

SERMON XXI.

And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.—JOHN XVII. 13.

OUR Lord is still amplifying that argument of his own departure, and the disciples' danger in the world, and so justifieth his earnestness in prayer for them. I come to thee, and must leave their company, and therefore I have need to make some provision for them. In the argument of this text, Christ showeth what was his special aim in the whole prayer. He is so earnest, not to blemish the Father, as if he were backward and wanted mercy, but for their comfort, that they might know what prayers were laid up in store for them, and to give them a taste of his own care. He prayeth with them, that they might know how he prayed for them. Christ would have something left upon record, as a pledge of his affections to the church: 'These things I speak in the world,' &c.

In the words, not to speak of the occasion, *I come to thee*; which signifieth not his address in prayer, but his ascension to God, as was cleared before, ver. 11. In the rest of the words we have Christ's action, and Christ's aim, the comfort of the disciples; where we have the author, *my joy*; the manner how received for quantity, *fulfilled*; the quality, *in themselves*.

'And these things I speak in the world;' that is, make this prayer in their hearing; λαλώ, 'I speak,' it signifieth prayer with an audible voice; elsewhere he useth the word ἐρωτώ and θήλω. And here a record and pattern is left for the use of the church in all ages.

'That they may have my joy.'—What is the meaning of that?

1. Because he rejoiceth in our good. *My joy*, and *your joy* are distinguished: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken to you, that my joy should be fulfilled in you, and that your joy might be full.' There is nothing maketh the heart of Christ so glad as to see his members thrive in peace and grace. So the apostle Paul: Phil. ii. 2, 'Fulfil ye my joy.' Nothing could be more comfortable to Paul than to see the Philippians thrive in grace. Thus some interpret it actively of the joy which Christ hath in the good of his members. But I suppose it is rather to be taken passively, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, 'in themselves.'

2. Others think that by *my joy* is meant a joy like mine; when they feel the same desires kindled in their hearts, they may be comforted with the workings of the same spirit of prayer in them; that is, feel such a joy as I feel in uttering these requests. But this doth not run so smoothly.

3. 'My joy,' because he is the author of it. *Gaudium ex me*. Joy which I work as mediator and redeemer. Of ourselves we have nothing but despair and trouble: Isa. lvii. 19, 'I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, and I will heal him.' We possess it, but it is Christ's joy; he worketh it, and causeth it by his Spirit; elsewhere it is called, 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' 1 Thes. i. 6.

4. 'My joy,' because he is the object of it. *Gaudium de me*. That

that joy which they have conceived from my presence with them, or care of them, may not be lessened, but increased, that this spiritual joy may be fulfilled. These two latter are of chief regard.

'May be fulfilled;' not only accomplished, but be abundant; as chap. xv. 11, 'That your joy may be full.' The filling up of joy is a phrase proper to St John: chap. iii. 29, 'This my joy therefore is fulfilled,' saith John the Baptist, because he heard the bridegroom's voice. So 1 John i. 4, 'These things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.' And 2 Epist. ver. 12, 'I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.' Possibly this joy is called a full joy, not with respect to itself, but with respect to other joys. In itself it is always a-growing, and receiveth a daily increase, till it be perfected in heaven. Here we have but some forerunning beams of the noon of glory, the first-fruits of the harvest. The joy of the world is a lank empty joy.

'In themselves;' that is, in their hearts, by their own feeling and experience; they have need of something within, for they have nothing without: John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.'

To draw all to some doctrinal head and issue. Of Christ's coming to God I have spoken already. I might observe the force of the word to comfort the heart, 'These things I speak, that my joy may be fulfilled.' But I shall content myself with two observations.

1. Observe, that this prayer of Christ's is a fountain of consolation. This joy ariseth from the things he now spoke in the world, partly because here we have a taste of Christ's heart, how zealously he is affected for our good. When he took his leave of us, he took his leave of us with blessings and supplications. Partly because here we have a copy, model, or counterpart of his intercession. Here you may know what he is now doing for you in heaven. Christ is their advocate and intercessor, he pleadeth their right, and sueth for blessings; he prayed for their preservation, unity, and glory. There are two ways to know Christ's intercession—by this record, and his intercession in our hearts: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession in us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.' The Spirit testifieth to our hearts the quality of that intercession Christ maketh for us in heaven; it is the echo of it; the inward interpellation of the soul is the echo of Christ's intercession. Now that the word and Spirit must go together, the form of it is left upon record. Here is a public record to look upon in all discomforts and troubles of the church; and this breedeth a full joy. Partly because Christ's prayers are so many promises; he prayeth for excellent blessings, and is sure of audience. Well, then, remember these prayers of Christ for your comfort; when we are pressed down with any evils in the world, let us run to Christ's prayers. As Luther said, Let us sing the 46th psalm; so say I, Let us meditate on John xvii.; here is a remedy for all the afflictions of the church.

2. Observe Christ's care to leave his people joyful; and careful he is, very solicitous about it before his departure.

First, I shall inquire what this joy is that Christ would establish.

1. For the kind of it, 'My joy;' not a worldly joy, but heavenly; not corporal, but spiritual. It ill besemeth christians to set their hearts

on earthly things, or suffer the world to intercept their joy : Phil. iv. 4, ' Rejoice in the Lord always ; and again I say, Rejoice.' The apostle was in prison when he wrote it, he had nothing else to rejoice in at that time ; but what he had felt the sweetness of himself he imparts to others. What can a man desire more than joy ? You are at liberty to rejoice, as he speaketh elsewhere of marriage : ' You are at liberty to marry, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ, but only in the Lord ;' such a joy you may have as Christ works, *ex me, de me*, of which I am the object and the author. You need not fear ; that which Christ would establish is a cheerful piety, not a profane joy : ' Christ's delights are with the sons of men,' Prov. viii. 31. He feasteth himself with the thoughts of his grace ; it is, as it were, the Lord's recreation ; therefore certainly the sons of men should have their delights with God. If the Lord, that sitteth upon the throne of majesty and glory, if he delights in us, should not we delight in a God that is so excellent and worthy ?

2. In what manner he would have it received, *πεπληρωμένην*, ' fulfilled in them.' The joy is full because the object is infinite ; we can desire nothing beyond him. Desire answereth to motion, joy to rest : when we can go no further, there we rest. What can we desire beyond God ? Acts xiii. 52, ' The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost ;' their hearts could hold no more. Narrow vessels are soon filled with the ocean. It is a full joy, not in itself, but with respect to worldly joy. Worldly joy is scanty, unstable, and vanishing ; it cannot satisfy nor secure the heart. Take away the creatures from the worldling and you take away his joy ; the object lieth without him. But, John xvi. 22, ' Your joy shall no man take from you ;' they cannot plunder you of peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. This ravisheth the heart : 1 Peter i. 8, ' Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ;' Phil. iv. 7, ' The peace of God, that passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' It is better felt than expressed ; a creature worketh it not, but a divine operation. Paul heard in heaven, ἀόρατα ῥήματα, ' unspeakable words.' So this, being a foretaste of heaven, cannot be conceived and expressed ; you cannot imagine how sweet it is, and still it increaseth till we come to heaven, and lose ourselves in these eternal ravishments.

3. It is inward for the quality of it, *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*, it is wrought in the midst of afflictions ; there is sweetness within when bitterness round about us ; like the wood that was thrown in at Marah, it maketh bitter waters sweet, Exod. xv. 25. Saints are fed with hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17. Their life is hid and their joy is hidden : 1 Peter i. 6, ' Wherein ye greatly rejoice ; though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' Without there are persecutions, temptations, afflictions from Satan and the world, and within joy ; they have meat and drink which the world knoweth not of ; the world seeth it not, and therefore the world will not believe it.

Secondly, How much Christ's heart is set upon it. It appears by the provision he made for them ; when he departed he left the Comforter : John xiv. 19, ' I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come unto you ;' John xv. 11, ' These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full.' He doth not

say, that my authority may remain over you, but my joy; and if we would make Christ's heart glad, or our own, we must obey his commandments; for when he enjoineth obedience to his disciples, it is that he may rejoice in our comfort. In his instructions he teacheth them how to pray: John xvi. 24, 'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full;' and now he prayeth himself, 'That they have my joy fulfilled in themselves.' Christ maketh this to be his main work and aim, that in this life we might have peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in the life to come joy for evermore. Now lest ye should think this was only for the twelve apostles, you shall see it was the end of the whole word. The scriptures were written, Rom. xv. 4, 'That we through patience and comfort of them might have hope.' The whole ministry of the church serveth to the fulfilling of this joy.

Thirdly, Reasons why Christ was so solicitous about this matter.

1. Because of the great use of it in the spiritual life, to make us to do and to suffer: Neh. viii. 10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' This is as oil to the wheels. It is a question which is most useful, godly joy or godly sorrow: sorrow maketh us serious, joy active. But why should I divide what God hath joined? *Gaudium ineffabile cum suspiriis enarrabilibus*. Both are wrought by the same Spirit; he is a comforter, and he descended in the form of a mourning dove. But certainly joy doth more quicken us in well-doing; it rendereth the functions of body and mind free and vigorous, that we may walk with alacrity and good conscience. The joy that we press you to is not a wantonness by which we cast away all care and labour, and give ourselves up to ease and lusts, as those do that make their life to be nothing else but a recreation; but such a joy as maketh us go about our duties and callings with comfort. This is sweet, when a man, out of the refreshings of the Spirit, can go about the business which God hath given him to do with delight: Acts xx. 24, 'Neither count I my life dear to me, so I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' As the eunuch 'went his way rejoicing,' Acts viii. 39. Not like slow asses that go by compulsion, but like generous horses, that delight in their strength and swiftness; to take pleasure in praying, in hearing, in suffering, in doing good, in following the duties of our calling. Most men count sorrow to be a virtue, and joy to be an indecent presumption. When men are sluggish, carnal, careless, that they may flow in worldly delights, this is naught.

2. To mar the taste of carnal pleasures. The soul cannot remain without some oblectation; it delighteth either in earthly or in heavenly things. Love will not remain idle in the soul. Now God will give us a taste of spiritual joy, of pleasantness in wisdom's paths, that we might disdain carnal pleasures. It is not a wonder for a clown, that hath not been acquainted with dainties, to love garlie and onions; but for a prince, that hath been acquainted with better diet, to leave the dainties of his father's table for those things, that were strange. I do not wonder at carnal men, that they are delighted with carnal objects; they never knew better; but for a child of God, that hath tasted how gracious and sweet God in Christ is, to find sap and savour in coarser fare, this is wonderful.

3. It is for his honour. Nothing bringeth reproach upon the ways of God so much as the sadness of those that profess them. *Spiritus Calvinianus est spiritus melancholicus*, was a Lutheran proverb, because the Calvinists were against wakes and dancings and revels. You darken the ways of God by your melancholy conversation. Religion should be cheerful, though not wanton and dissolute. We are to invite others: Ps. xxxiv. 2, 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.' Otherwise thou art as one of the spies that discouraged the children of Israel, by bringing up an evil report upon the land of Canaan.

4. Because he delighteth to see us cheerful: 'He delighteth in the prosperity of his saints.' Certainly the Lord doth not delight in a sad devotion, and that the finger should always be in the wound. As a man delighteth that his fields should prosper, and laugh with fatness, so doth Christ in the saints. They are his charge: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' Would you make Christ's heart glad, keep your own cheerful.

Fourthly, I shall give you some observations concerning joy.

1. God's providence to all the creatures doth aim at their joy and welfare. In inanimate creatures there is a cessation and rest, in the beasts a sensitive delectation, in a man joy. All actions that tend to the preservation of life, have their pleasure mixed with them; and therefore certainly he hath provided some christian joy for a christian. All actions of godliness have a delight mixed with them.

2. Spiritual joy ariseth more from hope than possession: Rom. xii. 12, 'Rejoicing in hope;' Heb. iii. 6, 'If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;' Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' It is an affection proper to the next life; but some birds sing in winter. Though we have not an actual possession of glory, yet there is a certainty of possession.

3. This joy is more felt in adversity than prosperity: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice; though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations;' Rom. v. 3, 'We glory in tribulation.' Partly from God himself; he proportioneth his comforts to our sorrows, and then sheddeth abroad his love most plentifully: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' Partly from the saints; they rejoice most in afflictions, because they taste in them what evil they are freed from in Christ. If we never had afflictions, we should not know what it is to be freed from eternal horrors and pains; but when we feel them then we say, If I have much ado to bear these temporal sorrows, what should I have done if I had been still liable to eternal! O blessed be God for my deliverance in Christ! Partly because of sweet experiences. We are kept from perishing with the world; a servant and stranger is turned out of doors, but a son is corrected. If it serveth for nothing else, yet for a spite to Satan, to confound him, when he thinketh he hath most advantage against us now, to overwhelm us with grief; as when one seeketh to wrest a staff out of our hands, we hold it the faster.

4. Those have the highest feeling of joy that have tasted the bitter-

ness of sorrow : Isa. lvii. 18, 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him : I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners ;' Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised,' &c. ; ver. 20, 'Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still,' &c. Unutterable groans make way for ineffable joys ; they feel the most lively elevation of joy as a recompense for the pangs of the new birth. God permits sorrows, that we may find the fuller comfort. Bernard thinks that the joy of the saints is greater than the joy of angels, because they who have been kept, and not restored, had never experience of any other condition ; however, his reason is notable : *Placet sanctis securitas, sed ei magis qui timuit ; jucunda omnibus lux, sed liberato de potestate tenebrarum jucundior ; transisse de morte ad vitam, gratiam duplicat.*

5. The feelings of this joy are up and down, yet when the joy is gone, the right remaineth, and this joy will be fulfilled : John xvi. 22, 'Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' If we lose it ourselves, it is not utterly lost. The sun is always moving, but it doth not always shine, and display his rays with a merry countenance ; so a christian meeteth with many rubs, but still he holdeth on his course to heaven ; and therefore, where sense faileth, faith should make supply.

6. The nature of man is more acquainted with sorrows than with pleasures. Men naturally are more susceptible of sorrow than of joy. Partly because of the presages of a guilty conscience : Heb. ii. 14, 'Through fear of death, they were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Men are more ingenious and inventive to torment themselves than they are to find out arguments of joy. Partly out of ingratitude : Mal. i. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord ; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us ?' We grieve more for a mean affliction than we rejoice in many great blessings. As if the humours of the body be out of order, or one joint break, this is enough to make us sink, and ill at ease ; so one light affliction sinks us. Partly because God hath laid this burden of sorrow upon us to make us long for heaven : 'Few and evil are the days of the years of my life.'

Use 1. To show us the goodness of God, who hath made our wages a great part of our work, and our reward our service. The Lord doth not require of us to lance and gash ourselves ; his ways are not sour ways ; he hath made it a part of our duty and homage to rejoice in him. Oh ! that he should deal so bountifully with us in this life ! The world might be a Bochim, and it is a Beracha. It is indeed a vale of tears ; but yet the sun shineth sometimes when it raineth. Oh ! how should this make us in love with the service of God ! They are happy that minister in his presence. It is a request, Ps. xc. 14, 'Oh ! satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.' Certainly God alloweth us to come with such requests, for he commandeth us to rejoice : 1 Thes. v. 16, 'Rejoice evermore.' We might weep evermore, yet he saith, 'Rejoice evermore.'

Use 2. To take off the slander brought on the ways of God, as if they were dark and uncomfortable, as if we should abandon and

renounce all delight. Oh! that wicked men would but make experience! God doth not require that you should renounce delight, but change the course of it. Joy is not abrogated, but preferred. Do not think the practice of religion is full of sadness and heaviness. Will you believe the spies, that have been in the land of promise? The righteous are only fit to give testimony to the comfort of a converted estate; a stranger intermeddled not with their joys. If any of God's children be uncomfortable, it is because they have not tasted deep enough of the promises, the Comforter suffereth some contradiction from their hearts and lusts: but what is this to your estate? The souls of wicked men are still under bondage; in the midst of their greatest joys, their pleasures are mixed with fear; as Belshazzar was soon put out of his mirth.

Use 3. Let us despise the dreggy delights of the world. We are empty by nature, and worldly joy filleth not but with wind. Since Christ hath made such provision for our consolation, why should we seek it elsewhere? God hath forbid no joy but what is hurtful. Outward mercies bring in some joy, but not a full joy. Godliness doth not unman us, and hinder the course of any true natural affection. But no outward thing should be our chief joy; a light touch is best: 1 Cor. vii. 30, 'They that rejoice should be as if they rejoiced not.' First we have an interest, then a comfortable use of the creatures. Hast thou wealth, power, greatness? Do not bind up thy heart with these things, they will be gone, and then thy joy will be gone too. When they take up too much of our affections, they are curses, and will prove our sorrow: Eccles. vii. 6, 'As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity;' a slight superficial thing. Vain men are catched with every light pleasure, as a fire soon taketh in thorns. Thorns burning under a pot make a great noise, and so carnal mirth maketh much noise. Worldly men promise themselves a great deal of pleasure and contentment, but this fire is soon out, so worldly joy is soon gone. Let us not delight in fleshly liberty; the pleasures of sin are short-lived, and carnal pleasures leave bitterness and remorse behind them: Prov. xiv. 13, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' As laughter, through dilatation of the spirits, maketh us sad afterwards. The fuel of carnal pleasures is gross, burdensome, oppressive to reason, it hindereth the free contemplation of the mind, and lasteth but for a little while; we need to be refreshed with other pleasures. But God in Christ is full and fresh to all eternity; angels are not weary of him. Besides, carnal mirth is but madness; Eccles. ii. 2, 'I have said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?' It is good for no serious purpose. Solomon challengeth the masters of mirth; what doth it but displace reason, and give way to vanity and lightness? I know there is a lawful use of inoffensive mirth; but when we take pleasures, they should not take us: Eph. v. 4, 'Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks;' ver. 19, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.' There is a mirth becoming the gravity of a christian.

Use 4. Reproof to two sorts:—

1. To those that are always sad. Christians do not live up to that care and provision which Christ hath made for them. In scripture it is, 'Rejoice evermore,' 1 Thes. v. 16. And they live as if God had said, Weep evermore. It is verily a fault, however disguised; in some it deserveth pity; in others chiding and rebuke. In some pity, that are under penal disturbance; when God putteth any into the stocks of conscience, they cannot come out at pleasure; these are irresistible chains; a poor creature lieth bound till God saith, Go forth. Those chains of darkness in which the devils are held are their own everlasting horrors. It is God's prerogative, 'to create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,' Isa. lvii. 19. Joy is his immediate dispensation. We wonder, considering the comforts of the gospel, that there should be any such thing as trouble of conscience, because we know not what it is to lie under God's mighty hand, to be cast into the prison, shall I say, or the hell of our consciences. Alas! poor creatures! We cannot break prison when we will. It is easy for those that stand upon the shore to say to those that are tossed upon the waves, Sail thus. They are tugging for life, the cause is beyond our direction and their choice. But these persons are to be pitied, yet counselled. Besides God's power, we mingle much of our own obstinacy and peevishness, as Rachel would not be comforted, Jer. xxxi. 15. We are to invite them to Christ, and they are bound to hearken. Their present duty is to come for ease: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' That is the only gracious issue of soul-troubles; as Christ cried, 'My God,' on the cross, they are not exempted from believing. But others are to be chidden. It is a sad thing that christians should not have the wisdom to make use of their own felicity. We often hug a distemper instead of a duty, as if God were better pleased with dolorous impressions: Lam. iii. 33, 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.' Not with his heart, so it is in the Hebrew. It argueth ill thoughts of God. Baal's priests gashed themselves to please their idols; but God delighteth in the prosperity of his saints. Men think there is more of merit and satisfaction in what is afflictive; it is a kind of revenge they take upon themselves. God hath required sorrow to mortify sin, but not to satisfy justice; he would have us triumph in Christ whilst we groan under the body of death. Oh! consider, sourness is a dishonour to God, a discredit to your profession, a disadvantage to yourselves, a grief to the Spirit, because you resist his work as a comforter. Besides, there is much of ingratitude in it; complaints and murmurings deface the beauty of his mercies. As a snail leaveth a frothy slaver upon the fairest flowers, so do unthankful christians leave their own slaver upon the rich mercies of God vouchsafed to them in Christ; when they are always complaining, and never rejoicing in God, they leave the slaver of their murmurings upon them, as if all were nothing. If a king advance a man, and he always is sad before him, he is angry: Neh. ii. 3, 'Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was sore afraid.' Because men are prejudiced against godly joy, let me tell you it is a fruit of the Spirit: Gal. v. 22, 'The fruit of the

Spirit is love, joy,' &c. In the garden of Christ there groweth other fruit besides crabs. It is a great privilege of Christ's spiritual kingdom: Rom. xiv. 17, 'The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' It is a help in the spiritual life: Neh. viii. 10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' It is as wings to the bird, that makes you fly higher; a sad christian hath lost his wings.

Well, then, consider these things. Besides your unfitness hereby for your duty, the uncheerfulness of professors darkeneth the ways of God, and brings a scandal upon Christ's spiritual kingdom. What cause have you to be always sad? It must be either your afflictions or your sins. For afflictions, if your eyes were opened, and earthly affections mortified, you would see no cause of grief. It can never be so ill with a christian but he hath matter of rejoicing. Nothing can deprive you of God, of your interest in Christ: Job xv. 11, 'Are the consolations of God small,' that they cannot counterbalance worldly afflictions? Your discontent cannot be greater than your grounds of comfort. It is true nature will work; afflictions are bitter in the root, but the fruit is sweet to a spiritual palate: Heb. xii. 11, 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous;' it doth but *seem* bitter, carnal sense is not a fit judge. But then for your sins. I confess, joy is proper to God's children, behaving themselves as children; but what shall we do when we have sinned? I answer—There is a time to mourn, and this is the season of it: 'If her father had spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?' Num. xii. 14. It is good to be sensible of the displeasure of a father. Ay! but in this heaviness there should be a mixture of joy. Though there be a time to mourn, yet 'Rejoice evermore.' Great heaviness, without a mixture of joy, is sinful. In this sense we should not mourn without hope. We have to do with a God that is not implacable; he mixeth love with his frowns: 'In the midst of judgment he remembereth mercy;' and therefore we should mix joy with our sorrows: Jer. iii. 14, 'Turn, O backsliding Israel, for I am married to you.' God doth not forget his relation to us, and so should not we. Come again, and I will make up all breaches between you and me. A believer may fall grievously, but not finally. He doth not fall so but that God takes hold of him; and we should learn to take hold of God. Labour to recover your former condition, that you may freely rejoice again; by this means love is renewed and strengthened.

2. The other sort are those that would rejoice, but do not provide matter of joy. Christ saith, 'That my joy may be fulfilled in themselves.' But in whom? He had pleaded their interest, 'They are thine;' he had spoken well of them to the Father, 'I am glorified in them.' Alas! the joys of others are but 'stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret,' frisks of mirth, when conscience is asleep. A man cannot rejoice in God till he hath some interest in him: I Sam. xxx. 6, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' when all was lost at Ziklag; pray mark, 'his God.' *Tolle meum et tolle Deum*—take away mine, and take away God. God is better known in *predicamento relationis, quam in predicamento substantie*. God in his nature is terrible; God in covenant is sweet: Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' When all things

fail, a child of God runneth to his interest. The object of joy is good, but not good in common, but *my* good. Excellency and propriety are the two conditions of the object of joy. Therefore holy joy is not every one's duty, but theirs that have an interest in God. There are some duties proper to the saints, that suppose such a state and interest. Prayer and hearing are common duties, the obligation lieth on all the creatures, it is the homage they owe to God; but now they are not immediately bidden to rejoice. All are bound to provide matter for joy, but not all to rejoice. Carnal men are for the present under wrath, liable to hell, bondage is their portion; therefore clear up your interest, if you would rejoice in God. Men delight in their children because they are their own.

Use 5. To raise your minds to the exercise of this joy. We should be more careful than we are to maintain our peace and joy.

To help you, I shall show—

1. What reason a christian hath to rejoice.

2. By what means he may get, keep, and maintain it.

First, What reasons a christian hath to rejoice. The causes of joy may be referred to his past estate, his present interest, his future hopes.

1. The remembrance of his past estate. A christian may stand wondering at the change which God hath made in his soul: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'That ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' The light is the more marvellous because of the foregoing darkness. Past miseries are sweet in the remembrance. It will be a part of our happiness in heaven to look back; as travellers in the inn discourse of the dangers and dirtiness of the way. It is matter of renewed joy to see how the weeds of sin are rooted out, how the buds of grace begin to grow in the garden of our hearts. No man looketh on the sea with more comfort than he that hath escaped the dangers of a shipwreck; as the Israelites, when they saw the Egyptians dead on the shore, sung a song of triumph; so doth a christian rejoice when he considereth his change, what he was, what he is.

2. His present interest, sense, and feeling. We have mercies in hand as well as mercies in hope, something exhibited as well as promised; God's eternal love, with all the blessings that issue thence, of justification, sanctification, &c. Paul triumphs in this: Rom. viii. 37, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.' God hath adopted them to be children, heirs of his heavenly kingdom; if the world maketh war against them, they have peace with God, they are in a reconciled estate; in frame of heart they are regenerate, they have the first-fruits of the Spirit, sweet experience of grace; not only the wine of Canaan, but the clusters of Canaan; they have communion with God, though banished from men. It is the nature of the mind to delight itself in the possession of any solid good. No good can satisfy but the supreme; this we are in part possessed of as soon as grace is wrought in the heart.

3. His future hopes: Heb. iii. 6, 'If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.' We are heirs-apparent to the crown of heaven. We may rejoice in what we possess, we may glory in what we hope for. This ravisheth the heart to think of it; we shall

have what infinite mercy will bestow, infinite merit purchase, and the ample promises of the reward¹ hath revealed. The body of sin will be destroyed, and we shall be out of the reach of temptations.

Secondly, By what means it is maintained. God hath appointed graces and ordinances for this end.

1. Graces; faith, hope, and obedience.

[1.] Faith; it is a help to joy; it representeth the excellency, truth, and reality of spiritual things. That which we rejoice in must be good, true, present. All joy ariseth from the presence of some good, either in actual possession or firm expectation. Thus doth faith: Heb. x. 34, 'Knowing in yourselves that in heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance.' Faith is not an opinion or wild guess; heaven is a pleasing fancy to a carnal man, but it is a reality, a substance, an enduring substance to a believer. The world is a fashion, perishing, moveable. It is the nature of faith to make things absent, present; it giveth a being to hope, it sets up a stage in the heart of a believer, where God is represented acting whatever he hath promised; and this not by a naked fiction or empty speculation, as a man may frame ideas of things that never shall be, as in the dream of dotage of a dis-tempered fancy they make a soul as if seen with bodily eyes. Faith gives to its object not only a naked representation, but an actual presence.

[2.] Hope; this dependeth much on faith; it is an earnest elevation of the mind to look for what faith counteth real. Now hope ravisheth the soul, as if it had its head above the clouds: 'Rejoicing in hope,' Rom. xii. 12. Joy is proper to enjoyment, but hope serves instead of enjoyment; they feast and entertain their souls with their glorious hopes.

[3.] Obedience; faith giveth the title, hope the sight, obedience the evidence, therefore it is necessary to the establishing of joy. Nay, it hath an effective influence; it is God's method. First he poureth in the oil of grace before the oil of gladness: Heb. vii. 2, 'First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, that is, King of peace;' Rom. xiv. 17, 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Sin taketh away joy and peace; the whole strength of men and angels cannot make the conscience of a sinner to rejoice. Yea, the children of God must take heed that they do not violate peace of conscience by allowing the least sin. You are to walk so that you may be in a condition capable of joy; none walk sweetly but they that walk strictly: Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;' that is a sweet couple.

2. Ordinances. I shall name them.

[1.] The word. The joy that hypocrites have is from the word: Heb. vi. 5, 'They have tasted the good word of God.' A temporary faith findeth joy in the word; all the fault is, it is but a taste, some slight experience, which they do not continue and maintain. Here is represented fuel for faith and hope, God's infinite mercy, Christ's infinite merits, the glory of the next world. Joy is, as it were, the blaze of the soul. Love keepeth the fire burning; but now, if we would have it blaze and flame up, we must come to the word, this is the bellows.

¹ Qu. 'word' ?—Ed.

When the angel preached the gospel, he said, Luke ii. 10, 'Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.' We come to hear good news from heaven; though an angel be not the messenger, yet the message is the same; God openeth his heart to us.

[2.] Prayer; wherein we open our hearts to God; it hath a pacative virtue. Many psalms begun with anguish end with triumph, as if he had received good news that his affairs were altered. Hannah when she had prayed, 'her countenance was no more sad,' 1 Sam. i. 18. God is 'the Father of mercies, the God of consolations,' 2 Cor. i. 4; the nearer to him, the nearer to the fountain of joy. There are joys felt in prayer, by retiring into God's presence: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' Heaven is a place of joy, because of the constant communion we have with God there. God doth not love to send us away sad.

[3.] Sacraments; because of sweeter experiences: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad, and rejoice in thee: we will remember thy love more than wine.' They are sealing ordinances: Heb. vi. 18, we have 'strong consolation;' Mat. xxvi. 30, 'When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives,' though it were a sad time. The eunuch went away rejoicing as soon as he was baptized, because he was made sure of the grace of God, Acts viii. 39. It is as when a man hath a good lease confirmed to him. It is not the bread and wine rejoiceth the heart, but the renewing of the covenant.

[4.] Meditation; it refresheth the soul, and feeds joy. It is the proper natural use of reason. The speculation even of terrible things is grateful. It was the comfort God himself took in his works; he made them, he saw them. It is a refreshing to the soul to think of creation and providence; as a son taketh pleasure in a history wherein are recorded his father's valiant acts. It is a pure recreation. But oh! the sweetness of redemption, the excellency of glory! The thoughts are sent as spies into the land of promise; hereby we have a Pisgah-sight; it giveth us a foretaste of heaven, and filleth our souls with joy and blessedness.

SERMON XXII.

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.—JOHN XVII. 14.

CHRIST had urged several arguments on the behalf the apostles, their interest, his own departure, their danger in the world; this is the argument he now presseth. Their danger, because of the world's hatred, is set forth by the occasion of it; their office, 'I have given them thy word;' the cause of it, 'They are not of the world;' which is amplified by their conformity to the pattern and example of Christ, 'Even as I am not of the world.' So that we have here the condition of the saints in the world, and then their constitution and temper.