the man's testimony. Having in vain attempted to implicate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a notable miracle was wrought, and they could not deny it, they renew their attempt to blemish it, and run it down, and do all they can to shake the opinion the man had of him that opened his eyes, and to convince him that he was a bad man; (v. 24.) Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner. Two ways this is understood; either,

1. Be wary of advice, to take heed of ascribing the praise of his cure to a sinful man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due; thus, under colour of such commendation of his good name, they would thus worship an honour, as those do, who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God to be worshipped; whereas this is his declared will, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and in confessing that Christ is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. When God makes use of men that are sinners, we are not at liberty to speak of God the Saviour, God the Father, and give God the glory, for every creature is that to us that makes it to be; and yet there is a gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, Give God the praise, but here it was ill used; and there seems to be this further in it, This man is a sinner, a bad man, and therefore give the praise so much the
more to God who could work by such an instrument."

[2.] Or by way of adjuration; so some take it;

"We know (though thou dost not, who hast not but lately come, as it were, into a new world) that this man is a sinner, a great impostor, who cheats the country; this we are sure of, therefore give God praise," (as Joshua said to Achan) "by making an injurious confession of the fraud and collusion which we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name, man, tell the truth." Thus is God's name abused in papal invocations, when by oaths, ex officio, they extort accusations of themselves from the heathens; and, shortly, from the Jews, the base, they speak of the Lord Jesus; "We know that this man is a sinner, is a man of sin. In which we may observe, First, Their insolence and pride. They would not have it thought, when they asked the man what he thought of them, that they needed information; nay, they knew very well that he is a sinner, and nobody can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces, (ch. 8. 46.) to convince him of sin, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of him as a malefactor, convicted upon the notorious evidence of the fact. Thus false accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. Secondly, The injury and indignity hereby done to the Lord Jesus. When he became man, he took upon him the form, not only of a servant, but of a sinner. (Rom. 8. 3.) and passed a short and gloomy chapter of human woe. Nor was he represented as a sinner of the first magnitude, a sinner above all men; and, being made sin for us, he despised even this shame.

4. The debate that arose between the Pharisees and this poor man concerning Christ. They say, "He is a sinner; he says, He is a prophet." As it is an encouragement to those who are concerned for the cause of Christ, to hope that it shall never be lost for want of witnesses, when the blind beggar picked up from the way-side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his most insipid enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ, to find with what prudence and courage this man managed his defence, according to the promise, It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his goodness.

Now in the parley between the Pharisees and this poor man we may observe three steps.

(1.) He sticks to the certain matter of fact, which they endeavour to shake the evidence of. That which is doubtful, is best resolved into that which is plain, and therein.

[1.] He adheres to that to which himself at least, and to his own satisfaction, was past dispute. (v. 25.) "Whether he be a sinner or not, I know not, I will not now stand to dispute, nor need I, the matter is plain, and though I should altogether hold my peace, would speak for itself;" or, as it might better be rendered, "If he be a sinner, I know it not, I see no reason to say so, but the contrary; for this one thing I know, and can be more sure of than you can be that which you are so confident of, that whereas I say, you say, that he has been a good friend to me, but that he is a prophet; I am both able and bound to speak well of him." Now here, First, He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave of the blessed Jesus; "You say that you know him to be a sinner; I, who know him as well as you do, cannot give him any such character."

Secondly, He brings in a charge arising from the power and goodness of the holy Jesus, and reserved to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses, here is one that is properly an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen him. Note, As Christ's miracles are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, that have been blind, and now see, so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ think, every one from an experimental knowledge of him, 1 John 1. 1. Acts 4. 20.

He does not here give a nice account of the method of the cure, nor pretend to describe it philosophically, but, in short, Whereas I was blind, now I see. Thus, in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when, and how, by what instruments, and by what steps and advances, the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort of it, if we can say, as he did, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." I did live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, but, thanks be to God, it is now otherwise with me," Eph. 5. 8.

[2.] They endeavour to baffle and stifle the evidence by a needless repetition of their inquiries into it; (v. 26.) What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes? They asked these questions, First, Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak importunately, than seem to be silenced, or run aground. Thus eager disputants, that resolve they will have the last word, by such vain repetitions, to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. Secondly, Because they hoped, by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping in it, or wavering, and then they would think they had gained him. They were not to be so caught; (v. 27.) He upbraids them with their obstinate infidelity, and invincible prejudices, and they revile him as a disciple of Jesus, (v. 27-29.) where the man is more bold with them, and they more sharp upon him than before.

[1.] The man boldly upbraids them with their wilful and unreasonable opposition to the evidence of this miracle, v. 27. He could not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, I have told you already, and ye did not hear, wherefore would ye hear it again, will ye also be his disciples? Some think that he spake seriously, and really expecting that they would be convinced. "He has many disciples, I will be one, will you also come in among them?" Some zealous young christians see so much reason for religion, that they are ready to think every man who hears them must be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken ironically; "Will ye be his disciples? No, I know you abhor the thoughts of it; why then should ye desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples, or leave you inexusable if ye be not?" Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, as these Pharisees here did, First, They make themselves contemptible and base, as these here did, who will not justly acknowledge this poor man for deserving the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. Secondly, They forfeit all the benefit of further instructions and means of knowledge and conviction; they that have been told once, and would not hear, why should they be told it again? Jer. 31. 9. See Matt. 10. 14. Thirdly, They hereby receive the grace of God in vain. This is implied in the former statement, and is the residue we well not; why then would you hear it again? Only that you may be his accusers and persecutors? Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and join with his followers, yet, one would think, should see cause enough not to hate and persecute him and them.

[2.] For this they scorn and revile him, v. 28. When they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, then broke out into a passion, and scolded him, began to call names, and give him ill language. See what Christ's faithful witnesses must
expect from the adversaries of his truth and cause: let them come upon all manner of evil to be said of them, Matt. 3. 11. The method commonly taken by unreasonable men, is, to make out with railing what is wanting in truth and reason.

First, They taunted this man for his admission to God, as a servant and disciple, as if that were reproach enough, and they could not say worse of him. "We seem to be his disciples, and will leave that preferment to thee, and such as thou art." They do what they can to put Christ’s religion in an ill name, and to represent the profession of it as a contemptible scandalous character. They reviled him. The vulgar reads it, maledicere cunctam—"they cursed him"; and what was their curse? It was this, "Be thou accursed" (saith St. Austin here) "ever be on us and on our children!" if we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment or clamours rather of a blind deluded world, we shall glory in our shame, and be ashamed of our glory. They had no reason to call this man a disciple of Christ, he had neither seen him, nor heard him preach, only he had spoken favourably of a kindness he had done him, and this they could not bring in evidence.

Secondly, They gloried in their relation to Moses as their Master; "We are Moses’ disciples, and do not either need or desire any other teacher." Note, 1. Carnal professors of religion are very apt to trust to, and be proud of, the dignities and privileges of their profession, while they are strangers to the principles and powers of their religion. These Pharisees had been before boast of their good parentage, We are Abraham’s seed; hence of our good education, We are Moses’ disciples, as if these would save them part. 2. It is sad to see how much one part of religion is opposed, under colour of zeal for another part; there was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses; Moses prepared for Christ, and Christ perfected Moses, so that they might be disciples of Moses, and become the disciples of Christ too; and yet they here put them in opposition, nor could they have any endurance in the same Murby such a corrupt, and under the armage of the abused name of Moses. Thus they who gain by the doctrine of free grace, value themselves as promoters of man’s duty, We are Moses’ disciples; while, on the other hand, they that cancel the obligation of the law, value themselves as the assertion of free grace, and as if none were the disciples of Jesus, but they; whereas, if we rightly understand the matter, we shall see God’s grace and man’s duty meet together, and kiss and befriend each other.

Thirdly, They gave some sort of reason for their adhering to Moses against Christ; (v. 2.) We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not whence he is. But did they not know that among other things which God spake unto Moses, this was one, that they must expect another Prophet, and a further revelation of the mind of God: yet, withheld they Jesus’ spirits, presuming that what God said to Moses, did appear, and gave sufficient proofs of his being that Prophet, under pretence of sticking to the old religion and the established church, they not only forfeited, but forsook, their own mercies. In this argument of their observe,

1. How impertinently they allege, in defence of their enmity to Christ, that which none of his followers ever denied, We know that God spake unto Moses, and God spake also unto Jesus; (ch. 5. 46.) and Jesus spake honourably of Moses; (Luke 16. 29.) they were both faithful in the same house of God, Moses as a servant, Christ as a Son; therefore their pleading Moses’ divine warrant in opposition to Christ’s, was an attempt to make nothin jpeople believe it was certain that Jesus was a false Prophet, as that Moses was a true one; whereas they were both true.

How strongly they urge their ignorance of Christ, as a reason to justify their contempt of him; Is for this fellow. Thus servilely do they speak of the blessed Jesus, as if they did not think it worth while to charge their memories with a name so inconsiderable; they expressed themselves with as much disdain of the Shepherd of Israel, as if he had not been worthy to be set with the dogs of their flock; as for this fellow, this merry fellow, we know not where he is. And therefore concluded him a sinner; whereas what we know little of, we should judge charitably of; but proud and narrow souls will think none good but themselves, and those that are in their interest. It was not long ago, that the Jews had made the contrary to this, an objection against Christ; (ch. 7. 55.) He knoweth the man whence he is, but will not let Christ come, no man knoweth where he is. Thus they could with the greatest assurance either affirm or deny the same thing, according as they saw it would serve their turn. They knew him not where he was, and whose fault was that? (1.) It is certain that they ought to have inquired; the Messiah was to appear about this time, and it concerned them to look about them, and examine every indication; but these priests, like these, Jer. 2. 8. said not, Where is the Lord? (2.) It is certain that they might have known where he was, might have known, not only, by searching the register, that he was born in Bethlehem; but, by inquiring into his doctrine, miracles, and conversation, they might have known that he was sent of God, and had better orders, a better commission, and far better instructions, than any they could give him. See the absurdity of infidelity; men will not know the doctrine of Christ, because they are resolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it, because they do not know it. Such ignorance and unbelief, which support one another, aggravate one another.

(5.) He reasons with them concerning this matter, and they excommunicate him.

[1.] The poor man, finding that he had reason on his side, which they could not answer, grows more bold, and, in prosecution of his argument, is very chargeful to them.

First, He considers at their obstinate infidelity; (v. 36.) not at all dunned by their frowns, nor shaken by their confidence, he bravely answered, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, the strangest instance of wilful ignorance that ever was heard of among men that pretended to sense, that you knew not from whence he is, and yet he has opened mine eyes. Two things he wonders at.

1. That they should be strangers to a man so famous.

2. That they should be so obstinate. Their infidelity must certainly be a considerable man, and worth taking notice of; the Pharisees were inquisitive men, had a large correspondence and acquaintance, thought themselves the eyes of the church, and its watchmen, and yet that they should talk, as if they thought it below them to take cognizance of such a man as this, and have conversation with him, this is
a strange thing indeed. There are many who pass for learned and knowing men, who understand business, and can talk sense in other things, who yet are ignorant, to a wonder, of the doctrine of Christ, who have no concern, no, not so much as a curiosity, to acquaint themselves with that which the angels desire to look into.

2. That they should question the divine commission, and not only unwisely, but undeniably wrought a divine miracle. When they said, We know not whence he is, they meant, We know not any proof that his doctrine and ministry are from heaven; Now this is strange, (saith the poor man,) that the miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you, and put the matter out of doubt; that you, whose education and studies give you advantages above others, of discerning the things of God, that you should thus shut your eyes against the light. It is a marvellous work, and a wonder, when the wisdom of the wise thus perisheth, (Isa. 29. 14.) that they deny the truth of that which they cannot gainsay the evidence of.

Note. (1.) The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction, is indeed a marvellous thing, Mark 6. 6. (2.) Those who have themselves experienced the power and grace of the Lord Jeshu and Jeshu, are under a kinder and more merciful dispensation than those who reject him, and, having such good thoughts of him themselves, are amazed that others have not so too.

Had Christ opened the eyes of the Pharisees, they would not have doubted his being a Prophet.

Secondly, He argues strongly against them, v. 31-33. They had determined concerning Jesus, that he was not of God, (v. 16.) but was a sinner, v. 24. In answer to which the man here proves not only that he was not a sinner, (v. 31.) but that he was of God, v. 33. He argues here, 1. With great knowledge. Though he could not read a letter on the book, he was well acquainted with the scripture and the things of God; he had wanted the sense of sense, yet had well improved that of hearing, by which faith cometh; yet that would not have served him, if he had not had an extraordinary presence of God with him, and special aids of his Spirit, upon this occasion. 2. With great zeal for the honour of Christ, whom he could not endure to hear run down, and evil spoken of. 3. With great boldness, and courage, and unweariedness, not terrified by the proudest of his adversaries. That are ambitious of the favours of God, must not be afraid of the frowns of men. See here? (saith Dr. Whitby) A blind man and unlearned, judging more rightly, and with more observation than that which the learned council of the Pharisees. Whence we learn that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or bishops; and that it is not absurd for men, sometimes, to vary from their opinions; these overseers being sometimes guilty of great oversights.

Now the man's argument may be reduced into four, somewhat like that of David, Ps. 66. 18. 19. The three first arguments, 1. The man's own proof, David's reply, David's relation of the miracle, and the man's reply to David's relation; both of the man's views, his sense of his weakness, and his credit of God, notwithstanding his non-conformity to your traditions in the business of the sabbath-day. Note, What Christ did on earth sufficiently demonstrated what he was in heaven; for if he had not been sent of God, he could not have wrought such miracles. It is true, the man of sin comes with lying wonders, but not with real miracles; it is likewise supposed in that false prophet, he shall do no great sign; (Deut. 18. 20.) but yet the case is so put, as that it would carry with it its own confirmation, for it is to enforce a temptation to serve other gods, which was to set God against himself. It is true likewise, many wicked people have, in Christ's name, done many wonderful works, which does not prove them to have wrought them to be of God, but in his name where they were wrought. We may
each of us know by this, whether we are of God or not: What do we? What do we for God, for our souls, in working out our salvation; what do we more than others?

[2.] The Pharisees, finding themselves unable either to answer his reasons, or to bear them, fell fool upon him, and with a great deal of pride and passion broke off the discourse, v. 34. Here we are told,

First, What they said; having nothing to reply to his argument, they reflected upon his person, Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us? They take that ill, which they had reason to take kindly, and are cut to the heart with rage, by that which should have pricked them to the heart with repentance.

Observe, 1. How they despised him, and what a severe censure they passed upon him: Thou wast
not wholly born in sin, as every man is, but together so, wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy body as well as in thy soul the marks of that corruption; thou wast one whom nature stigmatised. Had he still continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, and from thence to gather that he was more deeply tainted with sin than other people; but it was most unjust to take notice of it, now that the cure had not only made all visible, but had blotted it out of his heart, and had sanctified him as a favourite of heaven. Some take it thus: Thou hast been a common beggar, and such are too often common sinners, and thou hast, no doubt, been as bad as any of them; whereas by his discourse he had proved the contrary, and had exhibited a deep inepture of piety. But when proud imperious Pharisees resolve to run a man down, any thing will do to set him right, and bring him to confusion.

How they disdain to learn of him, or to receive instruction from him: Dost thou teach us? A mighty emphasis must be laid here upon thou and us. What wilt thou, a silly sorrowful, ignorant and illiterate, that hast not seen the light of the sun a day to an end, a beggar by the way-side, of the very dogs and refuse of the town, wilt thou pretend to teach us, that are the sages of the law and gran-
daes of knowledge? They not only set him in Moses' chair, and are masters in Israel. Thus, Pard. men scorn to be taught, especially by their inferiors, whereas we should never think ourselves too old, or too wise, or too good, to learn. Those that have much wealth, would have more; and why not those that have much knowledge? And those are to be valued, by whom we may improve in learning. What a poor excuse was this for the Pharisees' insolvency, that it would be a disparagement to them to be instructed, and informed, and convinced, by such a silly fellow as this.

Secondly, What they did; they cast him out. Some understand it only of a rude and scornful dismissal of him from their council-board; they turned him out of the room by head and shoulders, and perhaps ordered their servants to kick him; they thought it was time to send him far enough, who came so near their conclusions, but it set another to be a judicial act; they excommunicated him; it is likely, with the highest degree of excommunication, they cut him off from being a member of the church of Israel. "This poor man" (says Dr. Lightfoot) "was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr of the christian church. There was a law made, that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ, he should be cast out of the syna-
gogues, and receive no more bread in Moses' chair and are masters in Israel. "This poor man" (says Dr. Lightfoot) "was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr of the christian church. There was a law made, that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ, he should be cast out of the syna-
gogues, and receive no more bread in Moses' chair and are masters in Israel."

is a very dreadful thing; for what is so bound on earth, is bound in heaven; but to be cast out of a corrupt church, (which it is our duty to go out of,) and that unjustly, though cast out with an anathema, and all the bagbear ceremonies of bell, book, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread or be aggrieved at. The curse causeless shall not come. If they cast Christ's followers out of their syna-
gogues, as he foretells, (ch. 16. 2.) there is no harm done, when they are become synagogues of Satan.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

In these verses, we may observe,

1. The tender care which our Lord Jesus took of this poor man, (v. 35.) When Jesus heard that they had cast him out, (for it is likely the town rang it, and every body cried out shame upon them,) and that he had been cast out unjustly, then he came near him, and took him and looked after him, that he might encourage and comfort him. Because he had to the best of his knowledge, spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him and his truth and ways. Earthly princes neither do, nor can, take cognizance of all that vindicates their sons; and their grace is not sufficient to secure them. But Christ can, and will, and will not put them out of his way of his visits, happy they who have a Friend that men cannot debar them from! (2.) Jesus Christ will graciously find and take up those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding-place to his out-casts, and appear, to the joy of these whom their brethren hated and cast out.

II. The comfortable converse Christ had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved the knowledge he had of him, and now Christ gives him further instruction; for he that is faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more, Matt. 13. 12. 1. Our Lord Jesus examines his faith; Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah? Dost thou expect his coming, and art then ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifested to thee? This was that faith of the Son of God which they lived by who had good instructions of these things. (1.) The Messiah is here called the Son of God, and so the Jews had learned to call him from the prophecies, Ps. 2. 7. - 89. 17. See ch. 1. 49. Then art the Son of God, that is, the true Messiah. They that expected the temporal kingdom of the Mes
siah, delighted rather in calling him the Son of Da-
vil, which gave more countenance to that expecta-
tion, Matt. 22. 42. But Christ, that he might give
us an idea of his kingdom, as purely spiritual and
divine, calls himself the Son of God, and rather Son
of man in general, than of David in particular. (2.)
The desires and expectations of the Messiah, which
the Old Testament saints had, guided by, and ground
on, the prophecies were unexpectedly interpreted and
accepted as their believing on the Son of God.
This faith Christ here inquires after;
Dost thou believe? Note, The great thing which
is now required of us, (1 John 3. 23.) and will shortly
be inquired after concerning us, is, our believing on
the Son of God, and by this we must stand or fall
for ever. 2. The poor man solicitously inquires con-
cerning the Messiah he was to believe in, professing his res-
dience to embrace him, and close with him; (v. 36.)
Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? (1.)
Some think he did know that Jesus, who cured him,
was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus,
and therefore, supposing this that talked with him to
be a false prophet of Jesus, desired him to do him the
same favor direct to himself; he would be satisfied with
satisfy his curiosity with the sight of him, but that
he might the more firmly believe in him, and pro-
fess his faith, and know whom he had believed. See
Cant. 5. 6, 7. 3. It is Christ only that can
direct us to himself. (2.) Others think he did know
that this person who talked with him, was Jesus, the
same that cured him, whom he believed a great and
good prophet, he therefore could not get knowledge, if
he was, or was to be, the Son of God, and the true
Messiah. "Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come;
thou hast given me bodily sight, tell me, O tell me, who
and where this Son of God is." Christ's question intimated that the Messiah was
come, and was now among them, which he pre-
sently takes the hint of, and asks, Where is he, Lord?
The question was rational and just; Who is he, Lord,
that I might believe on him? For how could he be
believe in one of whom he had not heard; the work
of ministers is to tell us who the Son of God is, that
we may believe on him, ch. 20. 31.
3. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to
him as that Son of God, on whom he must believe;
(v. 37.) Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that
talketh in this way. Here is another new evidence
out of the Son of God, Behold the Word is nigh thee.
We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and
in so many words, reveal himself to any other, as
to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, I that
speak unto thee am he; he left others to find out by
arguments who he was, but to these weak and fool-
ish things of the world he chose to manifest himself,
sure not to the wise and prudent.
Christ here describes himself to this man by two
things, which express his great favour to him.
(1.) Thou hast both seen him; and he was much in-
debted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes, that
he might see him. Now he was made sensible, more
than ever, what an unspeakable mercy it was to be
cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of
God, a sight which rejoiced his heart more than that
of the light of the world. Note. The greatest com-
fort of bodily eyesight, is, its serviceableness to our
faith and the interest of our souls. How contentedly
might this man have returned to his former blind-
ness, like old Simon, now that his eyes had seen
God's salvation. If we apply it to the opening of
the eyes of the mind, it intimates that spiritual sight
is far better than bodily sight, and that we may not
see as we should, by faith we have seen Christ, seen him in his beauty and glory,
in his ability and willingness to save, so seen him
as to be satisfied concerning him, to be satisfied in
him? Let us give him the praise, who opened our
eyes.
(2.) It is he that talketh with thee; and he was in-
debted to Christ for condescending to do this. He
was not only favoured with a sight of Christ, but
was admitted into fellowship and communion with him.
Great princes are willing to be seen by those
among them, by whom they will be safe to talk with.
But Christ, by his word and Spirit, talks with those
whose desires are toward him, and in talking with them
manifests himself to them, as he did to the
two disciples, when he talked their hearts warm,
Luke 24. 32. Observe, This poor man was solicit-
ously inquiring after the Saviour, when at the same
time he saw him, and was talking with him. Note,
Jesus Christ is often near the souls that seek him
than they themselves are aware of. Doubtless the
saints are sometimes saying, Where is the Lord? and
fearing that they are cast out from his sight, when
at the same time it is he that talks with them, and
puts strength into them.
4. The poor man readily entertains this surprising
revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, he
says, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.
(1.) He desired him to be faith; in Christ, I bel-
ieve thee to be the Son of God. He would not dis-
pute any thing that he said, who had shewed such
mercy to him, and wrought such a miracle for him,
and doubt of the truth of a doctrine which was con-
firmed by such signs. Believing with the heart,
he thus confesses with the mouth; and now the bruised
reed was become a cedar.
(2.) He did also acknowledge him to be his Lord.
He worshipped him, not only gave him the civil respect due to
a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a
kind benefactor, but herein gave him divine honour
and worshipped him as the Son of God manifest in
the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped; so
that in worshipping Jesus, he owned him to be God.
Note. True faith will shew itself in a humble adora-
tion of the Lord Jesus. They who believe in him,
will see all the reason in the world to worship him.
We never read any more of this man; but, it is very
likely, from henceforth he became a constant fol-
lower of Christ.

39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am
come into this world, that they which see
not might see; and that they which see
might be made blind. 40. And some of the
Pharisees which were with him heard these
words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?
41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind,
ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see;
therefore your sin remaineth.

Christ having spoken comfort to the poor man
that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his
persecutors, a specimen of the distributions of trou-
ble and rest at the great day, 2 Thess. 1. 6. 7. Prob-
ably, this was not immediately after his discourse
with the man, but he took the next opportunity that
offered itself, to address the Pharisees.

1. Here is the account Christ gives of his design
in coming into the world; (v. 39.) "For judging
I am come to order and administer the great affairs
of the kingdom of God among men, and am invested
with a judicial power in order thereto, to be exe-
cuted in conformity to the wise counsels of God, and
in pursuance of them." What Christ spake, he
spake not as a preacher in the pulpit, but as a king
upon the throne, and a judge upon the bench. His
business into the world was great, he came to keep
the assizes and general gaol-delivery; he came for
judgment, that is, 1. To preach a doctrine and a law which would try men, and effectually discover and distinguish them, and would be completely hit, in all respects, to be the rule of government and of judgment, at least, shortly. 2. To put a difference between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men's true characters, by this one test, whether they were well or ill affected to him. 3. To change the face of government in his church, to abolish the Jewish ceremony, to take down that fabric, which, though erected for the time by the hand of God himself, yet by tract of time became corrupt, and by the incurable corruptions of the managers of it was become rotten and dangerous, and to erect a new building by another model, to institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism and exact Christianity; for this judgment he came into the world, and it was a great revolution.

This great truth he explains by a metaphor borrowed from the miracle he had lately wrought. That they which see not might see: and that they which see might be made blind. Such a difference of Christ's coming is often spoken of: to some his gospel is a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

(1.) This is applicable to nations and people, that the Gentiles, who had long been destitute of the light of divine revelation, might see it: and the Jews, who had long been puffed up and carnal, might be turned from carnal to spiritual light. He came for judgment, that is, to set those at liberty from their dark prison, that were willing to be released, Isa. 61. 1. [2.] Eventually, and in the issue, that those who see, might be made blind: and those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set up that in contradiction to divine revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness to them who were blinded, and an infatuation to those, who by wisdom knew not God. Christ came into the world for this judgment, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom seated in men's minds. Whereas in the Jewish church, the blessings and judgments of God's government were mostly temporal, now the method of administration should be changed; and as the good subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, so arise from a due illumination of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues, not war, famine, and pestilence, as formerly, but such as arise from a judicial infatuation, hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will judge between cattle and cattle, Ezek. 34. 17.

II. Here is the Pharisees' answer to this. They were more llen of blind, not desiring to learn any good from him, but to form evil against him; and they said, Are we blind also? When Christ said that they who saw, should by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them who were the seers of the people, and valued themselves on their insight and foresight. "Now," say they, "we know that the common people are blind: but are we blind also? What! we three. the doctors, the learned in the law, the great teachers in the schools—are we blind also?" This is scandalum magnatum—a libel on the great. Note, Frequently those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have not enough to discern a tact one, have not grace enough to hear a just one. These Pharisees took this repro for a reproach, as these lawyers, Luke 11. 53. "Are we blind also?" Darest thou say that we are blind, because thou hast wisdom, but every one that is blind, is blind to a generation, for values, and veins to." Note, Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion, especially if it be a high opinion, which others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men, must needs obtain acceptance with God, than which nothing is more false and deceitful, for God sees not as man sees, by the standards of men.

III. Here is Christ's answer to this evil, which, if it did not convince them, yet silenced them: If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see, therefore your sins are remitted. They gloried in it, that they were not blind, as the common people, were not so credulous and manageable as they, but would see with their own eyes, judging by their own reason, as they thought, sufficient for their own conduct, so that they needed not any body to lead them. This very thing which they gloried in, Christ here tells them, was their shame and ruin. For,

1. If ye were blind, ye should have no sin. (1.) If ye had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor should ye have had so much sin to answer for; as now ye have. If ye were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of your own poor subjects, from whom ye have taken the key of knowledge, ye should have had comparatively no sin." The times of ignorance God winked at; insensible ignorance, though it doth not justify sin, excuses it, and lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision, than for those that rebel against the light.

(2.) If ye had been sensible of your own blindness, if ye had seen, ye should be sensible of your own blindness, and would have seen, ye would have accepted Christ as your guide, and then ye would have had no sin, ye would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state. Note, Those that are convinced of their disease, are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls than self-sufficiency.

1. But now ye say, We see; now that ye have knowledge, and are instructed out of the law, your sin is highly aggravated; and now that ye have a conceit of that knowledge, and think ye see your way better than any body can shew it you, therefore your sin remains, your case is desperate, and your disease incurable. And as those are most blind, who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous to them, who, for lack of vision, will not see, they do see. No patients are so healthily managed as those in a frenzy, who say that they are well, and nothing ails them. The sin of those who are self-conceited and self-confident, remaineth, for they reject the gospel of grace, and therefore the guilt of their sin remains unpardoned, and they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the favour of their sin remains unbroken. Scorn them a proud man in his own conceit. Have I not spoken? Then shall the Pharisees say, We see. There are no more hopes for a fool, of a publican and a harlot, than of such.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter, we have, I. Christ's parabolical discourse concerning the son of the husbandman, v. 12., 18. II. The parable of the good shepherd, v. 1. 12. III. The various sentiments of men upon it, v. 19.-21. IV. The dispute Christ had with the Jews in the temple, at the feast of dedication, v. 22., 28. V. His departure into the country thereupon, v. 40., 42.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other
way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you— Amen, Amen. This vileness asseveration speaks not in certain terms, weighty as he said: we find Amen doubled in the church's Similitudes and parables, Ps. 141. 13—72. 19—39. 52. If we would have our Amens accepted in heaven, let Christ's Amens be prevailing on earth; his repeated Amens.

In the parable we have,

1. The evidence of a thief and a robber, that comes to do mischief to the flock, and damage to the owner, v. 1. He enters not by the door, as having no lawful cause of entry, but climbs up some other way, at a window, or some breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief! What plots will they lay, what pains will they take, what hazards will they run, in their wicked pursuits! This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of God.

2. The shepherd that owns the right shepherd, who has a property in the sheep, and a care for them; He enters in by the door, as having authority, (v. 2.) and he comes to do them some good office or other, to bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick, Ezek. 34. 16. Sheep need man's care, and, in return for it, are serviceable to man; (1 Cor. 9. 7.) they clothe and feed those by whom they are cased and fed.

3. The ready entrance that the shepherd finds; (v. 3.) To him the porter openeth. Anciently they had their sheep-folds within the outer gates of their houses, for the greater safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but such as the porter opened to, or the master of the house gave the keys to.

4. The care he takes, and the provision he makes for his sheep; The sheep hear his voice, when he speaks familiarly to them, when they come into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses; and, which is more, he calls his own sheep by name, so exact is the notice he takes of them, the account he keeps of them; and he leads them out from the fold to the green pastures; and (v. 4, 5.) when he turns them out to graze, he does not drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) he goes before them, to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them, and they, being used to it, follow him, and are safe.

5. The strange attendance of the sheep upon the shepherd; They know his voice, so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger; (for the ox knows his own, Isa. 1. 3.) and a stranger they do not follow, but, as suspecting some ill design, will flee from him, not knowing his voice, but that it is not the voice of their own shepherd. This is the parable; we have the key to it, Ezek. 34. 31. Ye my flock are men, and I am your God.

Let us observe something from the parable itself.

(1.) That good men are like sheep to their Creator. Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are like good men and sheep, who, being disposed to their master's will, have the good qualities of sheep, harmless and inoffensive as sheep: meek and quiet, without noise: patient as sheep under the hand both of the shearer and of the butcher: useful and profitable, tame and tractable, to the shepherd, and sociable one with another, and much used in sacrifices.

(2.) The church of God in the world is a sheep,
fold, into which the children of God that were scattered abroad, are gathered together, (ch. 11. 32.) and which is God's good fold, Ezek. 34. 14. See Mic. 2. 12. This fold is well fortified, for God himself is as a wall of fire about it, Zech. 2. 5.

(3.) This sheep-fold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers; crafty seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors that destroy and devour, greedy wolves, Acts 20. 29. Thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from him, to sacrifice them to death, and their food from them, yet they neglect and perish for lack of it. Wolves in sheep's clothing, Matt. 7. 15.

(4.) The great Shepherd of the sheep takes wonderful care of the flock of and all that belong to it. God is the great Shepherd, Ps. 23. 1—80. 1. He knows them as his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there; speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them, to set them in the way of his steps.

(5.) The under-shepherds, who are intrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust; magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests. They are to watch for the word of God faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel ordinances duly administered, taking the oversight of them; they must enter by the door of a regular ordination, and to such the porter will open; the Spirit of Christ will set before them an open door, give them authority in the church, and assurance in their own bosoms. They must know the members of their flock by name, and watch over them; must lead them by the way and feed them, and build them up, because they know not his voice. It is dangerous following those in whom we discern not the voice of Christ, and who would draw us from faith in him to fancies concerning him. And they who have experienced the power and efficacy of divine truths upon their souls, and have the savour and relish of them, have a strange satisfaction to discover Satan's wiles, and to discern between good and evil. The Jews ignorance of Christ, and of the drift and meaning of this discourse; (v. 6.) Jesus spake this parable to them, this figurative, but wise, elegant, and instructive discourse, but they understood not what the things were which he spake unto them; were not aware whom he meant by the thieves and robbers, and whom by the good Shepherd. It is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ, that they do not understand it, and they do not because they will not, and because they will miscarryerstand it. They have no acquaintance with, nor taste of, the things themselves, and therefore do not understand the parables and comparisons with which they are illustrated. The Pharisees had a great conceit of their own knowledge, and could not hear that it should be questioned, and yet they had not sense enough to understand the things that Jesus spake of; they were dull and blind; and therefore they, the greatest pretenders to knowledge are most ignorant in the things of God.

(II.) Christ's explication of this parable, opening the particulars of it fully. Whatever difficulties there may be in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, we shall find him ready to explain himself, as he be but willing to understand him. We shall find our scriptures, by persevering in the search of them, and the blessed Spirit interpreting the Willy of God, take us into God's own secret counsels and purposes.

Christ, in the parable, had distinguished the shepherd from the robber by this, that he enters in by the door. And, in the explanation of the parable, he makes himself to be both the door by which the sheep enter, and the Shepherd that enters by the door. Though it may be a similitude in the word, yet we may take some respect to the door and the shepherd, it is no simulation in doctrine to make Christ have his authority from himself, as he has life in himself; and himself to enter by his own blood, as the door, into the holy place.

1. Christ is the door. This he saith to them who pretended to seek for righteousness, but, like the Pharisees, wereured themselves to find the door, where it was not to be found. He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only shepherds, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds; I am the door of the sheep-fold; the door of the church. (1.) He is a door shut, to keep out thieves and robbers, and such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God than the interposition of the Lord Jesus, and his blood, temple, power, and glory, because, by it, all his people are held within it, is a door open, for passage and communication. (2.) By Christ, as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, ch. 14. 6. (3.) We go in and out in a religious conversation, assisted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his name, Zech. 10. 12. (4.) By him God comes to his church, visits it, and communicates himself to it. (5.) By him, he enters into his church, having become the door into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. 25. 34. More properly.

First, Christ is the door of the shepherds, so that none come not in by him, are to be accounted pastors, but (according to the rule laid down, v. 1.) thieves and robbers; (though they pretended to be shepherds;) but the shep had not heard them. This refers to all these that had the character of shepherds in Israel, whether magistrates or ministers, have ever made pretensions to be regarded as the Messiah, or any other expectations of men than what were suggested by their own carnal interest.

Observe, 1. The character given of them; they are thieves and robbers; (v. 8.) all that went before him, not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds, but all that anticipated his commission, and went before he sent them, (Jer. 23. 21.) that assumed a precedence and superiority above him, as the antichrist is said to do himself, 2 Thess. 2. 4. The Scribes, and Pharisees, and chief priests, all, them as many as have come before me, that have endeavored to forestall my interest, and to prevent my gaining any room in the minds of people, by possessing them with prejudices against me, they are thieves and robbers, and steal those hearts which have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property. They condemned our Saviour as a thief and robber, because he did not come in his own name as the door, nor take out a licence from them; but he shews that they ought to have received their commission from him, and to have been admitted by him, and to have come after him, which because they did not, but stepped before him, they were thieves and robbers. They would not come in his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and the door the shepherd has admitted, vacated and superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are not shepherds of his church, however they pretend to be shepherds, may shepherds of shepherds.

2. The care taken to preserve the sheep from
them, but the sheep did not hear them. Those that had a true savour of piety, that were spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God and godliness, could by no means approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their doctrine. Their Master, without any particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashed hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day; for nothing is more opposite to true christianity than Pharisaism; nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout than their hypocritical duties.

&c., Christ is the Door of the sheep; (v. 8.) By me (Acts—through me as the door) if any man enter into the sheep-fold as one of the flock, he shall be saved; shall not only be safe from thieves and robbers, but shall be happy, he shall go in and out.

Here are, 1. Plain directions how to come into the fold; we must come in by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in him as the great Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. There is no entering into God's church but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men but those that are willing to submit to the grace and government of the Redeemer. We must know him by the door of faith (Acts 14. 27.) since the door of innocency is shut against us, and that pass become unpassable, Gen. 3. 24.

2. Precious promises to those that observe this direction:

(1.) They shall be saved hereafter; that is the privilege of their home; these sheep shall be saved from being distracted and imprisoned by divine justice, for trespass done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great Shepherd; saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be for ever happy.

(2.) In the mean time they shall go in and out, and find pasture; that is the privilege of their way. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ, shall be in his fold as a man at his own house, where he has free ingress, regress, and regresses. True believers are at home in Christ; when they go out, they are not shut out as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not shut in as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, they come in to the fold at night; and in both the Shepherd leads and keeps them, and they find better pastures, and more than enough in the fold. In public, in private, they have the word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported and nourished, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied; they are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

2. Christ is the Shepherd, v. 10, 11. He was prophesied of under the Old Testament as a Shepherd, Is. 40. 11. Ezek. 34. 23.—32. Zech. 13.

7. In the New Testament he is spoken of as the great Shepherd, (Heb. 13. 20.) the chief Shepherd, (1 Pet. 5. 4.) the Shepherd and bishop of our souls, 1 Pet. 2. 25. God, our great owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, has constituted his Son Jesus to be our Shepherd; and here again and again, under the New Testament, he has all that care of the church, a care which is such a good care as the shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church, and every believer, that the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

(1.) Christ is a Shepherd, and not as the thief, not as that come not in by the door. Observe,

The mischievous design of the thief; (v. 10.) The thief cometh not with any good intent, but to steal and to kill, and to destroy. First, Those whom they steal, whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they kill and destroy spiritually; for the heretics they firmly bring in, are damnable. Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. This is the chief conspiration, by keeping it in an unknown tongue, steal away the inventions by mainning them and altering the property of them, that steal away Christ's ordinances to put their own inventions in the room of them, they kill and destroy; ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. Secondly, Those whom they cannot steal, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away, because all the power of Christ is against such traitors and murderers to kill and destroy corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed, is in danger to be slain.

2. The gracious design of the Shepherd; he is come,

First, To give life to the sheep. In opposition to the design of the thief, and is to kill and destroy, which was the design of the Scribes and Pharisees; Christ saith, I am come among men, 1. That they might have life. He came to put life into the flock, the church in general, which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones than like a pasture covered over with flocks. Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and to revive dying zeal, to set them of his flock free, to unbind their hands; that these great broken, (Ezek. 34. 16.) and this to his church is as life from the dead. He came to give life to particular believers; life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened; (Gen. 2. 17.) that we might have life, as a criminal has when he is pardoned, as a sick man when he is cured, a dead man when he is raised, a patient when he is cured, a just man and at last glorified. 2. That they might have it more abundantly, &c. As we read it, it is comparative, that they might have a life more abundant than that which was lost and for feitied by sin; more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan; more abundant than could have been expected, or than we are able to ask or think. But it may be construed without an atote of comparison, that they might have abundance, or, might have it abundantly. Christ came to give life and &c. as something more, something better, life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice; life in abundance is eternal life; life without death, or fear of death; life as a daughter, 28. To give his life for the sheep; and this, that he might give life to them; (v. 11.) The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 1. It is the propriety of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob died so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. 31. 40. So did David, when he slew the lion with his bare hand, the king, one of such a shepherd of souls was St. Paul, who would gladly spend, and be spent, for their service, and counted not his life dear to him, in comparison with their salvation. But 2. It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd, to give his life to purchase his flock, (Acts 20. 28.) to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

(3.) Christ is a good shepherd, and not as a hiving; there were many that were not thieves, aiming to kill and destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; foolish shepherds, idle shepherds, Zech. 11. 13, 17. In opposition to these,

1. Christ here calls himself the good Shepherd, (v. 11.) and again, (v. 14.) I am the good Shepherd, that good Shepherd whom God had pro
mixed. Note, Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds, the best in the world to take the oversight of souls, none so skilful, so faithful, so tender, as he, no such feeder and leader, no such protector and leader of souls as he.

[2.] He proves himself so, in opposition to all hirelings, 12-14. \[1.

The carelessness of the hireling, or unfaithful shepherd described: (v. 12, 13.) he that is a hireling, that is employed as a servant, and is paid for his pains, whose own the sheep are not, who has neither profit nor loss by them, he sees the wolf coming, or some other danger threatening, and he leaves the sheep to the wolf, for in truth he careth not for them. Here is plain reference to that of the idle shepherd, Amos v. 15.

Here is the description of bad shepherds, magistrates and ministers, both their bad principles and their bad practices.

1. Their bad principles, the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls in trying times to betray their trust, and in quiet times not to mind it? What makes them false, and apt to lead their flock astray? It is, because they are hirelings, and care not for the sheep. That is, (1.) The wealth of the world is the chief of their good; it is because they are hirelings. They undertook the shepherd's office, as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ and doing good. It is the love of money, and of their own bodies, that carries them on in it. Not that they are hirelings, who, while the master is near, are indifferent, or the learner, or the labourer is worthy of his meat: and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry; but those are hirelings, that love the wages more than the work, and set their hearts upon that, as the hireling is said to do, Deut. 24. 13. See 1 Sam. 2. 19. Isa. 56. 11. Mic. 3. 5, 11. (2.) The work of their place is the least of their care; they value not the sheep, are unconcerned in the souls of others, their business is to be their brothers' lords, not their brothers' keepers or helpers; they seek their own things, and do not, like Timothy, naturally care for the state of souls; what can be expected but that they will fly when the wolf comes? He careth not for the sheep, for he is one whose own the sheep are not; in one respect we may say of the best of the under shepherds, that the sheep are not their own, they have not the same self-interest in them as in others, because they are the flock, which will all be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchmen.

Secondly, See here the grace and tenderness of the good Shepherd, set over against the former, as it was in the prophecy, (Ezek. 34. 21; 32. Ec.) I am the good Shepherd. It is matter of comfort to the church and all her friends, that, however she may be damaged and endangered by the treachery and mismanagement of her under officers, the Lord Jesus is, and will be, as he ever has been, the Good Shepherd.

Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness.

1. His acquainting himself with his flock, with all that belong, or in any wise appertain to his flock, which are of two sorts, both known to him.

[2.] He knows his sheep, and seares them, (v. 14, 15.) as the good shepherd; (v. 3, 4.) I know my sheep, and am known of mine. Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers: they know one another very well, and knowledge notes affection.

[1.] Christ knows his sheep. He knows with a distinguishing eye who are his sheep, and who are not; he knows every one of them, his hirelings, hearkens to the voices of his hirelings, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He knows with a favourable eye those that in truth are his own sheep; he takes cognizance of their state, concerns himself for them, has a tender and affectionate regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession he ever lives to make within the veil; he visits them graciously by the Spirit, and has communion with them, he knoweth them, he approveth and accepts of them, as Ps. 1. 6. 7. 18. Exod. 33. 17. [2.] He is known of them. He observes them with an eye of favour, and they observe him with an eye of faith. Christ's knowinge his sheep, is put before their knowing him, for he knew and loved us first; (John 4. 16.) and it is not so much our knowing him as our being known of him, that is our happiness, Gal. 4. 9. Yet it is the character of Christ, that they know him; they know him from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, know his voice, know by experience the power of his death. Christ speaks here as if he gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respect an honour to him.

Upon this occasion Christ mentions (v. 15.) the mutual acquaintance between his Father and him; as the Father know me, even so know I the Father. Now this may be considered, either, First, As the ground of the intimate acquaintance and relation which subsist between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, which is the bond of that relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which we may be sure stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood the matter of themselves, and, if there could be no mistake which might leave the matter at any uncertainty, or bring it into any hazard, the Lord Jesus knoweth whom he hath chosen, and is sure of them; (ch. 13. 18.) and they also know whom they have trusted, and are sure of him; (2 Tim. 1. 12.) and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and the Son had of one another's mind, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Or, Secondly, As an apt similitude, illustrating the intimacy that is between Christ and believers; it may be connected with the foregoing words, thus; I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father know me, and I know the Father; compare ch. 17. 21. 1. As the Father knew the Son, and loved him, and owned him in his sufferings, when he was acquainted with all that were not his, so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful tender eye upon them, will be with them when they are left alone, as he was with him. 2. As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed him, and always did those things that pleased him; and confided in him as his God, even when he seemed to forsake him, so believers know Christ with an obediential filial regard.

[2.] He is acquainted with those that are hereafter to be of his flock; (v. 16.) Other sheep I have, have a right to, and an interest in, which are not of
this fold, of the Jewish church, them also I must bring: Observe.

3. The eye that Christ had to the poor Gentiles; he had sometimes intimated his special concern for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to them indeed his personal ministry was confined, but, saith he, I have other sheep. Those who in process of time should believe in Christ, and be brought into obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here called sheep, and he is said to have them, though as yet they were not members of his church; because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ in the councils of divine love from eternity. Christ has a right to many a soul by virtue of the Father's donation and his own purchase, which he has not yet the possession of; thus he had much people in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, Acts 18. 10. Those other sheep I have, saith Christ, I have them on my heart, have them in my mind, as sure to have them as if I had them already.

Now Christ speaks of those other sheep, First, To take off the contempt that was put upon him, as having few followers, as having but a little flock, and therefore, if a good shepherd, yet a poor shepherd; "But," saith he, "I have more sheep than you see." Secondly, To take down the pride and vain-glory of the Jews, who think all the Motions of my Father's love towards his sheep from among them. "No," saith Christ, "I have others whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of your flock."

2. The purposes and resolves of his grace concerning them; "Them also I must bring, bring home to God, bring into the church, and, in order to that, bring off from their vain conversation, bring them back to the path of their wanderings, as that lost sheep," Luke 15. 5. But why must he bring them? What was the necessity? First, The necessity of their case required it; "I must bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly, for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them." Secondly, The necessity of his own engagements required it; he must bring them, or he would not be faithful to his trust, and true to his undertaking. "They are, and must be saved, and I have paid for, and therefore I must not neglect them nor leave them to perish." He must in honour bring those whom he was intrusted with.

3. The happy effect and consequence of this, in two things. First, "They shall hear my voice. Not only my voice shall be heard among them; whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the sound of the gospel shall go to the ends of the earth, it shall be heard by them; I will speak, and give to them to hear." Faith comes by hearing, and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ is both a means and an evidence of our being brought to Christ, and to God by him. Secondly, There shall be one fold and one Shepherd. As there is one Shepherd, so there shall be one fold. Both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to the feet of their Shepherd, shall have a joint and equal share in the privileges of it, without distinction. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in him; two sticks shall become one in the hand of the Lord. Note, One Shepherd makes one fold; one Christ makes one church. As the church is one in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it must be sought to be one in love and affection. Eph. 4. 3-6.

2. Christ's offering himself for his sheep, is another proof of his being a good shepherd, and in this he yet more commended his love, v. 15, 17, 18.

(1.) He declares his purpose of dying for his flock; (v. 15.) I lay down my life for the sheep. He not only ventured his life for them, (in such a case, the hope of saving it may balance the fear of losing it,) but he actually deposited it, and submitted to a necessity of dying for our sins, not merely as a purchase, but as a pawn or pledge; as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life, the same, not only for the good of the sheep, but in their stead. Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising change, the shepherd offers himself for his sheep.

When David, the shepherd of Israel, was himself guilty, and the destroying angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, These sheep, what evil have they done? Let thy hand be against me, 2 Sam. 24. 17. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless; and his sheep, what evil have they not done? Yet he saith, Let thine hand be against me. Christ here seems to refer to that prophecy, Zechar 13. 7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; and though the smiting of the shepherd be for the present the scattering of the flock, it is in order to the gathering of them in.

(2.) He takes off the offence of the cross, which to many is a stone of stumbling, by four considerations.

1. That his laying down his life for the sheep, was the condition, the performance of which entitled him to the honours and powers of his exalted state; (v. 17.) "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. Upon these terms I am, as Mediator, to expect my Father's acceptance and approbation, and the glory designed me—that I become a sacrifice for the chosen remnant. Not but that, as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from eternity, but, as God-man, as Immanuel, he was therefore beloved of the Father, because he undertook to die for the sheep; therefore God's soul delighted in him as his Elect, because herein he was his faithful Servant; (Isa. 42. 1.) therefore he said, This is my beloved Son. What an instance is this of God's love to man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us! See what a value Christ puts upon his Father's love, that, to recommend himself to that, he would lay down his life for the sheep. Did he think God's love recompense sufficient for all his services and sufferings, and shall we think it too little for our's, and court the smiles of the world to make it up? Therefore doth my Father love me, that is, me, and all that by faith become one with me; me, and the mystical body, because I lay down my life. Christ's having the purchase of his Father's love both to him and us."

2. That his laying down his life was in order to his resuming it; I lay down my life, that I may receive it again. First, This was the effect of his Father's love, and the first step of his exaltation, the fruit of that love. Because he was God's holy One, he must not see corruption, Ps. 16. 10. God loved him too well to leave him in the grave. Secondly, This was the evidence of his Father's love; in laying down his life he might have an opportunity of declaring himself to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection, Rom. 1. 4. By a divine stratagem (like that before Ai, Josh. 8. 15.) he yielded to death, as if he were smitten before it, that he might the more gloriously conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He laid down a willed body, that he might resume a glorified one, fit to ascend into the world of spirits; laid down a life adapted to this world, but resumed it, for the glory of his Father."

* This statement does not appear to be supported by the words of our Lord, or by any part of scripture; a consideration of it in the text, it is a new and unexpected view of it, especially as it supplies the adversaries of the atonement with materials for abundant and plausible declamation.—Ed.
one adapted to the other, like a corn of wheat, ch. 12. 24.

[3.] That he was perfectly voluntary in his suffering and death (v. 18.) "No skill of death can force my life from me against my will, but I freely lay it down of myself, I deliver it as my own act and deed, for I have (which no man has) power to lay it down, and take it again."

First, See here the power of Christ, as the Lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had in himself.

1. He had power to keep his life against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seems to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered, otherwise it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands because his hour was come. No man taketh my life from me. This was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero.

2. He had power to lay down his life. (1.) He had ability to do it. He could, when he pleased, slip the knot of union between soul and body, and, without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other: having voluntarily taken up a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again; which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, They laid him in the sepulchre. (2.) He had authority to do it, &c. Though we could find instruments of cruelty, whereby to make an end of our own lives, yet I fumpossum quod jure possumus—We can do that, and that only, which we can do lawfully; we are not at liberty to do it; but Christ had a sovereign authority to dispose of his own life as he pleased; he was no debtor as we are either to life or death, but perfectly sui juris.

He had power to take it again; we have not; our life, once laid down, is as water spilt upon the ground; but Christ, when he laid down his life, still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it again. Parting with it by a voluntary conveyance, he might limit the surrender at pleasure, and he did it with a power of revocation, which was necessary to preserve the intentions of the surrender. Secondly, See here the grace of Christ; since none could demand his life of him by law, he restored it by force, he laid it down of himself for our redemption. He offered himself to be the Saviour; Lo, I am come; and then the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself to be a Sacrifice, Here am I, let those go their way; by the which will we are satisfied, Heb. 10. 16. He was both the offerer and the offering, so that his laying down his life was his offering up himself.

[4.] That he did all this by the express order and appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately resolves the whole affair; This commandment have I received of my Father; not such a commandment as made what he did necessary, prior to his own suspension and undertaking; but this was the law of meditation, which he was willing to have written in his heart, so as to delight in doing the will of God according to it, Ps. 40. 8.

19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an account of the people's different sentiments concerning Christ, on occasion of the foregoing discourse; there was a division, a schism, among them, they differed in their opinions, which threw them into heats and parties. Such a ferment as this they had been in before; (ch. 7. 43.—9. 16.) and where there has once been a division, a little thing will make a great rumour. This division was occasioned by the sayings of Christ, which, one would think, should rather have united them all in him as their centre; but they set them at variance, as Christ foresaw, Luke 12. 51. But it is better that men should be divided about the doctrine of Christ, than united in the service of sin, Luke 11. 21. So what the debate was in particular was this;

I. Some upon this occasian made all of Christ and of his sayings, either openly in the face of the assembly, for his enemies were very impatient, or privately among themselves; they said, He has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?

1. They reprove him as a demoniac. The worst of characters is put upon the best of men. He is a distracted man, he rates and is delirious, and no more to be heard, than the rambles of a man in Bedlam. Thus still, if a man preaches seriously and pressingly of another world, he shall be said to talk like an enthusiast; and it is all imputed to fancy, a heated brain, and a crazed imagination.

2. They ridicule his hearers; Why hear ye him? Why do you so far encourage him, as to take notice of what he says? Note, Satan runs many, by putting them out of conceit with the word and ordinances, and representing it as a weak and silly thing to attend upon them. Men would not be thus laughed out of their necessary food, and yet suffer themselves thus to be laughed out of what is more necessary. They that hear Christ, and mix faith with what they hear, will soon he able to give a good account why they hear him.

II. Others stood up in defence of him and his discourse; and though the stream ran strong, dared to swim against it; and though perhaps they did not believe on him as the Messiah, yet they could not hear him thus abused.

If they could say no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a man in his wits, that he had not a devil, that he was neither senseless nor graceless. The absurd and most unreasonable reproaches, that have sometimes been cast upon Christ and his gospel, have excited those to appear for him and it, whether from the love of great affection to either. Two things they plead:

1. The excellency of his doctrine; These are not the words of him that hath a devil; they are not idle words; distracted men are not used to talk at this rate. These are not the words of one that is either violently possessed with a devil, or voluntary in league with the devil. Christianity, if it be the true religion, is certainly the greatest cheat that ever was put upon the world; and if so, it must be of the devil, who is the father of all lies: but it is certain that the doctrine of Christ is no doctrine of devils, for it is levelled directly against the devil's kingdom, and Satan is too subtle to be divided against himself. So much of holiness there is in the words of Christ, that we may conclude they are not the words of one that has a devil, and therefore are the words of one that was sent of God; are not from hell, and therefore cannot be from the devil.

2. The power of his miracles: Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? that is, a man that has a devil. Neither mad men nor bad men use to work miracles. Devils are not such lords of the power of nature, as to be able to work such miracles; nor are they such friends to mankind, as to be willing to work them if they were able. The devil will sooner put out men's eyes than open them. Therefore Jesus had not a devil.
22. And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of dedication, and it was winter. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30. I and my Father are one. 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him, 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

We have here another encounter between Christ and the Jews in the temple, in which it is hard to say which is more strange, the gracious words that came out of his mouth, or the spiteful ones that came out of their's.

1. We have here the time when this conference was: It was at the feast of dedication, and it was winter, a feast that was annually observed by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar, and the purging of the temple, by Judas Maccabaeus, after the temple had been profaned, and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large in the history of the Maccabees; (lib. 1. cap. 4.) we have the prophecy of it, Dan. 8. 13, 14. See more of the feast, 2 Mac. 1. 13. The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead, and, in remembrance of it, they kept an annual feast on the twenty-fifth day of the month Caslu, about the beginning of December, and seven days after. The celebrating of it was not confined to Jerusalem, as that of the divine feasts was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a holy time, (it is only a divine institution that can sanctify a day,) but as a good time, as the days of Purim. Esth. 9. 18. Christ forecast to be now at Jerusalem, not in honour of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that he might improve those eight days of vacation for good purposes.

2. The place where it was; (v. 23.) Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch; so called. (Acts 3. 11.) not because built by Solomon, but because built in the same place with that which had borne his name in the first temple, and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked, to observe the proceedings of the great sanhedrim that sat there; (Ps. 82. 1.) he walked with authority, to give audience to any that should apply themselves to him, to offer them his service. He walked, as it should seem, for some time alone, as one neglected; walked pensively, in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ, may find him in the temple, and walk with him there.

3. The conference itself, in which observe,

1. A weighty question put to him by the Jews, v. 24. They came round about him, to tease him; he was waiting for an opportunity to do them a kindness, and they took the opportunity to do him a mischief. ill-will for good will is no rare and uncommon return. He could not enjoy himself, no not in the temple, his Father's house, without disturbance. They came about him, as it were, to lay siege to him, to entice him to say something improper; they came about him as if they had a joint and unanimous desire to be satisfied; came as one man, pretending an impartial and important inquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon our Lord Jesus; and they seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of all the Jews; How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, how dost thou keep us in suspense? How long are we to doubt whether thou be the Christ or no, and not able to determine the question? Now, [1.] It was the effect of their infidelity and powerful prejudices, that after our Lord Jesus had so fully proved himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them he was Christ; and their corruptions, which said No, because he was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics, may, in the event of any future age, find that the source of the rise of the argument in question is in vain; the present arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections, but the scales may still hang even. [2.] It was an instance of their impudence and presumption, that they laid the blame of the doubting upon Christ himself, as if he made them to doubt by inconsistency with himself, whereas in truth they made themselves doubt by indulging their prejudices. When an individual's sayings appear to presage the fault is not in the object, they are all plain to him that understands, but in the eye, Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to doubt.

2. They challenge him to give a direct and categorical answer, whether he was the Messiah or no; If thou be the Christ, as many believe thou art, tell us plainly, not by parables, as, I am the light of the world, and the good Shepherd, and the like.
out to dition verbs—in so many words, either that then art the Christ, or as John Baptist, that thou art not," ch. 1. 20. Now this pressing query of their's was exceedingly good, they pretended to be desirous to know the truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was really bad, and put with an ill design; for if he should tell them plainly that he was the Christ, they would have this to say presently, These beastly wild beasts of the desert, as they had, ch. 3. 13.

11. Christ's answer to this question, in which
1. He justifies himself as not at all accessory to their infidelity and scepticism; referring them, (1.) To what he had said; I have told you. He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of man; that he had life in himself, and that he had authority to execute judgment. And is not this the Christ then? These things he had told them, and the thing he had done; and they might refer them again, merely to gratify their curiosity. Ye believed not. They pretended that they only doubted, but Christ tells them that they did not believe. Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us, nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind, but to be thankful for divine revelation as we have it, which if we do not believe, neither would we be persuaded at all, so ever so much adapted to our humour. (2.) He refers them to his works, to the example of his life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficial, and of a piece with his doctrine; and especially to his miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain that no man could do those miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

2. He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the most plain and powerful arguments used to convince them; Ye believed not, and again, Ye believed not. Ye still are what ye always were, obstinate in your unbelief.

But the reason he gives, is very surprising; Ye believed not, because ye are not of my sheep: ye believe not me, nor does he believe that he is God's. We have no more to make him obnoxious to the jealousy and severity of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king, and therefore, whoever pretended to be the Messiah, would be prosecuted as a traitor, which was the thing they would have been at; for let him tell them ever so plainly that he was Christ, they would have this to say presently, These beastly wild beasts of the desert, as they had, ch. 3. 13.

1. They hear his voice, (v. 27.) for they know it to be his, (v. 4.) and he has undertaken that they shall hear it, v. 16. They discern it, It is the voice (as they may believe) of the Son of God. They delight in it, are in their element when they are sitting at his feet to hear his word. They do according to it, and make his word their rule. Christ will not account these his sheep, that are deaf to his calls, deaf to his charms, Ps. 88. 3.

2. They follow him, they submit to his conduct by a cheerful obedience to all his commands, and a pleasant conformity to his Spirit and pattern. The word of command has always been, Follow me. We must eye him as our leader and captain, and tread in his steps, and walk as he walked; follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit; follow the lamb, the man gives the captain, the leader of the flock, whithersoever he goes. In vain do we hear his voice if we do not follow him.

3. He has undertaken that it was their great unhappiness and misery not to be of Christ's sheep, he here describes the blessed state and case of those that are, which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those that were not of his sheep.

[1.] Our Lord Jesus takes cognizance of his sheep: They hear my voice, and I know them. He is not the shepherd, he is the sheep. A man is not a greater thing, till he is a particular regard to every individual, (Ps. 34. 6.) he knows their wants and desires; knows their souls in adversity, where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at hand.

[2.] He has provided a happiness for them, suited to them; I give unto them eternal life, v. 28. First, He estates them upon them, it is rich and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a dying soul, therefore the happiness provided is life, suited to his nature. Man has an immortal soul, therefore the happiness provided is eternal life, running parallel with his duration. Life eternal is the felicity and chief good of a soul immortal. Secondly, The manner of conveyance is free; I give it to them; it is not bargained and sold upon a valuable consideration, but given, gratuitously, 1 Cor. 15. 57. The donor has power to give it. He who is the Fountain of life, and Father of eternity, has authorized Christ to give eternal life, ch. 17. 2. Not I will give it, but I do give it, it is a gift in present. He gives the assurance of it, the pledge and earnest of it, the first fruits and forerunses of it; that spiritual life, which is eternal life began, heaven in the seed, in the bud, in the embryo.

[3.] He has undertaken for their security and preservation to this happiness. First, They shall be saved from everlasting punishment. They shall by no means perish for ever; so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction; the soul not annihilated, but ruined; its being continued, but its comfort and happiness irrecoverably lost. All believers are saved from this; whatever cross they may come under, they shall not come into condemnation, Ps. 106. 10. They shall not perish for ever, they shall not do unto them. They shall be saved from this, whatever cross they may come under, they shall not come into condemnation, Ps. 106. 9. Shepherds that have large flocks, often lose some of the sheep and suffer them to perish; but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish, none. Secondly, They cannot be kept from their everlasting happiness; it is in reserve, but he that gives it them will preserve them to it.

1. His own power is engaged for them; Neither
shall any man pluck them out of my hand. A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The Shepherd is so careful of their welfare, that he has them not only within his fold, and under his eye, but in his hand, interested in his special love, and taken under his special protection; (all his saints are in thy hand, Deut. 33. 3.) yet their enemies are so strong as to attempt to pluck them out of his hand; his, whose own they are, if they would, but they cannot, they shall not, do it. Note, Those are safe, who are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. The saints are preserved in Christ Jesus; and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from him, by persecuting and threatening them, but Christ saith that they shall not prevail.

2. His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, v. 29. He now appeared in weakness, and, lest his security should therefore be thought insufficient, he brings in his Father as a further security. Observe, (1.) The power of the Father: My Father is greater than all; greater than all the other friends of the church, all the other shepherds, magistrates, or ministers, and able to do that for them which they cannot do. Those shepherds slumber and sleep, and it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands; but he keeps his flock day and night. He is greater than all the enemies of the church, all the opposition given to her interests, and able to secure her from all her insuls; he is greater than all the combined force of hell and earth. He is greater in wisdom than the old serpent, though noted for subtlety; greater in strength than the great red dragon, though his name be legion, and his title principaliies and powers. The devil and his angels have had many a push, many a pluck for the mastery, but have never yet prevailed; Rev. 12. 7, 8. The Lord on high is mighty.

(2.) The interest of the Father in the sheep, for the sake of which this power is engaged for them; "It is my Father that gave them me, and he is concerned in honour to uphold his gift." They were given to the Son as a trust to be managed by him, and therefore God will still look after them. All the divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of the Father's designs. 

(3.) The safety of the saints inferred from these two. If this be so, then none (neither man nor devil) is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand, not able to deprive them of the grace they have, or to hinder them from the glory that is designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had himself experienced the power of his Father upholding and strengthening him, and therefore the safety of all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer, will secure the glory of the redeemed.

Further to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, he asserts the union of these two undertakers; "I and my Father are one, and have jointly and severally undertaken for the protection of the saints, and their perfection." This speaks more than the harmony, and consent, and good understanding, that were between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption, every good man is so far one with God, as to concur with him; therefore it must be meant the ownness of the nature of Father and Son, that there are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The fathers urged this, both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two; and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are one. If we should altogether hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at him would speak it out, for the Jews understood him as hereby making himself God, (v. 35.) and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of his hand, because they could not pluck them out of the Father's hand; which had not been a controversy or a question, if the Father had been an almighty power with the Father, and, consequently, been one with him in essence and operation.

III. The rage, the outrage, of the Jews against him for this discourse; The Jews took up stones again, v. 31. It is not the word that is used before, ch. 8. 59, but πετοσκόι—tho they carried stones, got such crowbars as were good for the shock of God, such as they used in scoring inesthensible men, in scoring inesthensible malleators; they caught them up in some place at a distance, as it were preparing things for his execution without any judicial process; as if he were convicted of blasphemy upon the notorious evidence of the fact, which needed no further trial. The absurdity of this insult which the Jews offered to Christ, will appear, if we consider, 1. That they had insultingly not to say insubordinately, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he were the Christ or no; and yet now that he not only said it, but proved himself so, they condemned him for it as a malleator. If the preachers of the truth propose it modestly, they are branded as cowards; if boldly, as insolent; but wisdom is justified of her children.

2. That when they had made the like attempt before, it was, he escaped through the midst of them; (ch. 8. 59.) yet they repeat their halffold attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though never any hardened themselves against him, and prospered.

IV. Christ's tender expostulation with them upon this occasion of his being thus treated; v. 43. Jesus answered, what they did, for we do not find that they said any thing, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd that they had gathered about him, to join with them, crying, Stone him, stone him, as afterwards, Crucify him, crucify him. When he could have answered them with fire from heaven, he mildly replied, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; or what works do you stone me? Words so very tender, that one would think they should have melted a heart of stone.

In dealing with his enemies he still argued from his works, men evidence what they are by what they do. His good works—σωλην εξωτερικον, excellent, eminent works. Opera extimia vel processa; it signifies both great works and good works.

1. The divine power of his works convicted them of the most obstinate infidelity. They were works from his Father, so far above the reach and course of nature, as to prove him that did them, sent of God, and acting by commission from him. These works they shewed them, he did them openly before the people, and not in a corner; his works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive and impartial spectators. He did shew them his works by candle-light, as they that do them only for show, but he shewed them at noon-day before the world, ch. 18. 20. See Ps. 111. 6. His works so udenly demonstrated, that they were an incontestable demonstration of the validity of his commission.

2. The divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works he did among them were not only magnificent, but magnificent not only works of wonder to amaze them, but works of love and kindness to do them good, and so make them good, and endear himself to them. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils,
which were favours, not only to the persons concerned, but to the public; these he had repeated, and multiplied: "Note, for which of these do ye stone me? Ye cannot say that I have done you any harm, or given you any just provocation; if therefore ye will go on with your treachery, but at all events do some good work, some good turn done you; tell me for which." Note, (1.) The horrid ingratitude that is in our sins against God and Jesus Christ, is a great aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceedingly sinful. See how God argues to this purpose, Deut. 32. 6. Jer. 2. 5. Mic. 6. 5. (2.) We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only perform good works, but are the servants of our love, Ps. 33. 12. 41. 9. When he asks, For which of these do ye stone me, as he intimates the abundant satisfaction he had in his own innocence, which gives a man courage in a suffering day, so he puts his persecutors upon considering what was the true reason of their enmity, and asking, as all those should do, that create trouble to their neighbour, Why persecute we him? As Job advises his friends to do, Job 19. 28. V. Their vindication of the attempt they made upon Christ, and the cause upon which they ground- ed their prosecution, v. 35. What sin will warrant fig-leaves with which to cover itself, when even the bloody persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves? They thought that such enemies to their country, as to persecute him for a good work: For a good work we stone thee not. For indeed they would scarcely allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man, (ch. 5.) and the blind man, (ch. 9.) were so far from being acknowledged good services to the town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath-day. But if he had done any good works, they would not own that they stoned him for them, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, ch. 11. 47. Thus, though most absurd, thy could not be brought to own their absurdities. 2. They would be thought such friends to God and his glory, as to prosecute him for blasphemy; Because that thou, being a man, maketh thyself God. (v. 40.) This pretended zeal for the law, they seem mightily concerned for the honour of the divine majesty, and to be seized with a religious horror at that which they imagined to be a reproach to it. A blasphemer was to be stoned, Lev. 24. 16. This law, they thought, did not only justify, but sanctify, what they attempted, as Acts 26. 9. Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more courageous than a well-informed conscience, so nothing is more outrageous than a mistaken one. See Isa. 66. 5. ch. 16. 2. (2.) A real enmity to the gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront than by representing Christ as a blasphemer. It is no new thing for the worst of characters to be put upon the best of men, by those that resolve to give them the worst of treatment. 1. The crime laid to his charge is blasphemy, speaking reproachfully and despitely of God. God himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name, and so shows its ill-will. 2. The proof of the crime; Thou, being a man, makest thyself God. As it is God's glory, that he is God, which the scribes and Pharisees ascribed to him; so it is his glory, that beside him there is no other, which we rob him of when we make ourselves, or any creature, altogether like him. Now, First, Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of himself, amounted to this—that he was God, for he had said that he was one with the Father, and that he would give eternal life; and Christ does not deny it, which he would have done, if it had been a mistaken inference from his words. But, Secondly, They were to be mistaken, when they looked upon him as a mere man, and not partaker of Godhead; he claimed was usurpation, and of his own making. They thought it absurd and impious that such a one as he, who appeared in the fashion of a poor, mean, despicable man, should profess himself the Messiah, and entitle himself to the honours confessedly due to the Son of God. Note, 1. These are the claims which they imputed to him as blasphemous: (v. 34, 35.) when he proves himself to be no blasphemer, by two arguments. 1. By an argument taken from God's word. He appeals to what was written in their law, that is, in the Old Testament; whoever opposes Christ, he is to have the scripture upon his side. It is written, Ps. 82. 6. 8. They shall know that I am the Lord; and my servant shall be ministered unto him; from the less to the greater. If they were gods, much more am I. Observe, (1.) How he explains the text; (v. 55.) He called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken. The word of God's commission came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they were called gods, Exod. 22. 28. To some the word of God came immediately, as to Moses; to others in the way of an established ordinance. Magistrates are a divine institution; and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure that the scripture cannot be broken, or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is right, the very style and language of scripture are unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, Matt. 5. 18. (2.) How he applies it. Thus much in general is easily inferred, that they were very rash and unreasonable, who condemned Christ as a blasphemer, only for calling himself the Son of God, when yet they themselves called their rulers so, and therein the scripture warranted them. But the argument goes further; (v. 36.) If magistrates were called gods, because they were commissioned to administer justice in the nation, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, Thou blasphemest? We have here two things concerning the Lord Jesus. [1.] The honour done him by the Father, which he justly glorifies in: he sanctified him, and sent him into the world. Magistrates were called the sons of God, though the word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measure, as upon Saul; but our Lord Jesus was himself the Word, and had the Spirit without measure; they were constituted for a particular country, city, or nation, but he was sent into the world, vested with a universal authority, as Lord of all; they were sent to, as persons at a distance, he was sent forth as the Lamb that was to be slain, and he was from eternity with God. The Father sanctified him, that is, designed him, and set him apart to the office of Mediator, and qualified and fitted him for that office. Sanctifying him is the same with sanctifying him, ch. 6. 27. Note Whom the Father sends, he sanctifies; whom he
designs for holy purposes, he prepares with holy principles and dispositions. The holy God will reward, no less than he will employ, none but such as he finds or makes holy. The Father's sanctifying and sending him is here vouched for a sufficient warrant for his calling himself the Son of God; for because he was a holy thing he was called the Son of God, Luke 1:35. See Rom. 1:4.

[2.] The dishonour done him by the Jews, which he justly deserves—though they impiously said of him, whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a blasphemer, because he called himself the Son of God; “Say ye of him so and so? Dare ye say so? Dare ye thus set your mouths against the heavens? Have ye brow and brass enough to tell the God of truth that he lies, or to condemn him that is most just? Look me in the face, and say it if you can, what, say me of the Son of God, should yet speak this? If devils had so said of him, whom he came to condemn, it had not been so strange; but that men should say so of him, whom he came to teach and save, be astonished, O heavens, at this! See what is the language of an obstinate unbelief; it does, in effect, call the holy Jesus a blasphemer. It is hard to say which is more to be wondered at, that such a mighty work of God should be spoken by such things, or that men who have spoken such things, should still be suffered to breathe in God's air. The wickedness of men, and the patience of God, as it were, contend which shall be most wonderful.

2. By an argument taken from his own works, v. 37, 38. In the former he only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument ad hominem—turning a man's own argument against himself; but he here makes out his own, claims, and proves that he and the Father are one; (v. 37, 38.) If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. Though he might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as invertible, yet he vouchsafes to reason with them.

Observe, (1.) From what he argues—from his works, which he had often vouchsafed as his credentials, and the proofs of his mission. As he proved himself sent of God by the divinity of his works, so we must prove ourselves allied to Christ by the Christianity of our's. [1.] The argument is very cogent; for the works he did, were the works of his Father, which the Father only did, and which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but by the immediate operation of the power of God in nature. Opera Deo proprio—works peculiar to God, and Opera Deo digna—works worthy of God—the works of a divine power. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeal, alter, and over-rule them at his pleasure, by his own power, is certainly the sovereign Prince who first instituted and exacts these laws. The miracles which the apostles wrought in his name, and consequently, the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it when he was gone. [2.] It is proposed as fairly as it can be desired, and put to a short issue. First, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. He does not demand a blind and implicit faith, nor an assent to a divine mission further than he gives proof of. He does not lay hold, by his power, and for the affection of people, or wheedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions, but with the greatest fairness imaginable quitted all demands of their faith, further than he produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents, where he has not sown in arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, Infinite Wisdom itself being judge.

Secondly, "But if I do the works of my Father, if I work undeniable miracles for the confirmation of a holy doctrine, though you believe not me, though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, yet believe the works: believe your own eyes, your own reason, the thing speaks itself plainly enough." As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence, (Rom. 1:20.) so in the things of the Son of God, were seen by his miracles, and by all his works, both of power and mercy; so that they who were not convinced by these works, were without excuse.

(2.) For what he argues—that ye may know and believe, may believe it intelligently, and with an entire satisfaction, that the Father is in me, and I in him; for that which is not same; but search in it out to perfection; but know and believe it: acknowledging and adoring the depth when we cannot find the bottom.

39. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. 42. And many believed on him there.

We have here the issue of the conference with the Jews. One would have thought it should have convinced and melted them, but their hearts were hardened. Here we are told, 1. How they attacked him by force. Therefore they sought again to take him, v. 39. Therefore, 1. Because he had fully answered their charge of blasphemy, and wiped off that imputation, so that they could not for shame go on with their attempt to stone him, therefore they conceived to seize him, and proceed to take a offender against the state. When they were constrained to drop their attempt by a popular tumult, they would try what they could do under colour of a legal process. See Rev. 12. 13. Or, 2. Because he persevered in the same testimony concerning himself, they persisted in their malice against him. What he had said before, he did in effect say again, for the faithful witness never runs from what he has once said; and therefore, having the same provocation, they express the same resentments, and justify their attempt to stone him by another attempt to take him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its politics, male faciis male faciis tegere ne perpilant—to cover one set of bad deeds with another, lest the former should fall through by his own.

2. How he avoided them by flight; not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of human infirmity, but a glorious retirement, in which there was much of a divine power. He escaped out of their hands, not by the interposed of any friend that helped him, but by his own wisdom he got clear of them; he either drew a veil over himself, or cast a mist before them; he got away, as his hearts who did not turn. Note, no weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, Ps. 2. 5. He escaped, not because he was afraid to suffer
but because his hour was not come. And he who knew how to deliver himself, no doubt knew how to deliver the guilty out of temptation, and to make a way for them to escape.

31. How he disposed of himself in his retirement: he went away again beyond Jordan, v. 40. The Bishop of our souls came not to be fixed in one seat, but to go about from place to place, doing good. This great Deceitfactor was never out of his way, for where there was work to be done. Though Jerusalem was the royal city, yet he made many a kind visit to the country, not only to his own country Galilee, but to other parts, even those that lay remotest beyond Jordan. Now observe,

1. What shelter he found there. He went into a private part of the country, and there he abode: there he found some rest and quietness, when in Jerusalem he could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not gathered, nor would be, yet Christ was glorious, and would be.

Christ's going now beyond Jordan, was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his gospel have often found better entertainment among them that are of this world, than among the wise, the mighty, the noble, 1 Cor. 1:27.

2. What success he found there. He did not go thither merely for his own security, but to do good there; and therefore he chose to go thither where John at first baptized, (ch. 1. 28.) because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry and baptism thereabouts, which would dispose them to receive Christ and his doctrine; for it was not long since, but a little while, that he was himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard and received. The event in some measure answered expectation; for we are told,

1. That they flocked after him: (v. 41.) Many resorted to him. The return of the means of grace to a place, after they have been for some time omitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to abide at Bethabara, the house of passage, where the ferry-boats lay, by which they crossed the river Jordan, that the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come to hear him when it lay in their way, but who would scarcely go up the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

2. That they reasoned in his favour, and sought arguments to induce them to close with him, as much as they at Jerusalem sought objections against him. They said very judiciously, John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this Man were true. Two things they considered, upon recollecting what they had seen and heard from John, and of Christ and the Baptist's ministry. Christ, v. 38. Sermon. 31. That Christ far exceeded John Baptist's power, for John did no miracle, but Jesus does many; whence it is easy to infer, that Jesus is greater than John. And if John were so great a prophet, how great then is this Jesus? Christ is best known, and acknowledged by such a comparison with others as sets him superlatively above others. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not work miracles, as Elias did; lest the minds of people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honour of working miracles was reserved for Jesus, as a flower of his crown, that there might be a sensible demonstration, and an undeniable one, that, though he came after John, yet he was preferred far before him.

[2.] That Christ exactly answered John Baptist's testimony. John not only did not murmur to draw people from Christ, but he said a great deal to direct them to Christ, and to turn them over as apprentices to him, and that came to their minds now; all things that John said of this Man were true, that he should be the Lamb of God, should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Great things John had said of him, which raised their expectations; so that, though they chose to go to him, yet his country to inquire after him, yet, when he came into their's, and brought his gospel to their doors, they acknowledged him as great as John had said he would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know him experimentally, we find all things that the scripture saith of him, to be true; nay, and that the reality exceeds the report, 1 Kin. 18. 39. 40. and John's reports of him, and his hearers' forebodings, and by comparing what they heard them with, what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, First, They were confirmed in their belief that John was a prophet, who foretold such things, and spake of the eminent to which this Jesus would arrive, though his beginning was so small. Secondly, They were prepared to believe that Jesus is the prophet of whom the scriptures spoke, and things accomplished, which John foretold. By this we see that the success and efficacy of the word preached, are not confined to the life of the preacher, nor do they expire with his breath, but that which seemed as water split upon the ground, may afterward be gathered up again. See Zech. 1. 3. 6.

3. That many believed on him there. Believing that he who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, must be that he had declared himself to be, the Son of God, they gave themselves up to him as his disciples, v. 27. An emphasis is here to be laid, [1.] Upon the persons that believed on him; they were many. While they that received and embraced his doctrine at Jerusalem were but as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, they that believed on him in the country beyond Jordan, were a fall harvest gathered into him. [2.] Upon the place where this was; it was there where John had been preaching and baptizing, and had had great success, there many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of the doctrine of repentance has had success, as desired, there the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and of grace-grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The pillars of his death, and their sweetest of the sweet dew sent from heaven, to those who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter, we have the histories of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death—the raising of Lazarus to life; which is recorded only by this evangelist; for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee amongst his countrymen; he left Jerusalem till the passion-work; whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that, when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree, either with his safety or with his humility, to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any of the other evangelists; and no other of them speak of it so well; and therefore there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle of itself so great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning event of Christ's history. In order to the history of the raising of Lazarus, there are three things to be observed, 1. The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings, v. 1. 16. 2. The visit he made to Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of the tidings, v. 17. 31. 32. 3. The miracle wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, v. 33. 34. 44. The effect wrought by this miracle upon others, v. 45. 57.
1. **NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.** 2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, let us go into Judea again. 8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye might believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. 16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

We have, in these verses,

1. A particular account of the parties principally concerned in this story, v. 1, 2, 1. They lived at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ often lodged when he came up to the feast. It is here called the town of Mary and Martha, that is, the town where they dwelt; as Bethsaida is called the city of Andrew and Peter, ch. 1. 44. For I see no reason to think, as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town, and the rest were their tenants. 2. Here was a brother named Lazarus; his Hebrew name, probably, was Eleazar, being a Greek translation put to it, is made Lazarus. Perhaps, in prospect of this history, our Saviour made use of the name of Lazarus in that parable wherein he designed to set forth the blessedness of the righteous in the bosom of Abraham immediately after death, Luke 16. 22. 3. Here were two sisters, Martha and Mary, who seem to have been the housekeepers, and to have managed the affairs of the family, while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well-ordered family, and a family that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife, (for anguish that appears,) but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters dwelling together in unity. 4. One of the sisters is particularly described to be that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, v. 2. Some think she was that woman that we read of, Luke 7. 37, 38, who had been a sinner, a bad woman. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ, which this evangelist relates; (ch. 12. 3,) for the evangelists do never refer one to another, but John frequently refers in one place of his gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety and devotion, that come from an honest principle of love to Christ, will not only find acceptance with him, but gain reputation in the church, Matt. 26. 13. This was she whose brother Lazarus was sick; and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have, the more frequently we are thus afflicted by sympathy, and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares and crosses.

II. The tidingsthat were sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, v. 3. His sisters knew where Jesus was, a great way off beyond Jordan, and therefore sent him a special messenger to him with the affliction of their family. In which they manifest, 1. The affection and concern they had for their brother. Though, it is likely, his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life, as they ought to have done. They shewed their love to him now that he was sick, for a brother is born for adversity, and so is a sister too. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. 2. The regard they had to the Lord Jesus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, to utter all their words before him. Though God knows all our wants, and griefs, and cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The message they sent, was very short, not pettingioning, much less prescribing or pressing, but barely relating the case with the tender insinuation of a powerful plea, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest, is sick. They do not say, He whom we love, but, He whom thou lovest. Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God himself, and from his blessed Son. They do not say, Lord, behold, he whom thou dost love; but, he whom thou lovest; for herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. Our love to him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note, (1.) There are some of the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus, whom he hath a special kindness for above others. Among the twelve there was one whom Jesus loved. (2.) It is not new thing for those whom Christ loves, to be sick; all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces, of God's people. (3.) It is a great comfort to us when we are sick, to have these about us that will pray for us. (4.) We have great encouragement in our prayers for those who are sick, if we have ground to hope that they are such as he cares for.

III. An account how Christ entertained the tidingsthat brought him of the illness of his friend.

1. He prognosticated the event and issue of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters of Lazarus by the express, to support them while he waited to come to them. Two things he prognosticates;

(1.) This sickness is not unto death; it was mortal, proved fatal, and no doubt but Lazarus was truly dead for four days. But, [1.] That was not
the errand upon which this sickness was sent; it came not, as in a common case, to be a summons to the grave, but there was a further intention in it. Had it been sent on that errand, his rising from the dead would have defeated it. [2.] That was not the final effect of this sickness. He died, and yet it might be said he did not die, for Deut. 34. 6, is the very word used there—That is not said to be done, which is not done for a perpetuity. Death is an everlasting farewell to this world, it is the way whence we shall not return; and in this sense it was not unto death. The grave was not his long home, his house of eternity. Thus Christ said of the maid whom he proposed to restore to life, She is not dead, but sleepeth. John 11. 11. As was the case, so is the way; for she was raised from the dead, and therefore, is not unto death, for it is not unto eternal death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world; when we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support, that there is hope of a recovery, but in that we may be disappointed; therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed; if they belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, for his power is sufficient for the second death, and then no such hurt of the first. [2.] But it is for the glory of God, that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that he may have opportunity of shewing them favour; for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting, are those which are most necessary. If God be pleased to make the darkest dispensations of Providence, they are all for the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, this disappointment, are so; and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied. Lev. 10. 3. It was for the glory of God, for it was that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, as it gave him occasion to work that glorious miracle, the raising of him from the dead. If there could be here the man was born blind, that Christ might have the honour of curing him (John 9. 3.) so Lazarus must be sick and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances, that the design of them all is, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, his wisdom, power, and goodness, glorified in supporting and relieving them; see 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. (2.) They had pleaded, Lord, it is he whom thou dost love, and the plea is allowed; (v. 5.) Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus: Thus the claims of faith are ratified in the court of heaven. Now one would think it should follow, When he heard therefore that he was sick, he made all the haste that he could to him; if he loved them, now was a time to shew it by hastening to them, for he knew the issue. The opposite is: As he was going to Bethany, he delayed to shew his love; it is not said, He loved them, and yet he lingered; but he loved them, and therefore he lingered: when he heard his friend was sick, instead of coming post to him, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. (1.) He loved them, that is, he had a great opinion of Martha and Mary, of their wisdom and grace, of their faith and love to him, and the discrimination and affection he had for them, therefore he deferred coming to them, that he might try them, that their trial might at last be found to praise and honour. (2.) He loved them, that is, he designed to do something great and extraordinary for them, to work such a miracle for their relief as he had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore he delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be dead and buried before he came. If Christ had come presently, and cured the sickness of Lazarus, he had done no more than he did for many; if he had raised him to life when newly dead, no more than he had done for some; but, determing his relief so long, he had an opportunity of doing more for him than for any. Note, God hath graces in tenures even in seemings delays. Isa. 54. 7, 8. —19. &c. Christ's friends at Bethany were not cut of his thoughts, though, when he heard of their distress, he made no haste to them, yet he wrought the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public or personal, stands at a stand, it does but stay the time, and every thing is beautiful in its season. IV. The discourse he had with his disciples, when he was about to go visit his friends at Bethany, v. 7-16. The conference is so very free and familiar, as to make out what Christ saith, I have called you friends. [2.] Two things he discourses about—his own danger, and Lazarus's death. 1. His own danger in going into Judea, v. 7-10. (1.) Here is the notice which Christ gave his disciples of his purpose to go into Judea toward Jerusalem. His disciples were the men of his counsel, and to them he saith, (v. 7.) Let us go into Judea again, though they there are unworthy of such a favour. This was a reproof of a thought the disciples had given him, and a mercy to those that have often rejected them. Now this may be considered, [1.] As a purpose of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whose affliction, and all the aggravating circumstances of it, he knew very well, though no more Expresses were sent to him; for he was present in spirit, though absent in body. When he knew they were brought to the last extremity, he desired them to have confidence in his own as the saints. But we have and taken a final farewell: "Now," saith he, Let us go to Judea. Christ will arise in favour of his people, when the time to favour them, yea, the set time, is come; and the worst time is commonly the set time. When our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts, then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened the graves, Ezek. 37. 11, 12. In the depths of affliction, let trust the means of God's grace, and his grace in the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity; Jehovah-jireh. Or, [2.] As a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had so lately been frightened by an attempt upon their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt upon their's too. To go to Judea, which was so lately made too hot for them, was obliging that Master, and showing them great respect to him. "Go to Judea, and I will stay and take shelter here;" no, Let us go. Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril, but he accompanies them in it: and is with them, even then when they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. (2.) Their objection against this journey: (v. 8.) Master, the Jews of late sought to stoneth thee, and great thou thy faith is! again. Here, [1.] They remind him of the danger he had been in there not long since. Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master does, and to remember injuries longer. He had put up the affair, it was over and gone, and forgotten, but his disciples could not forget it: of late, inno, as if it were this very day, they sought to stone thee. Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of the danger was fresh in their minds. [2.] They marvel that he will go thither again. Will thou favour those with thy presence, that have expelled thee out of their coasts? Christ's ways in passing by offences are above our ways. Will thou expose thyself among a people that are so desperately enraged against thee? Goest thou thither again, where thou hast been so ill used? Here the fervent great care for their Master's safety, Peter did, as he said, Master, shew thyself to had Christ been minded to shift off suffering, he did not want friends to persuade him to it; but he had
open'd his mouth to the Lord, and he would not, he could not, go back. Yet while the disciples shew a care of and for others, they are led by their own time, First, A distrust of his power; as if he could not secure both himself and them now in Judea as well as he had done formerly. Is his arm waxen short? When we are solicitous for the interests of Christ's church and kingdom in the world, we must yet rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep with a hand of steel. A second fear is, that of being a Seer. A secret fear of suffering themselves; for they count upon that if he suffer. When our own private interests happen to run in the same channel with the public, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts; when really we are only zealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, and seek our own things, under colour of seeking the things of Christ; we have therefore need nicely to distinguish upon our principles. (3.) Christ's answer to this objection; (v. 9, 10.) Are there not twelve hours in the day? The Jews divided every day into twelve hours, and made their hours longer or shorter, according as the days were, so that an hour with them was the twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, they reckoned with them that this interval was nearer twelve hours long than our's. The Divine Providence has given us day-light to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and reckoning the year round, every country has just as much daylight as night, and so much more as the twilight amount to. Man's life is a day, this day is divided into divers ages, states, and opportunities, as into hours shorter or longer, as God has appointed; the consideration of this should make us not only very busy, as to the work of life, (if there were twelve hours in the day, each of them ought to be filled up with duty, and none of them trifled away,) but also very easy as to the perils of life; our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done, and our testimony finished. This Christ applies to his case, and shews why he must go to Judea, because he had a clear call to go. For the opening of this, First, He shews the comfort and satisfaction which a man has in his own mind while he keeps in the way of his duty, as it is in general prescribed by the word of God, and particularly determined by the providence of God; If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not; that is, if a man keep close to his duty in the day, he will not be led astray, and set in the way of a wrong path by his own fear, or by the commands of God, he does not hesitate in his own mind, but, walking uprightly, walks surely, and with a holy confidence. As he that walks in the day, stumbles not, but goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, because he sees the light of this world, and by it sees his way before him; so a good man, without a visible light, or the brightness of the sun, relies upon the word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end, because he sees those two great lights, and keeps his eye upon them; thus he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, Gal. 6. 4. Ps. 119. 6. Christ, wherever he went, walked m the day, and so shall we, if we follow his steps. Secondly, He shews us the case of the man is, who walks not according to this rule; (v. 16.) If a man walk in the night, he stumbles; that is, if a man walk in the way of his heart, and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world, if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uncleaness and frightful apprehensions; trembles at the shaking of a leaf; and flees when none pursues; while an upright man laughs at the shaking of the spear, and stands un- daunted when ten thousand invade. See Isa. 33. 11-16. He stumbles, because there is no light in his own eye, and he is blind to our moral actions, which light about us is to our natural actions. He has not a good principle within; he is not sincere; his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judea, but encourages his disciples to go along with him, and fear no evil. 2. The death of Lazarus is here discussed of between Christ and his disciples, v. 11-16. Where what? (1.) The notice Christ gave his disciples of the death of Lazarus, and an intimation that his business into Judea was to look after him, v. 11. After he had prepared his disciples for this dangerous march into an enemy's country, he then gives them, [1.] Plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though he had received no advice of it; Our friend is sick. See here how Christ calls a believer, and a believer's death. First, He calls a believer his friend; our friend Lazarus. Note, 1. There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection and communion pursuant to it, which our Lord Jesus will own and not be ashamed of. His secret is with the righteous. 2. Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends, all his disciples should take for such; all the Disciples of Christ call Lazarus as their common friend; Our friend d. 3. Death itself does not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet he is still our friend. Secondly, he calls the death of a believer a sleep; he sleepeth. It is good to call death by such names and titles as will help to make it more familiar and less formidable to us. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a sleep, as that of Jairus's daughter, because they were to be raised again speedily; and since we are sure to rise again at last, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life, make it as easy to us to put off the body and die, as it is to put off our clothes and go to sleep? A good Christian, when he dies, does but sleep; he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only the parenthesis, but death is the period, of our cares and toils. The soul does not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any terror, without any danger; not discomposed nor disturbed. The body, as the bed, has greater care of the sleeper than the sleeper of the bed; the body is kept in check as the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy quiet sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage-day, the coronation-day, to wear them at last. 14. The Greeks called their burying-places, dormitoriæ—εξαναπαυσα. [2.] Particular intimations of his favourable intentions concerning Lazarus: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. He could have done it, and yet have said where he was; he that recovered at a distance one dying, (ch. 4. 50.) could have raised the dead man, and put him into his offices, upon the miracle, to work it by the grave side; I go, to awake him. As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's waking out of sleep when he is called, especially when he is called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection; (Job 14. 13.) Then shalt thou call. Christ had no sooner said, Our friend sleeps, but presently he adds, I go, that I may awake him. When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the cause is, he lets them know in the same breath how easily, how quickly,
he can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to Judea, might help to take off their fear of going with him thither; he did not go upon a public errand to the temple, but a private visit, which would not so much expose him and them; and besides, it was to do a kindness to a family they were all obliged to seek. (2.) Their mistake of the meaning of this notice, and the blunder they made about it; (v. 12, 13.) They said, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. This speaks,

[1.] Some concern they had for their friend Lazarus, they hoped he would recover; 

He shall be saved. from dying at this time. Probably, this was their mistake of some of his illness, that one of the most threatening symptoms he was under, was, that he was restless, and could not get to sleep; and now that they heard he slept, they concluded the fever was gone off, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physic, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death: if a good Christian so sleep, he shall do well, better than he did here; and we should cheer them up and ourselves; for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for him to go to him, and expose himself and them. "If he sleep, he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are." Thus we are willing to hope that that good work which we are called to do, will do itself, and will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it.

This mistake of the Lord, and the sight of him; (v. 14.) Jesus spake of his death. See here, First, How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all those for heretics, who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes; yet this was a gross one, for it had easily been prevented, if they had remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament. They should have understood that Christ when he spake this similitude, it was not for them, but that he spake an unspoken language. Besides, it would sound odd for their master to undertake a journey of two or three days, only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep, which any one else might awake him out of. What Christ undertakes to do, we may be sure, is something great and uncommon, and a work worthy of himself. Secondly, How carefully the evangelist states this mistake, and this mistake only. Else that speak in an unknown tongue, use similitudes, should learn hence to explain themselves, and pray that they may interpret, to prevent mistakes.

[3.] The plain and express declaration which Jesus made to them of the death of Lazarus, and his resolution to go to Bethany, v. 14, 15.

(1.) He gives them notice of the death of Lazarus; what he had before said darkly, he now says plainly and without a figure; Lazarus is dead. (v. 13.) Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for it is precious in his sight. (Ps. 116. 13.) and he is not pleased if we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how he condescends to those that are out of the way, and by his subsequent saving and bringing up the dead, explains the difficulties of what went before. (2.) He gives them the reason why he had delayed. He spake this similitude that I was not there. If he had been there time enough, he would have healed his disease and prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus's friends: but then his disciples would have seen no further proof of his power than what they had often seen and, consequently, their faith had received no increment; but now that he went and raised him from the dead, as there were many brought to believe in him, who before did not. (v. 43.) So here was much done towards the perfecting of what was lacking in the faith of those that did, which Christ aimed at; to the intent that ye may believe. (3.) He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him; Let us go into him. Not, "Let us go to his sisters, to comfort them," which is the utmost we can be known: But, "Let us go to him; for Christ can show wonders to the dead. Death, which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls; as he will maintain his covenant with the dead, so he can make visits to the dead. Lazarus is dead, but let us go to him;" (v. 15.) or, as he spake it, for Thomas. It is his hope, there is no need to go, we are ready to say, If he be dead, it is to no purpose to go. (4.) Thomas excites his fellow-disciples cheerfully to attend their Master's motions; (v. 16.) Thomas, which is called Didimus, Thomas in Hebrew, and Didymus in Greek, signifies twin. He is said of Rebeckah, (Gen. 25. 24.) that there were twins in her womb. The word is Thomas; probably, he who, probably, looked with fear and concern upon another, when Christ had said so positively, Let us go to him; he said very courageously, Let us also go, that we may die with him. With him; that is,

[1.] With Lazarus, who was now dead; so much did he take it. Lazarus was a dear and loving friend both to Christ and his disciples. The death of a dear friend is a particular intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, said he, let us go and die with him. For, First, If we survive, we know not how to live without him. Probably, Lazarus had done them many good offices, sheltered them, and provided for them, and been to them instead of eyes; and now that he was gone, they had no more friend, no sign of help. Therefore, said he, let us go, we have as good a friend as the world can give us. Secondly, With Christ. Our lives bound up in the lives of some that were dearer to us, but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably, upon himself, when these are gone, when we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. Secondly, If we die, we hope to be happy with him. Such a firm belief he has of a happiness on the other side death, and such an hope that we are in the first place in that he is willing they should all go and die with him, it is better to die, and going with our Christian friends to that world which is enriched by their removal to it, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure out of it. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts henceward. How pleasant does this increase them part of dying, as if it were only undressing and going to bed. (2.) Let us go, and die with our Master, who is now exposing himself to death by venturing into Judea; and so I rather think it is meant. "If he will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with him, according to the command we received, Follow me." Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews against him, and the severity which God would suffer from the hands of his enemies, that it was no foreign suggestion that he was now going to die. And now Thomas discovers, First, A gracious readiness to die with Christ himself, flowing from strong affections to him, though his faith was weak, as appeared afterward, ch. 14. 20. 23. When their Master will die, Ruth 1. 17. Secondly, A zealous desire to help his fellow-disciples into the same frame. "Let us go, and all, and die with him; if they stone him, let them stone us, who would desire to survive such a Master." Thus,
in difficult times, Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, let us die with him. Note, The consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls for us.

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary sat still in the house. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believe thou this? 27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth unto the grave to weep there. 32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The matter being determined, that Christ will go to Judæa, and his disciples with him, they address themselves to their journey; in this journey some passages happened, which the other evangelists record, as the healing of a blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zacchæus. We must not reckon ourselves out of our way, while we are in the way of doing good; nor he so intent upon one good office as to neglect another. At length, he comes near to Bethany, which is said to be about fifteen furlongs off from Jerusalem, about two measured miles. Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought in Jerusalem, and so was put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more numerous, but those in or near Jerusalem were more illustrious; there he healed one that had been diseased thirty-eight years, another that had been blind from his birth, and raised one that had been dead four days. To Bethany Christ came, and observe, What post he found the friends there in. When he had been last with them, it is probable that he left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends, (though Christ knows,) we know not what changes may affect us or them before we meet again.

1. He found his friend Lazarus in the grave, v. 17. When he came near the spot, where he knew that Lazarus was lying, he was told by the neighbours, or some he met, that Lazarus had been four days buried. Some think that Lazarus died the same day that the messenger came to Jesus with the tidings of his sickness, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place, and two days for his journey. I rather think that Lazarus died at the very instant that Jesus said, "Our friend, where he is now newly fallen asleep," and that the time between his death and burial, (which among the Jews was but short,) with the four days of his laying in the grave, was taken up in this journey; for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho, and his abode at Zaccheus's house took up some time. Promised salvations, though they always come surely, yet they often come slowly. Here Christ's friends were in great consternation. Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated where it is said, that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them. Note, (1.) Ordinarily, where death is, there are mourners especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations, and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The place where death is, is called the house of mourning, Ecles. 7. 2. When man goes to his long home, the mourners go about the streets, (Ecles. 12. 5.) or rather sit alone, and keep silence. Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested; yet made a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, (ch. 14. 1.) not from the house. (2.) Where there are mourners, there ought to be comforters. It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow, to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When we are under the present impressions of grief, we are apt to forget those things which would minister comfort to us, and therefore have need of remembrancers. It is a mercy for a friend when we are in sorrow, and our duty to be such to them who are in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress upon this, obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead. They comforted them concerning their brother, by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but of the happy state he was gone to. When godly relations and friends are taken from us, we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind, and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning them who are gone before us to a happiness where they have no miss of us.

This visit which the Jews made to Martha and Mary, is an evidence that they were persons of distinction, and made a figure; as also, that they beheld with the eye of faith, the objects of which the followers of Christ, yet those who had no respect for him, were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews, Jewish ladies, it is probable, should come together, just at this time, to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracle, and see what miserable conforters they were, in comparison with Christ. Christ did not usually send for witnesses to
his miracles, and yet if none were by but relations, it would have been excepted against; therefore God's counsel so ordered it, that those should come together accidentally, to hear their testimony to it, that all infidelity might stop her mouth.

II. What passed between him and his surviving brethren after this event, we are not informed. He defers his visits for a time, they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; so it was here. His departures ensure his returns, and his absence teaches us how to value his presence.

I. We have here the interview between Jesus and Martha; she went and met him, v. 9, 20.

(1.) It should seem that Martha was earnestly engaged in business, and immediately for it. Either she had sent out messengers, to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had often asked, \\textit{Sis
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? So that the first who discovered him, ran to her with the welcome news. However it was, she heard of his coming before he was come. She had waited long, and often asked, \\textit{Is he come?} and could hear no tidings of him; but long looked for came at last. At the end the vision will speak, and not be.

(2.) Martha, when the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and went and met him, in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waved all ceremony and compliment to the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to go and meet Jesus. Note, When God by his grace or providence provides for the bending of a soul, we should go forth by faith, hence, an prayer to meet him. Some suggest that Martha went out of the town to meet Jesus, to let him know that there were several Jews in the house, who were no friends to him, that if he pleased he might keep out of the way of them.

(3.) When Martha went to meet Jesus, Mary sat still in the house. Some think that she did hear the tidings, being in her withdrawing-room, receiving visits of condolence, while Martha, who was busied in the household-affairs, had early notice of it. Perhaps Martha would not tell her sister that Christ was coming, being ambitious of the honour of receiving him first. \\textit{Secta
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\textbf{1.} Jesus's word which Christ gave to Martha, in answer to her personal address; v. 23.

First, This was true of Lazarus in a sense pecu-
lir to him, he was now presently to be raised; but Christ speaks of it in general as a thing to be done, not which he himself would do, so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what he did. He also expresses it ambiguously, leaving her uncertain at first, whether he would raise her presently, or not till the last day, that she might try her faith and patience.

Secondly, It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the last day. Note, It is matter of comfort to us, when we have buried our earthly friends and relations, to think that they shall rise again. As the soul at death is not lost, but gone before, so the body is not lost, but laid up. Think you hear Christ saying, "Thy parent, thy child, thy voice-fellow, shall rise again; these dry bones shall live!"

Firstly, The faith which Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith, v. 24.

First, She accounted it a faithful saying, that he shall rise again at the last day. Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet, as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, Acts 24. 15. 1. That there shall be a last day, with which all the days of time shall be compared; the last day shall be a general resurrection at that day, when the earth and sea shall give up their dead. 2. That there shall be a particular resurrection of each one. "I know that I shall rise again, and this and the other relation that was dear to me." As bone shall return to his bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

Secondly, Yet she seems to think this saying not so well, that she all the while does really say, "I know he shall rise again at the last day; but what are we the better for that now?" As if the comfort of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded not satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present sensible things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than those things which are the objects of faith. I know that he shall rise again at the last day; and is not that enough? She seems not to think it is. Thus, by our discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes, and put a slight upon them, as not worth regarding.

The further instruction and encouragement which Jesus Christ gave her; for he will not quench their faith, nor break the strength of her belief. He said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; v. 25, 26. Two things Christ possesses her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress; and they are the things which our faith should fasten upon in the like cases.

First, The power of Christ, his sovereign power; I am the Resurrection and the Life, the fountain of life, the Head and Author of all spiritual life. Martha believed that at his prayer God would give anything, but he would have her know that by his word he could work any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the last day, Christ tells her that he had that power lodged in his own hand, that the dead were to hear his voice, (ch. 5. 23.) whence it was easy to infer, He that could raise a world of men that had died, could raise himself one man that had been dead but four days. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all good Christians, that Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, and will be so to them. Resurrection is a return to life, Christ is the author of that return, and of that life to which it is a return. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and the ground of our hope of both.

Secondly, The promises of the new covenant, which give us further ground of hope that we shall live. Observe,

1. To whom these promises are made—to them that believe in Jesus Christ, to them that consent, and confide in, Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator of reconciliation and communion between God and man; that receive the record God has given in his word concerning his Son, sincerely comply with it, and answer all the great intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed, Whoever believeth, and believeth in me, whate'er my Lord and Master will say, (v. 26.) Of natural life; Whoever lives in this world, whether he be Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives, if he believes in Christ, he shall live by him. Yet it limits the time, Whoever, during life, while he is here in this state of probation, believeth in me, shall be happy in me, but after death it will be too late. Whoever lives and believeth, lives in the faith, (Gal. 3. 26.) has a faith that is an evidence of a conversion.

Or, (2.) Of spiritual life: He that lives and believes, is he that by faith is born again to a heavenly and divine life, to whom to live is Christ—that makes Christ the life of his soul.

2. What the promises are; (v. 23.) Though he die, yet shall he live, and, (v. 26.) he shall never die. Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for both.

(1.) For the body, here is the promise of a blessed resurrection. Though the body he dead because of sin, (there is no remedy but it will die,) yet it shall live again, though he were dead. All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead, are here overlooked, and made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though the effects of death be dismal, though the body be dead, and buried, and putrefied, though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust, that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them, yet the context as strongly as you will, on that side, yet we are sure that he shall live again; the body shall be raised a glorious body.

(2.) For the soul, here is the promise of a blessed immortal life. He that liveth, and believeth, who, being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually by virtue of that union, he shall never die. That spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in eternal life. As the soul, being in its nature spiritual, is therefore immortal; so if by faith it live a spiritual life, consonant to its nature, its felicity shall be immortal too. It shall never die, shall never be cut off, or rendered lifeless, but continue in this same life, with no intermission or interruption of its life, as there is of the life of the body. The mortality of the body shall at length be swallowed up of life; but the life of the soul, the believing soul, shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. He shall not die, is no less; for ever, Non morietur in aeternum; so Cyprian quotes it. The body shall not be for ever dead in the grave, it dies (like Christ the two witnesses) but for a time, times, and the dividing of time; and when time shall be no more, and all the divisions of it shall be numbered and finished, a spirit of life from God shall enter into it. But that is not all: the soul shall not die that death which is for ever, shall not die eternally. Blessed and holy, that is, Blessed and happy, is he, that by faith has both the resurrection and the life; he is one in Christ, who is that Resurrection; for on such the second death, which is a death for ever, shall have no power; see ch. 6. 40.

Christ asks her, "Believest thou this? Canst thou assent to it with application? Canst thou take my word for it?" Note, When we have read or heard the word of Christ concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to our selves, "Do we believe this, this truth in particular, this which is attended with so many difficulties, this which is suited to my case? Does my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it,
so that I can say, not only this I believe, but then I believe it?" Martha was dosing upon it, but her's being a hint of the life of this world; before Christ gave her hopes of that, he directed her thoughts to another life, another world: "No matter for that, but believe this then that I tell thee concerning the future state." The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make that impression upon us that they do, if we did but believe the things of eternity as we ought.

(27.) Martha's unspoken assent yielded to what Christ said, v. 27. We have here Martha's creed, the good confession she witnessed, the same with that for which Peter was commended, (Matt. 16. 16, 17.) and it is the conclusion of the whole matter.

First, Here is the guide of her faith, and that is, the word of Christ; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire as Christ had said it. You, Lord, whereby she subscribes to the truth of all and every part of that which Christ had promised, in his own sense: Even so. Faith is an echo to divine revelation, returns the same words, and resolves to abide by them; You, Lord. As the word did make it, so I believe and take it, said queen Elizabeth.

Secondly, The ground of her faith, and that is, the authority of Christ; she therefore believes this, that he is that Son of God, that Messiah, that is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation for the support of the superstructure. I believe, &c., I believe that thou art Christ, and therefore I do believe this." Observe here,

1. What she believed and confessed concerning Jesus: three things, all to the same effect. (1.) That he was the Christ, or Messiah, promised and expected under this name by Jews, he avowed of One. (2.) That he was the Son of God; so the Messiah was called, (Ps. 2. 7.) not by office only, but by nature, (3.) That it was he who should come into the world, the &c.; that Blessing of blessings which the church had so many ages waited for as future, she embraced as present.

2. What she inferred hence, and what she alleged this for; if she admits this, that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that he is the Resurrection and the Life; for if he be the Christ, then, (1.) He is the Fountain of light and truth, and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own word. If he be the Christ, he is that Prophet whom we are to hear in all things. (2.) He is the Fountain of life and blessedness, and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon his veracity. For he who has turned to dust, live again? How shall souls, clogged and clouded as ours are, live for ever? We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be the Son of God, who has life in himself, and has it for us.

3. We have here the interview between Christ and Mary the other sister. And there observe,

(1.) The notice which Martha gave her of Christ's coming; (v. 28.) When she had so said, as one that made a deep impression upon her mind, and called Mary her sister. [1.] Martha, having received instruction and comfort from Christ herself, called her sister to share with her. Time was, when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ, to come and help her in much serving; (Luke 10. 49.) but, to make her answer for that, here she is inducements to draw her to Christ. [2.] She called her secretly, and whispered in her ear, bearer of news. She knew, where none were her friends to Christ. The saints are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, by an invitation that is secret and distinguished, given to them, and not to others; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of; joy that a stranger does not intermeddle with. [3.] She called her by order from Christ; he bid her go call her sister. The call that is effectual; whoever brings it, it is Christ that sends it. The Master is ever calling for the Master. It calls Christ the Master; &c. Here, a teaching Master, by that title he was commonly called and known among them. Mr. George Herbert took pleasure in calling Christ, my Master. Secondly, She triumphs in his arrival; The Master is come. He whom we have long wished and waited for, he is come; he is come; this was the best cordial in the present distress. He who is the hour of comfort in him is gone; but the Master is come, who is better than the dearest friend, and has that in him which will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come, who is our Teacher, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow, (Ps. 94. 12.) who will teach, and so comfort." Thirdly, She invites her sister to go and meet him; He calls for thee, invites what is become of thee, we did have the sent for. Note, When Christ, our Master, comes, he calls for us. He comes in his word and ordinances, and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. He calls for thee in particular, for thee by name, Ps. 27. 8. And if he call thee, he will care thee, he will comfort thee.

(2.) The haste which Mary made to Christ upon this notice given her; (v. 29.) In so much as she heard the good news, she went quickly, and came to him. She was, as it were, a messenger for Christ. [1.] She did not consult the decorum of her mourning, but, forgetting ceremony, and the common usage in such cases, she runs through the town, to meet Christ. Let not nice punctilios of decency and honour deprive us at any time of opportunities of conversing with Christ. [2.] She did not consult her neighbours the Jews, that were with her, comforting her; she left them all, to come to him, and did not only not ask their advice, but not so much as ask their leave, or beg their pardon for her rudeness.

We are told (v. 30.) where she found the Master; he was not yet come into Bethany, but was at the town's end, in that place where Martha met him, See here, First, Christ's love to his work; he stood near the place where the grave was, that he might be ready to go to it; and would not go into the town to return to Martha, to see what had become of her company, till he had done the work he came to do; not would he go into the town, lest it should look like ostentation, and a design to draw a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. Secondly, Mary's love to Christ; still she loved much. Though Christ had seemed unkind in his delays, yet she can take nothing amiss from him. Let us go thus to Christ, without the camp. He himself was in that which pleased him; he was in the very place of his callings; he was in the very time of his works; he sought not to do his own pleasure, but that she hardened herself in sorrow; and therefore concluded, when she went out, and turned that way, it was to go to the grave, and weep there. See [1.] What often is the folly and fault of mourners; they contrive how to aggravate their own grief, and to make bad matter.
own pain, and to say, "We do well to be passionate in our grief, even unto death; we are apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction, and what good does it do us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in it? Why should mourners go to the grave, to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope? Affliction of itself is grievous, and a burden to every soul, but sorrows are the wisdom and duty of comforters; and that is, to prevent as much as may be, in those who grieve inadequately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary, were thereby led to Christ, and became the witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends in their sorrows, for they may know better."

(4.) Mary's address to our Lord Jesus; (ver. 52.) she came attended with her train of comforters, and fell down at his feet, as one overwhelmed with a passionate sorrow, and said with many tears, (as appears, ver. 53.) Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another. Now here,

I. Her posture is very humble and submissive; she fell at his feet, which was more than Martha did, who had a greater command of her passions. She fell down as a sinking mourner, but fell down at his feet as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sitten at Christ's feet to hear his word, (Luke 10. 39.) and here we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace set themselves at Christ's feet, to receive instructions from him, and so come to a state of comfort and confidence; a day of trouble cast themselves at his feet, with hope to find favour with him. She fell at his feet, as one submitting to his will in what was done, and referring herself to his good will in what was now to be done. When we are in affliction, we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in a penitent sorrow and self-abasement for sin, and a patient resignation of ourselves to the divine conduct. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet, was in token of the profound respect and veneration she had for him. Thus they were wont to give honour to their kings and princes; but our Lord Jesus not appearing in secular glory as an earthly prince, they who by this posture of adoration gave honour to him, certainly looked upon him as more than man, and intended hereby to give him divine honour. Mary hereby made profession of the Christian faith, and truly cast herself at his feet, and, as it were, to the effect said, I believe that thou art the Christ; bearing the knee to Christ, and confessing him with the tongue, are put together as equivalent, Rom. 14. 11. Phil. 2. 10. 11. This she did in presence of the Jews that attended her, who, though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ; yet in their sight she fell at Christ's feet, as one that was neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ, nor afraid of disbling her friends and neighbours by it. Let them rescit it as they pleased, she falls at his feet; and if this be to be vile, she will be yet more vile; see Cant. 8. 1. We serve a Master whom we have no reason to be ashamed of, and whose acceptance of our services is sufficient to balance the reproach of men and all their re\-

[2.] Her address is very pathetic; Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so; yet both the sisters very indelicently cast the same in his teeth, and in effect charge him with the death of their brother. This repeated challenge he might justly have resumed; might have told them he had something else to do them to their beck, and to attend them, he must come when his business would permit him; but not a word of this; he considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they may have leave to speak; and, therefore overlooked the rudeness of this welcome, and gave us an example of mildness and meekness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did; but it appears by what follows, that what she said short in words, she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affectation and a loud praying voice, in the ears of Christ, no rhetoric like that.

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35. Jesus wept. 36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? 41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I know that thou hear\-
est me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Here we have,

I. Christ's tender sympathy with his afflicted friends, and the share he took to himself in their sorrows, which appeared three ways.

1. By the inward groans and troubles of his spirit, ver. 35. Jesus saith of Mary weeping for the loss of a loving brother, and the Jews that came with her, weeping for the loss of a good neighbour and friend; when he saw what a place of weepers, a Bochim, this was, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. See here,

(1.) The griefs of the sons of men represented in the tears of Mary and her friends. What an em\-

as likewise to weep with them that weep, as these Jews here with Mary, considering that we ourselves also are in the body. They that truly love their friends, will share with them in their joys and griefs; for what is friendship, but a communication of affections? Job 16: 5.

(2.) The grace of the Son of God, and his compassion toward those that are in misery. In all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. 63: 9. Judg. 10: 16. When Christ saw them all in tears, [1.] He groaned in the spirit. He suffered himself to be tempted, (as we are when we are disturbed by some great affliction,) yet without sin. This was an expression, either, First, Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about him, as Mark 3: 39. "Why make ye this ado, and weep?" When in his heart is here; does this become those that believe a God, a heaven, and another world?" Or, Secondly, Of his resentment of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death, which fallen man is subject to; being now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, he thus stirred up himself to the encounter, put on the garments of vengeance, and his fury it upheld him; and that he might in his own name make your sins and their griefs, and the cure of our griefs, he was pleased to make himself sensible of the weight of them, and under the burden of them he now groaned in spirit. Or, Thirdly, It was an expression of his kind sympathy with his friends that were in sorrow. Here were the sounding of the bowels, and the mercies, which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits for, Isa. 63: 15. Christ not only seemed concerned, but he was moved in the same; his heart was inwardly and sincerely affected with the case. David's preferred friends counterfeited sympathy, to disguise their enmity; (Ps. 41: 6.) but we must learn of Christ to have our love and sympathy without dissimulation. Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh. [2.] He was troubled. He troubled himself; so the phrase is, very significantly. He had all the passions and emotions of the human nature, for in all things he must be like to his brethren; but he had a perfect command of them, so that they were never up, but when and as they were called; he was never troubled, but when he troubled himself, as he saw cause; he often composed himself to trouble, but was never discomposed or disordered by it; he was voluntary both in his passion and in his compassion; he had power to lay down his grief, and to take care of his concern for them appeared by his kind inquiry after the poor remains of his deceased friend; (v. 34.) Where have ye laid him? He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, because, [1.] He would thus express himself as a man, even then when he was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, he accommodates himself to the way and manner of the sons of men; Rom. 1: 3. Abn me nec, non necesse est, Deut. 32: 43. You are not forced to, he would not be, if he were, saith Austin here. [2.] He inquired where the grave was, lest, if he had gone straight to it of his own knowledge, the unbelieving Jews should thence have taken occasion to suspect a collusion between him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. Many expositors observe this from Chrysostom. [3.] He would thus divert the grief of his mourning friends, by raising their expectations of something greater than their present loss. To comfort them with an address of condolence, to mingle a few fruitless insignificant tears with your's; no, I have other work to do; come, let us adjourn to the grave, and go about our business there. Note, A serious address to our work is the best remedy against inordinate grief. [4.] He would hereby intimate to us the special care he takes of the bodies of the saints, while they lie in the grave; he takes notice where they are laid, and will look after them, there is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

3. It appeared by his tears. Those about him did not tell him where the body was buried, but desired him to come and see, and led him directly to the grave, that his eye might yet more effect his heart with the calamity of it. He had seen the body, as if he had been following the corpse thither, J e s u s wept, v. 35. A very short verse, but it afford many useful instructions. [1.] That Jesus Christ was really and truly Man, and partake with the children, not only of flesh and blood, but of a human soul susceptible of the impressions of joy, and grief, and other affections. Christ gave this proof of his humanity in his own heart; that, in a great man, he could weep, and, as a merciful man, he would weep, before he gave this proof of his divinity. [2.] That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as was foretold, Isa. 53: 2. We never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears. Thus he shews not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but who they saw to the Spirit, must sow in tears. [3.] They were the tears of a grief of heart, and make them most to resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow, to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as the Lord Jesus. Different constructions were put upon Christ's weeping.

[1.] Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural; (v. 36.) Then said the Jews. Indeed, he shed tears. They seem to wonder that he should have so strong an affection for one whom he was not related to, and whom he had not had any long acquaintance with, for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Lazarus. It becomes us, according to this example of Christ, to shew our love to our friends, both living and dying. We must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus; they that weep for him, though not void of hope; as the devout men that buried Stephen, Acts 8: 2. Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus, but he has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that he died for them. When he only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, See how he loved him! Much more reason have we to weep, for whom he has laid down his life; See how he loved us. Greater love has no man than this.

[2.] Others made a peevish unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears bespoke his inability to help his friend; (v. 37.) Could not this man, that opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus? Here it is slyly insinuated, First, That the death of Lazarus being, (as it seemed by his tears,) a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, (did he not concern him that he did not, because he incline to think that he could not, as when he was dying, they concluded that he could not, because he did not, save himself, and come down from the cross;) not considering that divine power is always directed in its operations by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends, whom he loves, die, he loves them, and is with them; he does not make a remark upon his affliction; we must not impute it to any defect, either in his power or love, but conclude that it is because he sees it for the best. Secondly, That therefore it might justly be questioned, whether he did indeed often open the eyes of the blind, that is, whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least, it should seem that he had a limited power, and therefore not a divine one.
Christ soon convinced these ^ [1.] whisperers, by raising Lazarus from the dead, which was the greater work, that he could have prevented his death, but therefore did not, because he would glorify himself the more. 

II. Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle. 

1. Christ repeats his groans, upon his coming near the grave; (v. 35.) Again groaning in himself, he cried, Lazarus is dead. This was reproved at the unbelief of those, who spake doubly of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, Matt. 23. 37. (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations, which, it is likely the mourning sisters made, when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before, his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think that he groaned in spirit, because, to gratify the desire of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Mary and Martha, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again, where they were newly got into a safe and quiet harbor. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but, being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. 

4. Christ groaned as one that would affect himself with the calamitous state of the human nature, as subject to death, from which he was now about to rescue Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might offer it up with strong crying, Heb. 5. 7. Ministers, when they are sent by the preaching of the gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to, and pray for, and groan in themselves to think it. 

2. The grave is here described, wherein Lazarus lay; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. The graves of the common people, probably, were digged as our's are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults; so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably, this fashion was kept up among the Jews, in imitation of the patriarshes, who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, Gen. 23. This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends, betrays their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended, when the stone was rolled to the grave, or, as here, laid upon it, like that on the mouth of the den into which Daniel was cast, (Dan. 6. 17.) that the purport might not be changed; intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the way where they cannot return. This descriptions, grave-stone, with an inscription upon it, which the Greeks called ?epo?nas - a memorandum, because it is both a memorial of the dead, and a monemtwo to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, Monamentum, a moneda, because it gives motion. 

3. Orders are given to remove the stone, (v. 39.) Take ye away the stone. He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre, and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body, and not a ghost or spectre. He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell, of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step toward the raising of a soul to spiritual life when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say. 

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave, Lord, by this time he stinketh, or, is become noisome, for he has been dead four days, or, with a more usual form, he is four days old in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave, as the word is, who has seen the desolations of the grave in his body, which the Jews have supposed to be renewed. 

Probably, Martha perceived the body to smell, as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus, 

(1.) It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies; four days is but a little while, yet what a great change will that make with the body of man, if it be so long without food, much more so if so long without life! Dead bodies, (saith Dr. Hammond,) after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure it is such a person, so Maimonides in Lightfoot. Therefore Christ rose the third day, because he was not to see corruption. 

(2.) It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this. (1.) Some think that she knew it of dead bodies, and such a person teaches to the dead body; now that it began to putrefy, she did not care it should be thus publicly shewn, and made a spectacle of. (2.) Others think that she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead body should be offensive to him. That which is very noisome, is compared to an open sepulchre, Ps. 3. 9. If there were any thing noisome, she would not have her Master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones, that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill, altogether noisome, Ps. 14. 3. [3.] It should seem by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust; *Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him, his body begins to rot, and it is impossible that this putrid carcasse should live.* She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no in stances, either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When our bones are dried, we are ready to say, Our hope is lost. Yet this distrustful word of her's, served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious, by this it appeared that he was dead, and did not die, and that through the posture of a dead body might be counterfeited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it could not be done, puts the more honour upon him that did it. 

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave to Martha for the weakness of her faith; (v. 40.) Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? This word of his to her was not believed, but interpreted by her as a promise to see it when she had said, (v. 27.) Lord, I believe; and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. 

Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable, that a sincere faith shall at length be crowned with a blessed vision; 'If thou believe, thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and to thee in the other world.' (2.) When our Lord Jesus gives the faith of his word, his power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. (2.) We have need to be often reminded of these sure mercies with which our Lord Jesus hath encouraged us. Christ does not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given; Only believe. We are apt to forget what Christ has spoken, and need him to put
us in mind of it by his Spirit; "Said I not unto thee so and so? And dost thou think that he will ever
usay it?"

6. The opening of the grave in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection; (v. 41.) "Then they took away the stone. Then, when Martha was satisfied, and had waved her ob-
ject, then they said, Must Christ take his own way, and not prescrib, but subscribe, to him. They took
away the stone, and that was all they could do, Christ only could give life. What man can do is to
prepare the way of the Lord, to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and, as here, to take away the
stone.

III. The miracle itself wrought. The spectators amazed by the rolling away of the stone, gathered
about the grave, not to commit dust to dust, earth to earth, but to receive dust from the dust, and earth
from the earth again; and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.
1. He applies himself to his living Father in heaven, so he had called him, (ch. 6. 57.) and so eyes
him here.

The gesture he used was very significant; He lifted up his eyes, an outward expression of the
elevation of his mind; and to shew them who stood by from whence he derived his power; also to set
us an example: this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice; see ch. 17. 1. Look how
they will answer it, who profanely ridicule it; but that which is especially charged upon us hereby, is,
to lift up our hearts to God in the highest and purest prayer, but the assurance of the soul to God, and the
directing of its affections and motions heavenward? He lifted up his eyes, as looking above, looking be-

dy the grave where Lazarus lay, and overlooking all the difficulties that arose from thence, that he
might have his eyes fixed upon the divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who consider-
ed not his own body nor dead, nor the delivere A of Sarah's, but never took those into his thoughts,
and so gained such a degree of faith, as not to stagger
at the promise, Rom. 4. 20.

(2.) His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him; Father, I
thank thee that thou hast heard me. He has here taught us, by his own example, (1.) In prayer to
call God Father, and to draw nigh to him as chil-
dren to a father, a thing not to be thought of, with a holy boldness. (2.) In our prayers to praise
him, and when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favours. Thank-
givings, which speak God's glory, not our own, like the Pharisee's God, I thank thee, are decent forms
into which to put our supplications.

But our Saviour's thanksgiving here was intended to express the unshaken assurance he had of the
effect of this miracle, which he had in his own power to do in concurrence with his Father; "Fa-
ther, I thank thee, that my will and thine are in this matter, as always, the same." Elijah and Elisha
raised the dead, as servants, by entreat; but Christ, as a Son, by authority, having life in himself, and
power to quicken whom he would: and he speaks of this as his own act; (v. 11.) "I go, that I may
gain the glory of God, and not the reputation of the dead; he had obtained by prayer, for his Father heard him; proba-

bly, he put up the prayer for it when he groaned in spirit, once and again, (v. 33, 38.) in a mental prayer,
with groanings which could not be uttered.

Now Christ speaks of this miracle as an answer to prayer. First, Because he would thus humble him-
sell, though he were a Son, yet learned he this obedience; to ob and receive. His mediatorial crown
was granted him upon request, though it is of right, Ps. 2. 8. and ch. 17. 5. He prays for the glory he
had before the world, though, having never forfeited it, he might have demanded it. Secondly, because
he was pleased thus to honour prayer, making it the key whereby, even he unlocked the treasures of
divine power and grace. Thus he would teach us in prayer, by the lively exercise of faith, to enter
into the holiest.

Now Christ being assured that his prayer was an-
swered,

1. He professes his thankful acceptance of this an-
swer, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Though
the miracle was not yet wrought, yet the prayer was
answered, and he triumphs before the victory. No
other can pretend to such an assurance as Christ had;
yet we may by faith in the promise have a prospect of
the true effect of this grace, and may rejoice in that prospect, and give God thanks for it. In David's
devotions, the same Psalm which begins with prayer for a mercy, closes with thanksgivings for it.

Note, (1.) Mercies, to answer to prayer, ought in
a special manner to be acknowledged with thank-
gfulness. Beside the grant of the mercy itself, we
are to value it as a great favour in itself, and in
our prayer take no notice of it. (2.) We ought to meet
the first appearances of the return of prayer with early
thanksgivings. As God answers us with mercy, even
before we call, and hear, while we are yet speaking,
so we should answer him with praise, even before
he grants, and give him thanks while he is yet
speaking good words and comfortable words.

2. He professes his cheerful assurance, that ready
answer at any time, (v. 42.) And I knew that thou
heardst me always. Let none think that this was
some uncommon favour granted him now, such as
he never had before, nor should ever have again;
no, he had the same divine power going along with
him in his whole undertaking, and undertook no-
thing but what he knew to be agreeable to the coun-
sel of God's will. I gave thanks! (saith he) for
being heard in this, for because I am sure to be heard
in every thing." See here, (1.) The interest on
Lord Jesus had in heaven, the Father heard him
always, he had access to the Father upon every oc-
casion, and success with him in every errand. And
we may be sure that his interest is not the less for
his going to heaven, which may encourage us to de-
pend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions
into his hand, for he knows the heart of the Father,
and always answers accordingly. (2.) The confidence he had of that
interest; I knew it. He did not in the least hesitate or doubt concerning it, but had an entire satisfaction
in his own mind of the Father's complacency in him,
and concurrence with him in every thing. We can-
not have such a particular assurance as he had; but
this we know, that whatsoever we ask according to
his will, he heareth us, 1 John 5. 15.

But why should Christ give us this double intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, It is
because of the people which stand by, that they
may believe that thou hast sent me; for prayer may
preach.

[1.] It was to obviate the objections of his en-
emies, and their reflections. It was blasphe-
mosely suggested by the Pharisees, and their creatures,
that either the event was tricked by the devil; or,
wherever the country, he openly made his
address to God, using prayers, and not charms, not
blessing and cursing; as they did, that used fa-
limer charms, (Isa. 8. 19.) But with elevated eyes
and voice professed his communication with Heaven,
and dependence on Heaven.

[2.] It was to culminate the faith of those that
were well inclined to him; that they might have that
they hast sent me, not to destroy men's lives, but to
save them. Moses, to shew that God sent him, made
the earth open and swallow men up; (Num. 16
39, 40.) Elijah, to show that God sent him, made fire come from heaven, and devoured men; for the law was a dispensation of terror and death: but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it freely by his own power, some of his work disciples, who as yet understood not his divine nature, would have thought that he took too much upon him, and have been stilled at it; these babies could not bear that strong meat, therefore he chooses to speak of his power as received and derived; he speaks self-denyingly of himself, that he might speak the more plainly to us. Non in res suspect ad sumam dignitatem atque notnam salutem—in what he said, we behold so much his dignity as our salvation. Jausenius.

2. He now applies himself to his dead friend in the earth. He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the indiscernible operations of the Spirit of life; but he did it by a call, a loud call.

(1.) To be significant of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus, how he created this new thing; he spoke, and it was done. He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to call him by his name, and therefore, [1.] The soul of Lazarus, which was to be called up, was asleep, and we usually speak loud, when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a loud voice, that the scripture might be fulfilled, (Isa. 26. 19.) I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.

(2.) To be typical of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure, [1.] Of the gospel-call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin, which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, (ch. 5. 25.) and of the warning of the means of it; (ch. 6. 63.) and now he gives a specimen of it. By his word, he saith to souls, Live, yea, he saith to them, Live, Ezek. 16. 6. Arise from the dead, Eph. 5. 14. The spirit of life from God entered into those that had been dead and dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied over them, Ezek. 37. 10. They who infer from the commands of the word, to turn and live, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life.

[2.] Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day, with which they that sleep in the dust, shall be awakened, and summoned before the great tribunal. When Christ shall descend with a shout, a call, or command, like this here, Come forth. See 1 Thess. 4. 16. He shall call both to the heavens for their souls, and to the earth for their bodies, that he may judge their people.

This loud call here was but short, yet mighty through God to the bating down of the strong-holds of the grave.

First, He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names, whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his favour, I know thee by name. The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died, shall rise again at the last day. He that calls the stars by their names, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust of the earth, and will lose none of them.

Secondly, He calls him out of the grave, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He does not say unto him, Live, for he himself must give life, but he saith to him, Arise, for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir ourselves to move; the grave is not such a world as place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth.

Thirdly, The event was according to the intention; he that was dead came forth, v. 44. Power went along with the word of Christ, to reanimate the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth.

The miracle is described, not by its invisible springs to springs to satisfy the curiosity of the world, but to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in Paradise, in joy and felicity; but you will say, Was it not then really an unwillingness to it, to return it into the prison of the body? And if it were, yet, being for the honour of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to St. Paul to continue in the flesh, when he knew that to depart to Christ, was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus after he was raised, could give an account or description of his soul's removal out of the body or return to it, or what he saw in the other world, I suppose, both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must have needed his Master's word. Whether in the state of the body, I cannot tell; and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful, or possible, to express it. In a world of sense we cannot frame to ourselves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world; let us not covet to be wise above what is written, and this is all that is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, he that was dead came forth. Some have observed, that though we read of many who were raised from the dead, who, no doubt, conversed familiarly with men afterward, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

This miracle was wrought, 1. Speedily. Nothing intervenes between the command, Come forth, and the effect of that command, but the power itself. Many are carried through the gateway of death, and raised from the grave in an instant; they will not stay to be convinced of the resurrection. We cannot say, Whether in the state of the body, I cannot tell; and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful, or possible, to express it.

Thus the change in the resurrection will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. 15. 52. The Almighty power that can do it, can do it in an instant; Then shall thou call, and I will answer; will come at the call, as Lazarus, Here am I. 2. Perfectly. He was so thoroughly revived that he came out of his grave, as strongly as ever he got up out of his bed; and returned not only to life, but health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men. 3. With this additional miracle, (as some reckon it,) that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his grave-clothes, with which he was bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin; and the body of the Jews so observed, that Lazarus was in such a state when in the grave, whence he was buried, that it might appear that it was he himself, and not another, and that he was not only alive, but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his grave-clothes. The binding of his face with a napkin, proved that he had been really dead, for otherwise, in less than so many days' time, that would have moldered him; but by its visible effects to parts of him, it might hinder him, and see him, that it was he himself, and so be witnesses of the miracle. Now see here, 1. How little we carry with us, when we leave the world—only a winding-sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of grave clothes. 2. What condition we
shall be in, in the grave. What wisdom or device can there be, where the eyes are he-dwindled, or what working, where the hands and feet are lettered? And so it will be in the grave, whither we are going. Lazarus being come forth, hampered and bound with his grave-clothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprised and frightened at it; we should be so if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ, to make the thing familiar, sets them to work; " Loose him, Slacken his grave-clothes, that they may serve for day-clothes till he comes to his house; and then he will go himself so glad, without guide or support to his own house." As in the Old Testament, the translations of Ezra and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosaical economy; so the resurrection of Lazarus was in the New Testament designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done; not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less as an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a sanguine desire to excite those who needed no spur, the more vigorously to prosecute him. There is a strange instance, (1.) Of a most obstinate infidelity, refusing to yield to the facts of the case; (2.) Of a most weighty testimony, yet the evidence, that the god of this world had blinded their minds. (2.) Of a most inveterate enmity. If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been modified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more than what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of haging; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. Doge is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue. (Ps. 130. 2.)

52. 2. The judges, the leaders, the blind leaders, of the people were no less exasperated by the report made to them, and what they had heard they did. A great council is called and held. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, as was foretold, (Ps. 2. 2.) The rulers take counsel together against the Lord. Consults of the Sanhedrim were intended for the public good, but here, under colour of that, the greatest injury and mischief are done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace, were hid from the eyes of these that were interested with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation; that, as iron sharpeneth iron, and as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine. (2.) The case is proposed, and shewed to be weighty; and of mighty consequence.

11. The matter to be debated, was, what course they should take with these witnesses to the growth of his interest; they said, What do we? For this Man doth many miracles. The information given about the raising of Lazarus, was produced, and the men, brethren, and fathers are called in to help as solicently as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in the bowels of their country. First, They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that he had wrought many of them; they are therefor witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledged his accidents, and yet denied his commission. Secondly

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle, which were as usual; to some it was a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. Some were invited by it, and induced to believe. Many of the Jews, when they saw the things that Jesus did, believed on him, and yet they might, for it was an illiberal thing for them to be so. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet ceased the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now that they had themselves seen this done, their malice was conquered, and they yielded at last. But blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love him, and comfort ourselves; and these were many of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. While we are doing good offices to others, we put ourselves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

2. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelieb. 1. The informers were so; (r. 46.) Some of them, who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, were so far from being convinced, that they went to the Pharisees, when they knew to be his implacable enemies, and told them what things Jesus had done; not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less as an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a sanguine desire to excite those who needed no spur, the more vigorously to prosecute him. There is a strange instance, (1.) Of a most obstinate infidelity, refusing to yield to the facts of the case; (2.) Of a most weighty testimony, yet the evidence, that the god of this world had blinded their minds. (2.) Of a most inveterate enmity. If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been modified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more than what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of haging; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. Doge is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue. (Ps. 130. 2.)
They consider what was to be done, and chide themselves that they had not done something sooner, effectually to crush him. They do not take it at all into their consideration, whether they should not receive him for their own name, and own him as the Messiah, though they professed to expect him, and Jesus gave pregnant proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted that he is an enemy, and as such is to be run down. "What do we? Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine, so destructive to our interest, spreads thus? Shall we take it for granted that we have got the sentiments of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined, and not bestir ourselves? What have we been doing all this while? And what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking, and bring nothing to pass?"

[2.] That which made this matter weighty, was that Christ ordered the church and nation to be in from the Romans, (v. 48.) "If we do not silence him, and take him off, all men will believe on him; and this being the setting up of a new king, the Romans will take umbrage at it, and will come with an army, and take away our place and nation, and therefore it is no time to trifle." See what an opinion they have of the power. They speak as if they thought Christ's success and progress in his work depended upon their connivance, as if he could not go on to work miracles, and make disciples, unless they let him alone; as if it were in their power to conquer him who had conquered death, or as if they could fight against God, and prosper. But he that sits in heaven, laughs at the fond conceit which an important malice has of its own omnipotence.

Secondly, Of their own policies. They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight and foresight, and great sagacity in their moral prognostications.

1. They take on them to prophesy that, in a little time, if he have liberty to go on, all men will believe on him; hereby owing, when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power in them, such as could not be resisted, but that all men would become his proselytes and votaries; thus do they now make his interest formidable, though, to serve another turn, these same men strove to make it contemptible; (ch. 7. 48.) Have any of the rulers believed on him? This was the thing they were afraid of, that men would believe on him, and then all their measures were broke. Note, The success of the gospel is the terror of its adversaries; if souls be saved, they are undone.

2. They foretell that if the generality of the nation be drawn after him, the rage of the Romans will be drawn upon them. They will come and take away our place; the country in general, especially Jerusalem, or the temple, the holy place, and their privileges in the temple, their places of power and trust.

Now it was true that the Romans had a very jealous eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true that if the Romans should pour an army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here appeared a consideration which should have moved them more, the power of the priests of the Lord, if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God and all good men. Had they kept their integrity, they need not to have feared the Romans; but they speak like a dissipated people, as the men of Judah, when they basely said to Samson, "Acrost thou not that the Philistines rule over us?" Judg. 15. 11. When men lose their piety, they lose their courage.

But, (1.) It was false that there was any danger of the Romans being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's gospel, for it was no way influential in them, but it was beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest, for he taught men to give tribute to Cæsar, and not to resist evil, but take up the cross. The Roman governor, at his trial, could find no fault in him. There was more danger of the Romans being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are often the cue of their enemies, and the benefit of their friends.

(2.) Had there really been some danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, yet that would not justify their hating and persecuting a good man. Note, [1.] The enemies of Christ and his gospel have often coloured their enmity with a seeming care for the public good and the common safety, and, in order to that, have branded their prophets and ministers as trouble-makers in Israel, and men that turn the world upside down.

[2.] Carnal policy commonly sets up reasons of state, in opposition to rules of justice. When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety more than for truth and duty, it is wisdom from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. But see what was the issue; they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating of Christ's gospel would bring desolation upon them by the Romans, and therefore, right or wrong, set themselves against it; but it proved that their persecuting of the gospel, brought upon them that which they feared, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Romans came and took away their place and nation, and their place knew them no more. Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin, we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; and they who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to secure or advance their own secular interest, will find Jerusalem a more burthensome stone than they think it is, Zech. 12. 5. The fear of the wicked it shall come upon them.

(3.) Caïphas makes a malicious but mystical speech in the council, upon this occasion.

[1.] The malice of it appears evident at first view, v. 49, 50. He, being the High-Priest, and so president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated: "You know nothing at all, your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear a dispute, it is soon determined, if you consider that received maxim, That it is expedient for a man that one should die for the people."

First, The counselor was Caïphas, who was High-Priest that same year. The high-priesthood was by the divine appointment settled upon the heir male of the house of Aaron, for and during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir male, but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual change, like a senatorial, yet frequently changed, as those could make an interest with the Roman powers. Now it happened that this year Caïphas wore the mitre.

Secondly, The drift of the advice was, in short, this, That some way or other must be found out to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think that they strongly suspected him to be indeed the Messiah; but his denial of any office, less a temporal, and so much as to their national and secular interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, he will be put to death. Caïphas does not say, Let him be silenced, imprisoned, banished, though that is sufficient for the restraint of one they thought dangerous; but die he must. Note, Those that have set themselves against Christianity, have commonly divested all selves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.
First, He explains what He said, and shows how it not only was, but was intended to be, accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not speak it of himself; as it was an artifice to spur the council against Christ, he spoke it of himself; yet the evil rather; but as it was in vain, declaring it the purpose and design of God the Father to save God's spiritual Israel from sin and wrath, he did not speak it of himself; for he knew nothing at the matter, he must not so, neither did his heart think so, for nothing was in his heart but to destroy and cut off, Isa. 10. 7.

1. He prophesied, and those that prophesied, in their prophesying, did not speak of themselves. But by the word of God, that is, of God's Spirit—this once, though a bad man, and an implacable enemy to Christ and his gospel. Note, (1.) God can, and often does, make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions, for he has them not only in a chain, to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but in a bridle, to lead them to do the service they would not. (2.) Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? will be rejected as a frivolous plea.

2. He prophesied, being High-Priest that year; not that his being High-Priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical name to have first inspired with prophecy the man that first assumed it. But by the word of God, that is, of God's Spirit—this once, though a bad man, and an implacable enemy to Christ and his gospel. Note, (1.) God can, and often does, make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions, for he has them not only in a chain, to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but in a bridle, to lead them to do the service they would not. (2.) Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? will be rejected as a frivolous plea. He happened to be High-Priest that year which was fixed to be the year of the redemption, when Messiah the Prince must be cut off, but not for himself; (Dan. 9. 26.) and he must own it as a measure of God's purpose, (Acts 2. 17.) Being High-Priest that year that famous year, in which there was to be such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the prophecy, (Joel 2. 28, 29.) compared with Acts 2. 17., some drops of the blessed shower light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs (saith Dr. Lightfoot) of the children's bread, which fell from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was that year High-Priest, was extorted an implicit resignation of it to him, who should not (as they had done for many ages) offer beasts for that nation, but offer himself, and so make an end of the sin-offering. This resignation he made unanswerable, as Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob.

3. The matter of his prophecy, was, the Jesus should die for that nation, the very thing to which all the prophets bare witness, who testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ; (1 Pet. 1. 11.) That the death of Christ must be the life and salvation of Israel; he meant by that nation, those in it that ultimately adhered to Judaism; but God in these in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ, and become flowers of it, all believer's in it, according to the prophecy. The Jesus, which Caiaphas was now projecting, proved the sum of that interest in the nation, which he intended should be the security and establishment of it, for it brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved...
the advancement of that interest which he hoped it
would have been the run of, for Christ, being lifted
up from the earth, drew all men unto him. It is a
great thing that is here prophesied; That Jesus
should die, die for others, not only for their good,
but in their stead; die for that nation, for they had
the first offer made them of salvation by his death.
If the whole nation of the Jews had unanimously
believed in Christ, and received his gospel, they had
the one mightily of his kingdom as a voice raised
from their grievances. The fountain was first opened
to the house of David, Zech. 13. 1. He so died for
that nation, as that the whole nation should not
perish, but that a remnant should be saved, Rom.
11. 3.

Secondly, The evangelist enlarges upon this word of
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niej unprepared for it; but he retired, First, To put a mark of his displeasure upon Jerusalem and the people of the Jews. They rejected him and his gospel, justly therefore did he remove himself and his gospel from them. The Prince of teachers was now removed into a corner. (Isa. 30. 28.) There was no more sign of him; and it was a thing of that thick darkness which was shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the day of her visitation. Secondly, To render the cruelty of his enemies against him the more inconceivable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the public, was, his public appearance, he would try whether their anger would be turned away by his being absent from them; and when David was led to Gath, Saul was satisfied, not of his repentance, but of his absence from him. 1 Sam. 27. 4. But it was the life, the precious life, that these wicked men hunted after. Thirdly, His hour was not yet come, and therefore he declined anger, and did it in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his ser•vants in time of persecution, and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in persecution, that the service of their Lord is better than his. Fourthly, His retirement, for a while, was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more remarkable and illustrious. This swelled the acclamations of joy with which his well-wishers welcomed him at his next public appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the city. (6.) The strict inquiry made for him during his absence. v. 53—57. [1.] The occasion of it was the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence, according to custom; (v. 53.) The Jews' passover was nigh at hand, a festival which shone bright in their calendar, and which there was great expectation of for some time before; this was Christ's fourth fast and last passover, since he entered upon his public ministry, yet it might truly be said, (as 2 Chron. 35. 18.) There never was such a passover in Israel, for in it Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Now the passover being at hand, many went out of all parts of the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves. This was either, First, A necessary purifi•cation of those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the water of purification, and to perform the other rites of cleansing upon them, for the law might command the passover in their uncleanness, Num. 9. 6. Thus before our gospel-passover we must renew our repentance, and be baptized to the blood of Christ, and compass God's altar. Or, Secondly, A voluntary purification, or self-sequestration, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many that were more devout than their neighbours, spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do them in private, both for the adornment of the temple-service. Thus we must by solemn preparation set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God. [2.] The inquiry was very soliozious: They said, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? v. 56. First, Some think that this was said by those who wished well to him and expected his coming, that they might have his doctrine, and make him the more inconsistent. They who came early out of the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came up the sooner with that expectation, and therefore as they stood in the temple, the place of their purification, they inquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them hopes of seeing him? If there were those, and those of the most devout people, and best affected to revelation, who showed it respect to Christ, it was a check to the vanity of the chief priests, and a reproach against them. Secondly, It should rather seem that they were his enemies, who made this inquiry after him, who wished for an opportunity to lay hands on him. They, seeing the town begin to fill with devout people who were zealous of the temple, and are enemies to the country, wondered they did not find him among them, and were afraid that those who had been assisting them that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ. How miserably degenerate was the Jewish church, when the priests of the Lord were become like the priests of the calves, a snare on Mezphar, and a net spread upon Tabor, and were found to make slaughtered. (Hos. 5. 1, 2.) When, indeed, they were found to be so, they would have been themselves secured with the least part of worst malice. Their asking, What think ye? If he be not come up to the feast? implies, 1. An invi•sion reflection upon Christ, as if he would omit his attendance on the feast of the Lord, for fear of exposing himself. Itchers, through irreligion, he absent, they are not animadverted upon; but if Christ appear, it is curiosity. This sense of his presence, (for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice,) is not to be the ground of reproach, as it was to David's, that his seat was empty at the feast, though Saul wanted him, only that he might have an opportunity of taking him to the wall with his javelin, 1 Sam. 20. 26, 27, &c. It is said to see holy ordinances prostituted to such unholy purposes. 2. A fearful apprehension that they had of losing their game: Will he be not come up to the feast? If he do not, our measures are broken, and we are all undone; for these are the weapons of a pursuivant into the country, to fetch him up. [3.] The orders issued out by the government for the apprehending of him were very strict, v. 57. The great Sanhedrim issued out a proclamation, strictly charging and requiring, that if any person in city or country knew where he was, (pretending that he was a criminal, and had fled from justice,) they should shew it, that he might be taken, probably promising a reward to any that would discover him, and imposing a penalty on such as harboured him. So that hereby he was represented to the people as an obnoxious, dangerous man, an outlaw, whom any one may have a blow at. Saul issued out such a proclamation for apprehending of David, and Abah of Elijah. See, First, How intent they were upon his being taken, that they should shew it, and by indisputably they imposed in it: now at a time when they were in the exercise of religion and the duty of their function, they would have found themselves something else to do. Secondly, How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them; if any man were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an hirpling at the sins of wicked rulers, that they commonly make those that are under the influence of their unrighteousness. But, notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where he was, yet such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God's hold of the consciences of others, that he continued undiscovered, for the Lord hid him.

CHAP. XII.

It was a melancholy account which we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, of the grandeur borne by Jesus, when the Scribes and Pharisees pronounced him a teacher to their church, and put upon him all the marks of ignorance they could; but the story of this chapter balances that, by giving us an account of his appearing, and being received by his Saviour, as Redeemer, notwithstanding all that was so strongly thrown upon him. Thus the one was set over against the other, to see what honours were bestowed on him, and what hours, even in the depth of his humiliation. Mary did hair
ST. JOHN, XII.

1. WHEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then sat with one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him. 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus. Let her alone: against the day of my burying she hath kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. 12. In these verses, we have,

1. The kind visit our Lord Jesus made to his friends at Bethany, v. 1. He came up out of the country, six days before the passover, and took up at Bethany, a town that, according to the computation of our metropolis, lay so near Jerusalem, as to be within the bills of mortality. He lodged here with his friend Lazarus, whom he had lately raised from the dead. His coming to Bethany now, may he considered.

1. As a preface to the passover he intended to celebrate, to which relation is had in the date of the same; six days before the passover. Devout men set time apart before, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to fulfill all righteousness. And thus he has set us an example of solemn self-seclusion, before the solemnities of the gospel-passover; let us hear the voice crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

2. As a voluntary exposing of himself to the fury of his enemies; now that his hour was at hand, he came within their reach, and freely offered himself to them, though he had shewed them how easily he could evade all their snares. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not forced from him, but resigned; (2.) As the strength of his persecutors could not overpower him, so their subtlety could not surprise him, but he died, because he would. (2.) As there is a time when we should follow him, for it cannot be otherwise, so there is a time when we are called to jeopard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul, when he went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem.

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whom he loved, and from whom he was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit; he came to take leave of them, and to leave with them a comfort and concern for himself, that was approaching. Note, Though Christ departed for a time from his people, he will give them intimations that he parts in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town where Lazarus was, whom he raised from the dead. That miracle, wrought here, put a new honour upon the place, and made it remarkable. Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of that miracle; for where Christ works wonders, and shows signal favours, he looks after them, to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where he has sown plentifully, he observes whether it comes up again.

11. The kind entertainment which his friends there gave him; they made him a supper, (v. 2.) a great supper, v. 3. It is queried whether this was the same with that which is recorded, Matt. 26. 6. &c. in the house of Simon; most think that they were; for the substance of the story and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said two days before the passover, whereas this was done six days before; nor is it likely that Martha should serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think she removed his dinner from the second to the third day of the passover week, but this the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish sabbath, the night before he rode in triumph into Jerusalem; that in the house of Simon, this of Lazarus; these two being the most public and solemn entertainments given him in Bethany. Mary graced them both with this token of her respect; and what she did of her own, he told this; but a pound of it, (v. 3.) she used that second time, when she poured it all out, Mark 14. 3.

Let us see the account of this entertainment.

1. They made him a supper; for with them, or ordinarily, supper was the best meal. This they did in token of their respect and gratitude, for a feast is made for friendship; and that they might have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with him, for a feast is made for familiarity. Perhaps in allusion to this, and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh, it is that he promises to such as open the door of their hearts to him, that he will sup with them, Rev. 3. 5.

2. Martha served; she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master; though a woman of some quality, she did not think it below her to serve, when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a dishonour or disparagement to us, to stoop to any service wherein Christ may be honoured. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being troubled with much serving. But she did not therefore leave off serving, as some, who, when they are reproved for one extreme, proceedeally run into another; she left that of her own accord, when she saw the Lord served. This was on the one hand, a proof of her tenderness and care of his honour, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy, who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him, to hear his wisdom; better be a waiter at Christ's table, than a guest at the table of a prince.

3. Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat. It
proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that there were those who did eat and drink with him, Acts 10. 41. Lazarus did not retire into a wilderness after his resurrection, as if, when he had made a visit to the other world, he must ever after be a hermit in this; no, he conversed familiarly with people, as others did. He sat at meat, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ has raised up to a spiritual life, are made to sit together with him. See Eph. 2, 3, 6.

111. The particular respect which Mary showed him, above the rest, in anointing his feet with sweet spices, was not only a great instance of affection, very costly, which, probably, she had had for her own use; but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she anointed the feet of Jesus, and, as a further token of her reverence for him, and negligence of herself, she wiped them with her hair, and this was taken notice of by all that were present, for the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. See Prov. 31. 16.

Doubtless, she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family; and thus she studies what she shall render. Now by this her love to Christ appears to have been,

1. A generous love; far from sparing necessary expenses, she, in this, showed she is as generous in religious service, as she must be to avoid it. If she had any thing more valuable than another, that must be brought out for the honour of Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love him so much better than the world, as to be willing to lay out the best they have for him.

2. A condescending love; she not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but poured it upon him with her hands, which might have made her one of her servants to have done; nay, she did not, as usual, anoint his head with it, but his feet. True love, as it does not spare charge, so it does not spare pains in honouring Christ. Considering what Christ has done and suffered for us, we are very grateful if we think any service too hard to do, or too mean to stoop to, whereby he may really be glorified.

3. A tender love; there was not a more tender mark of this love, faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed, who, being both Priest and King, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, God's Anointed should be our Anointed. Has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows? Let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections above all competitors. By consenting to Christ as our King, we must comply with God's designs, appointing him our Head, whom he has appointed, Hos. 1. 11.

The filling of the house with the pleasant odour of the ointment may intimate to us, (1.) That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses, bring a sweet odour into them; Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart. (2.) Honours done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers; the vessels of God and good men an offering of a sweet smelling savor.

IV. Judas's dislike of Mary's compliment, or token of her respect to Christ, ver. 4, 5, where observe,

1. The person that carped at it was Judas, one of his disciples; not one of their nature, but only one of their number. It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and there are many who pretend to stand in relation to Christ, who really have no kindness for him. Judas was an apostle, a preacher of the gospel, and yet one that discouraged and check'd this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see the life of religion and holy zeal flowered upon and discon tens'd of such as are children by their offers to Christ, and encouraged, for this was he that should betray Christ. Note, A blemish of love to Christ, and a secret content of covetousness, when they appear in professors of religion, are a sad presage to a bad apostasy. It foretells, lesser instances of worldliness, discon tention, to be ready for a closure with greater temptations.

2. The pretence with which he covered his dislike; (v. 5.) "Why was not this ointment, since it was designed for a poor use, sold for three hundred pence," (which is six do. of our money,) "and given to the poor?" Ver. 6. Here is, 1. A full reply, which is the better sort of argument, and pleads the pretence for Satan's triad this is honest with an air of indignation. (2.) Here is a useful wisdom passing censure upon grouse zeal, as a gull of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves upon their secular honors, and undervalue others, have none in them of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. (3.) Here is charity to the poor in such a colour for espousing a piece of part to Christ, and secretly making a deal for covetousness. Many excuse themselves from laying out in charity, under pretense of laying out for charity; whereas if the clouds be full of rain, they will empty themselves. Judas asked, Why was it not given to the poor? To which it is easy to answer, Because it was better bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Note, We must not conclude that those do upon the wrongest pretense of charity, which are upon the wrongest pretense of religion. But if we are to judge of their good, it is to judge of it according to the ends they have in view, and as just as we would have them; as if every thing must be adjudged impudent and unrighteous, which does not take its measure from us and our sentiments. Proud men think all ill-used who do not agree with them.

3. The discovery and discovery of Judas's hypocrisy here, ver. 6. Here is the evangelist's remark upon it by the direction of him who alone knew the heart. Thus he said, not that he cared for the poor, as he pretended, but because he was a thief, and had the bag.

(1.) It did not come from a principle of charity; not that he cared for the poor. He had no compassion toward them, no concern for them; what were the poor to him any further than he might serve his own ends by them; for he had none of the spirit of the covenant, and therefore none of the heart. Thus he said, not that he cared for the poor; it is all one to him whether it's true interest sink or swim, but, under the pretence of this, they are advancing, themselves. Simon and Levi pretended zeal for circumcision, not that they cared for the seal of the covenant, any more than John for the Lord of hosts, when he said, Come, see our zeal.

(2.) It did come from a principle of covetousness. The truth of the matter was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have had it in money, to be put in the common stock which he was entrusted with, and then he knew what to do with it. Observe,

1. (1.) Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whereby some think he was called Isacar, the bag-house. (2.) See what estate Jesus had and his disciples had at this time; it was but little; they had neither farms nor merchandise, neither vineyards nor stock nor, shall I say, a bag, or, as some think, the word signifies, box, or coffer, wherein they kept just enough in their subsistence, giving the surplus, if any, went to the poor; this they carried about with them, and so they went with Jesus. Observe, Judas was more interested in my property about me. This bag was employed by the contributions of good people, and the Master and his disciples had all in common; let this lessen our esteem of worldly wealth, and deaden us to the
punctilious of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and despicable way of living, if that be our lot; that it was our Master's lot; for our sales he became poor.

[2.] See who was the steward of the little they had; it was Judas, he was purse-bearer. It was his office to receive and pay, and we do not find that he gave any account what markets he made. He was appointed to this office, either, First, Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter or John that was made steward, (though it was a place of trust and profit,) but Judas, the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are often so, so they are a diminution, to a minister of the gospel; see 1 Cor. 6. 4. The prime-ministers of state in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, Acts 6. 2. Secondly, Because he was destruous of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him, either, 1. As a kind- ness, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government, because disappointed of their preferment; but Judas has no cause to complain of that; the bag he chose, and the bag he had, Or, 2. In judgment upon him, to punish him for his secret wickedness; that was put into his hands, which would be a snare and trap to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within, are often justly punished with strong temptations to sin without. We are too apt to be triumphing, and to be proud of it, for at the best we are but stewards of it; and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged, (pardon the expression,) that was steward of the bag; the prosperity of fools destroys them.

(2.) Being trusted with the bag, he was a thief, he had a dishonest disposition. The reigning love of money is dishonest; and as much as anger and revenge are heart-murder, Or, perhaps, he had been really guilty of embezzling his Master's stores, and converting that to his own use, which was given to the public stock. And some conjecture, that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and then run away and leave his Master, having heard him speak so much of troubles approaching, which he could by no means reconcile himself to. Note, They to whom the management and disposal of public issues is committed, have need to be governed by strong principles of justice and honesty, that no blot cleave to their hands; for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, or the country, if cheating be thriving, and communities being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing of them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft and the portion of thieves will be found no justifying matter. Judas, who had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

Y. Christ's justification of what Mary did; (v. 7, 8.) Let her alone. Hereby he intimated, 1. His acceptance of her kindness. Though he was perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet, as it was a token of her good-will, he signified himself well-pleased with it. 2. His care that she should not be molested in it; Purdon her, so it may be read; "excuse her, then, she has been an error of her love." Note, Christ would not have then censured or discouraged, who sincerely design to please him, though in their honest endeavours there be not all the discretion that may be, Rom. 14. 3. Though we would not do as they do, yet let them alone. For Mary's justification,

(1.) Christ puts a favourable construction upon what Mary said, and says, she knew that it was not meat to eat of; Against the day of my burying she has kept this. Or, She has reserved this for the day of my embalming; so Dr. Hammond. "You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of your dead friends, nor say that it should be sold, and given to the poor. Now this anointing other was so intended, or at least may be so interpreted; for the day of my burying is now at hand, and she has anointed a body that is about to be embalmed. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus thought it much and dear of his own death and burial; it would be good for us to do so too. 2. Providence does often so open a door of opportunity to good christians, and the Spirit of grace does so open their hearts, that the expressions of their pious zeal prove to be more reasonable, and more beautiful, than any foresight of their own. It is good that men make them. [5.] The grace of Christ puts kindness into the heart of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

(2.) He gives a sufficient answer to Judas's objection, v. 8. [1.] It is so ordered in the kingdom of Providence, that the poor we have always with us, some or other that are proper objects of charity; (Deut. 15. 11.) such there will be as long as there are in this lapsed state of mankind so much folly, and so much affliction. [2.] It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace, that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Jesus Christ; "Ale ye have not always, but only now for a little time." Note, We need wisdom when two duties come in competition, to know which to give the preference to, which must be determined by the circumstances. How short times are said to be, how improved, and these opportunities first and most valuable, they become only to be of the shortest continuance, and which we see most speedily hastening away. That good duty which may be done at any time, ought to give way to that which cannot be done but just now.

VI. The public notice which was taken of our Lord Jesus here at this supper in Bethany; (v. 9.) Much people of the Jesus knew that he was there, for he was the talk of the town, and the name became thither; the more because he had lately ascended, and now broke out as the sun from behind a dark cloud. 1. They came to see Jesus, whose name was very much greatened, and made considerable by the late miracle he had wrought in raising Lazarus. They came, not to hear him, but to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him here at Bethany, hearing he was come and might be seen, he was there with some who were to do passover. They came, not to seize him, or inform against him, though the government had presented him to an outlawry, but to see, and show him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest in spite of all the attempts of his enemies to misrepresent him. It being known where Christ was, multitudes came to him. Note, Where the King is, there is the court, where Christ is, there will the gathering of the people be, Luke 17. 37.

2. They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, which was a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith in Christ, to have the story perhaps from Lazarus's own mouth. Others came only for the gratifying of their curiosity, that they might say they had seen a man who had been dead, and that he was alive and well, to the King served for a show, these holy-days, to those, who, like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing new things. Perhaps some came to put curious questions to Lazarus about the state of the dead, to ask what news from the other world; we ourselves have sometimes said, it may be, We would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus. Note, We may be sensible that Lazarus was silent, and gave them no account of his voyage; however, the scripture is silent, and gives us no account of it; and we must not covet
to be wise above what is written. But our Lord Jesus was present, who was a much fitter person to them to apply to than Lazarus; for to his own self he says, 'My Father is he in heaven, and I in the earth.' We need not what they tell us concerning another world, neither should we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. We have a more sure word of prophecy.

VII. The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of our Lord Jesus, and their plot to crush him; (c. 10, 11.) They consulted (or decreed) how they might put Lazarus to death also, by means of him, of what was done to him, not of any thing he said or did, many of the Jews were away, and believed on Jesus. Here observe,

1. How vain and unsuccessful their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to alleviate the people from him; and exasperate them against him, and yet many of the Jews, their neighbours, their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the convincing evidence of Christ's miracles, that they went away from the interest and party of the priests; went off from obedience to their tyranny, and believed on Jesus. And it was by reason of Lazarus; his resurrection put life into their faith, and convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah, and had life in himself, and power to give life. This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles, of which they had heard he wrought in Galilee; what was impossible to him, that could raise the dead?

2. How absurd and unreasonable this day's vote was—that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage that could be; they were like a wild beast in a net, full of fury, and laying about them without any consideration. It was a sign that they neither feared God, nor respected reason. For,

(1.) If they had feared God, they would not have done such an act of defiance to him. God will have Lazarus to live by miracle, and they will have him to die by malice. They cry, Away with such a fellow, it is not fit he should live, when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it highly fit he should live: what was this but walking contrary to God? They would put Lazarus to death, and with difficulty save him: If God had been on their side, if they could contend with God, and try titles with the King of kings. Who has the keys of death and the grave, he or they? O cree malitia! Christus qui suscibir pastor mortuum, non posset occurrere—Blind malice, to suppose that Christ, who could raise one that had died a natural death, could not raise one that had been slain! Aye, in be. Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love, as if they had made a league offensive and defensive with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One would think that they should rather have consulted how they might have joined in friendship with Lazarus and his family, and by their mediation have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the God of this world had blinded their minds.

(2.) If they had regarded man, they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they could not pretend to lay any crime. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can so easily break through the most sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teaches? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition was thought sufficient, as in the church of Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate the greatest villains, and make them meritorious.

12. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, 15. I am not daughter of Sion; behold, thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18. For this came the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.
that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet their God. (Amos 4. 12.) and the virgins to meet the bridegroom.

3. In what way they expressed their respects; they had not the keys of the city to present him, nor the sword or mace to carry before him, none of the city-music to compliment him with, but such as they had gave him; and even this despisable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw, before the throne, and before the Lamb, Rev. 7. 9, 10. Though these were not before the throne, they were before the Lamb, the paschal Lamb, who now, according to the usual order, foretold the coming of Christ, none set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of that celestial choir,

(1.) That they had palms in their hands, and so, had these branches of palm-trees. The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes plurimum palmarum honos—a man of many palms. Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit that he should have the victor's palm borne before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had put it off. But this was not all; the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles, (Lev. 23. 40. Nehem. 8. 15.) and the useing of this particular branch was, in the fashion of the ancient world, to be introduced thus was rather a disparagement than any honour to the King of Israel, for it seemed as if he would look great, and knew not how. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. He was now humbling himself, but in his exalted state John sees him in a vision on a white horse, with a bow and crown.

III. The fulfilling of the scripture in this, As it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, v. 15. This is quoted from Zech. 9. 9. To him bare all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that Zion's King should come, should come thine, sitting on an ass's colt; even this minute circumstance was foretold, and Christ took care it should be pointed out, when he fulfilled it. (2.) Christ is Zion's King; the holy hill of Zion was of old destined to be the metropolis or royal city of the Messiah. (2.) Zion's King does and will seek her, and come to her; though for a short time he retires, in due time he returns. (3.) Though he comes but slowly, (an ass is slow-paced,) yet he comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension as greatly encourage the supplications and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble suppliants may reach to speak with him. If this be a discouragement to Zion, that her King appears in no greater state or strength, let her know that though he comes to her, riding on an ass's colt, yet he goes forth against her enemies, riding on the heavens for her help, Ps. 92. 11.

2. The character of Zion is therefore applied to behold her, to take notice of him and his approaches; behold, and wonder, for he comes with observation, though not with outward show. Cant. 3. 11. Fear not. In the prophecy, Zion is bid to receive gratefully, and to show, but here it is rendered, Fear not. Unbasing fears are emblems to spiritual joys; if they be cured, if they be conquered, joy will come in very sight of them. Christ is come to show his people, to silence their fears. If the case be so, that we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, yet we shall labour to get from under the oppressions of fear. Rejoice greatly, at least, fear not.

IV. The remark made by the evangelist in the disciples' understanding of this; (v. 16.) They understood not at first why Christ did this, and how
the scripture was fulfilled; but when Jesus was glorified, and thereupon the Spirit poured out, then they remembered that these things were written of him in the Old Testament, and that they and others had, in all sincerity, done the things that were foretold. 3. See the imperfection of the disciples now, in their infant state: even they understood not these things at first; did not consider, when they fetched him the ass, and set him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Zion's King. Now observe, (1.) The scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those who have not themselves any allusion to the scripture, in what they do, Isa. 45. 4. (2.) This was fulfilled, not in the word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand; not at their first acquaintance with the things of God, while they see men as trees walking; not at the first proposal of the things to their view and consideration. That which afterward is clear, at first was dark and doubtful. (3.) It will become the disciples of Christ, when they are grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the follies and weaknesses of their first beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they may have compassion on the ignorant. When I was a child, I spake as a child.

2. See here the improvement of the disciples in their adult state. Though they had been children, they were not always so, but went on to perfection. Observe, (1.) When they understood it: when Jesus was glorified; for, [1.] Till then they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expected it to appear in external pomp and power, and therefore knew not how to apply the scriptures which spake of it to so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, of its powers, glories, and effects, will prevent our misinterpreting and misapplying of the scriptures that speak of it. [2.] Till then the Spirit was not poured out, who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the scriptures by the same Spirit that indited the scriptures. The Spirit of revelation is to all the saints a Spirit of wisdom, Eph. 1. 17, 18. (2.) It was a providence; they compared that providence with the event, and put them together, that they might mutually receive light from each other, and so they came to understand both. Then remembered they that these things were written of him by the prophets, consentant to which they were done to him. Note, Such an admirable harmony there is between the word and works of God, that the remembrance of what is written, will enable us to understand what is done; and the observation of what is done, will help us to understand what is written. As we have heard, so have we seen. The scripture is every day in the fulfilling.

V. The reason which induced the people to pay this respect to our Lord Jesus upon his coming into Jerusalem, though the government was so much set against him. It was because of that illustrious miracle he wrought in raising Lazarus. 1. See here what an instance of grace they had of this miracle: no doubt, the city rang of it, the report of it was in all people's mouths. But they who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to those who were eye-witnesses of it, that they might know the certainty of it by the utmost evidence the thing was capable of. The proof, therefore that stood by when he called Lazarus out of his grave, being found out and examined, bare record, v. 17. They unanimously averred the thing to be true, beyond dispute or contradiction, and were ready, if called to it, to depose it upon oath, for so much is implied in the word ἀμετρήτως. Note, The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incon testable proofs. It is probable that these who had seen this miracle, did not only assert it to those who asked them, but publicly shewed, that this might add to the triumphs of this solemn day, and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, They who wish well to Christ's kingdom, should be forward to proclaim what they know, that may redound to his honour.

2. What improvement they made of it, and what instance it affords us of their faith, v. 13. For this cause, as much as any other, the people cried, etc. (1.) Some, out of curiosity, were desirous to see one that had done such a wonderful work. Many aged scribes he had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after him as this one miracle did. But, (2.) Others, out of conscience, studied to do him honour, as one sent of God. This miracle was preserved for one of the law, that it might confirm those things which went before, and might gain him this honour just before his sufferings: Christ's works were all not only well done (Mark 7. 37.) but well timed.

VI. The indignation of the Pharisees at all this; some of them, probably, saw, and they all soon heard of Christ's public entry. The committee, appointed to find out expediency to crush him, now heard with a view to confirm their design that he had retired into privacy, and that he would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but they now rage and fret when they see they imagined but a vain thing.

1. They own that they had got ground against him; it was plainly to be perceived that they forewaged nothing. They could not, with all their insinuations, alienate the people's affections from him, nor with their menaces restrain them from showing their affection to him. Note, They who oppose Christ, and fight against his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes, in spite of them, and the little efforts of their impotent malice. Ye prevail nothing, saith he, ye foresee nothing. Note, There is nothing got by opposing Christ.

2. They own that he had got ground; the world is gone after him; there is a vast crowd attending him, a world of people; an hyperbole common in most languages. Yet here, like Caiphas, were they aware, they prophesied that the world would go after him; some of all sorts, some from all parts; nations shall be gathered. But to what intent was this said? (1.) Thus they express their own vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the horn of the righteous be exalted with honour, the wicked are exalted, and they are grievèd. (Ps. 112. 9, 10.) Considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so inconsiderable a piece of honour as was now done him; but proud men would monopolize honour, and have none share with them, like Haman. (2.) Thus they excite themselves, and one another, to the charge of Christ, as one of their enemies. Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active by being baffled; and shall their friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who knows its cause is righteous, and will at last be victorious?

20. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at
the feast. 21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, when the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will I make my Father honour.

Honour is here done to Christ by certain Greeks that inquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem, (for that day was taken up in public work,) but a day or two after.

1. We are told who they were that did this honour to our Lord Jesus; certain Greeks among the people, who came up to worship at the feast, v. 20. Some think they were Jews of the dispersion, some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called Greeks, Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called proselytes of the gate, such as the eunuch and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews, and therefore those among the Gentiles who were piously inclinéd joined with them in their solemn meetings, as far as was allowed them. There were devout worshippers of the true God, even among them that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was in the latter ages of the Jewish church, that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple at Jerusalem; a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the temple worship to the Gentiles is a serious signal of the division that was to come.

2. And, to show that they were somewhat of the more advanced in knowledge, they show a desire to see Christ, whom they were industrious in the use of proper means. They did not conclude it impossible, because he was so much crowded, to get to speak with him, nor rest in bare wishes, but resolved to try what could be done. Note, They that would have the knowledge of Christ, must seek it.

3. They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think that they had acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles; and then it teaches us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people, for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. It is good to know those who know the Lord. But if these Greeks had been near Galilee, it is probable that they would have attended Christ there where he mostly resided; therefore I think that they applied themselves to him, only because they saw him a close follower of Christ, and he was not the first who could get to speak with him. They show an instance of the general interest of good men for Christ; how many of them made an interest with one of his disciples for an opportunity to converse with him; a sign that they looked upon him as some great one, though he appeared mean. Those that would see Jesus by faith now that he is in heaven, must apply themselves to his ministers, whom he has appointed for this purpose, to guide poor souls in their inquiries after him. Paul may have intended for Ananias and Philip.

The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip, signified the agency of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and the discipling of the nations.

3. Their address to Philip was in short this, Sir, we would see Jesus. They gave him a title of respect, as of authority of honour, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, they would see Jesus; not only see his face, that they might be able to say, when they came home, that they had seen one that was so much talked of; it is probable that they had seen him when he appeared publicly; but they would have some free conversation with him, and be taught by him, which it was no easy thing to find him. For leisure for, his hands were so full of public work. Now that they were come to worship at the feast, they would see Jesus. Note, In our attendances upon holy ordinances, and particularly the gospel-passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus; to have our acquaintance with him increased, our dependence on him encouraged, our conformity to him carried on; to hear him, to keep up communion with him, and derive communications of grace from him; we miss of our end in coming, if we do not see Jesus.

4. Here is the report which Philip made of this to his Master, v. 22. He tells Andrew, who was of Bethsaida likewise; and was a senior fellow in the college of the apostles, contemporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done; whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because, as Christ's case was in jeopardy, they were not sent but to the house of Israel. They agree that it must be made; but then he would have Andrew go along with him, remembering the favourable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case two of them should agree touching any thing they should ask, Matt. 18. 19. Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another, and concur in helping one another. They must be of one mind and of one heart. They should seem that Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ, when he was teaching in public, for we read (v. 29.) of the people that stood by; but he was seldom alone.

III. Christ's acceptance of this honour done him, signified by what he said to the people hereupon, (v. 23, &c.) where he for tellth the both the honour which he would do to Christ and what event should have in his following, (v. 23, 24.) and the honour which they should have that followed him, v. 25, 26. This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with him.

1. He foresees that plentiful harvest in the conversion of the Gentiles, which this was as it were the first-fruits of, v. 23. Christ said to these two disciples, who spake a good word for those Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no, The hour is come, when the Son of man shall be glorified, by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and
in order to that he must be rejected of the Jews. Observe,

(1.) The end designed hereby, and that is the glorifying of the Redeemer; "And is it so?" Do the Gentiles begin to inquire after me? Does the morning star appear? These glorifying of the morning star, which knows its place and time too, does that begin to take hold of the ends of the earth? Then the hour is come for the glorifying of the Son of man." This was no surprise to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. Note, (1.) The calling, the effectual calling, of the Gentiles into the church of God, greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The glorifying of the redeemed, was the magnifying of the Redeemer. [2.] There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph; The hour is come.

(2.) The strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death of Christ, intimated in that similitude; (v. 21.) "Thrice, verily, I say unto you, to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, that except a corn of wheat fall, not only to, but into, the ground, and die, and be buried and lost, it abideth alone, and you never see any more of it; but if it die according to the course of nature, (otherwise it would be a miracle,) it bringeth forth much fruit; God giving to every seed its soul unto death, else he cannot divide a portion with the great, Isa. 33. 12. He shall have a seed given him, but he must shed his blood, to purchase them and purify them, must win them and wear them. It was necessary likewise, as a qualification for that glory, which he was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church; for if he had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so broken the yoke of the life of righteousness, he had not been sufficiently provided for the entertainment and restoration of those that should come to him, and therefore must abide alone. [2.] The advantage of Christ's humiliation illustrated. He fell to the ground in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was his glory veiled; but that was not all, he died, this immortal Seed submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green, and fresh, and flourishing, and with a great increase, so one dying Christ gathered to himself thousands of living Christians, and he became their Root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this Corn of wheat. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the church is replenished, the mystical body kept up, and will at length be completed; and when time shall be no more, the Captain of our salvation, bringing many sons to glory by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated for ever with the admiring praises of saints and angels, Heb. 2. 10—13.

2. He foretells and promises an abundant recompense to them, and should cordially embrace him and his gospel, and then he cannot appear that they do so, by their faithfulness in suffering for him, or in serving him. (1.) In suffering for him, (v. 23.) "He that loves his life better than Christ, shall lose it;" but he that hates his life in this world, and prefers the favour of God and an interest in Christ before it, shall keep it unto life eternal. This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us anothers.

[1.] See here the fatal consequence of an inordinate love of life; many a man hugs himself to death, and loses his life by over-valuing it. He that so loves his animal life, as to indulge his appetite, and make provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lusts thereof, shall thereby shorten his days, shall lose the life he so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is too much in love with the life of the body, and the ornaments and delights of it, as, for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, he shall lose it, lose a real happiness in the other world, while he thinks he secures an imaginary one in this. *Skim for skin* a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain, but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven for it, buys life too dear, and is guilty of his folly who sold a birthright for a mess of pottage.

[2.] See also the blessed recompense of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body, as to venture that for the preserving of the life of his soul, shall find both, with unspeakable advantage, in eternal life. Note, First, It is required of the disciples of Christ, that they hate their life in this world; a life in this world supposes a life in the other world, and this is bowed when it is loved less than that one. The life in this world includes all the enjoyments of our present state, riches, honours, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them; these we must hate, that is, deserve them as vain and insufficient to make us happy, dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part with them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, Acts 20. 24.—21. 13; Rev. 12. 11. See here much of the power of godliness. Contempt of life conquers the strongest natural affections; and much of the mystery of godliness—that it is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. Secondly, These who, in love to Christ, hate their own lives, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just. He that hateth his life, shall keep it; he puts it into the hands of one that will give the power of godliness to make such with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one. [2.] In serving him; (v. 26.) If any man profess to serve me, let him follow me, as a servant his master; and where I am, i.e. *is* *in* *heaven*, there let my servant be; so some read it, as part of the duty. There let him be, to attend upon me; we read it as part of the promise, There shall he be in happiness with me. And lest this should seem a small matter, he adds, If any man serve me, *he* will my Father's honour; and that is enough, more than enough. The Greeks desired to see Jesus; (v. 21.) but Christ lets them know that it was not enough to see him, they must serve him. He did not come into the world, to be a show for us to gaze at, but a King to be ruled by. And he says this for the encouragement of those who inquired after him, to become his servants. In taking servants, it is usual to fix both the work and the wages; Christ does both here.

[1.] Here is the work which Christ expects from his servants; and it is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes them. First, Let them attend their Master's motions; If any man serve me, let him follow me. Christians must follow Christ, follow his methods and prescriptions, do the things that he saith; follow his example and pattern, walk as he also walked; follow his conduct, by his providence and Spirit. We must go whither he leads us, and in the way he
leads us; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes before us.  "If any man serve me, if he put himself into that relation to me, let him apply himself to the business of my service, and be always ready at my call." Or, "If any man do indeed serve me, let him make an open and public profession of his relation to me, by following me, as the servant owns his master by following him in the streets."

Secondly, Let them attend their master's repose; Where I am, there let my servant be, to wait upon me. Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered; and there let his servants be, to present themselves before him, and receive instruction from him. "Where I am to be in heaven, whither I am now going, there let the thoughts and affections of my servants be, let them have that conversation be, where Christ sitteth," Col. 3, 1, 2.

[2.] Here are the wages which Christ promises to his servants; and they are very rich and noble. First, They shall be happy with him; Where I am, there shall also my servant be. To be with Christ when he was here in poverty and disgrace, would seem but poor preferment, and therefore, doubtless, he means being with him in paradise, sitting with him at his table above, on his throne there; it is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, ch. 17. 24. Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if he were already in it, Where I am; because he was sure of it, and near to it, and it was still upon his heart, and in his heart given, but far beyond what such worthless worms of the earth could expect to receive. The Rewarded is God himself, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus as done to himself. The reward is honour, true lasting honour, the highest honour; it is the honour that comes from God. It is said, (Prov. 27. 18.) He that waits on his master, (humbly and diligently,) shall be honoured. Those that wait on Christ, God will put honour upon, such as his servant's children, and the glory of his name, himself under a veil. They that serve Christ must humble themselves, and are commonly villified by the world, in recompence of both which they shall be exalted in due time. Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks who desired to see him, encouraging them to serve him; what became of these Greeks, we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus asked the way to heaven with their faces thitherward, found it, and walked in it.

27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say! Father, save me from this hour: for this cause came I unto this hour. 28. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying what death he should die. 34. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law of the thing that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Honour is here done to Christ by his Father, in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and which gave occasion to a further conference with the people. In these verses, we have,

1. Christ's address to his Father, upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time; (ch. 27.) Now is my soul troubled. A strange word to come from Christ's mouth, and at this time surprising. Ere this comes in the midst of divers pleasing prospects, in which, one would think, he should have said, Now is my soul pleased. Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble. When Paul had been in the third heaven, he had a thunder in the bush. Observe,

1. Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings; Now is my soul troubled. Now the black and dismal scene began, now were the first thrones of the travail of his soul, now his agony began, his soul began to be exceeding sorrowful. Note, (1.) The sin of our souls was the trouble of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. (2.) The trouble of his soul designed to effect the travail of his soul; for, after this, he said to his disciples, (ch. 14, 1.) Let not your hearts be troubled; why should your's be troubled and mine too? Our Lord Jesus went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before him, and yet submitted to a trouble of soul. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was now troubled, now in sorrow, now in fear, now for a season; but it would not be so always, it would not be so long. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles. They are but for a moment, and will be turned into joy.

2. The strait he seems to be in, hereupon, intimated in those words, And what shall I say? This does not speak him consulting with any other, as if he needed advice, but considering with himself what was to be said now. When our souls are troubled, we must take heed of speaking muddily, but debate with ourselves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a loss, as if what he should choose he wot not. There was a struggle between the work he had taken upon him, which required sufferings, and the nature he had taken upon him, which dreaded them; between these two he here passes with. 'What shall I say? He looked, and there was none to help, which put him to a stand. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that he should speak thus like one at a plunge. Quo se magis examinavit gloria Dominus, quod delicatiae habemus erga nos amoris spectim---The more en
1. How this answer was given—by a voice from heaven. The Jews speak much of a Bathsheba—the daughter of a woman, as one of those divers manners by which God in time past spake to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but to our Lord Jesus: it was given to this purpose for him; (Matt. 3. 17—17, 5) and here, probably, this audible voice was introduced by some visible appearance, either of light or darkness, for both have been used as vehicles of the divine glory.

2. What the answer was—it was an express return to that petition, Father, glorify thy name. I have glorified it already, and I will glorify it yet again. When a Father does not hear as we should, Our Father, hallowed be thy name, this is a comfort to us, that it is an answered prayer: answered to Christ here, and in him, to all time behooves. (1) The name of God had been glorified in the life of Christ, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples he gave of holiness and goodness. (2) It should be further glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ: his wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness, were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered, the affront done to God’s government satisfied for, and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased. What God has done for the glorifying of his own name, is an encouragement to us to expect what he will yet further do. He that has occurred thus much of the nature of this voice, may have another view of this grace.

III. The opinion of the_standers concerning this voice, v. 29. We may hope there were some among them, whose minds were so well prepared to receive a divine revelation, that they understood what was said, and they bare record of it. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude; some of them said that it thundered, others who more directly notice that there was plainly an immediate intelligible voice, said that certainly an angel spake to him. Now this shows, 1. That it was an actual thing, even in the judgment of those that were not at all well affected to him. 2. That they were both to admit so plain a proof of Christ’s divine mission. They would rather say that it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spake to him in answer to his prayer; and yet, if it thundered with such solemn sound and messenger, (as v. 4.) was it not that God’s voice? On, if angels’ spake to him, are they not God’s messengers? But thus God spake once, ye twice, and man perceives it not.

IV. The account which our Saviour himself gives of this voice.

1. Why it was sent; (v. 56.) “It came not because of me, but merely for my encouragement and satisfaction.” (then it might have been whispered in his ear privately.) “But for your sakes.” (1) “That all you who heard it, may believe that the Father hath sent me.” What is said from heaven concerning our Lord Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is said for our sakes, that we might be brought to submit to him, and rest upon him. (2) “That you, my disciples, who are to follow me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same consolations that I carry on me.” Let this encouragement to part with life itself for his sake, if they were called to it, that it should redound to the honour of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings, were intended for our sakes. For our sakes he sanctified himself, and comforted himself.

2. What was the meaning of it. He that lay in the Father’s bosom, knew his face, and what was the meaning of it, and two things God intended, when he said that he would glorify his own name, (1) That by the death of Christ, Satan should be conquered; (v. 31.) Note is the judgment. He speaks with a divine exultation and triumph. “Now
the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for the breaking of the serpent's head, and giving a total rent to the powers of darkness; now for that glorious achievement, now, that great work is to be done, which has been so long thought of in the divine counsels, so long talked of in the written word, which has been so much the hope of saints, and the dread of devils." The matter of the triumph is,

[1.] That now is the judgment of this world; i.e., it is now the fitting season for the execution of the judgment promised, according to the word of God. The word "judgment" is now upon the turning point, this is the critical day, upon which the trembling scale will turn for life or death, to all mankind; all that are not recovered by this, will be left helpless and hopeless. Or, rather, it is a law term, as we take it; "Now judgment is entered, in order to the taking out of execution against the prince of this world." Note, The death of Christ was the judgment of this world. First, It is a judgment of discovery and distinction—judicium discretions; so Austin. Now is the trial of this world, for men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them; to some it is foolishness and a stumbling-block, to others it is the wisdom and power of God; of which there was a figure in the two thieves that were crucified with him. By this our Lord has judged what they thought of the person and work of Christ. Secondly, It is a judgment of favour and absolution to the chosen ones that are in the world. Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world as a Sacrifice for sin and a Surety for sinners, so that when he was judged, and iniquity laid upon him, and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the judgment of this world, for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but the whole world, 1 John 2. 1-2. Thirdly, It is a judgment of condemnation given against the powers of darkness; see ch. 16. 11. Judgment is put for vindication and deliverance, the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a famous trial between Christ and Satan, the serpent and the promised seed; the trial was for the world, and the lordship of it; the devil had long borne sway among the children of men, time out of mind; he now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the forfeiture incurred by sin. We find him willing to have come to a composition; (Luke 4. 6, 7.) he would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ, provided he would hold them by force, and burden him; but Christ would try it out with him; by dying he takes off the forfeiture to divine justice, and then fairly dispuces the title, and receives it in the court of heaven. Satan's dominion is declared to be a usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, Ps. 2. 6, 8. The judgment of this world is, that it belongs to Christ, and not to Satan; to Christ therefore let us all turn tenants.

[2.] That now is the prince of this world cast out. First, It is the devil that is here called the prince of this world, because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world; he is the ruler of the darkness of this world, that is, of this dark world, of those in it that walk in darkness, 2 Cor. 4. 4. Eph. 6. 12.

Secondly, He is said to be cast out, to be now cast out, for whatever had been done hitherto towards weakening the devil's kingdom, was done in the virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done now. Christ reconciling the world to God by the merit of his death, broke the power of death, and cast out Satan as a destroyer; Christ, reducing the world to God by the doctrine of his cross, broke the power of sin, and cast out Satan as a destroyer. The bruising of his heel was the breaking of the serpent's head, Gen. 3. 15. When his oracles were centered, his temples forsaken, his idols famished, and the kingdoms of the world become Christ's kingdom, then was the prince of this world cast out, as appears by comparing this with John's vision, (Rev. 12. 8-11.) where it is said to be done by the blood of the Lamb. Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of people, was an indication of the great design of his whole undertaking. Observe, What assurance Christ here speaks of the victory over Satan; it is as good as done, and can with certainty be expected. 2. That by the death of Christ souls shall be converted, and that would be the casting out of Satan; (v. 32.) If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me. Where observe two things,

[1.] The great design of our Lord Jesus, which was to draw all men to him, not the Jews only who had been long in profession a people near to God, but the Gentiles also, who had been afar off; for he was to be the desire of all nations, (Hag. 2. 7.) and to him must the gathering of the people be. That which his enemies dreaded, was, that the world would go after him, and he would draw them to him, notwithstanding their opposition. Observe here how Christ himself is all in all in the conversion of a soul. First, It is Christ that draws; I will draw them to me as the centre of their unity. The soul that was at a distance from Christ, is brought into an acquaintanceship with him; but a and distrustful of him, is brought to love him and trust him; drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and he would draw men's hearts to him thither.

[2.] The strange method he took to accomplish his design by being lifted up from the earth. What he meant by that, to prevent mistake, we are told; (v. 33.) This he spake, signifying by what death he should die, the death of the cross, though they had designed, and attempted to stone him to death. He that was crucified, was first nailed to the cross, and then lifted up upon it. He was lifted up as a spectacle to the world; lifted up between heaven and earth, as unworthy of either; yet the word here unqualified hinoos is used for measuring the body to the height of heaven, —If I be exalted; he reckoned his sufferings his honour. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ, we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, We shall then be lifted up.

Now Christ's drawing all men to him, followed his being lifted up from the earth. First, It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ; while Christ lived, we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed, but it was after his death that we read of thousands at a sermon added to the church which should be saved. Israel began to multiply in Egypt after the death of Joseph. Secondly, It followed upon it as a consequence. The Jews were taught by his death the fruitful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ to draw souls to him. The cress of Christ, though to some a stumbling-stone, to others is a load-stone. Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net; (Matt. 13. 47, 48.) or to the setting up of a standard, which draws soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in
the wilderness, which drew all those to it that were
stung with fiery serpents, as soon as ever it was
known that it was lifted up, and there was healing
virtue in it. O! what flocking was there to it! So
there was to Christ, when salvation through him was
preached to all nations; see ch. 3. 14. 15. Per-
haps it has some reference to the posture in which
Cain was crucified, with his arms stretched out, to
invite all to him, and embrace all that come. They
that put Christ to that ignominious death, thought
to drive all men from him; but the devil was
outshone in his own bow. Out of the eater came forth
meat.

V. The people's exception against what he said,
and their cavil at it, v. 34. Though they had heard
the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that
proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object, and
pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself, the
Son of man, (v. 23,) which they knew to be one of
the titles of the Messiah, Dan. 7. 13. He had also
said, that the Son of man must be lifted up, which
they understood of his dying, and, probably, he
explained himself so; and some think repeated what
he said to Nicodemus, (ch. 3. 14.) So must the
Son of man be lifted up. Now against this,
1. They alleged those scriptures of the Old Test-
ament which speak of the perpetuity of the Mes-
siah, that he should be so far from being cut off
in the midst of his days, that he should be a Priest
for ever, (Ps. 110. 4,) and a King for ever, (Ps. 89. 29,
35. 108. 5.) They are the length of life for the Son
ever, and his years of generation. (Pss. 61. 6.) From
all this they inferred that the Messiah should not die.
Thus great knowledge in the letter, of the scripture,
if the heart be unsanctified, is capable of being abused
to serve the cause of infidelity, and to fight against
Christianity with its own weapons. Their perverseness
in opposing this to what Jesus had said, will appear, if we
consider, (1.) That, when they vouched the scripture to prove that the
Messiah abideth for ever, they took no notice of
those texts which speak of the Messiah's death and
sufferings: they had heard out of the law, that Mes-
siah abideth for ever; and had they never heard
out of the law, that Messiah shall be cut off, (Dan.
9. 26,) and that he shall pour out his soul unto
death, (Isa. 53. 12,) and particularly, that his hands
and feet were pierced, (Ps. 22. 24, 25,) they
make so strange of the lifting up of the Son of
man? Note. We often run into great mistakes, and
then defend them with scripture-arguments, by put-
ing those things asunder, which God in his word
has put together; and opposing one truth, under
pretense of supporting another. We have heard
out of the gospel, that which exalts free grace, we
have heard also that which enjoin duty, and we
must cordially embrace both, and not separate
them, or set them at variance. (2.) That, when they
opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings
of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had
said concerning his glory and exaltation. They
had heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever;
and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he
should be glorified, that he should bring forth much
fruit, and draw all men to him? (John 15. 2.) Yet he
justly make a difference between himself and his followers,
which suppos'd his abiding for ever? But this they
overlook. Thus unfair disputants oppose some parts
of the opinion of an adversary, which, if they would
but take entire, they could not but subscribe to;
and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes,
which to men of corrupt minds are stones of
stumbling—as Christ crucified, and yet glorified; lifted
up, and yet triumphed over sin and death, &c.
2. They ask, hereupon. Who is this Son of
man? This they asked, not with a desire to be instructed,
but tauntingly and insultingly, as if now they had
raffled him, and run him down. Then says,
The Son of man must die; we have proved the
Messiah must not, and where is then the Messiah-
ship? This Son of man, as thou callest thyself, can-
not be the Messiah, thou must therefore think of
something else to pretend to. Now that which
prejudiced them against this Messiah was, his meanness and poverty;
they would rather have no Christ
than a suffering one.

VI. What Christ said to this exception, or, rather,
what he said upon it. The objection was a
perfect cavil; they might, if they pleased, answer it
themselves. Man dies, and yet is immortal, and
abideth for ever, so the Son of man; therefore,
indeed, and of a truth, the Son of man must be
lifted up, and this is the measure of his glory, for
fully, he gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities
in such vain and fruitless civils as these; (v. 35, 36.)
Yet a little while, and but a little while, is the light
with you; therefore be wise for yourselves, and
walk while we have the light.

In general, we may observe here. 1. The concern
Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire
of their welfare. With what tenaciousness does he here
advocate those to look well to themselves, who were
entrusting ill against him? Even when he endured the contradiction of sinners, he embalmed their
conversion. See Prov. 29. 10. 2. The method he
takes with those objectors; with meekness instruc-
ting those that opposed themselves, (2 Tim. 2. 24.) Were but men's consciences awakened by a due
consideration about their eternal state, and did they
consider how little time they have to spend, and
to sparrow, they would not waste precious thoughts
and time in trifling civils. Particularly we have here,
(1.) The privilege and advantage they enjoyed in
having Christ and his gospel among them, with
the shortness and uncertainty of their enjoyment of
it. They have but a little while in the light with you. Christ
is about to be removed, (v. 31.) and the light of
righteousness, abides for ever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little
while within our horizon. Now, (2.) The Jews at
this time had the light with them, they had Christ's
bodily presence, heard his preaching, saw his mir-
cles. The scripture is to us a light shining in a
dark place. (2.) It was to be but a little while with
them; Christ would shortly leave them, their vis-
ible church state would soon after be dissolved, and
the kingdom of God taken from them, and blindness
and hardness would happen unto Israel. Note. It
is good for us all to consider what a little while we
are to have the light with us. Time is short, and
perhaps opportunity not so long. The candlestick
may be removed; however, we must be removed
from you. Christ would shortly be the light of life with
us; yet a little while is the light of the gospel
with us, the day of grace, the means of grace, the
Spirit of grace, yet a very little while.

(2.) The warning given them to make the best of
these advantages while they enjoyed them, because
of the danger they were in of losing them. Walk
while we have the light: as travellers who make
the best of their way forward, that they may not
be over-reached in their journey, and find the night
is uncomfortable and unsafe. Come, says
they, let us mend our pace, and get forward, while
we have day-light. Thus wise should we be for
our souls, who are journeying towards eternity. 

Note, [1.] It is our business to walk, to press forward, and to get nearer to the region of the future, and to be made fitter for it. Our life is but a day, and we have a day’s journey to go. [2.] The best time of walking is while we have the light. The day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is when we have the word of grace preached to us, and the Spirit of grace and life working with us, and therefore then is the time to be busy. [3.] We are highly concerned to improve our opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day’s work and day’s journey; “lest darkness come upon you, lest you lose your opportunities, and can neither recover them, nor dispatch the business you have to do without them.” Then darkness comes, which is such an utter incapacity to make sure of the great salvation, as renders the state of the careless sinner quite deplorable; so that if his work be undone, then it is likely to be undone for ever. 

(5.) The sad condition of those who have shined away the gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. They walk in darkness, and know not whither they go. They have no light in the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking toward. He that is destinate of the light of the gospel, and is not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, wanders endlessly in mistakes and errors, and a thousand crooked paths, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference of the light and darkness, and how to discern it, and knows not his danger, for he is either sleeping or dancing at the pit’s brink.

(4.) The great duty and interest of every one of us, inferred from all this; (v. 36.) While ye have the light, believe in the light. The Jews had now Christ’s presence with them, let them improve it: afterward they had the first offers of the gospel made to them by the apostles wherever they came; now this is an admonition to them not to out-stand their market, but to accept the offer when it was made them: the same Christ saith to us all who enjoy the gospel. Note, [1.] It is the duty of every one of us to believe in the gospel light, to receive it as a divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, for it is a light to our eyes, and to follow its courses; with a due regard to its glorious excellencies, and an expectation of its divine efficacy, and we must believe in it as he is revealed to us; as a true light that will not deceive us, a sure light that will not misguide us. [2.] We are concerned to do this while we have the light, to lay hold on Christ while we have the gospel to shew us the way to him, and direct us in that way. [3.] They that believe in the light, shall be the children of light, shall be called children of light, (Luke 16. 8, Eph. 5. 8,) and of the day, (1 Thess. 5. 5,) they that have God for their Father, are children of light, for God is light; they are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light. 

VII. Christ’s retiring from them, hereupon; These things spoke Jesus, and said no more at this time, but left this testimony, your God to whom you have devoted yourselves, and who are called children of light, (Luke 16. 8, Eph. 5. 8,) and of the day, (1 Thess. 5. 5,) they that have God for their Father, are children of light, for God is light; they are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light.

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3. The fulfilling of the scripture in this; (v. 58.) That the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, and that these infidel Jews designed the fulfilling of the scripture, as the infidel Jews that rather fancied those scriptures (which speak of the church’s best sons, to be fulfilled in themselves) but the event exactly answered the prediction, so that (ut for uta ut) this saying of Esaias was fulfilled. The more improbable any event is, the more does a divine foresight appear in
the prediction of it. One could not have imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews, and therefore their manner is called a marvellous work, and a wonder. Isa. 29. 9, 14. Christ himself marvelled at it, but it was what Isaiah foretold, (Isa. 53. 1,) and now it is accomplished. Observe, (1.) The gospel is here called their report; Who has believed? or, whom has he taught? (Isa. 53. 1.) and you have heard from us; our report is the report that we bring, like the report of a matter of fact; or the report of a solemn resolution in the senate. (2.) It is foretold, that few comparatively of those to whom this report is brought, will be persuaded to give credit to it. Many hear it, but few heed it, and embrace it; Who has believed? or, whom has he taught? Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is one thing, but a report which wants confirmation. (3.) It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented, that so few believe the report of the gospel. Lord is here prefixed from the LXX, but not in the Hebrew, and it intimates a sorrowful account brought to God by the messengers, of the cold entertainment which they and their report had: as the servant came, and reported not what was enjoined him, and said it was unprofitable. The reason why men believe not the report of the gospel, is, because the arm of the Lord is not revealed, to them, because they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to, the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, in which the arm of the Lord is revealed. They saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the arm of the Lord revealed in them. 21. They could not believe, and therefore they could not, because Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes. This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure that God is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore we cannot think that there is in any such an impatience to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil; God damns none but by sovereign decree, yet it is said, They could not believe. St. Austin, coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresses himself with a holy fear of entering upon an inquiry into this mystery. Justa sancta judicia ejus, sed occulta—His judgments are just, but hidden. 1. They could not believe, that is, they would not; they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity; thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and he gives divers instances of scripture of the putting of an impatience to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as Gen. 37. 4. They could not speak peaceably to him. and ch. 7. 7. This is a moral impatience, like that of one that is accustomed to do evil, Jer. 13. 23. But, 2. They could not, because Esaias had said, He hath blinded their eyes. Here the difficulty increases; it is certain the number of those believers was very few yet. (1.) There is a righteous hand of God sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impatience and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of the divine light and rebellion against the divine law. If God withhold abused grace, and give men over to indulge lusts; if he permit the evil spirit to do his work on them that resisted the good Spirit; and if his providence be his stubborn blocks in sinners' way, which confirm their prejudices, then he blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts, and these are spiritual judgments, like the giving up of idolatrous gentiles to vile affections, and degenerate christians to strong delusions. Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. [1.] Sinners are brought to see with their eyes, to discern the reality of many things, and to have some knowledge of them. (2.) To understand with their heart, to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent and approve, but to consent and accept. (3.) To be converted, and effectually turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God, as their felicity and portion. (4.) Then God will heal them, will justify and sanctify them; will pardon their sins, which are as bloody stains, and mortal their corruption, from which all the Egyptians might be delivered; and shall the word of God deny his grace, nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from, and its aversion to, God and the divine life, grows into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate. (2.) Judicial blindness and hardness are in the word of God threatened against those who willfully persist in wickedness, and were particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all his works, and all our's too. Christ knew before who would betray him, and spoke of it, ch. 6. 70. This is a confirmation of the truth of scripture-prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to strengthen our faith. It is also intended for caution to particular persons, to beware lest that come upon them, which was spoken of in the former, and is here foretold, of a rejection of the word, and an expression of a hope of a general rejection of it. (3.) What God has foretold will certainly come to pass, and so, by a necessary consequence, in order of thinking, it might be said, that therefore they could not believe, because God by the prophets had foretold they would not; for such is the knowledge of God, that he cannot be deceived in what he foresaw, and such his truth, that he cannot deceive in what he foretold, so that the scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it observed, that the prophecy did not name particular persons; so that it might not be said, "Therefore such a one and such a one could not believe, because Esaias had said so and so," but it pointed at the body of the Jewish nation, which would persist in their infidelity, till their cities were wasted without inhabitants, as it follows, Isa. 6. 11, 12; yet still reserving a remnant, (v. 13.) in it shall be a tenth which remaineth, sufficient to keep a door of hope open to particular persons; for each one might say, Why may not I be of that remnant? Last, the evangelist, having quoted the prophecy, shows (v. 41.) that it was intended to look further than the prophet's own days, and that its principal reference was to the days of the Messiah; These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him. We read in the prophecy, that this was said to Esaias, Isa. 6. 9. But here we are told that it was said by him to the purpose. For nothing was said by him as a prophet, which was not first said to him; nor any thing said to him, which was not afterward said by him to those to whom he was sent. See Isa. 21. 10. The vision which the prophet there had of the glory of God, is here said to be his seeing the glory of Jesus Christ; he saw his glory. Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises are equally celebrated. Christ had a glory before the foundation of the world, and Esaias saw this, 3. It is said that the prophet there spake of him. It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself; (for the ends of the inspiration and prophecies were there given,) and yet it is here said to be spoken of Christ, for as all the prophets testified of him, so they testified him. This they spake of him, that as to many his coming would be not only fruitless, but fatal, a savour of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, If it was from heaven, why did not the Jews believe it? But this is an answer to it; It was not for want of evidence, but be-
cause their heart was made fat, and their ears heavy. It was spoken of Christ, that he should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Some honour was done to Christ by these rulers, for they believed on him, were convinced that he was sent of God, and received his doctrine as divine; but they did not do him honour enough, for they had not courage to own their faith in him. Many professed more kindness for Christ than really they had, these had more kindness for him than they were willing to profess.

See here what a struggle was in these rulers between their convictions and their corruptions.

I. See the power of the word in the convictions that many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They believed on him as Nicodemus, received him as a teacher come from God. Note, the truth of the gospel has perhaps been a stranger to you, or a more recent conversion. We are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their hearts, which yet outwardly they are shy of. Perhaps these chief rulers were true believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, It may be, there are more good people than we think there are. Elijah thought he was left alone, when God had seven thousand faithful worshippers in Israel. Some are really better than they seem to be. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a culpable yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation; nor have all they that are good the faculty of showing it as some have.

II. See the power of the world in the smothering of these convictions. They believe in Christ, but because of the Pharisees, who had it in their power to do them a dishonour, they durst not confess him, for fear of being excommunicated. Observe here,

1. Wherein they failed and were defective; they did not confess Christ. Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith which is either afraid or ashamed to show itself; for those who believe with the heart, ought to confess with the mouth, Rom. 10. 9.

2. What they feared; being put out of the synagogue, which they thought would be a disgrace and damage to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled a synagogue, that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

That was at the bottom of this fear; they loved the praise of men, chose it as a more valuable good, and pursued it as a more desirable end, than the praise of God; which was an implicit idolatry, like that (Rom. 1. 23.) of worshiping and serving the creature more than the Creator. They set these two in the scale one against the other, and, having weighed them, they proceeded accordingly; (1.) They set the praise of men in one scale, and considered it necessary to give praise to men, and to pay a deference to the opinion of the Pharisees, and receive praise from men, to be commended by the chief priests, and applauded by the people, as good sons of the church, the Jewish church. And they would not confess Christ, lest they should thereby derogate from the reputation of the Pharisees, and forfeit their own, and thus hinder their own preferment. And besides, the followers of Christ were put into an ill-name, and were looked upon with contempt, which they who had been used to honour could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known one another's minds, the 35. had have had more courage; but each one thought that if he should declare himself in favour of Christ, he should stand alone, and have nobody to back him; whereas if any one had had resolution to break the ice, he would have had more seconds than he thought of. (2.) They put the praise of God in the other scale; they were sensible that by confessing Christ they should both give praise to God, and have praise from God, he would be pleased with them, and say, Well done; but, (3.) They gave the preference to the praise of men, and that turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith, and represented it more desirable to stand right in the opinion of the Pharisees, than to be accepted of God. Note, Love of the praise of men is a very great prejudice to the power and practice of religion and godliness. Many come short of the glory of God, by having a regard to the applause of men, and a value for that. Love of the praise of men, as a by-end in that which is good, will make a man a hypocrite when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be got by it; and love of the praise of men, as a base principle in that which is evil, will make a man an apostate, when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it, as here. See Rom. 2. 29.

44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47. And if any man hear my words, and believeth not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

We have here the honour Christ not assumed, but asserted, to himself, in the account he gave of his mission and his errand into the world. Probably, this discourse was not at the same time with that before, (for when he departed, John 4. he retired) but after, when he made another public appearance; and as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's farewell sermon to the Jews, and his last public discourse; all that follows, was private with his disciples. Now observe how our Lord Jesus delivered this parting word; he cried and said, Doth not wisdom cry, (Prov. 8. 1.) cry without? Prov. 1. 20. The raising of his voice, and the spirit of intimation, His boldness in speaking; though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, he had courage openly to publish it; if they were ashamed of it, he was not, but set his face as a flint, Isa. 50. 7. His earnestness in speaking; he cried as one that was serious and important, and in good earnest
in what he said, and was willing to impart to them, not only the gospel of God, but even his own soul.

3. It denotes his desire that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his gospel by himself in his person, he makes proclamation, *Whoever will hear me, let them come now.*

Note, The last time of any thing is the most striking and solemn, and the best time to consider and profit by. It is this closing summary of all Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses, (Deut. 30. 13.) *See, I have set before you life and death.* So Christ here takes leave of the temple, with a solemn declaration of three things.

1. The privileges and dignities which they have, that believe; this gives great encouragement to us to believe, since it is a thing of that nature, that we need not be either shy of doing it, or shy of owning it; for,

1. By believing in Christ we are brought into an honourable acquaintance with God; (v. 44, 45.) *He that believeth on me, and seeth me, believeth on him that sent me, and seeth him.* He that believes on Christ, (1.) He does not believe in a mere man, such a one as he seemed to be, and was generally taken to be, but he believes in one that is the Son of God, and equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, (2.) His faith does not terminate in Christ, but through him it is carried out to the Father that sent him; to whom, as our end, we come by Christ as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God. The rest of the world may think or do as they please; to believe in Christ as Mediator; for its resignation to Christ is in order to its being presented to God. Christ's Christianity is made up, not of philosophy or politics, but pure divinity. This is illustrated, v. 45. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me;* which is the same with believing in him, for faith is the eye of the soul; in getting acquaintance with Christ, we come to the knowledge of God. (Fir, 3. C. 2. Cor. 4. 6.) who is the express image of his person, Heb. 1. 3. [2.] All that have a believing sight of Christ, are led by him to the knowledge of God, whom Christ has revealed to us by his word and Spirit. Christ, as God, was the image of his Father's person; but Christ, as Mediator, was his Father's representative in his relation to man; the divine light, law, and love, being communicated through him to us; so that in seeing him, we may read; in crying him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord, in the right of redemption, we see and eye the Father as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, in the right of creation; for God is pleased to deal with fallen man by proxy.

2. We are hereby brought into a comfortable enjoyment of ourselves; (v. 46.) *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes in me, Jew or Gentile, should not abide in darkness.* Observe, (1.) The character of Christ; *I am come a light into the world, to be a light to it.* It implies that he had a being, and a being as light, before he came into the world, as the sun is before it rises; the prophets and apostles were made lights to the world, but it was Christ only that came a light into this world, having before been a glorious light in the upper world, ch. 5. 39. (2.) The comfort of christians; they do not abide in darkness. [1.] They do not continue in that dark condition in which they were by nature, they are light in the Lord. They were without any true comfort, or joy, or hope, but do not continue in that condition; light is sown for them. [2.] What darkness of affliction, desiquetment, or fear, they may after this life suffer, or before, they may not abide long in that darkness. They are delivered from that darkness which is perpetual, and which abideth for ever, that utter darkness where is not the least gleam of light or hope of it.

11. The foul and danger they are in that believeth not, which gives fair warning to take heed of persisting in unbelief; (v. 47. 48.) "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not, but I only, or not now, lest I should be looked upon as unfair in being judge in my own case; yet let not unbelief in him who does not hear the words of the law, and our亲身, as the apostles, the preach- ers of Christ's word, are said to judge, Luke 22. 50. Christ's words will judge unbelievers two ways. [1.] As the evidence of their crime, they will convict them. Every word Christ spoke, every sermon,
every argument, every kind offer, will be produced as a testimony against those who slighted all he said.

[2.] As the rule of their doom, they will condemn them; they shall be judged according to the tenor of that covenant which Christ procured and published. That word of Christ, He that believeth not, shall be damned, will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are many such who judge the Word of God, and yet do not deny it. III. The declaration of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine upon pain of damnation, v. 49, 50. Where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father to deliver his doctrine to the world; (v. 49.) I have not spoken of myself, as a mere man, nor of a common man; but the Father gave me a commandment what I should say. This is the same with what he said ch. 7. 16. My doctrine is, (1.) Not mine, for I have not spoken of myself. Christ, as Son of man, did not speak that which was of human contrivance or comprouse; as Son of God, he did not act separately, or by himself alone, but what he said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But, (2.) It was his that sent him. God the Father gave him, [1.] His commission. God sent him as his agent and pleni-potentary to concert matters between him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. [2.] His instructions, here called a commission. He designed him by his obedience to save us. God commanded him what he should say, and what he should speak, two words signifying the same thing, to denote that every word was divine. The Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of themselves; but Christ spoke by the Spirit at all times. Some make this distinction: He was directed what he should say in his set sermons, and what he held in his private conversations. Others this: He was directed what he should say in his preaching now, and what he should speak in his judging at the last day; for he had commission and instructions for both.

2. The scope, design, and tendency, of that commission, v. 50. I know that his commandment is life everlasting. The commission given to Christ had a reference to the everlasting state of the children of men; and was in order to their everlasting life and happiness in that state: the instructions given to Christ as a prophet, were to reveal eternal life; (1 John 5. 11.) the power given to Christ as a King, was to give eternal life, ch. 17. 2. Thus the command given him was life everlasting. This Christ says he knew, 4. I know it is so; which intimates how cheerfully, and with what joy, Christ pursued his undertakings, knowing very well that he went upon a good errand, and that which would bring forth fruit unto eternal life. It intimates likewise how justly they will perish, who reject Christ and his word. Those who disobey Christ, despise everlasting life, and renounce it: so that not only Christ's words will judge them, but even their own; so shall their doings and transactions, by what they have decided it; and who can except against it?

3. Christ's exact observance of the commission and instructions given him, and his steady acting in pursuance of them. Whatsoever I speak, it is as the Father said unto me. Christ was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God, and was faithful in discovering so much of them to the children of men, as it was agreed should be discovered, and kept back nothing that was profitable. As the faithful witness delivers souls, so did he, and spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Note, (1.) This is a great encouragement to faith; the sayings of Christ, rightly understood, are what we may venture our souls upon. (2.) It is a great example of obedience. Christ said as he was bidden, and so must we; communicated what the Father had said to him, and so must we. See Acts 4. 20. In the midst of all the respects paid him, this is the honour he values himself upon, that what the Father had said to him, that he spoke, and in the manner of the Father; it was his, not his own. This was his glory, that, as a Son, he was faithful to him that appointed him; and, by an undesigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it, we must give him the glory due to his name.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Saviour, having finished his public discourses, in which he endeavoured the condescension of sinners, now applies himself to a private conversation with his friends, in which he designed the consolation of saints. Henceforward we have an account of what passed between him and his disciples, who were to be entrusted with the affairs of his household, when he was gone into a far country; the necessary instructions and comforts he furnished them with. His hour being at hand, he applies himself to set his house in order. In this chapter, I. He washes his disciples' feet, v. 1. 10. II. He foretells who should betray him, v. 18. 30. III. He instructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love, v. 31. 35. IV. He foretells Peter's denying of him, v. 36. 38.

1. NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: 4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whith: and ye are clean, but not all. 11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12. So after
ne had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so am I. 14. If then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15. For I have given you an example, that ye should as I have done to you. 16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord: neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted, that Christ's washing his disciples' feet, and the discourse that followed it, were the same night in which he was betrayed, and at the same sitting wherein he ate and drank the passover, as related in his Lord's discourse. But whether before the solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the passover, and the institution of the Lord's supper, they are not agreed. This evangelist, making it his business to gather up these passages which the others had omitted, industriously omits those which the others had recorded; which occasions some difficulty in putting them together. And if it were Matt. 26. 26, 27, at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or, it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not as that was in the house of Simon the leper, but in his own lodgings, where he had none but his disciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In these verses we have the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet, it was an action of a singular nature, a miracle, unless we call it a miracle of humility. Mary had just anointed his head; now, lest his acceptance of that should look like taking state, he presently balances it with this act of abasement. But why would Christ do this? If the disciples' feet needed washing, they could do it themselves; a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd and unusual, but for very good reasons and considerations. We are sure that it was not in a humour or a frolic that this was done; no, the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with a deal of seriousness; and four reasons are here intimated why Christ did this. 1. That he might testify his love to his disciples, v. 1. 2. That he might give in instance of his own voluntary humility and condescension, v. 2. 3. That he might signify to them spiritual washing, which is the same with his own; as our Lord did with Peter, v. 6-11. 4. That he might set them an example, v. 12-17. And the opening of these four reasons, will take in the exposition of the whole story.

1. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might give a proof of that great love whereby he loved them; loved them to the end, v. 1. 2. It is here held out as a self-evident truth, that our Lord Jesus, having loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the end, v. 1.

(1.) This is true of the disciples that were his immediate followers, in particular the twelve. These were his own in the world, his family, his school, his bosom-friends. Children he had none to call his own, but he adopted them, and took them as his own. He had those that were his own in the other world, but he left them for a time, to look after his own in this world. These he loved, he called them to a fellowship with him, comforted his love to them was always tender of them, and of their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be very free with him, and bare with their infirmities. He loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived, and after his resurrection; he never took away his loving-kindness. Though there were some persons of quality that espoused his cause, he did not lay any such tender hand upon them as he did upon his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful; and yet, though he reproved them often, he never ceased to love them, and take care of them.

(2.) It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's spiritual seed: in these he loved all the time he was in the world, that he gave them his own. They were given to them for they were given by the Father, he purchased them, and paid dear for them, and he has set them apart for himself; his own, for they have devoted themselves to him as a peculiar people. His own: where his own were spoken of, that received him not, it is as the—he own things, as a man's cattle are his own, which yet he may, when he pleases, sell and part with as he will. It is as his—his own persons, as a man's wife and children are his own, to whom he stands in a constant relation. [2.] Christ has a cordial love for his own that are in the world. He did love them with a love of good-will, when he gave himself for their redemption. He does love them with a love of compassion, when he admits them into communion with himself. Though they are in this world, a world of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet he loves them. He was now going to his own in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect there; but he seems most concerned for his own on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. [3.] Those whom Christ loves he loves to the end; he is constant in his love to them, as a father is to his children, he rests his everlasting love, (Deut. 1. 3.) from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; he loves his own, in spite into perfection, for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

2. Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet, as that good woman (Luke 7. 38, 39) showed her love to Christ by washing his feet, and anointing them. Thus he would show that as his love to them was constant, so it was condescending, that in procession of the designs of it he was willing to humble himself; and that the glories of his exalted state, which he was now entering upon, should be no obstruction at all to the favour he bare to his chosen: and thus he would confirm the promise he had made to all his followers, that he would make them set down to meat, and would come forth, and serve them. (Luke 12. 37.) He would put honour upon them, as great and surprising as for the Lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head; (Matt. 26. 8.) yet he presently gives this proof of his love to them. He loves them as his own, and his affectionate cares are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

3. He chose this time to do it, a little before his last passover, for two reasons:
(1) Because now he knew that his hour was come, which he had long expected, when he should depart from the earth to the Father. Observe here, 
[1.] The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus; he must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the restless, old world, this ungodly, unholy, unrighteous world; this world of labour, toil, and temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father, to the vision of the Father of spirits, and the fruition of him as our's. 
[2.] The time of this change; his hour was come. It is sometimes called his enemies' hour, (Luke 22. 53.) the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph; at that hour he had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour. 
[3.] His foresight of it; he knew that his hour was come; he knew from the beginning that it would come, and when, but now he knew that it was come. We know not when our hour will come, and therefore, boys, let us avoid the sin to which we are habitual preparation for it; ought never to be undone; but when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must vigorously apply ourselves to an actual preparation, as our Master did, 2 Pet. 3. 14. Now it was in the immediate foresight of his departure that he washed his disciples' feet; that, as his own head was anointed just now against the day of his burial, so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, Lev. 8. 6. When we see our day of approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind. 
(2) Because the devil had now put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, v. 2. These words in a parenthesis may be considered, 
[1.] As tracing Judas's treason to its original; it was a sin of such a nature, that it evidently bore the devil's image and superscription. What way of access the devil has to men's hearts, and by what methods he darts in his suggestions, and mingleth them indiscriminately with those thoughts which are the natives of the heart, we cannot tell. But there are some sins in their own nature so exceeding sinful in themselves, and so little temptation from the world and the flesh, that it is plain, Satan laid the egg of them in a heart disposed to be the nest to hatch them in. For Judas to betray such a Master so cheaply, and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God, as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom, but it proved the ruin of his own. 
[2.] As intimating a reason why Christ now washed his disciples' feet. First, Judas being now resolved to betray him, the time of his departure could not be far off; if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, I am now ready to be offered. Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we must be to remove the occasion of the mischief that may come. Secondly, Judas being now got into the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter, and the rest of them, (Luke 22. 31.) Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf has seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look well to the rest. Anitudes must be stirring, when the infection is begun. 
Dr. Lightfoot observes that the disciples had learnt of Judas's treason at the washing of Christ; compare ch. 12. 4, &c, with Matt. 26. 8. Now, lest they that had learned that of him, should learn worse, he fortifies them by a lesson of humility against his most dangerous assaults. Thirdly, Judas, who was now plotting to betray him, was one of the twelve. Now Christ would hereby shew that he did not design to cast them all off for the faults of one. Though one of their college had a devil, and was a traitor, yet they should fear never the worse for that. Christ loves his church, though there are hypocrites in it, and had still a kindness for his disciples, though there was a Judas among them, and he knew it. 
II. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might give an instance of his own wonderful humility, and shew how lowly and condescending he was, and let all the world know how low he could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, v. 5—7. Jesus knew; and now actually considering, and perhaps disclosing to his own high-minded honours as Mediator, and telling his friends that the Father had given all things into his hand, he went from supper, and, to the great surprise of the company, who wondered what he was going to do, washed his disciples' feet. 
1. Here is the rightfull advancement of the Lord Jesus. Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator, 
(1.) The Father had given all things into his hands; had given him a propriety in all, and a power over all, as Possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking; see Matt. 11. 27. The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man, were committed into his hands as the great umpire and referrer; and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment, were to pass through his hands; he is heir of all things. 
(2.) He came from God; this implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a being and glory, not only before he was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and that when he came into the world, he came as God's ambassador, with a commission from him. He came from God as the Son of God, and the sent of God. The Old Testament prophets were raised up and employed for God, but Christ came directly from him. 
(3.) He went to God, to be glorified with him with the same glory which he had with God from eternity. That which comes from God, shall go to God; they that are born from heaven, are bound for heaven; and so we may expect, when we trust in God to be our Friend and Agent for him on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome he was there; he was brought near to the Ancient of days, Dan. 7. 13. And it was said to him, Sit thou at my right hand, Ps. 110. 1. 
(4.) He knew all this; was not like a prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honour he is born for; not like a man who was not born from God, to be his Agent for him on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome he was there; he was brought near to the Ancient of days, Dan. 7. 13. And it was said to him, Sit thou at my right hand, Ps. 110. 1. 
[1.] As an inducement to him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies he had to leave to his disciples, because his hour was now come when he must take his leave of them, and be exalted above them for that familiar converse which he had now with them, v. 1. 
[2.] It may come in as that which supported him under his sufferings, and carried him cheerfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the consequence of it, yet, knowing also that he came from God, and went to God, he did not draw back, but went on cheerfully. 
[3.] It seems to come in as a foil to his condescen-
you, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of divine grace are sometimes represented in scripture as strange and surprising; (as Isa. 37. 17, 18. Hos. 2. 13, 14.) so here that is given as an inducement to Christ to stoop, which should rather have been a reason for his taking state; for God's thoughts are not as ours, nor his ways as our ways. He stooped to give us grace, which is the most signal instances of condescending grace, with the displays of divine glory, as Ps. 68. 4, 5. Isa. 37. 13.—66. 1, 2.

2. Here is the voluntary abasement of our Lord Jesus notwithstanding this. Jesus knowing his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, He rises up to his high estate: but to come down to the gospel, and calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do him homage; no, quite contrary, when he considered this, he gave the greatest instance of humility. Note, (1.) A well grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man with pride, will make and keep him very humble. (2.) Those that would be found conformable to Christ, and partakers of his Spirit, must study to keep their minds low in the greatest of the advancements. Now which Christ humbled himself to, was, to wash his disciples' feet.

[1.] The action itself was mean and servile, and that which servants of the lowest rank were employed in. Let these handmaid (saith Abigail) be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord; let me be in the meanest offices, 1 Sam. 25. 41.

[2.] The consideration was so much the greater, that he did this for his own disciples, who in themselves were of a low and desppicable condition, not curious about their bodies; their feet, it is likely, seldom washed, and therefore very dirty. In relation to him, they were his scholars, his servants, and such as should have washed his feet, whose dependence was upon him, and their expectations from him. Many of great spirits otherwise, will do a much thing to curry favour with their superiors, they rise by stooping, and climb by crouching; but for Christ to do this to his disciples, could be no act of policy or complaisance, but pure humility.

[3.] He rose from supper to do it. Though we translate it, (v. 2) supper being ended; it might be better read, there being a supper made, or he being at supper; for he sat down again, (v. 12.) and we find him dipping a sop, (v. 26.) so that he did it in the midst of his meal, and thereby taught us, First, Not to reckon it a disturbance, or any just cause of uneasiness, to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service, estirnating the discharge of our duty more than our necessary food, ch. 4. 34. Christ would not leave his preaching, to oblige his nearest relations, (Mark 3. 33.) but would leave his supper, to shew his love to his disciples in Servility. Secondly, He would be nice about our meat. It would be the armed man: a squishyish stomach to wash dirty feet at supper-time; but Christ did it, not that we might learn to be rude and slovenly, (cleanliness and godliness will do well together,) but to teach us not to be curious, not to indulge, but mortify, the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their due place, and no more.

[4.] He put himself in the place of a servant, to do humble offices. He wore his loose and upper garments, that he might apply himself to this service the more expeditiously. We must address ourselves to duty as those are resolved not to take state, but to take

huns; we must divest ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride, or hag in our way, and hinder us in what we have to do; must gird up the loins of our mind, as those that in earnest buckle to business.

[5.] He did it with all the humble ceremony that could be, went through all the parts of the service distinctly, and passed by none of them; he did it as if he had been used thus to serve; did it himself, alone, and had none to minister to him in it. He girded himself with the towel, as servants throw a napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; he poured water into the basin out of the water-pots that stood by, (ch. 2. 6.) and then washed their feet; and at the same time, he did it with more than mortal spirit, that he did not wash the feet of them all, but only four or five of them, that being thought sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to contravence this conjecture, for in other places where he did make a difference, it is taken notice of, and his washing the feet of them all without exception, teaches us a catholic and extensive charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

[6.] Nothing appears to the contrary, but that he washed the feet of Judas among the rest, for he was present, v. 26. It is the character of a widow indeed, that she had washed the saints' feet, (1 Tim. 5. 10.) and there is some comfort in that; but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of a sinner, the worst of sinners, the worst to him, who was at this time contriving to betray him.

Many interpreters make Christ washing his disciples' feet a representation of his whole undertaking. He knew that he was equal with God, and all things were his; and yet he rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded himself with our nature, took upon him the form of a servant, came not to be ministered to, but to minister, poured out his blood, poured out his soul unto death, and then prepared a laver to wash us from our sins, Rev. 1. 5.

III. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, v. 11—14. In which we may observe,

1. The surprise Peter was at, when he saw his Master go about this mean service; (v. 6.) Then comes he to Simon Peter, with his towel and basin, and bid him put out his feet to be washed. Chrysostom conjectures that he washed the feet of Judas first, who readily admitted it, and was pleased to see his Master so disparage himself. It is most probable, when he went about this service, (which is all that is meant by his beginning to wash, v. 5.) that he took Peter first; and the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter.

Whether Christ came first to Peter or no, when he did come to him, Peter started at the proposal; Lord, (saith he,) dost thou wash my feet? Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons, thou and me; and the placing of the words is observable, if and thou hast the prisoner, if thou washest the feet of a sinner, of another; is it possible? Shall those hands, which have washed so many, and with such a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? So Theophylact, and from him Dr. Taylor. Very willingly would Peter have taken the basin and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been prou
wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Which may be taken,

(1.) As a severe caution against disobedience; "I will not see, if thou continue extraneous, and wilt not comply with thy Master's will in so small a matter, thou shalt not be owned as one of my disciples, but be justly discarded and cashiered for not observing orders." Thus several of the ancients understand it; if Peter will make himself wiser than his Master, and dispute the commands he ought to obey, he does in effect renounce his allegiance, and insolently show himself the son of David. And so shall his doom be, he shall have no part in him. Let him use no more manners than do him good, for to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15. 22.

Or,

(2.) As a declaration of the necessity of spiritual washing; and so I think it is to be understood; "If I wash not thy soul from the pollution of sin, thou hast no part with me, no interest in me, no communion with me, no benefit by me." Note, All those, and those only, that are spiritually washed by Christ, have a part in Christ. [1.] To have a part in Christ, or with Christ, has all the happiness of a Christian bound up in it, to be partakers of Christ, (Heb. 3. 14.) to share in those inestimable privileges which Christ has purchased for us. [2.] To have a part, is a high honour to a sinner. It is that good part, the having of which makes one thing needful. [2.] It is necessary to our having a part in Christ, that he wash us. All those whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies, and both are included in his washing them. We cannot partake of his glory, if we partake not of his merit and righteousness, and of his Spirit and grace. 5. Peter's more than submission, his earnest request, to be washed by Christ, v. 9. If this be the meaning of it, Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. How soon is Peter's mind changed? When the mistake of his understanding was rectified, the corrupt resolution of his will was soon altered. Let us therefore not be peremptory in any resolve, (but only in our resolve to follow Christ,) because we may soon see cause to retract it; but let us be cautious in taking up a purpose we will be tendentious of. Observe,

(1.) How ready Peter is to recede from what he had said; "Lord, what a fool was I to speak such a hasty word!" Now that the washing of him appeared to be an act of Christ's authority and grace, he admits it; but disliked it, when it seemed only an act of submission. [1.] Good eyes, when they see their error, will not be loath to rectify it. [2.] Sooner or later, Christ will bring all to be of his mind.

(2.) How important he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the universal influence of it, even upon his hands and head. Note, A divorce from Christ, and an exclusion from having a part in him, is almost formidable evil. In the eyes less enlightened, for the fear of which they will be persuaded to any thing. And for fear of this we should be earnest with God in prayer, that he will wash us; will justify and sanctify us. "Lord, that I may not be cut off from thee, make me fit for thee, by the washing of regeneration. Lord, wash, not my feet only from the gross pollutions that cleave to them, but my hands and head. Note, Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be sanctified throughout, and to have the whole man, with all its parts and powers purified, 1 Thess. 5. 23.

6. Christ's further explication of this sign, as it represented spiritual washing.

(1.) With reference to his disciples that were faithful to him; (v. 10.) He that is washed all over

of the honour, Luke 17. 7, 8. This had been natural and regular. "For my Master to wash my feet, is such a solemnity as never was; such a paradox as cannot understand; it is the manner of men?" Note, Christ's condescensions, especially his condescensions to us, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly the matter of our admiration, ch. 14. 22. Who am I, Lord God?

And what is my father's house?

2. The immediate satisfaction Christ gave to this question of surprise, which was at least sufficient to remove his last doubt: [v. 7.] Wherefore I do this to thee.

[1.] Knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter. Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to what Christ was doing. (1.) Because he was at present in the dark concerning it, and ought not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the will and wisdom of one we could give a good reason for all he said and did. Christ would teach Peter an implicit obedience; "What I do, thou knowest not now, and therefore art no competent judge of it, but must believe it is well done, because I do it." Note, Consciousness to ourselves of the darkness we labour under, and our inability to judge of what God doeth, should make us sparing and modest in our censures of his providences.

[2.] Because there was something considerable in it, which he should hereafter know the meaning of; "Thou shalt know hereafter what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me:" so some. "Thou shalt know, when, in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing off from those under thy charge the sins and defilements of their earthly affections," so Dr. Hammond. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus does many things which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning of, but they shall know afterward; what he did, when he became man for us; and what he did when he became a worm, and no man, for us; what he did when he lived our life, and what he did when he laid it down, could not be understood till afterward, and then it appeared that it belonged him, Heb. 2. 17. Subsequent providences explain preceding ones; and we see afterward what was the kind tendency of events that seemed most cross; and the way which we thought was about, proved the right way. [2.] Christ's washing his disciples' feet, had a significa"
and implicit obedience. What he did, they should not know till after, that they might learn to appreciate in his will when they could not give a reason for it. [2.] Because it was proper to finish the riddle before he unrolled it. Thus, as to his whole undertaking, when his sufferings were finished, he had resumed the garments of his exalted state, and was ready to sit down again, then he opened the understandings of his discipes, and poured out his Spirit, Luke 24. 45, 46.

(2.) Before he explained it, he asked them if they could construe it: Know ye what I have done to you? He put this question to them, not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed, (as Zech. 4. 5, 13, Isa. 46. 3.) that their misery was occasioned by their pride, and that to begin raising their desires and expectations of instruction, I would have you know, and if you will give attention, I will tell you. Note, It is the will of Christ that sacramental signs should be explained, and that his people should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise, though ever so significant, to them who know not the thing signified, they are imperfect. So it is here, and they are to ask, What mean ye by this service? Exod. 12. 26.

2. Observe what he grounds that which he had to say upon; (v. 13.) "You call me Master and Lord, you give me these titles, in speaking of me, in speaking to me, and you say well, for so I am; you are in the relation of scholars to me, and I do the part of a master to you." Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord: he is our Redeemer and Saviour by redemptive order in the covenant of grace. (2.) Our Teacher and Instructor, in all necessary truths and rules, as a Prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our Lord, wise —or Ruler and Owner, that has authority over us, and propriety in us. (3.) It becomes the disciples of Christ to call him Master and Lord, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight. Deuot Mr. Herbert, when he mentioned the name of Christ, used to add, my Master; and thus expresses himself concerning it in one of his poems:

How sweetly doth my Master sound, my Master!
As ambergins leaves a sweet scent unto the taster.
So do these words a sweet content; an oriental fragrance,
My Master.

3. Observe the lesson which Christ hereby taught: You ought also to wash one another's feet, v. 14. (1.) Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church; that Christians should, in a solemn religious manner, wash one another's feet, in token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. St. Austin said, that these Christians of the time did it with their hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their hearts and humility; but he saith, It is much better to do it with the hands also, when there is occasion, as 1 Tim. 5. 10. What Christ has done, Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin says, that the p.p.e., in the annual observing of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's age than his follower, for the duty enjoined, in conformity to Christ, was neutral; Wash one another's feet. And Jansennus saith, It is done

Frigide et dissipilire—Frigidly, and unlike the primitive model.
(2.) But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental, as the eucharist. This was a parable to the eye; and three things our Master hereby designed to teach us.

[1.] A humble condensation; we must learn of our Master to be lowly in heart, (Matt. 11. 29.) and walk with all lowliness; we must think meanly of ourselves, and respect others, and treat them with much meekness and condescension. As if we were not so much as fit to lay our hands on earth, or to wash any man's feet; but we must say of that which seems mean, but has a tendency to the glory of God, and our brethren's good, as David, (2 Sam. 6. 22.) If this he be vile, I will be yet more vile. Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgotten the lesson; but now he teaches them in such a way as surely they could never forget.

[2.] An instruction to be servicable. To wash one another's feet is to stoop to the meanest offices of love, for the real good and benefit one of another, as blessed Paul, who, though free from all, made himself servant of all; and the blessed Jesus, who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves for the good of others, that we are not under any particular obligation to do, even to our inferiors, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. Washing the feet, after travel, contributes both to the decency of the person, and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet, is to consult both the credit and the comfort one of another; to do what we can, both to advance our brethren's reputation and to make their minds easy. See 1 Tim. 5. 10. The duty is most useful; we must both accept help from our brethren, and afford help to our brethren.

[3.] A serviceableness to the sanctification one of another; Ye ought to wash one another's feet, from the pollutions of sin. Austin takes it in this sense, and many others. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins, that is peculiar to Christ, but we may help to purify one another from sin. We must in the first place wash ourselves; this charity must begin at home, (Matt. 7. 5.) but it must not end there, we must sorrow for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more their gross pollutions, (1 Cor. 5. 2.) must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears. We must faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to repentance, (Gal. 6. 1.) and we must help to wash them off, (1 Peter 4. 8.) this is, in as other things, I have given you an example, that you should do to others, as I have done to you. Observe,

[1.] What a good teacher Christ is. He teaches by example as well as doctrine, and for that end came into this world, and dwelt among us, that he might set us a copy of all these graces and duties with his holy religion teaches; and it is easy without one false stroke. Hereby he made his own laws more intelligible and honourable. Christ is a commander like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, Look on me, and do likewise; (Judg. 7. 17.) like Abimelech, who said, What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done; (Judg. 9. 48.) and like Cassar, who called his soldiers, not milites, but commanileri of another kind, and whose usual word was, not Sic ille, but Veri ille: not Go, but Come.

[2.] What good scholars we must be; we must do as he hath done; for therefore he gave us a copy, that we should write after it, that we might be as he was in this world, (1 John 4. 17.) and walk as he walked, 1 John 2. 6. Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the exercise thereof they effectually serve the interests of their Master, and the ends of their mission. When Christ sent his apostles abroad with his authority, it was with these directions, they should not take state upon them, nor carry things with a high hand, but become all things to all men, 1 Cor. 9. 22. What I have done to your dirty feet, that ye do to the polluted souls of sinners; wash them. Some who suppose this to be done at the passover supper, think it intimates a rule in administering the Lord's supper, to see that they be first washed and sanctified, who come to it, and a blameless conversation, and then take them in to compass God's altar. But all Christians likewise are here taught to condense to each other in love, and to do it as Christ did it, unasked, unpaid; we must not be mercenary in the services of love, nor do them with reductancy.

(2.) I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you cannot think it before you do that, how mean soever it may seem, which you have seen me do, (7. 16.) the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, though sent with all the pomp and power of an ambassador, greater than he that sent him. Christ had urged this (Matt. 10. 24. 25.) as a reason why they should not think it strange if they suffered as he did; here he urges it in another light, that disciples should do much as he did, and those things he did, they were not better than his Master, and what was consistent with his dignity, was much more consistent with their's. If he were humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, [1.] We must take good heed to ourselves, lest Christ's gracious condescensions to us, and advancements of us, through the corruption of nature, occasion us to ascribe our success to ourselves, and to prevent the performance of his will in us. We need to be put in mind of this, that we are not greater than our Lord. [2.] Whatever our Master was pleased to condense to, in favour to us, we should much more condense to, in conformity to him. Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them or their condition. We commonly say to those who disdain to do such or such a thing, As good as you have done it, and been never the worse thought of; and true indeed it is, if our Master has done it. When we see our Master serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be domineering.

Lastly, Our Saviour closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of their obedience to these instructions; If ye know these things, or, Seing ye know them, that ye do them. Most people think, Happy are they that know and do; and, if ye know these things, ye are to do them. They know these things: that may be understood either as speaking doubtfully, whether they knew them or no; or so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom, that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit; or, as taking it for granted, that they did know these things; since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such an excellent
1. Christ gives them a general intimation of it; (v. 8.) I speak not of you all, I cannot expect you will all do it, though I have chosen, and whom I have passed by; but the scripture will be fulfilled, (Ps. 41. 9.) He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me. He doth not yet speak out of the crime, or the criminal, but raiseth their expectations of a further discovery.

2. He intimates to them, that they were not all right. He knowing, (v. 16.) Ye are clean, but not all. So here, I know whom I have chosen, whom I have not. Note, What is said of the excellencies of Christ's disciples cannot be said of all that are called so. The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, which separates between 
cattle and cattles, and will distinguish thousands into hell, who flattered themselves with hopes that they were going to heaven. I speak not of you all; you my disciples and followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies; a Judas among the apostles: it will be so till we come to the blessed society into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

3. That he himself knew who were right, and who were not; I know whom I have chosen, who the few are, that are chosen among the many that are called with the common call. Note, (1.) They that are chosen, Christ himself had the choosing of them: he nominated the persons he had in view for. (2.) They that are chosen, are known to Christ, for he never forgets any, whom he has once in his thoughts of love, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

4. That in the treachery of that proved false to him, the scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the surprise and safety of the thing. Christ took one into his family, whom he foresaw to be a traitor, and did not by effectual grace prevent his being made use of to cut off the Jewish nation. Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for though it do not at all lessen Judas's offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The scripture referred to, is David's complaint of the treachery of some of his enemies; the Jewish expositors generally understand it of Ahithophel, and one's from them; Groschius thinks it intimates that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel. But because that Psalm speaks of David's enemies being on his right hand, and at his left, and at the end of the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his, that proved false to him. This our Saviour applies to Judas.

(1.) Judas, as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privilege; he did eat bread with Christ. He was familiar with him, and favoured by him, as one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, He did eat of my bread, but Christ, being poor, had no bread he could properly call his own, he saith, He did eat bread with me; such as he had by the kindness of his friends, that ministered to him, his disciples had their share of; Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him, did not dine among servants, but sat at table with him at master, ate at the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he did. He ate miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied, ate the passerover with him. Note, All that eat bread with Christ, are not his disciples indeed. See 1 Cor. 10. 5-8.

(2.) Judas, as an apostate, was guilty of the basest treachery; he lifted up the heel against Christ. [1.] He forsook him, turned his back upon him, went out for the worse things his king knew. [2.] He despatched him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his gospel. Nay, [3.] He became an enemy to him; spurned at him, as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would
overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's seeming friends, to prove his real enemies. They who pretended to magnify him, magnify themselves against him. They eat not only the bread of his charity, but the bread of his covenant, yet rebel against him, and thereby prove themselves guilty not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness. He that knew them to be sinners, when he told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas; (v. 19.) "Now I tell you before it come, before Judas has begun to put his wicked plot in execution, that when it is come to pass, you may, instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your belief, that I am he, that he should come." 1. In his clear and certain foresight of things to come, which in this, as in other instances, he gave incontestable proof of, he proved himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would betray him, when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved himself the eternal Word, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the treachery of Judas shew, that the latter part of 2 Thess. 2. 1 Tim. 4. and in the Apocalypse being evidently accomplished, it is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole canon of scripture. 2. By this application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament to himself, he proved himself to be the true Messiah, to whom all the prophets before written, that it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and he suffered just as it was written, Luke 24. 25. 26. ch. 8. 28.

III. He gives a word of encouragement to his apostles, and all his ministers; whom he employed in his service; (v. 20.) He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me. The purport of these words is the same with what we have in other scriptures, but it is not to make out their coherence here. 1. Christ had told his disciples that they must humble and abase themselves. "Now," saith he, "though there may be those that will despise you for your condensation, yet there will be those that will do you honour, and shall be thankful for so doing." They who know themselves dignified by Christ's commission, may be content to be vilified in the world's opinion. 2. It is intended to silence the seducers of the times, because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shir of receiving any of them; for if one of them was false to his Master, whom would any of them be true to? Es uno disce omnibus—They are all alike. No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas's crime, so he will stand by them, and own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. They that had received Judas, when he was a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterward proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent. We cannot know what men are, much less what they will be, but those who appear to be sent of Christ, we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some, by carnal judgments, have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must not, till the contrary appear, be by some have entertained angels. The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with ever so much discretion, will neither justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

(1.) We are here encouraged to receive ministers as sent of Christ. He that receiveth whomsoever I send, though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others, (for as the law, so the gospel, makes men priests that have infirmity,) yet if he deliver my message, and be regularly called and appointed to do so, and, as an officer, give himself to the word and prayer; he that entertaineth, shall be owned as a friend of mine." Christ was now leaving the world, but he would leave an order of men, to be his agents, to deliver his word, and those who receive that in the light and love of it, receive him; to believe the doctrine of Christ, and obey his laws, and accept the salvation offered upon the terms proposed; this is receiving those whom Christ sends, and it is receiving Christ Jesus the Lord himself. (2.) We are here encouraged to receive Christ as sent of God; He that thus receiveth me, that receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the Father also, for they come upon his errand likewise, baptizing in the name of the Father, as well as of the Son. Now Christ was a God and a man. And as his Prince and Saviour, receiveth him that sent me, or his Portion and Felicity. Christ was sent of God, and in embracing his religion, we embrace the only true religion.

IV. Christ more particularly notifies to them the plot which one of their number was now hatching against him; (v. 21.) When Jesus had thus said in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, he was troubled in spirit, and went forth with some gesture or sign, and he testified, he solemnly declared it (cum animo testando)—with the solemnity of a witness on oath. "One of you shall betray me; one of you mine apostles and constant followers." None indeed could be said to betray him but those whom he reposed a confidence in, and were the witnesses of his retirements. This did not deter Judas to the sin by any fatal necessity; for although the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin; yet as to this heinous sin of Judas, 1. Christ foresaw it; for even that which is secret and future, and hid from the eyes of all living, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knows what is in man better than they do themselves, (2 Kings 6: 12.) and therefore sees what will be done by them. I know that thou wouldest not that thy temple be vilerly defiled, Is. 48: 8. 2. He foretold it, not only for the sake of the rest of the disciples, but for the sake of Judas himself, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots, when they find they are discovered; surely Judas, when he finds that his Master knows and despises their wicked scheme in time; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation. 3. He spake of it with a manifest concern; he was troubled in spirit when he mentioned it. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without any such trouble of spirit as he here discovered when he spake of the ingratitude and treachery of Judas. This touched him in a tender part. Note, the falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ are a great trouble of spirit to the Saviour; the sins of christians are the grief of Christ. "What? One of you betray me? Ye that have received from me such distinguished favours, you that I had reason to think would be firm to me, that have professed such a respect for me; what iniquity have you found in me, that one of you should betray me?" This went to his heart, as the multitudes always do towards wrongs done to their children, for which they brought them up, Isa. 1: 2. See Ps. 95: 10. Isa. 63: 10. V. The disciples quickly take the alarm; they knew their Master would neither deceive them nor jest with them; and therefore looked one upon another, with a manifest concern, doubting of whom he spake. By looking one upon another they discovered the trouble they were in upon this notice; given them; it struck such an horror upon them, that they knew not well which way to look, or what to say.
They saw their Master troubled, and therefore they were troubled. This was at least where they were chiefly concerned; but he must be taught to rejoice with troubling, and as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him; (2 Sam. 18. 33) so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ, is, and should be, a grief to all that are his; particularly the scandalous miscarriages of those that are called by his name: "Who is offended, and I am not offended?" (Luke 9. 45)

2. Hereby they endeavoured to discover the traitor; they looked wistfully in one another's face, to see who blushed, or, by some disorder in the countenance, manifested guilt in the heart, upon this notice: but while those who were faithful, had their consciences so clear, that they could lift up their faces without spot; he that was false, had his conscience so scared, that he was not asking whether he could blush, and so no discovery could be made this way. Christ thus perplexed his disciples for a time, and put them into confusion, that he might humble them, and prove them, might excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a gaze, to be put to a pause.

(1.) Their motives were solicitous to get their Master to explain himself, and to tell them particularly whom he meant; for nothing but that can put them out of their present pain, for each of them thought he had as much reason to suspect himself as any of his brethren; now, 1. Of all the disciples, John was most fit to ask, because he was the favourite, and sat next his Master; (v. 23.) There was leaning on Jesus's bosom, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. He loved them all, (v. 21.) but John was particularly dear to him. His name signifies gracious. Daniel, who was honoured with the revelations of the Old Testament, as John of the New, was a most greatly beloved, Dan. 9. 23. Note, Among the disciples of Christ, some are dearer to him than others.

(2.) His place and posture at this time; He was leaning on Jesus's bosom. Some say that it was the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaping posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on; which does not seem probable to me, for in such a posture as that they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but whether that were so or no, John now leaned in his bosom, and it seems to be an extraordinary expression of endearment used at this time. Note, There are some of Christ's disciples whom he lays in his bosom, who have more free and intimate communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him in his bosom, (ch. 1. 18.) and believers are, in like manner one with another, 1 John 4. 12. It is the bond of his friends; yet he does not put his name down, to shew that he was not proud of it, nor would seem to boast of it. Paul in a like case saith, I knew a man in Christ. (Phil. 4. 10.)

(3.) Yet he conceals his name, because he himself was the pensman of the story; he puts this instead of his own name, to shew that he was pleased with it; it is his title of honour, that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, as in David's and Solomon's court, there was one that was the King's friend, yet he does not put his name down, to shew that he was not proud of it, nor would seem to boast of it. Paul in a like case saith, I knew a man in Christ. (Phil. 4. 10.)

2. Of all the disciples Peter was most forward to know; (v. 24.) Peter, sitting at some distance, beckoned to John, by some sign or other to ask. Peter was generally the leading man, most apt to put himself forth; and where men's natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if they are not of an humble and prudent disposition and wisdom, they make men very servicable. God gives his gifts variously; but that the forward men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the modest be discouraged, it must be noted, that it was not Peter, but John, that was the beloved disciple. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was not he, but, that he might discover his own infirmity, and, if possible, female Peter's design. It were a desirable thing, we would think, to know who in the church will deceive us; yet let this suffice—Christ knows, though we do not. The reason why Peter did not ask himself, was, because John had a much fairer opportunity, by the advantage of his seat at table, to whisper the question into the ear of Christ, and to receive a private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ, and to engage their prayers for us. Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? Let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

3. The question was asked accordingly; (v. 25.) He asked, lying at the breast of Jesus, and so having the convenience of whispering with him, saith unto his Lord, Lord, who is it? (v. 26.) (1.) A regard to his fellow-disciple, and to the motion he made. Though Peter had not the honour he had at this time, yet he did not therefore disdain to take the hint and intimation he gave him. Note, They who lie in Christ's bosom, may often learn from those who lie at his feet, something that will be profitable for them, and he reminded of that, which they did not of themselves think of. Peter was willing to gratify Peter; herin, having so fair an opportunity for it. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, Rom. 12. 6.

(2.) A reverence of his Master. Though he whispered that in Christ's ear, yet he called him Lord; the familiarity he was admitted to, did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. It becomes us to use a reverence in conversation, and to observe a decorum, even in our secret devotions, which no eye is a witness to; as well as in public assemblies. The more intimate communion gracious souls have with Christ, the more sensibly they are of his worthiness, and their own unworthiness, as Gen. 18. 27.

4. Christ gave a speedy answer to this question, but whispered it in John's ear; for it appears, (v. 27.) that the rest were still ignorant of the matter. He is it to whom I shall give a sop, a morsel, a crumb; when I have dipped it in the sauce. And when he had dipped the sop, John strictly observing his motions, he gave it to Judas; and Judas took it readily enough, not suspecting the design of it, but glad of a savoury bit, to make up his mouth with. (1.) Christ notified the traitor by a sign. He who is about to betray shall have shortly in the bosom of Abraham. They who lay at Christ's feet, he will lay them in his bosom. (2.) That sign was a sop, which Christ gave him, a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the scripture, (v. 18.) that the traitor should be one that ate bread with him, that was at this time a fellow-commener with him. It had likewise a significance in it, and teaches us, [1.] That Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors; worldly riches,
nounces, and pleasures, are soft, (if I may so speak) which providence sometimes gives into the hands of wicked men. Judas perhaps thought himself a favourite because he had the sop, like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupefying sop, helps to destroy them. [2.] That we must not be outrageous against those whom we know to be very malicious against us. Christ carv'd to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death. If thine enemy hunger, feed him, that is to do as Christ does.

VII. Judas himself, instead of being convinced herein; for his wickedness, was the more confirmed in it, and the warning given him to be a savior of death unto death; for it follows,

1. The devil hereupon took possession of him; (v. 27.) After the sop, Satan entered into him; not to make him melancholy, or drive him distracted, which was the effect of his possessing some; not to harry him into the fire, or into the water; happy had it been for him, if that had been the worst of it, or if with the swine he had been chock'd in the sea; but Satan entered into him, to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of him, as one whose life was of small value, to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness, and a resolution to stick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But, Where is his sin? He then it is said, that now Satan entered into him. Judas was all along a devil, (ch. 6. 70.) a son of perdition, but now Satan gained a more full possession of him, had a more abundant entrance into him. His purpose to betray his Master was now ripened into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, Luke 11. 26. Note, [1.] The devil is in man, that does his works, (Eph. 2. 2.) yet sometimes he enters more manifestly and more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness, which humanity and natural conscience startle at. [2.] Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

2. How easy Satan to entice him after the sop? Perhaps he was presently aware that it was the discovery of him, and it made him desolate in his resolutions. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ's bounty, and are confirmed in their impenitency by that which should have led them to repentance. The coals of fire heaped upon their heads will not drive away burning them,.hidden them. 2. Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts: Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. This is not to be understood as either advising him to his wickedness, or warranting him in it; but either, (1.) As abandoning him to the conduct and power of Satan, Christ knew that Satan was entered into him, and had dominion over him; and he that knew it gave him up as hopeless. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction, were ineffectual; and therefore, "What thou doest thou wilt do quickly; if thou art resolved to ruin thyself, go on, and take what comes." Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good spirit justly withdraws. Or, (2.) As challenging him to do his worst; 'Thou art pleased against me, put me to the worst; I welcome, the sooner the better. I do not fear thee, I am ready for thee." Note, Our Lord Jesus was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas's betraying him as a thing he was now doing; though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief, are, in God's account, doing mischief.

3. They that were at table, understood not what he meant, because they did not hear what he whispered to John; (v. 28, 29.) No man at table, either the disciples, or any other of the guests, except John, knew for what intent he spake this to him. [2.] To love one another, that they could learn to suspect one another; charity thinks no evil. (2.) They therefore took it for granted that he said it to him as a trustee, or treasurer, of the household, giving him orders for the laying out of some money. Their surmisings in this case discover to us for what uses and purposes our Lord Jesus commonly directed payments to be made out of that little stock he had; and so teach us how to honour the Lord with our substance. They concluded something was to be laid out, either,

[1.] In works of piety; Buy those things that we have need of against the feast. Though he borrowed a room to eat the passover in, yet he bought in provision for it. That is to be reckoned well bestowed, which is laid out upon those things we have need of for the public concerns of the church. Though he might very well be excused, not only because he was poor himself, but because he did so much good otherwise, curing so many grubs; yet, to set us an example, he gave, for the relief of the poor, out of that which he had for the subsistence of his family; see Eph. 4. 28. Secondly, That the time of a religious feast was thought a proper time for works of charity. When he celebrated the passover, he ordered something for the poor. When we experience God's bounty to us, that should make us bountiful to the poor.

4. Judas hereupon sets himself vigorously to pursue his design against him; He went away. Notice is taken,

(1.) Of his speedy departure; he went out presently, and quitted the house. [1.] For fear of being more plainly discovered to the company; if he were, he expected they would all full upon him, and be the death of him, or at least of his project. [2.] He went out as one weary of Christ's company, and that of his apostles. Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself. Note, Withdrawing from the communion of the faithful, is commonly the first overt act of a backslider, and the beginning of an apostacy. Christ could not say to him, thou art shamed of me; but thou art not ashamed to look for those with whom he was to make his bargain, and to settle the agreement with them. Now that Satan had got into him, he hurried him on with precipitation; lest he should see his error, and repent of it.

(2.) Of the time of his departure: It was night. [1.] Though it was night, an unseasonable time for business; Satan had made no difficulty of the coldness and darkness of the night. This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of Christ, that the devil's servants are so earnest and venturous in his service. [2.] Because it was night, and that gave him advantage of privacy and concealment. He was not
willing to be seen treating with the chief priests, and therefore chose the dark night as the fittest time for such works of darkness. They whose deeds are evil, love darkness rather than light; see John 3:13, &c.

31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify himself in him, and shall straightway glorify him. 33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34. A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This and what follows, to the end of ch. 14. was Christ's table-talk with his disciples. When supper was done, Judas went out; but what did the Master and his disciples do, whom he left sitting at table? They applied themselves to profitable discourse, to teach us, as much as we can, to make conversation with our friends at table serviceable to religion. Christ begins this discourse; the more forward we are humble to promote that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying, the more like we are to Jesus Christ. Those especially that by their place, reputation, and gifts, command the company, to whom men give ear, ought to use the interest they have in other respects, as an opportunity of doing them good.

Now our Lord Jesus discourses with them, (and, probably, discourses much more largely than is here recorded.)

1. Concerning the great mystery of his own death and sufferings, which they were as yet so much in the dark about, that they could not persuade themselves to expect the thing itself, much less did they understand the meaning of it; and therefore Christ gives them such instructions concerning it, as made the offence of the cross to cease. Christ did not begin this discourse till Judas was gone out, for he was a false brother. The presence of wicked people is often a hinderance to good discourse. When Judas was gone out, Christ said, Now is the Son of man glorified: now that Judas is discovered and discarded, who was a spot in their love-feast, and a scandal to their family, now is the Son of man glorified. Note, Christ is glorified by the purifying of christian societies; corruptions in his church are a reproach to him; the purging out of those corruptions rolls away the reproach. Or, rather, now Judas was gone to set the wheels a-going, in order to his being put to death, and the thing was likely to be effected shortly; Now is the Son of man glorified, meaning, Now he is crucified. 1. Here is something which Christ instructs them in concerning his sufferings, that was very comforting. Three things.

(1.) That he should himself be glorified in them. Note, The Son of man is to be exalted to the greatest esteem honour and disgrace, to be despitably used to the last degree, and dishonoured both by the cowardice of his friends, and the insolence of his enemies; yet now he is glorified:

For, [1.] Now he is to obtain a glorious victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness, to spell them, and triumph over them. He is now riding on the harness, to take the field against those adversities of God and man, with as great an assurance as if he had put it off.

[2.] Now he is to work out a glorious deliverance for his people; by his death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlasting righteousness and happiness for them; to shed that blood which is to be an inestimable fountain of joys and blessings to all believers.

[3.] Now he is to give a glorious example of self-denial and patience under the cross, courage and contempt of the world, zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, such as will make him to be for ever admired and had in honour. Christ had been glorified in many miracles he had wrought, and the effect of his glorified sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state.

(2.) That God the Father should be glorified in them. The sufferings of Christ were, [1.] The satisfaction of God's justice, and so God was glorified in them. Reparation was thereby made with great advantage for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man. The ends of the law were abundantly answered, and the glory of his government effectually asserted and maintained. [2.] They were the manifestation of his holiness and mercy. The attributes of God shine bright in creation and providence, but much more in the work of redemption; see 1 Cor. 1. 21. 2 Cor. 4. 6. God is love, and herein he hath commanded his love.

(3.) That he should himself be greatly glorified after them, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, v. 52. Observe how he enlarges upon it.

[1.] He is sure that God will glorify him; and those whom God glories, are glorious indeed. Hell and earth set themselves to strive Christ, but God resolved to glorify him, and he did it. He glorified him in his sufferings by the amazing signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth, which attended them, and extend even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment that he was the Son of God. But especially after his sufferings he glorified him, when he set him at his own right hand, gave him a name above every name.

[2.] That he will glorify him in himself. He will glorify him in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposes his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honoured after his death, as his mother was; but Christ only in like manner glorified: For, Second, In God himself. God will glorify him with himself, as it is explained, ch. 17. 5. He shall set down with the Father upon his throne, Rev. 3. 21. This is true glory.

[3.] That he will glorify him straightway. He looked upon the joy and glory set before him, not only as great, but as near; and his sorrows and sufferings short and soon over. God serves done to earthly princes, often rewarded them beyond their hopes; but Christ had his preferences presently. It was but forty hours (or not so much) from his death to his resurrection, and forty days from thence to his ascension, so that it might well be said that he was straightway glorified, Ps. 16. 10.

[4.] All this, in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings, Seeing God is glorified in him, and receives honour from him, God shall glorify himself in him, and give honour to himself. Note, First, In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. Because he humbled himself, therefore God highly exalted him. If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, we may be sure that the Son shall be no loser in his. See the covenant between them, Isa. 53. 12. Secondly, Those who mind the business of
glorifying God, no doubt shall have the happiness of being glorified with him.

2. Here is something that Christ instructs them in, concerning his sufferings, which was awakening, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it; (v. 53.) Little children, yet a little while I am with you, &c. And these things Christ here suggests, to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities. Two serious words.

(1.) That his stay in this world, to be with them here, they would find to be very short. Little children. This compellation does not speak so much their weakness as his tenderness and compassion; he speaks to them with the affection of a father, now that the time was near to part with them: Know this then, that yet a little while I am with you. Whether we understand it of the time previous to his death, or the time between his death and ascension, it comes much to one; he had but little time to spend with them, and therefore,

[1.] Let them improve the advantage they now had. If they had any good question to ask, if they would have any important instruction of comfort, let them speak quickly; for yet a little while I am with you. We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because we shall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them.

[2.] Let them not delay upon his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; no, they must think of living without it; not be yet faithed by the same considerations that are pronounced for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, [1.] That when he was gone they would find a miss of him; Ye shall seek me, that is, ye shall wish ye had me again with you. We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual relief in temporal and spiritual distresses, yet it was not such a sensible satisfaction as his bodily presence would have been to those who had been used to that. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, Ye shall seek me and not find me; but to the disciples he only saith, Ye shall seek me, intimating, that though they should not find his bodily presence any more than the Jews, yet they should find that which was tantamount, and should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, yet they sought to good purpose. [2.] That when he went they could not come, which suggests to them high thoughts of him, who was going to an invisible inaccessible world, to dwell in that light which none can approach unto; and also high thoughts of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them that they could not find him, and as if the people that they could not serve the Lord, only to quicken them to so much the more diligence and care. They could not follow him to his cross, for they had not courage and resolution; it appeared that they could not, when they all forsook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to his crown, for they had not a sufficiency of their own, nor were their work and warfare fitting.

II. He discourses with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love; (v. 34, 35.) Ye shall love one another. Judas was now gone out, and had proved himself a false brother; but they must not therefore harbour such jealousies and suspicions one of another, as would be the bane of love; though there was one Judas among them, yet they were not all Judas. Now that the enmity of the Jews against Christ and his followers was swelling to the height, and they must expect such treatment as their Master had been treated of by believing in Christ, 1 John 3. 21, 22. 1 Pet. 1. 20, it is the command of our Ruler, who has right to give law to us; it is the command of our Redeemer, who gives us this law in order to the curing of our spiritual diseases, and the preparing of us for our eternal bliss. It is a new commandment; that is, [1.] It is a renewed commandment; it was a commandment from the beginning, (1 John 2. 7.) as old as the law of Moses, but now it is renewed in the New Testament. Law and testaments were so much in vogue, and self-love had so much the ascendant, that the law of brotherly love was forgotten as obsolete, and out of date; so that as it came from Christ new, it was new to the people. [2.] It is an excellent commandment; as a new song is an excellent song, that has an uncommon gratefulness in it. [3.] It is an everlasting command; something so new as to be always so, as the new covenant which shall never decay; (Heb. 8. 13.) it shall be new to eternity when faith and hope are antiquated. [4.] As Christ gives it, it is new. Before it was, Thou shalt love thy neighbour; now it is, Ye shall love one another; it is pressed in a more winning way, when it is thus pressed as mutual duty owing to one another.

The example of their Saviour is another argument for brotherly love; as I have loved you. This is that it makes a new commandment—that this rule and reason of love, (as I have loved you,) is perfectly new, and such as had been hid from ages and generations. Understand this, (1.) Of all the instances of Christ’s love to his disciples, which they had already experienced during the time he went in and out among them. He spake kindly to them, concerned himself heartily for them, and for them, as a master to children, instructed, corrected, and comforted them, prayed with them, and for them; vindicated them when they were accused, took their part when they were wronged, and publicly owned them to be dearer to him than his mother, or sister, or brethren. He reproved them for what was amiss, and yet compassionately bore with their failings, excused them, made the best of them, and passed by many things which he had cause to condemn them, and just now washed their feet; and thus they should do another, and love to the end. Or, (2.) It may be understood of the special instance of love to all his disciples, which he was now about to give, in laying down his life for them, Greater love hath no man than this, ch. 15. 13. Has he thus loved us all? Justly may he expect that we should be loving to one another. Not that we are capable of doing anything of the same nature for each other, (Ps. 49. 7.) but
we must love one another in some respects after the same manner; we must set this before us as our copy, and take directions from it. Our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering; it must be love to the souls one of another. We must also love one another from this matter, and upon this consideration—because Christ has loved us, see Rom. 13. 1—

3. The rapt vision of their profession; (r. 53.) By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. Observe, We must have love, not only show love, but have it in the root and habit of it; and have it there is not any present occasion to shew it; have it readily, as you may appear that you are indeed all my followers by following me in this. Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this he knows you if they may know themselves, (1 John 3. 14.) and by this others may know them. This is the livery of his family, the distinguishing character of his disciples; this he would have them noted for, as that wherein they excelled all others— their love one another. This was that it their Master said, That he had not ever heard of him, that he had heard of his love, his great love; and therefore if you see any people more affectionate one to another than what is common, say, "Certainly these are the followers of Christ, they have been with Jesus." Now by this it appears, (1.) That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples should love one another; in this they must be better, not gauder; whereas the way of the world is to be every one for himself, they should be hearty for one another. He does not say, By this shall men know that ye are my disciples—if ye work miracles; for a worker of miracles is but a cipher without charity; (1 Cor. 13. 1, 2.) but if ye love one another from a principle of self-denial and gratitude to Christ; this Christ would have to be the præmium of his religion, the principal note of the true church. (2.) That it is the true honour of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love. Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the esteem and respect of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, Acts 2. 46, 47. Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church, that the Christians were known by their affection to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it, and said, See how these Christians love one another, (1 Cor. 13.) That, if the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach upon their profession, but give just cause to suspect their own sincerity. Q. Jesus! are these thy Christians, these passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people? Is this thy son's coat? When our brethren stand in need of help from us, and we have an opportunity of being serviceable to them, when we differ in opinion and practice from us, or are in any ways rivals with, or provoking to us, and so we have an occasion to concendesc and forgive; in such cases this it will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.


In these verses, we have,

1. Peter's curiosity, and the check given to that.
2. Peter's question was held and blunt; (r. 56.) Lord, whither goest thou? Referring to what Christ had said, (r. 55.) Behold, we know not where.

The practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love, he overlooked, and asks no questions upon them, but fastens upon that concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault among us, to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which be long to God only, than concerning things revealed, which be useful both to me and my soul; more desirous to have our own gratified, than to have God directed, to know what is done in heaven than what we may do to get thither. It is easy to observe it in the converse of christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying, is dropped, and no more said to it, the subject is exhausted: while a matter of doubtful disputation, runs into an endless strife of words.

2. Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with any particular account of the world he was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as he did his sufferings; but said what he had said before; (r. 55.) Let that suffice, thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me hereafter.

1. (1.) We may understand it of his following him to the cross. He shall not yet strength to bear the cup of faith and resolution to drink of it empty; and it appeared so by his cowardice, when Christ was suffering. For this reason, when Christ was seized, he provided for the safety of his disciples; Let these go their way, because they could not follow him now. Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not cut out for them that work and hardship which they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the wedding-day. Peter, though designed for many a long year, cannot follow Christ now, not being come to his full growth, but he shall follow him hereafter; he shall be crucified at last, like his Master. Let him not think that because he escapes suffering now, he shall never suffer. From our missing the cross once, we must not infer that we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known.

2. (2.) We may understand it of his following him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with him; "No," said Christ, "thou canst not follow me now, thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The forerunner must first enter to prepare a place for thee, but thou shalt follow me afterwards, after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed." Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red-sea and Canaan.

II. Peter's confidence, and the check given to that.

1. Peter makes a daring protestation of his constancy. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, "I am not, Lord, will thou depart from me? Doth thou question my sincerity and resolution? I promise thee, if there be occasion, I will lay down my life for this sake." Some think Peter had a covert, as the Jews had in a like case, (ch. 7. 55.) that Christ was designing a journey or voyage into some remote country, and that he declared his resolution to go along with him wherever he went; but, having heard his Master so often speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand him any other wise than of his going away by death; and he re-
solves, as Thomas did, that he will go and die with him; and better die with him, than live without him. See here, (1.) What an affectionate love Peter had to our Lord Jesus, "I will lay down my life for thy sake, and I can do no more." I believe Peter spake as he thought, and, though he was inconsiderate, he was not inconsiderate, in this resolution. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our own lives, which thou dost not consider with what reluctance and struggle a life is laid down, and what a hard task it is to die; not so soon done as said." Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retrace his resolution, or recede from it, but that he might insert into it that necessary proviso, "Lord, thy grace enabling me, I will lay down my life for thy sake." "Will thou undertake to die for me? What, thou that tremblest to walk upon the water to me? What, thou that, when sufferings were spoken of, cried out, Be it far from thee, Lord? It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life." His Master himself struggled when it came to that, and the discourse is figurative: "It is not greater than I; so let it be; it is good for us to shun ourselves, to put a brasure reed set up for a pillar, or a sickly child undertake to be a champion? What a fool am I to talk so big?"

(2.) He plainly foretells his cowardice in the critical hour. To stop the mouth of his boasting, lest Peter should say it again, "Yea, Master, that I love thee," Christ solemnly asserts it with, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice. He does not say, as afterward, This night, for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but, "Shortly thou wilt have denied me thrice, within the space of one night; nay, within so short a space as between the first and last crowing of the cock: the cock shall not crow, till thou hast again and again denied me, and that for fear of suffering." The crowing of the cock is mentioned, [1.] To intimate that the trial in which he would miscarry thus, should be in the night, which was an improbable circumstance, but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. [2.] Because the crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which of itself would not have been, if Christ had not put this into the prediction. Christ not only foresees that Judas would betray him, though he only in heart designed it; but he foresees that Peter would deny him, though he did not design it, but the contrary. He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints. Christ told Peter, First, That he would deny him, would renounce and abjure him; "Thou wilt not only not follow me still, but be ashamed to own that ever thou didst follow me." Secondly, That he would do this not once only by a hasty slip of the tongue, but with a determined purpose, and with a grand determination. We commonly give it as a reason, why the prophecies of scripture are expressed darkly and figuratively; because, if they did plainly describe the event, the accomplishment would thereby either be concealed, or necessitated by a fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain and express prophecy of Peter's did not at all prevent him from denying Christ, so that we may at least make Christ necessary to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence of his own courage, to be told this; and to be told it in such a manner, that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael: What! is thy servant a dog? This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are sometimes the most unsafe and uncertain, and may most commonly betray their own weakness, that most confidently presume upon their own strength, 1 Cor. 10. 12.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper; when he had convicted and discoursed Judas, he set himself to comfort the rest, who were full of sorrow upon what he had said of leaving them, and a great many good words and comfortable words he has spoken to them. The discourse is interlocutory; as Peter in the foregoing chapter, so Thomas, and Philip, and Jude, in this interposed their thoughts upon what he said, according to the liberty he gave them; and upon the occasion of Peter's conference with Christ, the discourses of these disciples to Christ, and Christ's answers to them, are as instructive as solemn speeches, and more so. The general scope of this chapter is in the first verse; it is designed to keep trouble from their hearts; now in order to that, they must believe; and for that, let them consider. I. Heaven as their everlasting rest, v. 2. 3. II. Christ himself as their way, v. 4. 11. III. The great power they shall be clothed with by the presence of their prayers, v. 12. 14. IV. The coming of another Comforter, v. 15. 17. V. The fellowship and communion that should be between him and them after his departure, v. 18. 24. VI. The instructions which the Holy Ghost should give them, v. 25. 26. VII. The peace Christ besought them, v. 27. VIII. Christ's own cheerfulness in his departure, v. 28. 31. And this which he said to them, is designed for the comfort of all his faithful followers.

1. LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

In these verses, we have,

1. A general caution which Christ gives to his disciples, against trouble of heart; (v. 1.) Let not your heart be troubled. They now began to be troubled, were entering into this temptation. Now here see,

1. How Christ took notice of it. Perhaps it was legible in their looks; it was said, (ch. 15. 22.) they looked one upon another with anxiety and concern, and Christ looked upon their countenances and observed it; however, it was intelligible to the Lord Jesus, who is acquainted with all our secret undiscovered sorrows, with the wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are affected, but how we stand affected under our afflictions, and how near they lie to our
hearts; he takes cognizance of all the trouble which his people are at any time in danger of being overlooked, and he knows our state in adversity. Many things concurred to trouble the disciples now.

(1) Christ had just told them of the unkindness he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all. Peter, no doubt, looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him and for themselves too, not knowing how to bear the trial of some ill thing or other they should do. As to this, Christ comforts them; though a godly jealousy over ourselves is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not prevail to the disquieting of our spirits and the damping of our holy joy.

(2) He had just told them of his own departure from them; that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear him loaded with reproaches, and those will be as a sword in their bones; must see him barbarously abused, and put to death, and this also will be a sword piercing through their souls, for they had loved him, and chosen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon Christ pierced, we cannot but murmur and be in bitterness, though we see what a wise and good thing, and what a remedy for all our griefs of spirit, the sacrifice of him was; much more grievous must the sight be to them who could then look no further.

If Christ depart from them, [1] They will think themselves shamefully disappointed; for they looked that this had been he that should have delivered Israel, and should have set up his kingdom in secular power and glory, and, in expectation of that, had lost all to follow him. Now, if he leave the world in the same circumstances of weakness and poverty in which he had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. [2] They will think themselves sadly deserted and exposed. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies, that they could count upon nothing but being minded and run down if they part with their Master. Now, in reference to all these, Let not your heart be troubled. Here are three words, upon any of which the emphasis may significantly be laid.

First, Upon the word troubled, μη τασσεγ?σθαι. Be not so troubled, as to be put into a hurry and confusion, like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. He does not say, "Let not your hearts be sensible of the griefs, or sad because of them," but, "Be not troubled, and dismayed, be not cast down and disquieted." Ps. 23: 5.

Secondly, Upon the word heart; "Though the nation and city be troubled, though your little family and flock be troubled, yet let not your heart be troubled." Keep possession of your own souls when you can keep possession of nothing else. The heart is the main butt; whatever you do, keep trouble from that, keep that with all diligence. The spirit must sustain the infirmity, therefore see that that be not wounded.

Thirdly, Upon the word your; "You that are my disciples and followers, my redeemed, chosen, sanctified ones, however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, he not rest so, for you know better; let the sinners in Zion tremble, but let the sinners in Zion be joyful in their king." Here Christ's disciples should do more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unequal.

2. The remedy he prescribes against this trouble of mind, which he saw ready to prevail over them; in general, believe—trust. [1] Some read it in both parts imperatively, "Believe in God, and his perfections and providences, believe also in me, and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the great acknowledged principles of natural religion; that there is a God, that he is most holy, wise, powerful, and good, and that he is the ruler of the world, and has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that holy religion which I have taught you." But, [2] We read the former as an acknowledgment, that they did believe in God, for which he commends them; "But if you would effectually provide against a stormy day, believe also in me." To be thus sufficiently persuaded of the doctrine of Christ, as that which should give comfort, and become interested in his favour and promise, which otherwise as sinners we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but by believing in Christ as the mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father; by believing in the Son, as they believe in the Father; those that rightly believe in God, will believe in Jesus Christ, whom he has made known to them; and believing in God through Jesus Christ, is an excellent means of keeping trouble from the heart. The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it; the just shall live by faith; and no promise is so firmly annexed to it, as that which is the most confirmed and in great force. I had fainted unless I had believed.

II. Here is a particular direction to act faith upon, the promise of eternal life, ver. 5. He had directed them to trust to God, and to trust in him; but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come, when this body, and this world shall be no more; and for a happiness to last, as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven, which is admirably adapted and accommodated. All the saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities. That heaven would make amends for all.

Let us see how this is suggested here:

1. "Believe and consider that really there is such a happiness; In my Father's house there are many mansions; if we be not so, I would have told you." (1) See under what condition the happiness of heaven is here represented; as mansions, many mansions in Christ's Father's house. [1] Heaven is a house, not a tent or tabernacle; it is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] It is a Father's house; in Christ's Father's house, in his Father's house, whom he has loved, and to whom he has now ascended; so that in right of their elder brother all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to their home. It is his house, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. [3] There are mansions there; that is, First, Distinct dwellings, an apartment for each; perhaps there is an apartment for each of his disciples' chariots or chariots; or for the whole body of his church. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuality shall not be lost there; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder a seat, Rev. 4. 4. Secondly, Durable dwellings, mansions, from meta, mane, abiding places. The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a temporary stay, a few years of stay in the house of Zion. What you are in an inn, in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not where to lay his head, but the mansions in heaven will make them amends. [4] There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory; and he exactly knows their number; nor will be straitened for room by the coming of more company than he expects. He had told Peter that he should follow him, (ch. 13. 35,) but
let not the rest be discouraged, in heaven there are mansions for them all. Rehoboth, Gen. 26. 22.

(2.) See what assurance we have of the reality of the happiness itself, and the sincerity of the proposal of it to us: "If it were not so, I would have told you. If you had received yourselves, when you quitted your livelihoods, and ventured your lives for me, in prospect of a happiness future and unspeakable, I would have said to you, your errand was unprovided for. The assurance is built. (1.) Upon the veracity of his word. It is implied, "If there were not such a happiness, valuable and attainable, I would not have told you that there was." (2.) Upon the sincerity of his affection to them. As he is true, and would not impose upon "them himself, so he is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, or none designed for them, who had left all to follow him, he would not have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honourable retreat to the world again, and have made the best hand they could of it. Note, Christ's good-will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to disappoint the expectations of his own raising, or to let the lot of all men most miserable, who have been of him most observant.

2. "Believe and consider that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. You are grieved to think of my going away, whereas I go on your errand, as the forerunner; I am to enter for you." He went to prepare a place for us; that is, (1.) To take possession for us, as the advocate or attorney, and so to secure our title as indefeasible. Lawrence of Rome was given to Christ, for the use and benefit of all that should believe on him. (2.) To make provision for us, as our friend and father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared before the foundation of the world, yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ there, it was therefore necessary that he should go, to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in. Heaven would be an unready place for a Christian, if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table for them, to prepare thrones for them, Luke 22. 30. Thus he designed to bespeak the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints for whom it is prepared.

Believe and consider that therefore he would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that blessed place which he was going to prepare for them, and prepare for them; (v. 3.) "If I go and prepare a place for you, if that be the errand of my journey, you may be sure, when every thing is ready, I will come again, to receive you to myself, so that you shall follow me hereafter, that where I am there ye may be also." Now these are common words indeed:

(1.) That Jesus Christ will come again, &c. - I do come; intimating the certainty of it, that he will come, and that he is daily coming. We say, We are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming, and so he is; all he does has a reference and tendency to his second coming. Note, The belief of Christ's second coming, which he has given us, is an assurance of, is excellent preservation against trouble of heart, Phil. 4. 5. Jam. 5. 8.

(2.) That he will come again, to receive all his faithful followers to himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their public entry in solemn touching together at the last day, and then Christ himself will come again, to receive them, to conduct them out of the abundance of his glory, and to receive them out of the abundance of his love; he will have them by vestry the utmost respect and endearment imagi-

nable. The coming of Christ is, in order to our gathering together unto him, 2 Thess. 2. 1.

(3.) That where he is, there they shall be also. This speaks the same that many other scriptures speak, that the quintessence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ there, ch. 17. 24. Phil. 1. 23. 1 Thess. 4. 17. Christ speaks of his being there as now present, that where I am; where I am to be, and where I shall be, there ye shall be also; that ye may be eternally; not only there, in the same place; but there, in the same state: not only spectators of his glory, as the three disciples on the mount, but sharers in it.

(4.) That this may be inferred from his going to prepare a place for us, for his preparations shall not be in vain; he will not build and furnish lodgings, and then let them stand empty; he will be the finisher of that which he is the Author of; if he have prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it, and in due time put us in possession of it. As the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our resurrection, so his ascension, victory, and glory, are in assurance of our's.

4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way! 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father; and we will believe. 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10. Believe thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Christ having set the happiness of heaven before them as the end, here shews them himself as the way to it, and tells them that they were better advised, when they were to aim at, and with the way they were to walk in, than they thought they were; Ye know, that is, 1. "Ye may know; it is none of the secret things which belong not to you, but one of the things revealed; ye need not ascend into heaven, or go down into the deep, for the word is nigh you, (Rom. 10. 6-8.) level to you." 2. "Ye do know; ye know that which is the home, and which is the way, though perhaps not as the home, and the way, We have been told it, and cannot but know, if ye would recollect and consider it." Note, Jesus Christ is willing to make the best of his people's knowledge, though they are weak and defective in it. He knows the good that is in them, better than they do themselves, and is certain that they have that knowledge, and faith, and love, which they themselves are not sensible of, or not certain of.

This word of Christ gave occasion to two of his
disciples to address themselves to him, and he answers them both. 
1. Thomas inquired concerning the way, (v. 5.) without any apology for contradicting his Master; he said, "Lord, we know not whether thou goest, to what place or what state, and how can we know the way, in which we must follow thee? We can neither see it by instinct, nor inquire it out; but must still be at a loss." Christ's testimony concerning their ignorance made them more sensible of their ignorance, and more inquisitive after further light. 

Thomas here shows more modesty than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now. Peter was the more solicitous to know whether Christ went. Thomas here, though he complains that he did not know that, yet was most solicitous to know the way. Now, I. His admission of his ignorance commendable enough; if good men be in the dark, and know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects; but, 2. The cause of his ignorance was culpable. They knew not whether Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom in external pomp and power, and doted upon that, notwithstanding what he had said again and again to the contrary. It was that, when Christ spoke of going away and following him, their fancy ran upon his going to some remarkable city or other, Bethelhem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, there to be anointed king, and to restore the kingdom to Israel; and which way this place lay, where these castles in the air were to be built, cast, west, north, or south, they could not tell, and therefore knew not the way. Thus still we think ourselves more in the dark than we need be to be concerned concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas it is spiritual advancement that the promise points at. Had Thomas understood, as he might have done, that Christ was going to the invisible world, the world of spirits, to which spiritual things only have a reference, he would not have said, Lord, We do not know the way.

Now to this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, v. 6, 7. Thomas had inquired, both whether he went, and what was the way, and Christ answers both these inquiries, and makes good what he had said, that they would have no answer if they had understood; not that he was the way, but the Father was the way; they knew the Father, and he was the end; and therefore, whether I go we know, and the way we know. Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way, (v. 1.) and ye do all ye should do. 

(1.) He speaks of himself as the way, v. 6. Destin thy not know the way? I am the way, and I only, for no man comes to the Father, but by me. Great things Christ here sets of himself, shewing us, by his doctrine and example, and spiritual gifts, how he preserves us happiness, and he is the way. In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the war of innocence; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, as the way, an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his answers come to us by him; this is the way things happen, rer!') he good old way. The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them that they followed the road, and, while they continued following him, they would never be out of their way. 

Secondly, He is the truth: 1. As truth is opposed to figure and shadow, Christ is the substance of all the Old Testament types, which are therefore said to be figures of the truth, Heb. 9. 24. Christ is the true manna, (ch. 6. 33.) the true tabernacle, Heb. 8. 2. As truth is opposite to falsehood and error: the doctrine of Christ is true doctrine; when we inquire for truth, we need learn no more than the truth as it is in Jesus. 3. As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit, he is true to all that trust in him, as true as truth itself, 2 Cor. 1. 20. 

Thirdly, He is the life: for we are alive unto God, only in and through Jesus Christ, Rom. 6. 11. Christ forms in us the image of God, which, as our souls are to our bodies, Christ is the resurrection and the life. 

Let us consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end. In him we must set our ear, go on, and finish. As the truth, he is the guide of our way; as the life, he is the way. Secondly, that the way is bringing way: (Heb. 10. 26) there is truth and life in it, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

[2.] The necessity of his mediation: As man cometh to the Father but by me. Fallen man must come to God as a Judge, but cannot come to him as Father, through him by Christ as Mediator. We cannot come in the name of Christ till we repent of our sins, by repentance and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor obtain the happiness of coming to God as our Father, without his merit and righteousness: he is the High-Priest of our profession, our Advocate.

(2.) He speaks of his Father as the end, v. 7. If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth, by the glory you have seen in me, and the doctrine you have heard from me, we know him and have seen him. Here is,

[1.] A tacit rebuke to them for their dulness and carelessness in acquainting themselves with Jesus Christ, though they had been his constant followers and associates; If ye had known me —. They know the man and yet they say they cannot know the Father; they know him not, we the Christ, but did not follow en to know God in him. Christ had said to the Jews, (ch. 8. 19.) If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also, and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say, which is more strange, the wilful blindness of those that are enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that they do not have such opportunities of knowing him. If Christ had known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world; that he came down from heaven, and therefore must return to heaven; and then they would have known his Father also, would have known whether he desired to go, when he said, I go to the Father, to a glory in the other world, not in this, if we knew Christ aright better, we would understand better the weakness of their understanding; "And from henceforth, from my giving you this hint, which will serve as a key to all the instructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, ye know him, and have seen him, as much as we know you, as I have seen you," for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples, they were not
so ignorant as they seemed to be; for, though children, they knew not the Father. 1 John 2. 13. First. Many of the disciples of Christ have more knowledge and more grace than they think they have, and Christ takes notice of, and is well pleased with, that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not all at once know that they know him, 1 John 3. 22. First. Philip inquired concerning the Father, (v. 8.) and Christ answered him, v. 9—11. where observe, 1. Philip's request for some extraordinary discovery of the Father. He was not so forward to speak as some others of them were, and yet, from an earnest desire of further light, he cries out, Show us the Father. Philip listened to what Christ said to Thomas, and fastened upon the last words, Whither goest thou? that is it we want, that is it we would have; show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (1.) This supposes an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father: the petition is, Show us the Father; give us to know him in that relation to us; and this he begs, not for himself only, but for the rest of the disciples; the plain reason of his inquiring after the Father, is, that he will pass the word for his fellow-disciples. Grant us but one sight of the Father, and we have enough. Jansenius saith, Though Philip did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us, that the satisfaction and happiness of a soul consist in the vision and fruition of God, Ps. 16. 11—15. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests, and is as the top of its ambition; in the knowledge of God as our Father the soul is satisfied; a sight of the Father is a heaven upon earth, fills us with joy unspeakable. (2.) As Philip speaks it here, it intimates that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father as Christ thought fit to give them, but he would prescribe to him, and press upon him, something further, and no less than some visible appearance of the glory of God, like that to Moses, (Exod. 33. 22.) and to the elders of Israel, Exod. 24. 9—11. "Let us see the Father with our bodily eyes, as we see thee, and it sufficeth us; we will trouble thee with no more questions, Whither goest thou?" And so it discovers, not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel-way of manifesting the Father, which is spiritual, and not sensible. Such a sight of God, he thinks, would suffer them, and yet those who did thus see him were not sufficient, but soon corrupted themselves, and made a graven image. Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith than our own inventions would. Second. Christ's reply, referring him to the discoveries already made of the Father, v. 9—11. (1.) He refers him to what he had seen, v. 9. He upbraids him with his ignorance and inattention; Have I been so long time with you, now above three years intimately conversant with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? Now, he that has seen me, hath seen the Father; and how saust thou then, Show us the Father? Wilt thou ask, and it shall be given; or Wilt thou ask, and it shall be done? Now here, [1.] He reproves him for two things: First, For not improving his acquaintance with Christ, as he might have done, to a clear and distinct knowledge of him; Hast thou not known me, Philip, whom thou hast followed so long, and conversed with so much? Philip, the first day he came to him, declared that he knew him to be the Messiah; and yet now he seems not to know the Father in him. Many that have good knowledge in the scripture, and divine things, fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have, and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor see what they should see in him. That which aggravated Philip's dullness, was, that he had had so long an opportunity of improvement; I have been so long time with thee. Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more reasonable we should be active in grace and knowledge. Christ expects that our proficiency should be in some measure according to our standing, that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves; Have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in the knowledge of Christ, and so unskilful in the word of righteousness? Secondly, He reproves him for his infirmity in the prayer made; Show us the Father. Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples, that they know not what to pray for as they ought, (Rom. 8. 26.) but often ask amiss, (James 4. 3.) for that which either is not promised, or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here. (2.) He refers him to what he had said, v. 7. ye know the Father, and have seen him; and answers what Philip had asked, Show us the Father? Why, saith Christ, the difficulty is soon over, for he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. First, All that saw Christ in the flesh, must have seen the Father in him, if Satan had not blinded their minds, and kept them from a sight of Christ, as the image of God. 2 Cor. 4. Secondly, All that saw Christ by faith, did see the Father in him, though they were not suddenly aware that they did so. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; in the miracles, they saw God as the God of power, the finger of God. The holiness of God alone in the spotless purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace he did. (2.) He refers him to what he had reason to believe; v. 10, 11. Believe thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and therefore that in seeing me thou hast seen the Father? Hast thou not believed this? If not, take my word for it, and believe it. I tell thee here what it is which we are to believe; that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; that is, as he had said, (ch. 10. 30.) I and my Father are one. He speaks of the Father and himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were, or can be. In knowing Christ as God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, and as being of one substance with the Father, whom he glorifies, and in seeing him thus we see the Father. In Christ we behold more of the glory of God than Moses did at Mount Horeb. (2.) See here what inducements we have to believe this; and they are two. We must believe it, First, For his word's sake: The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself; See ch. 7. 16. My doctrine is not mine, What I have heard, I have seen the Father; and who soareth thou then, Show us the Father? Wilt thou ask, and it shall be given; or Wilt thou ask, and it shall be done? He speaks of the Father as the word of man, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but really it was the wisdom of God that guided it, and the will of God that enforced it. He spoke not of himself only, but the mind of God according to the eternal counsels. Secondly, For his works' sake: The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth them; and therefore believe the Father, whom ye see, and him that sees him, sees me. He is so intimate with the Father, that he is able to dwell in him; I am the Father, he abideth in me, by the inseparable union of the divine and human nature; never had God such a temple to dwell in.
on earth, as the body of the Lord Jesus, ch. 2, 21. Here was the true Shechinah, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, Col. 2, 9. The Father so dwells in Christ, that in him he may be found, as a man where he dwells. Seek ye the Lord, seek him, Christ, and he will be found, for in him he dwells. Whether the captives or the works of mercy, Christ did, and the Father did them in him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, for the very works' sake. As we are to believe the being and perfections of God, for the sake of the works of creation, which declare his glory; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ, for the sake of the mighty works, which by shewing forth themselves, (Matt. 14, 2.) shew forth him, and God in him. Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his divine mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of the faith of his own disciples, ch. 2, 11—13. 36.—10. 37.

12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, so they were full of care what would become of themselves when he was gone; while he was with them, he was a support to them, kept them in countenance, kept them in heart; but if he leave them, they will be as sheep having no shepherd, an easy prey to those who seek to run them down. Now, to silence these fears, Christ here assures them that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had all power, they, in his name, should have great power, both in heaven and in earth.

1. Great power on earth; (v. 12.) He that believeth on me, (as I know you do,) the works that I do, shall ye do also. This does not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works, to prove himself one with the Father, (that others should do as great works, ) but rather strengthens it; for the miracles which the apostles wrought, were wrought in his name, and by faith in him; and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that he not only wrought miracles himself, but gave power to others to do so too. Two things are here distinct of them:—

1. That they should be enabled to do such works as he had done, and that they should have a more ample power for the doing of them, than they had had when he first sent them forth, Matt. 10, 8. Did Christ heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? So should they. Did he convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to him? So should they. Through he should impart, the work shall not cease, nor fall to the ground, but should be carried on as vigorously and successfully as ever; and it is still in the doing.

2. That they should do greater works than these:—

(1.) In the kingdom of nature they should work greater miracles. No miracle is little, but some to our apprehension seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the fingers of his hands, but Peter with the power of his hand, Acts 5, 15. Paul by the handkerchief that had touched him, Acts 19, 12. Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. Ye shall do greater works, if there were occasion, for the glory of God. The prayer of faith, if at any time it had been necessary, should have removed mountains.

(2.) In the kingdom of grace. They should do twin greater victories by the gospel than had been obtained while Christ was upon earth. The truth and gospel, which Christ left behind him on earth, and that under such disadvantage, was the miracle of all. I think this refers especially to the gift of tongues, which was the immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, which was a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and which was made to serve so glorious an.intention as that of spreading the gospel to all nations in the power of the gospel. The powers of the apostles were such as they who believed not, (1 Cor. 14, 22.) and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle whatsoever.

The reason Christ gives for this, is, Because I go unto my Father, (1.) Because I go, it will be requisite that you should have such a power, lest the work suffer damage by your absence. [2.] Before I go to the Father, I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power, for I go to the Father, to send the Comforter, from whom you shall receive power. Acts 1, 8. The wonderful works, which they did in Christ's name, were part of the glories of his exalted state, when he ascended on high, Eph. 4, 8.

1. Great power in heaven; Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it, ch. 16, (v. 13, 14.) as Israel, that was a prince with God. Therefore you shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in me, and I am my Father. Observe, 1. In what way they were to keep up communion with him, and fetch in power from him, when he was gone to the Father—by prayer. When dear friends are to be removed at a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus, when Christ was going to his Father, he tells his disciples how they might write to him upon every occasion, and send it by a safe and ready way of conveyance, without danger of miscarriage, or lying by the way; Let me hear you from by prayer, the prayer of faith, and you shall hear from me by the Spirit. This was the old way of intercourse with absent men, ever since men began to call upon the name of the Lord; but Christ by his death has laid it more open, and it is still open to us. Here is,

(1.) Humility prescribed; Ye shall ask. Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of him as a debt, but must ask it as an alms, must be humble suppliants, beg or starve, beg or perish.

(2.) Liberty allowed; Ask any thing. Anything that is good and proper for you: any thing, provided you know what you ask, you may ask; you may ask for assistance in your work, for a mouth and wisdom, for preservation out of the hands of your enemies, for power to work miracles when there is occasion, for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated.

Occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

2. In what name they were to present their petitions; Ask in my name. To ask in Christ's name, is, (1.) To plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The Old Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed for the Lord's sake, (Dan. 9, 17.) and for the sake of the appointedsacrifice, (Ps. 84, 9.) Christ had taught them when they sought to a clearer light by the gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to ask in his name. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer, this was not inserted, because they did not so fully understand this matter
as they should afterward, when the Spirit was poured out. If we ask in our own name, we cannot expect to speed, for, being strangers, we have no name in heaven; being sinners, we have an ill name there; but Christ’s is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious. (2.) It is to aim at his glory and honour in our prayers, and to seek that as our highest end in all our prayers.

3. What success they should have in their prayers; “What ye ask, that will I do,” v. 13. And again, (v. 14.) “I will do it.” Ye may be sure I will: not only it shall be done, I will see it done, or give orders for the doing of it, “I will do it;” for he has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who sits at the right hand of God, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what reason their prayers should speed so well; “that the Father may be glorified in the Son. That is, (1.) This they ought to aim at, and have their eye upon, in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet, as in their centre; to this they must all be directed, that God in Christ may be in the Redeemer’s services, and all our prayers an answer, as to Christ in the name. Hallowed be thy name, is an answered prayer, and is put first, because, if the heart be sincere in that, it does in a manner concurate all the other petitions.

(2.) This Christ will aim at in granting, and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son might be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were magnified in the Redeemer, when by a power derived from him, and exerted in his name, and for his service, his apostles and ministers were enabled to do such great things, both in the proofs of their doctrine, and in the successes of it.

15. If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sceth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Christ not only proposes such things to them as were the matter of their comfort, but here promises to send the Spirit, whose office it should be to be their Comforter, to impress those things upon them.

1. He promises to this a memorandum of duty; (v. 13.) If ye love me, keep my commandments. Keeping the commandments of Christ is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles in particular. Now observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, he bids them keep his commandments; for we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word (παρακαταλέγω) signifies both to exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do, now that their Master was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them keep his commandments, and then nothing could come amiss to them. In difficult times our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were scorning their love to Christ by their grieving to think of his departure, and the sorrow which filled their hearts upon the foresight of that, he bids them, if they would show their love to him, do it, not by those weak and feminine passions, but by their conscientious care to perform their trust, and by a universal obedience to his commands; that is better than sacrifice, better than tears. I have loved thee. 4. When Christ has given them precious promises, of the answer of their prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, he lays down this as a limitation of the promises, “Provided ye keep my commandments, from a principle of love to me.” Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have comfort of the Spirit.

11. He promises this great and unspeakable blessing to them, v. 16, 17.

1. It is promised that they shall have another Comforter. This is the great New Testament promise, (Acts 1. 4.) as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise of the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow, and needed a comforter. Observe here,

(1.) The blessing promised: ὀλίγος παρακαταλέγοντας. The word is used only here in these discourses of Christ, and 1 John 2. 1. where we translate it an advocate. The Rhetorics, and Dr. Hammond, are for retaining the Greek word Paraclete; we read it Paräctëtës, the comfort of the Holy Ghost, including his whole office as a Paraclete.

[1.] Ye shall have another advocate. The office of the Spirit was to be Christ’s advocate with them and others, to plead his cause, and take care of his concerns, on earth, to be vivacius Christi—Christ’s voice, as one of the ancients calls him; and to be his advocate with the Father. The advocates of Christ were the disciples, and for his glory he sent them, and directed them to their work; they were the advocates of all his opponents. When Christ was with them, he spoke for them as there was occasion; but now that he is leaving them, they shall not be run down, the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, Matt. 10. 19, 20. And the cause cannot miscarry, that is pleaded by such an advocate.

[2.] Ye shall have another Master or Teacher, another Exhorter. While they held on with their opponents, When Christ was with them, he exhorted them to their duty; but now that he is going, he leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. Jansenius thinks the most proper word to render it by, is a Patron, one that shall both instruct and protect you.

[3.] Another Comforter. Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah was Messiah—the Comforter. The Targum calls the days of the Messiah, the years of consolation. Christ comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now that he was leaving them in their greatest need, he promises them another.

(2.) The giver of this blessing; The Father shall give him my Father and your Father; it includes both. The same that gave the Son to be our Saviour, will give his Spirit to be our Comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter, (ch. 15. 26.) but the Father is the prime agent.

(3.) How this blessing is procured—by the intercession of the Lord Jesus; I will pray the Father. He said, (v. 14.) I will do it; here he saith, I will intercede for it, to shew not only that he is both God and man, but that he is both king and priest. As priest he is ordained for men to make intercession, as king he is authorized by the Father to execute judgment. When Christ saith, I will pray the Father, it does not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned to it, but only that the gift of the Spirit from Christ’s mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession.

(4.) The continuance of this blessing; that he may abide with you for ever. That is, [1.] “With you, as long as you live. We shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are
...
removals from us; for if he depart for a season, it is that we may receive him for ever.' Let this moderate our grief, The Lord is at hand.

11. He promises that they should continue their acquaintance with him, and interest in him; (v. 19, 20.) Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more, that is, Now I am no more in the world; after his death, the world saw him no more, for though he was no longer visible, yet the spirit that had possessed the body, Acts 10. 31. The malignant world thought they had seen enough of him, and cried, Away with him, crucify him; and so shall their doom be; they shall see him no more. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith, shall see him for ever; the world sees him no more till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence.

13. 3. And then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. They saw him with an eye of faith after his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, as Lord of all; saw that in him, which the world saw not.

2. Because I live, ye shall live also. That which grieved them, was, that their Master was dying, and they counted upon nothing else but to die with him. No, saith Christ, (1.) I live; this the great God glories in, I live, saith the Lord, and Christ saith the same; not only, I shall live, as he saith of them, but, I do live; for he has life in himself; and lives for evermore. We are eternally blessed, while we know that our Redeemer lives. (2.) Therefore we shall live also. Note, The life of christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as he lives, they that by faith are united to him, shall live also; they shall live spiritually, a divine life in communion with God, this life is hid with Christ; if the head and not live, the members and branches live also. They are eternally blessed, while they shall rise in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; it shall be well with them in the world to come, it cannot but be well with all that are his, Isa. 26. 19.

3. Ye shall have the assurance of this; (v. 20.) At that day, when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know more clearly and certainly than ye do now, that I am in my Father, and you in me. (1.) These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven; At that day, when I shall receive you to myself, you shall know perfectly that which now you see through a glass darkly. Now it appears not what we shall be, but then it will appear what we were.

2. They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles; at that day clearly, and before the eyes, in that day clearly, and before the eyes, and with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the church saw Christ as the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. They know, [1.] That Christ is in the Father, is one with the Father, by their experience of what he has wrought for them and in them; they find what an admirable consent and harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, that is granted into this, and so they know that Christ is in the Father. [2.] The combination of the two names, Jesus Christ, is by the Spirit, that Christ abides in them, 1 John 3. 24. [3.] That they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual, and equally near on both sides, Christ in them, and they in Christ, which speaks an intimate and inseparable union; in the virtue of which it is that because he lives, they shall live also. Note, First, Union with Christ is the life of believers; and their relation to him, and to God through him, is their felicity. Secondly, The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable joy and satisfaction; they were more in Christ, and the abiding in him, is the further act of grace, that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ and the knowledge of it are sometimes separated.

11. He promises that he would love them, and manifest himself to them, v. 21—24. Where observe,

1. Who they are, whom Christ will look upon, and accept, as lovers of him; those that have his commandments, and keep them. By this Christ shews that the kind things he here said to his disciples, were intended not for those only that were now his followers, but for all that should believe in him through their word. Here is,

(1.) The duty of those who claim the dignity of being disciples; having Christ's commandments, and keep them; as we have just seen.

Secondly, we are to observe, what is necessary for good Christians to do, who are thus set in the profession, we have Christ's commandments, we have them sounding in our ears, written before our eyes, we have the knowledge of them; but this is not enough; would we approve ourselves christians indeed, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

(2.) The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as love him. Not those that have the greatest wit, and know how to talk for him, or the greatest estate to lay out for him, but those that keep his commandments. Note, the surest evidence of our love to Christ is obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, respectful, obediential love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

2. What returns he will make to them for their love; rich returns; there is no love lost upon Christ.

(1.) They shall have the Father's love; He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. We could not love God, if he did not first out of his good-will to us, give us his grace to love him; but there is a love of complacency promised to those that do love and serve him, and of more, v. 17. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, smiles upon them, and embraces them. God so loves the Son, as to love all those that love him.

(2.) They shall have Christ's love; and I will love him, as God-man, as Mediator. God will love him as a Father, and I will love him as a brother, an elder brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the protector of his well-being, in the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that God is love. And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he loved us. Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the grace and glory, which shall be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promises them, and be the protector of his well-being, in the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that God is love. And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he loved us. Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the grace and glory, which shall be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promises them, and be the protector of his well-being, in the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that God is love. And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he loved us. Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the grace and glory, which shall be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promises them, and be the protector of his well-being, in the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that God is love. And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he loved us.
know his love, and the dimensions of it. (Eph. 3. 18, 19.) develops its graces, and draws them into exercise, and thus enlarges their comforts in himself. When he cleans up the evidences of their interest in him, and gives them tokens of his love, experience of his tenderness, and earnest of his kingdom and glory, then he manifests himself to them; and Christ is manifested to none but those to whom he is pleased to manifest himself.

Now, upon occasion of Christ's making this promise:

(1.) One of the disciples expresses his wonder and surprise at it, v. 22. Observe, [1.] Who it was that said this—Judas, not Isau- rist. Judas, or Judas, was a famous name; the most famous tribe in Israel was that of Judah; two of Christ's disciples were of that name, one of them was the traitor; the other was the brother of James, (Luke 6. 16.) one of those that were akin to Christ, Matt. 13. 55. He is called Lebbæus and Thaddæus; was the penman of the last of the epistles, which in our translation, for distinction's sake, we call the Epistle of Jude. This was he that spake here. Observe, First, There was a very good man, and a very ill man, called by the same name; for names communicated us not to God, nor do they make men worse; Judas the apostle was never the worse, nor Judas the apostate ever the better, for being named. But, Secondly, The evangelist carefully distinguishes between them; when he speaks of this Judas, he adds, not Isaurist. Take heed of mistaking; let us not confound the precious and the vile.

[2.] What he said—Lord, how is it? Which speaks either, First, The weakness of his understanding. So some take it. He expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that it should appear in external pomp and power, such as all the world would wonder at. "How then," thinks he, "should it be confined to us only?" v. 19. "what is the matter now, that thou wilt not shew thyself openly, as is expected, that the Gentiles may come to thy light, andlong to the brightness of thy rising?" Note, We create difficulties to ourselves by mistaking the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world. Or, Secondly, As speaking the strength of his afflictions, and the humble and thankful sense he had of Christ's distinguishing favours to them: Lord, how is it? He is amazed at the condescensions of divine grace, as David, 2 Sam. 7. 18. What is there in us to do so great a grace? Note, 1. Christ's manifesting of himself to his disciples, is done in a distinguishing way; to them, and not unto the world that sits in darkness; to the base, and not to the mighty and noble; to babes, and not to the wise and prudent. Distinguishing favours are very obliging; considering who are passed by, and who are pitched upon. 2. It is justly marvellous in our eyes; for it is inconceivable that God should so graciously deal with us. "Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee." (2.) Christ, in answer hereunto, explains and confirms what he had said, v. 23, 24. He overlooks what infirmity there was in what Judas spake, and goes on with his comforts. [1.] He further explains the condition of the promise, which was so much to his advantage as to keep him from the world's ways. And as to this, he shews what an inseparable connection there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience is the fruit. First, Where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience; "If a man love me indeed, that love will be such a commanding constraining principle in him that no question, he will keep my words." Where there is true love to Christ, there is a value for his favour, a veneration for his authority, and an entire surrender of the whole man to his control and government. Where love is, duty follows of course, is easy and natural, and flows from a principle of gratitude.

Secondly, On the other hand, where there is no true love to Christ, there will be no care to obey him; "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings," v. 24. This comes in here as a discovery of those that do not love Christ; whatever they pretend, certainly do not love him, that believe not his truths, and obey not his laws, to whom Christ's sayings are but as idle tales, which he heeds not, or hard sayings, which he likes not. It is also a reason why Christ will not manifest himself to the world that doth not love him, because they put this affright upon him, not to keep his sayings; why should Christ be familiar with them that will be strange to him? [2.] He further explains the promise; (v. 23.) If a man doth thus love me, I will manifest myself to him. First, My Father will love him; this he had said before, (v. 21.) and here repeats it for the confirming of our faith; because it is hard to imagine that the great God should make those the objects of his love, that he has put his Father's name and seal of his wrath. Jude wondered that Christ should manifest himself to them; but this answers it, "If my Father love you, why should not I be free with you?"

Secondly, We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. This explains the meaning of Christ's manifesting himself to him, and magnifies the favour. 1. Not only, I will, but We will, and my Father, who, in this, are one. See v. 9. The light and love of God are communicated to man in the light and love of the Redeemer, so that wherever Christ is formed, the image of God is stamped. 2. Not only, "I will shew myself to him at a distance," but, "We will come to him, to be near him, to be with him;" such are the powerful influences of divine graces and comforts upon the souls of those that love Christ in sincerity. 3. Not only, "I will give him a transient view of me, or make him a short and running visit," but, "We will take up our abode with him, which notes complacency in him, and constancy to him. God will not only love obedient believers, but he will take a pleasure in loving them, will rest in love to them, Zeph. 3. 17. He will be with them as at his home. [3.] He gives a good reason both to bind us to observe the condition of the promise, and to press us to acquiesce upon the promise; (v. 24.) The word which you hear, is not mine, but his that sent me. To this purport he had often spoken, (ch. 7. 16.—8. 28.—12. 49.) and here it comes in very pertinent: First, The stress of duty is laid upon the precept of Christ as our rule, and justly, for the word of Christ which we are to keep, is the Father's word, and his will the Father's will. Secondly, The stress of our concern is laid upon the promise of Christ. But as much as, in dependence upon that promise, we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and quit all, it concerns us to inquire, whether the security be sufficient for us to venture our all upon; and this satisfies us it is, that the promise is not Christ's bare word, but the Father's which sent him; which therefore we may rely upon.

25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27. Peace I leave with you.
my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with. 1. That they should be under the tuition of his Spirit; v. 26. Where we may observe,

I. The reflection Christ would have them make upon the instructions he had given them; These things have I spoken unto you, (referring to all the good lessons he had taught them, since they entered themselves into his school,) being yet present with you. This intimates, (1.) That what he had said did not retrace or unsay, but ratify it, or stand to it. What he had spoken he had spoken, and would abide by it. (2.) That he had improved the opportunity of his bodily presence with them to the utmost; "As long as I have been yet present with you, you know I have lost no time." Note, When our teachers are about to be removed from us, we should call to mind what they have spoken, being yet present with us.

2. The encouragement given them to expect another teacher, and that Christ would find out a way of speaking to them, after his departure from them, v. 26. He had told them before, that the Father would give them this other comforter (v. 16.) and here he returns to speak of it again; for as the promise of the Messiah had been, so the promise of the Spirit now was, the consolation of Israel. Two things are further concerning the sending of the Holy Ghost.

(1.) On whose account he should be sent; "The Father will send him in my name; for my sake, at my special instance and request," or, "as my agent and representative." He came in his Father's name, as his ambassador; the Spirit comes in his name, as resident in his absence, to carry on his undertaking, and to perform things for his second coming. Hence he is called the Spirit of Christ, for he pleads his cause, and does his work.

(2.) On what errand he should be sent; two things he shall do.

[1.] He shall teach you all things; as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Christ was a teacher to his disciples; if he left them now that they have made so little proficiency, what will become of them? Why, the Spirit will teach them, shall be their standing Tutor. He shall teach them all things necessary for them, either to learn themselves, or to teach others. For they that would teach the things of God, must first themselves be taught of God; this is the Spirit's work. See Isa. 59. 21.

[2.] He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Many a good lesson Christ had taught them, which they had forgotten, and which would be to seek when they had occasion for it; many things they did not retain the remembrance of, because they did not rightly understand the meaning of; the Spirit shall not teach them a new gospel, but bring to their minds that which they had been taught, by leading them into the understanding of it. To this apostles were all of them to preach, and some of them to write, the things that Jesus did and taught, to transmit them to distant nations and future ages; now if they had been left to themselves, herein, some needful things might have been forgotten, others misrepresented, through the treachery of their memories; therefore the Spirit is promised to enable them truly to relate and record what Christ said unto them. And to all the saints the Spirit of grace is given to be a remembrancer, and to him by faith and prayer we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

II. That they should be under the influence of his peace; (v. 27.) Peace I leave with you. When Christ was about to leave the world, he made his will; his soul he committed to his Father, his body he bequeathed to Joseph, to be decently interred, his clothes fell to the soldiers, his mother he left to the care of John; but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? Silver and he gave them; but he left them an influence of his peace, and an infinite comfort, his peace. "I leave you, but I leave my peace with you." I not only give you a title to it, but put you in possession of it. He did not part in anger, but in love; for this was his farewell, Peace I leave with you, as a dying father leaves portions to his children; and this is a worthy portion. Observe,

1. The legacy that is here bequeathed; Peace, my peace. Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all the needful good, all that is really and truly good, all the purchased promised good. Peace is put for reconciliation and love; the peace bequeathed is peace with God, peace with one another; peace in our own bosoms, that seems to be especially meant; a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of our justification before God. It is the counterpart of our pardons, and the composure of our minds. This Christ calls his peace, for he is himself our Peace, Eph. 2. 14. It is the peace he purchased for us, and preached to us, and on which the angels congratulated men at his birth, Luke 2. 14.

2. To whom this legacy is bequeathed; "To you, my disciples and followers, that will be exposed to trouble, and have need of peace; to you that are the sons of peace, and are qualified to receive it." This legacy was left to them as the representatives of the church, to them and their successors, to them and all true christians in all ages.

3. In what manner it is left. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. That is, (1.) I do not compliment you with, Peace be unto you; n, it is not a mere formality, but a real blessing. (2.) The peace I give is of such a nature, that the smiles of the world cannot give it, nor the frowns of the world take it away. Or, (3.) "The gifts I give to you, are not such as this world gives to its children and votaries, that it is kind to." The world's gifts are but vain and transitory; Christ's gifts enrich the soul for eternity; the world gives lying vanities, and that which will cheat us; Christ gives substantial blessings, which will never fail us. The world gives and takes, Christ gives a good part that shall never be taken away. (4.) The peace which Christ gives, is infinitely more valuable than that which the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace. As is the difference between a killing lethargy and a reviving refreshing sleep, such is the difference between Christ's peace and the world's.

4. What use they should make of it; Let not your heart be troubled, for any evils past or present, neither let it be afraid of any evil to come. Note, They that are interested in the covenant of grace, and entitled to the peace which Christ gives, ought not to yield to overwhelming griefs and fears. This comes in here as the conclusion of the whole matter; he had said, (v. 1.) Let not your heart be troubled, and here he repeats it as that which he had now given sufficient reason for.

28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If we loved me, ye would rejoice, because I
said I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Christ here gives his disciples another reason, why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away; and that is, because his heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame, that they might look unto him, and run with patience. He comforted himself, 1. That though he went away, he should come again; "Ye have heard how I have said, and now I say it again, I go away, and come again." Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second coming, we have need to be told again. 2. And when we are under the power of any transport of passion, grief, or fear, or care, we forget that Christ will come again. See Phil. 4. 3. Christ encouraged himself with this, in his sufferings and death, that he should come again, and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; we go away to come again; the leave we take of our friends at that parting, is only a good new one to a final farewell. See 1 Thess. 4. 13, 14. 4. That he went to his Father; "If ye loved me, as by your sorrow ye say you do, ye would rejoice instead of mourning, because though I leave you, yet I said, I go unto the Father, not only mine, but yours, which will be my advancement and your advantage; for my Father is greater than I." Observe here, 1. It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples, that he is gone to the Father, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright side as well as a dark side. Therefore he sent this message after his resurrection, (ch. 20. 17.) I ascend to my Father and your Father, as most comfortable. 2. The reason of this is, because the Father is greater than he, which, if it be a proper proof of his Deity, which it is, alleged, "As no doubt, it is, must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father (so Dr. Hammond) would be the advancing of him to a much higher condition than that which he was now in. Or, thus, His going to the Father himself, and bringing all his followers to him there, was the ultimate end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the mean. The disciples of Christ raise in the hopes and expectations of his disciples, to something greater than that which now they thought all their happiness bound up in. The kingdom of the Father, wherein he shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom. 3. The disciples of Christ should show that they love him by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, which it is, alleged, "As no doubt, it is, must be understood thus, that he is gone to his Father, where he would be, and where we shall shortly with him. Many that love Christ, let their love run out in a wrong channel; they think if they love him, they must be continually in pain because of him; whereas they that love him, should dwell at ease in him, should rejoice in Christ Jesus." 31. That he who foretold these things, had divine presence, and knew beforehand what a day would bring forth. When St. Paul was going to Jerusalem, he knew not the things that did abide him there, but Christ did.

2. That the things foretold were according to the divine purpose and designation, not sudden resolves, but the contrivances of an eternal counsel. Let us therefore inquire what the counsel of God was, for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit; for the trial of our faith is very precious, though it cost us present heaviness, through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. 1. 6. 3. That he was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a struggle in his departure; (ch. 30.) "Henceforth I will not talk much with you, but I will shew you the Father; and ye shall see me no more; and the word which I have told you, I will not tell it again; but I will shew you the Father." Note, We should always endeavour to talk to the purpose, that we may be for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit; for the trial of our faith is very precious, though it cost us present heaviness, through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. 1. 6. We should always endeavour to talk to the purpose, because perhaps we may not have time to talk much. We know not how soon our breath will be stopped, and therefore should be always breathing something that is good. When we come to be sick, and die, perhaps we may not be capable of talking much to those about us; and therefore what good counsel we have to give them, let us give it while we are in health.

4. The reason why he would not talk much with them, was, because he had now other work to apply himself to; The prince of this world comes; he called the devil the prince of this world, ch. 12. 31. The disciples dreamed of their Master being the prince of this world, and they, worldly princes under him. But Christ tells them that the prince of this world was his enemy, and so were the princes of this world, that were actuated and ruled by him, 1 Cor. 1. 11. But he has nothing in number, the very opposite. 1. The prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. The devil had set upon him with his temptations, (Matt. 4.) had offered him the kingdom of this world, if he would hold them as tributary to him, with an eye to which, Christ calls him in disdain, the prince of this world; then the devil departed from him for a season; But now, says Christ, I see him rallying again, preparing to make a furious onset, and so to gain that by terrors, which he could not gain by allurements; to frighten from his undertaking, whom he could not entice from it. Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; for, being forewarned, we should be fore-armed. While we are here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always upon our guard. 2. The assurance he had of good success in the conflict; He hath nothing in me, &c. 49. He hath nothing at all. (1.) There was no fault in Christ to give authority to the prince of this world in his terrrors. The devil is said to have the power of death; (Heb. 2. 14.) the Jews called him the devil, the enemy of man. On every occasion. Now Christ having done so much, he had no legal power against him, and therefore,
though he prevailed to crucify him, he could not prevail to terrify him; though he hurried him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against him. (2.) There was no corruption in Christ to give advantage to the prince of this world in his temptations; he could not crush his undertaking by drawing him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in him, nothing irregular for his temptations to fasten upon, no tinder for him to strike fire into; such was the spotless purity of his nature, that he was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us is crushed, and defaced, the more comfortably may we expect sufferings and death.

V. That his departure was in compliance with, and obedience to, his Father. Satan could not force his life from him, and yet he would die; that the world may know that I love the Father, v. 31. We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often said, that his undertaking, as Mediator, was a demonstration to the world, (1.) Of his compliance with the Father; hereby it appeared that he loved the Father. As it was an evidence of his love to man, that he died for his salvation; so it was of his love to God, that he died for his glory, and the accomplishing of his purposes. Let the world know that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost. As the Father loved the things which are his hand, so the Son loved the Father, and gave his Spirit into his hand. (2.) Of his obedience to his Father; "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I did the thing commanded, in the manner commanded." Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father, is, our doing as he hath given us commandment. As Christ loved the Father, and obeyed him, even to the death; so must we love Christ, and obey him. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging him to suffer and die, bore him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctancies of nature; this took off the offence of the cross, that what he did was by order from the Father; the command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most displeased by others, and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves; This is the will of him that made me, that sent me.

2. As concluding what he had now said; having brought it to this, here he leaves it; that the world may know that I love the Father, you shall see how cheerfully I can meet the appointed cross; "Arise, let us go hence to the garden," so some; or to Jerusalem. When we talk of troubles at a distance, it is easy to say, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; but when it comes to the pinch, when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty, then to say, "Arise, let us go to meet it, instead of going out of our way to miss it," this lets the world know that we love the Father. If this discourse was at the close of the passover-supper, it should seem that at these words he returns from the table and retireth to the withdrawing room, where he might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this, is, that Christ mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die, and to obey the stepping of Judas's meeting him; Arise, says he, let us go hence; he looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, and therefore sits down again, and preaches another sermon.

Now, (1.) In these words he gives his disciples an encouragement to follow him. He does not say, I must go; but, Let us go. He calls them out to no hardships, but what he himself goes before them, as their leader. They had promised they would not desert him; "Come," says he, "let us go then; let us see how you will make the words good."

(2.) He gives them an example, teaching them at all times, especially in suffering times, to sit loose to the things that have come below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, and in the midst of the delights of an agreeable conversation, yet we must not think of being here always; Arise, let us go hence. If it were at the close of the paschal and eucharistical supper, it teaches us that the solemnities of our communion with God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under Christ's table, it is good to be here; yet we must think of rising and going hence; going down from the mount.

CHAP. XV.

It is generally agreed that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter, was at the close of his last supper, the night in which he was betrayed, and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted as that in the foregoing chapter was; and what he chooses to discourse of is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon. Now that he was about to leave them, 1. They would be tempted to leave him, and return to Moses, and the old ceremonial; and therefore he tells them, how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to him, and abide in him. 2. They would be tempted to grow strange one another; and therefore he presses it upon them, The Father, the Father, and to keep and observe that communion when he was gone, which had hitherto been their comfort. 3. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship, when they met with hardships; and therefore he prepares them to bear the shock of the world's ill-will. There are four words, to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced; 1. Fruit, v. 1., 8. 2. Love, v. 9., 17. 3. Hatred, v. 18., 25. 4. The Comforter, v. 26., 37.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Here Christ discourses concerning the fruit, the fruits of the Spirit, which his disciples were to bring forth, under the similitude of a vine. Observe here,

1. The doctrine of this similitude; what notion we ought to have of it: 1. That Jesus Christ is the vine, the true vine. It is an instance of the humility of Christ, that he is pleased to speak of himself under low and humble comparisons. He that is the Sun of righteousness, and the bright and morning Star, compares himself to a vine. The church, which is Christ mystical, is
a vine; (Ps. 80. 8.) so is Christ, who is the church
spiritual, Christ and his church are thus set forth.
(1.) He is the vine, planted in the vineyard, and
not a spontaneous product; planted in the earth for he is the Word made flesh. The vine has un-
sightly, unpromising outside; and Christ had no
form, nor comeliness, Is. 53. 2. The vine is a
spreading plant, and Christ will be known, Salv-
aton to the ends of the earth. The fruit of the vine
honours God, and cheers man; (Judg. 9. 13.) so
do a plant of Christ's mediation; it is better than
gold, Prov. 8. 19.
(2.) He is the true vine, as truth is opposed to
pretence and counterfeit; he is really a fruitful plant,
a plant of renown. He is not like that wild vine,
which deceived those who gathered of it: (2 Kings
4. 39.) but a true vine. Unfruitful trees are said to
be, (Hab. 3. 17. marg.) but Christ is a vine that
will not deceive. Whatever excellency there is in
any creature, serviceable to man, it is but a shadow
of that grace which is in Christ for his people's
good. He is that true vine typified by Judah's vine,
which enriched him with the blood of the grape,
(Gen. 49. 11.) by Joseph's vine, the branches of
which ran over the wall, (Gen. 49. 22.) by Israel's
vine, under which he dwelt safely, 1 Kings 4. 25.
2. That believers are branches of this vine, which
sprouts from the root and runs over the wall
which is unseen, and our life is hid with Christ; the
root bears the tree, (Rom. 11. 18.) diffuses sap to it,
and is all in all to its flourishing and fruitfulness:
and in Christ are all supports and supplies. The
branches of the vine are many, some on one side of
the house or wall, others on the other side; yet,
meeting in the root, are all but one vine; thus all
good christians, though in place and opinion distant
from each other, yet meet in Christ, the centre of
their unity. Believers, like the branches of the
vine, are weak, and insufficient to stand of themselves, but as they
are borne up. See Ezek. 15. 2.
3. That the Father is the husbandman, the
land-worker. Though the earth in the Lord's,
it yields him no fruit unless he work it. God has
to proprietary in, but a care of the vine and all the
branches. He hath planted, and watered, and gives
the increase; for we are God's husbandry, 1 Cor. 3.
9. See Is. 5. 1. 2. — 27. 2. 3. He had an eye upon
Christ, the root, and upheld him, and made him
to flourish out of a dry ground. He has an eye upon
all the branches, and prunes them, and watches over
them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any
husbandman so wise, so watchful about his vineyard,
as God is about his church, which therefore must needs
prosper.
II. The duty taught us by this similitude, which is,
to bring forth fruit, and, in order to that, to abide
in Christ.
I. We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for
grapes, (Isa. 5. 2.) and from a christian we look
for christiannes, that is the fruit, a christian temper
and disposition, a christian life, and a christian
character, and christian designs. We must
honour God, and do good, and exemplify the purity
and power of the religion we profess; and this is
bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful,
as christians, in all the fruits of righteousness, and as
apostles, in diffusing the savour of that knowledge.
To persuade them to this, he urges,
(1.) The doom of the unfruitful. (v. 2.) they are
to be cut off. It is here intimated, that there are
many who pretend for branches in Christ, who yet
do not bear fruit. Were they really united to Christ
by faith, they would bear fruit; but, being only
tied to him by the thread of an outward profession,
though they seem to be branches, they will soon be
seen to be dry ones; unfruitful professors are unfaith-
ful professors; professors, and no more. It might be
read, Every branch that beareth not fruit in me, and
it comes much to one; for they that do not bear fruit
in Christ, and in his spirit and grace, are as if they
had no fruit of his love. [2.] It is threatened, that they shall be taken away, in justice
to them and in kindness to the rest of the branches.
From him that has not real union with Christ, and
fruit produced thereby, shall be taken away even
that which he seemed to have, Luke 8. 18. Some
think this refers primarily to Judas.
(2.) The doom of the fruitful; he purges
them, that they may bring forth more fruitful fruit.
Note: [1.] Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward
of former fruitfulness. The first branch was, Be
fruitful; and it is still a great blessing. [2.] Even
fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness,
have need of purging, or pruning; as when he
taketh away that which is superfluous and luxur-
iant, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness.
The best hope that in them which is present, admit
of a triumphant, sometimes which should be taken
away; some notions, passions, or humours, that
want to be purged away, which Christ has promised
to do by his word, and Spirit, and providence; and
these shall be taken off by degrees in the proper
season. [3.] The purging of fruitful branches, in
order to their greater fruitfulness, is the care and
mystick of the Lord's vineyard; (Isa. 2. 23.) for he
guardeth the vineyard; and the vineyard is the
church.
(3.) The benefits which believers have by the
doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should
labour to exemplify in a fruitful conversation; (v. 3.)
Now ye are clean.
[1.] Their society was clean, now that Judas was
expelled by that word of Christ, Which thou dost, do
quickly; and till they were get clean of him, they
were not all clean. The word of Christ is a distin-
guishing word, and separates between the precious
and the vile; it will purify the church of the first
born in the great dividing day.
[2.] They were each of them clean, that is, sanc-
tified, by the truth of Christ; (ch. 17. 17.) that
faith by which they received the word of Christ,
purified their hearts, Acts 15. 9. The Spirit of
grace by the word refined them from the smell of
the world and the flesh; and purged out of them the
leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees; from which,
when they saw their inveterate rage and enmity against
their Master, they were now pretty well cleansed.
Apply it to all believers. The word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue
in that word, as it works grace, and works out cor-
rupution; it cleanses as fire cleanses the gold from its
dross, and as physic cleanses the body from its dis-
case. We then evidence that we are cleansed by
the word, when we bring forth fruit unto holiness.
Perhaps, here is an allusion to the law concerning
vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as un-
clean, and unincumbered, the three first years after
it was planted; and the fourth year it was to be hol-
liness of praise unto the Lord; and then it was clean,
Lev. 19. 25, 26. The disciples had not been three
years under Christ's instruction; and now ye are
clean.
(4.) The glory that will redound to God by our
fruitfulness, with that comfort and honour that will
come to ourselves by it, v. 8. If we bear much
fruit.
[1.] Herein our Father will be glorified. The
fruitfulness of the apostles, as such, in the diligent
discharge of their office, would be to the glory of
God in the conversion of souls, and the efficacy
of them up to him, Rom. 15. 9, 16. The fruitfulness
of all christians, in a lower and narrower sphere, is
to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of
christians many are brought to glorify our Father
which is in heaven.
[2.] So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed, as
proving ourselves, and making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves. So shall we both evidence our discipleship, and adorn it, and be to our Master for a name, and a praise, and a glory, that is, disciples indeed, Jer. 13. 11. So shall we be wide, and the gates, and have the reward of disciples, a share in the joy of our Lord. And the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is glorified.

2. In order to our fruitfulness, we must abide in Christ, must keep up our union with him by faith, and do all we do in religion in the virtue of that union. Here is (1.) The duty enjoined; (v. 4.) Abide in me, and I in you. Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, constantly to keep up a dependence upon Christ, and communion with him; habitually to adhere to him, and actually to derive fruit from him. These that are come to Christ, must abide in him; "Abide in me, by faith; and I in you, by my Spirit; abide in me, and then fear not but I will abide in you." For the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must abide in Christ's word by a regard to it, and it in us as a light to our feet. We must abide in Christ's merit as our righteousness and plea, and it in us as our support and comfort. The knot of the branch abides in the vine, and the sap of the vine abides in the branch, and so there is a constant communication both ways between them.

(2.) The necessity of our abiding in Christ, in order to our fruitfulness; (v. 4, 5.) "Ye cannot bring forth fruit, except ye abide in me; but if ye do, ye bring forth much fruit; for, in short, without me, or separate from me, ye can do nothing." So necessary is it to our comfort and happiness, that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to abide in Christ, is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful.

[1.] Abiding in Christ is in order to our doing much good. He that is constant in the exercise of faith in Christ and love to him, that lives upon his promises and is led by his Spirit, he brings forth much fruit, he is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is a noble principle productive of all good. A life of good to God is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly, it is useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life.

[2.] It is necessary to our doing any good. It is not only a means of cultivating and increasing what good there is already in us, but it is the root and spring of all good; "Without me ye can do nothing: not only no great things, but the sick, the blind, the dead, but nothing." Note, We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of the Mediator for all the spiritual and divine life, as we have upon the providence of the Creator for all the actions of the natural life; for, as to both, it is in the divine power, that we live, move, and have our being. Abstracted from the merit of Christ, we can do nothing. We were without Christ, nothing towards our sanctification. Without Christ, we can do nothing aright, nothing that will be fruit pleasing to God, or profitable to ourselves, 2 Cor. 3. 5. We depend upon Christ, not only, as the vine upon the wall, for support; but, as the branch on the root, for sap.

(3.) The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ; (v. 7.) They are cast forth as dry and withered branches, which are plucked off because theyumber the tree. It is just that they should have no be-

neft by Christ, who think they have no need of him; and that they who reject him, should be rejected by him; those that abide not in Christ, shall be abandoned by him; they are left to themselves, and to their own way, and to all that they love, and they are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful.

[2.] They are withered, as a branch broken off from the tree. That they abide not in Christ, though they may flourish a while in a plausible, at least a passable profession, yet in a little time they wither and come to nothing. Their parts and gifts wither, their zeal and devotion wither; their credit and reputation wither; and they go on in their scandalous sin, and they are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful.

[3.] Men gather them. Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. They that fall off from Christ, presently fall in with sinners; and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to seize them for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him.

[4.] They cast them into the fire, that is, they are cast into the fire; and they who seduce them and draw them to sin, do in effect cast them there; for they made them children of hell. Fire is the fittest place for withered branches, for they are good for nothing else, Ezek. 15. 5.

[5.] They are burned; that follows of course; but it is here added emphatically, and makes the threatening very terrible; they will not be consumed in a moment, like thorns under a pot, (Ecc. 7. 6.) but siwiw, they are burning for ever in a fire, which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ, this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are twice dead; (Luke 12.) and when it is said, They are cast into the fire and are burned, it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply men's gathering them, to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall bundle the tares for the fire.

[6.] The blessed privilege which they have, that abide in Christ; (v. 7.) If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will of my Father in my name, and he will give it you.

See here, [1.] How our union with Christ is maintained, by the word; If ye abide in me, he had said before, and I in you; here he explains himself, and my words abide in you; for it is in the word that Christ is set before us, and offered to us, Rom. 10. 6-8. It is in the word that we receive and embrace him; and so where the word of Christ dwells richly, in Christ dwells. If the word be our constant guide and monitor, if it be in us at home, then we abide in Christ, and he in us.

[2.] How our communion with Christ is maintained—by prayer; Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you. And what can we desire more than to have what we will for the asking? Note, They that abide in Christ as their hearts' delight, shall have, through Christ, the things which they ask anything for. We shall have nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise: First, That if we abide in Christ, and his word in us, we will not ask any thing but what is proper to be done for us. The promises abiding in us, lie ready to be turned into prayers; and the prayers so regulated, cannot but speed. Secondly, That if we abide in Christ and his word, we shall have such an interest in God's favour and Christ's mediation, that we shall have an answer of peace to all our prayers.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.
If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Christ, who is love itself, is here discouraging concern for love by a fourfold love.

1. Concerning the Father's love to him: and concerning this he here tells us,

1. That the Father did love him; (v. 9.) As the Father hath loved me. He loved him as Mediator; This is my beloved Son. He was the Son of his love. He loved him, and gave all things into his hand; and yet so loved the world, as to deliver him up for us all. When Christ was entering upon his sufferings, he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. Those whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of all the world.

2. That he abode in his Father's love, v. 10. He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of him. Even then, when he was made sin and a curse for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him; yet he abode in his Father's love. See Ps. 89, 33. Because he continued to love his Father, he went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love him.

3. That therefore he abode in his Father's love, because he kept his Father's law; I have kept my Father's commandments, as Mediator, and so abide in his love. Hereby shewed he that he continued to love his Father, that he went on, and went through, with his undertaking, and therefore the Father continued to love him. His soul delighted in him, because he did not fail, nor was discouraged, Isa. 42: 1, 4. We having broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God; Christ satisfied for us by obeying the law of redemption, and so he abode in his love, and restored us to it.

II. Concerning his own love to his disciples. This he leaves them, he loves them. And observe here,

1. The pattern of this love; As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ! As the Father loved him, who was most worthy, he loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved him as his Son, and he loves them as his children. So in all things into his hand; so, with himself, he freely gives us all things. The Father loved him as Mediator, as head of the church, and the great trustee of divine grace and favour, which he had not for himself only, but for the benefit of these for whom he was instructed; and, says he, I have been a faithful trustee. As the Father has committed his love to me, so I transmit it to you. Therefore the Father was well pleased with him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and loved him, in that, as beloved, he might manifest himself. Eph. 3: 19.

2. The prospects and products of this love, which are four:

(1.) Christ loved his disciples, for he laid down his life for them; (v. 13.) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And this is the love wherewith Christ hath loved us, he is our life.—And for us, body for body; Gal. 4: 15. If all that a man has he will give for his life, he that gives that for his friend, gives all, and can give no more; this may sometimes be our duty, 1 John 3: 16. Paul was ambitious of the honour; (Phil. 2: 17.) and for a good man some will even dare to die, Rom. 3: 7. It is love in the highest degree, which is strong as death.

(2.) The excellency of the love of Christ beyond all other loves: the love of Christ is his love, not exceeded, the most illustrious lovers. Others have laid down their lives, content that they should be taken from them; but Christ gave up his, was not merely passive, but made it his own act and deed. The life which others have laid down, has been but of equal value with the life for which it was laid down, and perhaps less valuable; but Christ is infinitely more valuable; his life was worth ten thousand of others, as Christ has laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us, when we were enemies, Rom. 5: 8. Plonogam serru or lupiue corda esse oportet, quia non melius tam incomparabilem divini amoris subteritat—These hearts must be harder than iron or stone, which are not softened by such incomparable sweetness of divine love. Calvin.

(3.) Christ loved his disciples in his own person, he took them into a close confidence of friendship with himself; (v. 14.) If we approve ourselves by your obedience my disciples indeed, we are my friends, and shall be treated as friends. Note, The followers of Christ are the friends of Christ, and he is graciously pleased to call and count them so. They that do the duty of his servants, are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. David had one servant in his court, and Solomon one in his; but, in a particular manner, the king's friend; (2 Sam. 15, 57. 1 Kings 4: 5.) but this honour have all Christ's servants. We may in some particular instances be friends to a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cares; thus Christ takes believers to be his friends, he visits them, and converses with them, as his friends; which, with the joy of their union, and of their afflictions in their afflictions, and takes pleasure in their prosperity; he pleads for them in heaven, and takes care of all their interests there. Have friends, but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6: 17. Though they often slew themselves unfriendly, he is a friend that loves at all times.

3. Observe how endearingly this is expressed here,

(1.) He will not call them servants, though they called him Master and Lord. They that would be like Christ in this, we must take a side in sitting upon all occasions in their authority and
periority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But, [2.] He will call them his friends; he will not only love them, but will let them know it; for in his tongue is the law of kindness. After his resurrection he seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of and to his disciples than before; Go to my brethren, (ch. 20. 17.) Children, have ye any meat, ch. 21. 5. But observe, though Christ called them his friends, they called the other disciples by a different name: Peter, servant of Christ, (1 Pet. 1. 1.) and so James, ch. 1. 1. The more a man puts Christ upon us, the more honour we should study to do him; the higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

(3.) Christ loved his disciples, for he was very free in communicating his mind to them; (r. 13.) "Hence forth ye shall be kept as the sheep in the folds of the Father, like orphans, and only told their present work; but when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know your Master's designs as friends. All things that I have heard of my Father, I have declared unto you." As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but as to the revealed will of God, Jesus Christ, his faithfully handed it down, which he ever showed it. [3.] Matt. 11. 27. The great things relating to man's redemption, Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, Matt. 13. 11.

(1.) Christ loved his disciples, for he chose and ordained them to be the prime instruments of his glory and honour in the world; (r. 16.) I have chosen you, and ordained you. His love to them appeared,

[1.] In their election, their election to their apostleship; (ch. 6. 70.) I have chosen you twelve. It did not begin on their side; Ye have not chosen me, but I first chose you. Why were they admitted to such an intimacy with him, employed in such an embassy for him, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing him for their Master, but to his favour and grace in choosing them for his disciples. It is fit that Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still he does it by his providence and Spirit. Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to their's, and directs and determines it. Of all that are called to grace and glory, it may be said, They have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen them, Deut. 7. 7, 8.

[2.] In their ordination; I have ordained you, ye are bidden;—"I have put you into the ministry, (1 Tim. 1. 12.) put you into commission." By this it appeared he took them for his friends, that he crowned their heads with such an honour, and filled them with grace and spiritual gifts. It was a mighty confidence he reposed in them, when he made them his ambassadors to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in this lower world, and the prime ministers of state in the administration of it.

The treasure of the gospel was committed to them,

First, That it might be propagated; that ye should go, and teach all nations, and teach all nations, and make disciples of all nations; Matthew 28. 19. But observe, we are not called to go about it, as we wish, and to us; we are not to go from place to place all the world over, and bring forth fruit. They were ordained, not so much to do this, as to bring others to do it. They were not to go about it, as we do, but to go about it, as we wish, and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained, not to hit the air, but to be instrumental in God's hand, for the bringing in, the propagation, and establishment of grace to Christ, Rom. 1. 13. Note, Those whom Christ ordains, should and shall be fruitful; should labour, and shall not labour in vain.

Secondly, That it might be perpetuated; that the fruit should remain, that the good effect of their labours may continue in the world from generation to generation, to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short-lived thing, as many of the sects of the philosophers, that were a nine days wonder; it did not come up in a night, nor should it perish in a night; but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted to us by the same hand that composed them; the foundation, ever since the Christian church was first founded by the ministry of the apostles and seventy disciples; as one generation of ministers and christians has passed away, still another has come. By virtue of that great charter, (Matt. 28. 19.) Christ has a church in the world, which as our lawyers say of bodies corporate, does not die, but lives in a perpetual succession, and continues from day to day, and shall do while the earth remains.

Lastly, His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace; Whatever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, he will give it you. Probably, this refers in the first place to the power of working miracles, which the apostles were clothed with, which was to be drawn out by prayer. But they are included in the reference to the performance of all the acts of kindness, the increase of your labours, whatever help from heaven ye have occasion for at any time, it is but ask and have. Three things are here hinted to us for our encouragement in prayer, and very encouraging they are. [1.] That we have a God to go to, who is a Father; Christ here calls him the Father, both mine and yours; and the Spirit in the word and in the heart teaches us to cry, Abba, Father. [2.] That we come in good condition. Whatever need and we come upon to the throne of grace, according to God's will, we may with a humble boldness mention Christ's name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concerned for us. [3.] That an answer of peace is promised us. What ye ask for, shall be given you. This great promise made to that great duty, keeps up a comfortable and grateful intercourse between heaven and earth.

III. Concerning the disciples' love to Christ, enjoined in consideration of the great love where with he had loved them. Three things he exhorts them to:

1. To continue in his love; (v. 9.) "Continue in your love to me, and in mine to you." Both may be taken in. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continual proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may tempt us to withdraw from him, or provoke him to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ, should continue in their love to him, that is, he always loving him, and taking all occasions to shew it, and love to the end. The disciples were to go out upon service for Christ, in which they would meet with many troubles; that says Christ, "Continue in my love. Keep up your love with care, and then all the troubles ye meet with will be easy; love made seven years' hard service easy to Jacob. Let not the troubles ye meet with for Christ's sake, quench your love to Christ, but quicken it rather."

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, v. 11. This he designed in those precepts and promises given them. [1.] That his joy might remain in them. The words are so placed in the original, that they may be read either.

[1.] That my joy in you may remain. If they bring forth much fruit, and continue in his love, he will continue to rejoice in them, as he had done. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus: he rests in his love to them, Zeph. 3. 17. As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints.
1. It is here recommended by Christ's pattern, (t. 12.) as I have loved you, Christ's love should direct and engage our love to each other; in that manner, and from that motive, we should love one another, as, and because, Christ has loved us. He here specifies some of the expressions of his love to them; he called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked; Go ye and do likewise.

2. It is required by his precept. He integrates his authority, has made it one of the statute-laws of his kingdom. Observe how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatical.

(1.) This is my commandment, (v. 12.) as it was the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment most insisted on by any other, foreseeing the people's idolatry Christ, foreseeing the unchristianness of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept.

(2.) These things I command you, v. 17. He speaks as if he were about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, that ye love one another; not only because this includes many others, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also. 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. 23. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Here Christ discourses concerning hatred, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here, 1. Who they are, in whom this hatred is found; in the world, the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; who are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to; all those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who would not come into the church of Christ, which he audibly and visibly separates from this evil world. The citing of these the world, speaks, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity. Lord, how were they increased, that troubled the Son of David? I fear if we should put it to the vote between Christ and Satan, not a world out-poll us either. 2. It speaks their impurity and combination; that person best to be considered, and are as the, Ps. 15. 3. Jews and Gentiles.
that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. It speaks their spirit and disposition; they are men of the world, (Ps. 17. 13, 14.) wholly devoted to this world, and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sin of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world. Who they are against whom this hatred is excelled; against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself, and against the Father.

1. The world hates the disciples of Christ. The world hateth you, (v. 19.) and he speaks of it as that which they must expect and count upon, v. 18, as John 3. 15. Observe how this comes in here, (1.) Christ has expressed the hatred of the world against his apostles, and he has forebade his followers to be surprised at it; they must not be surprised at it, because they had it for their friends; but, lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as there was to Paul, a thorn in the flesh, that is, as it is explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 10. (2.) He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, that it might not be a surprise to them. They must prepare accordingly. (3.) He had charged them to love one another, and need enough they had to love one another, for the world would hate them: to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of unkindness and ill-will from these that were without. 'Keep peace among yourselves, and that will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you.' Those that are in the list of enemies, are concerned to hold together. See,

[1.] The world's enmity against the followers of Christ; it hateth them. Note, Whom Christ blesseth, the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of Heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him, because his Father loved him; Saul hated David, because the Lord was with him; Ahab hated Micaiah, because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

[2.] The fruits of that enmity. Two of which we have seen already. 1. It will persecute you, because they hate you, for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, to suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12. Christ foresaw what ill-usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world, and yet, for the sake of those few that by their ministry were to be called out of the world, he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Secondly, Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that the world would reject their doctrine: when Christ says, If they have kept my sayings, they will keep your's, he means, They will keep your's, and regard your's, no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affliction to Jeremiah, to say, Let us not give heed to any of your words, Jer. 18. 18.

[3.] The causes of that enmity. The world will hate them, First, Because they do not belong to it; (v. 19.) "If we were of the world, of its spirit, and in its interests, if we were carnal and worldly, the world would love you, as its own; but because you are called out of the world, it hateth you, and ever will." Note, 1. We are not to wonder, if those that are devoted to the world, are caressed by it as its friends; most men bless the covetous, Ps. 10. 3.—49. 18. 2. Nor are we to wonder, if those that are delivered from the world, are maligned by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, The reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world, is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ hath chosen them out of it, set them apart for himself; and this is the reason why the world hates them; (v. 18.) "You are not of the world, because you are designed for, set them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated." (2.) The grace which by virtue of this choice they are ended with, sets them against the world; they swim against the stream of this world, and are not conformed to it; they witness against this by virtue of this choice they are designed for, set them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. This would support them under all the calamities which the world's hatred would bring upon them, that therefore they were hated, because they were the choice and chosen ones of the Lord Jesus, and were not of the world. Now, (1.) This was no just cause for the world's hatred of them. If we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it; but if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, (2.) This was just cause for their own joy. He that is hated because he is rich and prosperous, cares not who has the vexation of it, while he has the satisfaction of it.

—Populus me sibi dati, at mihi plaudo
Ipse dixit in isto, 'Let them hiss on, he cries,
While in my own opinion fully blessed.
Timon in Hor.

Much more may they hug themselves, whom the world hates, but Christ loves.

Secondly, Another cause of the world's hating you, will be, because you do belong to Christ, (v. 21.) for my name's sake. Here is the core of the controversy; whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel, they hate Christ's disciples because they bear his name, and bear up his name in the world. Note, 1. It is the character of Christ's disciples, that they stand up for his name. The name into which they were baptized, is that which they have lived and died by. 2. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name, to suffer for so doing; to suffer many things, and hard things, all these things. 3. It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer for Christ's name sake. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. (1 Pet. 4. 14.) happy indeed, considering not only the honour that is imprinted upon the sufferings, (Acts 5. 41.) but the comfort that is infused into them, and especially the crown of glory which those sufferings lead to. If we suffer with Christ, and for Christ, we shall reign with him. Thirdly, After all, it is the world's ignorance that is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ; (v. 21.) because they know not him that sent me. 1. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the very first principles of natural religion, and did but know God, though they would not embrace christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it. These have no knowledge, who eat up God's people, Ps. 14. 4. 2. They know not God, as he that sent our Lord Jesus, and authorized him to be the great Mediator of the peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him in Christ, and they who persecute those whom he sends, make it to appear that they know not that he was sent of God. See 1 Cor. 2. 8.

2. The world hates Christ himself. And this is spoken of here for two ends. (1.) To mitigate the trouble of his followers, ari-
ing from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange, and the less grievous; (p. 18.) Ye know that it hated me before you, \textit{et al.} We read it as signifying precisely the same; he began in the bitter cut of anger, and then left us to pledge him; but it may be read as speaking his superiority over them; \textit{Ye know that it hated you, your first, your chief and captain, your leader and commander.}\textsuperscript{1} If Christ, who excelled in goodness, and was perfectly innocent and universally beneficent, was hated, can we expect that any virtue or merit of our's should screen us from it? \textsuperscript{2} If Christianity is the origin of our religion, may not so much opposition in the planting of it, his servants and followers can look for no other in the propagating and processing it.

For this he refers them (v. 20.) to his own word, at their admission into discipleship; \textit{Remember the word that I said unto you.} It would help us to understand Christ's latter sayings, to compare them with his former sayings. Nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us easy, than remembering the words of Christ, which will expand his providences. Now in this word there's

\textbf{First, A plain truth;} The servant is not greater than the Lord. This he had said to them, Matt. 10. 24. Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must diligently attend all his motions, and patiently arise in all his dispositions, for the servant is inferior to the master; they are not to be compared. The strongest arguments for the hardest duties; Elisha answers a multitude of Job's murmurings, with this one self-evident truth, \textit{that God is greater than man.} Job 33. 12. So here is

\textbf{Secondly, A proper inference drawn from it,} \textit{If they have persecuted me, as ye have seen, and are likely to see much more, they will also persecute you; ye may expect it and count upon it, for:} 1. \textit{Ye will do the same to them, as ye have done to me; they will persevere in their sins, and call them to repentance, and give them strict rules of holy living, which they will not bear.} 2. \textit{Ye cannot do more than I have done to oblige them; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they suffer ill for doing well.} He adds, \textit{If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also;} as there had been no peculiar mercy to him, so no peculiar mercy can be wrought upon my preaching, so there will be by your's a few, and but a few. Some give another sense of this, making \textit{gygep.} to be put for \textit{gygep.} \textit{Gygep.} \textit{If they have lain in wait for my sayings, with a design to ensnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your talk.}\textsuperscript{2} (2.) It serves to aggravate the wickedness of this unbelieving world, and to discover its exceeding sinfulness; to hate and persecute Christ was enough, but in them to hate and persecute Christ himself, was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it hated Jesus Christ. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ.

\textbf{Two things he insists upon to aggravate the wickedness of the} haters of Christ.

\textbf{1. That there was the greatest reason imaginable why they should love him; men's good words and good works recommend them: now as to Christ. First, His words were such as merited their love;} \textit{et al.} \textit{If I had not spoken unto them, to count their love, they had not had sin, their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of me; their sin had been comparatively so. But now that I have said so much to them to recommend myself to their best estimation, they would shew their presumption, no excuse for their sin.} Observe here,

1. The advantage which they have, that enjoy the gospel; Christ in \textit{it} comes and speaks to them; he speaks in person to the men of that generation, and is still speaking to us by our Bibles and ministers, and as one that has the most unquestionable authority over us, and affection for us. For in the first age it is Christ who carries on solicitude, majesty, and might, and a condescending tenderness, able, one would think, to charm the dearest adder.

2. The excuse which they have, that enjoy the gospel; \textit{et al.} \textit{If I had not spoken to them, if they had never heard of Christ and salvation by him, they had not had sin.} (1.) Not this kind of sin. They had not been chargeable with a contempt of Christ, it is true, but the good, the wise, the merciful, the mighty grace to them. As sin is not imputed where there is no law, so unbelief is not imputed where there is no gospel; and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damming sin, that, being a sin against the remedy, other sins would not damn, if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. (2.) Not such a degree of sin. If they had not had the gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad; for the words of ignorance God winked at, Luke 12. 47. 48.

3. The aggravated guilt which they lie under, to whom Christ has \textit{come and spoken} in vain, whom he has called and invited in vain, with whom he has reasoned and pleaded in vain; they have no cloak for their sin, they are altogether inexcusable, and in the judgment-day will be speechless, and will have but a word to say in their behalf. \textit{Note,} The clearer and fuller the discoveries are, which are made of us in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, the more is said to us, that is convincing and releaming, the greater is our sin if we do not love him and believe in him. The word of Christ strips sin of its cloak, that it may appear sin.

\textbf{Secondly, His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words (v. 24.)} \textit{If I had not done among them, in their country, and before their eyes, such works as no other man ever did, they had not had sin; their unbelief and enmity had been excusable; and they might have had some colour to say that my word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed;} but he produced satisfactory proofs of his divine mission, \textit{works which no other man did.} Note, 1. As the Creator demonstrates his power by the works of nature, so the Redeemer, by his miracles, demonstrates his power by the works of grace, prove he sent of God, and sent on a kind errand. 2. Christ's works were such as \textit{no man ever did.} No common person that had not a commission from heaven, and God with him, could work miracles, ch. 5. 22. And no prophet ever wrought such miracles, so many, so illustrious. Moses and Elias wrought miracles as servants by a derived power: but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This was it that amazed the people, that with authority he commanded diseases and devils; (Mark 1. 27.) they owned they never saw the like, Mark 2. 12. They were all good works, works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for he is upholding them with this, that they hated him. One that was so universally useful, more especially to men, and to the world, than he would think, should have been universally beloved, and yet even he is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners' infidelity and animosity, to him, to the last degree of wickedness and abomination. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works, if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have declared want of proof; but it has more reason to despair of itself, since both its heart and soul lie in the sin, not only of obstinate unbelief, but of those ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable, and disposed to do them a kindness; yet they hated him, and studied to do him mischief. And what is his
word that great love where'th he loved us, and yet are not wonted upon by it.

[2.] That there was no reason at all why they should hate him. For nothing that at one time will say
and do what it is recommending, yet at another time will say and do that which is provoking and dissembling: but our Lord Jesus not only did much to merit men's esteem and good-will, but never did any thing justly to incur their displeasure; this he pleads by quoting a scripture for it; (v. 23.)

"This comes to pass, this unceasing hatred of
me, and of my disciples unto the very end, that the word
might be fulfilled, which is written in their law,"
(that is, in the Old Testament, which is a law, and
was received by them as a law.) "They hated me
without a cause," this David speaks of himself as
a type of Christ, Ps. 35. 19.—58. 4. Note, First,
They that hate Christ, hate him without any just cause: truly Christ is unreasonable enemy. We think those desire to be hated, that are haughty and froward, but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender; those also that under colour of complaisance are malicious, envious, and revengeful, but Christ devoted himself to the service of those that used him not, and of those that abused him; tolled for others' ease, and impoverished his own, and we think they were hateful, that are hurtful to kings and provinces, and disturbers of the public peace; but Christ, on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country, and yet was hated. He testified indeed that their works were evil, with a design to make them good, but to hate him for that cause was to hate him without a cause. Secondly, Herein the scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without cause, for he had been serviceable to him with his harp, and with his sword: Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and to them a great benefactor. Thus was the Son of David, hated and hunted most unjustly. They that hated Christ, did not design therein to fulfill the scripture; but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye; and it confirms our faith in Christ as the Messiah, that even this was foretold concerning him, and, being foretold, was accomplished in him. And we must not think it strange or hard, if it have a further accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us, with this, that they are causeless, whereas the more God permits them the more we have the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easily borne.

3. In Christ the world hates God himself; this is twice said here; (v. 23.) "He that hateth me, though he thinks his hatred goes no further, yet really he hates my Father also." And again, v. 24. They have seen and hated both me and my Father. Note, (1.) There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature, and the beauty of his providence; they are enraged at his justice, as the devils that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly break his bands asunder. They who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, they see and hate him. (2.) Hatred of Christ will be construed and adjudged hatred of God, for he is in his person his Father's representative, the more like he is the Son of God, and his great agent and ambassador. God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father, and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easy to infer, that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, whatever they may cry up natural religion, are really taking up the cause of the devil, and are in effect devils, and they that ridicule the light of the Gospel would, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving malignant world know that their enmity to the gospel of Christ, will be the doing open in the presence of God, the blessed God himself; and let all that suffer for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this; if God himself be hated in them, and struck at through them, they need not be either ashamed of their cause, or afraid of the issue.

26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Christ having spoken of the great opposition which his gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they and it would be run down by that violent torrent, he here intimates to all those that were well-wishers to his cause and interest, what effectual provision was made for the supporting it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit, (v. 26.) and the subordinate testimony of the apostles; (v. 27.) and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

1. It is here promised that the blessed Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it should meet with. Christ, when he was reviled, committed his injured cause to his Father, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter came and pleaded it powerfully, and curtailed it triumphantly. "When the Comforter or Advocate is come, which proceedeth from the Father, and whom I will send to supply the want of my bodily presence, he shall testify of me against those that hate me without cause." We have more in this verse concerning the Holy Ghost, than in any one verse beside in the Bible; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with him, as far as he is revealed.

1. Here is an account of him in his essence, or subsistence rather. He is the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father. Here, (1.) He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a spirit, and proper title of the Spirit of truth, a title fully given him and confirmed to him by that he is put in the place of the apostles. (2.) As a divine person, that proceedeth from the Father, by outgoings that were of old from everlasting. The Spirit or breath of man, called the breath of life, proceeds from the man, and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength to blow out what he would extinguish, and blow up what he would ex- er. Thus the blessed Spirit is the emanation of divine light, and the energy of divine power. The rays of the sun, by which it dispenses and diffuses its light, heat, and influence, proceed from the sun, and yet are one with it. The Viene Creed says, the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son, for he is called the Spirit of the Son, Gal. 4. 6. and the Son is here said to send him. The Greek church of Rome will have him with his beginning in testing divine light, and the energy of divine power.

2. In his mission. (1.) He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, graces, and powers, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the [lig]uus— he that should come; now the blessed Spirit is so. (2.) I will send him to you from the Father. He had said, (ch. 14. 16.) I will pray the Father, and he shall send the Comforter; that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of his dominion within
the veil. The Spirit was sent, [1.] By Christ as Mediator, now ascended on high to give gifts unto men, and all power being given to him. [2.] It is in the power of the Father in heaven, not the Spirit of the house." (The Spirit was given in a cloudy, frowen, Acts 2, 2,) "but according to my Father's will and appointment, and with his concurring power and authority." [3.] To the apostles, to instruct them in their preaching, enable them for working, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christ and them in the ministry; to them and their seed, and their seed's seed, according to that promise, Isa. 59. 21.

3. In his office and operations, which are two: [1.] One implied in the title given to him, he is the Comforter, or Advocate. An advocate for Christ, to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity, a comforter to the saints against the world's hatred.

(2.) Another expressed; He shall testify of me. He is not only an advocate, but a witness for Jesus Christ; he is one of the three that bear record in heaven, and the first of the three that bear witness on earth, 1 John 5. 7, 8. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; he indited the scriptures which are the standing witnesses that testify of Christ, ch. 3. 19. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for he qualifies ministers, and the power of Christianity too, for he sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

11. It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honour of being Christ's witnesses; (ver. 77.) And ye also shall bear witness of me, being competent witnesses, for ye have been with me from the beginning of my ministry. Observe here,

1. That the apostles were appointed to be witnesses for Christ in the world. When he had said, The Spirit shall testify, he adds, And you also shall bear witness. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to engage and encourage our's. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people attend to it; for the Spirit of grace witnesses and works by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses that were called in the famous trial between Christ and the prince of this world, whi h issued in the ejection of the intruder. This speaks, (1.) The work cut out for them; they were to attest the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown and dignity. Though Christ's disciples fled when they should have been witnesses for him upon his trials before the High-Priest and Pilate, yet after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ against the accusations it was leveled with. The truth of the christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of whom all the apostles were eye witnesses and chosen witnesses, (Acts 10. 41,) and they bore their testimony accordingly, Acts 3. 13. - 3. 31. Christ's ministers are his witnesses. (2.) The honour put upon them hereby—that they should be workers together with God; "The Spirit shall testify of me, and you also, under the conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit, (who will preserve you from mistaking in that which you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by revelation,) shall bear witness." This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honoured them, and would own them.

2. That they were qualified to be so; Ye have been with me from the beginning. They not only heard his public sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He went about doing good, and while others saw his wonderful and ministerial powers, they did not speak for himself, but what they had, he had by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the acquaintance of him that was the wise and true record of all things.

12. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2. They shall put you out of the synagogue: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he told them the worst of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had bid them in the chapter before to expect the world's hatred, where in these verses of them all. They had had likewise opportunity of observing the unsatisfied purity of his conversation, and could witness to them that they never saw in him, or heard from him, anything that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note, (1.) We have great reason to receive the record with the apostles of Christ's words; they did not speak for himself, but what they had, they had by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the acquaintance of him that was the wise and true record of all things. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach them. Those speak best of the things of God, that speak experimentally. It is particularly an great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ: from the beginning, to understand all things from the very first, (Luke 1. 5.) to have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance, and constant converse with the gospel of Christ, will make a man like a good householder.

CHAP. XVI.

Among other glorious things God hath spoken of himself, this is one, I wound, and I heal. Dent. 32. 38. Christ's discourse in this chapter, which concludes and concludes his farewell sermon to his disciples, does so. Here are woundings of Christ, the means he used to administer the Spirit, and the great advantages of the Spirit on these woundings.

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Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he told them the worst of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had bid them in the chapter before to expect the world's hatred, where in these verses of them all. They had had likewise opportunity of observing the unsatisfied purity of his conversation, and could witness to them that they never saw in him, or heard from him, anything that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note, (1.) We have great reason to receive the record with the apostles of Christ's words; they did not speak for himself, but what they had, they had by the indwelling of the Spirit, and the acquaintance of him that was the wise and true record of all things. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach them. Those speak best of the things of God, that speak experimentally. It is particularly an great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ: from the beginning, to understand all things from the very first, (Luke 1. 5.) to have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance, and constant converse with the gospel of Christ, will make a man like a good householder.
back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort. It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called an hour of temptation.

Sure Lord Jesus, by giving us notice of trouble, assigned to take off the terror of it, that it might not be a surprise to us. Of all the adversities of our peace in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment does; but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and bring forewarned, are forearmed.—Psalmist, psalm. A mind that does not forethink what they should suffer: (v. 3.) "They have power to do it, shall put you out of their synagogues; and that is not the worst, they shall kill you." Ece duos gladiis—Behold two swords drawn against the followers of the Lord Jesus.

1. The sword of ecclesiastical censure; this is drawn against them by the Jews, for they were the only pretenders to church-power. They shall cast you out of their synagogues, as they shall make you excommunicate. (1.) "They shall cast you out of the particular synagogues ye were members of." At first, they scourged them in their synagogues as contemners of the law, (Matt. 10. 17.) and at length, cast them out as incorrigible. (2.) "They shall cast you out of the congregation of Israel in general, the nation of the Jews; shall drive you out of a house fortified, that shall put you into the condition of an outlaw, qui ejudi gurit libertum—to be knocked on the head, as another wolf; they will look upon you as Samaritans, as heathen men and publicans." Interdico tibi aqua ebjudig—"I forbid you the use of water and fire. And were it not for the penalties, forfeitures, and incapacities, incurred hereby, it would be no injury to be thus driven out of a house infected and falling dole. It is not, for we have been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been brained with an anathema, and many a child of God delivered to Satan.

2. The sword of civil power: "The time cometh, the hour is come; now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as heretics, they will kill you, and think the worse of you." (1.) You will find them really cruel: They will kill you. Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles (we are told) were all put to death, except John. Christ had said, (ch. 13. 27.) Ye shall hear witness, witnesses,—ye shall be martyrs, shall seal the truth with your blood, your hearts' blood. (2.) You will find them seemingly conscientious: they will think they do God service; they will seem to sacrifice to God, as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, Let the Lord be glorified, Isa. 66. 3. Note, [1.] It is possible for those that are real enemies to God's service, to pretend a mighty zeal for it. The devil's work has many a time been done in God's living; and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had, sits in the temple of God. Note, [2.] It is common to patronise an enmity to religion with a colour of duties to God, and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors. Paul verily thought he ought to do what he did against the name of Jesus. This does not at all lessen the sin committed, or the harm done. Villanous and villanous wills never be consacratory by putting on the name of God to them: but it doth greatly the sufferings of the persecuted, to die under the character of being enemies to God; but there will be a resurrection of names, as well as of bodys, at the great day.

III. He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity and rage against them; (v. 3.) "These things will they do unto you, not because you have done them any harm, but because they have not known the Father, nor me. Let this comfort you, that no one can occasion this against you but the worst of men. So

1. Many that pretend to know God, are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretend to do him service, think they knew him, but was it a wrong notion they had of him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, My God, we know thee, Hos. 8. 1, 2.

2. They that are ignorant of Christ, cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to be the children of God, until they know the first principles of religion; which knowledge, is a part of the discipline of Christianity. These are very ignorant indeed of God and Christ, that think it an acceptable piece of service to persecute good people. They that know Christ, know that he came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to save them; that he rules by the power of truth and love, not of fire and storm. Never was there such a persecuting church as that which makes ignorance the mother of devotion.

IV. He tells them why he gave them notice of this now, and why not sooner.

1. Why he told them of it now; (v. 4.) not to discourage them, or add to their present sorrow; nor did he tell them of their danger, that they might centre their thoughts to avoid it, but that they might centre their hope and expectation of God's power, that when the time shall come (and you may be sure it will come) you may remember that God will come to the aid of his worshippers, and give them help in their sufferings. It will be of use to us to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. (1.) That our belief of Christ's foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, (2.) That the trouble may be the less grievous, for we were told of it before, and we took up our profession in expectation of it, so that it ought not to be a surprise to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye to the fulfilling of the scripture.

2. Why he did not tell them of it sooner: "I spake not this to you from the beginning, when you and I came to be first acquainted, because I was with you." (1.) While he was with them, he bore the shock of the world's malice, and stood in the front of the battle, against him the powers of darkness levelled all their force, not against small or great, but only against him. The King of Israel, and therefore he did not need them to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share; but we do find that from the beginning he bid them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, (2.) It seems rather to be meant of the promise of another Comforter. This he had said little of to them at the beginning, because he was himself with them to instruct, guide, and comfort them, and then they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bride-chamber would not have so much need of a comforter till the bridegroom should be taken away.

V. He expresses a very affectionate concern for the present sadness of his disciples, upon occasion of what he had said to them; (v. 5, 6.) "Now I am to be no longer with you, but go my way to him that sent me, there I must be subject to the same fatigue; and mine of you asketh me with any courage, Whither goest thou? But, instead of inquiring after that which would comfort you, you are gone that which leans melancholy, and sorrow has filled your heart."

1. He had told them that he was about to leave them; Now I go my way. He was not driven away by force, but voluntarily departed; his life was not extorted from him, but deposited by him. He went to him that sent him, to give an account of his mission. Thus, when we depart out of this world, we go to him that sent us into it, to give an account of his mission.
ing we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day.

2. He had told them what hard things they must suffer when he was gone, and that they must not expect such an easy quiet life as they had had. Now, if these were the legacies he had to leave to them, who had left all for him, they would be tempted to think that he had bargained for it, and were, for the present, in a constellation about it, in which their Master sympathizes with them, yet blames them. (1.) That they were careless of the means of comfort, and did not stir up themselves to seek it; None of you asks me, Whither goest thou? Peter had started that question, (ch. 13. 36.) and Thomas had seconded it, (ch. 14. 5.) but they did not pursue it, they did not take the answer, they were in the dark concerning it, and did not enquire further, nor seek for fuller satisfaction; they did not continue seeking, continue knocking. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how condescending to the weak and ignorant! Many a teacher will not endure that the learner should ask the same question twice; if he cannot tell him the thing concerning which our Lord Jesus knows how to deal with babies, that must be taught with precept upon precept. If the disciples here would have pushed on that enquiry, they would have found that his going away was for his advancement, and therefore his departure from them should not inordinately trouble them, (for why should they be against his departure?) and for their advantage; and therefore their sufferings for the time should not inordinately trouble them; for a sight of Jesus at the right hand of God, would be an effectual support to them, as it was to Stephen. Note, A humble believing inquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of Providence, would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, and bear the less, because of them; it will silence us to ask, Whence come they? but will abundantly satisfy us to ask, Whither go they? for we know they work for good, Rom. 8. 28.

(2.) That they were too intent, and pored too much, upon the occasions of their grief; Sorrow has filled their hearts. Christ had said enough to fill them with joy; (ch. 15. 11.) but, by looking at that only which made against them, and overlooking that which made for them, they were so full of sorrow, that there was no room left for joy. Note, To see the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians, to dwell only upon the dark side of the cloud; to meditate nothing but terror, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples’ hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operation of the cords that Christ administered, was, too great an affection to this present life. They were big with hopes of their Master’s external kingdom and glory; and that so they should shine and reign with him; and now, instead of that, to hear of nothing but bonds and afflictions, this filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God, than the love of the world; and the sorrow of the world, the consequence of it.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. 13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you. As it was usual with the Old Testament prophets, to comfort the church in its calamities with the promise of the Messiah, (Isa. 9. 6. Mic. 5. 5. Zech. 3. 8.) so, the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still. Three things we have here concerning the Comforter’s coming.

1. That Christ’s departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter’s coming, ver. 7. The disciples were so loath to believe this, that Christ saw cause to assert it with a more than ordinary solemnity: I tell you the truth. We may be confident of the truth of every thing that Christ has told us, he has no design to impose upon us. Now, to make them easy, he here tells them, 1. In general, It was expedient for them that he should go away. This was strange doctrine, but if it was true, it was comfortable enough, and showed them how absurd their sorrow was; It is expedient, not only for me, but for you also, that I go away; though they do not see it, and are loath to believe it, so it is. Note, (1.) These things often seem grievous to us, that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. (2.) Our Lord Jesus is always for that which is most expedient for us, whether we think so or no. He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choices, but graciously overrules them, and gives us the physic we are loath to take, because he knows it is good for us.

2. It was therefore expedient, because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit. Now observe, (1.) That Christ’s going was in order to the Comforter’s coming. [1.] This is expressed negatively; If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. And why not? First, So it was settled in the divine councils concerning this affair, and the measures must not be altered; shall the earth be forsaken for them? He that gives freely, may recue one gift before he bestows another; while we would fondly hold all. Secondly, It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come, that is constantly to reside. Thirdly, The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ’s purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. Fourthly, It was to be in answer to his intercession within the veil. See ch. 14. 16. Thus must this gift he both paid for, and prayed for, by each one of us; thus, that he may think us the greater value upon it. Fifthly, The great argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world, must be, Christ’s ascension into heaven, and his welcome there. See v. 10. and ch. 7. 39. Lastly, The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to date upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

[2.] It is expressed positively; If I depart, I will send him unto you; as though he had said, "I, just me-
to provide effectually that you shall be no losers by my departure." The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without its necessary supports. Though he departs, he sends the Comforter; nay, he departs on purpose to send him. Thus still, though one generation of men, and of his church, another is raised up in their room, for Christ will maintain his own cause.

(2.) That the presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much better, and more desirable, than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us that he should go away, to send the Comforter. His corporal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is everywhere, in all places at all times, wherever two or three are gathered in his name. Christ's bodily presence draws men's eyes; his Spirit draws their hearts; that was the letter which kills, his Spirit gives life.

II. That the coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to the carrying on of Christ's interest on earth; (v. 8.) And when he is come, (whence hence, that is sent, is willing of himself to come, and at his first coming he will do this;) he will reprove, or, as the margin reads it, he will convince the world, by your ministry, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. See here what the office of the Spirit is, and on what errand he is sent: (1.) To reprove. The Spirit, by the word and conscience, is a reprobatory minister of righteousness to his own children by them the Spirit reproves. (2.) To convince. It is a law term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been long canvassed in a clear and true light. He shall convince, that is, "He shall put to silence the adversaries of Christ and his cause, by discovering and demonstrating the falsehood and fallacy of that which they believe, and the truth and certainty of that which they have opposed." Note. Convincing work is the Spirit's work, he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart. The Spirit is called the Comforter, (v. 7.) and here it is said, He shall convince. One would think that were cold comfort, but it is the method by which the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort; first to open the wound, and then apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

2. See who they are, whom he is to reprove and convince; the world, both Jew and Gentile. (1.) He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction, for the apostles shall go into all the world, backed by the Spirit, to preach the gospel, fully proved. He shall sufficiently provide for the taking off and silencing of the objections and prejudices of the world against the gospel. Many an infidel was convinced of all, and judged of all, 1 Cor. 14. 24. (2.) He shall effectually and savingly convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to the faith of Christ. Now this is an encouragement to the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with.

[1.] That they should see good done, Satan's kingdom fall like lightning, which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon; and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. [2.] That this would be the foundation of assurance and joy, and the great source of their courage and success; for, when they suffer, these should contribute very much to this good work.

3. See what the Spirit shall convince the world of. (1.) Of sin, (v. 9.) because they believe not on me. [1.] The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin, not barely to tell them of it; in conviction there is more than that, it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they (ch. 8. 9.) that were convicted of their own consciences; Make them to know their abominations. The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we were not convinced against right reason, and our true interest; of the guilt of sin, that by it we are become obdios to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Spirit demonstrates the depravity and degeneracy of the whole world, that all the world is guilty before God.

[2.] The Spirit, in conviction, fastens especially upon that which is believed, the world believing in Christ. First, As the great reigning sin. There was, and is, a world of people, that believe not in Jesus Christ, and they are not sensible that it is their sin; natural conscience tells them that murder and theft are sins; but it is a supernatural work of the Spirit to convince them that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion, after it has given us its best discoveries and directions, lays and leaves us under this further obligation, that whatever divine revelation shall be made to us at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it divine, we accept it, and submit to it; which law they transgress, who, when God speaks to us by his Son, refuse him that speaketh; and therefore it is sin.

Secondly, The great ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature, no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that dams sinners; it is because of that, that they cannot enter into rest, that they cannot escape the wrath of God; it is a sin against the remedy.

Thirdly, As that which is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it. The Spirit shall convince the world, that the true reason why sin reigns among them, is, because they are not by faith united to Christ. Ne putamus vel guttam insan rectitudinis sine Christo nobis inesse—Let us not suppose that, apart from Christ, we have a drop of rectitude. Calv.

(2.) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, (v. 10.) We may understand this.

[1.] Of Christ's personal righteousness. He shall convince the world, that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous, (1 John 2. 1.) as the centurion owned, (Luke 23. 47.) Certainly this was a righteous man. His enemies put him under the worst of characters, and multitudes were not, or would not, be convinced but that he was a bad man, which strengthened their prejudices against his being the Christ, but he is justified by the Spirit, (1 Tim. 3. 16.) he is proved to be a righteous man, and not a deceiver; and then the point is in effect gained; for he is either the great Redeemer, or a great cheat; but a cheat we are sure he is not.

Now by what medium or argument will the Spirit convince men of the sincerity of our Lord Jesus? Why, by his very presence, he will contribute something toward the removal of their prejudices; they shall see him no more, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, which made them slight him. Moses was more respected after his removal than before. But, Secondly, His going to the Father would be a full conviction of it. The coming of the Spirit, according to the promise, was to prove his Father's exaltation to God's right hand. (Acts 2. 33.) and that was a demonstration of his righteousness; for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand.

[2.] Of Christ's righteousness, communicated to us for our justification and salvation; that everlasting righteousness, which Messiah was to bring in, Dan. 9. 24. Now, First, The Spirit shall convince men of this righ-
trousnesses; having by convictions of sin showed them their need of a righteousness, lest that drive them to despair, he will shew them where it is to be had, and how they may, upon their believing, be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness, that went about to establish their own; 'namely, and the Spirit will do it.

Secondly, Christ's second argument proper to convince men of this righteousness; I go to the Father, and, as an evidence of my welcome with him, you shall see me no more. If Christ had left any part of his undertaking unfinished, he had been sent back again; but now we are sure he is at the right hand of God, we are sure of being justified therein.

(3.) Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged, v. 11. Observe here,
[1.] The devil, the prince of this world, was judged; was discovered to be a great deceiver and destroyer; and as such, judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done. He was cast out of the Gentile world, when his oracles were silenced, and his altars deserted; cast out of the bodies of many. Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the gospel of Christ; he fell as lightning from heaven.

[2.] This is a good argument wherewith the Spirit convinces the world of judgment, that is, First, Of inherent holiness and sanctification, Matt. 12. 18. By the power of his Spirit, he proves to men's consciences that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm and dispossession him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. Secondly, Of a new and better dispensation of things. He shall show that Christ's errand into the world, was to set things right in it, and to introduce times of reformation and regeneration; and he proves it by this, that the prince of this world, and the power of darkness, is judged and expelled. All will be well when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. Thirdly, Of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus. He shall convince the world that all judgement is committed to him, and that he is the Lord of all; which is evidently this, that he has judged the prince of this world, has broken the serpent's head, destroyed him that has the power of death, and spoiled principalities and powers. If Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before him.

Fourthly, Of the final day of judgment; all the obstinate enemies of Christ's gospel and kingdom shall certainly be reckoned with at last, for the devil, their ringleader, is judged.

Thirdly, That the coming of the Spirit would be of unspokable advantage to the churches themselves; the Spirit has been to do, not only on the church of Christ, to convince and humble them, but upon his servants and agents, to instruct and comfort them, and therefore it was expedient for them that he should go away.

1. He intimates to them the tender sense he had of their present weakness; (v. 12.) I have yet many things to say unto you, (not which should have been said, as v. 10, 23.) but the world knoweth them not, he cannot hear them now. See what a teacher Christ is! (1.) None like him for copiousness; when he has said much, he hath still many things more to say; treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. (2.) None like him for compassion; he would have told them more of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, particularly of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not hear it, he would not have given them any satisfaction. When, after his resurrec
tion, they spake to him of restoring the kingdom to Israel, he referred them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, by which they should receive power to bear those discoveries which were so contrary to the notions they had received, that they could not bear them now.

2. He assures them of sufficient assistance, by the pouring out of the Spirit. They were now conscious to themselves of great dulness, and many mistakes; and what shall they do now their Master is leaving them? "But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, you will be easy, and all will be well." Well indeed! for he shall undertake to guide the apostles, and glorify Christ.

(1.) To guide the apostles; he will take care,
[1.] That they do not miss their way. He will guide you, as the camp of Israel was guided through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire. The Spirit guided their tongues in speaking, and their pens in writing, to secure them from mistakes. The Spirit is given us to be our guide, (Rom. 8. 14.) not only to shew us the way, but to go along with us, by his continued aids and influences.

[2.] That they not come short of their end; He will guide them into all truth, as the skillful pilot guides the ship into the port it is bound for. To be led into a truth, is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be powerfully and strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish, and savour, and power of it in our hearts; it proves a gradual discovery of truth shining more and more; "He shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy, to those that are more difficult." But how into all truth? The meaning is,

First, Into the whole truth relating to their embassy; whatever was needful or useful for them to know, in order to the due discharge of their office, they should be fully instructed in; what truths they were to teach others, the Spirit would teach them, would give them the understanding of, and enable them both to explain and to defend.

Secondly, Into nothing but the truth; All that he shall guide you into, shall be truth; (1 John 2. 27.) the accompanying is truth.

In the following words he proves these three:

1. The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but he shall shew you things which are to come; (v. 13.) and the fruit of these and of the Spirit shall be the mind of the Father, that, and that only, shall he speak." This intimates, (1.) That the testimony of the Spirit, in the word and by the apostles, is what we may rely upon. The Spirit knows and searches all things, even the deep things of God, and the apostles received that Spirit; (1 Cor. 12. 10.) so that we may venture our souls upon the Spirit's word. (2.) That the testimony of the Spirit always concurs with the word of Christ, for he does not speak of himself, has no separate interest or intention of his own, but, as in essence, so in records, he is one with the Father and the Son, 1 John 5. 7. Men's word and spirit often disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal spirit never do.

2. He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is not of the truth, so that you can never hear him say or do anything that you cannot hear him now. See what a teacher Christ is! (1.) None like him for copiousness; when he has said much, he hath still many things more to say; treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. (2.) None like him for compassion; he would have told them more of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, particularly of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not hear it, he would not have given
the Spirit does now shew us things to come in this world, as he did to the apostles; let it suffice, that the Spirit in the word hath shewed us things to come in the other world, which are our chief concern.

(2.) The Spirit undertook to glorify Christ, v. 14, 15.

[1.] Even the sending of the Spirit was the glorifying of Christ. God the Father glorified him in heaven, and the Spirit glorified him on earth. It was the honour of the Redeemer, that the Spirit was both sent in his name, and sent on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching and all the writing of the apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ.

[2.] The Spirit glorified Christ, by leading his followers into the truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. 4. 21. He assured them,

First, That the Spirit should communicate the things of Christ to them; He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. As in essence he proceeded from the Son, so in influence and operation he derives from him. He shall take, and shall shew you.

All that the Spirit shows us, that is, applies to us, for our instruction and comfort, all that he gives us for our strength and quickening, and all he secures and seals to us, did all belong to Christ, and was had and received from him. All was his, for he bought it, and paid dear for it, and therefore he had reason to call it his own; his, for he first received it; it was given him as the Head of the church, to be derived from him to all his members.

The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest, and pursue the same design; those therefore who pretend to the Spirit, and yet vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for he came to glorify Christ.

Secondly, That herein the things of God should be communicated to us; lest any should think that the receiving of this would not make them much the richer, he adds, All things that the Father has are mine. As God, all that self-existent light and self-sufficient happiness which the Father has, he has; as Mediator, all things are delivered to him of the Father; (Matt. 11. 27.) all that grace and truth which God designed to shew to us, he lodged in the hands of the Lord Jesus, Col. 1. 19. Spiritual blessings are properly those that are given by the Father to the Son for us, and the Son converts the grace of the Spirit to shew them to us. Some apply it to that which goes just before; He shall shew you things to come, and so it is explained by Rev. 11. 1. God gave it to Christ, and he signified it to John, who wrote what the Spirit said, Rev. 3. 1, 6.

16. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jesus, for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, here promises that he would visit them again.

1. Observe the intimation he gave them of the comfort he designed them, v. 16. Here he tells them,

That they should now shortly lose the sight of him. A little while, and ye shall not see me, and still desire to see me, shall not see me; and therefore if they had any good question to ask him, they must ask quickly, for he was now taking his leave of them.

Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days of the Son of man; but, perhaps, yet a little while and we shall not see them. They lost the sight of Christ, (1.) At his death, when he withdrew from this world, and never after shewed himself openly in it. The most that death does to our Christian friends, is, to take them out of our sight, not out of being, not out of bliss, not out of all relation to us, only out of sight, and then not out of mind. (2.) At his ascension, when he withdrew from them, (who, after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with him,) out of their sight; a cloud received him, and, though they looked up steadfastly after him, they saw him no more, Acts 1. 9, 10. 2 Kings 2. 12. See 2 Cor. 5. 16.

2. That yet they should speedily recover the sight of him; Again a little while, and ye shall see me, and therefore ye ought not to sorrow as those that have no hope; his farewell was not a final farewell, they should see him again. (1.) At his resurrection, soon after his death, when he shewed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours. See Hos. 6. 2. (2.) By the pouring out of the Spirit, soon after his ascension, which scattered the mists of ignorance and mistakes they were almost lost in, and gave them a much clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's gospel than they had yet had. The Spirit's coming was Christ's visit to his disciples, not a transient but a permanent one, and such a visit as abundantly repays the loss of his sight. (3.) At his second coming. They saw him again as they removed one by one to him at death, and they shall all see him together at the end of time, when he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him. It might be truly said of this, that it was but a little while, and they should see him; for it was near the end of days, to the days of eternity? 2 Pet. 3. 8, 9.

The reason given is, "Because I go to the Father, and therefore," [1.] I must leave you for a time, because my business calls me to the upper world, and you must be content to want me, for really my business is your's." [2.] "Therefore you shall see me again shortly, for the Father will not detain me to your prejudice. If I go upon your errand, you shall see me again as soon as my business is done, as soon as is convenient." It should seem, all this
refers rather to his going away at death, and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and his return at the end of time; for it was his death that was their grief, not his ascension, (Luke 24. 32.) and between his death and resurrection it was indeed a little while. And it may be read, not, yet a little while; (it is not in wager, as it is ch. 12. 33.) for this is a parallelism. I mean, namely, the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, for a little while ye shall see me, namely, the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends, Yet a little while, and we shall not see them, either they must leave us, or we leave them, but it is certain that we must part shortly, and yet not part for ever. But we must find out whom we hope to see with joy in the morning. 

II. The perplexity of the disciples upon the intimation given them; they were at a loss what to make of it: (v. 17, 18.) Some of them said, softly, among themselves, either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous to understand him. What is this that he saith to us? Though Christ had often spoken to his disciples of his departure, and of all that must happen to him, yet they were in the dark; though presently after presently, it is in vain, unless God give the understanding. Now see here, 1. The disciples' weakness, in that they could not understand so plain a saying which Christ had already given them a key to, having told them so often in plain terms that he should be killed, and the third day rise again; yet, say they, He cannot tell what he saith; for, (1.) Sorrow had filled the temple, and made them apt to receive the impressions of comfort. The darkness of ignorance and the obscurity of melancholy commonly increase and thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. (2.) The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them, that they could make no sense at all of those sayings of his, which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder that we complain of its difficulty; but when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter becomes easy. (3.) It should seem, that which puzzled them, was the little while. If he must go at last, yet they could not conceive how he should leave them quickly, when his stay hitherto had been so short, and so little while, comparatively. Thus it is hard for us to conceive how we ought to use our time, which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When we are told, Yet a little while, and we must go hence; Yet a little while, and we must give up our account; we know not how to digest it; for we always took the vision to be for a great while to come, Ezek. 12. 27.

2. Their willingness to be instructed. When they were at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they could not receive any account, and asked help of one another. By mutual converse about divine things we both borrow the light of others, and improve our own. Observe how exactly they repeat Christ's words. Though we cannot fully solve every difficulty we meet with in scripture, yet we must no therefore throw it by, but resolve what we cannot explain, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

III. The further explication of what Christ had said. 1. See here why Christ explained it; (v. 19.) because he knew they were desirous to ask him, and designed it. Note, The knots we cannot untie, we must bring to him who alone can give an understanding. Christ knew they were desirous to ask him, but were bashful and ashamed to ask. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires, though they be not as yet offered up, the graces that cannot be uttered, and even prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. Christ instructed those who he knew were desirous to ask him, though they did not ask. Before we call, he answers.

Another reason why Christ explained it, was, because he observed them contussaimg this matter among themselves. Why? Do ye inquire this among yourselves? Well, I will make it easy to you. This intimates to us who they are that Christ will teach: (1.) The humble that confess their ignorance, for so much their inquiry implied. (2.) The diligent, that use the means they have; Do ye inquire? You shall be taught. To him that hath, shall be given.

2. See here how he explained it; not by a nice and critical descent upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them; he had told them not of seeing him, and seeing him, and they did not apprehend that, and therefore he explained it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us; (v. 20.) Ye shall weep and lament, for my departure; but the world shall rejoice in it; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. But he says nothing of the little while, because he saw that perplexed them more than any thing; and it is no matter for our knowing the times and the seasons. Note, Believers have joy or sorrow, according as they have or have not a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence with them.

Christ says here, and v. 21, 22, of their sorrow and joy.

(1.) Is primarily to be understood of the present state and circumstances of the disciples, and so we have.

[1.] Their grief foretold; Ye shall weep and lament, and ye shall be sorrowful. The sufferings of Christ could not but be the sorrow of his disciples, they wept for him because they loved him; the pain of our friends is pain to ourselves; when they wept, it was for sorrow, Luke 22. 43. They wept for themselves, and their own loss, and the sad apprehensions they had of what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a grief to lose him for whom they had left their all, and from whom they expected so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples beforehand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

[2.] The world's rejoicing at the same time; But the world shall rejoice. That which is the grief of saints, is the joy of sinners. First, They that are strangers to Christ, will continue in their carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in their sorrows. It is nothing to them that pass by, Lam. 1. 12. Nay, Secondly, They that are enemies to Christ, will therefore rejoice, because they hope they have conquered him. Before his ascension, the chief priests had Christ upon the cross, we may suppose they made merry over him, as they that dwell on earth over the slain witnesses, Rev. 11. 10. Let it be no surprise to us if we see others triumphing, when we are trembling for the ark.

[3.] The return of joy to them in due time; But your sorrow shall be turned into joy. As the joy of the righteous is as the sunshine, so the sorrow of the just is but for a moment. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. His resurrection was life from the dead to them, and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into joy of such a nature as could not be damped and imibted by any sufferings of their own. They were sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; (2 Cor. 6. 10.) had sorrowful lives, and yet joyous hearts.

(2.) It is applicable to all the faithful followers of
The lamb, and describes the common case of christians. [1.] Their condition and disposition are both mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their temper: they that are acquainted with Christ, must, as he was, be acquainted with grief; they run a constant risk for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them; they mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves. [2.] The world at the same time, goes away with all the mirth; they laugh now, and spend their days so joyfully, that one would think they neither knew sorrow, nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are springing up in them. But the men who are not so fixed, nor have so large a share of them, and the favourites of heaven be such strangers to them. [3.] Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing. Gladness is shown for the upright in heart, that now in tears, and without doubt they shall shortly reap in joy. Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but turned into it; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs. This he illustrates by a similitude taken from a woman in travail, to whose sorrows he compares those of his disciples, for their encouragement; for it is the will of Christ that his people should be a comforted people. First, Here is the similitude orparable itself; (v. 21.) A woman, we know, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come, the hour which nature and providence have fixed, which she has expected, and cannot escape; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, provided she be safely delivered, and the child be, though a babe, (1 Chron. 4. 9.) yet not a burden, (Gen. 35. 18.) then she remembers no more the anguish, her groans and complaints are all over, and the after-pains are more easily borne, (Jer. 1. 14.) and the birth, if joy that is born into the world, is a joy, one of the human race, a child, be it a son or daughter, for the word speaks either. Observe, 1. The fruit of the curse, in the sorrow and pain of a woman in travail, according to the sentence, (Gen. 3. 16.) In sorrow shall they bring forth. These pains are extreme, the greatest griefs and pains of this world. — 21. 3. Jer. 4. 31.—6. 24.) and they are inevitable, 1 Thess. 5. 3. See what this world is; all its roses are surrounded with thorns; all the children of men are upon this account foolish children, that they are the heaviness of that bore them from the very first. This comes of sin. 2. The fruit of the blessing, in the joy that is for a child born into the world. If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, Be fruitful and multiply, parents could never have looked upon their children with any comfort; but what is the fruit of a blessing is matter of joy; the birth of a living child is, (1.) The parents' joy; it makes them very glad, Jer. 20. 15. Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and often prove the cause of much trouble and pain, yet it is natural to us to rejoice at their birth. Could we be sure that our children, like John, should be filled with the Holy Ghost, we might, indeed, like his parents, have joy and gladness in their birth, Luke 1. 14. 15. But when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but, as it is here expressed, they are born into the world, a world of snares, and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trepidation, lest it should prove better for them that they had never been born. (2.) This is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or remembered as water that pass away, Job 11. 16. Ave omne menimiae justus, Gen. 41. 51. Now this is very proper to set forth, [1.] The sorrows of Christ's disciples in this world; they are like travelling pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful product; they are in pain to be delivered, as the church is described, (Rev. 12. 2.) and the whole creation, Rom. 8. 22. [2.] Their joys after these sorrows, which will never now have for sure the blessedness described, Rev. 21. 4. When they are born into that blessed world, and reap the fruit of all their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when he saw of the travail of his soul abundantly to his satisfaction, Isa. 53. 11. Secondly, The application of the similitude; (v. 22.) Ye now therefore have sorrow, and are likely to have more, but I will see you again, and you me, and then all will be well. 1. Here again he tells them of their sorrow; Ye now therefore have sorrow; therefore, because I am leaving you, as is intimated in the antithesis, I will see you again. Note, Christ's withdrawals are just cause of grief to his disciples. If he hide his face, they cannot but be troubled. When the sun sets, the sunflower will hang the head. And Christ takes notice of those griefs, has a battle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners. 2. He, more largely than before, assures them of a return of joy, Ps. 30. 5, 11. He himself went through his own griefs, and bore our's, for the joy that was set before him; and he would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect. Three things recommend this comfort. (1.) The cause of it; "I will see you again. I will make you a kind and friendly visit, to inquire after you, and minister comfort to you." Note, [1.] Christ will graciously return to those that wait for him, though, for a small moment he has seemed to forsake them, Isa. 54. 7. Men, when they are preferred, will scarcely look upon their inferiors; but the exalted Jesus will visit his disciples. They shall not only see him in his glory, but he will see them in their meaness. [2.] Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples. When clouded evidences are cleared up, interrupted communion revived, then is the mouth filled with laughter. (2.) The cordialness of it; Your heart shall rejoice. Divine consolations put gladness into the heart. Isa. 51. 9, 11. The comfort is so sweet and not flashy, secret, and that which a stranger does not intermeddle with; it is sweet, and gives a good man satisfaction in himself; it is sure, and not easily broken in upon. Christ's disciples should heartily rejoice in his returns, sincerely and greatly. (3.) The continuance of it; Your joy no man taketh from you. Men will attempt to take their joy from them, they would if they could; but they shall not prevail. Some understand it of the eternal joy of them that are glorified; they that are entered into the joy of their Lord, shall go no more out. Our joys on earth we are liable to be robbed of by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting. I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of those that are sanctified, particularly the apostles and their successors, the most blessed of all, who, says Paul, in the name of the rest, who always came to victory in triumph, 2 Cor. 2. 14. A malicious world would have taken it from them; if bonds and banishments, tortures and deaths, would have taken it from them, they had lost it; but when they took every thing else from them, they could not take this; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. They could not rob them of their joy, because he could not separate them from the love of Christ, could not separate them from their God, nor of their treasure in heaven. 29. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my
name, he will give it you. 21. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you that I shall pray the Father for you: 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An answer to their askings is here promised, for their further comfort. Now there are two ways of asking, asking by way of inquiry, that is the asking of the ignorant; and asking by way of request, and that is the asking of the indigent. Christ here speaks of both.

In the way of inquiry, they should not need to ask; (v. 25.) "In that day ye shall ask me nothing; as ye have asked of the Father, even so shall ye ask of the Father." (John 16:26, 27.) ye shall ask no questions; "ye shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel mysteries, by the opening of your understandings, that ye shall not need to inquire," (as ch. 8. 11. They shall not teach.) "ye shall have more knowledge on a sudden than hitherto ye have had by diligent attendance." They had asked some ignorant questions, (as ch. 8. 9.) and the Father answered them in his preface to Peter; (as Matt. 18. 1.) some distrustful ones, (as Matt. 18. 27.) some impertinent ones, (as ch. 21. 21.) some curious ones, (as Acts 1. 6.) but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the story of the apostles Acts we seldom find them asking questions, as David, Shall I do this? Or, Shall I go thither? For they were constantly under a divine guidance. In that weighty case of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, Peter went, nothing doubting, Acts 10. 20. Asking questions supposes us at a loss, or at least at a stand, and the best of us have need to ask questions; but we should aim at such a full assurance of understanding, that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

Now in this he gives a reason, (v. 25.) which plainly refers to this promise, that they should not need to ask questions; "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs, in such a way as you have thought not so plain and intelligible as you could have wished, but the time cometh, when I shall shew you plainly, as plainly as you can desire, of the Father, so that you shall not need to ask questions." 1. The great thing Christ would lead them into, was the knowledge of God; 9. I will shew you the Father, and bring him you acquainted with him. This is that which Christ designs to give, and which all true christians desire to have. When Christ would speak the greatest favour intended for his disciples, he tells them that he would shew them plainly the Father; for what is the happiness of heaven, but immediately and everlasting to see God? To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the greatest and highest of all privileges; to be acquainted with his presence, to have the contemplation of; and to know him as our Father, is the greatest happiness for the will and affections to please themselves with the choice and enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had hitherto spoken to them in proverbs, which are wise sayings, and instructive, but figurative, and resting in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and many openly to the disciples; but, (1.) Considering their dulness, and unaptness to receive what he said to them, he might be said to speak in proverbs; what he said to them was as a book sealed, Isa. 29. 11. (2.) Comparing the discoveries he had made to them, in what he had spoken to their ears, with what he would make to them, when he would put his Spirit into their hearts; all hitherto had been but proverbs. It would be a pleasing surprise, then, to themselves, and they would think themselves in a new world, when they would reflect upon all their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear and distinct knowledge of divine things. The ministration of the letter was nothing to that of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 6—11. (3.) Confining it to what he had said of the Father, and the counsels of the Father, when he knew himself to be that Spirit, as was shortly to be revealed, Col. 2. 2. 3. He would speak to them plainly, with freedom, of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to a much greater knowledge of divine things than they had before, as appears by the utterance the Spirit gave them, Acts 2. 4. These things, which they had a very confused idea of in the days of Moses, and the mystery of; and what the Spirit showed them, Christ is here said to shew them, for as the Father speaketh by his Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will have its full accomplishment in heaven, where we shall see the Father as he is, face to face, not as we do now, through a glass darkly; (1 Cor. 13. 12.) which is matter of comfort to us under the cloud of present darkness, by reason of which we cannot order our speech, but that we must speak now in these dark days; but here, we have many questions to ask concerning the invisible God and the invisible world; but in that day we shall see all things clearly, and ask no more questions.

11. He promises that by way of request, they should ask nothing in vain. It is taken for granted that all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer. He had taught them by his precepts and example, that that must be their support and comfort when he had left them; their instruction, direction, strength, and success, must be fetched in by prayer.

Now, 1. Here is an express promise of a grant, v. 23. The preface to this promise is such as makes it inviolably sure, and leaves no room to question it; Verily, verily, I say unto you, I pray the Father, and he shall give you. But if you know it to be rich, and sweet; the golden sceptre is here held out to us, with this word, What is thy petition, and it shall be granted? For he says, Whatsoever we shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. We had it before, ch. 14. 13. What would we more? The promise is as express as we can desire.

(1.) We are here taught how to seek: we must ask the Father in Christ's name; we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to him; and to Christ as Mediator, and come as clients. Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual wants and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only. It includes also humility of address to him, with a believing confidence in him, as a Fatherable and ready to help us. Asking in Christ's name includes an acknowledging of our own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, and a complacency in the method God has taken of keeping up a correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependence upon Christ as the Lord our righteousness.

(2.) We are here told how we shall speed; He will give it you. What more can we wish for than to have what we want, no matter how we get it. This, then, was his promise, He will give it you, from procedeth every good and perfect gift. What Christ purchased by the merit
of his death, he needed not for himself, but intended it for, and consigned it to, his faithful followers; and having given a valuable consideration for it, which was accepted in full, by this promise he draws a bill as it were upon the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and in his name to ask for that which is purchased and promised, as one, and to give the true intent of the new covenant; Christ had promised them great illumination by the Spirit, but they must pray for it, and did so, Acts 1. 14. God will for this be inquired of. He had promised them perfection hereafter, but what shall they do in the meantime? They must continue praying. Perfect fruition is reserved for the land of our rest; asking and receiving are the comfort of the land of our pilgrimage.

2. Here is an invitation to them to petition. It is thought sufficient if great men permit addresses, but Christ calls upon us to petition, v. 24.

(1.) He looks back upon their practice hitherto: Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. That refers either, [1.] To the matter of their prayers; "Ye have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to which you might not have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out." See what a generous benefactor our Lord Jesus is, above all benefactors; he gives liberally, and is so far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts, that he rather upbraids us with the stubbornness and straitness of our requests; "Ye have asked nothing in comparison of what you would, were it but only what you have promised to give." We are bid to open our mouth wide. Or, [2.] To the name in which they prayed. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice, in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted, nor entered upon his intercession for us, the immense wherewith was to perfume all our devotions, and so enable us to pray in his name. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed diseases, in the name of Christ, as a king and a prophet, but they could not as yet distinctly pray in his name as a priest.

(2.) He looks forward to their practice for the future: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Jerusalem, as it was clipt and contorted, was to be a place of joy, and joy was to be their portion and happiness in it; and, as that which they needed and he had promised. [2.] He assures them that they shall receive. What we ask from a principle of grace, God will graciously give; Ye shall receive it. There is something more in that than in the promise, that he will give it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the comfort and benefit of it, a heart to eat of it, Eph. 6. 2. [3.] That hereby their joy should be full.

Which speaks, First, The blessed effect of the prayer of faith; it helps to fill up the joy of faith. Would we have our joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be much in prayer. When we are bid to rejoice evermore, it follows immediately, Pray without ceasing. See how high we are to aim in prayer—not only at peace, but joy, a fullness of joy. Here are the consequences. The blessed effects of the answer of peace; "Ask, and ye shall receive that which will fill your joy." Christ's gifts, through Christ, fill the treasures of the soul, they fill its joys, Prov. 8. 21. "Ask for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and ye shall receive it; and whereas other knowledge increases sorrow, (Ecc. 1. 18.) the knowledge he gives will increase, will fill, your joy." A hope here, or he makes this hope, that they might hope to speed, (v. 26, 27.) which are summed up in short by the apostle, (1 John 2. 1.) We have an advocate with the Father.

(1.) We have an Advocate; as to that, Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon it, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter: "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you, should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort, that I have settled a correspondence between you and God, I have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a new and living way into the holiest." He speaks as if they needed not any further favours, when he had prevailed for the gift of the Holy Ghost to make intercession within them, as a Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father; as if they had no further need of him to pray for them now; but we shall find that he does more for us than he saith he will. Christ's promises often rise higher than the extent of their promises, but Christ's go beyond them.

(2.) We have to do with a Father, which is so great an encouragement, that it does in a manner supersede the other; "For the Father himself loveth you, sent his son, he is a friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended." Note, The disciples of Christ are the beloved of God himself. Christ not only turned away God's wrath from us, and brought us into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, but purchased his favour for us, and brought us into a covenant of friendship. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon this, "The Father himself loveth you; who is perfectly happy in the enjoyment of himself, whose self-love is both his infinite rectitude, and his infinite blessedness; yet he is pleased to love you." Note, The Father himself loveth you, and not only you, but your officers of your church, and all your members, even you, and your faults, and whose wrath you have incurred, and with whom you need an advocate, he himself now loves you.

Observe, [1.] Why the Father loved the disciples of Christ; because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God, that is, because ye are my disciples indeed: not as if the love began with them, but when by his grace he has brought us in us a love to him, he is well pleased with the work of his own hands. See here, First, What is the character of Christ's disciples; they love him, because they believe he came out from God, is the only-begotten of the Father, and his high-commissioner to the world. Note, Faith in Christ works by love to him, Gal. 5. 6. If we believe him to be the Son of God, we must love him, and ask him to be an Advocate for us; and if we believe him to be our Saviour, we cannot but love him as the most kind to us. Observe with what respect Christ is pleased to speak of his disciples' love to him, and how kindly he took it; he speaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's favour; "Ye have loved me, and believed in me, when the world has hated and rejected me, and we shall be distinguished, who have thus distinguished yourselves." Secondly, See what advantage Christ's faithful disciples have, the Father loves them, and that because they love Christ; so well pleased is he in him, that he is well pleased with all his friends.

[2.] What encouragement this gave them in prayer. They need not fear speeding when they came to him for his intercession with the Father. First, This cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath and fury; no, the matter is not so, the Father's love and good-will appointed Christ to be the Mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy in giving him not a common grace, but the grace of Christ and his Father, that we may be able to confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers, that love Christ, ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as children to a loving Father.

23. I came forth from the Father, and
am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly. 30. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with:

1. An assurance that, though he was leaving the world, he was returning to his Father, from whom he had come. 

2. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and his return to him: (v. 28.) I came forth from the Father, and am come, as you see, into the world. Again, I leave the world, as you will see shortly, and go to the Father. This is the conclusion of the whole matter. There was nothing he had more incalculately upon them, than these two things—whence he came, and whither he went: the Alpha and Omega of the mystery of godliness. (1 Tim. 3. 16.) that the Redeemer, in his entrance, was God manifest in the flesh, and, in his exit, was received up into glory. These two great truths are here, (1.) Contracted, and put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to young beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a little compass in creeds and catechisms, have, like the beams of the sun concentrated in a burning-glass, conveyed divine light and heat with a wonderful power. Such we have, Job 28. 28. Eccl. 12. 13. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Tit. 2. 11. 12. 1 John 5. 11. much in a little. (2.) Compared, and set the one over against the other. There is an admirable harmony in divine truths; they both corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so: Christ had commenced his disciples for believing that he came forth from God; (v. 28.) and from thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God again, which therefore should not seem to them either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and own would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

If we ask concerning the Redeemer, whence he came, and whither he went, we here told, (v. 28.) I came forth from the Father, who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself. Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for this cottage; wonderful condescension!

2. That, when he had done his work on earth, he went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to leave the world, to return to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

2. The disciples' satisfaction in this declaration; (v. 29. 30.) Lo, now speakest thou plainly. It should seem, this one word of Christ did them more good than all the rest, though he had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word, he pleases; perhaps a word that has been spoken once, nevertheless, and not perceived, yet, being often repeated, takes hold at last.

Two things they improved in by this saying:—

1. In faith: (v. 29.) Do ye now believe? Observe,

[1.] What was the matter of their faith: They b(have, what is that which you speak, to be the truth? Do you believe these things which I so often told you? 2.3. That he came forth from God. He had said, (v. 27.) that they did believe this; "Lord," (say they,) "we do believe it, and we have come to believe it, and we know that we believe it; and have the comfort of it." [2.] What was the motive of their faith—his condescension. This proved him a teacher come from God, and more than a prophet, that he knew all things, which they were convinced of by this, that he disclosed these things which were hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note, Those know Christ best, that know him by experience; that can say of his power, It works in me; of his love, He loved me. And this proves Christ not only to have a divine mission, but to be a divine person; that he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, therefore the essential eternal Word, Heb. 4. 12. 13. He has made all the churches to know that he searches the reins and the heart, Rev. 2. 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, as it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria, that Christ told all things that ever she did, (ch. 1. 29.) and upon Nathanael, that Christ saw him under the fig-tree, ch. 1. 48. 49. These words, and needest not that any man should ask thee, may speak either, First, Christ's aptness to teach. He prevents us with his instructions, and is communicative of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in him, and needs not to be imported. Or, Secondly, His ability to teach: "Thou needest not, as other teachers, to have the learners' doubts told thee, for thou knowest, without being told, what they stumble at. The best of teachers can only answer what is asked; but he not only, when thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, Mark 9. 52. Thus he can have compassion, Heb. 5. 2.

3. The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence, that they now understood him, v. 31. 32. Observing how they triumphed in their attainments, he said, "Do we now believe? Do we now look upon ourselves as advanced and converted disciples, who have made it no more to be a bolder? Alas! ye know not your own weakness; ye will very shortly be scattered every man to his own, &c." Here we have,

[1.] A question designed to put them upon consideration: Do we now believe? [1.] If now, why not sooner? Have ye not heard the same things many a time before? They who after many in
structions and invitations are at last persuaded to believe, have reason to be ashamed that they stood it out so long. [2.7] "If now, why not even when an hour of temptation comes, where will your faith be then?" As far as there is inconstancy in our faith, there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, "Do we indeed believe?"

(2.8) A prediction of their fall; that, how confident soever they were of their own stability, in a little time they would all desert him; which was fulfilled that very night, when Jesus was seized by a party of the guards, "All his disciples forsook him and fled," Matt. 26. 56. They were scattered, [1.] From one another; they shifted every one for his own safety without any care or concern for each other. Troublesome times are times of scattering to christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day the flock of Christ is dispersed, Ezek. 34. 12. So Christ, as a society, is not visible. [2.] Scattered from him; ye shall leave me alone. They should have been witnesses for him upon his trial, should have ministered to him in his sufferings; if they could have given him no comfort, they might have done him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with him in his sufferings. John 11. 16. Ye shall have a good comfort when it is distress led by its enemies, is disturbed by its friends. The disciples had continued with Christ in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon him now; those that are tried, do not always prove true. If we at any time find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to him.

Thirdly, He spoke of it as thing very near. The hour was already come, in a manner, when they would be as shy of him as ever they had been fond of him. Note, A little time may produce great changes, both concerning us and in us.

(3.) An assurance of his own stability notwithstanding; yet I am not alone. He would not be otherwise known among his people, if it were any real damage to him; for in all our affections he should be sure of his Father's presence, which was instar omnium—every thing; The Father is with me. We may consider this,

[1.] As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was so with him in his sufferings as he never was before, and no one else was; the divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it, and put an invincible comfort and an inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole undertaking, (Ps. 89. 21, &c.) and to preserve him; (Isa. 49. 8.) this emboldened him, Isa. 36. 7. This, when he complained of his Father's deserting him, yet he called him My God, and probably it was so well assured of his favourable presence with him as to commit his Spirit into his hand. This he had comforted himself with all along; (ch. 8. 29.) He that sent me, is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, and especially now at last. This assists our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction; for though the Father was well pleased in him, for he went along with him in his undertaking from first to last.

[2.] As a privilege common to all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ; when they are alone, they are not alone, but the Father is with them. First, When solitude is their choice, when they are alone, as Isaac in the field, Nathaniel under the fig-tree, or any other Christian may, upon a day of mourning, the Father is with them. They that converse with God in solitude, are never less alone than when alone. A good God and a good heart are good company at any time. Secondly, When solitude is their affliction, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so; their company, like Job's, is made desolate; yet they are as much alone as they are thought to be, the Father is with them, as he was with Joseph in his bonds, and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his Father pities, as one whom his mother comforts. And while we have God's favourable presence with us, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. Non Deo tribuimus justum hominem nisi salus sine nobis sufficiat—We do not render due honour to God, unless we deem him alone sufficient. Calvin.

II. He comforts them with a promise of peace in him, by virtue of his victory over the world, whatever troubles they might meet with in it; (v. 33.) "These things I have spoken, that in me ye might have peace; and if ye have it not in me, ye will have it not in the world." A world of trouble and corruption, the whole world is full of trouble; even multitude; ye must expect no other, and yet may cheer up yourselves, for I have overcome the world.

Observe, 1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples; that in him they might have peace. He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of that doctrine which they were shortly to be made masters of by the pouring out of the Spirit, but only to satisfy them for the present, that his departure from them was really for the best. Or, we may take it more generally; Christ had said all this to them, that by enjoying him they might have the most enjoyment of themselves. Note, (1.) It is the will of Christ, that his disciples should have peace within, whatever their troubles without. There is the only true peace, and in him alone believers have it, for this man shall be the peace, Nic. 5. 5. Through him we have peace with God, and in him we have peace in our own minds. (3.) The word of Christ aims at this, that in him we may have peace. Peace is the fruit of the love of his lifas, Isai. 9. 7.

The entertainment they were likely to meet with in the world; "You shall not have outward peace, never expect it;" though they were sent to proclaim peace on earth, and good-will toward men,
they must expect trouble on earth, and ill-will from men. Note, It has been the lot of Christ's disciples to have to endure much in the world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are not better. Men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven; and so between both they shall have tribulation.

3. The encouragement Christ gives them with reference hereunto: But be of good cheer, &c. This is a comfort, but not a comfort of warrant; have a good heart on it, all shall be well. Note, In the midst of the tribulations of this world, it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God, whatever is pressing, and their hope in Christ, whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed, in compliance with the temper of the climate, and yet always rejoycing, always cheerful, (2 Cor. 6. 10.) even in tribulation, Rom. 5. 3.

4. The ground of that encouragement: I have overcame the world. Christ's victory is a christian's triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him, and cast him out; and still treads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world, by the conversion of many to the faith and grace of Christ, and by his church, making a kingdom of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the gospel to all the world, Be of good cheer, says he, I have overcame the world as far as I have gone, and so shall you; though you have tribulation in the world, yet you shall gain your point, and captivate the world. Rev. 6. 2. He overcame the wicked things of the world by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despising it and the shame of it; and he overcame the good things of it by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye, its pleasures no charm. Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was, and we ought to be encouraged by it; (1.) Because Christ has overcame the world before us, so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, (2.) He has conquered it for us, as the Captains of our salvation; we are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is crucified to us, which speaks it completely conquered and put into our possession; all is yours, even the world. Christ having overcame the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory, and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, 1 John 5. 4. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

CHAP. XVIII.

This chapter is a prayer, it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer, which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself, for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin, but this was procured for him by his Mediator, and is a sample of his intercession, and yet is not to be used both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe, 1. The circumstances of the prayer, v. 1 - 11. The particular prayers for himself, v. 11. - 26. The particular prayers for others, and that out of infinite love, for such as are his. And there see, 1. (1.) The general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them, v. 6. - 10. (2.) The particular petitions he puts up for them, v. 11. - 26. (3.) The reason he gives for these prayers, v. 27. - 30. (4.) That they might be sanctified, v. 17, 18. (5.) That they might be united, v. 11, and v. 20, 23. (6.) That they might be glorified, v. 21, 26. 1. THESE words spake Jesus, and lift ed up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3. And this is eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5. And now, O Father, glory thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here we have,

1. The circumstances of this prayer, v. 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh; (sometimes he continued all night in prayer;) but none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

(1.) The time when he prayed this prayer: when he had spoken these words, had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer in their hearing; so that,

(1.) It was a prayer after sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we preach to must pray for. He that was to prophesy upon the dry ground, was also to pray for things, O breathe, and breathe upon them. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God gave the increase.

(2.) It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer; that God would preserve the good impressions of this gesture to those that use it, (2 Cor. 13. 10.) It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and, to set a good example before masters of families, he not only, as a son of Ira- braham, taught his household, (Gen. 18. 19,) but, as a son of David, blessed his household, (2 Sam. 6. 20,) prayed for them and with them.

(4.) It was a parting prayer: when we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer, (2 Cor. 12. 20. 35.) Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, dying Moses, the twelve tribes, and so, here, dying Jesus the twelve apostles.

(5.) It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice which he was now about to offer on earth, specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death for the souls of his people, and the length and width of the uses of a fine, and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made.

(6.) It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Note, In his exalted state he addresses himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when he was on earth. No, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer: he lifted up his eyes to heaven, as before, (ch. 11. 41.) not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify his thoughts to that end, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, Ps. 23. 1. Sursum corda, was anciently used as a call to prayer. Up with your hearts, up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and
tence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

II. The first part of the prayer itself, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,
1. He prays to God as a Father; He lifted up his eyes, and said, Father. Note, As prayer is to be made to God only, so is it our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him our Father. All that have the Spirit of adoption, are taught to cry, Abba, Father. Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6. If God be our Father, we have liberty of access to him, temple to confidence in him, and great expectations from him. Christ calls him here holy Father, (v. 11.) and righteous Father, (v. 25.) For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for our direction and encouragement, to call God as we hope to find him.

2. He prayed for himself first; though Christ, as God, was prayed to, Christ, as man, prayed; thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness. It was said to him, as it is said to us, Ask, and I will give thee, Ps. 2. 8. What he had purchased he must ask for; and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This puts an honour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands, the way in which he conveyed with a very great assurance of his great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the prayer of the desolate shall not be despised; time was, when He that is advocate for us, had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator; and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, by prayers and supplications, (Heb. 5. 7.) so that he knows the heart of a petitioner, (Exod. 23. 9.) he knows the way. Now observe,
(1.) Christ begins with prayer for himself, and afterward prayed for his disciples; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first.

(2.) He was much shorter in his prayer for himself than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers; in making supplication for all saints, we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves.

Now observe two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and they are two one—that he might be glorified. But this one petition, Glorify then me, is twice put up, because it has a double reference. [1.] To the prosecution of his undertaking further: Glorify me, that I may glorify thee, in doing what is agreed upon to be yet done, v. 1—5. And, [2.] To the performance of his undertaking hitherto: Glorify me, for I have glorified thee. I have done my part, and Lord, do thine, v. 4, 5.

[1.] Christ here prays to be glorified, in order to his glorifying God; (v. 1.) Glorify thy Son according to thy promise, that thy Son may glorify thee according to his undertaking. Here observe,
First, How he prays for—what he might be glorified in this world: "The hour is come when all the powers of darkness will combine to vitify thy Son and name, Father, glorify him." The Father glorified the Son upon earth, 1. Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him, were thunderstruck with a word, when Judas confessed him innocent, and smiled that confession with his own guilty blood, when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself was stung with fear, when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, 2. Even by his sufferings: when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, ch. 13.

31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Phate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought. But, 3. Much more after his sufferings: thus he glorified the Son when he raised him from the dead, shewed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and set up his kingdom among men, then he glorified him. This he here prays for, and insists upon.

Secondly, What he pleads to enforce this request. But, 1. He made the things he had done, and the great things he was about to do, as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this, that the heathen are given him for his inheritance; for thou art my Son, Ps. 2. 7, 8. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world; but he rejected it with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his presentment, and here applies himself to him for it. Note, They that have received the adoption of sons, may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified; Father, glorify thy Son.

3. He pleads the time; The hour is come; the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God. He had often said his hour was not yet come; but now it was come, and he knew it. May know not his time, Mark 14. 48, 49. But the hour, that is, the time of the hour, this hour, (ch. 12. 27.) and here the hour; compare Mark 14. 33, ch. 16. 21. For, the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and remarkable hour, and, without doubt, the most critical that ever was since the clock of time was first set a-going. Now it was the hour he himself had, that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after.

(1.) The hour is come, in the midst of which I need to be owned. Now is the hour when this grand affair is come to a crisis; after many a skirmish, the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought, and that great cause, in which God's hour and man's happiness are altogether embarked, must now be either won or lost for ever. The two champions, David and Goliath, Michael and the dragon, are now entering the lists; the trumpet sounds for an engagement that will be irretrievably fatal either to the one or to the other: "Now glorify thy Son, now give him victory over principalties and powers, now let the bruising of a thousand year, the breaking of the serpent's head, now let thy Son be so upheld as not to fail or be discouraged." When Joshua went forth conquering and to conquer, it is said, "The Lord magnified Joshua; so he glorified his Son, when he made the cress his triumphant chariot.

(2.) The hour is come, in the close of which I expect to be crowned; the hour is come, when I am to be glorified, and set as a bright hand. Between him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering; but, being short, he speaks as if he made little of it: The hour is come that I must be glorified; and he did not expect it till then. Good Christians in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead: "Now the hour is come, stand by me, appear for me, now or never; now the earthly sky is bounded, the day elsewhere, then the hour is come, that I should be glorified." 2 Cor. 5. 1.

3. He pleads the Father's own interest and concern therein—that thy Son may glorify thee; for he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour; he desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways. (1.) He might glorify the Father in the performance of the undertaking, and the Father be glorified; he was to suffer. Father, glorify thy Son, expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honour among men, and, by his satisfaction, to come
up to the glory of God, which man, by his sin, came short of; "Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them." (2) By the doctrine of the cross, which was shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was established among men. He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off the offence of the cross, but to make it to them that are saved, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. If God had not glorified Christ crucified, by raising him from the dead, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore glorify the Son, says he, to the Father; all things are thine; give me power, says he, to be glorified with my body; that I may glorify thee with my estate," etc. Hallowed be thy name, must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions, 1 Pet. 4. 11. (2) He hath taught us what to expect and hope for. If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, even a capacity of grace he has so abundantly and the opportunity how suitable and convenient. But if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our counsels, and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

4. He pleads his commission; (v. 2. 3.) he desires to glorify his Father, in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him: Glorify thy Son, he saith; thou hast given him power, and power in the execution of the powers thou hast given him; so it is connected with the petition; or, that thy Son may glorify thee according to the power given him; so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator:

(1) The original of his power: Thou hast given him power, he hath it from God, to whom all power belongs. Man, in his fallen state, must, in order to recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission under the bread of heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be, between God and man; so, as to this office, he received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is; Christ's right to rule is incontestable.

(2) The extent of his power. He has power over all flesh. (1) Over all mankind. He has power in and over the world of spirits, the powers of the upper air, to whom he has power, and power in the execution of the powers they have given him; so it is connected with the petition; or, that thy Son may glorify thee according to the power given him; so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator:

(2) Over mankind, considered as corrupt and fallen, for he is called flesh, Gen. 6. 3. If he had put in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power; and all judgment, concerning them, is committed to him; power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; power on earth to forgive sins, or not. Christ, as mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand. He is King of nations, has power even over those that know him not, nor obey his gospel; whom he does not rule, he overlooks, Ps. 22. 28—29, 8. Matt. 28. 18. ch. 5. 13.

(3) The grand intention and design of this power, that he should give eternal life to all men, whom he hath chosen. Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

1. Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his charge and trust, as the crown and accomplishment of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the fallen race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant. he has chosen them, and given them to his Son. He has not distinguished their persons, or engaged his care for their souls, in virtue of any intrinsic excellency in them, but in view of the great design he had in view: Here he is laid open. He is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him, that he should give eternal life to them. See how great the authority of the Redeemer is! He has lives and crowns to give, eternal lives that never die, immortal crowns that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who has such presents in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those whom he undertakes to save. First, He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life, which is eternal life in the hand and embryo, ch. 1. 14. Grace in the soul, is heaven in that soul. Secondly, He will glorify them in the other world; their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God. This only is mentioned, because it supposes all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and indeed, all the other were in order to this; we are called to his kingdom and glory, and begotten to the inheritance; what is last in execution was first in intention, and that is eternal life.

5. Here is the observer of the Redeemer's universal dominion to the end. He has power over all flesh, on purpose that he might give eternal life to the select number. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men, is in order to the salvation of the children of God. All things are for their sake, 2 Cor. 4. 15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life, to all that were given to Christ. He is bound over all things to the church. The administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to converge for good to the called.

6. Here is a further explication of this grand design; (v. 5.) This is life eternal, which I am empowered, and have undertaken to give; this is the matter of it, and this the way leading to it; and he has known the only true God, and all the discourses and principles of natural religion, and Jesus Christ whom they have sent, as Mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion, which he is statutes for the recovery of man out of his degraded state. Here is,

1. The grand end which the Christian religion seeks before us, and to which the missionary design of the gospel is directed, is the fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all, that were given him. By the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this so much in excellence as it does in duration.

2. The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is, by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ: This is the only rule to know them; which may be taken two ways. First, Life eternal lies in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ; the future perfection of this life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ; they that are brought into union with Christ, and
live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure, by experience, what eternal life is, and will say, "If this be heaven, heaven is sweet." See Ps. 17. 15. Secondly, The knowledge of God and Christ leads to life eternal; this is the way in which Christ gives eternal life, by the knowledge of him that has called us; (2 Pet. 1. 3) and this is the way in which we come to receive it.

The Christian religion shows the way to heaven, 1. By directing us to God, as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to bring us to God, to know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him, as our owner, ruler, and benefactor, to devote ourselves to him as our only home; the world pressed upon us with its evil, and direct all to his praise as our highest end; this is life eternal. God is here called the only true God, to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders, not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said, that he is the true God and eternal life, (1 John 5. 20.) and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain there is but one only living and true God, and the God we adore is he. He is the true God, and not a mere name or notion; the only true God; and all that ever set up as rivals with him, are vanity and a lie; the service of him is the only true religion.

2. By directing us to Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and man; Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God would have been life eternal to him; but now that he is fallen, there must be something more; now that we are under guilt, to know God, is to know him as a righteous judge, whose curse we are under; and nothing is more killing than to be aware of ourselves, to know we are guilty, so near to our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is life eternal to believe in Christ; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him. See ch. 6. 39. 40. They that are acquainted with God and Christ, are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

3. Christ here prays to be glorified, in consideration of the glory that he is promised. Ps. 4. 5. The meaning of the former petition was, Glorify me in this world; the meaning of the latter is, Glorify me in the other world. I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify me thou. Observe here, First, With what comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth; I have glorified thee, and finished my work; it is as good as finished. He does not complain of the poverty and obscurity he had lived in, what a weary life he had upon earth, as ever any man of sorrows had; he overlooks this, and pleases himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his undertaking. This is here recorded.

1. For the honour of Christ, that his life upon earth did in all respects fully answer the end of his coming into the world. He is, says he, perfect, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; what he is the author of, he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father, by abasing himself, (that looked more likely to disparage him,) yet it was contrived so that he should glorify him; I have glorified thee on the earth, in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.

2. It is recorded for example to all, that we may follow his example. (1.) We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according to our capacity and the sphere of our activity; we must each of us do all the good we can in this world. (2.) We must win at the goal of God. We must pursue his will in any way in which he has given us to do it, demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity. (3.) We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and accomplished, as a hiring, our day.

3. It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him. If he has finished the work that was given him to do, then he is a complete Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves. And he that finished his work for us, will finish it in us to the day of Christ.

Secondly, See with what confidence he expects the joy set before him; (v. 5.) Now, O Father, glorify me. That which he has done is what he depends upon, and can not be denied him. 1. See here what he prayed for; Glorify thou me, as before, v. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted vain repetitions; Christ prayed, saying the same words, (Matt. 26. 44.) and yet prayed more earnestly. What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for; promises are not useless, nor are the prayers of saints in vain, till we are guided out of our desires and the ground of our hopes. Christ's being glorified, includes all the honours, powers, and joys of his exalted state. See how it is described.

(1.) It is a glory with God; not only, Glory my name on earth, but Glory me with thine own self. It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father; and yet with his own self. (2.) The highest glories of the exalted Redeemer were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb in conjunction; (Rev. 5. 13.) and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction; and thus the Father has glorified him with himself.

(2.) It is the glory he had with God before the world was. By this it appears, (1.) That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being before the world was, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that was above all things, and by whom all things consist. (2.) That his glory with the Father is to be seen in the exalted position which he has taken of the Father; for he was from eternity the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. 1. 3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had a glory with the Father before the world, but because we needed glory. (3.) That Jesus Christ in his state of humiliation manifested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was God manifested in the flesh, not in his glory. He laid down this glory for a time, as a pawn or pledge that he would go through with his undertaking, according to the appointment of his Father. (4.) That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and exalted himself again with his former robes of light.
Having performed his undertaking, he did, as it were, **repeacerque pigmenta**, take up his honor, by this demand, **Glorify the Son in me**. He prays that even his bonds might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emmanuel, God-man. He does not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth: no; he that knew both worlds, and might choose which he would have his preference in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this. He had despised the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. *Let the same mind be in me.*

1. There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, that if God were glorified in him, he should glorify himself in his Father. There was an infinite value in what Christ did to glorify his Father, that he properly merited all the glories of his exalted state. If the Father was a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was the Son should be no loser by it, at long run, in his glory.

2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would make himself an object for sin, he should disown the shell with the strong (Isa. 53. 10, 12) and the kingdom should be his; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon in his sufferings; it was for the joy set before him, that he endured the cross; and now in his exalted state, he still expects the completion of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, Heb. 10. 13.

3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given that his Father was well pleased in him his beloved Son.

4. Thus we must be taught that those, and only those, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father and the Spirit in the next world. Not that we can merit that glory, as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Christ, having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his, and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here, That when he did not pray for; (v. 9.) I pray not for the world. Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind in general, (he prays for that here, (v. 21.) That the world may believe that thou hast sent me,) nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here taken in its large sense, to comprehend all that are made subject to the dominion of this world, Take the world for a heap of unwinnable corn in the floor, and God gives it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, for a blessing is in it, but the Lord perfectly knows them that are his, he eyes particularly them that were given him out of the world, extracts them; and then take the world for the remaining heap of rejected worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but allows it to be taken away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ does not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprise of the barren tree; but he does not pray for them in this prayer; they are not here meant by the world, neither is he said for. He does not say, I pray against the world, as Elias made intercession against Israel; but I pray not for them, I pass them by, and leave them to themselves; they are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breast-plate of the great High-priest. And miserable is the condition of such, as it was of those who in the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so Jer. 7. 18. We that know not who are chosen, and who are passed by, must pray for all men, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 4. While there is life, there is hope, and room for prayer. See 1 Sam. 12. 23.

11. When he did pray for: not for angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays for them that were given him, meaning primarily the disciples that had attended him in the regeneration: but it is doubtless to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, v. 6, 8. 2. He prays for all that should believe on him; (v. 20.) and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place, and everywhere: for he has a concern for them all, and calls things that are not as though they were. 3. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what the general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour: they are five.

1. The share he had received concerning them; They were thine, and thou gavest them me; (v. 6) and again, (v. 28.) These which thou hast kept for me. The Father: these I have now praying for, are such as the Father intrusted with me, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them. Now,

1. (1.) This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils, to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him in his service, when he had given his name to be the learners, and the disciples of Christ. This doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the muniments of his grace and favour, in order to their being the publishers of his gospel, and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution; they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Now, they are the ministers and ministry, which are Christ's gift to the church, were first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As un-
of the law the Levites were given to Aaron, (Num. 3. 9.) to him (the great High-Priest of our profession) the Father gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle. See Eph. 4. 8, 11. Ps. 68. 18. Christ received this gift for such as he had given it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified; so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the gospel to devote themselves entirely to Christ's service, as being given to him.

(2.) But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ; (ch. 6. 32.) they were chosen, and they were to be saved by the knowledge of Christ. And it was their care, that they were to be saved to him as his charge; to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shews,

1. That the Father had authority to give them; Thou gavest them me. He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title to. The elect that the Father gave to Christ, were his own three ways: First, They were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him. When they were given to Christ to be vessels of honour, they were in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. Secondly, They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him. It was upon their own account that the Father gave them to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice then when they were pitched upon to be the monuments of mercy; might justly have been delivered to the tormentors when they were delivered to the Saviour. Thirdly, They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed for him; they were set apart for God, and were considered as his property. This he insists upon again, (v. 7.) All things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee; which, though it may take in all that appertaineth to his office as Mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him; "They are of thee, their being is of thee as the God of nature, their well-being is of thee as the God of grace; they are all of thee, and therefore, Father, I have been delivered to thee, for thou hast given them all for thee." (2.) That he did accordingly give them to the Son; Thou gavest them me, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; as patients to the physician, to be cured; children to a tutor, to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge; (Heb. 2. 13.) The children thou hast given me. They were delivered to Christ, First, That the election of grace might not be frustrated, that not one, no, not of all, might perish. That great concern must be had in one good hand, able to give sufficient security, that the purpose of God according to election might stand. Secondly, That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; they were given to him as his seed, in whom he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, (Isa. 53. 10, 11.) and might not among his sheep, and among his sheep, for naught, and in vain, Isa. 9. 4. We may plead, as Christ does, "Lord, keep my grace, keep my comforts, for thine they were, and thou gavest them me." They were given to Christ, and to him, and by him, and as such, and such as they were, and such as he was to be, and such as he was to give.

2. The care he had taken of them to teach them; (v. 6.) I have manifested thy name to them. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, (v. 8.) Observe here,

1. His own design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him, (ch. 1. 18.) to instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

2. His faithful discharge of this undertaking; I have done it. His fidelity appears. [1.] In the truth of his doctrine. It agreed exactly with the instructions he received from his Father. He gave not only the things, but the very words, that were given him. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. [2.] In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name in the souls of men. He did not seek glory in himself, but, in all he did and said, aimed to magnify his Father. Note, First, It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men. No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him, Matt. 11. 27. He only has acquaintance with the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only has access to the spirits of grace and of life, and can give them to men. The ministers may publish the name of the Lord, (as Moses, Deut. 32. 3.) but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ, God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ, God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure. Secondly, Sooner or later, Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him, and will give them his word, to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

3. The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them; (v. 6.) They have kept thy word; (v. 7.) They have known that all things are of thee; (v. 8.) They have received the words, and embraced them, have given their assent and consent to them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me. Observe here,

1. What success the doctrine of Christ had among those that were given him, in several particulars.

(1.) "They have received the words which I gave them, as thou sendest the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain." They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended in some measure the meaning of them, and were affected with them: they received the impression of the word. The word was to them an ingrafted word.

(2.) "They have kept thy word, have continued in it; they have confirmed to it." Christ's commandments are a way only kept, when it is observed. They that are taught to do the commands of Christ, ought to be themselves observant of them. It was requisite that they should keep what was committed to them, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

(3.) "They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping it. They have been aware that thou art the original Author of that holy religion which I am come to institute; that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts, which God gave without measure to him, were all from God; contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace, for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great argument of a good name, in compliance upon Christ, that he and all he is and has, all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, are of God, 1 Cor. 1. 30. We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

(4.) They have set their seal to it: They have known surely that I came out from God, v. 8. &c. See here.

First, What is it to believe; it is to know surely, to know that it is so of a truth. The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge; yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves,
posses his word for them that they did believe.

Note. We may know surely that which we neither do nor can know fully; may know the certainty of the things which are not seen, though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. We walk by faith, which knows surely, not yet by sight, which knows clearly.

7. Of what nature is it we are to believe? That Jesus Christ came out from God, as he is the Son of God, in his person the image of the invisible God, and that God did send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal King; so that the Christian religion stands upon the same foot, and is of equal authority, with natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, all his commands obeyed as divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as divine securities.

2. How Jesus Christ speaks of this here; he enlarges upon it,

[1.] As pleased with himself. Though the many instances of his disciples’ dulness and weakness had grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great fruitfulness in the faith, was a joy to him, that delights in the proficiency of his scholars. He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passes by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us, thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another.

[2.] As pleasing it with his Father. He is praying for those there were given him; and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note. The due improvement of grace received, is a good plea, according to the tenor of the new covenant, for further grace; for so runs the promise, To him that hath shall be given. They that keep Christ’s word, and believe on him, let Christ alone to commend them, and which is more, to recommend them, to his Father.

4. He pleads the Father’s own interest in them; (v. 9.) A prayer for them, for they are thine; and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest, which he and the Father have in what pertained to each; All mine are thine, and thine are mine. Between the Father and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about meum and tuum—mine and thine, for the matter was settled from all eternity; all mine are thine, and thine are mine. Here is,

[1.] The plea particularly urged for his disciples. This was the consideration of the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father’s, that it was in order to the making them the more so. Note, [1.] All that receive Christ’s word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant-relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to him. Christ has redeemed us, not himself only, but to God, by his blood, Rev. 5. 9, 10. They are first-fruits unto God, Rev. 14. 4.

[2.] This is a good plea in prayer. Christ here pleads it. They are thine; we may plead it for ourselves, I am thine, save me; and for others, (as Moses, Exod. 32. 11.) “They are thy people, They are thine; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil and the world?” In the same connection, they are thine, not at all or separate from thee? They are thine, as thou art thine.”

[2.] The foundation on which this plea is grounded; All mine are thine, and thine are mine. This speaks the Father and Son to be, [1.] One in essence. Every creature must say to God, All mine are thine; but none can say to him, All thine are mine, but he that is the same in substance with him, and equal in power and glory. [2.] One in interest; no opposite or divided interests between them.

First, What the Father has, as Creator, is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of in subserviency to his great undertaking. All things are delivered to him; (Matt. 11. 27.) the grant is general, that nothing was excepted, but he and all things under him.

Secondly, What the Son has, as Redeemer, is designed for the Father, and his kingdom shall shortly be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father’s praise, and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre; All mine are thine. The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion, which does not agree with the end and design of natural religion. In a limited sense, every true believer may say, All mine are thine; if God be our’s in covenant, all he is and has, is so far our’s, that it shall be engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense, every true believer does say, Lord, all mine are thine; all laid at his feet, to be serviceable to him. And then what we have may be comfortably committed to God’s care and blessing, when it is cheerfully submitted to his will, as it is to his command, I have, for it is all thine.

5. He pleads his own concern in them; I am glorified in them—glorified in them.

(1.) I have been glorified in them; what little honour Christ had in this world, was among his disciples; he had been glorified by their attendance on him and obedience to him, their preaching and teaching ministry, their patience and constancy for them. Note. Those shall have an interest in Christ’s intercession, in and by whom he is glorified.

(2.) “I am to be glorified in them, when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name.” The apostles preached and wrought miracles in Christ’s name; the Spirit in them glorified Christ; (ch. 16. 14.) “I am glorified in them; and therefore,” [1.] “I can bless myself for them.” What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world, lies in his church; and therefore it and all its affairs lie near his heart, within the veil. [2.] “Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon that account, will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified.” That in which God and Christ are glorified, may, with humble confidence, be committed to God’s special care.

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
After the general pleas with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care, follow the particular petitions he puts up for them; and, 1. They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things. He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates, and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished with that duty and knowledge of the world's things, which is the best of all: The prosperity of the soul is the best prospect; for, what relates to that, Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teaches us to seek, in the first place, both for ourselves and for others. 2. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and their various exigencies and occasions. Note, Christ's intercessions are always good for good people. The Advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burdens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of; (Luke 22. 32.) I have prayed for thee. 3. He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and fills his mouth with arguments, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to lay matters well upon our heart, at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

Now the first thing Christ prays for, for his disciples, is, their preservation, in these verses; in order to which he commends them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arises from their world, the world wherein they were, the world of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

1. The request itself; Keep them from the world. There were two ways of their being delivered from the world: 1. By taking them out of it; and he does not pray that they might be so delivered: I pray not that they should be taken out of the world; that is, (1.) I pray not that they may speedily be removed by death. If the world will be vexations to them, the readiest way to secure them, would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment. Send chariots and horses of fire for them, to fetch them to heaven; Job, Elijah, Jonah, Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be taken out of the world, Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons. [1.] Because he came to conquer, not to countenance, these intemperate heats and passions which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death. It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not avoid it. [2.] Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them, (Acts 22. 22.) and therefore necessary for them, (Heb. 11. 38.) and yet possibly for them. In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world, that were to believe in him through their world. Let not them be taken out of the world, when their Master is; they must each, in his own order, die a martyr, but not till they have finished this work for him. (2.) The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but dreaded rather, and laid to heart, Isa. 57. 1. Secondly, Though Christ loves his disciples, he does not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good, and glorify God, upon earth, and be ripened for heaven; otherwise good people would be afraid to live, because they can ill be spared to die. (2.) I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it in some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed; but that, in the preservation I desire for them. Non ut omni molestia liberatus sit et delicias colans, sed ut inter media pericula salvi veste maneat Dei auxilio. —Not that, being freed from all trouble, they may bask in luxurious ease, but that, by the help of God, they may be preserved in a scene of danger,

2. Another way is, by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and he prays they may be thus kept, v. 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition:

(1.) Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me. Christ was now leaving them; but let them not think that their defence was departed from them; no, he does here, in their hearing, commit them to the custody of his Father and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all his beholders, that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God himself. Those cannot but be safe, whom the almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him. Secondly, He prays, That they may be kept in the keeping of our souls to God; 1 Pet. 4. 19. 2 Tim. 1. 12. (1.) He here puts them under the divine protection, that they might not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they and all their concerns might be the particular care of the divine providence; "Keep their lives, till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let not them be blown upon by the hard breezes they may come in contact with; keep up their interest in the world; and let not that sink." To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel-ministry and gospel-church in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. (2.) He puts them under the divine tuition, that they might not themselves run away from their duty, and slide aside by the temptation of the world; "Keep them in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty." We need God's power not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See ch. 10. 28, 29. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

The titles he gives to him he prays to, and the prayers he prays for, enforce the petition.

First, He speaks to God as a holy Father. In constant intercourse with the divine care, we may take encouragement, 1. From the attribute of his holiness, for that is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath sworn by his holiness, Ps. 89. 35. If he be a holy God, and hate sin, he will make those that are his, holy, and keep them from sin, who hate it too, and dread it as the greatest evil. 2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he has beheld them with Christ. If he be a Father, he will take care of his own children, will teach them and keep them; who else should? Secondly, He speaks of them as those whom the Father had given him. What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. "Father, keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me, I commit to thy care." A holy Father has a holy mind to his holy gifts. (2.) Keep them through thine own name. That is, [1.] Keep them for thy name's sake; so some. Thy name and honour are concerned in their preservation as well as mere, for both will suffer by it.
if they either re
to or seek." The Old Testament
saints often pleaded, for thy name's sake; and those
may with comfort plead it, that are indeed more
concerned for the honour of God's name than for
any interest of their own.

[2.] Keep them in thy name; so others; the original
is so, ζητείναι τοῖς ὀνόμασίς του; 'Keep them in the know-
ledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the pro-
fession and service of thy name, whatever it cost
them, keep them in the interest of thy name, and
let them ever be faithful to that; keep them in thy
truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy com-
mmandments.'

[3.] Keep them by or through thy name; so others;
'Keep them by thine own power, thine own hand;
keep them thyself, undertake for them, let them be thine immediate care. Keep them by the
means of preservation which thy hand hath self
appeared, and by which thou hast made thyself
known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances;
let thy name be their strong tower; thy tabernacle
their pavilion."

(3.) Keep them from the evil; or out of the evil.
He had taught them to pray daily, Deliver us from
evil, and this would encourage them to pray.

[1.] Keep them from the evil one, the devil and all
his devices, and all his children. Keep them from Satan as a tempter, that either he may not have
leave to set them, or that their faith may not fail.
Keep them from him as a destroyer, that he may not
drive them to despair.'

[2.] Keep them from the evil thing, that is, sin,
from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it.
Keep them, that they do no evil.' 2 Cor. 13. 7.

Sin is that evil which, above any other, we should
dread and depurate.

[3.] 'Keep them from the evil of the world, and
of their tribulation in it, so that it may have nothing
in it, no malignity,' not that they might be kept
from affliction; but kept through it, that the pro-
erty of their afflictions might be so altered that
there might be no evil in them, nothing to do them
any harm.

II. The reasons with which he enforces these
requests for their preservation, which are five.

1. He pleads that hitherto he had kept them; (v.
12.) "While I was with them in the world, I have
kept them in thy name, in the true faith of the gos-
pel and the service of God; those that thou gavest
me for my constant attendants I have kept, they are
all safe, and none of them missing, none of them
removed, none of those that worked with me, and
that the scripture might be fulfilled." Observe,
(1.) Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking
concerning his disciples; while he was with them, he
kept them, and his care concerning them was not
in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them
from falling into any dangerous errors or sins; from
striking in with the Pharisees, who would have com-
fronted him with scribes and Pharisees, with the
disciples, to get a hold of them; he kept them from
deserting him, and returning to the little all they had left for him; he had them still un-
der his eye and care when he sent them to preach;
went not his heart with them? Many that followed
him a while, took offence at something or other,
and went off; but he kept the twelve, that they also
should not go away. He kept them from falling into
the hands of persons who would extinguish their
lives; and such persons as when he surrendered himself, ch.
18. 9. While he was with them, he kept them in a
visible manner by instructions still sounding in their
ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he
was gone from them, they must be kept in a more
spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports
are sometimes given and sometimes withheld; but
when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left com-
fortless.

What Christ here says of his immediate followers,
is true of all the saints while they are here in the
world; Christ keeps them in God's name. It is in-
spired. [1.] That they are weak, and cannot keep
themselves; their own hands are not sufficient for
them. [2.] That they are, in God's account, valuable
and worth the keeping; precious in his sight and
honourable; his treasure, his jewels. [3.] That:
their salvation is designed, for to that it is that they
are kept, ch. 15. 1; and that these yoke are reserved
for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved
for the day of bliss. [4.] That they are the charge
of the Lord Jesus; for as his charge he keeps them,
and exposed himself like the good Shepherd for the
preservation of the sheep.

(2.) The comfortable account he gives of his un-
toaking: None of them is lost. Note, Jesus Christ
will certainly keep all that were given him, so that
none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they
may think themselves lost, and may be nearly lost;
in imminence peril; but it is the Father's will that
he should lose none, and none he will lose; (ch. 6.
39.) so it will appear when they come altogether,
and none of them shall be wanting.

(3.) A brand put upon Judas, as one of those
whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among
those that were given to Christ, but not of Christ.
He speaks of Judas as already lost, for he had aban-
donned the society of his Master and his fellow-dis-
ciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's gui-
dance, and in a little time would go to his own place;
he is as good as lost.

But the apostacy and ruin of Judas were no re-
proach at all to his master, or his family: for
[1.] He was the son of perdition, and therefore none
of those that were given to Christ to be kept.
He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw
himself headlong into it. He was the son of the
destroyer, as Cain, who was of that wicked one. That
great enemy whom the Lord will consume, is called
a son of perdition, because he is a man of sin, 2
Thess. 2. 3. It is an awful consideration, that one
of the apostles proved a son of perdition. No man's
place or name in the church, no man's privileges or
opportunities of getting grace, no man's profession
or external performances, will secure him from ruin,
if his heart be not right with God; nor are any more
likely to prove sons of perdition at last, after a plausi-
ble course of profession, than those that, like Judas,
love the bag. But Christ's distinguishing Judas from
those that were given to him, (for was it averse,
from the end of his apostleship, that he should
not, though he knew him, (1 Cor. 6. 9.) take him
under his eye, and care, as he did others, ch. 12.
12.) not in vain. He kept them in God's name, per-

(2.) The scripture was fulfilled; the son of Judas
was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in his
word, and the event would certainly follow after the
prediction as a consequence, though it cannot be said
necessarily to follow from it as an effect. See Ps.
8. 35. 36. 37. 38. One would be amazed at the
treachery of apostates, were we not told it be-
fore.

2. He pleads that he was now under a necessity of
leaving them, and could no longer watch over them
in the way that he had hitherto done it; (v. 11.)
"Keep them now, that I may not lose the labour I
bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep
them, that I may be one with them as I am with
each other." We shall have occasion to speak of
that, v. 21. But see here,

(1.) With what pleasure he speaks of his own de-
parture. He expresses himself concerning it with
an air of triumph and exultation, with reference
both to the world he left, and the world he removed
to.

[1.] "Now I am no more in the world. Now
farewell to this provoking troublesome world, I have
had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand when I shall be no more in it. Now that I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it; nothing remains now but to hasten out of it as fast as I can. Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world, to think of being no more in this world; for when we have done what we have to do in this world, and are made meet for that, what is there here, that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death in this world, if that were the last word, with what a holy triumph would we say, "Now I am no more in this world, this dark deceitful world, this poor empty world, this tempting defiling world; no more vexed with its thorns and briers, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tossed no more on this stormy sea; now I am no more in this world, but can cheerfully quit it, and give it a final farewell."

[2.] Now I come to thee. To get clear of the world is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate uninterrupted and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, They who love God, cannot but be pleased with being removed thenceforth, not through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go, to be absent from the body, it is to be present with the Lord, like children fetched home from school to their father's house. "Now come I to thee whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee the Fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my heart shall overflow, my happiness completed, for now come I to thee." (2.) With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind; "But these are in the world. I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones that must stay in it? Holy Father, keep them; they will want my presence, let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out further into the world than they have yet ventured; they must launch forth into the deep, and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them." Observe here,

[1.] That, when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father, he carried with him a tender concern for his disciples, and the behaviour of the world, and continued to compassionatethem. He knew their names, and their states, and their breast-plate, may upon his heart, and has given them with the nails of his cross upon the palms of his hands; and when he is out of their sight, theyare not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are launching out into the world when we are not almost through it; and for those that are left behind in it when we are leaving it.

[2.] That, when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, he only says, They are in the world; that speaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and make a malignant world would hate and persecute.

3. He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to them to know themselves safe, and what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy: I speak this, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves, v. 13. Observe,

(1.) Christ earnestly desired the fullness of the joy of his disciples, for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took especial care to fulfill their joy. When they thought their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught,

[1.] To find our joy in Christ; "It is my joy, joy of my giving, or rather joy that I am the matter of." Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy; joy in his Lord, joy in the Father, joy in Christ is everlasting, like him.

[2.] To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, Phil. 3. 1—4. [5.] To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have; (2.) He did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping, and took them for witnesses that he did so; These things I speak in the world, while I am yet with them in the world. His intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in itself; but saving this in the world, would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and enable them to rejoice in tribulation. Note, [1.] Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended, in the presence of his disciples, to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) leave them to the world, and give them all, as he well were secured, that they might have strong consolation. [2.] Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfill our joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that he always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a yea rather upon the com.m., 8. 34. And see Heb. 7. 25.

4. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world, for his sake; (v. 14.) "I have given them thy word, to be published to the world, and they have received it, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world; and therefore the world hath hated them, as also because they are not of the world, any more than I." Here we have,

(1.) The world's enmity to Christ's followers. While Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them, much more would do it so when by their more extensive preaching of the gospel they would turn the world upside down; "Father, stand their friend," says Christ, "for they are likely to have enemies, and when they have taken them, as for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of those fiery darts, let them be compassed with thy favour as with a shield." It is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. Lord be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.

(2.) The reasons of that enmity, which strengthen the plea.

[1.] It is implied that one reason is, because they had received the word of God as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against them who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, They that receive Christ's good will and good word, must expect the world's ill will and ill word. Great ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of the world, and separate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and so condemn the world; "Father, keep them; for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee." Thus the palmist pleads, For thy sake I have borne reproach, Psa. 69. 9. Note. Those that keep the word of Christ's patience, are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, Rev. 3. 10. That cause which makes a martyr, may well make a joyful sufferer.
First, It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here or hereafter. And he offers himself in his work, of present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. Secondly, Those that through grace are sanctified, have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace; for if he that was the author of the good work be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; he that is holy must be holy still, more holy still pressing forward, pressing upward, as those that have been sanctified. 

Fourthly, It is an encouragement to us in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ in terces for, for us.

(2.) The means of conferring this grace—through thy truth, thy word is truth. Not that the Holy One of Israel is hereby limited to means, but in the counsel of forces, among other things, it was settled and agreed, [1.] That all needful truth should be comprised and summed up in the word of God. Divine revelation, as it now stands in the written word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but entire truth without defect. [2.] That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always be in the power of the world, but of the Spirit commonly uses in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth, (1 Pet. 1. 23) and the food of the new life, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

2. As ministers. "Sanctify them, set them apart for thyself and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven. Prophets were said to be sanctified, Jer. 1. 5. Priests and Levites were so. Sanctify them; (1.) "Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament." (2.) "Separate them to the office, Rom. 1. 1. I have called them, they have consented; Father, say Amen to it." (3.) "Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them; sanctify them by or in truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow, and the Levitical priests were a light, as it was to the patriarchs, so in the Spirit ministered ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. Sanctify them to thy truth, the word of thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar, so let them be to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. 9. 13, 14.) Note, (1.) Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers, with a particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand. (2.) The great thing to be asked of God for gospel-ministers, is, that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that word upon their own hearts, which they preach to others. Let them have the Urim and Thummim, light and insight, to themselves.

II. We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce the petition for the disciples' sanctification. 1. The mission they had from him; (v. 18.) "As thou hast sent me into the world, to be thy ambassador to the children of men, so now that I am recalled, have I sent them into the world, as my delegates. Now here.

(1.) Christ prays as a witness of his own mission: Thou hast sent me into the world, the great Author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the original and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be our abun-
dantly, in our dependence upon him; his record was on high, from whence his mission was.

[24] His speech is the excellent fruit of the commission which he had given his disciples: "I have sent them on the same errand, and to carry on the same design; to preach the same doctrine that I have preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission, (ch. 20. 21.) with reference to their office; it is not a messenger, (Rom. 15. 8.) a minister, (Mal. 3. 1.) Only they are sent as servants, he as a Son.

Now this comes in here as a reason. [1.] Why Christ engaged his Church so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and interest himself in those that are employed for him; what he calls us out to, he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. [2.] Why he committed them to his Father; because he knew and concerned in the work; their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ received gifts for men, (Ps. 68. 18.) and then gave them to men; (Eph. 4. 8.) and therefore pray aid of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father sanctified him when he sent him into the world, ch. 10. 36. Now they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The mercy he had for them is another thing here pleaded; (v. 19.) For their sakes I sanctify myself. Here is,

(1.) Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of Mediator; I sanctified myself: he entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially that which was now going about—the offering up of himself without spot unto God, by the eternal Spirit. He, as the priest and altar, sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said, Father, glorify thy name; and, Father, thy will be done; and, Father, I commit my spirit into thy hands; he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with his Father, for his intercession is meant; not that he is satisfied with his satisfaction; by his own blood he entered into the holy place, Heb. 9. 12. As the High-Priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, Lev. 16. 12, 14.

(2.) Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein; it is, for their sakes, that they may be sanctified, that is, that they may be martyrs; so some, "I sacrifice myself that they may be sanctified to the glory of God and the church's good." Paul speaks of his being offered, 2 Tim. 4. 6. Phil. 2. 17. Whatever there is in the death of the saints, that is precious in the sight of the Lord, it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather take it most generally, that they may be saints and ministers duly qualified and accepted of God.

Three things Christ meant in this matter, the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owns its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel-ministers with the blood of Jesus.

[25] The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out; in the church, to sanctify it, Eph. 3. 16. And he that designed the end, designed also the means, that they might be sanctified by the truth, the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to, and which Christ receiveth its sanctifying virtue and power from the depth of Christ. Some read it, that they be sanctified in truth, that is, truly; for as God must be served, so, in order to that, we must be sanctified, in the spirit, and in truth. And this Christ has prayed for, for all that are his; for this is his will, even their sanctification, which encourages them to pray for it.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23. In them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Next to their purity he prays for their unity; for the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable; and amity is thou amiable indeed, when it is like the ornament on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Zion's holy hill. Observe,

1. Who are included in this prayer; (v. 20.) Not those only, but those also that are now my disciples. (The eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women who followed him when he was here on earth,) "but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, either preached by them in their own day, or written by them for the generations to come; I pray for them all, that they all may be one in their interest in this prayer, and may all receive benefit by it." Note here,

1. Those, and those only, are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall, believe in him. This is that by which they are described, and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then, saw, and believed; but they in after-ages have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. It is through the word that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church, while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He does not here pray at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is in bondage with its children; no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for, the matter was reduced to a certainty by the divine prescience and purpose; he knew who were given him, who, being ordained to eternal life, were entered in the Lamb's book, and should undoubtedly believe, Acts 13. 19.

4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for those only that are to be employed in the highest posts of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the Divine Providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so does the Divine Grace in the most insignificant. The good Shepherd has an eye even to the foot of the flock.

5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual...
that all may be one. The same was said before, (v. 11.) that they may be one as we are, and again, v. 22.

The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that the oneness prayed for, (v. 11.) has special reference to the disciples as ministers of the gospel; that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and that the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the gospel, are owing to this prayer. Let them be not only of one heart, but one mouth, speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel-ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel-interest.

But it is certain that the oneness prayed for, (v. 21.) respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer—that they all may be one, in us, (v. 21.) one as we are, (v. 22.) made perfect in one, v. 23. It includes three things:

1. That they might all be incorporated in one body; that the Father, look upon them all as one, and ratify that at the last, when he shall gather them together as one church.

2. That they might all be animated by one Spirit. This is plainly implied in that—that they may be one in us. Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost. He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and superscription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might all be joined together in the bond of love and charity, all of one heart. That they all may be one, (1.) In judgment and sentiment; not in every little thing, it is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God, and in them, by the virtue of this prayer, they are all agreed—that God's favour is better than life; that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends; that there is another life after this; and the like. (2.) In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified, have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is one heart. (3.) They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true christian, as far as he is, eaves the glory of God as his highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good. (4.) They are all one in their desires and prayers; though they differ in words and the manner of expressing them, yet in the Spirit of adoption, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect. (5.) All one in love and affection. Every true christian has that in him, which inclines him to love all true christians as such. That which Christ here prays for, is, that communion of saints which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, 1 John, 5. 3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven, for then, and not till then, they shall be perfect in one, v. 23. Eph. 4. 13.

III. What is intimated by way of plea or argument to enforce this petition; three things.

1. The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, v. 11, 22—23.

(1.) It is taken for granted, that the Father and Son are one, in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, in all mutual endearments. The Father loveth the Son, and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, Thou in me, and I in thee. This he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him, yet he was made one Father, and the Father in him.

(2.) This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness.

(1.) As the pattern of that oneness, shewing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure, as God and Christ are one; for, First, The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace, in pursuance of the divine counsels. Secondly, It is a holy union, in the Holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a holy politic for any secular purpose. Thirdly, It is, and will be at last, a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections; so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified, and when grace shall be perfected in glory, they will be exactly correspondent to each other, all changed into the same image.

(3.) As the centre of that oneness, that they may be one in us, all meeting here. There is one God and one Mediator; and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity, and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a com- pleteness of union, which no one has in God and Christ as the end, and Christ as the way. All who are truly united to God and Christ, who are one, will soon be united to one another.

(4.) As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers were not one body with Christ, and did not jointly receive grace for grace from him, as he had received it for them? Christ's design was to reduce revolting mankind to God: "Father," says he, "let all that believe, be one, that in one body they may be reconciled," (Eph. 2. 13, 16.) which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, of the same body, (Eph. 3. 6.) to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, being engaged in the thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with do so apply it. "Father, let the Gentiles that believe he incorporated with the believing Jews, and make of twain one new man."

Those words, I in them, and then in me, shew what that union is, which is so necessary, not only to the beholding of the very being, of his church, First, Union with Christ; I in them. Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers, is the life and soul of the new man. Secondly, Union with God through him: Then in me; so as by me to be in them. Thirdly, Union with each other, resulting from those; that they hereby may be made perfect in one. We are complete in him.

The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to mutual endearments.

(1.) Those that were conferred upon the apostles,
and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world; the glory of working miracles; the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men; this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to disciple all nations.

Or, (2.) It is given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him; of being laid in his bosom, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he has confirmed it to the redeemed. [1.] This honour, he says, he hath given them, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and given it to them. This was Christ's promise to be real gifts. [2.] This was given him, to give them; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. [3.] He gave it them, that they might be one. First, To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, they might be truly denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them one, for he works all in all, 1 Cor. 12. 4. 

Secondly, To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed and one covenant, one Spirit and one Bible; in consideration of what they have in one God and one Christ, and of what they hope for in the heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance; for if some be advanced, others are eclipsed, and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever in amon quarrelling: but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects, they being all made to our God kings and priests, there is no occasion for contest or emulation. The more christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vain-glory, and, consequently, the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the public good. This is twice urged; (v. 21.) that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; for all knowledge is known; for without knowledge there can be no true belief. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it. They who believe at a venture, venture too far. Now Christ here shews,

(1.) His good-will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure is in everything, that he would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned, for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen, but we must in our places do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

(2.) The good fruit of the church's oneness; it will be an evidence of the truth of christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it.

[1.] In general, it will recommend christianity to the world, and to the good opinion of those that are without.

First. The embodying of christians in one society by the gospel-charter, will greatly promote christianity, when the world shall see so many of those that were its children, called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were; when they shall see

this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace, and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, We will go with you, for we see that God is with you.

Secondly, The uniting of christians in love and charity, is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them in the love that was among those primo-primitive christians, Acts 2. 42. 43. 4. 32. 33. When christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strife to cease, when it cools the fiery, softens the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficient, to all men; studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies; this will draw the world out of the errors and prejudices of neither of natural religion or natural affection in them.

[2.] In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts.

First, Of Christ: They will know and believe that thou hast sent me. By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was divine, in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love. Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashions men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one.

Secondly, Of christians: They will know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Here is, 1. The privilege of believers; the Father will himself love them with a love resembling his love to his Son, for they are loved in him with an everlasting love. 2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is, their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we love one another with a pure heart; for wherever the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do to the world, to know better how dear to God all good christians are! The Jews had a saying, If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with jewels. Those that have so much of God's love, should have more of ours.
not first sanctified; or, of that foolish burden, who began to build, and was not able to finish, as he would, if he should sanctify any, and not glorify them. 3. The manner of the request; Father, I will, Here, as before, he addresses himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but when he saith, I will, he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as does not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became him who paid for what he prayed for.

[1.] He speaks the authority of his intercession in general, as he was, with power in heaven, as well as on earth. He entering with his own blood into the holy place, his intercession there has an uncontrollable efficacy. He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne, (like Melchizedek,) a king-priest.

[2.] It speaks his particular authority in this matter; he had a power to give eternal life, (v. 23,) and pursuant to that power, he says, Father, I will. Though now he took upon him the form of a servant, yet that power being so most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, Come, ye blessed, having that in his eye, he might well say, Father, I will;

3. The request itself—that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory in his kingdom, and to worship him, which he had purchased. (1.) Under what notion we are to hope for heaven; wherein does that happiness consist? Three things make heaven:

[1.] It is to be where Christ is; where I am; in the paradise, whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens, whither his soul and body went at his ascension—where I am, am to be shortly, says he, Gal. 1:6. Now close on this.

(1.) To shew that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work—they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light; they must keep their light shining before them. (2.) To shew that they were qualified for further peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God, which the world had not.

[2.] It is to be with him, where he is; this is no tautology, but intimates that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence, that is the fulness of his joy. The very heaven of heavens is God in Christ, in company with him, and communion with him, Phil. 1:23.

[3.] It is to behold his glory, which the Father has given him. Observe,

First, The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven. That glory, before which angels cover their faces, was his glory, ch. 12:41. The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:23. Christ will come in the glory of his Father, for he is the brightness of his glory. God shews his glory there, as he does his grace here, through Christ. The Father has given me this glory; he was as yet in his low estate; but it was very sure, and very near.

Secondly, The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in the beholding of that glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person; shall see God in my flesh, Job 19:26. They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love, from whence flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an apprehending sight of Christ's glory, (Over fulget radiis mari) the eyes shine with the radiance of her husband. An astonishing sight; they shall be changed into the same glory, 2 Cor. 3:18.

(2.) Upon whose ground we are to hope for heaven; no other than purely the mediation and intercession of Christ, because he hath said, Father, I will. Our sanctification is our evidence, for he that has this hope in him, purifies himself; but it is the word of Christ that is our title, by the which we are sanctified, Heb. 10:10. Christ speaks here, as if he did not expect his own law pharse complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it, for it is the brightness of his glory, is the evidence of his Righteousness, which makes the Captain of our salvation perfect, Heb. 2:10.

5. The argument to back this request; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. This is a reason. (1) Why he expected this glory himself; Thou wilt give it me, for thou lovedst me. The honour and power given to the Son as Mediator, were founded in the Father's love to him; (ch. 15:19) the Father makes him this offer, which makes him highly pleased in his undertaking, and therefore he has given all things into his hand; and the matter being concerted in the divine counsels from eternity, he is said to love him as Mediator, before the foundation of the world. Or, (2) Why he expected that those who were given him should be with him to share in his glory; Thou lovedst me, and them in me, and causest them to be one thing I ask for thee.

11. The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified.

Two things he insists upon, and pleads.

1. The respect he had to his Father, v. 25. Observe,

(1.) The title he gives to God; O righteous Father. When he prayed that they might be glorified, he called him Father, but when he prays that they might be glorified, he calls him righteous Father; for it is a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out of all that good which the Father had promised, and the Son had purchased.

(2.) The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness; The world has not known thee. Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind, this is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here, (1.) To shew that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work—they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light; they must keep them. (2.) To shew that they were qualified for further peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God, which the world had not.

(3.) The plea he insists upon for himself; but I have known thee. Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did; knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking, knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in this prayer, conveys it with a confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here sung out blessings for those that were here his; pursuing this petition, when he had said, The world has not known thee, one would expect it should follow, but they have known thee; no, their knowledge was not to be boasted of; but I have known thee; which intimates that there is nothing in us to commend us to God, but all our interest in him, and our intercession with him, result from, and depend upon, Christ's interest and intercession. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

(4.) The plea he insists upon for his disciples; and they have known that thou hast sent me; and, [1.] Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes, to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not believe, and sent among them, who should believe? but all our interest in him, and intercession with him, result from, and depend upon, Christ's interest and intercession. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.
[2.] Hereby are they interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father: "I have known thee, immediately and perfectly; and those, though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee, yet they have known that thou hast sent me, have known that which was required of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer. Knowing Christ as sent of God, they have, in him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, Father, look after them for my sake."

The respect he had to his disciples; (v. 26.) "I have led thee into the knowledge of thee, and will do it yet more and more; with this great and kind intention, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." Observe here,

(1.) What Christ had done for them; I have declared unto them thy name. [1.] This he had done for those that were his immediate followers. All the time that he went in and out among them, he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it. The tendency of all his sermons and miracles, was, to advance his Father's honour, and to spread the knowledge of him, ch. 1. 18. [2.] This he has done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe, if Christ had not made known to them the Father's name and power. Note, We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name: he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. Secondly, Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God, he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

(2.) What he intended to do yet further for them; I will declare it. To the disciples he designed to give further instructions after his resurrection. (Acts 1. 3.) and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with divine things, by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shined, he shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, he will declare it; for to him hath that shall be given; and they that know God, by both need and desire to know him, more and more. This is fully pleaded for them: "Father, own and favour them, for they will own and honour thee."

(3.) What he aimed at in all this; not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, to secure and advance their real happiness in two things: 1. Communion with God; 'Therefore I have given them the knowledge of thy name, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, that thy love, even that wherewith thou hast loved me, may be, not only toward them, but in them.' That is, First, "Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let the Spirit of love, with which thou hast filled me, be in them." Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds, a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding, constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the leadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move toward the pole; it draws out the soul toward God, in pure and devout affections, which are as "hearts of the love of God in the soul." Secondly, "Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God's name declared to them, but, by a further declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest, that they may not only know God, but know that they know him," 1 John 2. 3. It is the love of God thus shed abroad in the heart, that fills it with joy, Rom. 5. 3, 3. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God, and communion with him; this we must pray for, this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

[2.] Union with Christ in order hereunto; and I in them. There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor by any means, but as those are kept in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love but by our experience of the indwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. It is Christ in us that is the only hope of glory, that will not make us ashamed, Col. 1. 27. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us, and our return of love to him again, passes through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of both is owing purely to him. Christ said but a little before, I in them; (v. 23.) and here it is repeated again, (though the sense was complete without it,) and the prayer closed with it, to show how much the heart of Christ was set upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this he leaves off: the Son of David, are ended; in them, I may have this, and desire no more. It is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed; it is his rest for ever, and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession. This prayer had an end, but that he ever lives to make.

CHAP. XVIII.

Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourse, but now that the time drew near that Jesus must die, he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some which the others had omitted, especially his sayings. So far were his followers from being ashamed of his cross, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was it which, both by word and writing, they were most industrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This chapter relates, I. How Christ was arrested in the garden, and surrendered himself a prisoner; hereunto he was led by the love of God, was abundantly abused in the High-Priest's court, and how Peter, in the mean time, denied him, v. 13. 27. III. How he was prosecuted before Pilate, and examined by him, and put in election with Barabbas for the favour of the people, and lost it, v. 28. 40. 1. WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. 2. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: fo: Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the Chief Priests and Phari5sees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the
ground. 7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them whom thou gavest me I have lost none.

10. Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the High-Priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 12. Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him.

The hour was now come that the Captain of our salvation, who was to be made perfect by sufferings, should enter upon his public interview with his enemies. The day of recompence is in his heart, and the year of his redemption is come, and his own arm works the salvation, for he has no second. Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight.

1. Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first; (c. 1, 2.) When he had spoken these words, our Lord stood up, and so finished his testimony, he would lose no time, but went forth immediately out of the house, out of the city, by moonlight, for the passover was observed at the full moon, with his disciples, (the eleven, for Judas was otherwise employed,) and he went over the brook Cedron, which runs between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, where was a garden, not of public, but private friend, who allowed him the liberty of it. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus entered upon his sufferings when he had spoken these words, as Matt. 26. 1. When he had finished these sayings. Here it is intimated,

(1.) That our Lord Jesus took his work before him. The office of the priest was to teach, and pray, and offer sacrifice. Christ, after teaching and praying, applies himself to make atonement. Christ had said all he had to say as a prophet, and now he addresses himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to make his soul an offering for sin; and when he had gone through that, he entered upon his kingly office.

(2.) That having by his sermon prepared his disciples for this hour of trial, and by his prayer prepared himself for it, he then courageously went out to meet it. When he had put on his armour, he entered upon the lists, and not till then. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and having a clear d in it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but he will first do that for them which is necessary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and commands, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with an unasked resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

2. That he went forth with his disciples. Judas knew what house he was in, in the city, and he could have staid and met his sufferings there; but,

(1.) He would do as he was wont to do, and not after his method, either to meet the cross or to miss it, when his hour was come. It was his custom when he was at Jerusalem, after he had spent the day in public work, to retire at night to the mount of Olives; there his quarters were, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for him in the palaces, in the heart of the town. This being his custom, he would not be put out of his method by the foresight of his sufferings, but, as Daniel, did then just as he did aforetime. Dan. 6. 10.

(2.) He was as unwilling that there should be an uproar among the people as his enemies were, so it was not his desire to make any noise or stir in the city; and in the meantime, if he had seized in the city, and a tumult raised thereby, mischief might have been done, and a dead of blood shed, and therefore he withdrew. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others with us. It is no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. They who aim at honour from men, value themselves upon a reputation to their advantage, but they who know that their blood is precious to Christ, and that not a drop of it shall be shed but upon a valuable consideration, need not stand upon such terms.

(3.) He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as he did at the end of it, of retirement from the world. Let us go forth to him with a ready heart, as to the cross. (Heb. 13. 13.) We must lay aside, and leave behind, the cares and cares, and comforts, of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God therewith.

3. That he went over the brook Cedron; he must go over that to go to the mount of Olives; but the notice taken of it intimates that there was something in it significant; and it points, (1.) At David's history and his prayer concerning the Messiah, (Ps. 118.) That he should drink of the brook in the wilderness; the brook of sufferings in the way to his glory and our salvation, signified by the brook of Cedron; the black brook, so called, either from the darkness of the valley it ran through, or the colour of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city; such a brook Christ drank of, when it lay in the way of our redemption, and therefore shall he lift up the head, his own and ours. (2.) At David's pattern, as a type of the Messiah. In his flight from Absalom, particular notice is taken of his passing over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet, weeping, and all that were with him in tears too, 2 Sam. 13. 23. 30. The Son of David, being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would not have him to reign over them, (and Judas, like Althophilus, being in the plot against him,) passed over the brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The guilty kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron; (Asa, 2 Chron. 13. 16. Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 30. 14. Josiah, 2 Kings 23. 4, 6.) into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ, being now made sin for us, that he might reconcile us, and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east side of Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where he finished them, on the west; for in them he had an eye to such as should come from the east and the west.

4. That he entered into a garden. This circumstance is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that Christ's sufferings began. It is true he entered into the garden of Eden sin began, there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised, and therefore in a garden that promised seed entered the lists with the old serpent. Christ was buried also in a garden. (1.) Let us, when we walk in our gardens, take occasion from thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all the pleasure we have in our gardens; for it is the curse upon the ground for man's sake was removed. (2.) When we are in the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expecta
tion of troubles, for our gardens of delight are in a
vain of tears.
5. That he had his disciples with him, (1.) Because he was ready to drink with them when he retired for
prayer. (2.) They must be witnesses of his suffer-
ings, and his patience under them, that they might with the more assurance and affections preach them
to the world, (Luke 24. 48.) and be prepared to suffer
themselves. (3.) He would take them into the dan-
ger to shew them their weakness, notwithstanding
his love for the first, and thereby make them more
difficulties, that he may magnify himself in their deliverance.
6. That Judas the traitor knew the place, knew it to be the place of his usual retirement, and, probably, by
some word Christ had dropped, knew that he intended
to be there that night, for want of a better closet.
A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer, and, after a passerover, a proper time to
retire for private devotion, that we may pray over the
impressions made, and the vows renewed, and clench the nail.

Mention is made of Judas’s knowing the place, (1.) To aggravate the sin of Judas, that he would betray his Master, notwithstanding the intimate acquain-
tance he had with him; nay, and that he would make more the indignant interest in Christ by giving
him an opportunity of betraying him; a generous
mind would have scorned to do so base a thing!
Thus has Christ’s holy religion been wounded in the
house of its friends, so as it could not have been wounded any where else. Many an apostle could not have been so profligate as he is, if he had not been
a professor; could not have ridiculed scriptures and
ordinances, if he had not known them.
(2.) To magnify the love of Christ, that, though
he knew where the traitor would seek him, thither
he went to be found of him, now that he knew his
hour was come. Thus he shews himself willing to
suffer and die for us. What he did was not by con-
straint, but by consent; though as man he said, Let
this cup pass away; as Mediator he said, “Lo, I
come, I come with a good will.” It was late in the
night, (we may suppose it eight or nine o’clock,) when
Judas went out to the garden; for it was not only
his meat and drink, but his rest and sleep, to do
the will of him that sent him. When others were
going to bed, he was going to prayer, going to suffer.

II. The Captain of our salvation having taken the
field, the enemy presently comes upon the spot, and
attaches Judas with a band of men, of which Judas
was the chief, commissioned by the chief priests, especially
those among them that were Pharisees, who were
the most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist
passes over Christ’s agony, because the other three
had fully related it, and presently introduces Judas
and his company that came to seize him. Observe,
1. The persons employed in this action—a band
of men, together, commissioned by the chief priests, with Judas.
(1.) Here is a multitude engaged against Christ—
a band of men, of which, some think was five hundred men,
others a thousand. Christ’s friends were few, his
enemies many. Let us therefore not follow a multi-
tude to do evil, nor fear a multitude designing evil to
us, if God be for us.
(2.) How a mixed multitude; the band of men
were Gentiles, Roman soldiers; a detachment out of
the guards that were posted in the tower of Antonia,
to be a curb upon the city; the officers of the chief
priests, (οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς;) either their domestic servants,
or the officers of their courts, were Jews; these had an
enmity to each other, but were united against Christ,
who came to reconcile both to God in one body.
(3.) It is a commissioned multitude, not a popular
mob; no, they have received orders from the chief
priests, upon whose suggestions to the governor that
this Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely, they had
a warrant from him to take him up, (for they feared
the people. See what enemies Christ and his gospel
were likely to have, numerous and potent, and therefore formidable: ecclesiastical and
civil powers combined against them, Ps. 2. 1, 2. Christ said it would be so, (Matt. 10. 18.) and found it so.
(4.) All under the direction of Judas; he received
this band of men, it is probable that he desired it,
telling them that this was the best occasion to have
good fortune, and being as ambitious of the honour of com-
manding in chief in this expedition, as he was covet-
ous of the wages of this unrighteousness. He thought
himself bravely preferred from coming in the rear
of the contemptible twelve, to be placed at the head of
these formidable hundreds; he never made such a
figure before, and promised himself, perhaps, that
this would not be the last time, but he should be re-
warded with a captain’s commission, or better, if he
succeeded well in this enterprise.

2. The preparation they had made for an attack;
they came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.
(1.) If he should abscond, though they had moon-
light, they would have occasion for their lights; but
they might have spared these; the second Adam
was never more unsaved than the first was, to seek
himself either for shame or shame, among the trees of the gar-
den. It was folly to light a candle, to seek the sun by.
(2.) If he should resist, they would have occasion
for their arms; the weapons of his warfare were
spiritual, and at those weapons he had often beaten
them, and put them to silence, and therefore they have
now recourse to other weapons, swords and swords.

III. Our Lord Jesus gloriously repulsed the first
onset of the enemy, v. 4—6, where observe,
1. How he received them, with all the mildness
imaginable toward them, and all the calmness
imaginable in himself.
(1.) He met them with a very soft and mild ques-
tion; (v. 4.) Knowing all things that should come
upon him, and therefore not at all surprised with
this alarm, with a wonderful intrepidity and pre-
sence of mind, undisturbed and undaunted, he went
forth to meet them, and, as if he had been uncon-
cerned, softly asked, “Whom seek ye? What is the
matter? What means this bustle at this time of
night?” See here, (1.) Christ’s foresight of his sufferings; he knew all those things that should
come upon him, for he had obliged himself to suffer
them, unless we had strength, as Christ had, to
bear the discovery, we should not covet to know
whatevery come upon us; it would but anticipate our
pain; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; yet
it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so
that when they come, we may say, “It is but what
we looked for, the cost we sat down and counted
unto ourselves, when we engaged to suffer.”
(2.) To profit by what we suffer; when they came
to force him to a cross, he did not run away from
them, but went out to meet them, and reached forth his hand to take the bitter
cup. When the people would have forced him to a
crown, and offered to make him a king of Galilee,
he withdrew, and hid himself; (ch. 6. 15.) but when
they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself;
for he came to this world to suffer, and went to the
place where his sufferings, and his soul to reign. This
is not as if we should deliberately expose ourselves to trouble, for we know
not when our hour is come; but then we are called
to suffering, when we have no way to avoid it, but by
sin; and when it comes to that, let none of these
things move us, for they cannot hurt us.
(2.) He met them with a very calm and mild
answer, when they told him whom they were in
quest of, v. 5. “They said, Jesus of Nazareth; and
he said, I am he.”

[1.] It should seem, their eyes were held, that they
could not know him. It is highly probable that many of the Roman band, at least the officers of the temple, had often seen him, so as to satisfy their curiosity; Judas, however, to be sure, knew him well enough, and yet none of them could pretend to say, Thou art the man we seek. Thus he showed them the folly of bringing lights to see for him, for he could make them not to know him, when they saw him; and he has herein showed us how easily he can infatuate the consuls of his enemies, and make them lose the themselves, when they are seeking mischief.

[2.] In their enquiries for him they called him Jesus of Nazareth, which was the only title they knew him by, and, probably, he was so called in their warrant. It was a name of reproach given him, to darken that he was no such man, and to show the world that his willingness to suffer. Though they called him Jesus of Nazareth, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach; he might have said, I am not he, for he was Jesus of Bethlem; but he would by no means allow equivocations. He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be ashamed of him or his words; but even in difficult times to speak our peace, and willingly to fall under his banner. I am he, I am he, I am he, the glorious name of the blessed God. (Exod. 3. 14.) and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus.

[3.] He fairly answers them, I am he. He did not improve the advantage he had against them by their blindness, as Elias did against the Syrians, telling them, This is not the way, neither is this the city of the prophet. He had already shewn his willingness to suffer. Though they called him Jesus of Nazareth, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach; he might have said, I am not he, for he was Jesus of Bethlem; but he would by no means allow equivocations. He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be ashamed of him or his words; but even in difficult times to speak our peace, and willingly to fall under his banner. I am he, I am he, I am he, the glorious name of the blessed God. (Exod. 3. 14.) and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus.

[4.] Particular notice is taken, in a parenthesis, that Judas stood with them. He that used to stand with them that followed Christ, now stood with those that fought against him. This describes an apostate: he that changes sides, he herds himself with these, with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment-day. This is mentioned, First, To shew the impudence of Judas. One would wonder where he got the confidence with which he now faced his master, and was not ashamed, neither could he blush: Satan in his heart gave him a whore's pre-ecard. Secondly, To shew that Judas was set up like a Pharaoh, and power went along with that word, I am he, to fell the aggressors; it was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming and his voice will be more terrible to apostates and betrayers than to sinners in any other class.

2. See how he terrified them, and obliged them to retire; (v. 6.) They went backward, and, like men that were struck, fell to the ground. It should seem they did not fall forward, as trembling themselves before him, and yielding to him, but backward, as standing it out to the utmost. Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man, even then when he was triumphed up in us a worm, and no man. This word, I am he, he had revived his disciples, and raised them up; (Matt. 14. 27.) but the same word strikes his enemies down. He shows his power; (v. 7.) What he could have done with them: when he struck them down, he could have struck them dead: when he spoke them to the ground, he could have spoke them to hell, and have sent them, like Kedah's company, the next way thither: but he would not do so.

[1.] Because the hour of his suffering was come, and he would not put it by; he would only show that his life was never spent, though laid it down of himself, as he had said. [2.] Because he would give an instance of his patience, and forbearance with the worst of men, and his compassion, as well as love to this very enemies. In striking them down, and no more, he gave them both a call to repent, and space to repent; but their hearts were hardened, and all was in vain.

(2.) What he will do at last with all his implacable enemies, that will not repent to give him glory; they shall fall, they shall fall before him. Now the time is come when he will make them turn their back, and Ps. 2. 8. and it will be accomplished in more and more; with the breath of his mouth he will strike the wicked. (2 Thes. 2.) Rev. 19. 21. Quod judicare fas est, quod judicat Deus facit—What will he do when he shall come to judge, seeing he did this when he came to be judged? Amos 4. 12. Having given his enemies a repulse, he gives his friend a protection, and that he has word for, 7–9, where we may observe,

1. How he continued to expose himself to their rage, v. 7. They did not yet long where they fell, but, by divine permission, got up again; it is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. When they were down, one would have thought they must have made their escape, where they were once up, one would have thought they should have let fall their pursuit; but we still find, (1.) They are as eager as ever to seize. It is in some confusion and disorder that they recover themselves, they cannot imagine what aided them: that they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin, that nothing will be upon them to reduce and subdue them. He is as willing as ever to be seized. When they were fallen before him, he did not insult over them, but, seeing them at a loss, asked them the same question, Whom seek ye? and they gave him the same answer, Jesus of Nazareth. In his repeating the question, he seems to come yet closer to their consciences; (v. 7.) Do ye not know where I seek? Are ye not aware that ye are in an error, and will ye meddle with your match? Have ye not bad enough of it, but will ye try the other struggle? Did ever any harden his heart against God and prosper? In their repeating the same answer, they showed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still called him Jesus of Nazareth, with as much disdain as ever, and Judas as unrelenting as any of them. Let us observe, that Christ, as it were, first steps at first in a small way, our hearts be hardened.

2. How he contrived to secure his disciples from their rage. He improved this advantage against them for the protection of his followers; when he shows his courage with reference to himself, I have told you that I am he, he shows his care for his disciples, Let these go their way. He speaks this as a command to them, rather than a contract with them; for they lay at his mercy, not he at theirs. He changes them therefore as the having authority; Let these go their way; it is at your peril if ye meddle with them. This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking him, and particularly Peter's denying him, the Christ had given them this pass, or warrant of protection, and yet they had not faith and courage enough to rely upon that, but they seek themselves to shield themselves and others with their own security. When Christ said, Let these go their way, he intended,

(1.) To reprove his effect to note concern for his disciples; when he exposed himself, he excused them, because they were not yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak, and their spirits low, and it would have been as much as their souls, and the lives of many of them, to bring them into such a flame now. Also were must not put into old boards. And besides, they had other work to do; they must go their way, for they are cog into all the world, to
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preach the gospel; Destroy them not, for a blessing is in them. Now heretofore, [3.] Christ gives us a great encouragement of our always following him; for though he has allotted our sufferings, yet he considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and will deliver the godly out of temptation, either from it, or through it. [2.] He gives us a good example of love to our brethren and concern for their welfare. We must not consult our own ease and safety, but our brethren’s as well as our own, and in some cases more than our own. There is a generous and heroic love, which will enable us to lay down our lives for the brethren, 1 John 3. 16.

(2.) He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as Mediator. When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape. He was our surety—a sufferer in our stead; when he said, Le 7:16, “I am the true vine,” he declared he go their way; like the ram offered instead of Isaac.

3. Now herein he confirmed the word which he had spoken a little before, (ch. 17. 12.) Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none. Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in the full extent of it, not only for them that were now with him, but for all who should believe in him through his name. It was a word. Though Christ’s keeping of them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin and apostasy, yet it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fit, for even the body was a part of Christ’s charge and care; he is to raise it up at the last day, and therefore to preserve that as well as the spirit and soul, 1 Thess. 5. 25. 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18. Christ will preserve the natural life for the service in which it is designed; it is given him to be used for him, and he will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it, whether by life or death; it shall be held in life as long as any use is to be made of it. Christ’s witnesses shall not die till they have given in their evidence. But that is not all; this preservation of the disciples was in the tendency of it, a spiritual preservation; they were now so weak in faith and resolution, that, in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer at this time, they would have shamed themselves and their Master, and some of them, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; and therefore, that he might lose none, he would not expose them. The safety and preservation of the saints is owing, not only to the grace of God in proportioning the strength to the trial, but also to the providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

V. Having provided for the safety of his disciples, he renews the rashness of one of them, and represses the violence of his followers, as he had repulsed the violence of his persecutors, v. 10, 11, where we have,

1. Peter’s grossness. He had a sword; it is not likely that he wore one constantly as a gentleman, but they had two swords among them all, (Luke 22. 38.) and Peter was intrusted with one, and he drew it, for now, if ever, he thought it was his time to use it, and he smote one of the High-Priest’s servants, who, it is likely, was one of the foremost, and aiming, it is likely, to cleave him down the head, missed his blow, and only cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus, and the greater certainty of the narrative, is recorded; it was Malchus, or Malbuch, Neh. 10. 3.

1. We must here acknowledge Peter’s good will: he had an honest zeal for his Master, though now misguided; he had lately promised to venture his life for him, and would now make his words good. Probably, it exasperated Peter to see Judas at his ease; his baseless excited Peter’s boldness, and I would have that when he did draw his sword, he did not aim at his head.

2. Yet we must acknowledge Peter’s ill-conduct; and though his good intention did excuse, yet it would not justify him. [2.] He had no warrant from his Master for what he did. Christ said, “if he must not take the sword of command, and not cut-out it; before they expose themselves to sufferings, they must see to it, not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. [2.] He transgressed the duty of his place, and resisted the powers that were, which Christ had never countenanced, but forbidden, Matt. 26. 53.

[3.] He exposed his Master’s sufferings, and, not disturbing the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, Master, spare thyself; suffering be far from thee; though Christ had told him that he must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come; thus, while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against him.

[4.] He broke the capitulation his master had lately made with them, and were to follow him in their way, he not only indented for their safety, but in effect passed his word for their good behaviour, that they should go away peaceably; this Peter heard, and yet would not be bound by. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardice when we are called to appear, so we may be of a shuffling forwardness when we are called to retire. [5.] He foolishly used it himself, and would perhaps, not without occasion of this enraged multitude; if he had cut off Malchus’s head when he cut off his ear, we may suppose the soldiers would have fallen upon all the disciples, and have hewed them to pieces, and would have represented Christ as no better than Barabbas. Thus may have been guilty of self-destruction, in their zeal for self-preservation.

[6.] Peter played the hero, so soon after this, (Telling his Master,) that we have reason to think that he would not have done this, but that he saw his Master cause them to fall on the ground, and then he could deal with them; but when he saw him surrender himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him then; whereas the true christian hero will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining; will be on the right side, though it be not the rising side.

[5.] We must acknowledge God’s over-ruling providence in directing the stroke, (so that it should do no more execution, but only cut off his ear, which was rather marking him than maiming him,) as also in giving Christ an opportunity to manifest his power and goodness in healing the hurt, Luke 22. 51. This was in danger of turning to Christ’s condemnation, and had been an occasion of that which we were much of his honour, even among his adversaries.

2. The rebuke his Master gave him; (v. 11.) Put up thy sword into the sheath, or scabbard; it is a gentle reproof, because it was his zeal that carried him beyond the bounds of discretion; he did not aggravate the matter, only bid him do so no more. Many think, when they are in grief and distress, it was expedient then, if they can get help about them; but Christ has here set us an example of meekness in sufferings. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the sword of the Spirit that was to be committed to him; weapons of warfare not carnal, yet mighty. When Christ with a word felled the aggressors, he showed Peter how he should be armed, with a sword, quick and powerful, which extended to the heart, and with that, not long after this, he laid Ananias and Saphira dead at his feet.

3. The reason for this rebuke: The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? Matthew relates another reason which Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this, which he had omitted; in which Christ gives us,

(1.) A full and of his own submission to his Father’s will. Of all that was anisss in what Peter did, he seems to resent nothing so much as that he would
have mended his sufferings now that his hour was come: "What, Peter, wilt thou step in between the cup and the life; Get thee hence, Satan." If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumptuous for Peter in word or deed to oppose it: "Shall I not drink it?" The manner of expression speaks a solemn resolution, the cup was to be drunk, and they knew it was thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of this cup, though it were a bitter cup, an infusion of the wormwood and the gall, the cup of trembling, a bloody cup, the drugged of the cup of the Lord's wrath, Isa. 51. 22. He drank it, that he might put into our hands the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of blessing; and therefore he is well paid, because his Father put it into his hand. If his Father will have it so, it is for the best, and be it so.

1. A fair pattern to us of submission to God's will in every thing that concerns us. We must pledge Christ in the cup that he drank of, (Matt. 20. 25,) and must argue ourselves into a compliance.

2. It is but a cup; a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a red sea, a dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. [3.] It is given us by a Father, who has a Father's authority, and does us no wrong; a Father's affection, and means us no hurt.

3. Having entirely reconciled himself to the dispensation, he calmly surrendered, and yielded himself. He was not sorcer, not because he could not have made his escape, but because he would not. One would have thought the care of Malchus's ear should have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. Malefactor's power, given use of, was but a mincer, that could not change it from its state, which the grandeur of the miracle could not oppose, nor the tenderness of the favour conclude. Anselm.

4. How they seized him; they took Jesus. Only some few of them could lay hands on him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were all aiding and abetting; in treason there are no accessories; all are principals. Now the scripture was fulfilled, Bulls have compassed me, (Ps. 118. 12,) compassed me like bees, Ps. 118. 12. The breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit, Lam. 4. 20. They had so often been poisoning their attempts to seize him, that now, having gotten him into their hands, we may suppose, they flew upon him with so much more violence.

5. How they secured him; they bound him. This particular of his sufferings is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that, as soon as ever he was taken, he was bound, pinioned, hand-cuffed; tradition says, "They bound him with such cruelty, that the blood started at his fingers' ends;" some bound his hands behind him, they clapped an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged him along." See Gerhard. Harm. cap. 5.

1. (This) speaks the spite of his persecutors. They bound him. [1.] That they might torment him, and put him in pain, as they bound Sannus to afflict him. [5.] That they might disace him, and make him a base thing, as God's witnesses were bound by wicked men, with his hands bound, 2 Sam. 13. 33, 54. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors with the power of his word, which galled them; and to be revenged on him, they laid these bonds on him.

2. (Christ's being bound was very significant; in us, as in other things, there was a mystery. [1.] Before they bound him, he had bound himself by his own undertaking to the work and office of a Mediator; he was already bound to the horns of the altar within cords of his own love to man, and due to his Father, else their cords would not have held him. [2.] We were bound with the cords of our iniquities, (Prov. 5. 22,) with the yoke of our transgressions, Lam. 1. 14. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound over to the judgment of God; corruption is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound under the power of Satan. Christ, being our one sin, and whether for us, to free us from these bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us, else there would have been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. To his bonds we owe our liberty, its confinement was our enlargement; thus the Son maketh us free. [3.] The types and prophories of the Old Testament were therein accomplished; Isaac was bound, that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the iron entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reoch, Ps. 105. 18. Simon was bound in order to his slaying some of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prince, Isa. 53. 8. (4.) Christ was bound, that he might bind us to duty and obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are for ever obliged to have an eye upon Christ's salvation (his friends' losses, is Christ's to us all); [5.] Christ's bonds, (Col. 4. 18,) remember them as bound with him from all sin, and to all duty. [6.] Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for him easy to us, if at any time we be called out to suffer for him, to sanctify and sweeten them, and put honour upon them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual bracelets.

13. And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the High-Priest that same year. 14. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15. And Simon Peter followed Jesus; and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the High-Priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High-Priest. 16. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the High-Priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19. The High-Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whether the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I
have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying. Answerest thou the High-Priest so? 23. Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24. Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the High-Priest. 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. 26. One of the servants of the High-Priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27. Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before the High-Priest, and some passages that occurred therein, which were omitted by the other evangelists; Peter's denying of him, which the other evangelists had given the story of entire by itself, is interwoven with the other passages. The crime laid to his charge, having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took it to fall directly under their cognizance; both Jews and Gentiles seized him, and so both Jews and Gentiles tried and condemned him, for he died for the sins of both. Let us go over the story in order.

1. Having seized him, they led him away to Annas first, before they brought him to the court, that was sat, expecting him, in the house of Caiaphas, v. 13.

1. They led him away, led him in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; led him as a lamb to the slaughter, and they led him through the sheep-gate, spoken of Neh. 3. 1. For through that they went from the mount of Olives into Jerusalem. They hurried him away with violence, as if he had been the worst and vilest of malefactors. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, and led captive by Satan at his will, and, that we might be rescued, Christ was led away, led captive by Satan's agents and instruments.

2. They led him away to their masters that sent them; it was now about midnight, and one would think they should have put him in ward, (Lev. 24. 12.) should have led him to some prison, till it was a proper time to call a court; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the justices of peace, to be committed, but to the high priest, to be confronted; so extremely violent was the prosecution, partly because they feared a rescue, which they would not only leave no time for, but give a terror to; partly because they greedily thirsted after Christ's blood, as the eagle that Hatheth to the prey.

3. They led him to Annas first; probably, his house lay in the way, and was convenient for them to call to refresh themselves, and, as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in council with the rest at that time of night, and yet earnestly desired to see the prey. To gratify him therefore with the assurance of their success, that the old man might sleep the better, and to receive his blessing for it, they preserved their prisoner before him. It is said to see them that are old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in them that do. Dr. Lightfoot thinks Annas was not present, because he was to attend early that morning in the temple, to exalt the Sacrifice which was to be offered, whether they were without blemish; if so, there was a significance in it, that Christ, the great Sacrifice, was presented to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar.

4. This Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas the High-Priest; this kindred by marriage between them, or this use of him as a minister of the church, ordered that this piece of respect should be done to Annas, to favour him with the first sight of the prisoner; or why Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter his heart was so much upon. Note, Acquaintance and alliance with wicked people are a great confirmation to many in their wicked ways.

1. Annas did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas to his house, which was appointed for the rendezvous of the Sanhedrim upon this occasion; or to the usual place in the temple, where the High-Priest kept his court; this is mentioned, v. 24. But our translators intimate in the margin, that it should come in, and, accordingly, read it there, Annas had sent him here. 1. The power of Caiaphas intimated; (v. 13.) He was High-Priest that same year. The High-Priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes by the simoniacal artificialities of aspiring men with the government, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its final period; approaching; while they were determining one another, God was overturning them all, that he might come, whose right it was. Caiaphas was High-Priest that same year when Messiah was to be cut off; which intimates, (1.) That when a bad thing was to be done by a High-Priest, according to the fore-knowledge of God, Providence so ordered it, that a bad man should be in the chair to do it. (2.) That, when God would make it to appear what corruption there was in the heart of a bad man, he put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas, that he was High-Priest that year, and so became a ringleader in the putting of Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation, and he had not been dishonoured if he had not been preferred.

The office of Caiaphas, which is intimated, (v. 14.) by the repeating of what he had said some time before, that, right or wrong, guilty or innocent, it was expedient that one man should die for the host; which refers to the story, ch. 11. 50. This comes in here, to shew, (1.) What a bad man he was; this was that Caiaphas that governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of the rules of equity. (2.) What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was adjudged before he was heard, and they were already resolved what to do with him; he must die; so that his trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's gospel are resolved, true or false, to run it down. (3.) It is a testimony to the innocence of our Lord Jesus, from the mouth of one of his worst enemies, who owned that he fell a sacrifice to the public good, and that it was not just he should die, but expedient only.

3. The concurrence of Annas in the prosecution of Christ. He made himself a partaker in guilt, (1.) With the captain and officers, that without law or mercy had bound him; for he approved it by continuing him bound, when he should have let him; he not being convicted of any crime, it being attempted an escape. If we do not what we can, to undo what others have ill done, we are accessi-
Now, [1.] This other disciple, whoever he was, showed a respect to Peter, in introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of being serviceable to his Master upon his trial, if there were occasion. Those that have a real kindness for Christ and his ways, though their temper may be reserved, and their circumstances lead them to be cautious and retired, yet, if their faith be sincere, they will discover, when they are called to it, whether they choose to adhere to him, or to do what they think a good turn. Peter perhaps had formerly introduced this disciple into conversation with Christ, and now he requires his kindness, and is not ashamed to own him, though, it should seem, he had at this time a poor downcast appearance.

[2.] But this kindness proved no kindness, nay a great dishonour; by letting him into the High-Priest’s hall, he let him into temptation, and the consequence was bad. Note, The courtesy of our friends often prove a snare to us, through a misguided affection.

2. Peter, being got in, was immediately assaulted with the temptation, and failed by it, v. 17. Observe here, (1.) How slight the attack was. It was a silly maid, of so small account, that she was only set keep the door, (as in ch. 3:26, &c.) no further than this, she only asked him carelessly, Art not thou one of this man’s disciples? Probably, suspecting it by his sheepish look, and coming in timorous. We should many a time better maintain a good cause, if we had a good heart on it, and could put a good face on it. Peter had some reason to take the alarm, if Malchus had set upon him, and had said, This is he that cut off my ear, and I will have his head for it;” but when a maid only asked him, Art not thou one of them? he might without danger have answered, And what if I am? Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, and insulted over him, upon it, these can bear but little for Christ, that cannot bear that; but is running with the footmen.

(2.) How speedy the surrender was; without taking time to recollect himself, he suddenly answered, I am not. If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, “It is my honour that I am so;” or if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence at this time, for it was an evil time. But all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure that but by a peremptory denial. I am not; he not only denies it, but even disdains, and scorns her words.

(3.) Yet he goes further into the temptation; (v. 18.) And the servants and officers stood there, and Peter with them.

[1.] See how the servants made much of themselves; the night being cold, they made a fire in the hall, not for their masters, (they were so eager in prosecuting Christ, that they forgot cold,) but for their comfort; they cared not what became of Christ, all their care was to sit and warm themselves, Am. 6. 6. [2.] See how Peter herded himself with them, and made one among them. He sat and warmed himself.

First, It was a fault had enough, that he did not attend his Master, and appear for him at the upper end of the hall, where he was called, Jerusalem, etc. He might have been a witness for him, and have confronted the false witnesses that swore against him, if his Master had called him; however, he might have been a witness to him, might have taken an exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples, who could none of them get in to hear the trial: he might have learned by his Master’s example how to carry himself when it should come to his turn to suffer thus.
yet neither his conscience nor his curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as, if, like Galileo, he cared for none of these things. And yet at the same time we have reason to think his heart was as full of grief and concern as it could hold, but he had no courage to own it. Lord, lead us not into temptation.

Secondly, It was much worse, that he joined himself with those that were his Master's enemies; he stood with them, and warmed himself; that was a poor excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company, that will be drawn to it by the love of a good fire. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not frozen, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed.

1. Because he associated himself with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless, they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done, and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not, he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret with his Master's sad disciples, and with his self; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better to abscond than appear to no purpose, or bad purpose.

2. Because he desired to be thought one of them, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, Gather not my soul among sinners. Not all the phrase of the prophets is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. They that deprecate the lot of the scornful hereafter, should dread the seat of the scornful now. It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves, Ps. 141. 4.

IV. Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny him, the High-Priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him,Meta. 29. and makes him to answer for himself, v. 19—21. It should seem, the first attempt was to prove him a seducer, and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates; and when they failed in the proof of that, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

1. The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined; v. (19.) concerning his discipuls and his doctrine. Observe,

(1.) The irregularity of the process; it was against all law and equity; they seize him as a criminal, and now that he is their prisoner, they have nothing to lay to his charge; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge must himself be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself the witness, and, against all reason and justice, is put on to be his own accuser.

(2.) Not the High-Priest, but his council; then, (see therefore, which seems to refer to v. 14.) because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice under colour of the public good, therefore he examined him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life. He examined him,

[1.] Concerning his disciples, that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dangerous to the Roman government as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples—what number they were—of what country—what were their names and characters? Injurious that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples, was, "What is now become of them all? Where are they? Why do they not appear?" Upbraiding him with their cowardice in deserting him; thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge, for it was for their sakes that he sanctified himself and suffered.

[2.] Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets, Deut. 18. 18. There was a manifest reproach in that court, (Deut. 17. 12.) there, and a plainness that would not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort something from him, which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make him an offender for some word or other, Isa. 29. 21. They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine and contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are indomitably quarrelling with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

2. The appeal Christ made, in answer to these interrogatories. (1.) As to his disciples, he said nothing; he meant to uphold him with their cowardice, no wonder that he said nothing, for

Pudet hae opprobria nobis, Et diei potuisse, et non potuisse refelli— Shame attaches, when charges are exhibited that cannot be refuted; he would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them. (2.) As to his doctrine, he said nothing in particular, but in general referred himself to the things that he had heard, being not only made known to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, v. 20, 21.

[1.] He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings; he does not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, Ye are wicked; but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they dealt fairly by him? Do ye indeed judge righteously? Ps. 58. 1. So here, Why ask ye me? Which implies two absurdities in judgment: First, "Why ask ye me now concerning my doctrine, when ye have already condemned it?" They had made an order of court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, (ch. 9. 22.) had issued out a proclamation for the apprehending of him; and now they come to ask what his doctrine is. Thus he was condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. Secondly, "Why ask ye me? Must I accuse myself, when ye have no evidence against me?"

[2.] He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself with that. The crime which the Sanhedrin by the law was to inquire after, was the clan destine spreading of dangerous doctrines, enticing secrecy, Deut. 13. 6. As to this, therefore, Christ clears himself fully.

First, As to the manner of his preaching; he spake openly, manifesta—with freedom and plainness of speech; he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles. Those that would under
We were conscious of the corruption of the age.

Sexually, as to the persons he preached to; he spoke to the world, to all that had ears to hear, and were willing to hear him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe; his doctrine feared not the censure of a mixed multitude; nor did he grudge the knowledge of it to any, (as the masters of some rare invention commonly do,) but freely communicated it, as the sun does his beams.

Thirdly, As to the places he preached in; when he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues—the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath-day—the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple at the time of the solemn feasts, when the Jews from all parts assembled there; though he often preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the sea-side, to show that his word had no respect to persons. But, he was not confined to temples and synagogues; yet what he preached in private, was the very same with what he delivered publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ, purely and plainly preached, needs not be ashamed to appear in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it. What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear; wisdom cries in the places of concourse, Prov. 1. 20. 6. 9. 3. 4. 5.

Fourthly, As to the doctrine itself; he said nothing in secret, contrary to what he said in public, but only by way of repetition and explication: in secret have I said nothing: as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he needed to be ashamed of; what he did speak in private to his disciples, he ordered them to proclaim on the house-tops, Matt. 10. 27. Ga. God saith of himself, (Isa. 45. 19.) I have not spoken in secret; his commandment is not hidden, Dent. 30. 11. And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, Rom. 10. 6. Veritas nullam mutat, nisi abscondit—Truth fears nothing but concealment. Tertullian.

[3.] He appealed to that which he had heard him, and declared they might be examined what doctrine he had preached, and whether it had that dangerous tendency that was surmised; "Ask them that heard me, what I said unto them; some of them may be in court, or may be sent for out of their beds." He means not his friends and followers, who might be presumed to speak in his favour, but, Ask any impartial hearer; ask your own officers. Some think he puts this in the mouth of his adversaries. But he, knowing what I said, referring to the report which they had made of his preaching, (ch. 7. 46.) Never man spoke like this man. Nay, you may ask some one upon the bench; for it is probable that some of them had heard him, and been put to silence by him. Note, The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right and reason on its side, that they who will judge impartially, cannot but be witness to its truth.

V. While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by, were abusing him, v. 22. 23. 1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him; though he spake with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow struck him with the palm of his hand, probably on the side of his head or face, saying, Answerest thou the High-Priest so? As if he had behaved himself rudely to the court.

(1.) He struck him, because he gave him a blow. Some think it signifies a blow with a rod or wand, from justification, or with the staff, which was the badge of his office. Now the scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 50. 6.) I gave my cheek, to be smitten, (so the Seventy,) to the word, the word was here used. And Mt. 5. 3. They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod, and shall smite him upon the cheek also. (2.) They had smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully. It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a mean servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied; and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges contumaciously and falsely as an infamous fact of force was our due; but Christ here took it to himself: "Upon me be the curse, the shame." (2.) He checked him in a haughty imperious manner; Answerest thou the High-Priest so? As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough to speak to his master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but, like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailer, and taught how to behave. Some think he was minded to ask him what right he had, and how he dared to reproach the High-Priest: others, that he meant to say, O Malechus, who owed to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But, whoever it was, it was done to please the High-Priest, and to curry favour with him; for what he said, speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the High-Priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will help forward the affliction of those whom their masters personate as successors of this High-Priest, that commanded the bystanders to smite Paul thus on the mouth, Acts 23. 2. Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness; and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him, (ch. 7. 46.) and lest he should now be thought a seditious friend to him, thus appears a bitter enemy.

2. Christ here affront this with wonderful meekness and patience; (v. 23.) "If I have spoken evil, in what I have now said, hear witness of the evil. Observe it to the court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper judges; but if well, and as it did become me, why smitest thou me?" Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dead, and he could have lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves, not to render railing for railing, but with the innocency of the dove, to bear injuries, even them when with the wisdom of the serpent, as our Saviour, we shew the injustice of them, and appeal to the majesty of heaven, and the gloom of eternity; and here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, Matt. 5. 39. is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice; but, comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, (1.) That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own cause; we must rather receive than give the second blow, when we are accused to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves; the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the public peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil-doers) is to be the avenger, Rom. 13. 4. (2.) Our resentment of injuries done us, must always be rational, and never passionate; such Christ's here was; when he suffered, he reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. (3.) When we are called out to suffering, we must accommodate ourselves to the incompe-
sions of a suffering state, with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive an-
other, and to make the best of it.

VI. While the servants were thus abusing him,
Peter was proceeding to deny him, v. 23—25. It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's suf-
firings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, v. 25.
While he was warming himself with the servants,
as one of them, they asked him, "Art not thou one
of his disciples? What dost thou here among us?"
He, perhaps, hearing that Christ was examined
about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized,
or at least smitten, as his Master was, if he should
own it, flatly denied it. And said, I am not. It was his
great folly to thrust himself into the temptation,
by continuing in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and that he had nothing
to do with. He said to warm himself; but they
that warm themselves with evil-doers, grow
cold toward good people and good things; and they
that are fond of the devil's fire-side, are in danger
of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his
Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better
than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which
many waters could not quench. Cant. 8. 6, 7.

2. He might have warmed himself with zeal for his
Mater, and indignation at his persecutors; but he
chose rather to warm with them, than to warm
against them. But how could one (one disciple) be
warm alone. Exeget. 11.

It was his great unhappiness that he was
again assaulted by the temptation; and no other
could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour,
of temptation. When the judge asked Christ about
his disciples, probably the servants took the hint,
and challenged Peter for one of them, "Answer to
thy name. See here, [1.] The subtility of the
tempter in running down one whom he saw falling
and hurrying a greater force against him; not
a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to
one temptation invites another, and perhaps a stronger.
Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground.
[2.] The danger of bad company. We commonly
study to approve ourselves to those with whom we
choose to associate ourselves; their good we
value ourselves upon, and covet to stand right in
their estimation. Choose our people we choose
our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly; we
are therefore concerned to make the first choice,
well, and not to mingle ourselves with those whom
we cannot please without displeasing God.

3. It was his great weakness, nay, it was his
great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to
say, I am not one of his disciples, as one ashamed
of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering
for it, which would have been yet more his honour.
See how the fear of man brings a snare. When
Christ was admired, and caressed, and treated with
respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prized
himself in, this, that he was a disciple of Christ, and
so put in for a share in the honours done his Master;
but thus many who seem fond of the reputation of
religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the
reproach of it; but we must take it for better and
worse.

2. He repeated the sin the third time, v. 26, 27.
Here he was attacked by one of the servants, who
was kinsman to Malchus, who, when he heard Peter
deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gave him the
lie with great assurance: "Did not I see thee in the
garage, with the common formers? Witness the man's
word." Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing
of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this
matter.

1. This third assault of the temptation was more
the than the former: before, his relation to Christ
was only suspected, here, it is proved upon him by
one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his
sword in his defence. Note, They who by sin-think
to help themselves out of trouble, do but entangle
and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be
brave, and stand with the cross: there may come when either he or we may perhaps tell the matter which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to
Malchus, because that circumstance would make it
the more a terror to Peter; "Now," thinks he, "I am
gone, my business is done, there needs no other
witness or prosecutor." We should not, if we can
help it, make any man in particular our enemy, be-
cause the ruine may come when either he or we
some of his relations may have us at their mercy.
He that may need a friend, should not make a foe. But
observe, though here was sufficient evidence against
Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial,
to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm
done him, nor attempted to be done. Note, We are
often drawn into sin by groundless causeless fears,
which there is no occasion for, and which a small
degree of wisdom and resolution would make noth-
ing of.

2. His yielding to it was no less base than the
former; He denied again. See here, [1.] The
nature of sin in general; the heart is hardened by the
decadence of it, Heb. 3. 13. It was a strange de-
gree of effrontery that Peter was arrived to on a
sudden, that he could, with such assurance stand
in a lie of the way he was, with a dear disproof;
but the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of
water; when once the fence is broken, men easily
go from bad to worse. [2.] Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful
sin, and upon that account exceeding sinful; one he
needs another to support it, and that another. It is
a rule in the devil's politics, Male facta male facta
tegere, ne herulant—To cover sin with sin, in order
to conceal sin.

3. The hint given him for the awakening of his
conscience was seasonable and happy; Immediately
the cock crew; and this is all that is here said of
his repentance, it being recorded by the other evan-
gelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing
to his mind the words of Christ. See here, [1.] The
care Christ has of those that are his, and in
building their fences: though they fall, they are not utterly
abandoned, but utterly cast off. [2.] The advantage
of having faithful remembrancers near us, who,
though they cannot tell us more than we know al-
ready, yet may remind us of that which we know,
but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to
others was an accidental thing, and had no signifi-
cancy; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and
had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by
putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28. Then led they Jesus from Caiphas
unto the hall of judgment; and it was
eary; and they themselves went not into
the judgment hall, lest they should be
defiled: but that they might eat the Passover.

29. Pilate then went out unto them, and
daid, What accusation bring ye against this
man? 30. They answered and said unto
him, If he were not a malefactor, we would
not have delivered him up unto thee. 31.
Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him,
and judge him according to your law. The
Jews therefore said unto him, It is not law-
ful for us to put any man to death: 32.
That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled,
which he spake, signifying what death he
should die. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39. But ye have a custom, that ye should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arrangement before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the praetorium. (A Latin word made Greek,) the praetor's house, or hall of judgment; thither they hurried him, to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death, they took this course. 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as a malefactor, being made sin for us. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being of all other the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indecible mark of infamy upon him, and so to sink his reputation, that they might be spared upon Cruelty him. 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invisi- dious thing to put one to death, that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing, than of the sin of it. See Acts 5, 28.

Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution:

(1.) Their policy and industry in the prosecution: It was early; some think about two or three in the morning; others about five or six; when most people were in their beds; and so there would be less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while, at the same time, they had their agents about, to call these together, whom they would influence, and make them go out against him. So much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution. Now that they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest, to push in this matter! See Mic. 2, 1.

(2.) Their superstitious and vile hypocrisy: The Chief Priests and elders, though they came along with the prosecution, yet afterwards, in effect, went into the judgment hall, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, but they should be defiled, but kept out of doors, that they might eat the passover, or the paschal lamb, (that was eaten the night before,) but the passover- fest, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, the Chagigah, as they called it, the passover-hall, spoken of Deut. 16, 2. Chr. 30, 24. 35, 8, 9. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court, for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution. This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity, to persecute Christ to the death. They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

Let us now see what passed at the judgment hall. Here is

1. Pilate's conference with the prosecuters; they are called first, and stated what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, v. 20–32.
2. The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, he went out to them into the court before the house, to talk with them. Locking up in Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:

(1.) His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment seat. Men in public trusts must not play their case.
(2.) His condensation to the humour of the people, and receiving from the honour of his place, to gratify their scruples. He might have said, "If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came;' by the same rule as we might say, "If the complainant scruple to put off his hat to the magistrate, let not his complaint be heard;' but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we should become all things to all men.

(3.) His adherence to the rule of justice, in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious: What accusation bring ye against this man? What is the crime he charge him with, and what proof have ye of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law, No quid in quibus convictiur. That we should be condemned unheard. See Acts 25, 16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man, without alleging some cause in the warrant, and much more to array a man, when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

2. The prosecuters demand judgment against him, upon a general surmise that he was a criminal; not alleging, much less proving, any particular worthiness or with bonds; or of bands; (v. 30.) If he were not a malefactor, or evil-doer, we would not have delivered him to thee to be condemned. This speaks them.

(1.) Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, a company of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so compliant to them, as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest
degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that he could; but if it had been law, they could not have answered him with more disdain.

(2.) Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus; right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty, but they will presume him guilty, who could prove himself innocent. They cannot say, "He is a traitor, a rebel, a breaker of peace," but they say, "He is an evil-doer." He an evil-doer, who went about doing good! Let those be called whom he had cured, and fed and taught; whom he had rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he was an evil-doer or no? Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the worst of malefactors.

(3.) Very proud and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up, under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient for the civil magistrate to ground a judicial sentence upon, than which what could be more fantastical?

3. The judge remained him to their own court; (v. 4.) "Thee let him, and judge him according to your own laws, and do not trouble me with him." Now,

(1.) Some think Pilate herein complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as scourging in their synagogues; whether capital or no, is uncertain; But, Pilate, "Go as far as your law will allow you, and if you go further, it shall be connived at." This he said, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, but unwilling to do them the service they required.

(2.) Others think he battered them, and upbraided them with their present state of weakness and subjection. They would be the sole judges of the guilt; "Pray," said Pilate, "if you will be so good as you have begun; you have found him guilty by your own laws; condemn him, if you dare, by your own laws, to carry on the humour." Nothing is more absurd, nor more deserves to be exposed, than for those to pretend to dictate, and boast of their wisdom, who are weak and in subordinate stations, and whose lot it is to be dictated to. Some think Pilate here reflects upon the law of Moses, as if that allowed them that which the Roman law would not by no means allow. Pilate hearing of a man unheard, "It may be, your law will suffer such a thing; but our law will not." Thus, through their corruptions, the law of God was blasphemed; and so is his gospel too.

4. They disowned any authority as judges, and (since it must be so) are content to be prosecutors. They now grow less insolent and more submissive, and own, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; we have power to take him; but we are powerless as a malefactor when we have the blood of."

(1.) Some think they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death, only by their own carelessness, and cowardly yielding to the daring iniquities of the age: so Dr. Lightfoot. Dr. Lightfoot. Dr. Lightfoot. Great error. It is not in our power to pass sentence of death upon any, till we do, we shall have the mob about us immediately.

(2.) Others think their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust to be lodged in the hands of a conquered and yet an unsubdued people. Their acknowledgement of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness; (v. 50.) but it amounts to a full evidence that the sceptre was departed from Judea, and therefore that now the Messiah was to come, Gen. 49. 10. If the Jews have no power to put any man to death, where is the sceptre? Yet they ask not, Where is the Shishah?

(3.) However, there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise but upon this occasion, That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 3. Observe.

1. In general, that even they who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings, beyond their intention, were made serviceable to the fulfilling of them by an over-ruling hand of God. As word of Christ shall fall to the ground; he can never either deceive or be deceived. Even the chief priests, while they persecuted him as a deceiver, had their spirits so directed as to help to prove him true, while they think that by taking other measures they might have defeated his predictions. Howbeit, they meant not so, Isa. 10. 7.

2. Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled, which he had spoken concerning his own death. Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled, by the Jews' declining to judge him according to their law. First, He had said that he should be delivered to the Gentiles; and that they should put him to death; (Matt. 20. 19. Mark 10. 33. Luke 18. 32.) and hereby that saying was fulfilled. Secondly, He had said that he should be cru-fied, (Matt. 20. 19.—26.) lifted up, ch. 3. 14.—12. 33. Now if they had judged him by their laws, he had been stoned; burning, branding, and beheading; were in some cases used among the Jews, but not crucifying. It was therefore necessary that Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being hanged upon a tree, he might be made a curse for us, (Gal. 3. 13.) and his hands and feet might be pierced. As the Roman power had brought him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, what death we shall die, which should free us from all disputing cares about that matter; "Lord, what, and when, and how, thou hast appointed."

II. Here is Pilate's conference with the prisoner, v. 33, 3c, where we have,

1. The prisoner set to the bar. Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus to be brought in. He was not crucified, nor slain in the sight of the people, but he might be disturbed by the noise, and ordered him to be brought into the hall; for he made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We by sin were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar; therefore, Christ, being made sin, and a curse for us, was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with him, the Gentiles, and the Jews were not entertained with that meeting with us.

2. His examination. The other evangelists tell us that his accusers had laid it to his charge, that he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and upon this he is examined.

(1.) Here is a question put to him, with a design to ensnare him, and to find out something, upon which to ground an accusation: Art thou the King of the Jews? This was so much talked of, and so long expected? Messiah, the Prince; art thou he? Dost thou pretend to be he? Dost thou call thyself, and wouldest thou be thought so? For he was far from imagining that really he was so, or making a question of that. Some think Pilate asked this with an air of scorn and contempt; What! Art thou a king, who makest so much a figure! Art thou the King of the Jews, by whom thou art thus hated and
persecuted? Art thou king de jure—of right, while the emperor is only king de facto—in fact?" Since it could not be proved he ever said it, he would constrain him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his accusers' profession.

(2.) Christ answers this question with another; not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate to consider what he did, and upon what grounds he went; (v. 34.) "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," from a suspicion arising in thy own breast, or doest others tell it thee of me, and dost thou ask it only to oblige them? Isaiah 40:26.

"It is plain that thou hast no reason to say that of thyself." Pilate was obliged by his office to take care of the interests of the Roman government, but he could not say that that was in any danger, or suffered any damage, from any thing our Lord Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed any secular power, never acted as a judge or divider; never were any traitorous principles or practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the least umbrage or suspicion.

[2.] "If others tell it thee of me, to incense thee against me, thou oughtest to consider who they are, and upon what principles they go, and whether they who represent me as an enemy to Caesar, are not really such themselves, and therefore use this only as a pretence to cover their malice; which, if, on the other hand, he be weighed by a judge that would do justice." Nay, if Pilate had been as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter, he would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus, was, because he did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done that, and would have wrought miracles to bring them out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of the Egyptian, they would have been far from siding with the Romans against him, that they would have made him their king, and have fought under him against the Romans; but he not answering this expectation of their's, they charged that upon him, which they were themselves most notoriously guilty of, disaffection to, and design against, the present government; and as such an information as this fit, of the" (Rom. 3:9–10).

(3.) Pilate presents Christ's answer, and takes it very honestly, v. 35. This is a direct answer to Christ's question, v. 34.

[1.] Christ had asked him, whether he spake of himself? "No," says he, "Am I a Jew? that thou suspectest me to be in the plot against thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, nor desire to know, and therefore interest not myself in the dispute who is the Messiah, and who not, it is all alike to me." Observe, with what disdain Pilate asks, Am I a Jew? The Jews were, upon many accounts, an honourable people; but, having corrupted the covenant of their God, he made them contemptible and base before all the people, (Mal. 2:8, 9.) so that a man of sense and honour reckoned it scurrilous to count a Jew among them. I say, the word of a priest, ought to be regarded; and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their information. Thus Christ, in his religion, still suffers by those that are of his own nation, even the priests, that profess relation to him, but do not live up to their profession.

[2.] Christ had declined answering that question, Art thou the King of the Jews? And therefore Pilate puts another question to him more general, "What hast thou done? What persuasion hast thou given to thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against thee? Surely there must be all this smoke but there is some fire, what is it?"

(4.) Christ, in his next reply, gives a more full and direct answer to Pilate's former question, Art thou a king? Explaining in what sense he was a king, but not such a king as was any ways dangerous to the Roman government, not a secular king, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, v. 36. Observe, 1. An account of the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is not of this world; it is expressed negatively what it is not, to testify the present mistakes concerning it; but the positive is implied, it is the kingdom of heaven, and belongs to another world; he is a king, and has a kingdom, but not of this world. First, Its rise is not from this world; the kingdoms of men arise out of the sea and the earth, (Dan. 7:3, 4, 18.) but his kingdom is not by succession, election, or compact, but by the immediate and special designation of the divine will and counsel. Second, Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men, (Luke 17:21.) set up in their hearts and consciences, (Eph. 6:10.) an infection of divine grace, spiritual, and all its glory within. The members of state in Christ's kingdom have not the spirit of the world, (1 Cor. 2:12.) Thirdly, Its guards and supports are not worldly; its weapons are spiritual; it need not, nor used, secular force to maintain and advance it, nor was it carried on in a way hurtful to kings or princes; it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes, or the civil powers, in their subjects; it tended not to alter any national establishment in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. Fourthly, Its tendency and design are not worldly. Christ aimed not, nor would allow his disciples to aim, at the pomp and power of the great men of the earth. Fifthly, Its subjects, though they are in the world, they are not of the world; they are called and chosen out of the world, are he from the world; they are neither the world's pupils, nor its darling; neither governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

[2.] An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom produced. If he had designed an opposition to the government, he would have fought them at their own weapons, and would have repelled force with force of the same nature; but he did not take this course; If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, and my kingdom be renounced by them. But, First, His followers did not offer to fight, there was no uproar, no attempt to rescue him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his friends and countrymen, and they generally armed; and the passover, being the great day on that occasion, was enough to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Secondly, He did not ordain them to fight; no, he forbade them; which was an evidence, both that he did not depend upon worldly aids, (for he could have summoned legions of angels into his service, which shewed his kingdom was from above,) as also that he did not dread opposition, which was a proper mark of his happiness in his kingdom, as knowing that that which would have been the destruction of any worldly kingdom, would be the advancement and establishment of his; justly therefore does he conclude, Now you may see my kingdom is not from hence; it is in the world, but not of it.
(5.) In answer to Pilate's further query, he replies yet more directly, (v. 37.) where we have,
[1.] Pilate's plain question; "Art thou a king then? Thou speakest of a kingdom thou hast; art thou then, in any sense, a king? And what colour hast thou for such a claim? Explain thyself." [2.] The good confession which our Lord Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, in answer to this; (1 Tim. 6. 13.) Thou sayest that I am a king, that is, It is as thou sayest, I am a king; for I came to bear witness of the truth.

First, He grants himself to be a king, though not in the sense that Pilate meant it. The Messiah was expected as the character of a king, Messiah the Prince; and therefore he answers Pilate in such a way as to explain that he was the Christ, he would not disown to Pilate that he was a king, lest he should seem inconsistent with himself. Note, Though Christ took upon him the form of a servant, yet even then he justly claimed the honour and authority of a king.

Secondly, He explains himself, and shews how he is a king; as he came to bear witness of the truth, he rules in the midst of men by the power of truth: If he had meant himself a temporal prince, he would have said, For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to rule the nations, to conquer kings, and take possession of kingdoms; no, he came to be a witness, a witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world, and for this is the sum of his testimony he sets up, and keeps up, his kingdom in heaven. He is a king, indeed, but of a different kind from what Pilate thought.

Secondly, Some think he speaks it as a judge, inquiring further into the cause now brought before him; "Let me into this mystery, and tell me what the truth of it is, the true state of this matter."

Thirdly, Others think he speaks it as a seer, in a hearing way; "Thou talkest of truth; causeth him then tell what truth is, or give me a definition of it. For he makes a jest of the everlasting gospel, that great truth, which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and which Christ was now witnessing to, and suffering for; and, like men of no religion, who take a pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; and therefore Christ made him no reply. Ansvter not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine. But though Christ would not tell him what truth was, he has told his disciples, and by them has told us, ch. 14. 6.

III. The result of both these conferences with the prosecutors and the prisoner, (v. 38-40.) in two things:
1. The judge appeared his friend, and favourable to him, for;
(1.) He publicly declared him innocent; (v. 38.) Upon the whole matter, I find in him no fault at all. He supposes there might be some controversy in religion between him and them; wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they; but nothing criminal appears against him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocency, was, [1.] For the justification and honour of the Lord Jesus. By this it appears, that though he was treated as the worst of malefactors, he had never merited such treatment. [2.] For the explaining of the design and intention of his death; that he did not die for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, and therefore he died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that, even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, one man should die for the people, ch. 11. 50. This is he that did no violence, neither was any deceit in him. (Is. 53. 9.) who was to be cut off, the root and foundation of sin, that came upon man, Dan. 9. 26. [3.] For the unequivocating of the sin of the Jews that prosecuted him with so much violence. If a prisoner has had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by those that are proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favour he must
be believed innocent, and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But our Lord Jesus, though brought in Not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor, and his blood thirsted for.

(2.) He proposed an expiatory for his discharge; (v. 39.) You have a custom, that I should suffer a prisoner at the passover; shall it be this King of the Jews? He proposed this not to the chief priests, (he knew they would never agree to it,) but to the multitude; it was an appeal to the people, as appears, Matt. 27. 15. Proverbiously, he had heard how these Jesus had been attended 'but the other day, with the hosannas of the common people; he therefore looked upon him to be the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus, and that would stop the mouth of the prosecutors, and all would be well.

(1.) He allows their custom, for which, perhaps, they had had a long prescription, in honour of the passover, which was a memorial of their release. But it was adding to God's words, as if he had not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance, and, though an act of mercy, might be injurious to the public. Prov. 17. 15.

(2.) He offers to release Jesus to them, according to the law, and had the best of heart and courage that became a judge, he would not have named an innocent person to be companion with a notorious criminal for this favour; if he found no fault in him, he was bound in conscience to discharge him. But he was willing to trim the matter, and please all sides; and was governed more by worldly wisdom than by the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared his enemies, and implacable against him. (v. 40.) They cried all again and again, Not this man, let him be released, but Barabbas. Observe,

(1.) How fierce and outrageous were they. Pilate proposed the thing to them calmly, as worthy their mature consideration, but they resolved it in a heat, and gave in their resolution with clamour and noise, and in the utmost confusion. Note, The enemies of Christ's holy religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down; witness the outcry at Ephesus, Acts 19. 34. But those who think the worse of things or persons, merely for their being thus excommunicated, have a very small share of constancy and consideration. Nay, there is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice on that side which calls in the assistance of popular tumult.

(2.) How foolhardy and absurd this were, intimated in the short account here given of the other candidate: Viz Barabbas was a robber; and therefore,

[1.] A breaker of the law of God; and yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders. Though Barabbas be a robber, he will not rob them of Moses' seat, nor of their traditions, and then no matter.

[2.] He was an enemy to the public safety, and personal property. The eminent power of the priests to make a tax robber (Job 30. 3. Men cried after them as after a thief.) yet here it is for one. Thus they do, who prefer their sins before Christ. Sin is a robber, every base lust is a robber, and yet foolishly chosen rather than Christ, who truly enrich us.

CHAP. XIX.

Though in the history hitherto this evangelist seems industriously to have declined the recording of such passages as had been related by the other evangelists, yet when he comes to the sufferings and death of Christ, instead of passing them over in a few of his Master's claim and cross, and looking upon them as the blemishes of his story, there he repeats what had been before related, with considerable enlargements, as one that desired to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified; to glory in nothing save in the cross of Christ. In the story of this chapter, we have,

1. The remembrance of Christ's trial before Pilate, which was tumultuous and confused, v. 1-15. 2. Sentence given, and execution done upon it, v. 16. 18. 3. The life over his head, v. 19. 21. 23. 24. 4. The care he took of his matter, v. 25. 26. 5. The giving him vinegar to drink, v. 28. 29. 6. His dying words, v. 30. 31. 7. The paring of his side, v. 31. 40. 8. The burial of his body, v. 36. 37. 9. That in meditating on these things, we may experimentally know the power of Christ's death, and the fellowship of his sufferings,

1. THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. 3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! 6. When the Chief Priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to release thee! 11. Jesus answered, Thou coudest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. 13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

Here is a further account of the unfair trial which they gave to our Lord Jesus. The prosecutors carry it on with great confusion among the people, and the judge with great confusion in his own breast;
between both the narrator is such as is not easily reduced to a method; we must therefore take the parts of it as they lie.

1. The judge abuses the prisoner, though he declares him innocent, and hopes therewith to pacify the prosecutors; wherein his intention, if indeed it were so, would consist in so justifying his proceedings, which were palpably unjust.

1 He ordered him to be whipped as a criminal, v. 1. Pilate, seeing the people so outrageous, and being disappointed in his project of releasing him upon the people's choice, took Jesus, and scourged him, that is, appointed the lictors that attended him, to do it. But in his opinion, that Pilate scourged Jesus himself, was more than the word against his own sentiments. The Roman scourgings were ordinarily very severe, not limited, as among the Jews, to forty stripes; yet this pain and shame Christ submitted to for our sakes.

(1.) That the scripture might be fulfilled, which spake of his being stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and the chastening of our flesh being upon him; (Isa. 53. 11-12.) but Christ undertook for the sinner, bearing the rod of his Father's wrath, I. 3. 1. Pilate's design in scourging him, was, that he might not be condemned, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, we having fellowship in his sufferings, and that did take effect: the physician scourged, and so the patient healed.

(2.) That by his stripes we might be healed, 1 Pet. 2. 24. We deserved to have been chastised with whips and scorpions, and to be beaten with many stripes, having known our Lord's will and not done it; but Christ undertook for the sinner, bearing the rod of his Father's wrath, I. 3. 1. Pilate's design in scourging him, was, that he might not be condemned, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, we having fellowship in his sufferings, and that did take effect: the physician scourged, and so the patient healed.

(3.) The soldiers, who were the governor's life-guard, put a crown of thorns upon his head; such a crown fitted for such a king; they put on him a purple robe, some old threadbare coat of that colour, which they thought good enough to be the badge of his royalty; and they complimented him with, Hail, King of the Jews! (as people like king,) and then smote him with their hands.

(1.) See here the baseness and injustice of Pilate, that he would suffer one whom he believed an innocent person, and if so, an excellent person, to be thus abused and trampled on by his own servants. They, who are under the arrest of the law, ought to be under the protection of it; and their being scourged is to be with their hands. But Pilate did this, [1.] To oblige his soldiers' manner of proceeding, which perhaps was his own too, notwithstanding the gravity of it ought not to have been expected in a judge. Herod, as well as his men of war, had just before done the same, Luke 23. 11. It was as good as a stage-play to them, now that it was a festival time; as the Philistines made sport with Samson. [2.] To oblige the Jews' malicious humour, and to gratify them, who desired that all possible disgrace might be done to Christ, and the utmost indignities put upon him.

(2.) See here the rudeness and insolence of the soldiers, how perfectly lost they were to all justice and humanity, to triumph over a man in misery, and one that had been in reputation for wisdom and honour, and never did any thing to forfeit it. But thus hath Christ's holy religion been basely misrepresented, dressed up by bad men at their pleasure, and so exposed to contempt and ridicule, as Christ was here. [1.] They clothe him with a crown of thorns, as if it were a shame and a jest, and nothing but a punishment. But how scarce it is credible that such a creature, which it is clear Pilate never could have designed to be a crown; to defy himself to such an abased and defiled imagination. And as Christ is here represented a king in conceit only; so is his religion as a concern in conceit only, and God and the soul, sin and duty, heaven and hell, are with them all chimera.

[2.] They crown him with thorns, as if it were a perfect penance, and the greatest pain and hardship in the world; as if to submit to the conduct of God and conscience were to thrust one's head into a thicket of thorns; but this is an unjust imputation; thorns and snares are in the way of the froward, but roses and laurels in religion's ways.

(3.) See here the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings for us. Great and generous minds can bear any thing better than ignominy; any toil, any pain, any loss, rather than reproach; and for our satisfaction. Herein he comforted his love, that he would not only die for us, but die of a fool dies. First, He endured the pain; not the pangs of death only, though in the death of the cross those were most exquisite; but, as if those were too little, he submitted to those previous pains. Shall we complain of a thorn in the flesh, and of being buffeted by affliction, because we need it to hide pride from us, when we are right? shall we be so unwise as to bear these thorns in the head, and those buffeting, and so abuse us; 2 Cor. 12. 7. Secondly, He despised the shame, the shame of a fool's coat, and the mock respect paid him, with, Hail, King of the Jews! If we be at any time ridiculed for well-doing, let us not be ashamed, but glorify God, for thus we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. He that bore these shame honours, was recompensed with real honours, and so shall we, if we patiently suffer shame for him.

II. Pilate, having thus abused the prisoner, presents him to the prosecutors, in hope that they would now be satisfied, and drop the prosecution, v. 4, 5. Here he proposes two things to their consideration. 1. That he had not found anything in him, which made him obnoxious to the Roman government; (v. 4.) I find no fault in him: sitior arius di
do not make it to much fault, or cause of ac
cusation. Upon further inquiry, he repeats the de
claration he had made, ch. 18. 38. Hereby he con
demns himself; if he found no fault in him, why did he scourge him, why did he suffer him to be abused? None ought to suffer ill but those that do ill; yet thus many banter and abuse religion, who yet, if they be serious, cannot but own they find no fault in it. If he found no fault in him, then he was scarecely obliging him to his prosecutors, and not immediately releasing him, he ought to have done? If Pilate would have consulted his own conscience only, he had neither scourged Christ, nor crucified him; but, thinking to trim the matter, to please the people by scourging Christ,
and save his conscience by not crucifying him; behold he does both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to crucify the governor, he would not have scourged him. It is common for those who think to keep themselves from greater sins by venturing upon lesser sins, to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him, which would make him the less dangerous to them and to their government, v. 3. He brought him out to them, wearing the crown of thorns, his head and face all bleeding, and said to him, Behold the man who are so jealous of; intimating, that though his having been so popular might have given them some cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen their's, yet they had taken an effectual course to prevent it, by treating him as a slave, and exposing him to contempt, after which he supposed the people would never look upon him with any respect, nor could he ever retrieve his reputation again. Little did Pilate think with what vengeance even these sufferings of Christ would in after-ages be commemorated by the best and greatest of men, who would glory in that cross and those stripes which he thought would have been to him and his followers a perpetual and indelible reproach.

(1.) Observe here how our Lord Jesus shews himself dressed up in all the marks of ignominy. He was dressed up in a crown of thorns, his head and face all bleeding; a bank of salt was heaped at, as no doubt he was, when he came forth in this garb, knowing that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, Luke 2. 34. Did he go forth thus bearing our reproach? Let us go forth to him bearing his reproach, Heb. 13. 12.

(2.) How Pilate shews him: Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. He saith unto them; so the original is, and the immediate antecedent being Jesus, I see no mistake in Gal. 4. 11. He that beareth a name of Christ is the Son of God, which is Christ's own words; he said, "Behold the man you are so exasperated against." But some of the Greek copies, and the generality of the translators, supply it as we do; Pilate saith unto them, with a design to qualify them, Behold the man; not so much to move their pity, Behold a man worthy your compassion, as to silence their jealousy. Behold a man not worthy your suspicion; a man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is profaned and cast to the ground, and now all mankind will make a jest of him.

The word however is very affecting; Behold the man. It is good for every one of us, with an eye of faith, to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. Behold this king with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him; the crown of thorns, Cant. 3. 11. "Behold him, and be suitably affected with the sight. Behold him, and mourn because of him. Behold him, and love him; be still looking unto Jesus."

III. The prosecutors, instead of being pacified, were but the more exasperated, v. 6, 7.

1. Observe here their clamour and outrage. The chief priests, who headed the mob, cried out with fury against his officers, or servants, who must say as they said, joined with them in crying, Crucify him, crucify him. The common people perhaps would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocence, but their leaders, the priests, caused them to err. Now by this it appears that their malice against Christ was, (1.) Unreasonable and most absurd, in that they offer not to make good their charge against him, or to object against the judgment of Pilate concerning him; but, though he be innocent, he must be crucified. (2.) It was insatiable and very cruel. Neither the extremity of his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the tender expostulations of the judge, could mollify them in the least; no, nor could the jest into which Pilate turned the case, put them into a pleasant humour. (3.) It was violent and exceeding resolute; they would have it their own way, and hazard the loss of the great city, and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost height of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord Jesus, and in crying, Crucify him, crucify him; and shall we be vigorous and zealous maddening his name, and in crying, Crucify him, crown him? Did their hatred of him sharpen their endeavours against him, and shall not our love to him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom?

2. The check Pilate gave to them still insisting upon the prisoner's innocence; 'Take ye him, and crucify him, if he must be crucified.' This is spoken ironically, he knew they could not, they dared not, crucify him; but it is as if he should say, 'You shall not make me a drudge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify him.' A good resolve, if he could but have stuck to it. He found no fault in him, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors. They that would be safe from sin, should be deaf to temptation. Nay, he should have secured the prisoner from their insults. What was he armed with power for, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage enough to act according to the genus of his conscience; and his cowardice betrayed him into a snare.

3. The further colour which the prosecutors gave to their demand; (v. 7.) We have a law, and by our law, if it were but in our power to execute it, he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. Now here observe,

(1.) They make his being of the law, even then, when through breaking the law they dishonoured God, as is charged upon the Jews, Rom. 2. 23. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding the statutes and judgments of other nations; but in vain did they boast of their law, when they abused it to such bad purposes.

(2.) They discover a restless and inveterate malice against our Lord Jesus. When they could not injure Pilate against him by alleging that he pretended himself a king, they charged that he pretended himself a God. Thus they turn every stone to take him off.

(3.) They pervert the law, and make that the instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a law made particularly against Christ, as if, being a law, it must be executed right or wrong; whereas there is a woe to them that do not righteous exercises, and that write the grievousness which they have prescried, Isa. 10. 1. See Mic. 6. 16. But it should rather seem they refer to the law of Moses; and if so, [1.] It was true that blasphemers, idolaters, and false prophets, were to be put to death by that law. Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God, was guilty of blasphemy, Lev. 24. 16. But then, [2.] It was false that he pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was so, and was indorsed into the proofs he produced of his being so. If he said that he was the Son of God, and the scope and tendency of his doctrine were not to draw people from God, but to bring them to him, and he confirmed his mission and doctrine by miracles, as undoubtedly he did beyond contradiction, by their law they ought to hearken to him, (Deut 18. 18, 19.) and if they did not, they were to be cast out. This which he had so long wished they might have been happy in, if they had not stood in their own light, they impute to him as a crime, for which he ought to die; yet if he ought to die by their law, he ought not to be crucified, for that was no death inflicted by their law.

IV. The judge brings the prisoner again to his trial, upon this new suggestion. Observe,
1. The concern Pilate was in, when he heard this alleged; (v. 8.) when he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, he was the more afraid. This embarrassed him more than ever, and made the case more difficult both ways; for, (1.) There was the more danger of offending the people, if he should acquit him, for he knew how jealous that people were for the unity of the godhead, and what aversion they had to other gods; and therefore, though he might hope to pacify their rage against a pretended king, he could never reconcile them to a pretended god. "If this be at the bottom of the tumult," thinks Pilate, "it will not be turned off with jests. If there were no other sin than this, he would have no shame in finding his own conscience, if he should condemn him. "Is he one," (thinks Pilate) "that makes himself the Son of God, and what if it should prove that he is so? What will become of me then?" Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found fighting against God. The heathen had some fabulous traditions of incarnate deities appearing sometimes in mortal circumstances, and treated by some of the gods paid dear for their doing. Pilate fears, lest he should thus run himself into a premunire.

2. His further examination of our Lord Jesus thereupon, v. 9. That he might give the prosecutors all the fair play they could desire, he resumed the debate, went into the judgment hall, and asked Christ, "Art thou a certain thing? Observe, (1.) The place he chose for this examination; he went into the judgment hall for privacy, that he might be out of the noise and clamour of the crowd, and might examine the thing the more closely. They that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus, must get out of the noise of prejudice, and retire as it were into the judgment hall, to converse with Christ. (2.) The question he put to him; Whence art thou? Art thou from men or from heaven? From beneath or from above? He had before asked directly, Art thou a king? But here he does not directly ask, Art thou the Son of God? lest he should seem to meddle with divine things too boldly: but in general, Whence art thou? Where wast thou? And in what world hadst thou a being, before thy coming into this world? (3.) The silence of our Lord Jesus when he was examined upon this head: but Jesus gave him no answer. This was not a sullen silence, in contempt of the court, nor was it because he knew not what to say; but,

[1.] It was a patient silence, that the scripture might be fulfilled; as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, Isa. 53. 7. This silence loudly spake his submission to his Father's will in his present sufferings, which he thus accommodated himself to, and composed himself to bear. He was silent, because he would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. If Christ had avowed himself a God as plainly as he avowed himself a king, it is probable he would not have condemned him; (for he was afraid, at the mention of it by the prosecutors;) and the Romans, though they triumphed over the kings of the nations they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods. See 1 Cor. 2. 8. If they had known him to be the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him; and how then must we have believed? [2.] It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked him, Art thou the Son of the Blessed? He answered, I am, for he knew they went upon the scriptures of the Old Testament which spoke of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked him, he knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the Son of God, and therefore to what purpose should he reply to him whose head was filled with the Jewish theology, to which he would have turned no answer?

4. The haughty check which Pilate gave him for his silence; (v. 10.) Spokest thou not unto me? Doest thou put such an affront upon me as to stand mute? What, knewest thou not, that, as president of the province, I have power, if I think fit, to crucify thee, and have power, if I think fit, to release thee? Observe here,

[1.] How Pilate magnifies himself, and boasts of his own authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, that whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, Dan. 5. 19. Men in power are apt to be puff'd up with their power, and the more absolute and arbitrary it is, the more it gratifies their pride, and humours that. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree, when he boasts that he had power to crucify one whom he had declared innocent, for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong. Id possessus, quod jure possimus.—We can only do that which we can justly do.

[2.] How he tramples upon our blessed Saviour; Spokest thou not unto me? He reflects upon him, First, As if he were unstateful and disrespectful to those in authority, not speaking when he was spoken to. Secondly, As if he had been ungrateful to one that had been tender of him; Spokest thou not unto me when I laboured to release thee? Though as if he were unworthy for himself; "Wilt thou not speak to clear thyself to one that is willing to clear thee?" If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which he had to do, was to lay down his life. (5.) Christ's pertinent answer to this check, v. 11.

[1.] He boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake; Big as thou lookest and talkest, thou couldst have no power at all against me; no power to scourge, no power to crucify, except it were given thee from above. Though Christ did not think fit to answer him when he was argumentative, (then answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like him,) yet he did think fit to answer him when he was interrogative; then answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit, Prov. 26. 4, 5. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but when he grew proud of it, he made him know himself; "All the power thou hast, is given thee from above," which may be taken two ways.

First, As reminding him that his power in general, as a magistrate, was a limited power, and he could do no more than God would suffer him to do. God is the fountain of power; and the powers that are, as they are ordained by him, and derived from him, so they are subject to him. They ought to go no further than his law directs them; they can go no further than his prevalence permits them. They are God's hand, and his sword, Ps. 17. 15. Though the axe may lie ready against him that hateth him, yet still it is but a tool, Isa. 10. 5, 15. Let the proud oppressors know that there is a higher than they, to whom they are accountable, Ex. 5. 8. And let this silence the murmuring of the oppressed, It is the Lord; (God has bid Shimei curse David;) and let it comfort them, that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them. See Isa. 13. 12, 13. Secondly, As informing him that his power against him in particular, and all the efforts of that power, were by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, Acts 2. 23. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon such a prisoner as this, who was looked upon by many as the Son of God and King of Israel, and had
the fate of so great a man at his disposal; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, and could do nothing against him but by the appointment of heaven, Acts 4. 27, 28. 12. He mildly excuses and extenuates his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ringleaders; "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee, liest under greater guilt; for thou as a magistrate hast power from above, and art in the place, thy sin is less than their's, who, from envy and malice, urge thee to abuse thy power."

First, It is plainly intimated that what Pilate did, was sin, a great sin, and that the force which the Jews put upon him, and which he put upon himself in it, would not justify him. Christ hereby intended a hint for the awakening of his conscience, and the increase of the fear he was now under. The guilt of others will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say, that others were worse than we, for we are not to be judged by comparison, but must bear our own burden.

Secondly, Yet their's that delivered him to Pilate, was the greater sin; by this it appears that all sins are not equal, but some more heinous than others; some comparatively, as gnats, others as camels; some comparatively, as flies, others as beams; some as pence, others as pounds. He that delivered Christ to Pilate, was either,

1. The people of the Jews, who cried out, Crucify him, crucify him; they had seen Christ's miracles, which Pilate had not: to them the Messiah was first sent, they were his own, and to them who were now enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome, and therefore it was much worse in them to appear against him than in Pilate.

2. Or rather he means Caiaphas in particular, who was at the head of the conspiracy against Christ, and first advised his death, ch. 11. 49, 50. The sin of Caiaphas was abundantly greater than the sin of Pilate. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ from pure enmity to him and his doctrine, deliberately and of malice prepense. Pilate condemned him purely for fear of the people, and it was a hasty resolution which he had not time to cool upon.

3. Some think Christ means Judas; for though he did not immediately deliver him into the hands of Pilate, yet he betrayed him to those that did. The sin of Judas was, upon many accounts, greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ, Judas was his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in him: but Judas knew a debt of gratitude by him, Pilate, though biassed, was not bribed, but Judas took a reward against the innocent; the sin of Judas was a leading sin, and let in all that followed. He was a guide to them that took Jesus. So great was the sin of Judas, that vengeance suffered him not to live; but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was gone to his own place.

V. Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, but in vain. We hear no more after this of any thing that passed between Pilate and the prisoner; what remains, lay between him and the prosecutors.

1. Pilate seems more zealous than before to get Jesus discharged: (v. 12.) from henceforth, from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given him that answer, (v. 11.) which, though it had a rebuke in it, yet was not to his disadvantage; and the Jews, which were to condemn him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but sought to release him, desired it, endeavoured it; he sought to release him, he contrived how to do it handsomely and safely, and so as not to displease the priests. It never does well, when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have long seeking to release him; but would have done it. But justice is the calm—let justice be done, though heaven itself should fail.

2. The Jews were more furious than ever, and more violent to get Jesus crucified. Still they carry on their design with noise and clamour as before; so now they cried out. They would have it thought that the commonalty was against him, and therefore laboured to get him cried down by a multitude, and that the people were hard, not to take a man for whom it was believed a fair poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carried by a great majority for the releasing of him. A few madmen may out-shout many wise men, and then fancy themselves to speak the sense (when it is but the nonsense) of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to change the sense of the people as it is to misrepresent it, or to change their cry. Now that Christ was in the hands of his enemies, his friends were shy and silent, and disappeared; and those that were against him, were forward to shew themselves so, and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring vote of all the Jews, that he should be crucified. In this outcry they endeavoured two things.

1. To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Caesar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, had declared his kingdom not to be of this world, and yet they will have it that he speaks against Caesar; thus he opposes Caesar; invades his dignity and sovereignty. It has always been the artifice of the enemies of religion, to represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both. (c.) To frighten the judge, as no friend to Caesar; "If thou let this man go unpunished, and let him go on, these are not Caesar's friend, and therefore false to thy trust and the duty of thy place, and obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure, and liable to be turned out." They intimate a threatening that they would inform against him, and get him displaced; and here they touched him in a sensible and very tender part. But of all people those Jews should not have pretended a concern for Caesar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. They should not talk of being friends to Caesar, who were themselves such back friends to him; yet thus a pretended zeal for that which is good, often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

2. When other expedients had been tried in vain, Pilate slightly endeavoured to bate them out of their fury, and yet, in doing that, betrayed himself to them, and yielded to the rapid stream, v. 13-15. After he had stood it out a great while, and seemed now as if he would have made a vigorous resistance upon that attack, (v. 12.) he basely surrendered. Observe here,

(v. 13.) What it was that shocked Pilate; (v. 13.) When he heard that saying, that he could not be true to Caesar's honour, nor sure of Caesar's favour, if he did not put Jesus to death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had said to prove Christ a malefactor, and that therefore it was Pilate's duty to condemn him, did not move him, but he still kept to his conviction of Christ's innocence; but when they urged that it was his interest to condemn Christ, that he might make himself a friend and a party to the Roman king, he was shocked. They that bind up their happiness in the favour of men, make themselves an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

(c.) What preparation was made for a definitive sentence upon this matter; Pilate brought Jesus forth, and he himself in great state took the chair; we may suppose that he called for his robes, that he might look big, and then he sat down in the judg-
ment seat. He was condemned with all the ceremony that could be. [1.] To bring us off at God's bar, and that all believers through Christ, being judged here, might be acquitted in the court of heaven. [2.] To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers might be brought to for his causa profe: or, might the better stand at Caesar's judgment seat, when his Master had stood there before him.

Notice is here taken of the place and time.

1. The place where Christ was condemned; in a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha, probably the place where he used to sit to the priests' and scribes' examinations. Some make Gabbatha to signify an enclosed place, fenced on all sides with the insula of the people, whom therefore he did the less need to fear; others, an elevated place, raised that all might see him.

2. The time. The hour, i. e. a part of the day. It was the preperation of the passover, and about the sixth hour. Observe, 1. The day: it was the preparation of the passover, the six for the passover-sabbath, and the solemnities of that, and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from Luke 23. 54. It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. So that this preparation was for the sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preperation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin in persecuting Christ with so much malice and fury; and it was when they should have been purging out the old leavens, to make ready for the passover; but the better the day the worse the deed.

3. The hour: it was about the sixth hour. Some ancient Grecian and Latin manuscripts read it about the third hour, which agrees with Mark 15. 25. And it appears by Matt. 27. 43. that he was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it should seem to come in here, not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin of his prosecutors, that they were pushing on the prosecution, not only on a solemn day, the day of the preparation, but from the third to the sixth hour, which was, as we call it, church-time; on that day they were employed in this wickedness, so that for this day, though they were priests, they dropped the temple-service, for they did not leave Christ until the sixth hour, when the darkness began, which frightened them away. Some think that the sixth hour, with this evangelist, is, according to the Roman reckoning and our six of the clock in the morning, answering to the Jews' first hour of the day; this is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, which was then a little after sun-rising.

[1.] The reponent Pilate had with the Jews, both priests and people, before he proceeded to give judgment, endeavouring in vain to stem the tide of their rage.

[2.] They cried out with the greatest indignation, Away with him, away with him, which speaks disdain as well as malice, ἀφεντε ἀνατρεψται. "Take him, he is none of our's; we disown him for his kinsman, much more for our king; we have not only no veneration for him, but we compassion not, even him out of our sight;" for so it was written of him, he is one whom the nation abhors, (Isa. 49. 7.) and they hid as it were their faces from him, Isa. 53. 2, 3.

[3.] Away with him from the earth, Acts 22. 22. This shews, First, How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal; we were by sin become odious to God's holiness, which cried, Away with him, away with him, for God is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity; we were also become obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us, "Crucify them, crucify them, let the sentence of the law be executed." Had not Christ interposed, and been thus rejected of men, we had been for ever rejected of God. Secondly, It shews how we ought to treat our sins; we are often in scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death; now that they that crucified Christ, did it with greatest obstinacy. With what abominable indignation should we run down sin in us, as they with an impious indignation ran him down, who was made sin for us. The true penitent casts away from him his transgressions, Away with him, away with them, (Isa. 2. 20. -20. 22.) crucify them, crucify them; it is not fit that they should live in my soul, Hos. 14. 12.

[4.] Pilate, willing to have Jesus released, and yet that it should be their doing, asks them, Shall I crucify your king? In saying this, he designed either, First, To stop their mouths, by shewing them how small it was for them to reject one who offered himself to them to be their king, at a time when they needed one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a deliverer? Though he saw no cause to fear him, they might see cause to hope for something from him; since crushed and sinking interests are ready to catch at any thing. Or, Secondly, To stop the mouth of his own conscience; "If this Jesus be a king," (thinks Pilate,) "he is only king of the Jews, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of him to them; if they refuse him, and have not their King yet, what is to be done to me?" He banters them for their folly in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that did so fair to be he.

[5.] The chief priests, that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify him, but otherwise sorely against their will, cried out, We have no king but Caesar. This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though at the same time they hated Caesar and his government. But observe here, First, What a plain indication this, that the time for the Messiah to appear, even the set time, was now come; for if the Jews have no king but Caesar, then is the scipire departed from Judah, and the leader from between his feet, which should never be till this, but come some day upon a spiritual kingdom. And Secondly, What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans, which followed not long after. 1. They adhere to Caesar, and to Caesar they shall go. God soon gave them enough of their Caesars, and, according to Jotham's parable, since the trees choose the bramble for their king, rather than the vine and the olive, an evil spirit is sent among them, for them to taste and see. 2. From henceforward they were rebels to the Caesars, and the Caesars tyrants to them, and it ended in the overthrow of their place and nation. It is just with God to make that a scourge against us, which we prefer before Christ. 2. They would have no other king
than Caesar, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now above many days without a king, and without a prince, (Hos. 3. 4.) without any of their own, but the kings of the nations have ruled over them: since they will have no king but Caesar, so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it.

16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. 17. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: 18. Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

We have here sentence of death passed upon our Lord Jesus, and execution done soon after. A mighty struggle Pilate had had within him between his convictions and his corruptions; but at length his convictions yielded, and his corruptions prevailed, the fear of man having a greater power over him than the fear of God.

I. Pilate gave judgment against Christ, and signed the warrant for his execution, v. 16. We may see here,

1. How Pilate sinned against his conscience; he had again and again pronounced him innocent, and yet he condemned him as guilty. Pilate, therefore, was condemn’d of, in his principles dis-obliged and exasperated the Jewish nation, for he was a man of a haughty, implacable spirit, and extremely wedded to his humour. He had seized upon the Corinthians, and spent it upon a water-work; he had brought in shields stamped with Caesar’s image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had sacrificed the lives of many to his resolutions herein; for thereby he should have been composing of, for those and other insensibilities, he was willing to gratify the Jews. Now this makes the matter much worse. If he had been of an easy soft and placable disposition, his yielding to so strong a stream had been the more excusable; but for a man that was so wilful in other things, and so fierce a resolution, to be overcome in a thing of this nature, shews him to be a bad man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his conscience than the crossing of his humour. Caesar, therefore, when it pleased him, did as he pleased.

2. How he endeavoured to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He delivered him, not to his own officers, (as usual,) but to the prosecutors, the chief priests and elders; so excising the wrong to his own conscience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Christ to death, but only connived at those that did it.

3. How Christ was made sin for us. We deserved to have been condemned; but Christ was condemned for us, that to us there might be no condemnation. God was now entering into judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into judgment with his servants.

II. Judgment was no sooner given, than with all possible expedition the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time. 1. Lest Pilate should change his mind, and order a reprieve. These are enemies to our souls, the worst of enemies, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. Lest there should be an uproar among the people, and there should have been a greater number against them, than they had with so much artifice got to be for them.

It were well if we would be thus expedients in that which is good, and not stay for more difficulties.

(1.) They immediately hurried away the prisoner. The chief priests greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for; now it is drawn into their net. Or they, that is, the soldiers who were to attend the execution, they took him, and led him away to the place where they had laid up the cross, and thence to the place of execution, as is usual with us, but directly to the place of execution.

Both the priests and the soldiers joined in leading him away. Now was the Son of man delivered into the hands of men, wicked and unreasonable men. By the law of Moses (and in appeals by our law) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, Deut. 17. 7. And the priests here were proud of the matter. His bearing led the Avenger of all, to pronounce and say, that he was made a sacrifice; and to the slaughter, Acts 8. 32. We deserved to have been led forth with the workers of iniquity as criminals to execution, Ps. 125. 5. But he was led forth for us, that we might escape.

(2.) To add to his misery, they obliged him, as long as he was able, to carry his cross, (v. 17.) according to the custom among the Romans; hence Faireser was among them a name of reproach. Their crosses did not stand up constantly, as our gibbets do in the places of execution; because the malefactor was nailed to the cross as it lay along upon the ground, and then it was lifted up, and fastened in the earth, and removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; so that few of these crosses were then to be seen. Now Christ’s carrying his cross may be considered, [1.] As a part of his sufferings; he endured the cross literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber, that was necessary for such a use, and some think it was neither seasoned nor hewn. The blessed body of the Lord Jesus was tender, and accustomed to such burdens; it had now lately been harassed and tired out. His shoulders were sore with the weight of the cross, and his back was torn with the nails which joined him to the cross. The cross would renew his smart, and be apt to strike the thorns he was crowned with into his head; yet all this he patiently underwent, and it was but the beginning of sorrows. [2.] As answering the type which went before him; Isaac, when he was to be offered, carried the wood on which he was to be bound, and with which he was to be burned. [3.] As very significant of his undertaking, the Father having laid upon him the iniquities of his people, and of his nation, Isa. 53. 4, and 59. 1. [4.] As very instructive to us. Our Master hereby taught all his disciples to take up their cross, and follow him. Whatever cross he calls us out to bear at any time, we must remember that he bore the cross first, and by bearing for us, bear it from us in a great measure, for thus he hath made his yoke easy, and his burden light. He bore that end of the cross that had the curse upon it, that was the heavy end; and thence all that are his, are enabled to call their afflictions for him light, and out for a moment.

(3.) They brought him to the place of execution; he went forth, not dragged against his will, but voluntary in his sufferings. He went forth out of the city, for he was crucified without the gate, Heb. 13. 12. And to put the greater infamy upon his sufferings, he was brought to the common place of execution, as one in all points numbered among the transgressors; a place called Golgotha, the place of a skull, where they threw dead men’s skulls and bones, or where the heads of beheaded malefactors were left; and a place, concerning which we are told, that Christ suffered, because he was made sin for us, that he might purge our consciences from dead works, and the pollution of them. If one would
take notice of the traditions of the elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the ancient writers concerning this place. [1.] That Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of his skull, and they observed that there where death triumphed over the first Adam, the second Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition, Origin, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Austin, Jeron, and others. [2.] That this was that mountain in the land of Moriah, on which Abraham offered up Isaac, and the ram was a ransom for Isaac.

4. There they crucified him, and the other malefactors with him; (v. 18.) There they crucified him. Observe, First, What death Christ died; the death of the cross, a bloody, painful, shameful death, a cursed death. He was nailed to the cross, as a sacrifice bound to the altar, as a Saviour fixed for his undertaking; his ear nailed to God’s door-post, to serve him for ever. He was lifted up, as the brazen serpent, hung between heaven and earth, because we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. His hands were stretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the tree some hours, dying gradually in the full use of reason and speech, that he might actually resign himself a sacrifice. Secondly, In what company he died; two other with him. Probably, those had not been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priests, to add to the disgrace of our Lord Jesus; which might appear the more severely for our reproach, and that the merit might appear to be his only. His exposing him much to the people’s contempt and hatred, who are apt to judge of persons by the lump, and are not curious in distinguishing, and would conclude him not only a malefactor because he was voked with malefactors, but the worst of the three, because put in the midst. But thus the scripture was fulfilled; he was numbered among the transgressors. He did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but he died among the criminals, and mingled his blood with their’s who were sacrificed to public justice.

And now let us pause a while, and with an eye of faith look upon Jesus. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him, who was clothed with glory, stripped of it all, and clothed with shame; him, who was the praise of angels, made a reproach of men; him, who had been with eternal delight and joy in the bosom of his Father, now in the extremities of pain and agony. See him bleeding, see him struggling, see him dying, see him and love him, love him and live to him, and study what we shall render.

19. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21. Then said the Chief Priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. 23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. 25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. 28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Christ’s dying, more fully related than before, which they will take special notice of, who covet to know Christ, and him crucified.

1. The title set up over his head. Observe, 1. The inscription itself which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross, disclosing the cause for which he was crucified, v. 19. Matthew called it, σημείον—σήματος; Mark and Luke called it, ἀνάγλυφον; the inscription; John calls it by the proper Latin name, inscriptio; it was this, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Pilate intended this for his reproach, that he, being Jesus of Nazareth, should pretend to be King of the Jews, and set up in competition with Cæsar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honour and interest, when he would treat but a titular king, a king in metaphor, as the worst of malefactors; but God over-ruled this matter, (1.) That it might be a further testimony to the innocence of our Lord Jesus; for here was an accusation, which, as it was worded, conveyed nothing. If this be that, if this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (2.) That it might shew forth his dignity and honour. This is Jesus Σαβ價值, Ναζαρηνης, the blessed Nazarene, sanctified to God; this is the King of the Jews, Messiah the Prince, the sceptre that should rise out of Israel, as Balaam had foretold; dying for the good of his people, as Cæphas had foretold. Thus all these three had men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription: (v. 20.) Many of the Jews read it, not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, strangers and proselytes, that came up to worship at the feast. Multitudes read it, and it oc-
casoned a great variety of reflections and speculations, as men stood affected. Christ himself was set for a sign, a title.

Here are two reasons why the title was so much read.

(1.) Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, was yet nigh the city; which intimates that if it had been any great distance off, they would not have been led, no not by their curiosity, to go and see it, and read it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors.

(2.) Because it was written in Hebrew and Greek, and Latin, which made it legible by all; they all understood one or other of these languages, and none were more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews generally were. It likewise made it the more considerable; every one would be curious to inquire what it was, which was so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the Hebrew, the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek, the learning of the philosophers; and Latin, the laws of the empire. In each of these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of revelation, wisdom, and power; God ordering it, that this should be written in the three then most known tongues; it was intimated thereby, that Jesus Christ should be a Saviour to all nations, and not to the Jews only; and also that every nation should一道 into the wonderful works of the Redeemer. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are the vulgar languages at that time in this part of the world; so that this is so far from intimating (as the Papists would have it) that the scripture is still to be retained in these three languages, that on the contrary it teaches us that the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, as the proper vehicle of it, that people may converse as freely with the scriptures as they do with their neighbours.

3. The offence which the prosecutors took at it, v. 21. They would not have it written, the king of the Jews; but that he said of himself, I am the king of the Jews. Here they shewed themselves, (1.) Very spiteful and malicious against Christ. It was more than enough to have him crucified, but they must have some excuse to justify themselves in giving him such bad treatment. They ought themselves concerned to give him a bad character and to represent him as an usurper of honours and powers that he was not entitled to. (2.) Foolishly jealous of the honour of their nation; though they were a conquered and enslaved people, they stood so much upon the punctilio of their reputation, that they scourged to have it said, that this was their king. (3.) They shew themselves very inproper and troublesome to Pilate; they could not but be sensible that they had forced him, against his mind, to condemn Christ, and yet, in such a trivial thing as this, they continue to tease him. It was so much the worse, in that, though they had charged him with pretending to be the king of the Jews, yet the proof did not prove it, nor had he ever said so.

The judge's resolution to adhere to it; *What I have written I have written, and will not alter it to humour them.*

(1.) Hereby an affront was put upon the chief priests, who would still be dictating. It seems, by Pilate's manner of speaking, that he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it; and therefore he was resolved to be cruel with them; and by this inscription intimates, [1.] That Jesus, notwithstanding their pretences, they were not sincere in their ascriptions to Caesar and his government; they were willing enough to have a king of the Jews, if they could have one to their mind. [2.] That such a king as this, so mean and despicable, was good enough to be the king of the Jews; and this would be the fate of all who should dare to oppose the Roman power.

[3.] That they had been very unjust and unreasonable in prosecuting this Jesus, when there was no fault to be found in him.

(2.) Hereby the honour was done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate stuck to it with resolution, that he was the King of the Jews; what he had written, was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter; for thus it was written, that Messias the Prince shall be cut off, Dan. 9. 26. This therefore is the true cause of his death; he dies, because the King of Israel must die, must thus die. When the king of Israel is crucified, and will not have him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, says, in effect, that he is a king; which was an earnest of what came to pass twenty years after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of Messiah, which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled against.

11. The dividing of his garments among the executioners, v. 23, 24. Four soldiers were employed, when they had crucified Jesus, had nailed him to the cross, and had wound him up, and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done, but to leave him to suffer the extremity of pain, as, with us, when the prisoner is turned off, then they went to make a dividend of his clothes, each claiming an equal share, and so they made four parts, as near of the same value as they could, to every soldier a part; but his coat, or upper garment, whether it be known, being a pretty piece of curiosity, without seams, was cast for the draughtsman, they agreed to cast lots for that. Here observe,

1. The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus, in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He therefore who was made sin for us, bare that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with white raiment, (Rev. 1:6.) and that when we are unclad, we may not be found naked.

2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ. They were willing to do it for his old clothes. Nothing is to be done so bad, but there will be found men bad enough to do it for a trifle. Probably, they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cores wrought by the touch of the hem of his garments, speculating that his admirers would give any money for them.

3. The sport they made about his seamless coat; we read not of anything about him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for the richness, but only the variety of it, for it was woven from the top throughout; there was no curiosity therefore in the shape, but a contrived plainness, Tradition says, his mother wove it him, and adds this further, that it was made for him when he was a child, and, like the Israelis' clothes in the wilderness, was woven old; but that is a groundless fancy. The soldiers thought it pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they would therefore cast lots for it. While Christ was in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his sobs.

The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to, to shew the care all Christians ought to take, that they rend not the church of Christ with strifes and divisions; yet some have observed, that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat, was not out of any respect to Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it entire for himself. And so many cry out against schism, only that they may enslave all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome, urged
much the tunique incontinens—the spotless coat; and some of them had so much upon it, that they were called the Incontinents of St. Mark. and
the Tunique incontinens, or the scripture in this, David, in spirit, foretold this very circumstance of Christ's sufferings, in that passage, Ps. 22. 18. The event so exactly answering the prediction, proves, (1.) That the scripture is the word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so long before, and they came to pass according to the prediction. (2.) That Jesus is the true Messiah he speaks of. The fulfilling of the scripture concerning the Messiah had, and have, their full accomplishment. These things therefore the soldiers did.

III. The care that he took of his poor mother.
1. His mother attends him to his death; (v. 25.) There stood by the cross, as near as they could get, his mother, and some of his relations and friends with her. At first, they stood near, as it is said here; but, it is probable, afterward the soldiers forced them to stand far off, as it is said in Matthew and Mark; or they themselves removed out of the ground.

(1.) See here the tender affection of those pious women to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings. When all his disciples, except John, had forsaken him, they continued their attendance on him. Thus the feeble were as David, (Zech. 12. 8.) they were not deserted by the host of the enemy, or the power of the sight; they could not rescue him or relieve him, yet they attended him, to show their good-will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some of the popish writers put upon the Virgin Mary standing by the cross, that thereby she contributed to the satisfaction he made for sin, no less than he did, and so become a joint-mediatrix and co-redemptrix in our salvation.

(2.) We must easily suppose what an affliction it was to those poor women, to see him thus abused, especially to the blessed virgin. Now was fulfilled Simon's word, A sword shall pierce through thine own soul, Luke 2. 35. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack, while he was upon the cross; and her heart bled with his wounds; and the reproaches with which they reproached him, fell on them that attended him.

(3.) We may justly admire the power of divine grace in supporting these women, especially the Virgin Mary, under this heavy trial. We do not find his mother wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or rending her clothes, or making an outcry, but, with a wonderful composure, standing by the cross, and her heart bled with his; and she were strengthened by a divine power to this degree of patience; and surely the Virgin Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest had, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, My grace is sufficient for thee.

2. He tenderly provides for his mother at his death. It is probable that Joseph, who had, was long, and thine his son, Jesus, had supported her, and her relation to him had been her maintenance; and now that he was dying, what would become of her? He saw her standing by, and knew her cares and griefs, and he saw John standing not far off, and so he settled a new relation between his beloved mother, and his beloved disciple; for he said to her, Woman, behold thy son; for whom henceforth I have no more concern with the world, do you take him, Rebol thy mother; to whom thou must pay a filial duty. And so from that hour, that hour never to be forgotten, that disciple took her to his own home. See here.

(1.) The care Christ took of his dear mother. He was not so much taken up with a sense of his sufferings as to forget his friends; all whose concerns he bore upon his heart. His mother, perhaps was so taken up with his sufferings, that he thought not what would become of her; but he admitted that thought. Silver and gold he had none to leave, no estate to entail, or his mother the soldiers had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas, who had carried it, hanged himself. He had therefore no other way to provide for his mother, than by his interest in a friend, which he does here.

(1.) He calls her woman, not mother, not out of any disrespect to her, but because mother would have been a cutting word to her that was already stricken to the heart with grief; like Isaac saying to Abraham, My father. He speaks as one that was now no more in this world, but was already dead to those in it that were dearest to him. His speaking in this seemingly slight manner to his mother, as he had done formerly, was designed to obviate and give check to the undue honours which he foresaw would be given her in the Romish church, as if she were a joint-purchaser with him in the honours of the Redeemer.

(2.) He directs her to look upon John as her son; Behold him as thy son, who stands there by thee, and be as a mother to him. See here, First, An instance of divine goodness, to be observed for our encouragement. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raises another for us, perhaps in a better and a better form. John, the beloved disciple, was often designated by the name of his dear mother, the Virgin Mary. And a special care for the children and the children of the church, and the children of the world. But, (2.) It would be a care and some charge to John; but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home, not objecting the trouble or expense, or his obligations to his own family, or the ill-will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are loved of him, will be glad of an opportunity to do any service to him, or his. Needy Peter's care of his dear brother, and his sister-in-law, Mat. 8. 5. 9. that the Virgin Mary lived with John, Jesus twelve years, and then died. Others, that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus.

IV. The fulfilling of the scripture, in the giving of him vinegar to drink, v. 28, 29. Observe,
1. How much respect Christ showed to the scripture; (v. 28.) Knowing that all things hereafter were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst; that is, he called for drink.

(1.) It was not at all strange that he was thirsty; we find him thirsty in a journey, (ch. 4. 6, 7.) and now thirsty when he was just at his journey's end. Well might he thirst, after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone, and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire purely by the loss of blood and extremity of pain. The tokens of
hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man that he begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we have been accustomed, had not Christ suffered for us.

(2.) But the reason of his complaining of it is somewhat surprising; it is the only word he spake, that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings. When they scourged him, and crowned him with thorns, he did not cry, O my head! or, My back! But now he cried, I thirst. For, [1.] He would thus express the travail of his soul, Isa. 53. 11. He thirsted after the punishing of God, and the accomplishment of our righteousness, and the happy issue of his undertaking. [2.] He would thus take care to see the scripture fulfilled. Hitherto, all had been accomplished, and he knew it; for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along; and now he called to mind one thing more, which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears that he was the Messiah, in that not only the scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly obeyed by him. By this it appears that God was with him of a truth—that in all he did, he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets.

Now, First, The scripture had foretold his thirst, and therefore he himself related it, because it could not otherwise be; and he said, I thirst; it is foretold that his tongue should cleave to his jaws. Ps. 22. 15. Sassen, an eminent type of Christ, when he was laying the Philistines heap upon heap, was himself sore athirst; (Judg. 15. 18.) so was Christ, when he was upon the cross, spilling principalities and powers.

Secondly, The scripture had foretold that in his thirst he should have vinegar given him to drink, Ps. 69. 21. They had given him vinegar to drink before they crucified him, (Matt. 27. 34.) but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore now he said, I thirst, and called for it again; then he would not drink, but now he received it. Christ would neither court an affront than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will of God is done, and the word of God accomplished.

2. See how little respect his persecutors showed to him; (v. 29.) There was set a vessel full of vinegar, probably, according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, it was now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine, which they used to give to them that were ready to perish; with that they filled a sponge, for they would not allow him a cup, and they put it upon his head, a heaped stalk, and with that heaved it to his mouth; in. 29: they stuck it round with husks; so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with husks-water, and this they gave him to drink when he was thirsty; a drop of water would have cooled his tongue better than a draught of vinegar; yet this he submitted to for us; we had taken the sour grafter, and thus his truth was more acceptable; we were perchance all comforters and refreshments, therefore they were withheld from him; when heaven denied him a beam of light, earth denied him a drop of water, and put vinegar in the room of it.

V. The dying word wherewith he breathed out his soul; (v. 30.) When he had received the vinegar, as much of it as he thought fit, he said, I is finished; and with that, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Observe, 1. What he said, and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation, reshaved—It is finished, a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one.

(1.) It is finished, that is, the toil and woe of his persecutors had now done its worst; when he had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave him, he said, This is the last; I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling.

(2.) It is finished, that is, the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled: it was a determinate counsel, and he took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered, Acts 2. 25. He had said, when he entered upon his sufferings, Father, thy will be done; and now he said with pleasure, It is done. It was his final and drink his work, (ch. 4. 34.) and the meat and drink refreshed him, when they gave him gold and vinegar.

(5.) It is finished, that is, all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, were accomplished and answered. He speaks as if, now that they had given him the vinegar, he could not be himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled between him and his death, but it had its accomplishment; such us, his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, his hands and feet being pierced, and his garments being divided; and now that this is done, It is finished.

(4.) It is finished, that is, the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it. The substance is come, and all the shadows are done away. Just now the veil of partition is taken down, even the veil of commandments, contained in ordinances, Eph. 2. 14, 15. The Mosaic economy is dissolved, to make way for a better hope.

(5.) It is finished, that is, sin is finished, and an end made of transgression, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. It seems to refer to Dan. 9. 24. The Lamb of God was slaughtered to take away the sin of the world, and it is done, Heb. 9. 26.

(6.) It is finished, that is, his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul, and those of his body; the storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to paradise, entering upon the joy set before him. Let all that suffer for Christ and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while, and they also shall say, It is finished.

(7.) It is finished, that is, his life was now finished, he was just ready to breathe his last, and now he is no more in this world, ch. 17. 11. This is like that of blessed Paul, (2 Tim. 4. 7.) I have finished my course, my race is run, my glass is out, mene, mene—numbered and finished. This we must all come to shortly.

(8.) It is finished, that is, the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a fountain of grace opened, that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid, that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and finished it, ch. 17. 14. For, as for God, his work is perfect; (ch. 19.) the moment I began (saith he) I finished it.

And as in the purchase, so in the application, of the redemption, he that has begun a good work, will perform it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

2. What he did; He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the sacrifice, but the priest and the offerer; and the animus offerentis—the mind of the offerer—was all in all in the sacrifice. He showed his will in his sufferings; by the which will we are sanctified.

(1.) He gave up the ghost. His life was not forcibly extorted from him, but freely resigned. He
had said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit; thereby expressing the intention of this act. I give up myself as a ransom for many; and, accordingly, he did give up his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands. Father, glory the name.

2. He bowed his head. They that were crucified, in dying stretched up their heads to gasp for breath, and did not drop their heads till they had breathed their last; but Christ, to shew himself active in dying, bowed his head first, comprising himself, as it were, to fall asleep. God had laid upon him the mighty of all, putting upon him the burden of the whole world, and some think that by this bowing of his head he would intimate his sense of the weight upon him. See Ps. 38. 4—10. 12. The bowing of his head shews his submission to his Father's will, and his obedience to death. He accommodated himself to his dying work, as Jacob, who gathered up his feet into the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.

31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. 35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he kneweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken. 37. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

This passage concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death, is recorded only by this evangelist.

1. Observe the superstition of the Jews which occasioned it; v. 31. Because it was the preparation for the sabbath, and that sabbath-day, because it fell in the passover-week, was a high day, that they might shew a veneration for the sabbath, they would not have the dead bodies to remain on the cross on the sabbath-day, but besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, which would be a certain, but cruel dispatch, and that then they might be buried out of sight.

Note here, 1. The esteem they would be thought to have for the approaching sabbath, because it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and (some reckon) the day of the offering of the first-fruits. Every sabbath-day is a holy day, and a good day, but this was a high day, perhaps greater.a great day. Passover sabbaths are high days; sacrament-days, supper-days, communion-days, are high days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them, that these may be high days indeed to us, as the days of heaven.

2. The reproach which they reckoned it would be to that day, if the dead bodies should be left hanging upon the cross. Dead bodies were not to be left at any time; (Dent. 21. 23.) yet, in this case, the Jews would have left the Roman custom to take place, had it not been an extraordinary day: and many strangers from all parts being then at Jerusalem, it would have been an offence to them; nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's crucified body, for, unless their consciences were quite seared, a sight of it might breed in their rage a little over, they would upbraid them.

3. Their petition to Pilate, that their bodies, now as good as dead, might be dispatched; not by strangling or beheading them, which would have been a compassionate hastening them out of their misery, like the coup de grace (as the French call it) to them that are broken upon the wheel, the stroke of the bowels, or the use of any such instruments; but would carry them off in the most exquisite pain. Note, (1.) The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. (2.) The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard to the sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice and righteousness; they made an conscience of bringing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the cross.

II. The dispatch of the two thieves that were crucified with him, v. 32. Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired; and the soldiers came, hardened against all impressions of pity, and broke the legs of the two thieves, which, no doubt, extorted from them hideous outcries, and made them die according to the bloody disposition of the Roman law. Nero, so as to feel themselves secure. One of these thieves, though crucified, and had not crucified himself, had an assurance that he should shortly be with him in paradise, and yet died in the same pain and misery that the other thief did; for all things come alike to all; many go to heaven, that have hands in their death, and die in the bitterness of their soul. The extremity of dying agues is no obstruction to the living comforts that wait for holy souls on the other side death. Christ died, and went to paradise, but appointed a guard to convey him thither. This is the order of going to heaven—Christ, the first-fruits and forerunner, afterward they that are Christ's.

III. The trial that was made whether Christ was dead or no, and the putting of it out of doubt.

1. They supposed him to be dead, and therefore did not break his legs, v. 33. Observe here, (1.) That Jesus died less than persons crucified ordinarily did. The structure of his body, his being extraordinarily fine and tender, was the sooner broken by pain; or, rather, it was to show that he laid down his life of himself, and could die when he pleased, though his hands were nailed. Though he yielded to death, yet he was not conquered. (2.) That his enemies were satisfied he was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have omitted this piece of cruelty, if they had not been sure he was got out of the reach of it. (3.) Whatever devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand. It was fully destined to break his legs, but, God's counsel being otherwise, see how it was prevented.

2. Because they would be sure he was dead, they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute, that the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, aiming at his heart, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, v. 34.

(1.) The soldier hereby designed to decide the question whether he was dead or no, and, by this honourable wound in his side, to supersede the ignominious method of dispatch they took with the other two. Tradition says that this soldier's name was Longinus, and that, but having put his spear into his eyes, he was immediately cured of it, by some drops of blood that flowed out of Christ's side lighting on them: significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story. (2.) But God had a further design herein, which was,
[1.] To give an evidence of the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If he was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but, by this experiment, he was certainly dead, for this spear broke up the very fountains of life, and, according to the law and course of nature, it was impossible a human body should survive such a wound in the vitals, and such an evacuation thence.

[2.] To give an illustration of the design of his death. There was much of mystery in it, and its being so solemnly attested, (v. 35.) intimates there was something miraculous in it, that the blood and water, which were separately and separately for the same wound; however, that was very significant; this same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, 1 John 5. 6, 8.

First, The opening of his side was significant. When we would protest our sincerity, we wish there were a window in our hearts, that the thoughts and intents of them might be visible to all. Through this window, opened in Christ's side, you may look into his heart, see love flaming there, love strong as death; see our own names written there. Some make it an allusion to the opening of Adam's side in innocence. When Christ, the second Adam, was fallen into a deep sleep upon the cross, then was his side opened, and out of it was his church taken, which he espoused to himself. See Eph. 5. 30, 32. Our poet, Mr. George Herbert, in his poem called The Barge, very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when his side was pierced, thus speaking to his disciples:

If ye have any thing to send, or write, (I have no bag, but here is room,) Unto my Father's hands and sight (Believe me) it shall safely come. Then I shall mind what you impart, Look, you may put it very near my heart; Or if hereafter any of my friends Will use me in this kind, the door Shall still be open; what he sends I will present, and somewhat more, Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey Any thing to me. Hark, Despair, away.

Secondly, The blood and water that flowed out of it were significant:

1. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ—justification and sanctification having the law and course of regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification. Blood and water were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by blood; stains contracted must be done away by the water of purification. These two must always go together. Ye are sanctified, ye are justified, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to part them asunder. They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe both merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

2. They signify the two great ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed, and applied to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ. It is not the water in the font that will be to us the washing of regeneration, but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience and refresh the soul, but the blood out of the side of Christ. Now was the rock smitten, (1 Cor. 10. 4.) now was the fountain opened, (Zech. 13. 1.) now were the wells of salvation digged, Isa. 12. 3. Here is the river, the streams where make glad the city of our God.

IV. The atestation of the truth of this by an eyewitness, (v. 35.) the evangelist himself. Observe,

1. What a competent witness he was of the matter of fact. (1.) What he bare record of he saw; he had it not by hearsay, nor was it only his own conjecture, but he was an eye-witness of it; it is what we have seen and looked upon, (1 John 1. 1.) and had perfect understanding of, Luke 1. 3. (2.) What he saw he faithfully bore record of; as a faithful witness, he told not only the truth, but the whole truth; and did not only attest it by word of mouth, but left it upon record in writing, in perpetuum rei memoriam—an unaging memorial. (3.) His record is undoubtedly true; for he wrote not only from his own personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. (4.) He had himself a full assurance of the truth of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself; he knows that he saith true. (5.) He therefore witnessed these things, that we might believe; he did not record them merely for his own satisfaction or the private use of his friends, but made them public to the world; not to please the curious or entertain the ingenious, but to draw men to believe the gospel in order to their eternal welfare.

2. What care he shewed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured, both of the truth of Christ's death, he saw his heart's blood, his life's blood, let out; and also of the benefits that flow to us from his death, signified by the blood and water which were very shortly after this silence the fears of weak christians, and encourage their hopes, iniquity shall not be their ruin, for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, How can we be sure of this? You may be sure, for he that saith it bare record.

V. The accomplishment of the scripture in all this; (v. 36.) that the scripture should be fulfilled, not only of the Old Testament preserved, and the truth of the New Testament confirmed. Here are two instances of it together.

1. The scripture was fulfilled in the preserving of his legs from being broken; therein that word was fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (1.) There was a promise of this made indeed to all the righteous, but principally pointing at Jesus Christ the righteous; (Ps. 31. 5.) He keepeth all his bones, none of them is broken. (2.) And David, in spirit, says, All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee? Ps. 35. 10.

(2.) There was a type of this in the paschalt lamb, which seems to be especially referred to here, (Exod. 12. 46.) Neither shall ye break a bone therefor; and it is repeated, (Numb. 9. 12.) Ye shall not break any bone of it; for which law the will of the law-maker is the reason, but the antitype must answer the type. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5. 7. He is the Lamb of God, (ch. 1. 59.) and, as the true passover, his bones were kept unbroken. This commandment was given concerning his bones, when dead, as of Joseph's, Heb. 11. 22.

(3.) There was a significance in it; the strength of the body is in the bones. The Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength, and therefore not a bone of Christ's body be broken, lest though he be crucified in weakness, his strength to save is not at all broken. Sin breaks our bones, it broke David's, (Ps. 51. 8.) but it did not break Christ's bones; he stood firm under the burden, mighty to save.

2. The scripture was fulfilled in the piercing of his side; (v. 57.) They shall look on him whom they have pierced; so it is written, Zech. 12. 10. And there the same that pears out the shunt of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, says, They shall look upon me, which is here
applied to Christ, They shall look upon him. (1.) It is here implied that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment than in the piercing of his hands and feet; he was pierced by the Sanhedrim in the house of his friends, as it follows, Zech. 13. 6. (2.) It is promised that when the Spirit is poured out, they shall look on him and mourn. This was in part fulfilled, when many of those that were his betrayers and murderers, were troubled to the heart, and brought to believe in him; but the number of those that were pierced in the very, when all Israel shall be saved; and in wrath, when they who persisted in their inidelity, shall see him whom they have pierced, and wail because of him, Rev. 1. 7. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of piercing the Lord Jesus, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on him.

38. And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet lay’d. 42. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation-day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

We have here an account of the burial of the blessed body of our Lord Jesus. The solemn funerals of great men are looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of dear friends are attended with concern. Come and see an extraordinary funeral; never was the like! Come and see a burial that conquered the grave, and buried it, a burial that beautified the grave, and softened it for all believers! Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight. Here.

1. The body begg’d, v. 38. This was done by the interest of Joseph of Arimathea, or Arimathaea, of whom no mention is made in all the New Testament story, but only in the narrative which each of the evangelists gives us of Christ’s burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Observe, 1. The character of this Joseph. He was a disciple of Christ invisible,—in secret, a better friend to Christ than the public could know him to be. It was his honour that he was a disciple of Christ; and some such there are, that are themselves great men, and unavoidably linked with bad men; but it was his weakness that he was so secretly, when he should have confessed Christ before men, yet though he had lost his preferment by it. Disciples should openly own themselves, yet Christ may have many that are his disciples sincerely, though secretly; better secretly than not at all, especially if, like Joseph here, they grow stronger and stronger. Some who in lesser trials have been timorous, yet in greater have been very courageous; so Joseph here. He concealed his affection to Christ for fear of the Jews, lest they should put him out of the synagogue, at least out of the Sanhedrim, which was all they could do. To Pilate the governor he went boldly, and yet feared the Jews. The impotent malice of those that can but censure, and revile, and clamour, is sometimes more formidable even to wise and good men than one would think.

2. The part he bore in this affair. He, having by his place access to Pilate, desired leave of him to dispose of the body. His mother and dear relations have neither spirit nor interest to attempt such a thing. His disciples were gone; if nobody appear, the Jews or soldiers would bury him with the thieves; therefore God raised up this gentleman to interpose in it, that the scripture might be fulfilled, and the doctrine presented to his approaching resurrection maintained. Note, When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it, and spirit them for it. Observe it as an instance of the humiliation of Christ, that his dead body lay at the mercy of a heathen judge, and must be begged before it could be buried; and also that Joseph would not take the body of Christ till he had asked and obtained leave of the governor; for in those things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned, we must ever pay a deference to that power, and peaceably submit to it.

II. The embalming prepared, v. 39. This was done by Nicodemus, another person of quality, and in a public post. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, which, some think, were bitter ingredients, to embalm the body, others fragrant ones, to perfume it. Here.

1. The character of Nicodemus, which is much the same with that of Joseph; he was a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. He at first came to Jesus by night, but now owned him publicly, as before, ch. 7. 50, 51. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed, may afterward become like a shining lamp; and the twinblooding lamb doth a bison. See Rom. 14. 4. It is a wonder that Joseph and Nicodemus, men of such interest, did not appear sooner, and solicited Pilate not to condemn Christ, especially seeing him so loath to do it. Begging his life would have been a nobler piece of service than begging his body. But Christ would have none of his friends to endeavour to prevent his death when his hour was come. While his persecutors were forwarding the accomplishment of the scriptures, his followers must not obstruct it.

2. The kindness of Nicodemus, which was considerable, though of a different nature. Joseph served Christ with his interest, Nicodemus with his purse. Probably, they agreed it between them, that while one was procuring the grant, the other should be preparing the spices; and that for expediency, because they were straitened in time. But why did they make this ado about Christ’s dead body?

(1.) Some think we may see in it the weakness of their faith. A firm belief of the resurrection of Christ the third day, would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all their services. If Christ was a long time buried, when Christ has a long home, need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one that, like a way-faring man, did but turn aside into it, to tarri for a night or two?

(2.) However, we may plainly see in it the strength of their love. Hereby they shewed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not passes’d by the reproach of the cross. They that had been so industrious to profane his crown, and lay his honour in the dust, may already see that they imagine a vain thing; for as God had done him honour in his sufferings, so did men too, even great men. They shewed not only the charitably respect of committing his body to the earth, but the honourable respect shewed to great men. This
they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do the helic and expectation of it. Since God designed honour for this body, they would put honour upon it. However, we must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own time and frame of this matter.

I. The body got ready, v. 40. They took it into some house adjoining, and, having washed it from blood and dust, wound it in linen clothes very decently, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as the manner of the Jews is to bury, or to embalm, (so Dr. Hammond,) as we near dead bodies.

Here was care taken of Christ's body; it was wound in linen clothes. Among other clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the grave-clothes, to make them easy to us, and to enable us to call them our wedding-clothes. They wound the body with the spices, for all his garments, his grave-clothes not excepted, smelled of marjoram and aloes, (the spices here mentioned,) out of the rocky palaces; (Ps. 45. 8,) and an ivory palace the sepulchre hewn out of a rock, to Christ. Dead bodies and graves are unsome and offensive; hence sin is compared to a body of death and an open sepulchre; but Christ's sacrifice, being to God as a sweet-smelling savour, hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or fire-fame can quench the heart, as the grave of our Redeemer does, where there is life to perceive the fragrant odours of it.

The case of Christ, to this example, we ought to have regard to the dead bodies of Christians; not to enshrine and adore their relics, no not those of the most eminent saints and martyrs, (nothing like that was done to the dead body of Christ himself,) but carefully to deposite them, the dust in the dust, as those who believe the dead bodies of the saints are still united to Christ, and designed for glory and immortality at the last day. The resurrection of the saints will be in virtue of Christ's resurrection, and therefore in burying them we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for he, being dead, thus spaketh, Thy dead men shall live, Is. 26. 19. In burying our dead, it is not necessary, that in all circumstances we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, and in a garden, and be embalmed as he was; but he being buried after the manner of the Jews, we may, in burying others, do that which the custom of our country where we live, except in those that are superstitious.

IV. The grave pitched upon in a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathaea, very near the place where he was crucified. There was a sepulchre, or vault, prepared for the first occasion, but not used. Observe,

1. This was Christ's grave, without the city, for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury, not in their cities, much less in their synagogues, which some have thought better than our way of burying; yet there was then a peculiar reason for it, which does not hold now, because the touching of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution; but now that the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, and done away its pollution for all believers, we may well keep a grave, keeping it a dead place, and thus it incapable of a good improvement, to have the congregation of the dead in the church yard, encomposing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and in the midst of life we are in death. Those that would not superstitionly, but by faith, visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the midst of this world.

2. The sepulchre hewn in a garden. Observe,

(1.) That Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden; so he contrived it, that it might be a memorandum,

[1.] To himself while living; when he was taking the pleasure of his garden, and reaping the products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish us with a proper object for meditation, and such a one as we are both to admit in the midst of our pleasure.

(2.) To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the place of our father's sepulchres; and perhaps we might make our own less formidable, if we made theirs more familiar.

(3.) That in a sepulchre in a garden Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden, death and the first man was buried; but in the garden they are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden he would rise, and begin his exhibition. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, (ch. 12. 24,) and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for his dew is as the dew of herbs, Isa. 26. 19. He is the fountain of gardens, Cant. 4. 15.

3. That he was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, (1.) For the honour of Christ; he was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. He that was born from a virgin womb, must rise from a virgin tomb. (2.) For the confirming of the truth of his resurrection; that it might not be suggested that it was not he, but some other that those new, many new garments, which has resounded, that he rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has made all things new has new-made the grave for us.

V. The funeral solemnized; (v. 42.) There laid they Jesus, that is, the dead body of Jesus. Some think the calling of that Jesus, intimates the inseparable alliance between the dead body and the sepulchre. Even this dead body was Jesus—a Saviour, for his death is our life; Jesus is still the same, Heb. 13. 8. There they laid him because it was the preparation day.

1. Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover-sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been kept by the chief priests and scribes, to ensure, by the solemnity of the sabbath, that they were well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. (1.) They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath-day, because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. (2.) They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done on the evening before the sabbath, should be so contrived, that it may neither intrude upon sabbath-time, nor indispose us for sabbath-work.

2. Observe the convenience they took of an adjoining sepulchre; the sepulchre they made use of, was nigh at hand. Perhaps, if they had had time, they would have carried him to Bethany, and buried him among his friends there. And I am sure he had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David than any of the kings of Judah had; but it was so ordered, that he should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand. (1.) Because he was to lie there but a while, as in an inn, and therefore he took the first that offered itself. (2.) The reason was because this was a new sepulchre. They that prepared it, little thought who should handle it; but the wisdom of God has reaches infinitely beyond ours, and makes what use he pleases of us among all we have. (3.) We are hereby taught not to be over-curios in the place of our burial. Where the
tree falls, why should it not lie? For Christ was buried in the sepulchre that was next at hand. It was in the promise of Canaan, that directed the Patriarchs desires to be carried thither for a burying-place; but now that that promise is superseded by a better, that care is over.

This without pomp or solemnity is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our Saviour undisturbed for our debts, till if he be released, his discharge will be ours. Here is the spot of righteousness set for a while, to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; for here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered. Thank's be to God who giveth us the victory.

CHAP. XX.

This evangelist, though he began not his gospel as the rest did, yet concludes it as they did, with the history of Christ's resurrection; not of the thing itself, for none of them describe how he rose, but of the proofs and evidences of it, which demonstrate that he was risen. The proofs of Christ's resurrection, which we have in this chapter, are:

1. Such as occurred immediately at the sepulchre. 1. The sepulchre found empty, and the grave-clothes in good order, v. 11. 2. Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, v. 11. 12. 3. Christ himself appearing to her, v. 14. 18. 11. Such as occurred afterward at the meetings of the apostles. 1. At one, the same day at evening that Christ rose, when Thomas was absent, v. 19. — 25. 2. At another, that day seven-nights, when Thomas was with them, v. 26. — 31. What is related here, is mostly what was omitted by the other evangelists.

1. THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, — 7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one thing which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof of than the resurrection of their Master. 1. Because that was it which he himself had appealed to as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. They that would not believe other signs were referred to this sign of the prophet Jonas. And therefore his enemies were most solicitous to stifle the notice of this, because it was put on this issue; and if he be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Because this was that upon which the performance of his undertaking for our redemption and salvation did depend. If he give his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it does not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a satisfaction. If he be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by, it we are undone, 1 Cor. 15. 17. 3. Because he never shewed himself after that he rose from the dead. Acts 10. 40. 41. We should have said, "Let his ignominious death be private, and his glorious resurrection public." But God's thoughts are not as our's; and he ordered it that his death should be public before the sun, by the same token that he blushed and hid his face upon it. But the demonstrations of his resurrection should be reserved as a favour for his particular friends, and by them be published to the world, that they might be blessed, who have not seen, and yet have believed. The method of proof is such as gives abundant satisfaction to those who are piously disposed to receive the doctrine and law of Christ, and yet leaves room for those to object, who are willingly ignorant and obstinate in their unbelief. And this is a fair trial, suited to the nature of the thing.

In these verses, we have the first step toward the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is, that the sepulchre was found empty. He is not here, and if so, they must tell us where he is, or we conclude him risen.

1. Mary Magdalene, coming to the sepulchre, finds the stone taken away. This evangelist does not mention the other women that went with Mary Magdalene, but her only, because she was the most active and forward in this visit to the sepulchre, and in her appeared the most affection; and, 1. It was an affection kindled by a good cause, in consideration of the great things Christ had done for her. Much was forgiven her, therefore she loved much. 2. She had shewed her affection to him while he lived, attended his doctrine, ministered to him of her substance, Luke 8. 2, 3. It does not appear that she had any business now at Jerusalem, but to wait upon him, for the women were not bound to go up to the feast, and, probably, she and others now followed him the closer, as Elisha did Eliphaz, now that they knew their master should shortly be taken from their head, 2 Kings 2. 1, 2. 3. The continued instance is, that if the length of time at a place, or an aspect to which he had adjured, were to prove the sincerity of her love. Note, Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant. Her love to Christ was strong as death, the death of the cross, for it stood by that; cruel as the grave, for it made a visit to that, and was not deterred by its terrors. 1. She came to the sepulchre, to wash the dead body with her tears, for she went to the grave, to "weep there, and to mourn and to wail with the mourning that she had prepared. The grave is a house that people do not care for making visits to. They that are free among the dead, are separated from the living; and it must be an extraordinary affection to the person, which will endure his grave to us. It is especially frightful to the weak and timorous sex. Could she, that had not strength enough to roll away the stone, prove herself strong enough to roll the stone that is the grave? The Jews' religion forbade them to meddle any more than needs must with graves and dead bodies. In visiting Christ's sepulchre she exposed herself, and perhaps the disciples, to the suspicion of a design to steal him away; and what real service could she do him by it? But her love answers these and a thousand such objections. Note, 1. Much study to do honour to mind in those things wherein yet we cannot be profitable to him. 2. Love to Christ will take off the terror of death and the grave. If we cannot come to Christ but
through that darksome valley, even in that, if we love him, we will fear no evil.

(3.) She came as soon as she could, for she came,

1. Upon the first day of the week, as soon as the sabbath was gone, having not slept even to set forth without, (as Amos 8.5,) but to be at the sepulchre.

2. That she loved Christ, will take the first opportunity of testing the, their respect to him. She had spent the day before in commemorating the work of creation; and therefore rested; but now she is upon search into the work of redemption, and therefore makes a visit to Christ, and him crucified.

3. She found the stone away, which she had seen rolled to the door of the sepulchre. Now this was,

1. A surprise to her, for she little expected it.

2. Christ crucified is the fountain of life, his grave one of the wells of salvation, if we come to it in faith, though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up; we shall find the stone rolled away. (as Gen. 49.10.) and free access to the comforts of it. Surprising comforts are the frequent encouragements of early seekers.

3. It was the beginning of a glorious discovery; the Lord was risen, though she did not at first apprehend it so. Note, First, They that are most constant in their adherence to Christ, and most diligent in their inquiries after him, have commonly the first and sweetest notices of the divine grace. Mary Magdalene, who followed Christ to the last of his humiliation, met him with the first in his exaltation. Secondly, God ordinarily reveals himself and his comforts to us by degrees; to raise our expectations and quicken our inquiries.

II. Finding the stone away, she hastens back to Peter and John, who, probably, lodged together at that end of the town, not far off, and acquaints them with it; "They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, envying him the honour of such a decent burying place, and we know not where they have laid him, nor where to find him, that we may keep the remainder of our last respects." Observe here,

1. What a notion Mary had of the thing as it now appeared; she found the stone gone, looked into the grave, and saw it empty. Now one would expect that the first thought that offered itself, should have been, Surely the Lord is risen; for whenever he had told them that he should be crucified, which she had now heard, was in the same breath, that the third day he should rise again. Could she feel the great earthquake that happened as she was coming to the sepulchre, or getting ready to come, and now see the grave empty, and yet have no thought of the resurrection enter into her mind; what, no conjecture, no suspicion of it? So it seems by the construction she puts upon the moving of the stone, which was very far fetched.

Note, When we come to reflect upon our own conduct in a cloudy and dark day, we shall stand amazed at our dulness and forgetfulness, that we could miss of such thoughts, as afterward appear obvious, and how they could be so far out of the way, when we had occasion for them. She suspected, They have taken away the Lord; either the chief priests have taken him away, to put him in a worse place; or Joseph and Nicodemus have, upon second thoughts, taken him away, to avoid the ill-will of the Jews. Wherever was her suspicion, it seems, it was a great vexation and disturbance to her, that the body was gone; whereas, if she had understood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. Note, Weak believers often make that the matter of their complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. We cry out that this and the other have been stolen away, whereas we are not so industrious how to retrieve them, when indeed the removal of our temporal comforts, which we lament, is in order to the resurrection of our spiritual comforts, which we should rejoice in too.

2. What a narrative she made of it to Peter and John. She did not stand poring upon the grief herself, but acquaints her friends with it. Note, The communication of sorrows is one good improvement of the communion of saints. Observe, Peter, though he had denied his Master, had not deserted his Master's friends; by this appears the sincerity of his repentance, that he associated with the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the disciples keeping up their intimacy with him as formerly, notwithstanding his fall, teaches us to restore those with a spirit of meekness, that have been faulted. It God has forgiven them upon their repentance, why should not we?

III. Peter and John go with all speed to the sepulchre, to satisfy themselves of the truth of what was told them, and to see if they could make any further discoveries. v. 3, 4. Some think that the other disciples were with Peter and John when the news came; for they told these things to the eleven, Luke 24.9. Others think that Mary Magdalene told her story only to Peter and John, and that the other women told their's to the other disciples; yet none of them went to the sepulchre but Peter and John, who were two of the first three of Christ's disciples, often distinguished from the rest by special favours. Note, It is well when these that are more honoured than others with the privileges of disciples, are more active than others in the duty of disciples, more willing to take pains, and run hazards in a good work.

1. See here what use we should make of the experience and observations of others. When Mary told them what she had seen, they would not in this sense take her word, but would go and see with their own eyes. Do others tell us of the comfort and benefit of ordinances? Let us be engaged thereby to make trial of them. Come and see how good it is to turn next to God.

2. See how ready we should be to share with our friends in their cares and fears. Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre, that they might be able to give Mary a satisfactory answer to her jealousies. We should not grudge any pains we take for the surrounding and comforting of the weak and timorous followers of Christ. See how haste we should make in a good work, and when we are going on a good errand. Peter and John consulted neither their ease nor their curiosity, but ran to the sepulchre, that they might shew the strength of their god and affection, and much lose no time. If we are in the way of God's commandments, we should run that way.
ST. JOHN, XX.

5. See what a hideous emulation it is among disciples to strive which shall excel, which shall exceed, in that which is good. It was no breach of all manners for John, though the younger, to out-run Peter, and yet before him. We must do our best, and turn over those that can do better, nor despise those that do as they can, though they come behind. (1.) He that got foremost in this race, was the disciple whom Jesus loved in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus. Note, Sense of Christ’s love to us, kindling love in us to him again, will make us excel in virtue. 2. The battle of Christ will constrain us more than anything to abound in duty. (2.) He that was cast behind, was Peter, who had denied his Master, and was in sorrow and shame for it, and this clogged him as a weight; sense of guilt and shame, and hinders our enlargements in the service of God. When conscience is offended, we lose ground.

IV. Peter and John being come to the sepulchre, prosecute the inquiry, yet improve little in the discovery.

1. John went no further than Mary Magdalene had done. (1.) He had the curiosity to look into the sepulchre, and saw it was empty. He stooped down, and looked in. Those that would find the knowledge of Christ, must stoop down, and look in, must with an humble heart, and vein to the authority of divine revelation; and must look wisely. (2.) Yet he had not courage to go into the sepulchre. The warmest affections are not always accompanied with the boldest resolutions; many are swift to run religion’s race, that are not stout to fight her battles.

2. Peter, though he came last, went in first, and made a more exact discovery than John had, v. 6, 7. Though John out-run him, he did not therefore turn back, or stand still, but made after him as fast as he could; and while John was with a deal of caution looking in, he came, and with a deal of courage went into the sepulchre.

(1.) Observe here the boldness of Peter, and how God dispenses his gifts variously. John could out-run Peter, but Peter could out-dare John. It is seldom true of the same persons, what David says poetically of Saul and Jonathan, that they were swifter than eagles, and yet stronger than lions, 2 Sam. 1. 27. Some disciples are quick, and they are useful to quicken them that are slow; others are bold, and they are useful to hearten them that are timorous; diversities of gifts, but one Spirit.

Peter’s venturing into the sepulchre may teach us, [1.] That those who in good earnest seek after Christ, must not frighten themselves with bugbears and foolish fancies: “There is a lion in the way, a ghost in the grave.” [2.] That good Christians need not be afraid of the grave, since Christ has him in it; for to them there is nothing in it frightful; it is but the put of destruction, nor the seems in a never-dying worm. Let us therefore not indulge, but consider the fear we are apt to conceive upon the sight of a dead body, or being alone among the graves; and, since we must be dead and in the grave shortly, let us make death and the grave familiar to us, as near kindred, Job 17. 14. [3.] We must be willing to go through the grave to Christ, that we may partake of his glory, and live with him; for we cannot see God’s face and live, better die than never see it. See Job 19. 25, &c.

(2.) Observe the posture he found things in, in the sepulchre. [1.] Christ had left his grave-clothes behind him there; what clothes he appeared in to his disciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his grave clothes, as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside, First, Because he rose to die no more, death was to have no more dominion over him, Rom. 6. 9. Lazarus came out with his grave-clothes on, for he was to use them again; but Christ, rising to an immortal life, came out free from those incumbrances. Secondly, Because he was going to be clothed with the robes of glory, therefore he lays aside these rags; in the heavenly paradise there will be no more occasion for clothes than there was in the earthly. The ascending prophet dropped his mantle. Thirdly, When we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we must leave our grave-clothes behind us, otherwise we cannot carry on the spiritual labours of Christ. [2.] The grave clothes were found in very good order, which serves for an evidence that his body was not stolen away while men slept. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes, and leave the body; but none ever took away the body, and left the clothes*, especially when it was fine linen and new. Mark 15. 46. Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes, than naked. Or, if they that were supposed to have stolen it, would have left the grave-clothes behind, yet it is more likely they should have disposed they should see leisure to fold up the linen.

[3.] See how Peter’s boldness encouraged John; now he took heart and ventured in; (v. 8.) and he saw and believed; not barely believed what Mary said, that the body was gone; (no thanks to him to believe what he said;) but he began to believe that Jesus was risen to life again, though his faith, as you see, was very unsteady and wavered. [1.] John followed Peter in venturing. It should seem, he durst not have gone into the sepulchre if Peter had not gone in first. Note, It is good to be imbosed in a good work by the boldness of others. The dread of difficulty and danger will be taken off by observing the resolution and courage of others. Perhaps John’s quickness had made Peter run faster, and now Peter’s boldness makes John venture further, than otherwise either the one or the other would have done; though Peter had lately fallen under the disgrace of being a deserter, and John had been advanced to the honour of a confidant, (Christ having committed his mother to him,) yet John not only associated with Peter, but thought it no disrangement to follow him. [2.] Yet, it should seem, John got the start of Peter in believing. Peter saw and wondered, (Luke 24. 12.) but John saw and believed. A mind disposed to contemplation, may perhaps sooner receive the evidence of divine truth than a mind disposed to action.

But what was the reason that they were so slow of heart to believe? The evangelist tells us, (v. 9.) and they could not believe what Peter said. They let the scripture not be considered, and apply, and duly improve, what they knew of the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. The Old Testament speaks of the resurrection of the Messiah; they believe him to be the Messiah; he himself had often told them that, according to the scriptures of the Old Testament, he should rise again; but they had not presence of mind sufficient to connect these two things, and explain the present appearances. Observe here, First, How unapt the disciples themselves were, at first, to believe the resurrection of Christ, which confirms the testimony they afterward gave with so much assurance concerning it; for, by their backwardness to believe it, it appears that they were not*.

* Mr. Henry would not express himself thus, were he now living.—Ed.
credulous concerning it, nor of those simple ones that believe every word. If they had had any design to advance their own interest by it, they would greedily have caught at the first spark of its evidence, would have raised and supported one another's expectation of it, and have prepared the minds of those that followed them to receive the notices of it: but we find, on the contrary, that their hopes were frustrated, it was to them as a strange thing, and one of the very last things they expected. Peter and John were so shy of believing it at first, that nothing less than the most convincing proof the thing was of their own invention, could bring them to testify it afterward with so much assurance. Hereby it appears that they were not only honest men, who would not deceive others, but cautious men, who would not themselves be imposed upon.

Secondly, What was the reason of their slowness to believe? Because as yet they knew not the scripture. This seems to be the evangelist's acknowledgment of his own fault among the rest; he does not say, "As yet Jesus had not appeared to them, but had shewed them his hands and his side," but, "As yet he had not opened their understandings to understand the scriptures." (Luke 24: 44, 45.) For bringing forward these things of the first disciples, the apostles proceed as follows:

2. Peter and John pursued their inquiry no further, but desisted, hewing between faith and unbelief: (r. 10.) The disciples went away, not much the wiser, to their own home, viz.: into their own friends and companions, the rest of the disciples; to their own lodgings, for houses they had none at Jerusalem. They went away, for fear of being taken up upon suspicion of a design to steal away the body, or of being charged with it now that it was gone; instead of improving their faith, their care is to secure themselves, to shift for their own safety. In difficult dangerous times, it is hard even for good men to go on in their work with the resolution that becomes them.

(2.) Because they were at a loss, and knew not what to do next, nor what to make of what they had seen; and therefore, not having courage to stay at the grave, they resolve to go home, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto them; which is an instance of their weakness as yet.

(3.) It is probable that the rest of the disciples were together; to them they return, to make report of what they had discovered, and to consult with them what was to be done; and, probably, now they arrange that for their meeting in the evening, when Christ came to them.

It is observable that before Peter and John came to the sepulchre, an angel had appeared there, rolled away the stone, frightened the guard, and comforted the women: as soon as they were gone from the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene here sees two angels in the sepulchre, (r. 12.) and yet Peter and John come to the sepulchre, and go into it, and see none; what shall we think of this? When Peter and John were at the sepulchre, who appeared there before and after? [1.] Angels appear and disappear at pleasure, according to the orders and instructions given them. They may be, and are really, where they are not visibly: nay, it should seem, may be visible to one, and not to another, at the same time, 2 Kings 6: 17. Num. 22: 23. 25. God in his pleasure, may make themselves visible, then invisible, and then visible again, to answer any for us to inquire; but that they do so is plain from this story. [2.] This favour was shewed to these who were early and constant in their inquiries after Christ, and was the reward of them that came first, and stood last, but denied to them that made a transient visit. [3.] The apostles were not to receive their instructions from the angels, but from the Spirit of grace. See Heb. 2: 5.

11. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, 12. And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14. And when she had said this, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. 18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

St. Mark tells us, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene; (Mark 16: 9.) that appearance is here largely related; and we may observe, The constancy and fervency of Mary Magdalene's affection to the Lord Jesus, v. 11.

1. She stood at the sepulchre, when Peter and John were gone, because there her Master had lain, and there she was likeliest to hear some tidings of him. Note, (1.) Where there is a true love to Christ, there will be a constant adherence to him, and a resolution with purpose of heart to cleave to him. This good woman, though she has lost him, yet rather than seem to desert him, will abide by his grave for his sake, and continue in his love, even when she wants the comfort of it. (2.) Where there is a true desire of acquaintance with Christ, there will be a constant attention on the means of knowledge. See Hos. 6: 2, 3. The third day, he will raise us up; and then shall we know the meaning of that resurrection, if we follow on to know, as Mary here.

2. She stood there weeping, and these tears loudly spake her affection to her Master. They that have lost Christ, have cause to weep; she wept at the remembrance of his bitter sufferings; wept for his death, and the loss which she and her friends and the country sustained by it; wept to think of returning home without him; wept because she did not now find his body. They that seek Christ, must do him this wrong, (Luke 2: 48.) must weep, not for him, but for themselves.

3. As she wept, she looked into the sepulchre, that her eye might affect her heart. When we are in search of something we have lost, we look anew and again in the place where we last left it; and expect to have found it; she will look in seven times, not knowing but that at length she might see some encouragement. Note, (1.) We must not hinder seeking. Though she wept, she stooped down,
and looked in. (2.) Those are likely to seek and find, the seek with affection, that seek in tears.

11. The vision she had of two angels in the sepulchre, was here.

1. The description of the persons she saw. They were two angels in white, sitting, (probably, on some benches or ledges hewn out in the rock,) one at the head, and the other at the feet, of the grave. Here we have,

(1.) Their nature: they were angels, messengers from God, sent on purpose, on this great occasion.

[1.] To honour the Son, and to grace the solemnity of his resurrection. Now that the Son of God was again to be brought into the world, the angels have a charge to attend him, as they did at his birth, Heb. 1. 6. [2.] To comfort the saints; to speak good words to them that were in sorrow, and, by giving them notice that the Lord was risen, to prepare them for the sight of him.

(2.) Their number: two, not a multitude of the heavenly host, to singing praises, only two, to bear witness; for out of the mouth of two witnesses this word would be established.

(3.) Their array; they were in white; denoting,

[1.] Their purity and holiness. The host of men, standing before the angels, and compared with them, are described in the vision of the Seraphims (Is. 6. 2), but angels are spotless; and glorified saints, when they come to be as the angels, shall walk with Christ in white.

[2.] Their glory, and glorying, upon this occasion. The white in which they appeared, represented the brightness of that state into which Christ was now risen.

(4.) Their posture and place. They sat, as it were, reproposing themselves in Christ's grave; for angels, though they needed not a restoration, were obliged to Christ for their establishment. These angels went into the grave, to teach us not to be afraid of it, nor to think that our resting in it awhile, will be any prejudice to our immortality; no, matters are so ordered, that the grave is not much out of our way to heaven. It intimates likewise that angels are to be employed about the saints, not only at their death, to carry their souls into Abraham's bosom, but at the great day, to raise their bodies, Matt. 24. 31. Those angelic guards, (and angels are called watchers, Dan. 4. 23,) keeping possession of the sepulchre, when they had frightened away the guards which the enemies had set, represents Christ, before the power of darkness, routing and defeating the. Their MICHAEL and his company are more than conquerors. Their sitting to face one another, one at his head's head, the other at his head's head, denotes their care of the entire body of Christ, his mystical as well as his natural body, from head to foot; it may also remind us of the two cherubims placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, Exod. 25. 18. Christ crucified was the great propitiation, when the head and feet of which were these two cherubims, not with flaming swords, to keep us from, but welcome messengers, to direct us to the way of life.

2. Their compassionate inquiry into the cause of Mary Magdalene's grief; (v. 13.) Woman, why weepest thou? This question was, (1.) A rebuke unto her, sloping on, Wherearest thou, when thou hast cause to rejoice? Many of the floods of our tears would dry away before such a search as this into the fountain of them. Why art thou cast down? (2.) It was designed to show how much angels are concerned at the griefs of the saints, having a charge to minister to them for their comfort. Christians should thus sympathize with one another. (3.) It was sent to make an occasion of informing her of that which would turn her mourning into rejoicing, would put off her sackcloth, and gird her with gladness.

3. The melancholy account she gives them of her present distress; Because they have taken awa, of the blessed body I came to embalm, and I have not seen him yet. That same story we had, v. 2. In it we may see,

(1.) The weakness of her faith. If she had had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, this morrow would have been removed; but we often perplex ourselves needlessly with imaginary difficulties, which faith would discover to us as real advantages, and prove the remedy for these fears and darkness they are under, which are the necessary means of grace for the humbling of their souls, the mortifying of their sins, and the enduring of Christ to them.

(2.) The strength of her love. That they have a true affection for Christ, cannot but be in great affliction when they have lost either the comfortable tokens of his love in their souls, or the comfortable opportunities of conversing with him, and doing him honour, in his ordinances. Mary Magdalene is not diverted from her inquiries by the surprise of the vision, nor satisfied with the honour of it; but still she harps upon the same string: They have taken away my Lord. A sight of angels and their smiles, will not suffice without a sight of Christ, and an assurance of his presence, in the midst of our sorrows. Nay, the sight of angels is an opportunity of pursuing her inquiries after Christ. All creatures, the most excellent, the most dear, should be used as means, and but as means, to bring us into acquaintance with God in Christ. The angels asked her, Why weepest thou? I have cause enough to weep, says she, for they have taken away my Lord, and, like Mary, What have I more? Do you ask, Why I weep? My beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone. Note, None know, but they that have experienced, the sorrows of a deserted soul, that has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit who can bear?

III. Christ's appearing to her while she was talking with the angels, and telling them her case; before they had given her any answer. Christ steps in himself, to satisfy her inquiries, for God now speaketh to us by his Son; none but he himself can direct us to himself. Mary would fain know where her Lord is, and behold, he is at her right hand. Note,

1. Those that will be content with nothing short of a sight of Christ, shall be put off with nothing less. Thy beloved is but as his shadow, but never said to be as glad to ask or think. “Is it Christ that thou wouldest have? Christ thou shalt have.” 2. Christ, in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations. Mary hopes to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and behold, she sees him alive. Thus he does for his praying people more than they themselves ask or think.

In this verse, the presence of Christ to Mary, v. 14.

[1.] How he did it at first. conceal himself from her. He stood as a common person, and she looked upon him accordingly, v. 14. She stood expecting an answer to her complaint from the angels; and either seeing the shadow, or hearing the tread of some person behind her, she turned herself back from talking with them, and asked Jesus himself, as it were, of her, Are you not the very person she was looking for, and yet she knew not that it was Jesus. Note, First, The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, (Ps. 34. 18,) nearer than they are aware. They that seek Christ, though they do not see him, may yet be sure he is not far from them. Secondly, Those that diligently seek the Lord, will turn every stone in their way, being always after him. Mary turned every stone in her way, and then Jesus answered her question, as it were, of her, Are you not the very person she was looking for, and yet she knew not that it was Jesus.
obedience to the Lord Jesus, whom they saw before Mary did; and that she looked back to see who it was that paid such a profound reverence to. But if so, it is not likely that she would have taken him for the gardener; rather, therefore, it was her earnest desire in seeking, that made her turn every way. Thirdly, Christ is often near his people, and they are not aware of him. She knew not that it was Jesus; not that he appeared in any other likeness, but either it was a careless transient look she cast upon him, and, her eyes being full of care, she could not so well distinguish, or they were hidden, that she should not know him, as those of the two disciples, Luke 24, 16.


First, The question he asked her was natural enough, and what any one would have asked her: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? What business hast thou here in the garden so early?" What all this noise and ado for? Perhaps, it was spoken with some roughness, as Joseph spoke to his brethren when he made himself strange, before he made himself known to them. If it should seem, this was the first word Christ spake after his resurrection; "Why weepest thou? I am risen." The resurrection of Christ has enough in it to allay our sorrows, to check the streams, and dry up the fountains, of our tears. Observe here, Christ takes cognizance, 1. Of his people's griefs, and inquires, Whom weep ye? He bottes their tears, upbraids me with my tears? You know why I weep, and whom I seek; and therefore supposing him to be the gardener, the person employed by Joseph to dress and keep his garden, who, she thought, was come thither thus early to his work, she said, Sir, if thou hast carried him hence, pray tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. See here,

2. The error of her understanding; she supposed our Lord Jesus to be the gardener, perhaps, because he asked what authority she had to be there. Note, Troubled spirits, in a cloudy and dark day, are apt to misrepresent Christ to themselves, and to put wrong constructions upon the methods of his providence and grace.

3. The truth of her affection. See how her heart was upon it to find Christ! She puts the question to everyone she meets, like the careful spouse, Sir, ye whom my soul loveth? She speaks respectfully to a gardener, and calls him Sir, in hopes to gain some indulgence from him concerning her beloved. When she speaks of Christ, she does not name him; but, If thou hast borne him hence, taking it for granted that this gardener was full of thoughts concerning this Jesus as well as she, and that therefore he had removed it to some sorry place, which he thought fitter for it. Yet Mary does not threaten to tell his master, and get him turned out of his place for it; but undertakes to find out some other sepulchre, to which he might be welcome. Christ needs not to stay where he is thought a burden.

[14] How Christ at length made himself known to her, and, by a pleasing surprise, gave her invisible assurances of his resurrection. Joseph to his brethren, I am Joseph. So Christ here to Mary Magdalene, now that he is entered upon his exalted state.

Observe, [1.] How Christ discovered himself to this good woman that was seeking him in tears; (v. 16.) Jesus saith unto her, Mary. It was said with an emphasis, and with a kind of freedom and freedom which the gardener might change his voice, and speak like himself, not like the gardener. Christ's was et making himself known to his people is by his word, his word applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular. When those, whom God knew by name in the councils of his love, (Exod. 33, 12.) are called by name in the efficacy of his grace, then he reveals his Son in them, as in Paul, (Gal. 1, 16.) when Christ called to him by name, Said, Said. Christ's shew knew his voice, ch. 10, 4. This one word Mary, was like that to the disciples in the storm, It is I. Then the word of Christ does us good, when we put our names into the precepts and promises, "In this Christ calls me, and speaks to me."

[2.] How readily she received this discovery; when Christ said, Mary, dost thou not know me? was she surprised, as though she were a stranger to him? She was presently aware who it was, as the sponser: (Cant. 2, 8.) It is the voice of my beloved. She turned herself, and said, Rabbi, My master. It might properly be read with an interrogation, "Rabbi? Is it my master? Nay, but is it indeed? Observe,

First, The title of respect she gives him; My Master; mistress, a teacher, master. The Jews called their doctors Rabban, great to distinguish them from all others. Their critics tell us, that Rabban was with them a more honourable title than Rabbi; and therefore Mary chooses that, and adds a note of approbation, My great Master. Note, Notwithstanding the freedom of communion which Christ is pleased to admit us to with himself, we must remember that he is our Master, and to be approached with a godly fear. Secondly, What a title of respect she gives this title to Christ. She turned herself from the angels whom she had in her eye, to look unto Jesus. We must take off our regards from all creatures, even the brightest and best, to fix them upon Christ, from whom nothing must divert us, and with whom nothing must interfere. When she thought it had been the gardener, she looked another way when she spake to him; but now that she knew the voice that hears Christ's voice, and is turned to him, calls him, with joy and triumph, My Master. See with what pleasure those who love Christ, speak of his authority over them! My Master, my great Master.

[3.] The further instructions that Christ gave her: (v. 17.) "Touch me not, but carry the news to the disciples."

First, He darts her from the expectation of familiar society and conversation with him at this time; Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended. Mary was so transported with the sight of her dear Master, that she forgot herself, and that state of reverence into which he was now entering, and was ready to express her joy by affectionate embraces of him, which Christ here forbid. Touch me not. He said to her quite all, for I am to ascend to heaven. He bid the disciples touch him, for the confirmation of their faith; he allowed the women to take hold of his feet, and worship him; (Matt. 28.
3.) But Mary, supposing that he was risen, as Lazarus was, to live among them constantly, and converse with them freely as he had done, upon that presumption was about to take hold of his hand with some remark of his having been freed; this mistake Christ rectified; she must believe him, and adore him, as exalted, but must not expect to be familiar with him as formerly. See 2 Cor. 3. 16. He forbids her to set upon his bodily presence, to set her heart on that, or expect the continuance of that, and leads her to the spiritual converse and communion which she should have with him after he was ascended to his Father; for then he gave her full proof that it was a step toward his ascension. Mary thought, now that her Master was risen, he would presently set up a temporal kingdom, such as they had long promised themselves. "No," says Christ, "touch me not, with any such thought; think not to lay hold on me, so as to detain me here; for though I am not yet ascended, I am to my brethren, and tell them, I am to ascend." As before his death, so now after his resurrection, he still harps upon this, that he was going away, was no more in the world; and therefore they must look higher than his bodily presence, and look further than the present state of things.

Thus, Touch me not, do not stay to touch me now, stay not now to make any further inquiries, or give any further expressions of joy, for I am not yet ascended, I shall not presently depart, it may as well be done another time; the best service thou canst do now, is, to carry the tidings to the disciples; lose no time therefore, but go away with all speed." Note, Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Jacob must let an angel go when the day breaks, and it is time for him to look to his family. Mary must not stay, to talk with her Master, but must carry his message; for it was a day of good tidings, which she must not engross the comfort of, but hand it to others. See that story, 2 Kings 7. 9.

Secondly, He directs her what message to carry to his disciples; But go to my brethren, and tell them, not only that I am risen, she could have told them that of herself, for she had seen him, but that I ascend. Observe, 1. To whom this message is sent; Go to my brethren with it; for he is not ashamed to call them so. (1.) Though he was now entering upon his glory, and was declared to be the Son of God with great power, yet he owns his disciples as his brethren, and expresses himself with more tender affection to them than before; he had called them friends, but never brethren till now. Though Christ be high, yet he is not haughty. Notwithstanding his elevation, he disdains not to own his poor relations. (2.) Though his disciples had lately carried themselves very dishonorably toward him; he had made them the reproach of the world, and they were ashamed and vile, when he was apprehended; justly might he now have sent them an angry message; "Go to yonder treacherous deserters, and tell them, I will never trust them more, or have any thing more to do with them." No, he forgives, he forgets, and does not publish.

Do what it is sent; by Mary Magdalene, out of fear of those seven devils, yet now thriven. This was her reward for her constancy in adhering to Christ, and inquiring after him; and a great rebuke to the apostles, who had not been so close as she was in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early as she was in meeting the rising Jesus; she becomes an apostle to the apostles.

3. What the message itself is; I ascend to my Father. Two full breasts of consolation here are in these words:

(1.) Our joint relation to God, resulting from our union with Christ, is an unspakeable comfort. Speaking of that inexpressible spring of light, life, and bliss, he says, He is my Father, and my Father; my God, and your God. This is very expressive of that near relation that is between Christ and believers; he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both one; for they agree in one, Heb. 2. 11. Here are such an advancement of Christians, and such a condescension of Christ, as bring them very near together. So admirably well is the matter contrived, in order to their union.

(1.) It is the great condescension of Christ, that he is pleased to own the believer's God for his God; in this relation and this God is made one, that he must be the God of the Redemption, to save you; (Ps. 89. 26.) that he might be the God of the redeemed, to save them. The summary of the new covenant is, that God will be us a God; and therefore Christ being the Surety and Head of the covenant, who is primarily dealt with, and believers only through him as his spiritual seed, this covenant relation I have with God, becomes his own; and so our's; we partaking of a divine nature, Christ's Father is our Father; and he partaking of the human nature, our God is his God.

(2.) Christ's ascension into heaven in further prosecution of his undertaking for us, is likewise an unspakeable comfort; "Tell them I must shortly ascend; that is the next step I am to take." Now this was intended to be,

[1.] A word of caution to these disciples, not to expect the continuance of his bodily presence on earth, nor the setting up of his temporal kingdom among men, which they dreamed of. "No, tell them, I am risen, not to stay with them, but to go on their errand to heaven." Thus they who are raised to a spiritual life, in conformity to Christ's resurrection, must reckon that they rise in hope; they are quickened with Christ, that they may sit with him in heavenly places, Eph. 2. 6. Let them not think that this earth is to be their home and rest; no, being born from heaven, they are bound for heaven; their eye and aim must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts. I ascend, therefore must I seek things above.

(2.) More to the point, to them, and to all that shall believe in him through their word; he was then ascending, he is now ascended to his Father, and our Father. This was his advancement, he ascended, to receive those honours and powers which were to be the recompence of his humiliation; he says it with triumph, that they who love him may rejoice. This is our advantage; for he ascended to receive the fulness of his kingship for us; (Ps. 68. 18.) he ascended as our forerunner, to prepare a place for us, and to be ready to receive us. This message was like that which Joseph's brethren brought to Jacob concerning him, (Gen. 45. 26.) Joseph is yet alive, and not only so, but the same as in his natum venit—he lives, and comes into the senate too; he is governor over all the land of Egypt; all power is his.

I ascend these words, I ascend to my God, and
your God, to include a promise of our resurrection, in the virtue of Christ's resurrection. For Christ had proved the resurrection of the dead in these words, I am the God of Abraham, Matt. 22. 32. So that Christ here answers, "As he is my God, and hath therefore raised me, so he is your God, and will therefore raise you, and be your God, Rev. 21. 3. But I live, ye shall live also. I now ascend, to honour my God, and ye shall ascend to him as your God."

Lastly, Here is Mary Magdalen's faithful report of what she had seen and heard, to the disciples; (v. 18.) She came and told the disciples, whom she found together, that she had seen the Lord. Peter and John had left her seeking him carefully with tears, and would not stay to seek him with her; and now she comes, to tell them that she had found him, and to rectify the mistake she had led them into, by inquiring after the dead body, for now she found it was a living body, and a glorified one; so that she found what she sought; and, what was infinitely better, she had joy in her sight of the Master herself, and was willing to communicate of her joy, for she knew it would be good news to them. When God comforts us, it is with this design, that we may comfort others.

And as she told them what she had seen, so also what she had heard; she had seen the Lord, and heard the assurance of his resurrection, which was the token, and (a good token it was,) that he had spoken these things unto her, as a message to be delivered to them, and she delivered it faithfully. They that are acquainted with the word of God themselves, should communicate their knowledge for the good of others, and not grudge that others should know as much as they do.

19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. 24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Di'dy'mus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of his nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The infallible proof of Christ's resurrection, was, his shewing himself alive, Acts 1. 3. In these verses, we have an account of his first appearance to the college of the disciples, on the day on which he rose. He had sent them the tidings of his resurrection by trusty and credible messengers; but, to shew his love to them, and confirm their faith in him, he came himself, and gave them all the assurances they could desire of the truth of it, that they might not have it by hears only, and at second hand, but might themselves be eye-witneses of his power also, because they must attest it to the world, and build the church upon that testimony. Now observe here,

1. When, and where, this appearance was. v. 19. It was the same day that before, being to meet with the disciples of the week, on the day after the Jewish sabbath, at a private meeting of the disciples, ten of them, and some more of their friends with them, Luke 24. 35.

There are three secondary ordinances (as I may call them) instituted by our Lord Jesus, to continue in his church, for the support of it, and for the due administration of the principal ordinances— the civil, sacramentals, and prayer; because to the last day solemnly declared, By the hand of mine administration, the mind of Christ concerning each of these is plainly intimated to us in these verses, and of the two first, here, in the circumstances of this appearance, the other, v. 21. Christ's kingdom was to be set up among men, immediately upon his resurrection; and, accordingly, we find the very day he rose, though but a day of small things, yet graced with those solemnities which should help to keep up a face of religion throughout all the ages of the church.

1. Here is a Christian sabbath observed by the disciples, and owned by our Lord Jesus. The visit Christ made to his disciples, was, on the first day of the week. And the first day of the week is (1) think the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and that is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed. Though it is expressed, (v. 1.) that Christ was the first day of the week, and it might have been sufficient to say here, (v. 19.) he appeared the same day at evening; yet, to put an honour upon the day, it is repeated, being the first day of the week; not that the apostles designed to put honour upon the day, (they were yet in doubt concerning the occasion of it,) but God designed to put honour upon it. God has blessed then to receive Christ's first visit on that day. Thus, in effect, he blessed and sanctified that day; because in it the Redeemer rested.

2. Here is a Christian assembly solemnized by the disciples, and that also owned by the Lord Jesus. Probably, the disciples met here for some religious exercise, to pray together; and, perhaps, they met to consult concerning their Lord's resurrection, and to see and confer with the eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and to consult what they saw to be done; whether they should keep together, or scatter; they met, to know one another's mind, strengthen one another's hands, and occupy proper measures to be taken in the present crisis offortune.

This meeting was private, because they durst not appear publicly, especially met not in a body; they met to consult the best way to spread abroad the news, the more safely, the Lord might not be seen together, and that none might come among them but such as they knew; for they feared the Jews, who would persecute the disciples as criminals, that they might seem to believe the lie they would deceive the world with, that they came by night, and stole him again. Note: (1.) The disciples of Christ, even in difficult times, must not forsake the assembling of themselves together, Heb. 10. 25. (2.) God's people have been often obliged to enter into their chambers, and shut their doors, as here, for fear of the Jews. Persecution is allowed them, and retirement from persecution is allowed them; and then where shall we look for them but in dens and caves of the earth? It is a real grief,
but no real reproach, to Christ's disciples, thus to accord.

11. What was said and done in this visit Christ made to his disciples, and this interview between them.

1. When they were assembled, Jesus came among them, in his own likeness, yet, drawing a veil over the brightness of his body, now began to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in his transfiguration. Christ came among them, to give them a specimen of the performance of his promise, that, when two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them.

2. He came, though the doors were shut. This does not at all weaken the evidence of his having a real human body after his resurrection; though the doors were shut, he knew how to open them without any noise, and come in so that they might not hear him, as formerly he had walked on the water, and yet had a true body. It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence from them.

We have five things in this appearance of Christ: 1. The Hand, familiar salutation of his disciples; he said, Peace be unto you. This was not a word of course, though commonly used so at the meeting of friends, but a solemn uncommon benediction, conferring upon them all the blessed fruits and effects of his death and resurrection. The phrase was common, but the sense was now peculiar. Peace be unto you, is as much as, All good be with you. Peace (the peace of the world) is in the power of his hand, and has left them his peace for their legacy, ch. 14. 27. By the death of the testator the testament was become of force, and he was now risen from the dead, to prove the will, and to be himself the executor of it; accordingly, he here makes prompt payment of the legacy; Peace be unto you. His speaking peace, makes peace; creates the fruit of the lips, peace; peace with God, is in your own conscience, peace with one another; all this peace he be with you; not peace with the world, but peace in Christ. His sudden appearing in the midst of them, when they were full of doubts concerning him, full of fears concerning themselves, could not but put them into some disorder and consternation, the noise of which waves he stills with this word, Peace be unto you. 2. His clear and undisguised manifestations of himself to them, v. 20. And here observe,

[1.] The method he took to convince them of the truth of his resurrection. They now saw him alive, whom amazements had seen dead two or three days before. Now the only doubt was, whether this that they saw alive, was the same individual body that had been seen dead; and none could desire a further proof of it, than the scars or marks of the wounds in the body. Now, First, The marks of the wounds, and very deep marks, (though without any pain or soreness,) remained in the body of the Lord Jesus even after his resurrection, that they might be demonstrations of the truth of it. Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds. Christ's wounds were to speak on each of them, that it was he himself, and therefore he rose with them; they were to speak in heaven, in the intercession he must ever live to make, and therefore he ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, and bleeding after, Rev. 5. 6. Now, it should seem, he will come again with his scars, that they may look on him with satisfaction, and he will remember his suffering for you. Secondly, These marks he showed to his disciples, for their conviction. They had not only the satisfaction of seeing him look with the same countenance, and hearing him speak with the same voice they had been so long accustomed to, (see oculos, sic ulla manus, sic ora, for such were his gestures, such his eyes and hands!) but they had the further evidence of those peculiar marks; he opened his hands to them, that they might see the marks of the wounds on them; he opened his breast, as the nurse her's to the child, to shew them the wound there. Note, the exalted Redeemer will ever shew himself open-handed and open-hearted to all his faithful friends, that they may be sure of him. When Christ manifests his love to believers by the comforts of his Spirit, assures them that because he lives, they shall live also, then he shews them his hands and his side.

[2.] The impression it made upon them, and the good it did them.

First, They were convinced that they saw the Lord; so was their faith confirmed. At first, they thought they saw an apparition only, a phantasm; but now they knew it was the Lord himself. Many true believers, who, while they were weak, feared their comforts were but imaginary, afterward find them, through grace, real and substantial. They ask not, Is it the Lord? but are assured, it is he.

Secondly, They were well glad; that which strengthened their faith, raised their joy, believing, they rejoiced. The evangelist seems to write it with something of transport and triumph. Then! then! were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. If it revived the spirit of Jacob, to hear that Joseph is yet alive; how would it revive the heart of those disciples, to hear that Jesus is in agony! It is life from the dead to them. Now that word of Christ was to them, to be his angels, I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. This wiped away all tears from their eyes. Note, A sight of Christ will gladden the heart of a disciple at any time; the more we see of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in him; and our joy will never be perfect till we come there where we shall see him as he is.

(3.) The honourable and ample commission he gave them to be his agents in the planting of his church, p. 921. Here is,

[1.] The preface to their commission, which was the solemn repetition of the salutation before; Peace be unto you. This was intended, either, First, To raise their attention to the commission he was about to give them. The former salutation was to still the tumult of their fear, that they might calmly attend to the commission of his resurrection; this was to reduce the transport of their joy, that they might sedately hear what he had further to say to them; or, Secondly, To encourage them to accept of the commission he was giving them. Though it would involve them in a great deal of trouble, yet he designed their honor and comfort in it, and, in the issue, it would be peace to them. Gideon received his commission with this word, Peace be unto thee, Judg. 6. 22, 23. Christ is our peace; if he be with us, peace is to us. Christ was now sending the disciples to publish peace to the world; (Isa. 52. 7.) and Christ here not only confers it upon them for their own satisfaction, but commits it to them as a trust to be by them transmitted to all the sons of peace, Luke 10. 5, 6.

[2.] The commission itself, which sounds very great: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. First, It is easy to understand how Christ sent them; he appointed them to go on with his work upon earth, and to lay out themselves for the spreading of his gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom, among men. He sent them authorized with a divine warrant, armed with a divine power, to sent them as ambassadors to treat of peace, and as heralds to proclaim it; sent them as servants to kid to the marriage. Hence they were called apostles—men sent. Secondly, But how Christ sent them as the Father sent him, is not so easily understood; certainly then
commissions and powers were infinitely inferior to his; but,

1. Their work was of the same kind with his, and they were to go where he left off. They were not sent to sit on thrones and kings, like his Mediator and Prophet.

2. As he was sent to bear witness to the truth, so were they; not to be mediators of the reconciliation, but only preachers and publishers of it. Was he sent, not to be ministered to, but to minister; not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him? So were they. As the Father sent him to last shepherds of the house of Israel, so he sent them into all the world.

3. He had a power to send them, equal to that which the Father had to send him. Here the force of the comparison seems to lie. By the same authority that the Father sent me, do I send you. This proves the Godhead of Christ; the commissions he gave, were of equal authority with those which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all intents and purposes; equal with those he gave to the Old Testament prophets in visions. The commissions of Peter and John by the plain word of Christ, are as good as those of Isaiah and Ezekiel, by the Lord sitting on his throne; may, equal with that which was given to the Mediator himself for his work. He had an incontrovertible authority, and an irresistible power to do what he pleased. And so had they for theirs. Or thus, Is the Father hath the Holy Ghost as the recital of his power; by virtue of the authority, given him as Mediator, he gave authority to them, as his ministers, to act for him, and in his name, with the children of men; so that they who received them, or rejected them, received or rejected him, and him that sent him, ch. 13. 20.

4. The qualifications of them for the discharge was communicated in them by their commission, (ch. 22.) He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Observe,

1. The sign he used to assure them of, and affect them with, the gift he was now about to bestow upon them; he breathed on them; not only to shew them by this breath of life, that he himself was really alive; but to signify to them the spiritual life and power which they should receive from him for all the services that lay before them. Probably, he breathed upon them all together, not upon each severally; and though Thomas was not with them, yet the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him, as he did Elisha and Medad, Numb. 11. 26. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man at first, by the breathings of the breath of life into him, (Gen. 2. 7.) and to intimate that he himself was the author of that work, and that the spiritual life and strength of ministers and christians are derived from him, and depend upon him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to man and began the old world, so the breath of the mighty Saviour gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, Job 33. 4. Or here he alludes to the work of the Spirit, the breath of Christ, proceeding from the Son. The Spirit, in the Old Testament, is compared to breath; (Ezek. 37. 9.) Come, O breath; but the New Testament tells us, it is Christ's breath. The breath of God is put for the power of his wrath, (Isa. 11. 4.—30. 33.) but the breath of Christ signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatenings is changed into the breathings of love by the mediation of Christ. His sins are on us, and ours on his breast, so the word of Christ is spirit and life. The word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the word. Secondly, That the Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they could only beg this blessing, and carry it as messengers; but Christ conferred the Holy Ghost by breathing, for he is the author of the gift, and from him it comes originally. Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it; (Numb. 11. 17.) but Christ did it, John 20. 22. [2.] The solemn grant he made, signified by this sign, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, in part now, as an earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence. They now received more of the Holy Ghost than they had yet received. Thus spiritual blessings are given gradually; to him that has shall be given. Now that Jesus began to be glorified, more of the Spirit began to be given. See ch. 7. 39. Let us see what is contained in this present case. First, Christ hereby gives them assurance of the Spirit's aid in their future work; in the execution of the commission now given them: I send you, and you shall have the Spirit to go with you. Now the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, to qualify them for all the services that lay before them. When Christ employs he will clothe with his Spirit, and furnish with all needful powers.

Secondly, He hereby gives them experience of the Spirit's influences in the present case. He had showed them his hands and his side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection; but the plainest evidences will not of themselves work faith, witness the infidelity of the soldiers, who were the only eye-witnesses of the resurrection. Therefore receive ye the Holy Ghost, as the work of faith in you, and to open your understandings. They were now in danger of the Jews; Therefore receive ye the Holy Ghost, to work courage in you. What Christ said to them, he says to all true believers, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Eph. 1. 13. What Christ gives we must receive, must submit ourselves and our whole souls to the quickening sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit; receive his motions, and humble ourselves to receive his powers, and make use of them; and they who thus obey his word as a precept, shall have the benefit of it as a promise; they shall receive the Holy Ghost as the guide of their way, and the earnest of their inheritance.

5. One particular branch of the power given them by their commission, particularized, (v. 23.) whosoever receiveth you, receiveth me; that is, if you be as instruments in the hands of God, you may expect to be as instruments to the comfort of men. If you be instruments to their comfort, you are instruments to the comfort of Christ. The apostles were not sent to receive a share in the world. The powers ye are entrusted with, they are only to administer in the world, they are not to hold the world. If you are ministers of the word and ministry, if you are mediators of salvation, if you are guardians of the spiritual estate of men, then your powers are to be in the world; and their use is to be in the world. If you are mediators of salvation, you are mediators of the service of God; and that service is in the world, and the use of that service is in the world. Therefore receive ye the Holy Ghost, to work courage in you. What Christ said to them, he says to all true believers, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Eph. 1. 13. What Christ gives we must receive, must submit ourselves and our whole souls to the quickening sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit; receive his motions, and humble yourselves to receive his powers, and make use of them; and they who thus obey his word as a precept, shall have the benefit of it as a promise; they shall receive the Holy Ghost as the guide of their way, and the earnest of their inheritance.

6. Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and Paul struck Elymas blind. Yet it must be understood as a miraculous intervention of God, to be the punishment of his ministers, and not as the punishment of unbelievers, that none of the apostles should be put to death. God performed the miraculous. The apostles, in preaching remission, must begin at Jerusalem, though she had lately brought upon herself the guilt of Christ's blood: Yet you may declare the wisdom and power of God. This is an instance of their having authority to execute judgments. And Peter did so, Acts 2. 38—3. 19. Christ, being risen for our justification, sends his gospel-heralds to proclaim the jubilee begun, the act of indemnity now passed; and by this rule men shall be judged, ch. 12. 48. Rom. 2. 16. Jam. 2. 12. God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; those
whom the gospel acquits, shall be acquitted, and
those whom that condemns, shall be condemned; which
puts immense honour upon the ministry, and
should put immense courage into ministers.
Two ways the apostles and ministers of Christ 
remit and retain sin, and both as having authority.
[1.] By sound doctrine. They are commissioned to
tell the world, that salvation is to be had upon 
gospel-terms, and no other, and they shall find God 
will accept it to; so shall their doom be. [2.] By a strict
discipline, applying the general rule of 
gospel to particular persons. "Whom you ad-
mit into communion with you, according to the rules 
of the gospel, God will admit into communion with 
himself; and whom you cast out of communion, as 
impotent and obstinate in scandalous and infectious 
sins, shall be bound over to the righteous judgment 
of God." III. The incredulity of Thomas, when the report 
of this was made to him, which introduced Christ's 
second appearance.
1. Here is Thomas's absence from this meeting, 
ver. 24. He is said to be one of the twelve, one of the 
college of the apostles, who, though now eleven, had 
been but eleven, and one of them was missing; Christ's 
disciples will never be all together till the general 
assembly at the great day. Perhaps it was Thomas's 
unhappiness that he was absent; either he was not 
well, or had not notice; or perhaps it was his sin 
and folly; either he was diverted by business or 
company, which he preferred before this opportu-

nity. The desperate come on for fear of the Jews; 
and he called that his prudence and caution which was his 
cowardice. However, by his absence he missed 
the satisfaction of seeing his Master risen, and of 
sharing with the disciples in their joy upon that oc-
casion. Note, Those know not what they lose, who 
carelessly absent themselves from the stated solemn 
assemblies of Christians. The account which the other disciples gave him of the visit their Master had made them, ver. 25. The next time they saw him, they said unto him, 
with joy enough, We have seen the Lord; and, no 
doubt, they related to him all that had passed, par-
ticularly the satisfaction he had given them, by show-
ing them his hands and his side. It seems, though 
Thomas then said, We have seen nothing long from 
the absenters for a time must not be condemned as 
apostates for ever; Thomas is not Judas. Observe 
with what exultation and triumph they speak it: "We have seen the Lord, the most com-
fortable sight we ever saw." This they said to 
Thomas. (1.) To upbraid him with his absence; "We 
have seen the Lord, but thou hast not." Or rather, 
(2.) To inform him; "We have seen the Lord, and 
with whom thou hast been here, to see him too, for 
thoughlest have seen enough to satisfy thee." Note,
The disciples of Christ should endeavour to build up one another in their most holy faith, both by 
repeating what they have heard, to those that were 
absent, that they may hear it at second hand; as 
also by communicating what they have experienced. 
They that by faith have seen the Lord, and tasted 
that he is gracious, should tell others what God had 
done for their souls; only let boasting be excluded.
3. The objections Thomas raised against the evi-
dence, to justify himself in his loathness to admit it. 
"Tell me not that you have seen the Lord alive, you 
are too credulous, somebody has made fools of you; 
for my part, except I shall not only see in his 
hand the nail, and feel the print of the nail, but put my finger into it, and 
thrust my hand into the wound in his side, I am re-
solved I will not believe." Some, by comparing this 
with what he said, (ch. 11. 16.—14. 5.) conjecture 
him to have been a man of a rough, morose temper, 
apt to speak peevishly; for all good people are not 
like happy in their temper; however, there was 
certainly much amiss in this here.
1. He had either not heeded, or not duly 
regarded, what Christ had so often said, and that too 
according to the Old Testament, that he would rise 
again the third day; so that he ought to have said, 
He is risen, though he had not seen him, nor spoken 
with him at that.
2. He did not pay a just deference to the testi-
mony of his fellow-disciples, who were men of wise-
don and integrity, and ought to be credited. He 
knocked them to be honest men; they all ten of them 
conferred in the testimony with great assurance; and 
yet he cannot persuade himself to say that their 
record is true. Christ had chosen them to be his 
worshippers of this very thing to all nations; and yet 
Thomas, one of their own fraternity, would show 
them to be competent witnesses, nor trust them fur-
ther than he can see them. It was not, however, 
their veracity that he questioned, but their pru-
dence; he feared they were too credulous.
3. He tempted Christ, and limited the Holy One 
of Israel, when he would be convinced by his own 
eyes. And thus the school, or rather the superior, 
that the print of the nails, which the apostles told him 
they had seen, would admit the putting of his finger into 
them, or the wound in his side the thrusting in of 
his hand; nor was it fit to deal so roughly with a 
living body; yet Thomas tie up his faith to this 
vidence; either he will be humoured, and have his 
fancy gratified, or he will not believe; see Matt. 
16. 17. 27.
(4.) The open avowal of this in the presence of the 
disciples, was an offence and discouragement to 
them. It was not only a sin, but a scandal. As one 
coward makes many, so does one unbeliever, one 
sceptic, making his brethren's heart to faint like his 
heart, Deut. 20. 8. Had he only thought this evil, 
and then laid his hand upon his mouth, to suppress 
it, his error had remained with himself; but his pro-
claiming of his infidelity, and that so peremptorily, 
mebe of ill consequence to the rest, who were as 
yet but weak and wavering.
26. And after eight days again his disciples 
were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, 
and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto 
you. 27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach 
hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and 
reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and 
be not faithless, but believing. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto 
him, My Lord and my God. 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast 
seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are 
they that have not seen, and yet have 
believed. 30. And many other signs truly 
did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, 
which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might 
believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of 
God; and that believing ye might have 
life through his name.
We have here an account of another appearance 
of Christ to his disciples, after his resurrection, 
when Thomas was now with them. And concern-
3ing this we may observe.
1. When it was that Christ repeated his visit to 
his disciples, after eight days; that day seven-night 
after he rose, which must therefore be, as that was, 
the first day of the week.
I. He deferred his next appearance for some time, to shew his disciples that he was not risen to such a life as he had formerly lived, to converse constantly with them, but was as one that belonged to another world, and visited this only as angels do, now and then, when there was occasion. Where Christ was during these eight days, and the rest of the time of his absence on earth, is fully to inquire, and presumption to determine. Wherever he was, no doubt angels ministered unto him. In the beginning of his ministry and his life, he was seen, tempted by the evil spirit, Matt. 4. 1, 2. And more at the beginning of his glory he was forty days, for the most part unseen, attended by good spirits.

2. He deferred it so long as seven days. And why so?

(1.) That he might put a rebuke upon Thomas for his incredulity; he had neglected the former meeting of the disciples: and to teach him to prize those seasons of grace better for the future, he cannot have such another opportunity for several days. He that slips one tide, must stay a good while for another. A very melancholy week, we have reason to think, Thomas had of it, drooping, and in suspense, while the other disciples were full of joy; and it was owing to himself and his own folly.

(2.) That he might try the faith and patience of the disciples in his absence. That was the point when they were satisfied that they had seen the Lord; then were the disciples glad; but he would try whether they could keep the ground they had got, when they saw no more of him for some days. And thus he would gradually wean them from his bodily presence, which they had dated and depended too much upon.

(3.) That he might put an honour upon the first day of the week, and give a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church as the Christian sabbath, the weekly day of holy rest and holy conversations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed, was an appointment from the beginning, as old as innocence; and that in the kingdom of the Messiah the first day of the week should be that solemn day, this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly: and it is highly probable that in his former appearance to them he appointed them that day seven-night to be together again, and promised to meet them; and also, that he appeared to them every first day of the week, beside other times, during the forty days. The religious observance of that day has been from thence transmitted down to us through every age of the church. This therefore is the day which the Lord has made.

II. Where and how, Christ made them this visit; it was at Jerusalem, for the doors were shut now, as before, for fear of the Jews. There they stood, to keep the feast of unleavened bread seven days, which expired the day before this; yet they would not set out on their journey to Galilee on the first day of the week, because there was the Christian sabbath, but stayed till the day after.

1. That Thomas was with them; though he had withdrawn himself once, yet not a second time. When we have lost one opportunity, we should give the more earnest heed to lay hold on the next, that we may recover our losses. It is a good sign if such a loss what our desires, and a bad sign if it cost them. The disciples admitted him among them, and did not insist upon his believing the resurrection of Christ, as they did, because as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful discretion, but bid him welcome to come and see. But observe, Christ did not appear to Thomas, for his satisfaction, till he found him in society with the rest of his disciples, because he would countenance the meetings of Christians and ministers, t; there will he be in the midst of them. And beside, he would make all the disciples witnesses of the rebuke he gave to Thomas, and yet withdrew the tender care he had of him.

2. That Christ came in among them, and stood in the midst, and they all knew him, for he showed himself now, just as he had showed himself before, (v. 19.) still the same, and no changeling. See the confederacy of our Lord Jesus! The gates of hell were not opened to him, and there he might have been in the midst of the adorations of a world of angels; yet, for the benefit of his church, he lingered on earth, and visited the little private meeting of his poor disciples, and is in the midst of them.

3. He saluted them all in a friendly manner, as he had done before; he said, Peace be unto you. This was no vain repetition, but significant of the abundant and sacred peace which Christ gives, and of the continuance of his blessings upon his people, for they fail not, but are new every morning, new every meeting.

III. What passed between Christ and Thomas at this meeting; and that only is recorded, though we may suppose he said a deal to the rest of them. Here is,

1. Christ's gracious condescension to Thomas, v. 27. He singled him out from the rest, and dealt with himself particularly to him: Reach hither thy finger, and since then will have it so, behold my hands, and satisfy thy curiosity to the utmost about the print of the nails; reach hither thy hand, and if nothing less will convince thee, thrust it into my side.

Here we have,

(1.) An implicit rebuke of Thomas's incredulity, in the plain reference which is here had to what Thomas had forgot. That no faith will be accepted of him, until he had heard it, though unseen; and one would think that his telling him of it should put him to the blush.

Note, There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, no, nor thought in our minds, at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus, Ps. 78. 21.

(2.) An express condescension to his weakness, which appears in two things. [1.] That he suffers his wisdom to be prescribed to. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors, who are in their acts of grace; yet Christ is pleased here to accommodate himself even to Thomas's fancy in a needless thing, rather than break with him, and leave him in his unbelief. He will not break the brake reed, but, as a good shepherd, gathers that which was driven away, Ezek. 34. 16. We ought the more to bear the infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15. 1, 2.

[2.] He suffers his wounds to be raked into, as it were, Thomas even to thrust his hand into his side, if then at last he would believe. Thus, for the confirmation of our faith, he hath instituted an ordinance on purpose to keep his death in remembrance, though it was an ignominious shameful death, and, one would think, should rather have been forgotten, and no more said of it; yet because it was such an evidence of his love, as would be an encouragement to our faith, he comitts the thing to be celebrated. And in that ordinance wherein we show the Lord's death, we are called, as it were, to put our finger into the print of the nail. Reach hither thy hand to him, who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving hand to thee.

It is an affecting word with which Christ closes up what he had to say to Thomas, Be not faithless but believing; we say, do not think it become an unbeliever; as if he should have been sealed up under unbelief, had he not yielded now. This warning is given to us all, Be not faithless; for, if we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless; let us therefore say, Lord, I believe, hith thou mine unbelief.
2. Thomas's believing consent to Jesus Christ. He is the same as put his finger into the print of the nails; it should seem, he did not, for Christ says, (v. 29.) Thou hast seen and believed; seeing suf-

And now faith comes off a conqueror, after a struggle with unbelief.

(1.) Thomas is now fully satisfied of the truth of Christ. He now knew that the same Jesus that was crucified, is now alive, and this is he. His slowness and backwardness to believe may help to strengthen our faith; for hereby it appears that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, who attested it to the world, and pawned their lives upon it, were not easy credulous men, but cautious enough, who suspended their belief of it till they saw the utmost evidence of it they could desire. Thus ouch of the eater came forth meat.

(2.) He therefore believed him to be Lord and God, and we are to believe him so. [1.] We must believe his deity—that he is God; not a man made God, but God made man, as this evangelist had laid down his thesis at first, ch. 1. 1. The author and head of our holy religion has the wisdom, power, kingdom, and glory, of his Father God, who was crucified, because he was to be not only the founder of it, but the foundation of it for its constant support, and the fountain of life for its supply. [2.] His meditation—that he is Lord, the one Lord, 1 Cor. 8. 6. 1 Tim. 2. 5. He is sufficiently authorized, as plenipotentiary, to settle the great concerns that lie between God and man; to take up the controversy which would have inevitably have been our ruin, and to establish the correspondence that was necessary to our happiness; see Acts 2. 36. Rom. 14. 9.

(3.) He consented to him as his Lord and his God. In faith there must be the consent of the will to gospel-terms, as well as the assent of the understanding to gospel-truths. We must accept of Christ to be that to us, which the Father hath appointed him. My Lord refers to Adonai—my foundation and stay: My God, to El-bobim—my prince and judge. God having constituted him the umpire and referrer, we must approve the choice, and entirely refer ourselves to him. This is the vital act of faith, He is mine, Cant. 2. 16.

(4.) He made an open profession of this, before those that had been the witnesses of his unbelieving doubts. He is Lord, it is Christ, and, to complete the scene, who first receiveth, Thou hast seen my Lord and my God; or, speaking to his brethren, This is my Lord and my God. Do we accept of Christ as our Lord and God? We must go to him, and tell him so, as David, (Ps. 16. 2.) deliver the surrender to him as our act and deed, tell others so, as those that triumph in our relation to Christ; This is my beloved. Thomas speaks with an ardency of affection, as one that has beheld Christ with all his might, My Lord and my God.

3. The judgment of Christ upon the whole; (v. 29.) "Thou hast not seen me, thou hast believed, and it is well thou art brought to it at last upon any terms; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Here:

(1.) Christ owns Thomas a believer. Sound and solid belief is the only way to be like the Lord Jesus. They who have long stood it out, if at last they yield, shall find him ready to forgive. No sooner did Thomas consent to Christ, than Christ gives him the comfort of it, and lets him know that he believes.

(2.) He upholds him with his former incredulity. He might well be ashamed to think. [1.] That he had been so backward to believe, and came so slowly to his own comforts. They that in sincerity have closed with Christ, see a great deal of reason to la-

that they did not do it sooner. [2.] That it was not without much ado that he was brought to believe at last; "If thou hadst not seen me alive, thou wouldst not have believed;" but if no evidence must be admitted but that of our own senses, and we must believe nothing but what we ourselves are eye-witnesses of, farewell all commerce and conversation. If this must be the only method of proof, how must the world be converted to the faith of Christ? He is therefore justly blamed for laying scheme upon the earth.

(3.) He commends the faith of those who believe upon easier terms. Thomas, as a believer, was truly blessed; but rather blessed are they that have not seen. It is not meant of not seeing the objects of faith, (for those are invisible, Heb. 11. 1. 2 Cor. 4. 18.) but the motives of faith—Christ's miracles, and especially his resurrection; blessed are they that see not these, and yet believe in Christ. This may look, either backward, upon the Old Testament saints, who had not seen the things which they saw, and yet believed the promise made unto the fathers, and lived by that faith; or forward, upon them who shall afterward believe; the Gentiles; who had never seen Christ in the flesh, as the Jews had. This faith is more1 culpable and praise-worthy than either of those; for it is a better temper of mind in those that do believe. Not to see, and yet to believe, argues greater industry in searching after truth, and greater ingenuity of mind in embracing it. He that believes upon that sight, has his resistance conquered by a sort of violence; but he that believes without that, like the hecrons, is more noble. [2.] It is a greater instance of the power of divine grace. The less sensible the evidence is, the more does the work of faith appear to be the Lord's doing. Peter is blessed in his faith, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to him, Matt. 16. 17. Flesh and blood contribute more to their faith that see and believe, than to theirs who see not, and yet believe. Dr. Lightfoot quotes a saying of one of the Rabbins, 'That one proselyte is more acceptable to God than all the thousands of Israel that stood before mount Sinai; for they saw and received the law, but a proselyte sees not, and yet receives it.'

IV. The remark which the evangelist makes upon his narrative, like an historian drawing towards a conclusion, v. 30. 31. And here:

1. He assures us that many other things occurred, which are not written in the book:—many signs. Some refer this to all the signs that Jesus did during his whole life, all the wondrous words he spake, and all the wonderful works he did. But it seems rather to be confined to the signs he did after his resurrection, for these were in the presence of the disciples only, which are here spoken of, Acts 10. 41. Divers of his appearances are not recorded, as appears, 1 Cor. 15. 5. 8. 9. 20. 21.

(1.) We may here improve this general attestation, that there were other signs, many other, for the confirmation of our faith; and, being added to the particular narratives, they very much strengthen the evidence. They that recorded the resurrection of Christ, were not put to fish for evidence, to take up such short and scanty proofs as they could find. Many were shown that might rest with concurrence, no, they had evidence enough and to spare, and more witnesses to produce than they had occasion for. The disciples, in whose presence these other signs were done, were to be preachers of Christ's resurrection to others, and therefore it was requisite they should have proofs of it ex abundanti—in abundance, that they might have a strong consolation, who ventured life and all upon it.

(2.) We need not ask why they were not all writ-
ten, or why not more than these, or other than these; for it is enough for us, that so it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration this was given. Had this history been a mere human composition, it had been studded with a multitude of depo-
sitions and affidavits, to prove the contexted truth of Christ's resurrection, and long arguments drawn up for the demonstration of it; but, being a divine history, the demands written with a truth absolutely, re-
lating what amounted to a competent proof, sufficient to convince those that were willing to be taught, and
to condemn those that were obstinate in their unbe-
lief; and if this satisfy not, more would not. Men produce all they have to say, that they may gain credit; but God does not, for he can give faith. Had this history been written for the entertainment of men, and the following chapter, he might have v

[The following is a continuation of the text, discussing various aspects of Christ's resurrection and the events surrounding it.]

Christ's name, by his merit and power, and both indefeasibly sure to all true believers.

CHAP. XXI.

The evangelist seemed to have concluded his history with the foregoing chapter; but, as St. Paul sometimes in his epistles, new matter occurring, he begins again. He had said, that there were many other signs which Jesus did for the proof of his resurrection. And in this chapter he mentions one of these, which was Christ's appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, in which we have an account.

1. How he discovered himself to them, as they were fishing, filled their net, and then very familiarly came and talked with them upon certain subjects in his presence.

2. What discourse he had with Peter after dinner, 


It is strange that the last gospel of this chapter was added by some other hand, when it is expressly said, (v. 24,) that the disciple whom Jesus loved, is he which testifieth of these things.

1. A FTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits;) dragging the net with fishes.

9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14. This is now the third time that Jesus
shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

We have here an account of Christ's appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Now,

1. Let us compare this appearance with those that went before. In those Christ shewed himself to his disciples when they were met in a solemn assembly, (it should seem, for religious worship,) upon a Lord's day, and when they were all together, perhaps expecting his appearing; but in this he shewed himself to some of them occasionally, upon a week-day, when they were fishing, and little thought of it. Christ has many ways of making himself known to his people; usually in his ordinances, but sometimes by his Spirit he visits them when they are employed in common business, as the shepherds who were keeping their flock by night, (Luke 2: 8,) even so here also, Gen. 16. 13.

2. Let us compare it with that which followed at the mountain in Galilee, where Christ had appointed them to meet him, Matt. 28. 16. This latter moved as soon as the days of unleavened bread were over, and disposed of themselves as they thought fit, till the time fixed for this interview, or general rendezvous appointed, as if they were waiting for that, that they might not be weary of waiting. Christ is often better than his word, but never worse; often prevents and outdoes the believing expectations of his people, but never disappoints them.

As to the particulars of the story, we may observe, 1. Who they were, to whom Christ now shewed himself; (v. 2.) not to all the twelve, but to seven of them only. Nathanael is mentioned as one of them, whom we have not met with since ch. 1. But some think he was the same with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. The two not named, are supposed to be Philip of Bethsaida, and Andrew of Capernaum. Observe here,

1. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be much together; not only in solemn religious assemblies, but in common conversation, and about common business. Good Christians should by this means both testify and increase their affection to, and delight in, each other, and edify one another both by discourse and example.

2. Christ chose to manifest himself to them when they were together; not only to communicate the time of his appearing, but to give them joint witnesses of the same matter of fact, and so might corroborate one another's testimony. Here were seven together, to attest this; on which occasion some observe, that the Roman law required seven witnesses to a testament.

3. Thomas was one of them, and is named next to Peter, as if he now kept closer to the meetings of the apostles than ever. It is well, if losses by our neglects make us more careful afterward not to slip opportunities.

II. How they were employed; v. 3. Observe,

1. Their agreement to go a-fishing. They knew not well what to do with themselves. For my part, says Peter, I will go a-fishing; We will go with thee then, says they, for we will keep together. Though continually two of a trade cannot agree, yet they could. Some think they did miss in returning to their boats and nets which they had left; but then Christ would not have countenanced them in it with a visit. It was rather commendable in them; for they did it, (1.) To redeem time, and not be idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection. Their commission was in a drawing, but not perfected. The hour for entering upon action was not come. It is probable that their Master had directed them to say nothing of his resurrection till after his ascension, nay, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at Jerusalem. Now, in the mean time, rather than do nothing, they would go a-fishing; not for recreation, but for business. It is an instance of their humility; though they were advanced to be sent of Christ, as he was of the Father, yet they did not take state upon them, but remembered the rock out of which they were hewn. It is an instance likewise of their industry, and speaks them good husbands of their time. When they were waiting, the whale was to be tilling. Those who would give an account of their time with joy, should contrive to fill up the vacancies of it, to gather up the fragments of it. (2.) That they might help to maintain themselves, and not be burdensome to any. While their Master was with them, those who ministered to him were kind to them; but now that the bridegroom was taken from them they must for those days, and therefore their own hands, as Paul's, must minister to their necessities; and for that reason Christ asked them, Have ye any meat? This teaches us with quietness to work, and eat our own bread.

2. Their disappointment in their fishing. That night they caught nothing, though, it is probable, they toiled all night, as Luke 5. 5. See the vanity of this work; it is not sufficient to be diligent in it, though it be not empty. Even good men may come short of desired success in their honest undertakings. We may be in the way of our duty, and yet not prosper. Providence so ordered it, that all that night they should catch nothing, that the miraculous draught of fishes in the morning might be the more wonderful and the more acceptable. In these disappointments Christ was very gracious, and has often designs that are very gracious. Man has indeed a dominion over the fish of the sea, but they are not always at his beck; God only knows the paths of the sea, and commands that which passeth through them.

III. After what manner Christ made himself known to them. It is said, (v. 1.) He shewed himself. His body, though a true and real body, was raised, as our's will be, a spiritual body, and so was visible only when he himself was pleased to make it so; or, rather, came and removed so quickly, that it was here or there in an instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Four things are observable in the appearance of Christ to them,

1. He shewed himself to them seasonably, (v. 4.) When the morning was come, after a fruitless night's toil, Jesus stood on the shore. Christ's time of making himself known to his people, is, when they are most at a loss. When they think they have lost themselves, he will let them know that they have not lost him. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes, if Christ comes, in the morning. Christ appeared to them, not walking upon the water, because, being risen from the dead, he was not to be with them as he had been; but standing upon the shore, because now they were to make toward him. Some of the ancients put this significance upon it, that Christ, having finished his work, was got through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to a safe and quiet shore, where he stood in triumph; but the disciples, beholding their work before them, were yet at sea, in toil and peril. It is a comfort to us, when our passage is rough and stormy, that our Master is at shore, and we are hastening to him.

2. He shewed himself to them gradually. The disciples, though they had been intimately acquainted with him, knew not, all at once, that it was Jesus. Little by little they came to know him, and not looking so much upon him, they took him for some common person waiting the arrival of their boat, to buy their fish. Note, Christ is often nearer us than we think he is, and so we shall find afterward, to our comfort.
3. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his pity, v. 5. He called to them, Children, v. 6.—Lads, have ye any meat? Have ye caught any fish? Here, (1.) The compellation is very familiar; he speaks unto them as unto his sons, with marks of a father; Children. Though he was now entered upon his exalted state, he spake to his disciples with as much kindness and affection as ever. They were not children in age, but they were his children; the children which God had given him. (2.) The question is very kind; Have ye any meat? He asks as a tender father concerning his children, whether they had been provided with that which is fit for them? That, if they be not, he may take care for their supply. Note, The Lord is for the body. 1 Cor. 6. 13. Christ takes cognizance of the temporal wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient. Verily they shall be fed, Ps. 77. 3. Christ looks into the cottages of the poor, and asks, Children, have ye any meat? Thereby inviting them to open their cases before him, and by the prayer of faith to make their requests known to him: and then let them be careful for nothing; for Christ takes care of them, takes care for them. Christ has herein set us an example of compassionate concern for our brethren; there are many poor householders disabled for labour, or disappoint-ed in it, that are reduced to straits, whom the rich should inquire after thus, Have ye any meat? For the more frequent mention of the question, there is a rare expression, They that would have supplies from Christ, must own themselves empty and needy.

4. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his power; and this perfected the discovery; v. 6. he ordered them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, the contrary side to what they had been casting it on; and then they who were going home empty-handed, were enriched with a great draught of fishes. (1.) The orders Christ gave them, and the promise annexed to these orders; Cast the net there in such a place, and you shall find. He from whom nothing is hid, no not the inhabitants under the waters, (Job 26. 5.) knew on what side of the ship the shoal of fishes was, and to that side he directs them. Note, Divine Providence extends itself to things most minute and contingent; and there are the care that know how to take hints from thence in the conduct of their affairs, and acknowledge it in all their ways.

(2.) Their obedience to these orders, and the good success of that. As yet they knew not that it was Jesus; however, they were willing to be advised by any body, and did not bid this supposed stranger mind his own concerns, and not meddle with theirs, but took his counsel; in being thus observant of strangers, they were obedient to their Master unawares. And it spied wonderfully well; now they had a draught that paid them for all their pains. Note, Those that are humble, diligent, and patient, (though their labours may be crossed,) shall be crowned; they sometimes live to see their affairs take a happy turn, after many struggles and fruitless labour. They that cast their net at the right hand, and not hastily clasping Christ's orders. Those are likely to speed well, that follow the rule of the word, the guidance of the Spirit, and the intimations of Providence; for that is casting the net on the right side of the ship.

Now the draught of fishes may be considered,

[1.] As a miracle in itself: and so it was designed, to prove that Jesus Christ was raised in power, though seen in weakness, and that all things were put under his feet, the fishes of the sea not excepted. He manifested himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for.

[2.] As a mercy to them; for the reasonable and abundant supply of their necessities. When their ingenuity and industry failed them, the power of Christ came in opportunely for their relief; for he would take care that they who had left all for him, should not want any good thing. When we are most at our flight, Jesus does not fail to strengthen us.

[3.] As the memorial of a former mercy, with which Christ had formerly recompensed Peter for the loss of his boat, Luke 5. 3, 8. This miracle nearly resembled that, and could not but put Peter in mind of that, which helped him to improve this; for both that and this affected him much, as meeting him in his own element, in his own employment. Latter favours are designed to bring to mind former favours, that eaten bread may not be forgotten.

[4.] As a mystery, and very significant of that work to which Christ was now with an enlarged commission sending them forth. The prophets had been fishing for souls, and caught nothing, or very little; but the apostles, who let down the net at Christ's word, had wonderful success. Many were taken, the large catch of fishes denoting the large number of souls that should be brought in. Luke 5. 1-11. They themselves, in pursuance of their former mission, when they were first made fishers of men, had had small success in comparison with what they should now have. When, soon after this, three thousand were converted in one day, then the net was cast on the right side of the ship. It is an encouragement to Christ's ministers to continue their diligence in their work. One happy draught, at length, may be sufficient to set many years at their tables. The same work may be performed in one stroke; and if it were not, the same word would not be spoken; the same miracle would not be wrought.

IV. How the disciples received this discovery which Christ made of himself, v. 7, 8. Where we find,

1. That John was the most intelligent and quick-sighted disciple. He whom Jesus loved, was the first that said, It is the Lord; for those whom Christ loves he will in a special manner manifest himself to. He speedily took in the full import of his Master's answers, and considered more closely to his Master in his sufferings than any of them; and therefore he has a clearer eye and a more discerning judgment than any of them, in recompence for his constancy. When John was himself aware that it was the Lord, he communicated his knowledge to those with him; for this dispensation of the Spirit is given to every one, that he may profit thereby. They that knew Christ themselves, should endeavour to bring others acquainted with him, we need not engage him, there is enough in him for us all. John tells Peter particularly his thoughts, that it was the Lord; knowing he would be glad to see him above any of them. Though Peter had denied his Master, yet, having repented, and being taken into the communion of the disciples again, they were as free and familiar with him as ever.

2. That Peter was the most zealous and warm-hearted disciple: for as soon as he heard it was the Lord, (for which he took John's word,) the ship could not hold him, nor could he stay the bringing of it to shore, but into the sea he throws himself presently, that he might come first to Christ.

(1.) He shewed his respect to Christ by girding his fisher's coat about him, which might appear before his Master in the best clothes he had, and not rudely rush into his presence, stripped as he was to his waistcoat and drawers, because the work he was about was toilsome, and he was resolved to take pains in it. Perhaps this fisher's coat was made of
leather, or oil-cloth, and would keep out wet; and he got it to him, that he might make the best of his way through the water to Christ, as he used to do after his nets, whereon was intended upon his fishing orb called his good-will and aim to be with Jesus. “If Christ suffer me,” (thinks he) “to drown, and come short of him, it is but what I deserve for denying him.” Peter had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much by his willingness to run hazards, and undergo hardships, to come to him. They that have been with Jesus, will be willing to swim through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to come to him. And it is a laudable contention among Christ’s disciples, to strive who shall be first with him.

3. That the rest of the disciples were careful and honest-hearted. Though they were not in such a transport of zeal as to throw themselves into the sea, like Peter, yet they hastened in the boat to the shore, and made the best of their way; (v. 2.) The disciples did not at first discover that it was Christ, came, slowly, yet they came to Christ. Now here we may observe,

(1.) How variously God dispenses his gifts. Some excel, as Peter and John; are very eminent in gifts and graces, and are thereby distinguished from their brethren; others are but ordinary disciples, that mind their duty, and are faithful to him, but do nothing to make themselves remarkable; and yet both the one and the other, the eminent and the obscure, shall sit down together with Christ in glory; nay, and perhaps the last shall be first. Of those that do excel, some, like John, are eminently contemplative, have great gifts of knowledge, and serve the church with that; others, like Peter, eminently active and courageous, are strong, and do exploits, and are thus very serviceable to their generation. Some are useful as the church’s eyes, others as the church’s hands, and all for the good of the body.

(2.) What a great deal of difference there may be between some good people and others in the way of their honouring Christ, and yet both accepted of him. Some serve Christ more in acts of devotion, and extraordinary expressions, as a religious zeal; and Christ, and the Lord, and the Lord’s people. Peter, ought not to be censured for casting himself into the sea, but commended for his zeal and the strength of his affection; and so must they be, who, in love to Christ, quit the world, with Mary, to sit at his feet. But others serve Christ more in the affairs of the world: they continue in that ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore, as the other disciples here; and this may be censured as worldly. Eternally, they, in their place, are as truly serving Christ as the other, even in serving tables. If all the disciples had done as Peter did, what had become of their fish and their nets? And yet if Peter had done as they did, we had wanted this instance of holy zeal. Christ was well pleased with both, and so must we be.

(3.) That there are several ways of bringing Christ’s disciples to shore to him from off the sea of this world. Some are brought to him by a violent death, as the mariners, who threw themselves into the sea, in their zeal for Christ; others are brought to him by a natural death, dragging the net, which is lesser terrible; but both meet at length on the safe and quiet shore with Christ.

V. What entertainment the Lord Jesus gave them when they came ashore.

1. He had provision ready for them. When they came to land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a good fire there to warm them and dry them, fish and bread; competent provision for a good meal.

(1.) We need not be curious in inquiring whence this fire, and fish, and bread, came, any more than whence the meat came, which the ravens brought Elijah. He that could multiply the loaves and fishes that were, could make new ones if he pleased, or turn stones into bread, or send his angels to fetch fishes here and there as he would. It is uncertain whether this provision was made in the open air, or in some fisher’s cabin, or hut, upon the shore; here was nothing stately or delicate; we should be content with mean things, for Christ was.

(2.) We may be comforted in this instance of Christ’s care of his disciples; he has wherewith to supply all our needs, and knows what we have need of. He kindly provided for those fishermen, when they came weary from their work; for verily they shall be fed, who trust in the Lord, and do good. It is encouraging to Christ’s ministers, whom he hath made fishers of men, that they may depend upon him who employs them, to provide for them; and if they should miss of encouragement in this world, should be able to say, “The Lord shall provide.” And let them and their posterity ever, let them content themselves with what they have here; they have better things in reserve, and shall eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom, Luke 22. 30.

A while ago, the disciples had entertained Christ with a broiled fish, (Luke 24. 42.) and now, as a friend, he returned their kindness, and entertained them with one; nay, in the draught of fishes, he repaid them more than a hundred fold.

2. He called for some of that which they had caught, and they produced it, v. 10, 11. Observe here,

(1.) The command Christ gave them to bring their draught of fish to shore; “Bring of the fish hither, which you have now caught, and let us have some of them,” not as if he needed it, and could not make up a dinner for them without it; but, [1.] He would have them eat the labour of their hands, Ps. 128. 2. What is got by God’s blessing on our own industry and honest labour, if withal God give us power to eat of it, and enjoy good in our labour, hath a peculiar sweetness in it. It is said of the slothful man, that he roasted not that which he took in hunting; he could not find in his house what he might have been willing to take, Prov. 12. 27. But Christ would hereby teach us to use what we have. [2.] He would have them taste the gifts of his miraculous bounty, that they might be witnesses both of his power and of his goodness. The benefits Christ bestows upon us, are not to be buried and laid up, but to be used and laid out. [3.] He would give us a specimen of the spiritual entertainment he has for his believers, which, in this respect, is most free and familiar—that he supplies with them, and with them; their graces are pleasing to him, and his comforts are so to them; what he works in them he accepts from them. [4.] Ministers, who are fishers of men, must bring all they catch to their Master, for him their success depends.

(2.) The reason for the command. v. 11. It was said, (v. 6.) They were not able to draw the net to shore, for the multitude of fishes; that is, they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but he bade them bring it to shore, made it easy. Thus the fishers of men, when they have enclosed souls in the gospel-net, cannot bring them to shore, cannot carry on and complete the good work begun, without the continued influence of the divine grace. If he that helped us to catch them, when, without his help, we should have caught nothing,
do not help us to keep them, and draw them to land, by binding them up in their most holy faith, we shall lose them at last, 1 Cor. 3. 7.

Observe, [1.] Who it was, that was most active in leading the fishes; it was Peter; who, as in the former instance, (v. 7.) had shown a more zealous affection to his Master’s person than any of them, so in this he shewed a more ready obedience to his Master’s command; but all that are faithful, are not alike forward.

[2.] The number of the fishes that were caught. They had the curiosity to count them, and perhaps it was in order to the making of a dividend; they were in all a hundred and fifty and three, and all great fishes. These were many more than they needed for their present supply, but they might sell them. If not for this, the money would serve to bear their charges back to Jerusalem, whither they were shortly to return.

[3.] A further instance of Christ’s care of them, to increase both the miracle and the mercy; for all there were so many, and great fishes too, yet was not the net broken; so that they lost none of their fish, nor damaged their net. It was said, (Luke 5. 6.) This is no other than Peter, who was the cleanest made of them for they had long since left their own, and if so, Christ would teach us to take care of what we have borrowed, as much as if it were our own. It was well that their net did not break, for they had not now the leisure they had had, to mend their nets.

The net of the gospel has enclosed multitudes, three thousand in one day, and yet is not broken; it is still as mighty as when bringing home to the shore 1050. This he invited them to dinner. Observing them to keep their distance, and that they were afraid to ask him, Who art thou? because they knew it was their Lord, he called to them very familiarly, Come, and dine.

(1.) See here how free Christ was with his disciples; he treated them as friends; he did not say, Come, and wait, come, and attend me, but Come, and dine, and not. Go thine own way, as servants are appointed to do, but Come, and dine with me.

This kind invitation may be alluded to, to illustrate, [1.] The call Christ gives his disciples into communion with him in grace here. All things are now ready; Come, and dine. Christ is a feast; Come, dine upon him; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drunk indeed. Christ is a friend; come, dine with him.

(2.) See how reverently the disciples were before Christ; they were somewhat shy of using the freedom he invited them to; and he by his coming to them, to their meat, it should seem that they stood passing. Being to eat with a ruler, such a ruler, they consider diligently what is before them. None of them durst ask him, Who art thou? Either, [1.] Because they would not be so bold with him. Though perhaps he appeared now in something of a disease at first, as to the two disciples, when they came to him, (Luke 24. 36.) he seemed not to shew yet they had very good reason to think it was he, and could be no other. Or, [2.] Because they would not so far betray their own folly. When we had given them this instance of his power and goodness, they must be stupid indeed if they questioned whether it was he or no. When God, in his providence, has given us sensible proofs of his care for our bodies, and has given us, in his grace, manifest proofs of his goodness to our souls, and good work upon us, we should be ashamed of our distrusts, and not dare to question that which he has left us no room to question. Groundless doubts must be stifled, and not started.

4. He carved for them, as the Master of the feast, v. 13. Observing them to be still shy and timorous, he comes, and takes bread himself, and gives them, some to each of them, and fish likewise. No doubt, he might have grace to give himself a feast, and clear the dish; (as Luke 24. 36.) but, it being his known and constant practice, it did not need to be mentioned.

(1.) The entertainment here was but ordinary; it was but a fish-dinner, and coarsely dressed; here was nothing sumptuous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely. Hunger is the best sauce. Christ, though he entered upon his exalted state, shews himself still as he was, not shewed himself a prince by feasting. Those that could content themselves with bread and fish, unless they have sauce and wine, would scarcely have found in their hearts to dine with Christ himself here.

(2.) Christ himself began. Though, perhaps, having a glorified body, he needed not to eat, yet he would shew that he had a true body which was capable ofchange. The apostle produced this as one proof of his resurrection, that they had eaten and drunk with him, Acts 10. 41.

(3.) He gave the meat about to all his guests. He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but he himself divided it among them, and put it into their hands. Thus to him we owe the application, as well as the purchase of the breadth of redemption. He gives us power to eat of him.

The evangelist leaves them at dinner, and makes this remark, (v. 14.) This is the third time that Jesus shewed himself alive to his disciples, or the greater part of them. This is the third day; so some. On the day he rose, he appeared five times; the second day was that day seven-night; and this was the third. Or, this was his third appearance to any considerable number of his disciples together; though he had appeared first to Mary, to the women, then to the two disciples, to Cephas, yet he had but twice before this appeared to any company of them together. This is taken notice of, [1.] For the confirming the truth of his resurrection; the vision was doubled, was tripled, for the thing was certain. They who believed not the first sign, would be brought to believe the voice of the latter signs. [2.] As an instance of Christ’s continued kindness to his disciples, (and what could be more than to feed them?) and the more reason why we should visit them. It is good to keep account of Christ’s gracious visits; for he keeps account of them, and they will be remembered against us if we walk unworthily of them, as they were against Solomon, when he was reminded that the Lord God of Israel had appeared unto him twice. This is the third; have we made a due improvement of the first and second? See 2 Cor. 12. 14. This is the third, perhaps it may be the last.

15. So when they had dined. Jesus saith to Simon Peter. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17. He saith to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all
things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and wast able to walk: but when thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

We have here Christ's discourse with Peter after dinner, so much of it as relates to himself; in which

He examines his love to him, and gives him a charge concerning his flock, v. 15—17. Observe,

1. When Christ entered into this discourse with Peter; it was after they had dined; they had all eaten, and were filled, and, it is probable, were entertained with such edifying discourse as our Lord Jesus used to make his table-talk. Christ foresaw that what he had to say to Peter, would give him some uneasiness, and therefore would not say it till they had dined, because he would not spoil his dinner. Peter was conscious to himself that he had incurred his Master's displeasure, and could expect no other than to be upbraided with his treachery and ingratitude. "Was this thy kindness to the friend? Did not I tell thee what a coward thou wouldest prove?" Nay, he might justly expect to be struck out of the roll of the disciples, and to be expelled the sacred college. Twice, if not thrice, he had seen his Master since his resurrection, and he said not a word to him of it. We may suppose Peter full of doubt upon what terms he stood with his Master; sometimes hoping the best, because he had received favours from him in common with the rest; yet not without some fears, lest the shining would come at last, that would pay for all. But now, at length, his Master put him out of his pain, said what he had to say to him, and confirmed him in his place as an apostle. He did not tell him of his fault hastily, but deferred it for some time; did not tell him of it unseasonably, to disturb the company at dinner, but when they had dined together in token of reconciliation, then discoursed he with him about it, not as with a criminal, but as with a friend. Peter had reproached himself for it, and therefore Christ did not reproach him for it, nor tell him of it directly, but only by a tacit intimation; and being satisfied in his sincerity, the offence was not only forgiven, but forgotten; and Christ let him know that he was as dear to him as ever. Herein he has given us an encouraging instance of his tenderness toward penitents, and his taught us, in like manner, to restore sinners gladly, with a spirit of meekness, and for love's sake.

2. What was the discourse itself. Here was the same question three times asked, the same answer three times made, and the same reply three times given, with very little variation, and yet no vain repetition. It was repeated by our Saviour, in the speaking of it, the more to affect Peter, and the other disciples that were present; it is repeated by the evangelist that went forth of it, the more to affect us, and all that read it.

(1.) Three times Christ asks Peter whether he loves him or no. The first time the question is, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me more than these? Observe,

[1.] How he calls him: Simon, son of Jonas. He speaks to him by name, the more to affect him, as Luke 22. 51. Simon, Simon. He does not call him Cephas, or Peter, the name he had given him, for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified, but his original name, Simon. Yet he gives him no hard language, does not call him out of his name, though he deserved it; but as he had called him when he pronounced him blessed, Simon Bar-jona, Matt. 16. 17. He calls him son of Jonas, (or John, or Jokanaan,) to remind him of his extraction, how mean it was, and unworthy the honour to which he was advanced.

[2.] How he catechises him; Lovest thou me more than these? First, Lovest thou me? If we would try whether we are Christ's disciples indeed, this must be the inquiry, Do we love him? But there was a special reason why Christ put it now to Peter.

1. His fall had given occasion to doubt of his love; "Peter, I have cause to suspect thy love; for if thou hadst loved me, thou wouldest not have been ashamed and afraid to own me in my sufferings. How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart was not with me?" Note, We must not reckon it an affront to have our sincerity questioned, when we ourselves have done that which makes it questionable; after a shaking fall, we must take heed of setting too soon, lest we settle upon a wrong bottom.

The question is affecting; he does not ask, "Dost thou love me?" but, "Dost thou love me?" Give but proofs of that, and the affront shall be passed by, and no more said of it. Peter had professed himself a penitent, witness his tears, and his return to the society of the disciples; he was now upon his probation as a penitent; but the question is not, "Simon, how much hast thou sinned? How often hast thou fasted, and afforded thy soul?" but, "Dost thou love me? That is it which will make the other expressions of repentance acceptable. The great thing Christ eyes in penitents, is, their eyeing him in their repentance. Much is forgiven her, not because she wept much, but because she loved much.

2. His function would give occasion for the exercise of his love. Before Christ would commit his sheep to his care, he asked him, Lovest thou me? Christ has such a tender regard to his flock, that he will not trust it with any but those that love him, and therefore will love all that are his for his sake. Those that do not truly love Christ, will never truly love the souls of men, nor will naturally care for their state as they should; nor will that minister love his work, that does not love his Master. Nothing is less love to Christ, than to instigate helpers to go cheerfully through the difficulties and discouragements they meet with in their work. 2 Cor. 3. 15, 14. But this love will make their work easy, and them in good earnest in it.

Secondly, Lovest thou me more than these? περιπλήκτησαν;

1. "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these, more than thou lovest those people? Dost thou love me better than John, thy intimate friend? or Andrew, thy own brother and companion? Those do not love Christ aright, that do not love him better than the best friend they have in the world, and make it to appear whenever they stand in comparison or in competition. Or, "more than thou lovest these things, these beasts and nets; more than all the pleasure of fishing; which some make a great deal of; they tell us: we will make them know that others make a calling of." Those only love Christ indeed, that love him better than all the delights of sense and all the profits of this world. "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these occupation: thou art now employed in? If so, leave them, to employ thyself wholly in feeding my flock." So Dr. Whitby.
than any of the rest of the disciples love me?" And then it is either to uphold him with his own glorious innocence of having sinned, and deny thee, yet will I. "Art thou still of the same mind?" Or to intimate to him, that he had now more reason to love him than any of them had, for more had been forgiven to him than to any of them, as much as his sin in denying Christ was greater than theirs in for-saking him.

Tell me therefore which of them will love me most? Luke 7: 42. Note, We should all study to keep up in others the same spirit of peace and harmony, the same love and kindness, the same patience and meekness, the same striving after peace, and striving to save all; the same love to the peace, to strive which shall love Christ best; nor any breach of good manners, to go before others in this love.

The second and third time that Christ puts this question, (1.) He left out more than these; because Peter, in his answer, modestly left it out, not willing to compare himself with his brethren, much less to prefer himself before them. Though we cannot say, We love Christ more than others do, yet we shall be accepted, if we can say, We love him indeed. (2.) In the last he altered the word, as it is in the original. In the two first inquiries, the original word is, εσφαλμαν, (2.) Three times Peter returns the same answer to Christ: "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. Observe, [1.] Peter does not pretend to love Christ more than the rest of the disciples did; he is now ashamed of that rash word of his, though all men deny thee, yet will not I; and he had reason to be ashamed of it. Note, Though we must be better than others, yet we must, in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves; for we know more evil of ourselves than we do of any of our brethren.

[2.] Yet he professes again and again, that he loved Christ; "Yes, Lord surely I love thee; I was unworthy to live, if I did not." He had a high esteem and value for him, a grateful sense of his kindness, and was entirely devoted to his honour and interest; his desire was stedfast to be to him, and be with him, yet he was undone without; and his delight in him, as one he should unspeakably happy in. This amounts to a profession of repentance for his sin, for it grieves us to have affronted one we love; and to promise of adherence to him for the future; Lord, I love thee, and will never leave thee. Christ prayed that his faith might not fail, (Luke 22: 32.) and because his faith did fail, his love did not; for faith will work by love.

Peter had forfeited his claim of relation to Christ; he was now to be re-admitted, upon his repentance; Christ puts his trial upon this issue; Dost thou love me? And Peter joins issue upon it; Lord, I love thee. Note, Those who can truly say, through grace, that they love Jesus Christ, may take the comfort of their interest in him, notwithstanding their daily infirmities; and no one so goes to Christ himself for the proof of it; Thou knowest that I love thee; and the third time yet more emphatically; Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. He does not vomit his fellow-disciples to witness for him, they might have deceived him; nor does he think his own word might be taken, the credit of that was destroyed already; but he calls Christ himself to witness. First, Peter does not say that Christ knew all things, and particularly that he knew the heart, and was a dissembler of the thoughts and intents of that, ch. 16. 30. Secondly, Peter was satisfied of this, that Christ, who knew all things, knew the sincerity of his love to him, and would be ready to attest it in his favour. It is a terror to a hypocrite, to think that Christ knows all things; for the divine omniscience will be a witness against him. But it is a comfort to a sincere Christian, that he is at liberty to appeal to, My thoughts are in heaven, my record is with God, and which is us better than we know ourselves. Though we know not our own uprightness, he does.

[3.] He was grieved, when Christ asked him the third time, Lovest thou me? v. 17. First, Because it put him in mind of his threefold denial of Christ, and was plainly designed to do so; and when he thought upon it he wept. Every remembrance of sin and sinners, and of our sins and sinfulness, is a true penitent. Thou shalt be ashamed, when I am justified toward thee. Secondly, Because it put him in fear, lest his Master foresaw some further miscarriage of his, which would be as great a contradiction to his profession of love to him as the former was. "Surely," thinks Peter, "my Master would not thus put me upon the rack, if he did not see some cause for it. What would become of me, if I should be again tempted?" Godly sorrow works carefulness and fear, 2 Cor. 7. 11.

(3.) Three times Christ committed the care of his flock to Peter; Feed my lambs, feed my sheep; feed my sheep.

[1.] Those whom Christ committed to Peter's care, were his lambs and his sheep. The church of Christ is his flock, which he himself geçhuod over and fed, Acts 20. 28. and he is the Chief Shepherd of it: in this flock some are lambs, young and tender and weak, others are sheep, grown to some strength and maturity. The Shepherd here takes care of both, and of the lambs first, for upon all occasions he shewed a particular tenderness for them; the lambs he gathereth in his arms, and carries in his bosom, Isa. 40. 11.

[2.] The more he gives him concerning them, is to feed them. The word used, (v. 15, 17.) is διδων, which strictly signifies, to give them food; but the word used, (v. 16.) is τιμωμα, which signifies more largely to do all the offices of a shepherd to them; "Feed the lambs with that which is proper for them, and the sheep likewise with food convenient. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, seek and feed them, and the other sheep also which are not of this fold." The office is the duty of all Christ's ministers, to feed his lambs and sheep. Feed them, that is, teach them; for the doctrine of the gospel is spiritual food. Feed them, that is, "Lead them to the green pastures, presiding in their religious assemblies, and ministering all the ordinances to them. Feed them by personal application to their respective state and case: not only lay meat before them, but feed them with it, that are withal and will not, or are weak, lest they cannot, feed themselves." When Christ ascended on high, he gave pastors; left his flock with them that loved him, and would take care of them for his sake.

[3.] But why did he give this charge particularly to Peter? Ask the advocates for the pope's supremacy, and they will tell you, that Christ hereby designed to give to Peter, and therefore to his successors, and therefore to the bishops of Rome, an absolute rule and authority, as the head of a christian church; as if a charge to serve the sheep, gave a power to lord it over all the shepherds; whereas, it is plain, Peter himself never claimed such a power, nor did the other disciples ever own it in him. This charge given to Peter to preach the gospel, is by a strange fetch made to support the usurpation of his pretended successors, that fleece the sheep, and, instead of feeding them, feed upon them. But the particular application to Peter here, was designed, First, to restore him to his apostleship, now that he repented of his abjuration of it, and to renew his commission, both for his own satisfaction, and for the satisfaction of his brethren. A commission given to one convicted of a crime, is supposed to amount to a pardon; no doubt, this com-
mission given to Peter, was an evidence that Christ was reconciled to him, else he would never have re-
posed such a confidence in him. Of some that have deceived us we say; "Though we forgive them, we will not forget them," but Christ, when he forgave Peter, trusted him with the most valuable treasure he had on earth. Secondly, It was designed to quicken him to a diligent discharge of his office as an apostle. Peter was a man of a bold and zealous spirit, always forward to speak and act, and, lest he should be tempted to take upon him the directing of the shepherds, he is charged to feed the sheep, as And subsequently to the dog, and, not to lord it over God's heritage, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. If he will be doing, let him do this, and pretend no further. Thirdly, What Christ said to him, he said to all his disciples; he charged them all, not only to be fishers of men, (though that was said to Peter, Luke 5. 10.) by the conversion of sinners, but feed-
ers of the flock, by the edification of saints.
II. Christ, having thus appointed Peter his doing work, next cuts out to him his suffering work. Hav-
ing confirmed to him the honour of an apostle, he now tells him of further prefigurement designed—
the honour of a martyr. Observe,
1. How his martyrdom is foretold; (v. 18.) Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, being compelled to it, and art thou shall gird thee, as a prisoner that is punish-
ning, and carry thou whether naturally thou wouldst not.
(1.) He prefaces the notice he gives to Peter of his sufferings, with a solemn assentation, Verily, verily, I say unto thee. It was not spoken of as a thing probable, which perhaps might happen, but as a thing certain, I say it to thee. "Others, perhaps, will say to thee, as thou didst to Peter, 'This shall not be to thee,'" says profane; but he saith, "As I Christ fore-
saw all his own sufferings, so he foresaw the suffer-
ings of all his followers, and foretold them, though not in particular, as to Peter, yet in general, that they must take up their cross. Having charged him to feed his sheep, he bids him not to expect ease and honour in it, but trouble and persecution, and to suf-
f, die for well doing.
(2.) He foretells particularly that he should die a violent death, by the hands of an executioner. The stretching out his hands, some think, points at the manner of his death by crucifying; and the tradition of the ancients, if we may rely upon that, informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome under Nero, A. D. 68, or as others say, 79. Others think it points at the bonds and imprisonments which those were hampered with, that are sentenced to death. The pomp and solemnity of an execution add much to the terror of death, and to an eye of sense make it look doubly formidable. Death, in these horrid shapes, has often been the lot of Christ's faithful ones, who yet have overcome it by the blood of the Lamb. This prediction, though pointing chiefly to his death, was to have its accomplishment in his pre-
vious sufferings and toils, so that our Lord, as is evident, when he was imprisoned, Acts 4. 3—5. 18. 
12. 4. No more is implied here in his being car-
rried whither he would not, than that it was a violent death that he should be carried to; such a death as even innocent nature could not think of without dread, nor approach without some reluctance. He thus put into the christian, does not put off the man; Christ himself being here girded, proves by pre-empting his natural aversion to pain and death is well reconcil-
able with a holy submission to the will of God in both. Blessed Paul, though longing to be unloaded, owns he cannot desire to be unclothed, 2 Cor. 5. 4.
(3.) He compares this with his former liberty. Time was, when thou knewest not any of these hardships, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst. Where trouble comes, we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it has been otherwise; and to fret the more at the grievances of restraint, sickness, and poverty, because we have known the sweets of liberty, health, and plenty, Job 29. 2. Ps. 42. 4. But we may turn it the other way, and rea-
son thus with ourselves, "How many years of pros-
perity have I enjoyed more than I deserved and im-
proved? And, having received good, shall not I re-
ceive evil also?" See here,
1. What a change may possibly be made with us, to our condition in this world! They that have girded themselves with strength and honour, and indulged in the luxury of the world, before, perhaps, looses, may be reduced to such circum-
stances as are the reverse of all this. See 1 Sam.
2. 5.
2. What a change is presently made with those that leave all to follow Christ! They must no longer gird themselves, but he must gird them; and must no longer walk whither they will, but whither he will.
3. What a change will certainly be made with us, if we should live to be old! They who, when they were young, had strength of body and vigour of mind, and could easily go through business and hardship, and take the pleasures they had a mind to, when they shall be old, will find their strength gone, like Samson, when his hair was cut, and could not shake the women of a city as at other times.
Christ tells Peter he shall suffer thus in his old age. First, Though he should be old, and, in the course of nature, not likely to live long, yet his en-
emies would hasten him out of the world violently then when he was about to retire out of it peaceably, and would put out his candle when it was almost burned down to the socket. See 2 Chron. 36. 17. Secondly, God would shelter him from the rage of his enemies till he should come to be old, that he might be made the fitter for sufferings, and the church might the longer enjoy his services.
2. The explication of this prediction; (v. 19.) This shake he to Peter, signifying by what death he should glorify God, when he had finished his course. Observe,
(1.) That it is not only appointed to all once to die, but it is appointed to each what death he shall die, whether natural or violent, slow or sudden, easy or painful. When Paul speaks of so great a death, he intimates that there are degrees of death; there is one way into the world, but many ways out, and God has determined which way we should go.
(2.) That it is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to glorify God in it, for what is our chief end but this, To die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord? When we die patiently, submitting to the will of God; die cheerfully, re-
joicing in hope of the glory of God; and die usefully, witnessing to the truth and goodness of religion, and encouraging others, we glorify God in dying; and this is the earnest expectation and hope of all good christians, as it was Paul's, that Christ may be mag-
ified in this mortal body. But Paul adds,
(3.) That the death of the martyrs was in a special manner for the glorifying of God. The truths of God, which they died in the defence of, are hereby confirmed. The grace of God, which carried them with so much constancy through their suffer-
ings, is hereby magnified. And the consolations of God, which have abounded toward those in their sufferings, the sweet and sensible communications of their consolations, have hereby been recommended to the faith and joy of all the saints. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, and the conversion and establishment of thousands. Pre-
cious therefore in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, as that which honours him; and those who thereby at such an expense honour him, will honour.
3. The word of command he gives him hereupon;  
*When he had spoken thus, observing Peter perhaps to lack blank upon it, he saith unto him, Follow me.*  
Probably, he rose from the place where he had sat  
at dinner, walked off a little, and bid Peter attend  
him. This word, *Follow me,* was, (1.) A further  
confirmation of his restoration to his Master's  
 favour, and to his apostleship; for, *Follow me,* was  
the first word (2.) It was an exclamation of the pre-  
diction of his sufferings, which perhaps Peter at first  
did not fully understand, till Christ gave him that  
key to it, *Follow me,* "Expect to be treated as I  
have been, and to tread the same bloody path that I  
have trod before thee; for the disciple is not greater  
than his Lord." (3.) It was to excite him to, and  
encourage him in, faithfulness and diligence in his  
work as an apostle. He had bid him feed his sheep,  
and then (as at II. 13. 24.) *Thou shalt follow me.*  
They that faithfully follow Christ in grace, shall certainly  
follow him to glory.

20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the  
disciple whom Jesus loved following;  
which also leaned on his breast at supper,  
and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?  
21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus,  
Lord, and what shall this man do?  
22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry  
till I come, what is that to thee?  
Follow thou me.  
23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that  
that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him.  
He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come,  
what is that to thee?  
24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things,  
and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.  
25. And there are also many other things  
which Jesus did, the which, if they should be  
written every one, I suppose that even the  
world itself could not contain the books  
that should be written. Amen.

In these verses, we have,  
1. The conference Christ had with Peter concerning  
John, the beloved disciple: in which we have,  
1. The eye Peter cast upon him; (v. 20.) Peter,  
in obedience to his Master's orders, followed him,  
and, turning about, pleased with the honour his  
Master now did him, he sees the disciples whom  
Jesus loved following likewise. Observe here,  
(1.) How John is described; he does not name  
himself, as thinking his own name not worthy to be  
preserved in these records; but gives such a descrip-  
tion of himself as sufficiently informs us whom he  
meant, and withal gives us a reason why he follow-  
ed Christ so close; he was a disciple whom Jesus  
loved, whom he had a particular kindness for above  
the rest: and therefore you cannot blame him for  
coveting to be as much as possible within hearing  
of Christ's gracious words during those few precious  
moments, with which Christ favoured his disciples;  
it is probably that mention is here made of John's  
having leaned on Jesus' breast, and his inquiring  
whether Peter would have followed him: and this  
mention of Peter (ch. 13. 24.) as a reason why Peter  
made the following inquiry concerning him, to repay  
him for the former kindness. Then John was in  
the favourite's place, lying in Christ's bosom, and  
he improved the opportunity to oblige Peter. And  
now that Peter was in the favourite's place, called  
to take a walk with Christ, he thought himself  
bound in gratitude to, and specially to mark out to  
his Master as he thought would oblige him, we all being desirous  
to know things to come. Note, As we have  
interest at the throne of grace, we should improve  
it for the benefit of one another. They that help  
us by their prayers at one time, should be helped  
by us with our's at another time. This is the com-  
munion of saints.  
(2.) What he said; he also followed Jesus; which  
shows how well he loved his company; where he  
was, there also would this servant of his be. When  
Christ called Peter to follow him, it looked as if he  
designed to have some private talk with him; but  
such an affection John had to his Master, that he  
would rather do a thing that seemed rude than lose  
the benefit of any of Christ's discourse. What  
Christ said to Peter, he took as said to himself: for  
the word of an eminent servant, was given to all  
the disciples. However, he desired to have fellow-  
ship with those that had fellowship with Christ, and  
to accompany those that attended him. The bring-  
ing of one to follow Christ, should engage others.  
Draw me, and we will run after thee, Cant. 1. 4.  
(3.) The notice Peter took of it; he, turning  
about, seeth him. This may be looked upon either,  
As a culpable diversion from following his  
Master; he should have been wholly intent upon  
that, and have waited to hear what Christ had fur-  
ther to say to him, and then was he looking about  
him to see who followed. Note. The best men find  
it hard to attend upon the Lord without distraction;  
hard to keep their minds so closely fixed as they  
should be, in following Christ; and a needless and  
unseasonable regard to our business, makes us divert  
ourselves from that communion with Christ, with  
which he deals. Or, [2.] A sensible concern for his fellow-disciples. He was not so  
capable in this, as to elevate with the honour his Master did him, in  
singing him out from the rest, as to deny a kind look to one that followed. Acts of love to our brethren must go along with acts of faith in Christ.  
2. The inquiry Peter made concerning him: (v.  
21.) "Lord, and what shall this man do?"  
Then Peter was told the truth, which in the depth  
and depth, to be carried whither I would not.  
What should that be, his work, and his lot?"  
Now this may be taken as the language,  
(1.) Of concern for John, and kindness to him;  
"Lord, then shewest me a great deal of favour:  
here comes thy beloved disciple, whover forsook thy  
faith, as I have done; he expects to be taken  
concerned, and rather to be shewn, and nothing to say to him? Why  
that not tell him he must be employed, and how  
he must be honoured?  
(2.) Of uncomposition, at what Christ had said to  
him concerning his sufferings; "Lord, must I alone  
be carried whither I would not? Must I be marked  
out to be run down, and must this man have no  
share of the cross?" It is hard to reconcile ourselves  
to distinguishing sufferings, and the troubles in  
which we think we stand alone.  
(3.) Of curiosity, and a fond desire of knowing.
things to come, concerning others, as well as himself. It seems, by Christ's answer, there was something amiss in the question; when Christ had given him the charge of such a treasure, and the notice of such a trial, it had well become him to have said, "Lord, and what shall I do then to appease the judge faithful to such a trust, in such a trial? Lord, increase my faith. As my day is, let my strength be." But instead of this,

[1.] He seems more concerned for another than for himself. So apt are we to be busy in other men's matters, but negligent in the concerns of our own souls; quick-sighted abroad, but dim-sighted at home; judging others, and condemning what they will do, when we have enough to do to prove our own work, and understand our own way.

[2.] He seems more concerned about event than about duty. John was younger than Peter, and, in the course of nature, likely to survive him; "Lord," says he, "what times shall he be reserved for?" Whereas, if God by his grace enable us to persever to the end, and finish well, and get safe to heaven, we need not ask, "What shall be the lot of those that shall come after us?" Is it not well if peace and truth be in my days? Scripture-predictions must be eyed for the directing of our consciences, not the satisfying of our curiosity.

3. Christ's reply to this inquiry; (v. 22.) "If I would that he should continue until I come;" one does suffer as though he were "what is to thee? Mind thou thy own duty, the present duty, follow thou me." (1.) There seems to be here an intimation of Christ's purpose concerning John, in two things.

[1.] That he should not die a violent death, like Peter, but should tarry till Christ himself came by a natural death to fetch him to himself. The most correct version is the Latin; and hence it is, that John was the only one of all the twelve that did not actually die a martyr. He was often in jeorldy, in bonds and banishments; but at length died in his bed in a good old age.

Note, First, At death Christ comes to us to call us to account; and it concerns us to be ready for his coming. Secondly, Though Christ calls out some of his disciples to resist unto blood, yet not all. Though the crown of martyrdom is very glorious, yet the belov'd disciple comes short of it.

[2.] That he should not die till after Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem: so some understand his tarrying till Christ comes. All the other apostles died before that destruction; but John survived it many years. God wisely so ordered it, that one of the apostles should live so long as to close up the canon of the New Testament; which John did solemnly, Rev. 22. 18. And to obviate the design of the enemy that sowed tares even before the servants fell asleep, John lived to confront Elyon, and Cerinthus, and other heretics, who rose betimes, speaking perverse things.

(2.) Others think that it is only a rebuke to Peter's curiosity, and that his tarrying till Christ's second coming, was only the supposition of an absurd possibility.

"Wherefore askst thou after that which is foreign and secret? Suppose I should design that John should never die; what does that concern thee? It is nothing to thee, when, or where, or how, John must die; I have told thee how thou must die for thy part; it is enough for thee to know that. Follow thou me." Note, It is the will of Christ, that his disciples should manifest his power and authority, and do his duty, which is the province of his people; but their inquiries about future events, concerning either themselves or others.

[1.] There are many things we are apt to be solicited about, that are nothing to us. Other people's characters are nothing to us; it is out of our line to judge them; Rom. 14. 4. Whatever they are, saith Paul, it makes no matter to me. Other people's affairs are nothing to us to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the Scribes and disputers of this world concerning the counsels of God, and the state of the invisible world, concerning which we may say, that is it to us? What do you think will become of such and such? Is it a common question, which may easily be answered with another; What is that to me? To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to know the times and the seasons? Secret things belong not to us. [2.] The great thing that is all in all to us is duty, and not event; for duty is our's, events are God's: our own duty, and not concern concerning what for every one shall bear his own burden; our present duty, and not the duty of the time to come; for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof: a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord; (Ps. 37. 23.) he is guided step by step. Now all our duty is summed up in this one, of following Christ; we must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them, follow him to do him honour, as the servant his master; we must walk in the way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is.

And if we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which does not belong to us.

4. The mistake which arose from this saying of Christ, that that disciple should not die, but abide with the church to the end of time; together with the suppression of this, in the repetition of Christ's words, v. 23. Observe here,

(1.) The easy rise of a mistake in the church by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition to a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all.

[1.] They were inclined to expect it, because they could not choose but desire it. Quod volumus facile credimus—We easily believe what we wish to be true. For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, and to continue in the world till Christ's second coming, they think, will be a great blessing to the church, which in every age might have recourse to him as an oracle; when they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they apprehend, it shall be the guide of his select band; or, if that be not, supply the want of his; forgetting that the blessed Spirit the Comforter was to do that. Note, We are apt to date too much on men and means, instruments and external helps, and to think we are happy, if we may but have them always with us; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men. There is no need of immortal ministers to be the guides of the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

[2.] Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations, when they now found that John survived all the rest of the apostles; because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always; whereas that which waxeth old, is ready to vanish away, 1 Pet. 8. 19.

[3.] However, it took rise from a saying of Christ's, misunderstood, and then made a saying of the church. Hence learn,

First, The uncertainty of human tradition, and the folly of building our faith upon it. Here was a tradition, an apostolical tradition, a saying, that went abroad among the brethren; it was early, it was common, it was very useful; but when their inquiries about future events, concerning either themselves or others. [1.] There are many things we are apt to be solicited about, that are nothing to us. Other people's characters are nothing to us; it is out of our line to judge them; Rom. 14. 4. Whatever they are, saith Paul, it makes no matter to me. Other people's affairs are nothing to us to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the Scribes and disputers of this world concerning the counsels of God, and the state of the invisible world, concerning which we may say, that is it to us? What do you think will become of such and such? Is it a common question, which may easily be answered with another; What is that to me? To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to know the times and the seasons? Secret things belong not to us. [2.] The great thing that is all in all to us is duty, and not event; for duty is our's, events are God's: our own duty, and not concern concerning what for every one shall bear his own burden; our present duty, and not the duty of the time to come; for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof: a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord; (Ps. 37. 23.) he is guided step by step. Now all our duty is summed up in this one, of following Christ; we must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them, follow him to do him honour, as the servant his master; we must walk in the way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is. And if we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which does not belong to us. 4. The mistake which arose from this saying of Christ, that that disciple should not die, but abide with the church to the end of time; together with the suppression of this, in the repetition of Christ's words, v. 23. Observe here,

(1.) The easy rise of a mistake in the church by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition to a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all.

[1.] They were inclined to expect it, because they could not choose but desire it. Quod volumus facile credimus—We easily believe what we wish to be true. For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, and to continue in the world till Christ's second coming, they think, will be a great blessing to the church, which in every age might have recourse to him as an oracle; when they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they apprehend, it shall be the guide of his select band; or, if that be not, supply the want of his; forgetting that the blessed Spirit the Comforter was to do that. Note, We are apt to date too much on men and means, instruments and external helps, and to think we are happy, if we may but have them always with us; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men. There is no need of immortal ministers to be the guides of the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

[2.] Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations, when they now found that John survived all the rest of the apostles; because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always; whereas that which waxeth old, is ready to vanish away, 1 Pet. 8. 19.

[3.] However, it took rise from a saying of Christ's, misunderstood, and then made a saying of the church. Hence learn,
say, and yet it was a misconception. Let the scripture be its own interpreter, and explain itself, as it is in a great measure its own evidence, and proves itself, for it is light.

Secondly, The aptness of men to misinterpret the sayings of Christ. The grossest errors have sometimes shrouded themselves under the umbrage of incontestable truths; and the scriptures themselves have been wrested by the unlearned and unstable. We must not think it strange, if we hear the sayings of Christ misinterpreted, vouched to patronize the errors of antichrist, and the impudent doctrine of transubstantiation, for instance, pretending to build upon that blessed word of Christ, This is my body.

(2.) The easy rectifying of such mistakes, by adhering to the word of Christ, and abiding by that. So the evangelist here corrects and controls that saying among the brethren, by repeating the very words of Christ. He did not say so then, but he said, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? He said so, and no more. Add thou not unto his words. Let the words of Christ speak for themselves, and let no sense be put upon them but what is genuine and natural; and in that let us agree. Note, The best end of men's controversies, would be to keep to the express words of scripture, and speak, as well as think, according to that word. Is scripture-language the safest and most proper vehicle of scripture truth: the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. 2. 13. As the scripture itself, duly attended to, is the best weapon wherewith to wound all dangerous errors, (and therefore Deists, Socinians, Papists, and Enthusiasts, do all they can to derogate from the authority of the scripture,) so the scripture itself, humbly subscribed to, is the best weapon, whereby to heal the wounds that are made by different men in their expression concerning the same truths. Those that cannot agree in the same logics and metaphysics, and the propriety of the same terms of art, and the application of them, may yet agree in the same scripture-terms, and then may agree to love one another.

II. We have here the conclusion of this gospel, and with it of the evangelical story, v. 24, 25. This evangelist ends not so abruptly as the other three did, before he concluded. 1. It concludes with an account of the author or penman of it, connected by a decent transition to that which went before; (v. 24.) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things to the present age, and wrote these things for the benefit of posterity, even this same that Peter and his Master had that conference about in the foregoing verses—John the apostle.

(1.) Observe here, that those who wrote the history of Christ, were not ashamed to put their names to it. John here does in effect subscribe his name. As we are sure who was the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, which were the foundation of that revelation, so we are sure who were the penmen of the Four Gospels and the Acts, the Pentateuch of the New Testament. The record of Christ's life and death is not the report of we know not who, but was drawn up by men of known integrity, who were ready only to depose it upon oath, but which was more, to seal it with their blood.

(2.) Those who wrote the history of Christ, wrote upon their own knowledge, not by hearsay, but what they themselves were eye and ear witnesses of. The penman of this history was a disciple, a beloved disciple, one that had leaned on Christ's breast, that had himself heard his sermons and conferences, had seen his miracles, and the proofs of his resurrection. This is he who testifieth what he was well assured of.

(3.) Those who wrote the history of Christ, as they testified what they had seen, so they wrote what they had first testified. It was published by word of mouth, with the greatest assurance, before it was committed to writing. They testified it in the pulpit, testified it at the bar, solemnly avouched it, stedfastly avouched it, not as travellers gave account of their travels, to entertain the company, but as witnesses upon oath give an account of what they know in a matter of consequence, and which is to be held in the strictest veracity. What they wrote, they wrote as an affidavit, which they would abide by. Their writings are standing testimonies to the world of the truth of Christ's doctrine, and will be testimonies either for us or against us, according as we do or do not receive it.

(4.) It was graciously appointed for the support and benefit of the church, that the history of Christ should be put in writing, that it might with the greater boldness and certainty spread to every place, and last through every age.

2. It concludes with an attestation of the truth of what had been here related; We know that his testimony is true. This may be taken either.

(1.) As speaking the common sense of mankind in matters of this nature, which is, that the testimony of one who is an eye-witness, is of unspeakable reputation, solemnly avouched what he had seen, and that the world is such as incapable of the greater certainty, and unexceptionable evidence. We know, that is, All the world knows, that the testimony of such a one is valid, and the common faith of mankind requires us to give credit to it, unless we can disprove it; and in other cases verdict and judgment are given upon such testimonies. The truth of the gospel comes confirmed by all the evidence we can rationally desire or expect in a thing of that nature. The matter of it is of the first moment, and that no one should and work such miracles, and rise from the dead, is proved beyond contradiction, by such evidence as is always admitted in other cases, and therefore to the satisfaction of all that are impartial; and then let the doctrine recommend itself, and let the miracles prove it to be of God. Or,

(2.) As speaking the satisfaction of the churches at that time, concerning the truth of what is here related. It is said, &c., to take it for the subscription of the church of Ephesus; others of the angels or ministers of the churches of Asia to this narrative. Not as if an inspired writing needed any attestation from men, or could from thence receive any addition to its credibility; but thereby they recommended it to the notice of the churches, as an inspired writing, and declared the satisfaction they received by it.

Or,

(3.) As speaking the evangelist's own assurance of the truth of what he wrote, like that, (ch. 19, 35.) He knew that he said true. He speaks of himself in the plural number, We know, not for majesty-sake, but for modesty-sake, as 1 John 1. 1. That which we have seen; and 2 Pet. 1. 16. Note, The evangelists themselves were entirely satisfied of the truth of what they have testified, and transmitted to us. They do not require us to believe what they did not believe themselves: no, they know their testimony was true, for they ventured both this life and the other upon it; threw away this life, and depended upon another, on the credit of what they spake and wrote.

3. It concludes with an et cetera; with a reference to many other things, very memorable, said and done by our Lord Jesus, which were well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for posterity; v. 25. There were many things very remarkable and improbable, which, if they should be written at large, with the several circumstances of them, even the world itself, that is, all the libraries
in it, could not contain the books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an orator, as Paul, (Heb. 11. 23.) What shall I more say? For the time would fail me.

If it be asked why the gospels are not larger, why they did not make the New Testament history as copious and as long as the old; it may be answered, (1.) It was not because they had exhausted their subject, and had nothing more to write, that was worth writing; no, there were many of Christ's sayings and doings not recorded by any of the evangelists, which yet were worthy to be written in letters of gold. For, (1.) Every thing that Christ said and did, was worth our notice, and capable of being improved. He never spake an idle word, nor did an idle thing; nay, he never spake or did anything mean, or little, or trifling, which is more than can be said of the wisest or best of men. (2.) His miracles were many, very many, of many kinds, and the same often repeated, as occasion offered. Though one true miracle might perhaps suffice to prove a divine commission, yet the repetition of the miracles upon a great variety of persons, in a great variety of cases, and before a great variety of witnesses, helped very much to prove them true miracles. Every new miracle rendered the report of the former the more credible; and the multitude of them render the whole report inconstant. (3.) The evangelists upon several occasions give general accounts of Christ's preaching and miracles, inclusive of many particulars, as Matt. 4. 23, 24.—9. 35.—11. 1.—14. 14, 15, 36.—19. 2, and many the like. When we speak of Christ, we have a copious subject before us, the reality exceeds the report, and, after all, the one half is not told us. St. Paul quotes one of Christ's sayings, which is not recorded by any of the evangelists; (Acts 20. 35.) and doubtless there were many more. All his sayings were apophthegms.

(2.) But it was for these three reasons, (1.) Because it was not needful to write more. This is implied here; there were many other things, which were not written because there was no occasion for writing them. What is written, is a sufficient revelation of the doctrine of Christ, and the proof of it, and the rest was but to the same purpose. They that from hence argue against the sufficiency of the scripture, as the rule of our faith and practice, and for the necessity of unwritten traditions, ought to shew what there is in the traditions they pretend to, perfective of the written word; we are sure there is that which is contrary to it, and therefore reject them. By these therefore let us be admonished, for of writing many books there is no end, Eccl. 12. 12. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither would we if there had been much more.

(2.) It was not possible to write all. It was possible for the Spirit to indite all, but morally impossible for the penmen to pen all. The world could not contain the books. It is an hyperbole common enough and justifiable, when no more is intended than this, that it would fill a vast and incredible number of volumes. It would be such a large and overgrown history as never was; such as would justly out all other writings, and leave us no room for them. What volumes would be filled with Christ's prayers, had we the record of all those he made, when he continued all night in prayer to God, without any vain repetitions? Much more if all his sermons and conferences were particularly related, his miracles, his cures, all his labours, all his sufferings; it would have been an endless thing.

(3.) It was not advisable to write much; for the world, in a moral sense, could not contain the books that should be written. Christ said not what he might have said to his disciples, because they were not able to bear it; and for the same reason the evangelists wrote not what they might have written. The world could not contain, οὐκ ἔστιν. It is the word that is used, ch. 8. 57. My word has no place in you; they would have been so many, that they would have found no room. All people's time would have been spent in reading, and other duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is overlooked of what is written, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputation; this would have been the case much more, if there had been such a world of books of equal authority and necessity as the whole history would have swelled to; especially since it was requisite that what was written should be meditated upon, and expounded, which God wisely thought fit to leave room for. Parents and ministers, in giving instruction, must consider the capacities of those they teach, and, like Jacob, must take heed of over-driving. Let us be thankful for the books that are written, and not prize them the less for their plainness and brevity, but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be there where our capacities shall be so elevated and enlarged, that there will be no danger of their being over-loaded.

The evangelist concluding with Amen, thereby sets to his seal, and let us set to our's, an Amen of faith, subscribing to the gospel, that it is true, all true; and an Amen of satisfaction in what is written as able to make us wise to salvation. Amen; so be it.

END OF VOL. FIFTH.