

# THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

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## SERMON I.

*And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them into an high mountain apart.—MAT. XVII. 1; with,*

*It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.—LUKE IX. 28.*

I MEAN to handle the transfiguration of Christ, which was:—

1. A solemn confirmation of his person and office.

2. A pledge of that glorious estate which is reserved for us in heaven.

1. It was a confirmation of his person and office, as appeareth Mat. xvii. 5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' So Peter, who was one present, urgeth it, 2 Pet. i. 16-18, 'We have not followed cunningly-devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.' And John also: John i. 14, 'We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.' They were eye and ear witnesses, and therefore could affirm the certainty of this doctrine.

2. It is a pledge of our glorious estate; for Christ's body was adorned with heavenly glory, and he had spoken, chap. xvi. 27, of his coming in the glory of the Father; and now he gives his disciples a pledge and earnest of it.

In this introduction four things are observable:—

1. The time: *after six days.*

2. The persons whom he takes with him: *Peter, James, and John.*

3. The place he brings them to: *into an high mountain apart.*

4. The preparative action: *he went up into a mountain to pray.*

First, The time. The evangelist Luke saith, 'about an eight days;' Matthew and Mark, 'after six days.' The reconciliation is easy. Matthew and Mark spake of the space of time between the day of prediction, and the day of transfiguration exclusively; Luke includeth them both. The Jews called that flux of time between one Sabbath and another, eight days, including not only the intervening week, but both the Sabbaths. According to their custom Luke speaketh; Matthew of the time between.

Secondly, The persons chosen to attend him in this action: 'Peter, James, and John.'

1. Why *three*?

2. Why *those three*?

1. Why three? So great an action as this was needed valuable testimony; for the law saith, 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses everything shall be established,' Deut. xvii. 6. Now Christ would go to the utmost of the law, and would have, not two only, but three witnesses, as the apostle speaks of three witnesses in heaven and three on earth, 1 John v. 7, 8; so here are three and three—three from heaven, God the Father, Moses, and Elias; and three from earth, Peter, James, and John.

2. Why those three? Many give divers reasons. Peter had led the way to the rest in that notable confession of Christ, Mat. xvi. 16, and is conceived to have some primacy for the orderly beginning of actions in the college of the apostles. James was the first apostle who shed his blood for Christ, Acts xii. 2; and John was the most long-lived of them all, and so could the longer give testimony of those things which he heard and saw, till the church was well gathered and settled. Others give other reasons. But to leave conjectures, it is certain that these had many singular favours afforded them above the rest of the twelve, as appeareth partly in this, that Christ changed their names, calling Peter, Cephas, or a stone; and the other two Boanerges, sons of thunder, which was a token that Christ loved these more than the rest. Yea, among these, John was his bosom favourite, and therefore called often 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' partly because he was in the whole course of his life more intimate with these than with the rest of the disciples. You shall see when he raised Jairus's daughter from death to life, Luke viii. 51, he suffered nobody to go in but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. So these very persons were those who in Mount Olivet were conscious to his agonies: Mat. xxvi. 27, 'He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.' Now these who were to be conscious to his agonies are first in Mount Tabor beholders of his great majesty and glory, for their better encouragement and preparation for his and their own sufferings.

Thirdly, The place: 'He bringeth them into an high mountain apart.' This mountain is supposed to be Tabor, though not named by the evangelists—a fit place both for height and secrecy, both which were necessary to the double action that was to be performed there, either his transfiguration or prayer.

1. To his transfiguration height and secrecy were necessary.

[1.] Height: This work required not only a mountain, but a high

mountain, for his transfiguration was a middle state between the infirmity of his flesh and the glory that he now possesseth. So the top of a very high mountain was chosen; it is as a middle place between heaven, the habitation of God, and earth, the habitation of men. Besides, since Moses and Elias were to appear in this action, and that with bodies above the state of those natural bodies which we have here below, it was more agreeable this should be done in a mountain than in the lower parts of the earth; yea, moreover, they were so nearer to heaven, to which they went back again.

[2.] Secrecy was necessary to his transfiguration, for Christ was about a business which he would not have presently to come abroad, and therefore it was to be confined to the knowledge of a few, who were to be called up from the rest into an high mountain: ver. 9, Jesus 'charged them that they should tell the vision to no man till the Son of man was risen from the dead;' and what was done before many will hardly be concealed. The due time for the general and public manifestation of the divine glory was not yet come, therefore he would not have it unseasonably divulged. And hereby he teacheth us modesty. Christ was crucified in the city before all, but transfigured in the mountain only before a few.

2. The other action, of prayer, doth very well agree with height and secrecy.

[1.] For height: Though God heareth us everywhere, where-soever we 'lift up pure hands, without wrath and doubting;' yet a mountain is not altogether disagreeable to this duty. It is good to be as near heaven as we can. I am sure it is good to get up the heart there. We have a freer prospect of heaven from a mountain, and may look up to those blessed regions where our God is; therefore Christ often chose a mountain to pray in, not only now, but at other times: Mat. xiv. 23. Certainly when we pray we should turn our backs upon all earthly things, and have our hearts and minds carried up to him to whom our prayers are directed, and that place where he dwelleth.

[2] Secrecy is necessary for this duty, partly to avoid ostentation: Mat. vi. 6, 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy doors.' Public prayer must be performed before others, but not private, for fear of hypocrisy; so also to increase fervency. Secret prayers are usually most ardent. *Ille dolet verè qui sine teste dolet.* 'My soul shall weep sore in secret places,' Jer. xiii. 17. And Peter went out and wept bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. And Jacob wrestled with God alone, Gen. xxxii. 24. Frequency of objects draws away the mind, obstructeth our affections, abates the vehemency of our zeal, fills us with carnal thoughts; therefore Christ retireth himself and his three disciples, that being separated from all distractions, they might attend the prayer and the vision without interruption.

Fourthly, The preparative action. In Luke it is, 'He went into a mountain to pray.' Christ had two ends; he told his disciples the one, but concealeth the other. He spake only of prayer, the more to hide the thing from the rest of the apostles, which would soon be evident enough to those whom he took along with him. Now this telleth us that every weighty business should be begun with

prayer. When we go about the performance of weighty and serious duties, we should withdraw ourselves from all occasions which may hinder us and distract us therein, as our Lord, being to give himself to prayer, goeth apart into a mountain.

In this introduction I shall only take notice of two things:—

1. The choice of his company.

2. His preparative action: he prayed, and whilst he prayed he was transfigured.

1. Of the choice of his company: he took Peter, James, and John. That Christ doth not use all his servants alike familiarly in everything, partly because he had his liberty; for in matters of free favour it is not acceptance of persons to pass by some and admit others—no, not in the most necessary spiritual dispensations: Mat. xi. 27, 'All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whomsoever the Father will reveal him.' The plea of the Lord of the vineyard will ever hold firm and valid: Mat. xx. 15, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?' But this is a thing of another nature. The dispensing of his arbitrary respects, acceptance of persons in judgment, is a violation of justice, but not in matters of free favour, partly because he would consecrate and hallow spiritual friendship, and commend it to us by his own example; and, therefore, though he loved all his disciples, yet he chose out some for intimacy and special converse. These were ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι, the flower of the apostles, either because, of their suitableness, he had a special inclination to them, or, for their sincerity and eminency in grace, he delighted in them more than in the rest. *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis, ad magis*: if I love all that are godly, I love those most who are most godly. Now as Christ consecrated holy friendship in his own person, so was it exemplified in his disciples, for I find a great friendship between two of these mentioned in the text, John and Peter. You find them mostly together: John xx. 2–4. Mary Magdalene runneth and cometh to Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved; Peter went forth and the other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So Acts iii. 1, 'Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.' John xxi. 7, 'The disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord;' and John xxi. 21, 22, 'Peter, seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved, said, Lord, and what shall this man do?' as willing to know the future state of his friend. So Acts viii. 14, Peter and John go to Samaria to confirm the disciples. See John xviii. 15, 'And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple, and that other disciple was known unto the high priest,' meaning himself. So that in these and other places you still find Peter and John together as very near and fast friends: they always keep together, possibly for spiritual assistance; for Peter was of an hot temper. John the disciple of love; Peter hasty and of a military valour, John all for lenity and peace. Well, then, though we ought to seek peace with all men as much as is possible, Rom. xii. 18, and there should be special concord and communion with all Christians—Φιλαδελφία riseth higher than Ἀγάπη, 2 Pet. i. 7—yet friendship and inward conversation should only be with a few,

such as may be helps to us in godliness, and may promote our mutual good, temporal and spiritual. So did Christ, who had twelve disciples, single out three of them for greatest intimacy; and so did Peter, who, though he had eleven colleagues, and held concord with all, yet his intimate friendship was with John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. It is good to hold friendship with those who are beloved of God, and one who, by his love and lenity, might cool his heats and abate his hasty fervours, which were so natural to him.

Now, having so fair an occasion, I shall treat of spiritual friendship, for an heavenly, faithful friend is one of the greatest treasures upon earth. A friend is valuable in secular matters, much more a spiritual friend: Prov. xxvii. 17, 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend,'—that is, when he is dull his friend setteth an edge upon him.

[1.] Friendship is necessary for every one that would live in the world, because man is ζῶον πολιτικόν, a sociable creature. Man was not made to live alone, but in company with others for mutual society and friendship; and they that fly all company and live to and by themselves are counted inhuman: Eccles. iv. 9–12, 'Two are better than one, for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they have heat; but how can one be warm if he lie alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him.' Thus far Solomon. The Egyptians in their hieroglyphics expressed the unprofitableness of a solitary man by a single millstone, which alone grindeth no meal, but with its fellow is very serviceable for that purpose. The Lord appointed mankind to live in society, that they might be mutually helpful to one another. Surely God never made them to live in deserts; the wild beasts love to go alone, but the tame in flocks and herds. The Lord doth give variety of gifts to the sons of men; to all some, but to none all, that one might stand in need of another, and make use of one another; and the subordination of one gift to another is the great means of upholding the world. Man is weak and insufficient to himself, and wanting the help of others, needeth society, and is inclined to it by the bent of his nature.

[2.] Though man affecteth society, yet in our company we must use choice, and the good must converse with the good, for these reasons:—

(1.) Partly because like doth best sort with like. Friendship is founded in suitableness and maintained by it—*eadem velle et nolle*, to will and nill the same things, breedeth an harmony of minds; the godly will have special love to the godly, and they that fear God will be companions of them that fear him, Ps. cxix. 63; they must needs be more dear and precious to them than others, as a wicked man easily smelleth out a fit companion for him: Ps. l. 18, 'When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.' Like will to like; every man showeth his temper in his company. The fowls of heaven flock together according to their several kinds; ye shall not see doves flocking with the ravens, nor diverse kinds intermixed. Men that delight in excess of drink choose company

suitable to their brutish humour; those that delight in gaming choose such as make no conscience of their time, or have no care of their souls. That which every one is taken withal he loveth to do with his friends, therefore they that love God delight in those that love him, those that are most apt to stir them up to the remembrance of everlasting things and the preparation necessary: so they are of singular use to us.

(2.) If they be not like to us, intimacy and converse will make us like to them. Every man is wrought upon by his company; we imitate those whom we love and with whom we frequently converse: Prov. xiii. 20, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' As a man that walketh in the sun is tanned insensibly, so, if we are not aware, we adopt their manners and customs, and get a tincture from them, especially in evil; for we are more susceptible of evil than of good—as the sound get a sickness from the diseased sooner than the sick get health from the sound. Or in the types of the law: that which was clean, by touching the unclean became unclean, but the unclean were not purified by touching the clean: Prov. xxii. 24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' A man would think that of all sins wrath and anger should not be propagated by converse, the motions and furies of it being so uncomely and indecent to any beholder; yet secretly a liking of the person breedeth a liking of the sin, and a man is habituated into such a frame of spirit as they have whom he hath chosen for his companions. Now this should be regarded by us, because we are sooner made evil by evil company than good by good company; therefore how careful should we be to converse with such as may go before us as examples of godliness, and provoke us by their strictness, heavenly-mindedness, mortification, and self-denial, to more love to God, zeal for his glory, and care of our own salvation. Especially doth this concern the young, who, by the weakness of their judgment or the vehemency of their affections and want of experience, may easily be drawn into a snare.

(3.) Because our love to God should put us upon loving his people and making them our intimates; for religion influenceth all things—our relations, common employments, friendship, and converse: 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.' The new nature inclineth to both: there is an inward propension and inclination needing no outward provocation and allurements: 1 Thes. iv. 9, 'As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another.' God's teaching is by effectual impression or inclining the heart. It is a smart question that of the prophet, 2 Chron. xix. 2, 'Shouldest thou hate the godly, and love those that hate the Lord?' Surely a gracious heart cannot take them into his bosom: he loveth all with a love of good will, as seeking their good, but not with a love of complacency, as delighting in them. Our neighbour must be loved as ourselves—our natural or carnal neighbour as our natural self, with a love of benevolence, and our spiritual neighbour as our spiritual self, with a love of complacency. We have hated our sinful neighbour

as we hate ourselves; much more as to love of benevolence—we must neither hate ourselves, our neighbour, nor our enemy. But it is complacency we are speaking of, and so ‘the wicked is an abomination to the righteous,’ Prov. xxix. 27. The hatred of displacency is opposite to the love of complacency, as the hatred of enmity to the love of benevolence. We cannot enter into a confederacy and intimate kindness with them.

(4.) Because that love which is built upon holiness is the most durable and lasting. There is a confederacy in evil, as between drunkards with drunkards, and robbers with robbers: Prov. i. 14, ‘Cast in thy lot amongst us, let us all have one common purse.’ Or when men conspire against the truth and interest of Christ in the world; as Gebal and Ammon and Amalek leagued themselves against God’s people, divided in interests but united in hatred; as the Pharisees and Herodians agreed together to tempt Christ; and Herod and Pilate, though otherwise no very good friends, agreed to mock him. This is *unitas contra unitatem*, as Austin; or *consortium factionis*, a bond of iniquity. Now this friendship is soon dissolved, for these men, though they agree in evil, yet have contrary lusts and interests; and besides, partners in evil are usually objects reviving guilt; their very presence upbraids the consciences of one another with the remembrance of their past sins; and sin, though it be sweet in the committing, yet it is hateful and bitter in the remembrance of it. Again, there is a civil friendship built on natural pleasure and profit. Certainly men are at liberty to choose their company as their interests and course of employments leads them. This may be a society for trade or civil respect; it cannot be a true and proper friendship, for riches, which are so frail and slippery, can never make a firm tie and bond of hearts and minds: Prov. xiv. 20, ‘The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends;’ Prov. xix. 6, ‘Many will entreat the favour of a prince, and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts: all the brethren of the poor do hate him,’ &c. And as it is a fluid, so it is a base and sordid friendship that is built upon riches, for that concerneth the estate rather than the soul. Well, then, religious friendship, which is built upon virtue and grace, and is called ‘the unity of the spirit,’ Eph. iv. 3, is the most firm bond of all. Sinful societies are soon dissolved, and the profane, though they seem to hold together, yet upon every cross word may fall out and break; and civil friendship, which is only built upon pleasures and profit, standeth upon a brittle foundation. Certainly the good and the holy are not so changeable as the bad and the carnal. Besides, that friendship which is built upon honesty and godliness, is *amicitia per se*, the other is *amicitia per accidens*. It cometh from constitution of soul and likeness of spirits, and the good we seek may be possessed without envy; the friends do not straiten and intrench upon one another. Again, there is a virtuous friendship, which consists in a harmony of minds, or an agreement in some common studies. This is more noble, and more like true friendship than society for trade and temporal interests; but yet this friendship is not so durable, for at last it must be broken off by death; but the godly are everlasting companions. Besides, self-love and envy are more apt to invade other friendships; but the godly, if they be true

to the laws of spiritual friendship, they seek the good of one another as much as their own, and rejoice in the graces of one another as much as in their own.

[3.] Though we owe this religious friendship to all that fear God, yet some few may be chosen for our intimacy and spiritual solace. We owe it in some respects to all that fear God, and must dispense the general acts of friendship to them: Acts iv. 32, 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.' And Christian love is called *σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος*, 'the bond of perfectness,' Col. iii. 14, because it is the band by which holy and Christian societies, called churches, are bound together and preserved; otherwise, like a besom unbound, they fall all to pieces. But yet this doth not hinder but that some may be chosen for our intimacy. Christ, that denied himself to many of the commodities of human life, would not live without special friends, and would enjoy this virtuous solace; and in David and Jonathan we have an instance of it: 1 Sam. xviii. 1, 'And the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.' Certainly too many cannot perform the acts of intimate friendship to us, nor we to them. The love being like a river dispersed into several channels, must needs be shallower and weaker; therefore our choice friends must be but few: *inter binos et bonos* was the old rule, though it need not be so straitly confined.

[4.] In the choice of these few friends we must use caution. (1.) Such as are near to us, with whom we have frequent and familiar converse, and perform a mutual interchange of all offices of love: Prov. xviii. 24, 'A man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.' Consanguinity and affinity is not so near a tie as this friendship. (2.) Not only near, but those who are holy, prudent, and good: Prov. xiii. 20, 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' (3.) Such as are most likely to be faithful: Job vi. 15, 16, 'My brethren have dealt deceitfully with me as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away'—pools in winter, when less need of water, but dried up in summer, when water in those parched countries was a great commodity. So many seem to be great friends, heighten our expectation; but in our necessities and straits leave us destitute. 'Ye see me cast down and are afraid,' saith Job, 'as if I should be a burden to you.' Dearest friends may disappoint us; their affection wants an inward principle; it is a winter brook, and not a spring. Therefore, since the heart of man is so deceitful, and not only deceitful, but though sincere for the present, very changeable; and this is so important an interest of human life, and the vexation of a disappointment in a bosom friend is so grievous, and involveth us in many inconveniences, natural and spiritual; for Solomon telleth us, Prov. xxv. 19, 'Confidence in an unfaithful friend in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.' When we think to eat with the broken tooth, or to walk with the foot out of joint, we are put to grievous pain and torment; therefore we should go to God, and pray him to direct us in the choice of intimate friends. David sadly regrets a disappointment in a friend: Ps. lv. 12-15, 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: nor was it he that



hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance,' &c. A deceitful friend may become the greatest foe, and we resent their ingratitude more than the injuries of others, when they abuse their trust and the familiarity they had with us. The worst that a professed enemy can do is not so grievous as the treachery of a professed friend. This is more piercing, less to be avoided; therefore, whom we have used most familiarly and freely, loved as our soul and life, from such we expect the same firm and hearty friendship. Therefore it concerneth us to seek to God that we may have a godly wise man with whom we may be free in all cases of mind or conscience, and to whom we may freely open ourselves, and be strengthened in the service of God. It is a great part of our contentment and happiness, therefore, that we may not be deceived in our choice. Let us go to God who knoweth hearts, and God hath a great hand in this: Ps. lxxxviii. 8, 'Thou hast put away my acquaintance from me; thou hast made me an abomination to them.' By the providence of God they left him as a man whose condition they were afraid to look upon. And again, ver. 9, 'Lover and friend hast thou put far from me; they stand aloof from me as an execrable thing.' He owneth providence in it.

[5.] When friends be thus chosen, there must be a faithful discharge of the duties of friendship, both in counsels and reproofs; for the godly use this friendship chiefly for spiritual ends.

(1.) In counsel, for Solomon telleth us, Prov. xxii. 9, 'As ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.' As sweet perfumes are a reviving, so to be supported in good resolutions, or directed and guided in our way to heaven by a faithful friend, is very cheering and comfortable. And we read, 1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17, that 'Jonathan went to David, and strengthened his hand in God.' Whereas, on the contrary, a carnal friend is the greatest bane that may be, who doth strengthen us in evil; an instance whereof we have in Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, 2 Sam. xiii. 3, 4, and 'Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, and Jonadab was a subtle man;' and he gave him counsel how he should surprise his sister, to defile her, and satisfy his incestuous lust. Such a friend is really and truly our greatest foe. He was a friend to his vice, but a foe to his person and soul; whereas a true friend, whose friendship is grounded on godliness, will be a foe to our sins, by wholesome admonition and rebukes, and a friend to our soul's salvation.

(2.) Reproofs: that is also a part of friendship: Prov. xxvii. 6, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' A faithful friend's wounds are a more sincere testimony than an enemy's kisses, and so afterwards they will be interpreted: Prov. xxviii. 23, 'He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.' For this we must trust God, though for the present we displease our friends. So Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart by suffering sin upon him.' It is kindness to his soul to reprove him. In the general, holy friendship must be improved to the use of edifying: Rom. i. 11, 12, 'I long to see you, to impart some spiritual gift unto you, that I

may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith of you and me.'

[6.] After the best care is used, you must remember that our friends are but an outward help, which God can continue or withdraw at his pleasure; and that our chief help, comfort, and counsel cometh of God. So it was with Christ: John xvi. 32, 'Behold the hour is come that ye shall be parted every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' Christ was forsaken of his disciples, but not forsaken of his Father. So Paul, 2 Tim. i. 16, 'At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me;' Ps. xli. 9, 'My familiar friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against me.' Those that have been acquainted with the secrets of your soul may not only grow strange to you, but betray you; therefore, do not over-value any earthly friend. Man will be man still, that God may be God, all in all unto his people: and when we are deserted of men, we must learn to trust in God, who never faileth us, fail who will: Ps. xxvii. 10, 'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;' and cxlii. 4, 5, 'I looked on my right hand and beheld, and no man would know me: refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and portion in the land of the living.' We are left alone for God to help us. The defectiveness of all worldly friends shows us more of the goodness of God.

2. The preparative action: he went up into a mountain to pray, and whilst he prayed he was transfigured.

[1.] In that he prayed, it teacheth us to hallow all our actions by prayer. We do not bid ourselves God speed, unless we recommend our affairs to God; whatsoever assurance we have of the blessing, yet we must pray: Jer. xxix. 10-12, 'For thus saith the Lord, After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place, &c. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you;' Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 'I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.' Therefore we should be daily in the practice of this duty, and not look upon it as a work that may well be spared. If Christ, who as to his divine nature was equal with God, surely we should often come and prostrate ourselves before him in this act of holy adoration. Christ had right and title to all, all was his due, yet he was much in prayer. How dare we go about any business without his leave, counsel, and blessing; and usurp any of his blessings without begging them by prayer?

[2.] While he prayed he was transfigured, Luke ix. 29; which teacheth us two things:—

(1.) That we have the highest communications from God in prayer, for then Christ's shape was altered. By prayer the soul hath the most familiar converse with God that possibly it can have, and also by the means of this duty God hath most familiar converse with us. In our prayers to God we have experience of the operations of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit

itself helpeth us with groanings which cannot be uttered ;' Jude 20, 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost ;' and in God's answering our prayer we have experience of the comforts of the Spirit, and those spiritual solaces which he secretly giveth to his people. Hannah, when she had prayed, went away, and 'her countenance was no more sad,' 1 Sam. i. 18. In praying we put forth the groans of the spirit ; in the answer God gives the joys of the spirit : Ps. xxxiv. 5, 'They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.'

(2.) That we should pray so as that the heart may be raised and lifted up unto God, and in some sort made like God. When Christ prayed to God, he is made partaker of the divine glory, as Moses also, by conversing with God, his face shined, Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. This was extraordinary ; but sure the oftener we converse with God the more holy and heavenly should we grow, more like him in spirit, be changed into the glory of the Lord spiritually ; and so we are, if we be instant and earnest in prayer. If we have communion with God, there will be some assimilation to God.

*Use.* It reproveth our remiss, feeble, benumbed souls. There is no life in prayer, no working up the heart to God and heaven ; either our prayers are formal and cursory—James v. 16, *δέησις ἐνεργουμένη*—or our prayers are doctrinal, instructive rather than warning.<sup>1</sup> We get lightly over duties, but we should get life by prayer. This duty is not to inform the judgment, but to raise the affections, that they be all in a flame ; or else we content ourselves with a dull narrative, without getting up the heart to a sight of God and heaven ; or are seldom in praises or adoration of the excellences of God.

## SERMON II.

*And he was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*—MAT. XVII. 2 ; with, *And, as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.*—LUKE IX. 29.

IN both these texts, compared together, you may observe two things:—

1. The circumstance of time : during prayer.

2. The transfiguration itself.

[1.] More generally propounded, *he was transfigured before them.*

[2.] More particularly explained by the change of his face and raiment. The form of any man is most seen in his face. There was a glorious shining brightness. Luke saith, 'The fashion of his countenance was altered ;' Matthew, that 'His face did shine as the sun.' And in the glorious description of God in the prophet Habakkuk, it is said, chap. iii. 2, 'And his brightness was as the light.' For his garments, Luke saith, 'His raiment was white and glistening ;' Mark, chap. ix. 3, 'White as the snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them ;' but Matthew, 'white as the light,' which carrieth it higher.

<sup>1</sup> Qu., 'warming?'—ED.

The works of nature exceed those of art. The transfiguration that was plainly to be seen in his face was accomplished also in other parts of his body. All his body was clothed with majesty, so as it could not be obscured and hidden by his garments.

Now, first I shall speak of the circumstances of time, and then of the transfiguration itself.

I. Of the time: 'and as he prayed.' Now what Christ prayed for is not specified. (1.) If he asked common blessings, and prayed only in order to his usual solace and converse with God, it showed the success of vehemency in prayer. Christ prayed at such a rate as that he was transfigured and changed into the likeness of God in prayer. (2.) If He asked to be transfigured for the confirmation of his disciples, it showeth God's readiness to answer fervent and earnest prayers.

1. Of the first consideration. If Christ's prayer were of ordinary import, it teacheth us that we should pray so that the heart may be raised and lifted unto God in prayer, and in some sort made like unto God. Let us state this matter aright.

[1.] It must be granted that this shining of Christ's countenance as the sun, while he prayed, was extraordinary, and a dispensation peculiar to the Son of God. So also was the shining of Moses's face while he conversed with God in the mount, *Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30.* And for ordinary Christians to expect the like is to put a snare upon themselves, for these things are proper only to the end for which God appointed them.

[2.] This must be also considered, that the eminent and extraordinary passions and affections in the soul do discover themselves in the body, especially in the face; for it is said of Stephen, that when he was heightened into a great zeal for Christ, *Acts vi. 15,* that 'All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.' Angels have not bodies or faces, but they often assume bodies, and then they appear with a glorious and bright countenance, as the angel of the Lord that appeared at the sepulchre: *Mark xxviii. 3,* 'His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.' Now such a glory and gladness did God put upon the countenance of his servant Stephen, that he looked like an angel. Something extraordinary there might be in the case, but yet there was an ordinary reason for it. Stephen's mind was filled with such an incredible solace in the sense of God's love, that he showed no troubledness, but a mind so unconcerned and freed from all fear and sorrow, as if he had been among the angels of God in full glory, and not among his enemies, who sought his blood; and so may God raise the hearts of his people sometimes, as if they had put their heads above the clouds, and were in the midst of the glory of the world to come among his blessed ones. If that were extraordinary, Solomon tells us, *Eccles. viii. 1,* that 'a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine,' as it gives him readiness and tranquillity of mind, and cheerfulness of countenance. Guilt and shame cast down the countenance, but righteousness and wisdom embolden it, more particularly in prayer. As our confidence and joy in God is increased, it bewrayeth itself in the countenance: *Ps. xxxiv. 15,* 'They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.'

They are revived and encouraged, and come away from the throne of grace other manner of persons than they came to it.

[3.] That some kind of transformation is wrought by prayer, appeareth by these considerations :—

(1.) That as God is glorious in himself, so he maketh him that cometh to him partaker of his glory. For certainly all communion with God breedeth some assimilation and likeness unto God. It is clear in heavenly glory, when we see him as he is, we shall be like him, 1 John iii. 2; and it is clear also in our communion with him in the Spirit; for the apostle telleth us, that by ‘Beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,’ 2 Cor. iii. 18. Not only doth vision or immediate intuition produce this effect, but also spiritual specular vision, or a sight of God in the ordinances, produces a divine and God-like nature, inclining us to hate sin and love righteousness. The more we are above with God, the more we are like him. We see it in ordinary converse: a man is as the company that he keepeth. ‘He that walketh with wise men shall be wise,’ saith Solomon, ‘but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,’ Prov. xiii. 20. Now it is not imaginable that a man should converse often with God fervently, seriously, and not be more like him. He that liveth in a mill, the dust will stick upon his clothes. Man receiveth an insensible taint from his company. He that liveth in a shop of perfumes, often handleth them, is conversant among them, carrieth away somewhat of the fragrancy of these good ointments; so by conversing with God we are made like him.

(2.) Nearer we cannot come to God, while we dwell in flesh, than by lifting up the heart to him in fervent prayer. This is the intimate converse and familiarity of a loving soul with God; therefore it is called a lifting up the heart to God. He will not come down to us, therefore we lift up the heart to him: Lam. iii. 41, ‘Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens.’ So Ps. xxv. 1, ‘Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;’ and Ps. lxxxvi. 4, ‘Rejoice the soul of thy servant, for unto thee do I lift up my soul;’ so Ps. cxliii. 8, ‘Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.’ All these places show that there can be no sincerity and seriousness in this duty, unless there be this ascension of the soul to God; it is an act of spiritual friendship, therefore called an ‘acquainting ourselves with God,’ Job xxii. 21. Now as acquaintance is kept up by frequent visits, so prayer is called a giving God a visit: Isa. xxvi. 16, ‘In their trouble they have visited thee.’ Well, then, here is the greatest intimacy we have with God. In the word, God speaks to us by a proxy and ambassador—another speaketh for him. In the Lord’s Supper we are feasted at his cost, and remember him; but we are not admitted into his immediate presence, as those that are feasted by the king in another room than he dineth in. But prayer goeth up to God, and speaketh to himself immediately; and therefore this way of commerce must needs bring in much of God to the soul.

(3.) In fervent prayer we have a double advantage—we get a sight of God, and exercise strong love to God; and both conduce to make us like God.

(1st.) We get a sight of God, for in it (if it be seriously performed) we turn our back upon all other things, that we may look to God as sitting upon the throne, governing all things by his power for his glory. By faith we see the invisible one, Heb. xi. 27. Surely if we do not see God before the eye of our faith when we pray to him, we worship an idol—not the true and living God, who is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Our hearts should be shut up against the thoughts of any other thing, and confined only to the object to whom we direct our worship. I reason thus: If a Christian foreseeth the Lord before him in all his ways, and keepeth always as in his eye and presence, surely he should set the Lord before him in his worship and in his prayers, Ps. xvi. 8. A good Christian doth always keep as in God's eye and presence, much more when he calleth upon his name. Now every sight of God doth more affect and change the heart. As none but the pure in heart see God, so none see God but are most pure in heart. There is a self-purifying in moral things; purity of heart maketh way for the sight of God, Mark v. 8. So the sight of God maketh way for the purity of heart: 3 John 11, 'He that doth evil hath not seen God.' A serious sight of God certainly worketh some change in us.

(2dly.) In prayer, a strong love to God is acted, for it is the expression of our delight in him: Job xxvii. 10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?' Now we are changed into the likeness of him in whom we delight in. Love transformeth and changeth us into the nature of what is loved. There is the difference between the mind and the will: the mind draweth things to itself, but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is drawn by them as the wax receiveth the impression of the seal. Carnal objects make us carnal, and earthly things earthly; and heavenly things heavenly, and the love of God godly: Ps. cxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them, so are all they that put their trust in them,' stupid and senseless as idols: it secretly stamps the heart with what we like, and esteem, and admire.

[4.] There are agents in prayer to help us to improve this advantage.

(1.) The human spirit.

(2.) The new nature; and,

(3.) The Spirit of God.

(1.) The human spirit, or our natural faculty, so that, by our understandings, we may work upon our wills and affections: surely God maketh use of this, for the Holy Ghost doth not work upon a man as upon a block; and we are to rouse up ourselves, and to attend upon this work with the greatest seriousness imaginable. The prophet complains, Isa. lxiv. 7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' Without this it is but dead and cold work, and if there be no more than this, it is but dry literal work: not that fervent effectual prayer which will change the heart, *δέησις ἐνεργουμένη*, James v. 16. The *ἐνεργοῦμενοι* were those that were inspired and possessed by a spirit; therefore it must be a prayer that not only hath understanding and will in it, but spirit and life in it. However, we are to put forth our utmost endeavour, and raise the natural spirit as far as we can.

(2.) The second agent is the new nature, which inclineth us to God as our chief good and last end. This also must be taken in, for the Holy Ghost doth not blow as to a dead coal; the new nature is made up of faith, hope and love, and all these must be acted in prayer: faith, or the firm belief of God's being, and providence, and covenant; 'For how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. x. 14. Then love to God, or the desire of the fruition of him in heavenly glory, praying in the Holy Ghost: 'Keep yourselves in the love of God,' Jude 20, 21. If I do not love God, and desire to enjoy him, and delight in as much of God as I can get here, certainly there will be no life in prayer, or no ravishment and transport of soul, no spirit of desire animating our requests, and no spiritual solace and delight in our converse with God. Hope is also necessary to fervent praying, for a man coldly asketh for what he doth not hope for. Hope respecteth both means and end—supplies of grace by the way, and our final fruition of God in glory. This is called trust in scripture, and is the great ground and encouragement of prayer: Ps. lxix. 8, 'Trust in the Lord at all times; pour out your souls before him.' Prayer is the act of a trusting soul. Now these graces quicken our natural faculties, as they elevate and raise our hearts and minds to God and heaven.

(3.) The third agent in prayer is the Holy Spirit. He is sometimes said to pray in us, Rom. viii. 26; sometimes we are said to pray in him, Jude 20. The divine Spirit exciteth those graces in us which incline us to God; he raiseth our minds in the vision and sight of God. 'In thy light shall we see light,' Ps. xxxvi. 9; and he raiseth our hearts to a desire after and delight in God, for all that spiritual solace and joy is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost;' for both unutterable groans and unspeakable joys are of his working: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;' compared with 1 Pet. i. 8, 'In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Well, then, these work a kind of an ecstasy. If you would pray so as to be transported, transformed in prayer, something you must do as reasonable creatures, something as new creatures, and the Spirit influenceth all, and causeth the soul to follow hard after God. We must put forth our utmost endeavour, stir up the gift of God in us; and though we cannot command the influences of the Spirit, yet he is never wanting to a serious soul as to necessary help. Pray thus, and you will find, as the help of the Spirit in prayer, so the comforts of the Spirit as the success of prayer.

[5.] As there is daily and constant prayer in which we must ever bewray a seriousness and sincerity for these daily supplies of grace, so there are extraordinary occasions, because of some great business, conflict, or temptation: in those the heart and mind must be more than ordinarily raised and stirred. In every prayer of Christ there was not a transfiguration; and we read of our Lord Jesus, that in his agonies he prayed, *ἐκτενέστερον*, more earnestly than at other times, Luke xxii. 44; and upon eminent occasions, as the necessities of the saints are greater, so their acts of prayer are more earnest. On these weighty occasions many Christians are wholly swallowed up with the thoughts of God, and carried beyond themselves by their high love to God, and

earnest desires of the spiritual blessings they stand in need of, so that they seem to be rapt into heaven in their admiration of God and delight in him.

### APPLICATION.

*Use.* To reprove our feeble, remiss, and benumbed requests. There is no life in our prayers, no working up of the heart to God and heaven, no flames of love, no transports of soul by the vision and sight of faith, no holy and ardent desires after God, or spiritual solace and delight in him.

*Reasons*—1. We pray cursorily, and go about prayer as a customary task for fashion's sake; we come with a few cold devotions morning and evening, and so 'God is near in our mouths, and far from our reins,' Jer. xii. 2. Oh, take heed of this! Nothing breeds slowness and hardness of heart so much as perfunctory praying. The rule is, 'Continue instant in prayer,' Rom. xii. 12. And it is said of the saints that they 'Served God instantly night and day,' *ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ*, Acts xxvi. 7, that they might come to the blessed hope, with the united service of all their powers and faculties.

2. Our prayers are doctrinal and instructive, rather than affectionate and warming. We get light by other duties, but we should get life by prayer. This duty is not to inform the judgment, but to raise the affections, that they may be all flame. Other duties are feeding duties, but this is a spending duty, an egression of the soul after God: Ps. lxxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' A man may better spend two hours in hearing than half an hour in praying, if the heart be employed in it as it ought to be, in the sight of God, and an earnest desire after him. The prayers in scripture are all supplications or doxologies; there is no excursion into doctrines and instructions.

3. Else we are lamenting sin, and spend the time in confessing sin, which also hath its use in the seasons thereof; but are seldom in praises or adorations of the excellences of God, and the wonderful mysteries of his love in our redemption by Jesus Christ. Yet it is said, Ps. xxii. 3, 'O Lord, that inhabitest the praises of Israel.' These are the things that do most ravish the heart, and raise it in the contemplation of that glorious God to whom we speak; and fill us with the ecstasies of love, that we may be more like him—holy, wise, and good, as he is holy, wise, and good.

4. We think a dry narrative to be enough; that is, the fruit of a human spirit, or a mere product of memory and invention is a sufficient prayer, without acting faith, hope, or love in it, or those spiritual and heavenly desires which are the life of prayer: Ps. x. 17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' The arduity of humble addresses is God's own gift, and he will never reject and despise those requests that, by his own Spirit and appointment, are direct and brought to him.

But what if I have not those strong and earnest desires? I answer, Yet keep not off from prayer: for,

[1.] Good desires must be asked of God, for it is said, he prepareth the heart.

[2.] Such desires as we have must be expressed, and that is the way



to increase them, and to quicken us more. A sincere heart, that would serve God with his best, findeth more in a duty than he could expect, and by praying gets more of the fervency and ardours of praying: as a bell may be long a-raising, but when it is up, it jangleth not as it did at first.

[3.] Those cold affections which we have are killed by disuse and turning away from God; therefore go to him to get thy heart warmed.

2. Of the second consideration. If he prayed for this transfiguration, observe:—

That God often answereth his people in the very time while they are praying: Isa. lviii. 9, 'When they call I will answer, and when they cry he shall say, Here I am.' This hath been the course of God's dealing with the prayer-makers all along: Abel, Gen. iv. 4, 'God had respect to;' it is *ἐνεπύρισεν*, set his offering on fire. Daniel prayeth, and saith he, Dan. ix. 21, 'While I was speaking in prayer, the angel Gabriel was sent unto me;' and he said, 'At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth.' While many of the disciples were gathered together praying, God sent Peter to them, Acts xii. 12, 13. While Cornelius was in the act of prayer, 'At the ninth hour of the day,' which was the hour of prayer, 'he saw in a vision the angel of God,' Acts x. 3-9. While Peter went up to the house-top to pray, then he had the heavenly vision. So when Paul was in prayer, Ananias was sent to him: Acts ix. 11, 'Behold he prayeth;' and then God taketh care of him. So Acts iv. 31, 'When they had prayed, the house was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Thus God delighteth to honour his own ordinance, and to reward the waiting soul, that is frequent and constant in this way of waiting upon God, which should encourage us to be more frequent and serious in this work. You shall see how, in the very act of prayer, God hath—(1.) averted judgments; (2.) bestowed mercies and favours.

[1.] He hath put a stop to judgments: Ps. xcix. 6-8, 'Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the Lord, and he answered them; he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar; they kept his testimonies and the ordinance that he gave them. Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God; thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.' The drift of the Psalmist in this place is to show, by eminent instances of holy men that were most notable for prayer, how they have stopped judgments when they began to be executed. Moses, at his prayer God was propitiated, after the provocation of the golden calf; for it is said, Exod. xxxii. 11, 'Moses besought the Lord his God;' ver. 14, 'The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do.' The second, Aaron's making an atonement for the people, whereby the plague was staid: Num. xvi. 46, 'Take a censer quickly, for wrath is begun;' and ver. 48, presently the plague was stayed. Upon Samuel's prayer the Philistines were discomfited when they were overrunning Israel, 1 Sam. vii. 5, with ver. 9, 10. With every one of these God was pleased to talk and commune as a friend. Such honour was God pleased to put on these his faithful servants; and when the people had provoked God, and God's

wrath was already gone out against them for their crying sins, their prayers were so effectual as to divert the plagues and obtain remission.

[2.] So powerful, also, are they for obtaining blessings: Elijah (James v. 17, 18), though 'a man of like passions with us,' yet he could lock heaven and open it at his pleasure; 1 Kings xviii. 42, 45, the rain came as soon as Elijah put himself into a zealous posture to obtain it. Often success hath overtaken the prayer, and the blessing has been gotten before the supplication hath been ended. Isaac went out to meet with God, to meditate or pray, and he espied Rebecca afar off. Isa. lxxv. 24, 'Before they call I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking I will hear.' Oh, therefore, let us not entertain hard thoughts of God, as if he did not regard our suits and requests, and prayer were a lost labour.

II. I come now to the transfiguration itself, as it is here propounded and explained.

*Doct.* That one necessary and solemn act of Christ's mediation and manifestation to the world was his transfiguration before competent witnesses.

This was one solemn act, and part of Christ's manifestation to the world, for we have the record of it here; and it was necessary, for Christ doth nothing in vain. And here are competent witnesses,—three persons of eminent holiness, before whom all this was done, and they were eye-witnesses of his majesty, and ear-witnesses of the oracle which they heard from heaven, or the voice from the excellent glory.

I shall open:—

First, The nature of this transfiguration.

Secondly, The ends of it.

First, The nature of this transfiguration. It was a glorious alteration in the appearance and qualities of his body, not a substantial alteration in the substance of it. It was not a change wrought in the essential form and substance of Christ's body, but only the outward form was changed, being more full of glory and majesty than it used to be or appeared to be.

Two things are to be handled:—

1. How it differed from his body at another time, whilst he conversed here on earth.

2. How this change differed from the state of his body as it is now in glory.

1. How his body, now transfigured, differed from his body at other times during his conversing with men. Though the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him always, yet the state of his body was disposed so as might best serve for the decency of human conversation; as the sun in a rainy, cloudy day is not seen, but now, as it might, discover his divine nature, it would break out in vigour and strength.

[1.] It was not a change or alteration of the substance of the body, as if it were turned into a spiritual substance. No; it remained still a true human, mortal body, with the same nature and properties it had before, only it became bright and glorious.

[2.] As the substance of the body was not changed, so the natural shape and features were not changed, otherwise how could

it be known to be Christ? The shape and features were the same, only a new and wonderful splendour put upon them.

[3.] This new and wonderful splendour was not in imagination and appearance only, but real and sensible. If it had been in imagination, show, and appearance, it would make Christ like those deceivers who would dazzle the eyes of beholders with a false appearance, as magical impostors, or those apish imitators of divine glory; as Herod Agrippa, of whom we read, Acts xii. 21-23, how he appeared in royal state and made an oration, and they said, 'The voice of a God, and not of a man.' Josephus telleth us the manner, how he sat in the sun with glistering garments of cloth of silver, and when the sunbeams did beat upon it, the people cried him up as *κρείττονα τῆς θνήτης φύσεως*, as something higher and more excellent than a mortal creature. No; this was not a phantastical representation, but a real impression of divine glory on the body of Christ.

[4.] Although this appeared in the face chiefly, as the most conspicuous part of the body,—the text saith his face did shine as the sun,—yet more or less the other parts of his body were clothed with majesty and glory, and thence was the splendour derived to his garments.

2. How his body transfigured differed from his glorified body. This must be stated also, for Christ, by his transfiguration, was not admitted into the fulness of the state of glory, but only giveth some glimpse and resemblance of it. These two estates agree in the general nature, but some clarity, glory, and majesty is put upon Christ's glorified body that was not now. But the difference is:—

[1.] Partly in the degree and measure; the clarity and majesty of Christ's glorified body is greater and more perfect. Here is a representation, some delineation, but not a full exhibition of His heavenly glory.

[2.] Partly in continuance and permanency. This change was not perpetual, but to endure for a short time only, for it ceased before they came down from the mount.

[3.] The subject or seat of this glory differed, the body of Christ being then corruptible and mortal, but now incorruptible and immortal. If Christ's body had been immortal and impassible, then Christ could not die.

[4.] Here are garments, and a glorified body shall have no other garments than the robes of immortality and glory in heaven. Christ shall be clothed with light as with a garment.

Secondly, The ends of it. By this transfiguration God would show:—

1. What Christ was.

2. What he should be; and also,

3. What we shall be.

1. What Christ was. The dignity of his person and office. That he was the eternal Son of God, and the mediator of the new covenant; the great prophet whom God would raise up to his people.

[1.] The dignity of His person was seen, for the transfiguration was a ray of the divine glory. It was not the addition of any glory to Christ which he had not before, but a manifestation of the glory which he had, though obscured under the veil of our flesh; for the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, Col. ii. 9, 'And we beheld his

glory, as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God,' John i. 14. But it is said, 2 Pet. i. 17, that he received from God the same honour and glory. This is spoken of him as mediator; the glory of the Son of God incarnate was so obscured, for our sakes, that he needed this solemn act to represent him to the world.

[2.] His office: the great prophet of the church, 'Hear ye him.' A greater prophet than Moses. Moses saw the face of God, but he was in the bosom of God. Moses, his face shone, but not as Christ's, for it could be hidden by a veil; Christ darts his glory through his garments. Moses, his shining was terrible; Christ's was comfortable—the apostles were loath to lose the sight of it.

2. To show what Christ should be; for this was a pledge with what glory he should come in his kingdom, Mat. xvi. 27: it prefigured the glory of his second coming. Thus, for the confirmation of their faith, Christ would give his disciples a glimpse of his glory; he knew they would be sorely assaulted and shaken by the ignominy of his cross. But what is all this to us? We see not his glory.

[1.] What was once done and sufficiently attested needs not to be repeated; but it is a great satisfaction to us that we have a glorious head and chief; when we suffer for him we need not be ashamed of our sufferings. The apostles urge this concerning us as well as them.

[2.] The immediate manifestations of him who dwelleth in light inaccessible would undo us while we are in our mortal bodies. Blessed be God that he hath chosen fit means to reveal himself to us, that we may behold the glory of the Lord in a glass, 2 Cor. iii. 18, by the ministry of the word and other ordinances. The Israelites were sensible how little they could endure him who is, as it were, all sun, and all light, and all fire: Exod. xx. 18, 19, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die.' Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle when God appeared unto him, 1 Kings xix. 13; when Christ appeared to Paul from heaven he trembled and was astonished, and was three days without sight, as you may see, Acts ix. 9. There was a special reason why an apostle should see him in person.

[3.] We shall see this glory when fit for it: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' The queen of Sheba took a long journey to behold the glory of Solomon, that was but a temporal, fading, and earthly glory. Now much more transcendent is the glory of Christ's body in heaven; this we shall see to all eternity.

3. To show what we shall be; for Christ is the pattern, *primum in unoquoque genere*, &c.

[1.] It sheweth the possibility of our having a glorified body. When the Lord is pleased to let forth and communicate his glory, he is able to adorn and beautify our earthly and obscure bodies. The body of man in its composition hath a great mixture of earth, which is dark and obscure. Now God can make this clod of earth to shine as the star or sun for brightness: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' We are apt to say, How can it be? If we consider the infinite and absolute power of God, and this instance of Christ, it will make it

more reconcilable to your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your faith.

[2.] The certainty of it, as well as the possibility; for Christ assumed our body, not for passion only, but for glorification, that therein he might be an instance and pattern to us. For if the head be glorious, so will the members also. How base soever the people of God seem to be in this world, yet in the life to come they shall be wonderfully glorious: Mark xiii. 43, 'The righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' So Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Now our life is hidden with Christ, but when he who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;' 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 2 Thes. i. 10, 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.' All these places show we shall be partakers of this glory.

[3.] The manner. Glorification taketh not away the substance and natural properties of the body, for there is a glorious transfiguration, but no abolition of the substance of Christ's body; it was the same body of Christ before and after transfiguration. Glory freeth us from natural infirmities, but it doth not strip us of natural properties. Christ hath showed in his own body what he can or will perform in ours—these same bodies, but otherwise adorned, *τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως*: and 'with these eyes shall I see God,' Job xix. 26, 27: *Τοῦτο τὸ φθαρτὸν*, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,' 1 Cor. xv. 53.

*Use 1.* Be transformed that you may be transfigured: 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds,' Rom. xii. 2. The change must begin in the soul (2 Cor. iii. 18), and thence it is conveyed to the body. The lustre of grace maketh way for the splendour of glory: Prov. iv. 18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more to the perfect day.' The way of the wicked is an increasing darkness—ignorance, sin, outer darkness.

2. Be contented to be like Christ in reproaches, disgraces, and neglect in the world, that you may be like him in glory. Bear the reproach of Christ: Heb. xiii. 13, 'Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach;' Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Prefer it before all earthly honour: Acts v. 41, 'And they departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;' and 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'I will yet be more vile and base in my own sight.' Your Lord is a glorious Lord, and he can put glory upon you.

3. To wean our hearts from all human and earthly glory. What is a glorious house to the palace of heaven, glorious garments to the robes of immortality? The glory of Christ should put out the glory of these petty stars that shine in the world, as the sun puts out the fire. We have higher things to mind; it is not for eagles to catch flies, or princes to embrace the dunghill.

4. Since this glory is for the body, do not debase the body, to make it an instrument of sin: 1 Thes. iv. 4, 'Possess your vessels in sanctification and honour.' Do not offend God to gratify the body, as they do, Rom. xiv. 13, 'who make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts

thereof.' Do not spare the body to do God service: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope for to come; for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews:' 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

### SERMON III.

*And behold there appeared unto him Moses and Elias talking with him.—MAT. XVII. 3; with,  
And behold there talked with him two men, Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.—LUKE IX. 30, 31.*

HAVING spoken of Christ's transfiguration, we come now to speak of those special accidents and adjuncts which happened at the time of his transfiguration. Here are two mentioned:—

1. The extraordinary apparition of Moses and Elias.
2. Their conference with our Saviour.

In the first:—

1. The persons who appeared: Moses and Elias.
2. The manner of their appearing. Luke saith, 'They appeared in glory.' Since the scripture affixeth a *behold*, or note of attention, wherever this history is mentioned, it will not be unprofitable for us to consider it a little.

*First*, Who appeared: Moses and Elias. These were there in person, as well as Christ was there in person; for it is not a vision, but a thing really done and transacted. Christ would have but two, being to give us a glimpse only, not the full lustre and splendour of his glory and majesty, as he will at the last day, when he shall come in the glory of the Father, and all his holy angels with him.

But why these two?

1. With respect to the gospel or new law which he was to set up, it is for the confirmation thereof that Moses and Elias appear talking with him, showing the harmony and agreement between them, and the subordination of their dispensation to Christ and salvation by him. Moses was the person by whom the law was given, and Elias was a principal prophet. The law is represented by Moses, and the prophets by Elias. Both did frequently foretell and prefigure the death and resurrection of Christ, and all the scripture which was then written was usually called by this term, law and prophets: Acts xxiv. 14, 'Believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets;' and Mat. xi. 13, 'For all the law and the prophets prophesied until John;' Luke xvi. 24, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them;' so Acts xxvi. 22, 'I witness no other things than those which Moses and the prophets say should come to pass;' so Mark

vii. 11, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you the same to them, for this is the law and the prophets.' Well, then, the books of the Old Testament are frequently and solemnly thus called law and prophets; the Messiah was spoken of and foretold in both, and the godly before his coming waited for him as such. One place I had almost forgotten: Rom. iii. 21, 'The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.' Which sheweth that not only the person of Christ was set forth, but also his institution and gospel dispensation. Well, to manifest this consent, here is law and prophets, Moses and Elias friendly conferring with Christ, or rather attending upon him, as servants upon their Lord. Christ and Moses, Christ and the prophets, are not at variance, as the Jews suppose, but here is a fair agreement betwixt them.

2. With respect to the persons themselves, there are many special reasons. These had been the most faithful and laborious servants of the Lord, and public eminent instruments of his glory: Moses a giver of the law, and Elias a restorer of the law; Moses faithful in all the house of God, and Elias zealous for the glory of God. Both had ventured their lives: Moses by encountering Pharaoh, and Elias Ahab. Both had seen the glory of God in Mount Horeb, and spake with God also: Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 11, 'He saw the Lord face to face, and spake with him as a man doth with his friend;' and Elias, 1 Kings xix. Both had fasted forty days, as Christ also did; therefore conveniently were these chosen.

3. With respect to our profit and instruction, Christ would not choose two angels for this service, but two men. Here the business was not to see glorified spirits, but glorified bodies; therefore the angels, having no bodies of their own, and must appear in assumed bodies, if in any, are not fit; therefore two men that had bodies wherein they might appear.

But you will say, If two men must appear in glorified bodies, why not Enoch rather than Moses, who was translated into heaven, and remaineth there with a glorified body as well as Elias?

*Ans.* Enoch had no public charge; Enoch lived before the legal dispensation. These both belonged to it, and were chief in it, of great authority among the Jews. Enoch hath an honourable testimony in the word of God, but had no public office and charge in the church, which the other two had, and managed with great fidelity. By the appearance of Moses the whole legal economy is supposed to appear in his person, and by the appearance of Elias the prophetic ministry, which was a kind of chancery to the law, is supposed to appear also. Both do, as it were, deliver over to Christ their whole dispensation, and lay it down at his feet, as the magistrates that are to go out of office solemnly resign the ensigns of their authority to him that succeedeth; and also they come both to reverence the majesty of their supreme Lord. In short, it is for our comfort that one that died, and one alive in glory, should come to show that Christ is Lord of quick and dead, Rom. xiv. 9. Moses was dead, Elias translated: these two come, the one to give a pledge of the glory of the world to come, the other of the resurrection of the dead, which is the way and introduction to it;

and both these persons come to attend and adore our Saviour and do homage to him.

*Secondly*, They appeared in glory, that is, in a corporeal shape, shining with brightness and glory as Christ's body did, bating only for the degree and proportion, that there might be a difference between the Lord and his servants. Now, whether they appeared in bodies formed and assumed for the present purpose, and to be laid down again, as we do our garments, or in their own proper bodies, is often disputed by interpreters, upon this occasion. That they appeared in bodies is certain, for bodily acts and properties are ascribed to them—as their talking with Christ, their being seen by the apostles; for a spirit cannot be seen. If in bodies, why not their own? It is as easy to the Lord to cause them to appear in their own bodies as in a body assumed for this special purpose and service; and they were known by the disciples to be Moses and Elias, not by the external lineaments, for they never saw them in person before, but either were made known to them by some internal revelation, or by Christ's words, or by some words of Moses and Elias themselves; but which way soever they knew them, certain it is they knew them, and took them to be Moses and Elias, therefore Moses and Elias they were, both as to soul and body. The apostles that were admitted to this transfiguration were not to be deceived by a false appearance, for they were admitted to be confirmed in the truth of Christ's person and office, that by what they saw they might confirm others. How would it weaken the testimony if what they saw appearing before them in glory were not the bodies of Moses and Elias, but only other bodies assumed! Concerning Elias the matter is without difficulty, for since he saw not death, but was translated both body and soul into heaven, why should he lay down his own body and take another to come and serve Christ upon this occasion? Cause sufficient there was why he should come from the blessedness of heaven to Mount Tabor; no cause why he should lay aside his own proper body. It is no loss nor trouble, but advantage, to blessed and heavenly creatures to be serviceable to their Redeemer's glory, though it be to come out of the other into this world. But concerning Moses the matter is more doubtful. We read that he died in Mount Nebo, and his body was buried by God in the plains of Moab, so that his grave was known to no man unto this day, Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6. Some think it was preserved from putrefaction by the extraordinary power of God, that he might resume it at this time. The Jews say that God sucked out Moses's soul from his body with a kiss, and afterwards restored it again, and so he liveth in immortality; but he that looketh for divinity among the Jewish rabbins will much sooner find a ridiculous fable than any sound doctrine. Suffice it to us that he was really dead and buried, and his body mouldered into dust as our bodies are, and now, on this special occasion, raised out of the dust; but after this, whether it were laid down in dust again or carried into heaven, it is not for us to determine: it may be either, according to the analogy of the Christian faith. If his body returned to corruption again, surely it is a great honour that it was raised up for this special use: I say it was a great joy to these prophets to see all their predictions fulfilled in Christ. If we say it entered into glory, what inconvenience was there if God would



indulge him this peculiar prerogative, to be raised from the dead and enjoy blessedness both in soul and body before the last day? He granted it to Enoch and Elias, and those who came out of their graves after Christ's death, Mat. xxvii. 53: the great harvest is at the last day, but some first-fruits before.

Secondly, Their conference with our Saviour: they 'talked with him,' saith Matthew; they 'spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,' saith Luke. They talked with Christ, not with the apostles. Here is an apparition to them, but no parley and intercourse between them and the glorified saints. The saints that are glorified are out of the sphere of commerce of the living; nay, it is a question whether they heard at all what was said to Christ; but of that in the next verse.

Here observe three things:—

1. What they spake of Christ's death.
2. The notion by which his death is set forth: it is *ἔξοδος*.
3. The necessity of undergoing it, in the word *πληρεῖν*, 'which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.'

1. What they spake of none could divine, unless it had been told us, and the evangelist Luke telleth us that it was of his death. This argument was chosen:—

[1.] Because it was at hand. The next solemn mediatory action after this was his death and bloody sufferings. After he was transfigured in the mount he went down to suffer at Jerusalem.

[2.] This was an offence to the apostles, that their master should die: Mat. xvi. 22, 23, 'Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.'

[3.] This was the Jews' stumbling-block: 1 Cor. i. 23, 'We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block.'

[4.] This was prefigured in the rites of the law, foretold in the writings of the prophets. In the figures of the law it was represented: Heb. ix. 22, 'And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission;' especially the apostle urgeth the entering of the high priest with blood to the mercy-seat, ver. 23, 24. All the legal sacrifices were slain, and their blood brought before the Lord. So the predictions of the prophets: Isa. liii. 10, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make thy soul an offering for sin,' &c.; and Dan. ix. 26, 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' In short, that Christ should die for the sins of the world, was the great thing represented in the law and prophets. Rabbi Simeon and Rabbi Hadersim out of Daniel, that after Messiah had preached half seven years he shall be slain.

[5.] It was necessary that by death he should come to his glory, of which now some glimpse and foretaste was given to him: Luke xxiv. 46, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and rise from the dead the third day'—that is, with respect to the predictions; ver. 44, 'All those things which were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the book of Psalms, concerning me may be fulfilled;' and again, Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 'Oh fools, and slow of heart to

believe all that the prophets have spoken ! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory ?'

[6.] The redemption of the church by Christ is the talk and discourse we shall have in heaven ; the angels and glorified spirits are blessing and praising him for this : Rev. v. 9, 'Thou art worthy, for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' The angels, ver. 12, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honour, and blessing.' The redeemed church, and glorified saints and angels, have all one song, and one praise—the honour of the Lamb that was slain.

[7.] It is an instructive pattern to us, that Christ, in the midst of his transfiguration, and the glory which was then put upon him, forgot not his death. In the greatest advancements we should think of our dissolution. If Christ in all his glory discoursed of his death, surely it more becometh us, as necessary for us to prevent the surfeit of worldly pleasures, we should think of the change that is coming ; for 'Surely every man at his best estate is vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5. In some places they were wont to present a death's head at their solemn feasts. Merry days will not always last, death will soon put an end to the vain pleasures we enjoy here, and the most shining glory will be burnt out to a snuff.

2. The notion by which his death is expressed : his decease, *ἔξοδον*, which signifies the going out of this life into another, which is to be noted :—

[1.] In respect unto Christ his death was *ἔξοδος*, for he went out of this mortal life into glory, and so it implieth both his suffering death and also his resurrection : Acts ii. 24, 'God hath raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible he should be holden of it.' The grave was like a woman ready to be delivered ; it suffered throes till this blessed burden was egested.

[2.] With respect to us. Peter calls his death *ἔξοδον* : 2 Pet. i. 15, 'I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease.' The death of the godly is a going out but from sin and sorrow to glory and immortality, as Israel's going out of Egypt (whence the second Book of Moses is called Exodus) was no destruction and cessation of their being, but a going out of the house of bondage into liberty. Paul saith, 'I desire to be dissolved,' *ἀναλῦσαι*, Phil. i. 23—a setting sail for the other world. In scripture language the body is the house, the soul is the inhabitant : 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The soul dwelleth in the body as a man in a house, and death is but a departure out of one house into another—not an extinction, but a going from house to house.

3. The necessity of undergoing it, in the word *πληρεῖν*. This word *accomplish* noteth three things :—

[1.] His mediatorial duty, with a respect to God's ordination and decree declared in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which when they are fulfilled are said to be accomplished. Whatsoever Christ did in the work of redemption was with respect to God's will and eternal decree : Acts iv. 28, 'To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel

determined before to be done.' Now this was the more binding, being it was a declared counsel in the prophecies and figures of the Old Testament, therefore Christ cried out at his death, John xix. 30, 'It is finished,' or accomplished—meaning principally that the prophecies, and figures, and types which prefigured his death were all now accomplished.

[2.] His voluntary submission, 'which he should accomplish,' noteth his active and voluntary concurrence. It is an active word, not passive, not to be fulfilled upon him, but by him; for though his death in regard of his enemies was violent and enforced, yet he voluntarily underwent it for our sakes; no man could have taken his life from him unless he had laid it down, John x. 18; it was not forced upon him, but he yielded to it by a voluntary dispensation. As to men, it was an act of violence; but as to his Father, it was an act of obedience; as to us, an act of love. On Christ's part his enemies could not have touched him against his will, as indeed they cannot also one hair of our heads but as God permitteth.

[3.] That it was the eminent act of his humiliation, for this cause he assumed human nature. His humiliation began at his birth, continued in his life, and was accomplished in dying: all was nothing without this, for less could not serve the turn than the death of the Son of God. Then all sufferings were undergone which were necessary to take away sin; therefore there is a consummation or perfection attributed to the death of Christ: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There is done enough to expiate sin, to open a way to heaven and happiness. This accomplisheth all that is necessary by way of merit and satisfaction.

Now what shall we learn from hence, for surely such solemn actions of Christ were not in vain?

I. A notable argument to confirm the Christian faith, namely, the consent between the law and the prophets and Christ; for Moses and Elias are all Christ's ministers and servants, agreeing in one with him, and therefore appear at his transfiguration, where he is proclaimed to be the beloved Son of God, and the great doctor of the church, whom all are bound to hear under pain of damnation.

I will prove two things:—

First, The necessity of this appearance, both to the Jews and us Gentiles.

1. To the Jews in that age; for there were three opinions concerning Christ. Some had a blasphemous opinion of him, as if he were an imposter, and called him Samaritan and devil. So the chief priests and Pharisees, Mat. xxvii. 63, 'We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again;' and Mat. xii. 24, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.' Generally they looked upon him as an enemy to Moses: John ix. 29, 'We know that God spake to Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' Others had a more moderate opinion, who were alarmed by his miracles, and convinced by his holiness: Mark vi. 14–16, 'Some said it is Elias, others said it is a prophet, Jeremias, or one of the prophets; but Herod said it is John whom I beheaded, who is risen from the dead, and there-

fore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.' Herod's conscience could not digest John's murder, therefore he twice saith it is John, it must needs be John. The third opinion was that of the disciples, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' John vi. 69. Now, to set all at rights, to confute the blasphemous Jews, to rectify the moderate Jews, to confirm the disciples, here come Moses and Elias to justify him. They would not have owned him if a blasphemer and imposter, nor have come from heaven to honour him and do him homage if he had been an ordinary prophet; therefore they appear in glory, and talk with him of his death.

2. With respect to the modern Jews, and us Gentiles, this apparition was necessary to confirm us in the faith both of Christ's person and office; that he was the great teacher sent from heaven to make known the way of salvation to lapsed mankind; and Moses and Elias must be hereafter silent. Now the great prophet and doctor of the church is brought forth; and no other revelation or dispensation is to be expected or regarded, now he is brought forth. There is need that this should be sufficiently evidenced, partly because Christ had the law of Moses to repeal, which was well known to the Jews to be God's own law, else they and every true subject of God might refuse to obey him: partly because he had a new law to promulgate, even the law of faith and gospel ordinances, and so must manifest his authority before they can be received and submitted unto with that firm assent and consent which is necessary: partly because he himself was to be received and entertained as the Redeemer of the world, who had expiated our sins by his decease at Jerusalem, which was a new work, yet man's salvation lay upon it. And his death there was clouded with many prejudices; for they put him to death as a false prophet, guilty of blasphemy and sedition. Therefore it needed to be made manifest that such a man of sorrows, reckoned among transgressors, was the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Secondly, The sufficiency of this evidence. For if Moses and Elias appear in glory to countenance this dispensation, and declare their hearty concurrence and consent, there is no reason Jew or Gentile should scruple it. If Moses the lawgiver, and Elias, so zealous for the law, consent, why should the Jews refuse the gospel so agreeable to their dispensation, or the Gentiles question a doctrine so long ago manifested to the church by God, long before Christ and his apostles were in being? Those that lived in so many different ages could not lay their heads together to cheat the world with an untruth. There is a double argument may be drawn hence:—

1. The matter of fact. Moses and Elias did appear to witness their consent. Now this dependeth upon the testimony of the apostles present, whose testimony was by other means ratified and made valuable: 2 Pet. i. 16-18, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.'

2. Their consent in doctrine, which is obvious in all their writings. The apostles related nothing concerning Christ but what Moses and the prophets had foretold, and what was history in the New Testament was prophecy in the Old, either as to the person of Christ, or as to his kingdom—the duties and privileges thereof: John v. 39, ‘Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.’ So ver. 45–47, ‘Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words?’ The Old Testament beareth witness of Christ’s person, natures, offices, birth, life, sufferings, and the glory that should ensue: 2 Pet. i. 19–21, ‘We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ The apostles taught the same things the prophets had written, only applied them to Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, that they might know that he was Lord and Christ. The heathens take notice that at that time when Christ appeared, there was *Vetus et constans fama* (Sueton.); *Ex antiquis sacerdotum libris* (Tacitus)—that their King, Messiah, should come.

*Use* 1. For confutation of the Jews, and to show their obstinacy in not receiving Christ as the Messiah. God had told Moses, Deut. xviii. 18, ‘I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and whosoever will not hearken unto him, I will require it of him;’ which cannot be understood of any other prophet but Christ the Messiah; for it is said, Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11, ‘There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, who knew the Lord face to face, in all the miracles and wonders which the Lord sent him to do.’ But the Messiah doth match and overmatch him. He was a man as Moses was; for the promise was made on that occasion, ‘Let me hear the voice of the Lord God no more, nor see this great fire, that we die not.’ Saith God, ‘They have well spoken: I will raise up a prophet like unto thee from among their brethren.’ He must be a lawgiver as Moses, but of a more perfect law; he must be such an one as should see God face to face; he is of a divine nature, approved to the world by miracles, signs, and wonders. As Moses was, so Christ. Moses divided the sea as dry land, Christ walked upon it; Moses healed the bitter waters that were sick, Christ raised the dead. All the prejudice is, that he changed the law of Moses into the rites and institutes of the Christian religion. *Ans.* That was necessary, the substance being once come, that the shadows and ceremonies should be abolished; and besides, these were proper and peculiar to one nation in the world, namely, Judea; the exercise permitted but in one only place of that country, namely, Jerusalem, whither they were all to repair three times each year. But the Messiah’s law was to be common to all men—serves for all countries, times, places, persons, for he was to be the light of the

Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel. How should nations so far distant from Jerusalem repair thrice every year? or a woman dwelling in England or America repair thither for purification after every childbirth? Lev. xii. When Moses delivered the law to them: Deut. xviii. 15, 'The Lord thy God will raise thee up a prophet like unto me, unto him shalt thou hearken.' And the prophets, when they prophesy of his law: Isa. ii. 3, 'The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of God from Jerusalem.' Moses's law was published from Sinai, not from Sion; but the preaching of the gospel began at Jerusalem, and from thence was spread over all the world. Again it is said, Isa. xlii. 4, 'The isles shall wait for his law;' that is, the maritime countries. I pursue it no farther now.

2. To us Christians. Our religion is true: oh, let us be true in the profession of it; otherwise it will little help us in the day of our accounts: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' You stand upon the vantage-ground, but are not taller in stature than heathens and Jews. Disciples in name, not in deed: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Christians of letter, not of the spirit. Oh, reverence Christ, if Moses and Elias did him homage. When we have found truth, let us look after life; and having owned the true religion, express the power of it.

II. The next thing we learn is the necessity and value of Christ's death. For Moses and Elias insist upon 'his decease at Jerusalem; which quite contradicteth the Jewish deceit, and establisheth the Christian hope. The death of Christ for our redemption is the great article of the Christian faith, the thing foretold and prefigured by law and prophets, Luke xxiv. 44; and the ground of our comfort and peace: Isa. liii. 4, 5, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'

Let us consider:—

1. The notions by which Christ's death is set forth.

2. The necessity of it.

First, The notions by which Christ's death is set forth. Two solemn ones: a ransom, and a mediatorial sacrifice.

1. A ransom, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, Mat. xx. 28; *ἀντίλυτρον*, 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' A ransom is a price given to a judge, or one that hath power of life and death, for to save the life of one capitally guilty, or by law bound to suffer death, or some other evil and punishment. This was our case: God was the supreme judge, before whose tribunal man standeth guilty, and liable to death; but Christ interposed that we might be spared, Job xxxiii. 24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' There is a price or recompense given in our stead.

2. A mediatorial sacrifice: Isa. liii. 3, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;' Eph. v. 2, Christ 'hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' He hath undertook the expiation of our sins, and

the propitiating of God. God's provoked justice would not acquit the controversy it had against us till it were appeased by a proper sacrifice : 1 John ii. 2, 'He is the propitiation for our sins.'

Secondly, The necessity of it.

1. The sins and guilty fears of mankind needeth such a remedy. We are naturally sensible that the punishment of death is deserved and due to us by the law of God : Rom. i. 32, 'They which commit such things are worthy of death.' Now these fears are not easily appeased : Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?' Christ came and died to free us from them, that we might serve God cheerfully : Heb. ii. 14, 15, 'Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil ;' Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God ?'

2. The glory of God requires it :—

[1.] To declare his justice : Rom. iii. 25, 26, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God : to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' If God will pardon sin, there must be a fit means to keep up the honour of his justice, and the authority of his law ; for sin is not a wrong done to a private party offended, but a disobedience to authority, and disturbeth the order of government.

[2.] To declare his holiness, that he is a pure and holy God, hating sin. This was demonstrated in the sufferings of Christ, and the dear rate at which it was expiated ; for if this was done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?

*Use 1.* Oh, then, be affected with this great mystery, the death which the Son of God accomplished at Jerusalem ; look upon it under a double notion. With respect to his Father's command, it was an act of obedience, carried on with such humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of himself to God, charity, pity, as the like cannot be done by man or angel : Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one many were made righteous ;' Phil. ii. 8, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' This commendeth obedience to us. It was an act of love : Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me ;' Rev. i. 5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' He thought no price too dear for our salvation. Let us love him, again, who loved us first : 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us ;' and be contented to suffer with him and for him, that we may enter into his glory : Rom. viii. 17, 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,' if he call us thereunto.

2. Feel the virtue of it in heart and conscience. In heart: by our dying to sin, then we are planted into the likeness of his death, Rom. vi. 5. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof,' Gal. v. 24; 'Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.' Then glory in it: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' In conscience: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself,' &c.; Heb. xii. 24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel'—doth it appease our guilty fears, and purge our consciences from the stain and guilt of sin.

### III. The state of future glory and felicity.

1. The dead in the Lord are not perished, but live for ever with God in heaven: for here they appear long after their departure hence: Luke xx. 38, 'He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.' They all live to God. Though they are gone out of the sphere of our commerce, they have another life with God. Now fix this in your hearts, for many carry it so as if there were no immortality or life to come: we do not vanish into the air when we die. Moses is somewhere, and Elias somewhere, in the hand of God, and can appear when God will have them.

2. The saints appeared in a true, and in their own bodies, to establish the faith of the resurrection; their bodies were reserved for this use. One of them was already in glory in soul and body, the other now raised out of the dust after many years' burial. And why cannot God gather up our dust again and enliven it, that we may accompany Christ at his coming?

3. This instance sheweth also the degrees of glory. All the saints have their portion in bliss, but not a just equality. Moses and Elias appeared in glory, not Enoch; nor were any of the rest admitted to this solemnity. Here were three choice disciples, when the rest stood at a remote distance; so two glorified saints, but the rest not admitted to this honour, but stood waiting for his glorious ascension. There is difference on earth in the worldly state—some have greater riches, honours, and dignity than others; difference in the church, both in gifts and graces; yea, a difference in hell—some have a hotter, others a cooler punishment. So in heaven, according to eminency in holiness and faithfulness with God; otherwise there would not be a suitableness in God's dispensations.

4. The perfect subjection of the glorified spirits to the will of God, either to remain in the vision of God, or to be employed in the service of their Redeemer. We should think that a self-denial which they count an happiness, to come from heaven to Mount Tabor; they take up or lay down a body as God pleaseth. Heaven is a state not only of perfect happiness, but of exact conformity to God.

5. We shall have the company of the blessed saints in heaven. The disciples here did not only enjoy the company and sight of Christ, but the company and sight of Moses and Elias, being glorified saints. So in the heavenly life: Mat. viii. 11, it is made a part of our blessed-



ness in the kingdom of God to 'sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;' and Heb. xii. 23, 'Ye are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Here we are joined to them by faith and hope; there by sight and fellowship. The company of wicked men is now grievous and tedious to us, Ezek. ii. 6; but we shall have better company hereafter. Here we often part with our choicest friends and acquaintance, but there we shall meet and never part more. It is not to be imagined but that we shall have the comfort of our glorified fellow-creatures. The body hath its objects and felicity fit for a body.

6. The saints shall know one another, as the disciples knew Moses and Elias, though not by countenance, having never seen them before, but by revelation. Christ told them who they were, and we who have known before our old acquaintance shall know them again. Memory is not abolished, but perfected; we shall make one body, one society. Now we shall not converse as strangers; Abraham knew Lazarus, Luke xvi. 25. Ministers, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' Christ's argument, Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Angels know not only themselves, but all the elect now; how else do they minister about them? They know the least believer: Mat. xviii. 10, 'Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' And they are at length to gather them from the four winds: Mat. xiii. 41, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend.'

7. The conference of the blessed saints. We shall be with them, speak to them, hear them speak to us, though not after an earthly manner. We have now bodies, and so tongues and lips, which are the instruments of speech; ears, which are the instruments of hearing. Now these would seem vain and to no purpose if there were no use of speech and hearing. It was a blessed thing for Peter, James, and John to stand by and hear the conference between Christ, Moses, and Elias: 1 Kings x. 8, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.' Much more may it be said here.

*Use.* Well, then, Christian religion is true, Christ's death necessary, eternal life certain. Oh let our time, and hearts, and care be taken up about these great and glorious things; meditate on them, seek after them. First begin with the sureness of Christian doctrine, that you may lay a good foundation; that Christ is the teacher of the church, who hath 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,' 2 Tim. i. 10; then penitently sue out your pardon, in the name of Christ, depending on the merit of his death; and make this eternal life and happiness your choice, and the scope of your life and conversation: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

## SERMON IV.

*Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.—MAT. XVII. 4 ; with,*

*But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias ; not knowing what he said.—LUKE IX. 32, 33.*

WE are upon the adjuncts of Christ's transfiguration.

The first was the appearance of Moses and Elias talking with him.

The second is the entertainment which the apostles gave to this glorious dispensation, or their behaviour under it. Three things are observable :—

1. Their posture for some while : *and Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.*

2. Peter's motion when they were awake : *let us build here three tabernacles.*

3. The censure of it : *not knowing what he said.*

First, Their posture after the transfiguration was begun : 'And Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.' This sleep might arise either from a common natural cause, or from a special cause peculiar to this dispensation.

1. A common natural cause, being tired with labour in ascending the mountain, for it was *ὑψηλὸς λιαν*, 'exceeding high.' Or it was with watching, for they tarried there all night, and Christ continued long in prayer, and possibly being a little withdrawn from them, as in his agonies, he was transfigured before them.

2. The special cause of this sleep was the extraordinary apparition, as the prophets often were in a deep sleep and trance when they saw the like : Dan. viii. 18, 'As the angel Gabriel was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face towards the ground.' Again, Dan. x. 9, 'When I heard his voice, then was I in a deep sleep.' So the prophet Zechariah, in the midst of his visions : Zech. iv. 1, 'The angel of the Lord wakened me as one in a deep sleep.' Any eminent passion causeth sleep, and they were astonished so with these visions and representations, that nature fainted under them, and they fell into a sleep ; so the apostles seeing Christ, in the midst of fervent prayers, transfigured before them.

Now, whether it came from the one cause or from the other, we must conclude this sleep was a weakness on their parts, but directed and overruled by God for just and wise reasons.

1. It was a weakness and infirmity on their part, for questionless they were to attend with all vigilancy to this manifestation of our Saviour's glory, and observe the passages of it. Why else did he take them into the mountain apart, but as witnesses of it, as they were to

watch in his agonies? So in his transfiguration. It was a fault then : Mat. xxvi. 40, 'When he cometh he findeth them asleep. What! could you not watch with me one hour?' But the best men are clogged with human infirmities, in the most glorious manifestations of God to them.

2. The providence of God is to be observed in this sleep. That which came to pass through their fault was ordered by God's providence ; for if they had been awake, they had heard all the discourse that passed between Christ and the two great prophets, which neither their present condition nor the state of the time did permit. Christ had told them that he should suffer an ignominious death, which they did not thoroughly understand ; nor could they reconcile it with the present thoughts which they had of the Messiah ; nor was it fit for them to hear all, how the death of Christ was foretold in the prophecies, prefigured in the sacrifices, shadowed out in all the rest of the types of the law, and sung of in the book of Psalms, to satisfy the justice of God, and open a way for his mercy and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ would not have the great work of his dying hindered, and these things they were not to learn from Moses and Elias, but he would teach them himself after the resurrection : Luke xxiv. 44-46, 'These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their eyes that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.' And the full knowledge of them was reserved till the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. If they had heard them now, they would have begotten scruples and troublesome thoughts in their minds, and hindered the present service.

Observe hence our weakness during the time we are environed with mortality, that we cannot bear up long under spiritual duties ; either our hearts are soon overcharged with wonder and astonishment, or else we yield to natural infirmities. However, let it be a warning to us against sleepiness in the worship of God. It is true the best may be surprised with it, as here Christ's disciples. Yet it was a sin in them to be asleep when Christ was at prayers, and it is a sin God hath severely punished ; witness Eutychus : Acts xx. 9, 'And there sat in the window a young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep : and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.' Mark, though the sermon continued till midnight, and it was a youth that slept, yet he fell down as dead. It was a small sin—a sin of infirmity—a boy's sin ; yet God would leave this warning. I do not animadvert too severely upon this infirmity, only give you caution. Christ praying all night on Mount Tabor, this weakness prevailed on these choice apostles, and elsewhere during the time of Christ's agonies. Yet we are to strive against it, and be sure it may be said of us as of them : Mark xxvi. 41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Make conscience of avoiding this sin ; do not compose yourselves to sleep ; do not come to these duties spent with labours and worldly cares, nor

clogged with excess of meat or drink, nor having defrauded ourselves of necessary refreshing by sleep, by vain pleasures the night before.

Secondly, Their carriage when they were awake. When they awaked, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with them; they saw Christ transfigured before they fell asleep, but I think they saw not Moses and Elias before, but now saw them, that they might give testimony of it to the church, not by common fame and hearsay, but as eye-witnesses; and they knew Moses and Elias either by information from Christ, or some secret instinct and revelation of the Spirit, or as hearing some part of the discourse, they heard enough to show what they were, or what the general matter of their discourse was. But that which is most remarkable is Peter's motion and proposal, 'It came to pass, as they departed from him'—just as they were parting—'Peter said, Lord, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.' He mentioned no distinct tabernacle for himself and fellow-disciples, because they would be with Christ, attending on their master in his tent.

The motion in the general is rash, sudden, and unadvised; but being made by a good man, though under a passion, there is something good and something bad in it.

1. That which was good in it is, he yet retaineth his reverence.

[1.] That he submitteth his proposal to the judgment of his Lord and Master, wherein he expresseth his reverence of Christ—'Lord, if thou wilt.' He desireth a continuance of this dispensation, leaveth it to his consent, acknowledging herein his wisdom and authority.

[2.] It sheweth the valuableness and felicity of conversing with Christ and the glorified saints; for when but two of them appear in glory, talking with Christ, Peter said it is good to be here, to continue and abide in this place together with thyself, Moses, and Elias. What a blessed dignity is this! The glory of heaven is so ravishing and satisfactory to the soul, that the soul can rest in the least glimpse and degree of it! If a glimpse, what is the fulness? If the splendour of his humanity not yet glorified be so great, what is the glory of his Godhead? If a sight of these things at a distance, what is the participation when the glory shall be revealed in us, or we shall appear with him in glory? If Moses and Elias, what is the company of all the saints and angels? If it be thus at Mount Tabor, what will it be in heaven, when all the world is renewed and refined, and the church gathered together in one great assembly?

[3.] The nature of a state of glory, and how easily it maketh us to forget all things here below. Peter had a family, and household affairs to mind; for we read in the Gospel that his wife's mother was sick and cured by Christ: Mat. viii. 14. He had friends, and a brother called Andrew, who was one of the disciples of Christ, left below in the valley: John i. 40. Nay he forgot his own present condition of life, which could not long brook his remaining in that mountain, without the supply of food, and other necessities. Now all this sheweth that when we are translated to heaven, we shall be so ravished with that kind of life we shall have there, as that all sense and memory of things that we have left behind shall cease, as Peter being ravished with this

sight and spectacle, thinketh not of kindred, friends, or household, or any kind of worldly comfort, but saith only, it is good to be here ; so that it teacheth us that the delights of the other world make us forget all our concerns here below : all shall be forgotten and swallowed up in that heavenly delight we shall have there.

2. That which was evil in it.

[1.] That he mistook the nature of the present dispensation. This was to be a representation, not a fruition, to be transient and momentary ; for confirmation, not possession ; rather a *viaticum*, a bit by the way, than a feast. It was good and commendable to be affected with joy and delight in the presence and company of Christ, and Moses, and Elias, but it was not to be rested in as their full reward.

[2.] If this request had taken place, the work of our redemption had been hindered. What had become of Christ's death and passion, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem ? All our happiness dependeth on that, and if God should give way to our carnal desires, what mischief would ensue ! If Christ had hearkened to him, he would not have gone up to Jerusalem to suffer, nor would any man living have dared to lay hands upon him while he continued in this glory and majesty.

[3.] This request was injurious to Moses and Elias, that they should utterly forsake their heavenly mansions for an abode on earth, and therefore to desire their continuance there was to desire their loss. They were a little time to appear on earth with Christ, and then to return to their blessedness, or to the enjoyment of the sight of God in the third heavens.

[4.] It was injurious to Christ. To hope to learn something from Moses and Elias which Christ could not teach them, and to equal them with his Lord and Master, in building tabernacles for all three alike and without difference, was some lessening of his respect to Christ. If they were to learn anything from them, they were to consult the books, not the persons : Luke xvi. 29, ' They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.' And the desires of extraordinary means argueth a contempt of ordinary.

[5.] It was an error to imagine that tabernacles were necessary for Moses and Elias, who now appeared in such heavenly glory in the mount. They needed not earthly houses and tents to dwell in, to defend them from the injuries of the weather, neither had they such present conveniencies to prepare them.

Thirdly, The censure of the Holy Ghost : Luke saith, ' not knowing what he said.' In Mark, chap ix. 6, ' He wist not what to say ; for they were sore afraid.' They were words of a man in a rapture, or surprised with great astonishment. There were two affections, dazzled with the majesty of this glory, and transported with joy. There was also a great fright. Usually, τὰ λύπηρα φοβερά, such things as bring a hurt, occasion fear, and also things of excellent glory ; such as surpass our present meanness ; as here the change of Christ's person, and the glorious appearance of the great prophets, so long since separated from the commerce of mankind.

Observe, before we proceed, the inconvenience of great and excessive passions : they make us speak we know not what. Peter is an instance in scripture. Let us keep to him. You see him surprised with a

great passion of fear, when at Christ's command a great draught of fish came to hand in an unlikely time: Luke v. 8, 9, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes that they had taken.' You find him at other times transported with a passion of excessive reverence or humility: John xiii. 8, 'Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet.' With a passion of love, or pity to his Master: 'Lord, let it be far from thee; this shall not be unto thee,' when his Master had foretold his death: Mat. xvi. 22, in case of contempt of Christ. Here with a passion of joy or ravishment, or transport of soul, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' Now all these passions were religiously exercised; but it is dangerous when religion, which should bridle and govern our passions, is made the matter and fuel of them. Passionate joy, or passionate fear, passionate reverence, or passionate zeal, and anger, may easily transport us to some uncomely action or motion; for though in all these there was religion at top, yet sin at the bottom; and, therefore, you see how much it concerneth us to moderate and reduce ourselves to a due temper; for passion causeth us to do things without and against reason; yea, to speak and do we know not what; and when religious matters overheat our affections, we may err exceedingly.

Now, having opened this part of the history, let us observe something that conduceth to our practical instruction.

*Doct.* 1. That the state and condition of the glorified saints is a most delightful state and condition.

For when Peter had but a glimpse of it in the transfiguration of Christ, it seemed so ravishing and transporting, that here would he abide and stay by it; so was he affected with joy in the company and presence of Christ, and Moses and Elias appearing with him, that all his natural comforts and relations were forgotten. This would compensate all. If once we be gotten into this blessed estate, we shall never desire to come out of it, and part with it. This which the disciples had was but a little glimpse and taste of the life to come. This must needs be so; it is called joy: Mat. xxv. 21, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' and fulness of joy: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' No better estate can be expected. The soul is at rest, as having obtained its end. And it is also proved by the privileges and benefits the saints shall enjoy in the world to come.

1. A freedom from all evil, which here are matter of grief to us. And

2. The fruition of all good, which may any way bring joy, and delight, and contentment.

1. There is a freedom from all evil. There is a twofold evil, either of sin or punishment. In heaven there is neither sin nor misery.

[1.] To begin with sin, that is the worst evil, because it maketh us hateful to God, and grieveth the saints most: Rom. vii. 24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more, being often imprisoned, whipped, stoned; but his lusts troubled him more than scourges; and his captivity to the law of sin more than

prisons. God's children are most weary of the world, because they are sinning here whilst others are glorifying of God, and enjoying God and the company of his blessed ones. Now in heaven there is no sin: Eph. v. 27, there is neither spot nor blemish, nor wrinkle on the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as yours, but now they are washed in the Lamb's blood and fully cleansed; now with much ado we mortify sin, but then it is nullified. But if we subdue the power of sin, we do not get rid of the being of it, but then we are rid of all at once—of all sin, and temptation to sin. There was a serpent, a tempter in Paradise, but there is none in heaven; the devil is shut out, and the old man is left in the grave never to rise more.

[2.] There is not the least evil of affliction: Rev. xxi. 4, 'All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes.' Whatsoever is painful and burdensome to nature, is a fruit of sin, a brand and mark of our rebellion against God. Therefore, when sin is done away, affliction, which is the fruit of it, is done away also. In hell there is evil, and only evil; in heaven, happiness, and only happiness. Here our wounds are healed, but the scars remain—something to put us in mind that we have sin yet dwelling in us; but there all the effects of it cease—there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain.

2. They shall enjoy all good things, which shall bring joy and comfort to them. In blessedness there is a confluence of all good; our joys are full and eternal.

[1.] There is the immediate sight and presence of God and Jesus Christ, who shall be all in all to them: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know as also I am known.' And John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' We are brought into the presence of him who is blessedness itself.

[2.] The society of all the blessed angels and saints glorified: Mat. viii. 11, 'Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.'

[3.] The perfection of all heavenly gifts both in soul and body.

(1.) In soul: that is the heaven of heaven: 1 John iii. 2, 'Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy image and likeness.' By knowing we come to love, and by loving God we know him. There is vision, assimilation, satisfaction. The object is efficacious, the intimation vigorous and clear, the subject prepared for the impression.

(2.) In body: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' The body shall be endued with all glorious qualities, as brightness, strength, agility. It is a body wholly impassible and incorruptible, fit for the operations of a glorified soul, and with it shall for ever remain, a glorious temple of the Holy Ghost; therefore it is good to be here.

Use 1. Let this draw forth our love to such a blessed estate, which is

so full of delight and contentment, and wean us from these things which are most pleasing in the world.

1. The best estate in the world is but vanity, altogether vanity, Ps. xxxix. 5, mingled with some grievances. Wealth hath its incident cares, and honour its tortures, and all pleasures here are but bitter sweets; there is a worm that feedeth on our gourd, and will in time wither it. At last death cometh, and then the lust of the world is gone: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.' The godly themselves have but a mixed estate, because of remaining infirmities, they live here in a vale of tears and snares, and sin doth not gasp its last till death removeth us from this sinful flesh, and puts us into the sight of God himself. Wherefore the saints are groaning and longing for the parting day, when putting off the flesh we shall put off sin, and come and dwell with God for ever.

2. None are translated into heaven but such whose hearts are there first: 2 Cor. v. 2, 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ;' Rom. viii. 23, 'We that have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' A Christian waiteth and longeth for a purer state of bliss and immortality. The first-fruits show what the harvest will be, and a taste what the feast will prove; though they are thankful for this refreshing by the way, yet they are longing to be at home—cannot be contented without it.

3. The excellency of this estate requireth it: if it be not worth your desires and best affections, it is little worth. Christ procured it for us by a life of labours and sorrows, and the pangs of a bitter, cursed death; and when all this is done shall not we desire it and look after it?—that is foul ingratitude. Oh then let your hearts be upon it; desire must go before delight.

*Use 2.* To move us to labour for it, and seek it in the first place, and to get it assured that we have a part in this blessed and joyful condition: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof;' Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate;' so 2 Pet. i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' What profit is it to know that there is such a blessed and joyful estate, if we have no interest in it? Heaven is worth our pains, and will bear all the cost we can lay out upon it. So the children of God thought: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' If we do not desire it, we do not believe it; if we do not labour for it, we do not desire it.

*Use 3.* Let us comfort ourselves with the hopes of this blessed and joyful condition.

1. Against all the miseries and afflictions of this present life. These are necessary; we would sleep too quietly in the world if we did not sometimes meet with thorns in our beds; we should be so pleased with our entertainment in the way as we should forget home. But God awakeneth us out of our drowsy fits by sharp afflictions, as if he said, 'Arise, depart hence, this is not your rest,' Micah ii. 10. While we wallow in sensual comforts our hearts say, it is good being here.



2. When there is a joyful and blessed condition beyond them, it is some comfort in this shipwreck of man's felicity that we can see banks and shores, a landing-place where we may be safe and enjoy our repose. 'To you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,' 2 Thes. i. 7. Here our days are sorrow and our travail grief, but there is our repose.

3. That our joy and contentment is so infinitely above our sorrow and trouble, 2 Cor. iv. 7, so that in all the troubles and sorrows of this life, we may look beyond them and through them to the joy and comfort of the life to come. This joy is set before us in the promises of the gospel: Heb. xii. 2, Christ, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,' &c., and Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us,' we see it by faith, though not by sense.

*Doct. 2.* That one of the diseases of mankind is that we catch at felicity, without considering the way that leadeth to it.

Peter seeing and apprehending this estate to be an estate of happiness and glory, doth not consider what he must first do and first suffer before he could come to converse with Christ and the glorified saints. Our Saviour had lately told him that he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow him; but Peter overlooketh all this, and saith, 'It is good to be here.' He would be glorified before he was abased and had suffered all the afflictions foretold, and would have his wages before he had done his work. Every one would enjoy Christ's glory and happiness, but we do not like his yoke—are loth to submit to his cross. If we would enjoy happiness with Christ and the glorified saints, we must be humbled with them and suffer with them first. But we would triumph before we had fought any battle, and receive the crown before we have run our race, and reap in joy before we have sowed in tears, or performed that necessary work that God requires at our hands.

Now the reasons of it are these:—

1. Because by nature we love our own ease and contentment: Gen. xlix. 15, 'He saw that rest was good.' We are loth to undergo the cross, and desirous to enjoy happiness and glory before and without afflictions; but this is an untimely and preposterous desire, proceeding from self-love. God hath appointed another order, that the cross should go before the crown: Rom. viii. 17, 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together.'

2. From the libertinism and yokelessness of our natures, and that spirit of unsubmission which is so natural to us: Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' Duties are more displeasing to the flesh than happiness, and we like pardon and life more than we like strictness, purity, and that watching and striving, and waiting, and exercising ourselves unto godliness which the scripture calleth for.

*Use.* To press us to get this disease cured, and our hearts reconciled to our duty as well as to our happiness. These considerations may be a help to you.

1. God is a governor as well as a benefactor, and must be respected in both relations ; and therefore we must not only desire and wait for his benefits, but submit to his government. His government is seen in his laws and providence. In his laws he appoints our duty, in his providence he appoints our trials ; to refuse either is to question his sovereignty : Ps. xii. 4, ' Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail : our lips are our own : who is lord over us ? ' Exod. v. 2, ' And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go ; ' so also not to submit to his trials. Therefore now, if we love God as a benefactor, we must be subject to him as our true and proper sovereign, who will bring us to heaven in what way he pleaseth.

2. The terms and means appointed conduce to mortify our love to the false happiness, for one great part of religion is to draw off our hearts from the vain pleasures and honours of the world, the other part is to carry us on in the pursuit of the true happiness—a recess from the world and an access to God, mortification and vivification. We shall sit down with present things if we abandon ourselves to our sensual inclinations, Luke xvi. 25, so that our desires of the true happiness will be feeble and easily controlled if we submit not to the means.

3. The care and due observance of the means sheweth the value and respect to the true happiness. If we do not labour for it and suffer for it, we do not value it according to its worth. There is a simple, naked estimation, and a practical esteem. Naked approbation, Rom. ii. 18, ' And knowest his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law.' The practical esteem is a self-denying obedience, Rom. ii. 7, ' To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory,' &c. Then they respect means and end together, and submit to the one to obtain the other. If the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness, nor as eternal, for they that love themselves would be happy, and everlastingly happy ; but it is in conjunction with the means, as the Israelites despised the pleasant land, and murmured in their tents : Ps. cvi. 24, ' Yea, they despised the pleasant land ; and they believed not his word ; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord.' The land was a good, fertile land, but afar off, and because of giants and walled towns, and so not thought worthy the pains and difficulties to be undergone. Heaven is a good place, but out of indulgence to the ease of the flesh we dislike difficulties and strictness of holy walking.

4. The difficulty of salvation lies not in a respect to the end but the means, and therefore the trial of our sincerity must rather be looked for there. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity ; but that may be done in part by reason, but savingly and thoroughly by the Spirit of revelation : Eph. i. 18, ' The eyes of your understandings being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' But man is sooner convinced than converted, than drawn off from worldly vanities, that he may seek after this happiness ; and usually we have a quicker ear for offers of

happiness than precepts of duty and obedience. Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Oh that I could die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end were like his!' John vi. 34, 'Evermore give us this bread' of life; but a true Christian, 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. iii. 11.

5. The necessity of this self-denying resignation of ourselves to God, to bring us to heaven in his own way, is necessary. That we may begin with God: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' And also that we may be true to him, and go on with him, and be fortified against all the difficulties we meet with in the way to heaven: Heb. xi. 35, 'Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.' 'But none of these things move us,' Acts xx. 24: Mat. xx. 22, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

6. There is such an inseparable connexion between the end and means, that God will not give us the one without the other. If we believe, mortify, wait, suffer, then shall we reign with him—otherwise not.

*Doct. 3.* Much evil would ensue if we had our desires in all those things that we think good for us.

Peter said, 'It is good for us to be here;' but, alas! how ill would it have been for the world if Christ had abode still in the mount. Peter's instance sheweth us two things:—

1. That we are apt to consult with our own profit rather than public good. The world needed him, he had great business to do in the valley; but he would be in the mount. It is our nature, if it be well with ourselves, to forget others. Peter little minded his fellow-apostles, the redemption of the world, the conversion of nations, &c.

2. How much we are out when we judge by present sense and the judgment of flesh. We consult with the ease of the flesh, and so desire rest more than pains and labour; what pleaseth rather than what profiteth. Peter saith, 'It is good to be here,' but he must labour first, suffer first, before he entereth into glory.

Well, then, let us learn by what measure to determine good or evil.

1. Good is not to be determined by our fancies and conceits, but by the wisdom of God; for he knoweth what is better for us than we do for ourselves, and the divine choices are to be preferred before our foolish fancies; and what he sendeth and permitteth to fall out is better for us than anything else. Could we be persuaded of this, how would we be prepared for a cheerful entertainment of all that is, or can, or shall come, upon us. God is wiser than we, and loves us better than we do ourselves. The child is not to be governed by his own fancy, but his father's discretion, nor the sick man by his own appetite, but the skill of the physician. It is expedient God should displease his people, for their advantage: John xvi. 6, 7, 'Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away.'

We are too much addicted to our own conceits : Christ's dealing is expedient and useful, when yet it is very unsatisfactory to us. He is to be judge of what is good for us, his going or tarrying, and not we ourselves. We are short-sighted creatures, distempered with passions ; our requests many times are but ravings, we ask of God we know not what, as the two brethren, Mat. xx. 22, we pray ourselves into a mischief and a snare, and it were the greatest misery if God would carve out our condition according to our own fancies and desires.

2. That good is to be determined with respect to the chief good and true happiness. Now what is our chief happiness, but the enjoyment of God ? Our happiness doth not consist in outward comforts, riches, health, honour, civil liberty ; or comfortable relations, as husband, wife, children ; but our relation to and acceptance with God. Other things are but additional appendages to our happiness : Mat. vi. 33, *προστεθήσεται*, ' they shall be added to you.' Therefore poverty is good, afflictions are good ; they take nothing from our essential, solid happiness, rather help us in the enjoyment of it, as it increaseth grace and holiness, and so we enjoy God more. Surely that is good that sets us nearer to God, and that evil that separateth us from him. Therefore sin is evil because it makes an estrangement between us and God : Isa. lix. 2, ' Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' But affliction is good, because many times it makes us the more earnestly to seek after him : Hosea v. 16, ' In their affliction they will seek me early.' Therefore every condition is good or evil, as it sets us farther off or draweth us nearer to God ; that is good that tendeth to make us better, more like unto God, capable of communion with him, and conduceth to our everlasting happiness. So it is good that man ' bear the yoke from his youth,' that he be trained up under the cross, in a constant obedience to God, and subjection to him, and so be fitted to entertain communion with him. If afflictions conduce to this end they are good, for then they help us to enjoy the chief good.

3. That good is not always the good of the flesh, or the good of outward prosperity ; and, therefore, certainly the good of our condition is not to be determined by the interest of the flesh, but the welfare of our souls. If God should bestow upon us so much of the good of the outward and animal life as we desire, we could not be said to be in a good condition : if he should deny us good spiritual, we should lose the one half of the blessings of the covenant by doting upon and falling in love with the rest. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, but God will not serve our carnal appetites. We are more concerned as a soul than as a body : Heb. xii. 10, ' He verily chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Certain it is God will chasten us for our profit. What do we call profit ? the good things of this world, the great mammon which so many worship ? If we call it so, God will not ; he meaneth to impart some spiritual and divine benefit, which is a participation of his own holiness. And truly the people of God, if they be in their right temper, value themselves, not by their outward enjoyments, but by their inward improvement of graces : 2 Cor. iv. 16, ' For this cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' A discern-

ing Christian puts more value upon holiness wrought by affliction than upon all his comforts; so that though affliction be evil in itself, it is good as sanctified.

4. A particular good must give way to a general good, and our personal benefit to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the glory of God. The advancement of Christ's kingdom, or the good of the church, must be preferred before our personal benefit or contentment. Paul could want the glory of heaven for a while, if his continuance in the flesh were needful for the saints: Phil. i. 24, 'To abide in the flesh is more needful for you.' We must not so desire good to ourselves as to hinder the good of others. All elements will act contrary to their particular nature, for the conservation of the universe, so for the glory of God. That may be good for the glory of God which is not good for our personal contentment and ease. Now the glory of God is our greatest interest; if it be for the glory of God that I should be in pain, bereft of my comfort, my sanctified subjection to the will of God must say it is good: John xii. 27, 28. Here you must have the innocent inclination of Christ's human nature, 'Father, save me from this hour;' and the overruling sense of his duty, or the obligation of his office, 'but for this cause came I to this hour.' We are often tossed between inclination of nature and conscience of duty; but in a gracious heart the sense of our duty and the desire of glorifying God should prevail above the desire of our own comforts, ease, safety, and welfare. Nature would be rid of trouble, but grace submits all our interests to God's honour, which should be dearer to us than anything else.

5. This good is not to be determined by the judgment of sense, but by the judgment of faith; not by present feeling, but future profit. That which is not good may be a means to good. Affliction for the present is not pleasant to natural sense; nor for the present is the fruit evident to spiritual sense; but it is good, because in the issue it turneth to good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' &c. While God is striking, we feel the grief and the cross is tedious; but when we see the end, we acknowledge it is good to be afflicted: Heb. xii. 11, 'No affliction for the present seems joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised therein.' A good, present, is the cause of joy; and an evil, present, is the cause of sorrow. But there are two *termini diminuentes*, terms of abatement, *πρὸς τὸ παρὸν*, and *δοκεῖ*, present sense, and the conceits of the sufferer. When we are but newly under the affliction, we feel the smart, but do not presently find the benefit; but within a while, especially in the review, it is good for me. It is matter of faith under the affliction, it is matter of sense afterwards. God's physic must have time to work. That which is not good may be good; though it be not good in its nature, it may be good in its use; and though for the present we see it not, we shall see it. Therefore good is not to be determined by feeling, but by faith. The rod is a sore thing for the present, but the bitter root will yield sweet fruit. If we come to a person under the cross, and ask him, What! is it good to feel the lashes of God's correcting hand? to be kept poor, sickly, exercised with losses and reproaches, to part with friends and relations, to lose a

beloved child ? he would be apt to answer, No. But this poor creature, after he hath been exercised, and mortified, and gotten some renewed evidences of God's favour ; ask him, then, Is it good to be afflicted ? Oh yes, I had been vain, neglectful of God, wanted such an experience of the Lord's grace. Faith should determine the case when we feel it not.

Well, then, let us learn to distinguish between what is really best for us and what we judge to be best. Other diet is more wholesome for our souls than that which our sickly appetite craveth. It is best many times when we are weakest, worst when strongest : all things are good as they help on a blessed eternity : so sharp afflictions are good. That part of the world that is governed by sense will never yield to this. You cannot convince a covetous man that the loss of an estate is good ; or a worldly, rich man that poverty is good ; or an ambitious man that it is good to be despised and contemned ; or a sensual, voluptuous man that it is good to be in pains, that the body be afflicted for the good of the soul : they will never believe you. But those that measure all things by eternity, they know that poverty makes way for the true riches, and ignominy for the true glory, want for fulness of pleasures, and misery mortifies sin.

## SERMON V.

*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.*—MAT. XVII. 5.

IN this branch of the story two things are remarkable, and there is a *behold* prefixed before either of them to excite our attention. First, they see a bright cloud, and then they hear a voice out of the cloud.

First, Of the cloud : *and while he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them.* It was not a dark cloud, as upon Mount Sinai, when God gave the law, but a bright one, yet not so bright and lightsome but that it was mixed with some obscurity. It was no natural and ordinary cloud, such as are commonly engendered in the air above us, but extraordinary and supernatural, created by God for this occasion. The use of it was double.

1. To convey Moses and Elias out of their sight when this conference was ended. Therefore some expound that which is said, Luke ix. 34, ' They feared as they entered into the cloud,' after this manner, the disciples feared when they saw Moses and Elias entering into the cloud—that is, involved and covered in it. It is said of Jesus Christ himself, when he ascended into heaven, Acts i. 9, ' A cloud received him out of their sight.'

2. To be a token of the extraordinary presence of God, whose voice immediately came out of the cloud, as also to veil the glory thereof, which was best done by a cloud, a thing of a middle nature between terrestrial and celestial bodies. When Solomon builded the temple the Lord showed his special presence there by filling the house with

a cloud, 1 Kings viii. 10. This way of apparition God useth to moderate the splendour of his excellent glory. We are not able to behold God as he is, and must not pry into his glory; there is a cloud and veil upon it.

Secondly, They heard a voice: *and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

1. Observe, That there was a voice distinctly and audibly heard. Though God did sensibly now manifest his presence in the mount with Christ, and did audibly speak to them, yet he did not appear in any distinct form and shape, either of man or any other living creature, but all was done by a voice out of the cloud; so Deut. iv. 12, 'Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude,' and ver. 15, 'Take good heed to yourselves, for ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make to you any graven image.' The similitude of any figure, &c. The voice of God may with less danger come to us than any sight or representation of him.

2. The matter, or what this voice said: *This is my beloved Son; hear ye him.* By this voice there is:—

[1.] A testimony given to Christ.

[2.] A command to hear him; or,

(1.) The dignity of Christ. He is the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased.

(2.) A suitable respect bespoken for him.

The words are few, but yet contain the sum of the whole gospel, and they are spoken, not by a man, nor by an angel, but by the Lord himself, and therefore they should be entertained with the more reverence. The apostle Peter, who was one of the parties present, could never forget this testimony of the Father concerning his Son Jesus Christ: 2 Pet. i. 17, 'He received from the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and besides, what Christ speaketh of another voice from heaven is true of this: John xii. 30, 'This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,' not so much to encourage him in his suffering as to our edification and instruction. All the testimonies given unto Christ from heaven tended to point him out to sinners as the true Messiah, approved and accepted of God; therefore these words should ever be in our minds, especially when we draw nigh to God in solemn duties.

I shall begin with the dignity, honour, and glory of Christ, solemnly declared from heaven. There are three things in it:—

1. The relation between him and the Father: he is a *Son*.

2. The dearness of that relation: his *beloved Son*.

3. The complacential satisfaction which he taketh in him, and the price of our redemption paid by him: *in whom I am well pleased*.

*Doct.* That it is the main and principal point of the gospel, and of great necessity to be known and believed to salvation, that Jesus Christ is the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased.

1. I shall open this testimony given to Christ.

2. Speak of the importance and weight of it.

## I. Of the testimony given to Christ.

1. Let me open the term that expresseth his filiation, that he is God's Son. Christ is the Son of God properly so called, a Son only-begotten : John iii. 16, ' God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son ;' eternally begotten, Prov. viii. 22, 23, ' I was set up from everlasting, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.' A Son co-equal with his Father, John v. 18. The Jews sought to kill him because he said God was his Father, making himself equal with God, *πατέρα ἰδίου ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν*, his own proper Father. So co-essential, of the same substance with his Father, John i. 1, ' In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Now thus is he the Son of God.

Why is it mentioned there ?—

[1.] To show the special dignity of Christ above all others. He is the Son of God : Christians are the sons of God, but in a different manner—he by nature, we by adoption. Though God have many sons by creation and adoption, yet Christ is his Son in a peculiar and proper way, by eternal generation, and communication of the same essence, *ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαπητὸς*, that Son, that beloved Son; so a Son as none else is; the Son of God, properly so called.

[2.] To distinguish him from Moses and the prophets. From Moses, Heb. iii. 5, 6, ' Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house we are,' &c. ; so from the rest of the prophets : Heb. i. 1, 2, ' God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, but hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world.' This is the great doctor of the church ; now as to meekness above Moses, as to zeal above Elias, as to familiarity and communion he was with God and was God.

[3.] To show the old prophecies were fulfilled, which foretold the union of the two natures in his person, the predictions concerning one whose name should be Immanuel, God with us, and who should save and redeem the church, Isa. vii. 14 ; and of a child that should be ' the mighty God, the everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6. This the prophets foretold, that he should be God, and the Son of God : Micah v. 2, ' His going forth is from everlasting,' though born at Bethlehem ; so the bud of the Lord and the fruit of the earth, Isa. iv. 2. The man God's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7 ; and in many other places the union of the two natures is asserted.

## 2. He is the beloved Son.

[1.] That God loved Christ. Christ is the object of his Father's love, both as the second person and as mediator. As the second person of the Trinity—two things are wont to attract love, nearness and likeness, they are both here. Nearness, he was in the bosom of the Father : John i. 18, ' The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Likeness is another load-stone of affliction :<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3, He is ' the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' Such as the Father is so is Christ.

\* Qu., ' affection ' ?—ED.



[2.] As mediator, so God loveth him on the account of his obedience: John x. 17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep;' John iii. 35, the Father hath loved him and put all things into his hand. The Father approved Christ's undertaking for sinners, delighted in it as an excellent way of glorifying his name, and recovering poor creatures out of their lost condition; and rested satisfied, and was pleased with his death, as a sufficient ransom for poor souls. Well, then, God loved him so as to trust the souls of all mankind in his hands, and to appoint him to be the great mediator, to end all differences between him and us; and the more he doth in pursuance of his office, the more beloved he is and acceptable to God.

[3.] The testimony of his love to him as mediator; for his unspeakable rejoicing in him, as second person in the Trinity, we are not competent judges of. It is described: Prov. viii. 30, 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.' The mutual complacency which the divine persons take in one another is there set forth; God delighted in Christ, and Christ in God. But in the second love as mediator, God expressed his love to him in two things: the gift of the Spirit, and the glory of his human nature.

(1.) The gift of the Spirit: John iii. 34, 'God giveth not the Spirit in measure to him, for the Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands.' This was the great expression of his love to Christ as mediator, not to make him a visible monarch of the world, but by the gift of his Spirit to be head of the church.

(2.) The other expression of his love to him as mediator was the gift of everlasting glory: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me should be where I am, and behold my glory, for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.' God's love to Christ, as mediator, was manifested in exalting him to glory, and this everlasting. These are the great expresses of God's love to Christ, as God incarnate, or appearing in our nature.

Why is it put here?—

[1.] To show the end for which Christ came; to represent the amiableness of God—that he is love, 1 John iv. 8, and hath love for his children. Christ is the pattern of all, for he is first beloved, and the great instance and demonstration of God's love to the world.

[2.] To intimate the redundancy of this love; it overfloweth to us, for Christ being beloved, we are beloved also: Eph. i. 6, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved,' to the praise of his glorious grace. It is an overflowing love; he is loved, and all that have an interest in him are loved. There is a twofold love in God—the love of benevolence and complacency. The elect from all eternity are loved by God with a love of benevolence, whereby he willed good unto them, and decrees to bestow good upon them; but the love of complacency and delight is that love whereby God accepteth us, delighteth in us, when he hath made us lovely as his own children, reconciled them by the death of Christ, renewed them by the Spirit of Christ, and furnished them with all the graces which make us acceptable to him, and precious in his sight.

[3.] To show the kind and manner of the expressing of his love to

his redeemed ones. Christ prayed : John xvii. 23, 'That the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' And ver. 26 : 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,' that is, by the gift of the Spirit and everlasting glory. Though Christ was the beloved Son, yet his state was but mean and despicable in the world ; 'he was afflicted,' 'a man of sorrows,' pursued to the death, even a shameful, painful, accursed death ; yet all this while he was full of the Holy Ghost, of his graces, comforts, and afterwards received to glory ; and so will he love us. At this rate and tenor, his love bindeth him not to give us worldly greatness, but if we have the Spirit, and may be welcomed to heaven at the last, we have that which is the true discovery of God's love. So he manifested his love to the only-begotten Son, and therefore the adopted children should be contented with this love, if by the Spirit they may be enabled to continue with patience in well-doing, till they receive eternal glory and happiness.

3. The next thing is *ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα*, 'in whom I am well pleased.' This is to be interpreted of Christ as mediator, or God incarnate ; for this was twice spoken—at Christ's baptism, Mat. iii. 17, and now at his transfiguration. Both imply his mediatorship ; for his baptism had the notion of a dedication ; he did then present himself to God as a mediator for us, to be the servant of his decree, as we in baptism dedicate ourselves to fulfil the precepts which belong to us, and as we are concerned to promote his glory in the world. Christ presented himself as a mediator, that is, as a prophet to acquaint us with the way of salvation, as a priest to pay a perfect ransom for us, as a king to give us all things, and defend and maintain all those who submit to his government till their glory be perfected, and they attain unto their final estate of bliss and happiness. Now, then, God from heaven declared himself well pleased ; and now, again, when Christ had made some progress in the work, confirmeth it for the assurance of the world.

This, then, must be interpreted :—

[1.] As to Christ.

[2.] As to those who have benefit by him and interest in him.

[1.] As to Christ. He was well pleased ; partly, as to the design—the reparation of lost mankind ; partly, as to the terms by which it should be brought about ; partly, as to the execution and management of it by Christ.

(1.) As to the design. God was well pleased that lapsed mankind should be restored. At the first, God was pleased with his creation, Exod. xxxi. 17. 'On the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed ;' that is, recreated in the view of his works, as the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness. And Ps. civ. 31, 'The Lord shall rejoice in his works.' The Lord saw all to be good in the beginning and working, not to be repented of. This was God's rest and Sabbath, to take delight in his works. When he looked on it altogether, behold it was exceeding good ; but afterwards man, the ungrateful part of the creation, though the masterpiece of it in this visible and lower world, fell from God his creator, and preferred the creature before him, to his loss and ruin ; then God was so far displeased that he had reason to

wish the destruction of mankind. It is said, Gen. vi. 6, that 'it repented God that he had made man;' that is, he was displeased with us, estranged from us, no more contented with us than a man is in what he repenteth of. For, properly, God cannot repent; but this is an expression to show how odious we were grown to him: Ps. xiv. 2, 3, 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and did seek after God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' Alas! there is a lamentable appearance of mankind to God's sight, now nothing good to be found in them; an universal defection, both in piety and humanity. But then Christ undertook the reparation of mankind, and the design was pleasing to God, that he might not lose the glory of his creation, and all flesh be utterly destroyed: Col. i. 19, 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.' The restoring of fallen man to friendship with God, and all things tending to it, were highly pleasing to God, namely, that Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity, should become a mediator; for that end he had a great affection and liking to this thing: *ἐνδόκησε*, it is the same word used here, the thing is highly pleasing to God, that the breach should be made up; that man, who had lost the image, favour, and fellowship with God, should be again restored, by renewing his heart, reconciling his person, and admitting him again into communion with God, who was so justly provoked by him. God stood in no need of our friendship, nor could any loss come to him by our hatred and enmity; only it pleased the Father to take this way: Isa. liii. 10, for 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.'

(2.) He is pleased with the terms. God, who is the supreme governor of the world, and the offended party, stood upon these terms, that the honour of his governing justice should be secured, and the repentance and reformation of man carried on. Strictly these must be done, or else man must lie under his eternal displeasure; if one be done and not the other, no reconciliation can ensue. Now that God is highly pleased with the satisfaction and compensation made to his governing justice: Heb. x. 6, 7, 'In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;' ver. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.' God rejected all other sacrifices, but was fully satisfied with this, as enough to expiate the sin of man. Christ delighted to give it, and God delighted to accept of it. He paid a perfect ransom for us, besides or above which he craved no more, but rested fully content in it. For the other, the renovation of man's nature, to put him into a capacity to serve and please God, for God would not admit us to privileges without change of heart and disposition: Acts v. 31, 'God exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' In short, God is so satisfied with these terms, that (1.) He seeketh no further amends for all their

wrongs : Rom. iii. 25, ' Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past ; ' (2.) No further price for what they need : 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, ' Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish.' The repentance of a sinner is pleasing to him, there is joy in heaven : Luke xv. 7, ' Joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that is converted.' A feast was made at the return of the prodigal : ' As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner.' Our conversion is more pleasing to God than our destruction.

(3.) He is pleased with the execution and management of it by Christ. He carried himself in the office of the mediator according to what was enjoined him : John viii. 29, ' I do always the things that please him.' John v. 30, ' I can of myself do nothing ; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just ; because I seek not my will, but the will of the Father which sent me.' And did finish all that was necessary for the redemption of the elect before he died : John xix. 30, ' When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.' Evidences of this are his resurrection from the dead : Acts v. 30, 31, ' The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' Heb. xiii. 20, ' The God of peace brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' As pacified in Christ, ' received into glory,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. Certainly God is well pleased, since he hath given not only a discharge, but a reward. The gift of the Spirit, for renewing the heart of man, which is the great pledge of God's being satisfied : John vii. 39, ' This he spake 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 ; ' a sure evidence that our ransom is paid : Acts v. 32, ' And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him.' A sacrifice of infinite value and esteem.

[2.] That he is well pleased with us who have an interest in him. In our natural estate we are all displeasing unto God. Whatever we are in the purpose of his decree, we must look upon ourselves as we are in the sentence of his law ; so ' Children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3 : ' Enemies by our minds in evil works,' Col. i. 21 : ' Estranged from the womb,' Ps. lvi. 3 ; so that all of us were cut off from the favour of God, obnoxious to his wrath ; this is our miserable condition by nature, that we were no way pleasing to him, ' for without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. A sinner as a sinner can do nothing acceptable ; indeed, God having found a ransom, is *placabilis*, but not *placatus*, not actually reconciled to us till we are in Christ ; and he is *placandus antequam placendus*, to be appeased before he can be pleased ; he is not actually reconciled till we are in Christ.

(2.) Awakened sinners are not easily satisfied, so as to look upon themselves as pleasing unto God ; for the conscience of sin is not easily laid aside, nor is the stain soon got out. And though the grant be

passed in heaven, yet we have not the sense of it in our own hearts ; for it is the blood of Christ can only do it : Heb. ix. 14, ' How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? ' The carnal offer thousands of rams, and rivers of oil, and ' the fruit of the body for the sin of their soul,' Micah vi. 6, 7. They would give anything for a sufficient sin-offering ; yea, the renewed and pardoned have not so firm a peace as to be able always to look upon themselves in a state of well-pleasing, therefore often beg that God would dissipate the clouds and cause the light of his countenance to break forth upon them : Ps. lxxx. 19, ' Turn us, O Lord God of hosts ; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.' So that when there is a grant of pardon, and peace, and access to God, we have not always the sense.

(3.) Yet the ground is laid. As soon as we have an interest in Christ, God is well pleased with us ; if you consent to his mediation, and take him in his three offices, as a prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, hear him ; the business is put out of all question, that God will love you because he loved Christ. When you depend on him as a priest, you have reconciliation and access to God : Rom. v. 1, 2, ' Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand.' When you subject yourselves to him as a king, Col. i. 13, ' He hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Christ is dear to God, and to him all the subjects of his kingdom are dear also. So that if you will be more explicit in your duty, you may be more explicit in your comforts ; if you will receive his doctrine, so as it may have authority over your hearts ; if in the anguish of your souls you will depend on the merit of his sacrifice, and give up yourselves to live in a constant obedience to his laws ; you will find him to be a dear Son indeed, one very acceptable with God, for you also will be accepted with him, for his sake.

II. Concerning the weight and importance of this truth.

1. It is propounded as the foundation upon which God will build his church : Mat. xvi. 16-18, ' And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church : and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

2. It is the question put to those that would enter upon Christianity : Acts viii. 37, ' If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest : and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.' When they were serious in the profession, that was enough : 1 John v. 1, ' Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.'

3. This engaged the hearts of the disciples to tarry with him when others murmured at his doctrine. He that cleaveth to this profession carrieth himself accordingly, whatever temptations he hath to the contrary : we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

4. For this end the scriptures were written : ' These things are writ-

ten, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name,' John xx. 31. By obedience to his laws, dependence on his promises.

5. This is the ground of submission to Christ in all his offices, why we should hear him as a prophet in this place (which I shall more fully make manifest in the next sermon), why we should depend on him as a priest, for the virtue of his oblation and intercession: 'If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 1 John ii. 1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' The blood of Christ is of high esteem and infinite value, both as to merit and satisfaction, to purchase all manner of blessings for us, and to satisfy God's provoked justice for our sins. And if the Father be so well pleased with him, what can he not obtain at his hands? which is an encouragement in our prayers and supplications. So for our improvement of his kingly office, which respects duties and privileges; our duty with respect to the kingly office is subjection: Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and you perish in the midway.' Because Christ Jesus is the Son of God, he should be submitted unto and embraced with the heartiest love and subjection; for to kiss, is a sign of religious adoration, Hosea xiii. 2; as they kissed the calves, and offer homage and hearty subjection; as Samuel kissed Saul, because God had anointed him to be king over his people, 1 Sam. x. 1. So for privileges; he is God co-equal, co-eternal with his Father, able to protect all those that apply themselves to him, till he bring them to eternal glory and happiness; and, therefore, it is said, 1 John v. 5, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' That is the fortifying truth; this both cautioneth us against all the delights and snares, and supports us against all the terrors and fears of the world. If we have the Son of God for our prophet, priest, and king, we ought to carry ourselves with greater reverence, trust, and subjection.

*Use 1.* Believe it, lay up this truth in your hearts by a firm and sound belief. There are in faith three things—assent, acceptance, dependence. The matter in hand calleth for all these.

[1.] A firm assent; for here we have the testimony of God concerning his Son. The apostle tells us, that 'he that believeth not hath made God a liar, because he believeth not the testimony of God concerning his Son,' 1 John v. 10. The great testimony is this, that we have in hand that Jesus is his beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased; that he will give pardon and life to all that hearken to him, embrace his person, receive his doctrine, believe his promises, fear his threats, obey his precepts, the strictest of them. Oh! labour to work it into your hearts that indeed it is so. In matters of fact we receive the testimony of men, two or three credible men; why not in matters of faith?—the testimony of God evidenced to us by this solemn action, an account of which we have from ear-witnesses and eye-witnesses, who were men that hazarded their all for the delivery of this truth, and yet referred us to the surer word of prophecy, 1 Pet. i. 19. He

was owned as a Son: Ps. ii. 7, 'Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee.' As a beloved Son, in whom God is well pleased: Isa. xlii. 1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delighteth.' If you be not wanting to yourselves, you may have this witness in your hearts: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' Oh! let us not give the flat lie to God. Rouse up this languid faith. Is this true, or is it a cunningly devised fable?

[2.] Faith is an acceptance of Christ, or an entering into a covenant with God by him. You must have the Son: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.' Receiving, respects God's offer. God gives Christ, and we receive what God giveth,—to what end? Why, he giveth him as king, priest, and prophet, to dwell in our hearts by faith, to rule us and guide us by his word and Spirit, and maintain God's interest in us against the devil, the world, and the flesh, till we come to everlasting glory.

[3.] Dependence. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; therefore on him alone should we depend for all things necessary to salvation. Two things persuade this dependence:—

(1.) That nothing can be done without Christ: Acts iv. 12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Nothing can be done without Christ that may be effectual to our recovery, either for the paying of our ransom, or for the changing of our hearts. Alas! what could we do to please God, or profit our own souls? The work would cease for ever if it should lie upon our hands.

(2.) That he can do what he pleaseth for the good of his redeemed ones: John xvii. 2, 'As thou hast given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' All that Christ did for our salvation did highly content and please the Father; he is satisfied with him; he can make us lovely in his sight: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' And will now joy in his people, Isa. lxxv. 19, and rest in his love, Zeph. iii. 17. Well, then, let us believe; faith is a ratifying God's testimony concerning his Son; we believe what God hath said, that Christ is his Son; we receive him as he is freely offered, and subscribe to this declaration. The Father saith from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.' So penitent believers must answer back again, 'This is our beloved Redeemer, in whom we are well pleased; let the Father hear him. He hath somewhat to say to the Father as well as to us; his doctrine concerneth us, but his intercession is made to God.'

Use 2. Entertain it with thankfulness. That such a remedy should be provided for us argueth the unspeakable love of God: 1 John iv. 9, 'In this was manifested the love of God to us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him.' That God should bestow his Son upon us to procure our salvation. God tried Abraham's love in sacrificing his son, but manifested his love to us in sending his own Son; 'He spared him not, but delivered

him up for us all.' Now that such a remedy and ransom is found out for us, it should leave an impression of God's love on our hearts, that we may love him again who first loved us, 1 John iv. 19. Think nothing too dear for God, who thought no rate too dear to purchase our life and peace. As our salvation was precious to him, let his glory be dear to us; only let me tell you, this love must not be confined to a bare act of our reason, but you must pray to God to shed abroad this love in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, Rom. v. 5, that so you may study to love and please God, prize Christ and his precious benefits above all things in the world, and live to him who died for you, that you may feel the constraining efficacy and force of love.

## SERMON VI.

*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him.*—  
MAT. XVII. 5.

I. THE design and intent of this scripture is to set forth the Lord Jesus as the great mediator, as appeareth—

1. From the occasions upon which this voice came from heaven. At his baptism, which was Christ's dedication of himself to the work of a redeemer and saviour; and now at his transfiguration, to distinguish him from Moses and the other prophets, and publicly to instal him in the mediatory office.

2. The matter of the words show his fitness for this office, for here you have:—

[1.] His dignity: not a servant, but a Son: Heb. iii. 5, 6, 'Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house.' Now the old prophecies foretold the union of the two natures in his person, and necessary it was that our mediator should be God-man. There is a congruity between his person and office, one fit to be familiar with man, and naturally interested in his concerns, and yet so high and near the Father as may put a sufficient value upon his actions, and so meet to mediate with God for us.

[2.] The dearness between God and him: 'My beloved Son.' Christ is the object of his Father's love, both as the second person in the Trinity and mediator. The one is the ground of the other, for because he loved him he intrusted him with souls: John iii. 35, 'The Father hath loved him, and put all things into his hands'—the elect and all things else, all power that conduceth to their salvation. Afterwards loved him as mediator: John x. 17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.' Now such a beloved Son is fittest to mediate for us, and to come upon a design of love, to demonstrate God's great love to wretched sinners, and to be a pledge of that love which God will bestow upon us who are altogether so unworthy of it.

[3.] His acceptableness to God, who is well pleased with the design, the terms, the management of it.



II. This work of mediator Christ executeth by three offices, of king, priest, prophet. For he is head and lord of the renewed state; a priest to offer a sacrifice for sin, which, having once offered, he for ever represents in heaven; he was also to be teacher of mankind, to acquaint us with the way of salvation. These offices are often alluded unto in scripture: Rev. i. 5, 'The faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth;' so Heb. i. 2, 3, 'God hath spoken to us by his Son, he having by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.' The effect of them is more briefly described: John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' The way was opened by his passion, and is kept open by his intercession. Truth as a prophet. Life we have from him, as prince of life, or head of the renewed estate. So the effects: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' Wisdom as a prophet to cure our ignorance and folly; righteousness and sanctification as a priest; redemption as the king and captain of our salvation. The same benefits which he purchaseth as a king, he bestoweth as a priest, revealeth as a prophet. These three offices were typed out by the first-born, who were heads of families, and also prophets and priests.

That though all the three offices be employed, yet the prophetic office is more explicitly mentioned, partly as suiting with the present occasion, which is to demonstrate that Christ hath sufficient authority to repeal the law of Moses, which the prophets were to explain, confirm, and maintain till his coming. But now Moses and Elias appear in person to certify their consent, and God his approbation, from heaven, to that new law of grace which Christ should set up; partly because it is not necessary that in every place all the offices should be mentioned; sometimes but one, as where Christ is called either king, priest, or prophet; sometimes two together, Heb. iii. 1, prophetic, sacerdotal: 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;' sometimes his prophetic and kingly, Isa. lv. 4, 'Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, and for a leader and commander to the people:' partly because if Christ be received in this one office he will be received in all the rest; for as a prophet he hath revealed that doctrine which establisheth his kingly and priestly office, for he hath revealed all things necessary to salvation, and therefore his own sacrifice and regal power. Lastly, some think all expressly mentioned here. Thus Christ is God's beloved Son, and therefore the heir of all things, and lord and king, in whom he is well pleased—that is, pacified and satisfied with his offering as a priest, or appeased by his complete sacrifice. Hear him as the great prophet and doctor of the Church.

This premised, I come now to observe:—

*Doct.* That Christ is appointed by God the Father to be the great prophet and teacher, whose voice alone must be heard in the Church.

I. That Christ is the great prophet and teacher of the Church appeareth:—

1. By the titles given to him. He is compared with Moses the

great lawgiver among the Jews: 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of you like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken,' Deut. xviii. 15. He was to be like a Moses, but greater than Moses. A lawgiver as he, a man as he, one that saw God face to face as he, a mediator as he; but far other in all respects—a better law, a more glorious person, a more blessed mediator, working greater miracles than ever did Moses. So he is called our rabbi or master: Mark xxiii. 8, 'One is your master, even Christ, and ye are brethren.' The supreme authority, the original right is in Christ. We are not leaders and teachers, but fellow disciples; so Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Again, he is called the angel or messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. Christ with a 'great condescension took upon him the office of his Father's ambassador to the church, to promote the covenant of reconciliation between God and man, and make offers of it in preaching the gospel; and he it is that doth by his Spirit persuade the elect, and doth make his covenant sure to them. Once more, he is called 'Amen, the faithful and true witness,' Rev. iii. 14. There can be no prejudice against his testimony; he can never deceive nor be deceived; it is so, it will be so, as he hath said, *Amen* is his name.

2. By the properties of his office: he hath three things to qualify him for this high office:—

[1.] Absolute supreme authority: and therefore we must hear him and hearken to him. This is usually made the ground and reason of the gospel invitation, to invite sinners to submit themselves to seek after God in this way: as Mat. xi. 27, 28, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' &c. There is no true knowledge of God but by Christ and the gospel revelation which he hath established, therefore here we must seek rest for our souls: so John iii. 35, 36, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son hath not seen life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' First, his mediatorial authority is acknowledged; and then faith and obedience to the gospel is called for, for to the sentence of the Son of God we must stand or fall. So when Christ instituted and sent abroad his messengers to invite the world to the obedience of the gospel: Mat. xxviii. 18-20, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' He hath absolute and supreme authority to gather his church, to appoint ministers and ordinances, to bestow the Spirit, to open and close heaven and hell as he pleaseth, to dispose of all affairs in the world for the furtherance of the gospel, and to enjoin the whole world obedience to his commands, and to embrace his doctrine.

[2.] All manner of sufficiency and power of God to execute this office: John iii. 34, 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.' The former

prophets had the Spirit in a limited measure bestowed on them by God, for such particular purposes as best pleased him; therefore all their prophecies begin, Thus saith the Lord, as having for every particular message and errand new revelation. But on Christ the Spirit descended once for all, and commanded the belief of all and obedience to all that he should say. Therefore it is said, Col. ii. 3, 'In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' He is ignorant of none of those things which are to be known and practised in order to our eternal salvation; they are deposited with him to be dispensed to us.

[3.] There is in him a powerful efficacy. As he hath absolute authority to teach in his own name, and fulness of sufficiency to make known the mind of God to us; so he hath power to make his doctrine effectual. As when he dealt with his disciples, after he had opened the scriptures, he 'opened their understandings,' Luke xxiv. 25; so he 'opened the heart of Lydia,' Acts xvi. 14. He can teach so as to draw, John vi. 44, 45. He can excite the drowsy mind, change and turn the rebellious will, cure the distempered affections, make us to be what he persuadeth us to be. There is no such teacher as Christ, who doth not only give us our lesson, but an heart to learn; therefore to him we must submit, hear nothing against him, but all from him.

II. About hearing him, that must be explained also.

First, What it is to hear; it being our great duty, and the respect bespoken for him. In the hearing of words there are three things considerable—the sound that cometh to the ear, the understanding of the sense and meaning, and the assent or consent of the mind. Of the first the beasts are capable, for they have ears to hear the sound of words uttered. The second is common to all men, for they can sense such intelligible words as they hear. The third belongeth to disciples, who are swayed by their Master's authority. So that, *Hear him*, is not to hear as beasts, nor barely to hear as men, but to hear as disciples; to believe him, to obey him; to believe his doctrines and promises, and to obey his precepts. For his authority is absolute, and what he doth say, doth warrant our faith, and command our practice and obedience. I gather this partly from the word 'hear,' which not only signifies attention and belief, but obedience: as 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,' where to *obey* and *hearken* are put as words of the same import and signification. Partly from the matter of Christ's revelation; he hath revealed not only doctrines to inform the mind, but precepts to reform the heart and practice. If we assent to the doctrine, but do not obey the precepts, we do not hear him. Therefore to hear him is to yield obedience to what he shall teach you; and when Christ cometh to take an account of the entertainment of the gospel, 'he shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Partly too from the intimate connexion there is between his prophetic and regal office. Christ is so a prophet, that he is also a sovereign; and doth not only give us counsel and direction, but a law, which we are to observe under the highest penalties. If the gospel were an arbitrary direction, which we might observe or not observe, without any great danger to

ourselves, surely it were folly to despise good counsel ; but it hath the force of a new law from the great king and lawgiver of the world, therefore it must not only be believed but obeyed : Heb. v. 8, He that is the chief prophet of the church is also the king of saints. Partly also from the near connexion that is between faith and obedience. The matter which we believe is of a practical concernment, and doth not require only a simple faith, or bare belief, which were enough in points merely speculative, but a ready obedience. It is said, Rom. xvi. 26, ' The mysteries of the gospel are made manifest to all nations for the obedience of faith.' They are not matters of speculation and talk, but practice ; and blessedness is pronounced on such as hear them and keep them : Luke xi. 28, ' Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' Many hear and talk, hear and stuff their minds with notions, but they do not frame themselves to the practice of what they hear. Many question not Christ's authority, but yet they do not regard his doctrine. Now, faith doth not only silence our doubts, but quicken our affections and enliven our practice.

Secondly, How can we now hear Christ, since he is removed into the heaven of heavens, and doth not speak to us in person ?

*Ans.* Surely it doth not only concern the believers of that age, who conversed with Christ in the days of his flesh, but it is the general duty of all Christians to hear Christ ; for during the whole gospel dispensation, God speaketh to us by his Son, Heb. i. 2 : the revelation is settled, and not delivered by parcels, as it was to the ordinary prophets. Now we hear Christ in the scriptures : Heb. ii. 3, 4, ' How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? which was first spoken by the Lord, and afterwards confirmed to us by them that heard him.' He began to speak and to declare the gospel both before and after his resurrection ; and they that heard him were especially the apostles, who, being induced by the Holy Ghost, declared it first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, to whom it was continued by divers signs and wonders, as to the apostles, and to extraordinary messengers. Christ saith, Luke x. 16, ' He that heareth you heareth me ; and he that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' The despising of the messenger is the despising him that sendeth the message. A man's apostle is himself, is a Jewish proverb. As to ordinary ministers he saith, ' Lo, I am with you to the end of the world,' Mat. xxviii. 20 ; they are taken into part of the apostolical commission and blessings ; they preach in Christ's name, and we, as in his stead, pray you to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20 ; so that it is his voice and his message ; he affordeth his presence and assistance unto the world's end. If you receive it with faith and obedience, you are in a course and way which will bring you to everlasting blessedness ; but if you stand out obstinately against his message, you are in the way to everlasting misery, for refusing God's methods for your redemption.

Thirdly, The properties of this hearing or submission to our great prophet.

1. There must be a resolute consent or resignation of ourselves to his teaching and instruction. All particular duties are included in the general. First, we own Christ in his offices, before we perform

the duties which each of those offices calleth for at our hands and from us—before we depend on him as a priest, or obey him as a king. As we receive him with thankfulness and love as our dearest Saviour, and with reverence and a consent of subjection as a sovereign lord, so also with a consent of resolution to follow his directions as our prophet and teacher, being convinced that he is sent from God to show us the way of life and happiness: John vi. 63, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.’ His doctrine sheweth that there is such a thing, how it was purchased, which way it may be had, by God’s offer, and the terms prescribed. Before we take any particular direction from Christ about this or that duty, we must first consent in the general that he shall be our teacher and prophet. A particular consent to Christ in this relation is as necessary as to any of the rest.

2. This resignation of our souls to Christ as a teacher, as it must be resolute, so it must be unbounded and without reserves. We must submit absolutely to all that he propoundeth, though some mysteries be above our reason, some precepts against the interest and inclination of the flesh, some promises seem to be against hope, or contrary to natural probabilities. There are some mysteries in the Christian religion, though not against reason, yet above natural reason. Now we must believe them upon Christ’s word, *captivantes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi*: 2 Cor. x. 5, ‘Bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.’ All our disputings and reasonings against the Christian doctrine must be captivated by a submission to the authority of our teacher and prophet. A disciple is to be a learner, not a caviller; and some principles are not to be chewed, but swallowed as pills on the credit of the physician, when it appeareth on other grounds that Christ is the great teacher sent from God. And as there are mysteries above our reason, so there be duties against the interest and inclination of the flesh. Many of Christ’s precepts are displeasing to corrupt nature—to deny ourselves, to take up the cross, to mortify our appetites and passions, to cut off right hands, and to pluck out right eyes; that none shall be saved that are not regenerate and holy; that non-condemnation is the privilege of those that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; that if we live after the flesh we shall die; that we must not seek great things for ourselves; that we must hate father and mother, and our own life, if we will be Christ’s disciples. Flesh and blood can hardly down with these things—that there shall be such an exact day of account, such eternal torments in the other world; yet if this be revealed by our great prophet, as reason must not be heard against Christ, so the flesh must not be heard against Christ, nor the world heard against Christ; so if some of our hopes exceed the probability of natural causes: Rom. iv. 18, he ‘against hope believed in hope,’ as the resurrection of the body. We must believe and obey him in what he offereth and commandeth, notwithstanding the contradiction of our carnal minds and hearts, in what is hard to be believed and practised, as well as in what is easy.

3. It must be speedy as to the great solemn acts of submission. Do not delay to hear him: Heb. iii. 7, ‘To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ Christ must not be put off with dilatory shifts;

if we refuse to hear to-day, Christ may refuse to speak to-morrow. The Father hath his time of waiting, the Son of his gospel-offers, the Spirit of his earnest motions: it is dangerous to slip our day; therefore, if you will hear him, hear him now! Hear him betimes; the season falleth under the precept as well as the duty: 'Now, while it is called to-day.'

4. Your consent to hear him must be real, practical, and obediential, verified in the whole tenor and course of your lives and actions; for Christ will not be flattered with empty titles. 'Why call ye me lord and master, and do not the things which I say?' Luke vi. 46. If you pretend to hear his word, you must do it also, for you do not hear to please your minds with knowing, but that you may make it your serious care and business to serve, love, and please God. Many study Christianity to form their opinions rather than reform their hearts and practice. The great use of knowledge and faith is to behold the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that our own love may be quickened and increased to him again. If it serve only to regulate opinions, it is but dead speculation, not a living faith. A naked belief is but the sight of a feast,—it is the gracious soul doth eat and digest it; when our faith is turned into love and obedience, that is the true faith.

III. The reasons why this prophet must be heard.

1. Consider whose voice it is who speaketh—the only beloved Son of God, or God himself—and surely when he speaketh he must be heard: Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake from earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.' It is Christ doth speak, and God by him, commanding us to repent and believe the gospel; now to refuse him is a high contempt. God, when he gave the law, he spake on earth; but when he spake by Christ, he spake from heaven; for Christ came from heaven to acquaint us with the mind of God, and having done it, is returned to heaven again, from whence he sent down his Spirit on the apostles, who revealed his gospel to the world. This was a mystery hidden in the bosom of God, and brought to us thence by his only-begotten Son. Surely, with all humble submission, we should attend unto and obey his word: Ps. ciii. 20, 'Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.'

2. The matter which he speaketh and we hear—the doctrine of the gospel; it is the most sweet, excellent, and comfortable doctrine that can be heard, or understood by the heart of man: Prov. viii. 6, 'Hear,' saith Wisdom, 'for I will speak of excellent things: and the opening of my lips shall be of right things.' This is the brightest light that ever shone from heaven, the profoundest wisdom, the greatest love and mercy that ever was or can be shown to sinful wretches, of the highest concernment to man; because his everlasting state lieth upon it, a state of everlasting woe or weal.

Three things I shall take notice of:—

[1.] The way of reconciliation with God manifested and discovered out of his intimate love to us. Man had fallen from the love of God to the creature, and was conscious to himself of having displeased his

Maker, and so lay under the fears of his vindictive justice. Now God by Christ declareth his love to the offender in the fullest and most astonishing way, reconciling himself to him, and sheweth his readiness to forgive and save him: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief;' and, 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' Oh, what should be more welcome to the creature than this news of this pardoning covenant founded in the blood of Christ!

[2.] Our duty exactly stated, with convenient motives to enforce it. Not only the comfort of man is provided for, but also our subjection to God, and that upon the freest and most comfortable terms, that we should serve him in love, and glorify and please him, that we may be happy in his love to us; for the sum of religion is to love him, and keep his commandments: John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me: and if any man love me, he will keep my words.' To love him is our work, and to be beloved of him is our happiness; and ver. 24: 'He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.' The gospel is the very word of God, both the Father's and the Son's; it is an act of loving, serving, and pleasing God; for this is the word Christ preached, that we love God, and Christ loveth us again.

[3.] A prospect of eternal happiness: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'He hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' This is news, but darkly revealed before, and without this man knew not how to satisfy all his capacities and desires, but was like Leviathan in a little pool. Nay, we have not only a prospect of it, but the offer of it as a reward appointed, if we will be sincere in our faith, love, and obedience: 1 John ii. 25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Everlasting joy and blessedness is propounded to us; Oh, then, hear him, if this be that he speaketh of.

3. The danger of not hearing this prophet.

[1.] For the present: to continue to slight and contemn the gospel is the mark that you are in a carnal, perishing condition: 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' John x. 3, 'My sheep hear my voice;' and ver. 16, 'Other sheep are there which are not of this fold, and they shall hear my voice.' Christ's sheep, whether Jew or Gentile, they have all the same character, they all hear his voice; and ver. 27, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' They distinguish his voice, own his voice, obey his voice. So John viii. 47, 'Whosoever is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God;' so that you lose all this comfort if ye do not hear the voice of Christ and his faithful servants.

[2.] For the future: Deut. xviii. 19, 'Whosoever will not hearken to the words which that prophet shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;' that is, he must look to answer it another day. Peter rendereth it: Acts iii. 23, 'Whosoever will not hearken to that prophet shall be destroyed among the people.' It is not a bodily punishment, but eternal torment: John iii. 36, 'The wrath of God abideth on

him ;' Mark xvi. 16, ' He that believeth not shall be damned.' Thus you see how dangerous it is to refuse this prophet.

*Use 1.* Of conviction to the carnal Christian for not submitting to Christ's authority. All Christians do it in pretence, but few that do it in reality. Doth his word come to you not only in word but in power ?

[1.] Do you seriously come to him that you may have pardon and life. When Christ had proved that he was the Son of God, the great prophet of the church, by the testimony of John, the testimony of his works, the testimony of his Father, and the testimony of the scriptures : John v. 40, ' And ye will not come unto me that ye may have life ;'—though John, his works, the Father, the scriptures, will prove him to be what he was, the Messiah, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world, yet they would not come to him, nor believe, but wilfully rejected him, and their own blessedness. What the Jews did wilfully, carnal Christians do lazily ; they prize his name and slight his office, do not come to him to be taught, sanctified, and drawn to God.

[2.] Do you respect the word of the gospel, entertain it with reverence and delight, as the voice of the great prophet ? Do you meditate on it, digest it as the seed of the new life, as the rule of your actions, as the charter of your hopes ? A good man is described to be one that ' delighteth in the law of the Lord, and meditateth therein day and night,' Ps. i. 2 ; and, again, Ps. cxix. 97, ' Oh, how I love thy law ! it is my meditation all the day long.' But, alas ! few are of this temper : Hosea viii. 12, ' I have written to them the great things of thy law, but they were counted as a strange thing, they contemned the word of God,' as if its directions were of little importance, or did not concern them. Most men live like strangers to the word of God, little conversant in it, as there were no great hazard in breaking it.

[3.] Do you mingle it with faith in the hearing, that it may profit you, Heb. iv. 2, and feel the power of it for your good ? But rather you shun it—run from it : John iii. 20, ' They that do evil hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.' The word is a torment rather than a comfort to you ; you are afraid it will be found too true.

[4.] Do you receive it as the word of God ? 1 Thes. ii. 13. It may be you do not contradict the divine authority in the scriptures, but do you soundly believe them, and know the certainty of those things wherein you are instructed ? Luke i. 4. Have you done anything to prove the supreme truth that Jesus is a teacher sent from God ? Most men's faith is so weak and slight, because it is taken hand-over-head, there is no deepness of earth, Mark xiii. 6. You have some light sense of religion, but slight impressions are soon defaced, and truths easily taken up are as soon quitted ; the more we search into the grounds of things the more we believe, Acts xvii. 11. The Bereans ' searched the scriptures whether those things were so or no.'

[5.] Doth it come to you as the Mediator's word ?—' not in word only but in power,' 1 Thes. i. 5. There is a convincing power in the word : Acts ii. 37, ' When they heard these things, they were pricked in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and



brethren, what shall we do?' Many have not felt this power, but they fear it: John iii. 20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' A converting power when it becometh the seed of a new life: 1 Pet. i. 23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' A comforting power, giving the heirs of promise strong consolation, Heb. vi. 18. Do you find anything of this in your hearts? is it engrafted in your souls? James i. 21, 'Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.'

[6.] Do you hear him universally? It is said of the great prophet, Acts iii. 22, 'Him shall ye hear in all things that he shall say unto you.' Many will hear him in the offers of pardon, but not in the precepts of duty: you must take his whole covenant, the promises for your happiness, the duty for your work.

[7.] Do you hear him so as to prefer God and Christ and the life to come above all the sensual pleasures and vain delights and worldly happiness which you enjoy here? Religion is obstructed, not soundly received, if your hearts be not taken off from these things: Luke viii. 14, 'That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' He is not a scholar of Christ who is not more devoted to the love and obedience of God than any sensual satisfaction here below—unless you can renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and give up yourselves to Christ, to be taught, sanctified, and saved, and brought home to God, to enjoy him in everlasting glory, and taught how to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, Titus ii. 12.

*Use 2. Advice to weak Christians:—*

[1.] To excite themselves to obedience by this *hear him*, when dead and lifeless. Many times the heart is dull and needeth quickening. Conscience groweth sleepy and needeth awakening—you are too bold in sinning, cold and careless in spiritual and heavenly things. Now the first means to quicken us is Christ's divine authority: 2 Pet. i. 16, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' When you are customary in prayer and hearing,—It is Christ's will; I must do it as I will answer it to him another day.

[2.] When you do renounce some beloved lust or pleasing sin, urge your hearts with Christ's authority. Remember who telleth you of cutting off your right hand, and plucking out your right eye. How can I look the Mediator in the face, if I should wilfully break any of his laws, prefer the satisfaction of a base lust before the mercies and hopes offered me by Jesus Christ.

[3.] In deep distresses, when you are apt to question the comfort of the promises. It is hard to keep the rejoicing of hope, without regarding whose word and promise it is: Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house are ye, if ye hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.'

## SERMON VII.

*And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, be not afraid. And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.*—MAT. XVII. 6-8.

IN this part of the history are three things :—

I. The disciples' fear and astonishment, ver. 6.

II. Their comfortable and gracious recovery by Christ, ver. 7.

III. The event and issue of all, ver. 8.

I. Their astonishment: *They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.* Their falling on their faces was not out of worship and reverence, but consternation, as those John xviii. 6, 'As soon as he said to them I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.' The causes of their fear must be inquired into. These were holy men, the flower of Christ's disciples; they were men in an holy action—for Belshazzar in his cups to tremble were no news—they were not in the presence of an angry God, it was a gospel-voice that they heard: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' They had not a full dispensation of his glory, but only a glimpse of it, and that under a cloud and revealed in mercy; yet they were sore afraid. Upon any visions and apparitions of the divine majesty, God's servants fell to the earth: Ezek. i. 28, 'When I saw the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God, I fell on my face.' Paul, when Christ appeared to him from heaven, he fell to the earth, Acts ix. 4: Rev. i. 17, 'When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.' Abraham was cast into great horror, Gen. xv. 12, when God appeared solemnly to enter into covenant with him. So Isa. vi. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone.' So Daniel x. 8, 9, 'When I saw this great vision, there was no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: then was I in a deep sleep upon my face, and my face was towards the ground.'

Now I shall give—(1.) The special reasons why the manifestation and appearance of God to his great prophets did breed this astonishment and fear; (2.) What general note and observation may be concluded hence for our profit.

1. The special reasons why these manifestations and appearances of God to his great prophets do breed this astonishment and fear—they are two :—

[1.] To humble them to whom he vouchsafed so great a favour. To humble them lest the glory of these heavenly visions should too much puff them up. Therefore there was ever some weakness discovered in those that did receive them. Jacob wrestled with God, but came off halting and maimed, though he prevailed, Gen. xxxii. 31. When he came off from seeing God face to face, he halted on his thigh. Paul was rapt into the third heaven, yet presently buffeted with a messenger of Satan, lest he should be lifted up with the abundance of revelations, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Corruption remaineth in us, and

we are not able to bear these favours which God manifesteth to his choice servants, and therefore there is something to humble them in the dispensation, and to keep them from being puffed up with pride, something that is a balance to the great honour wherewith God hath honoured them.

[2.] All those that received visions from him to teach his people, God would season them by leaving a stamp and impression of his excellency upon them. This was the preparation of the prophets, and a preparation of the disciples to fit them for the work of the gospel. A due representation of God's glory and excellent majesty doth qualify them for their duty; they are fittest to carry God's message and describe him to others who are thus qualified and prepared, and have some reverence and awe of God impressed upon their own hearts, and have felt the power of his great majesty: 2 Cor. v. 16, 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.'

The general conclusion and observation which we may draw from thence is this:—

*Doct.* That God is of such glorious excellency and majesty, that we are not able to bear any emissions or extraordinary representations thereof in this state of frailty.

1. I will prove that God is a great God and of glorious majesty.

2. Give you the reasons why we are not able to bear the extraordinary manifestations thereof in this state of frailty.

1. That God is a God of great majesty, and ought to be revered by all that have to do with him. The point being a matter of sense, and evident by natural light, needeth not to be proved so much as improved.

[1.] Scripture representeth him as such: Dan. ix. 4, he is called 'the great and dreadful God;' so Deut. vii. 21, 'A mighty God and terrible;' and Nahum i. 5, 'A great and terrible God is he;' and, again, Job xxxvii. 22, 'With God is terrible majesty.'

[2.] This eminently shineth forth both in his works of creation and providence. (1.) Creation, in the stupendous fabric of the heavens: Jer. xxxii. 17-19, 'Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and outstretched arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee,' &c. In that mighty collection of waters in the sea: we cannot look upon that vast expansion of the firmament, that huge body of waters in the sea, without some religious horror. What is the God that made all this? Jer. v. 22, 'Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for a bound to the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?' (2.) Providence, whether in his way of mercy or judgment. Mercy: what a majestic description of God is there, Ps. l. 1-5, yet there his presence in his church is described. The drift of the psalm is, to set forth God's power and majesty when he comes to call the Gentiles, and to set up the evangelical way of his worship, when the light of the gospel shall shine forth from Sion: Ps. lxxv. 5, 'By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God, thou God of our salvation.' Though God is a God of salvation, yet the way of his delivering them

carrieth majesty and terror with it. So his works of judgment: Ps. cxix. 120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments, when the wicked of the earth are put away like dross.' A lion trembleth to see a dog beaten before him, and it is imputed as a fault to the wicked that they do not take notice of it: Isa. xxvi. 10, 'They will not behold the majesty of God.'

[3.] His greatness and majesty is such that we cannot comprehend it: Job xxxvi. 26, 'Behold, God is great, and we know him not, nor can the number of his years be searched out.' The greatness of God cannot be known, but only by way of negation, that he hath none of those infirmities which may lessen his being in our thoughts; or by way of comparison, that he is above all, God is greater than man, Jer. xxxvi. 12.

[4.] So great that he is fain to put a covering on, to interpose the clouds between us and him, for we are not able to bear his glorious and majestic presence: Job xxvi. 9, 'He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.' What would become of us if he should discover all his glory? This is his condescension to the lower world to appear under a veil, and cover his throne with clouds.

But though we do not know his full majesty, yet there is enough discovered both to faith, reason, and sense, that God is great and glorious, both in himself and in all his works. Scripture declareth it to faith, and reason will soon subscribe to so evident a truth, that he that made and sustaineth all things must needs be a great God. What other conceptions can we form of him when we look to the heaven and this earth which he sustaineth by his great power, and he declareth himself to sense by his daily providence to be a God of great majesty.

The proof of it needeth not so much to be spoke to as the improvement of it, which we are called upon for everywhere.

(1.) It is a mercy that, being so great, he taketh notice of us: Ps. viii. 3, 4, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' When we consider how the majesty of God shineth forth in the heavenly bodies, and those many glorious creatures God hath made besides us, we may wonder that God should esteem of man, and take care of man, and be so solicitous about man's welfare, who was formed at first out of so vile materials as the dust of the earth, and is still of so very frail, infirm, and mortal condition, and hath carried himself so unthankfully to God, that he should take care of him above his whole creation: Ps. cxliii. 6, 7, 'The Lord our God dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things in heaven and earth.' That the great God of such glorious majesty should take notice of worms, and behold us not only by visiting, over-seeing, and governing the affairs of this lower world, but should condescend to this low estate of ours in taking our flesh, whose excellency and majesty is so great that he might despise the angels, of whom he hath no need; but to stoop so low towards men is matter of wonder, praise, and adoration.

(2.) We should be humble in our conversing with him, considering what he is and we are: Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' This should keep his children in a holy awe. Oh! how low should we lie before this great God: Gen. xviii. 27, 'Who am I, that am but dust and ashes, that I should speak unto God?'

(3.) That we must not please ourselves with the performance of ordinary service to him, but we should raise it to an eminent degree of worship and adoration: Ps. xlviii. 1, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God;' and Ps. cxlv. 3, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.' Alas! the best we do is much beneath God. What low thoughts had Solomon of his stately temple, 2 Chron. ii. 6, 'Who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens is not able to contain him? who am I that I should build him an house?' Thus should we see that our best resolutions and performances come much short of the excellency and greatness of God. All formality and lifeless service proceedeth from hence, that we have not due and raised thoughts of his majesty and being: Mal. i. 14, 'I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.' The greatness of God calleth for other service than usually we give to him—he gets nothing from us that is perfect. But surely we should not put him off with our refuse, but spend the best of our strength, time, parts, and affections, in his service. Superficial dealing in it argueth mean thoughts of God, it is a lessening of his majesty.

(4.) We serve a great master, and so may expect great things from him. He discovereth himself unto his people according to the greatness and majesty of his being: Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3, 'The Lord hath done great things for them, yea, the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.' Kings or princes do not give pence or brass farthings, but bestow gifts becoming their magnificence. The heathens were forced to acknowledge it, and the people of God do willingly acknowledge it. So Joel ii. 21, 'Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things.' Be the mercies never so rare, the way never so difficult, God is able to accomplish them.

(5.) This should banish the fear of man, as to any danger can come from them to us, or to any attempts against God: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell fire.' They may threaten great things to us, but God threateneth greater. See Exod. xviii. 11, 'Now I know that God is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly God was above them.' There is a greater being we have to depend upon.

(6.) Because God is of such majesty and greatness, we should quarrel at none of his dealings, for he is too high to be questioned by the creature, and his counsels are carried on in such a way as we cannot judge of them, no more than a worm can judge of the affairs of a man; he is great in counsel, and wonderful in working.

(7.) This should keep his children in an holy awe: Heb. xii. 28, 29, 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.' When we come in the holy assemblies: Gen. xxviii. 17, 'How dreadful is this

place!' In our general course we must not slight his frowns nor despise his favours, all comes from a great God; nor behave ourselves irreverently in his presence, but still walk as those that have to do with a great and glorious God.

2. That in this present state we are not able to bear any extraordinary manifestation of his greatness and majesty.

[1.] Because of his glory, which would consume and swallow us up. This was a voice 'from the excellent glory,' 2 Pet. i. 17. 'Now if this excellent glory by the veil of the firmament were not obscured, man were not able to bear it: Job xxxvii. 20, 'If man speak, he shall be swallowed up:' 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see,' till we are received to heaven. Thus it is, his glory would kill us, his voice confound us. There is a mighty disproportion between mortal creatures and the infinite majesty of God; the brightness of his glory soon burdeneth and over-burdeneth the infirmity of the best creatures.

[2.] Because of our weakness.

(1.) Natural. We faint when we meet with anything extraordinary, and therefore no wonder if we are astonished with the near approach of the excellent majesty of God, and made unfit for any action of body or mind. If we cannot look on the sun, how can we see God? our felicity in heaven would be our misery on earth. This wine is too strong for old bottles.

(2.) Sinful infirmity, consciousness of guilt is in it also, and our disconformity to God through sin: Isa. vi. 5, 6, 'Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.' So Peter: Luke v. 8, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' This raiseth a fear in us upon every eminent approach or discovery of God's glory. Before the fall, God and Adam were friends; he would have endured God to speak to him; yet after the fall, the appearance of God became terrible. When he heareth his voice, he is afraid, and hideth himself; and something of this fear sticketh to the best of his people, and when God is eminently near it is discovered; for persons that have sin in them, to be near to so holy and glorious a majesty, that is a part of the reason of this fear and trouble. Well, then, both these causes go together, the representation of the majesty of God, and the sense of our own frailty and weakness.

*Use.* Is to press us to two things:—

1. To press us to an holy awe and reverence when we come near to God.

2. To take heed that our fear of God do not degenerate into a slavish fear.

*First,* To press us to an holy awe and reverence of God, when we draw nigh unto him. Surely we should in all our worship have such thoughts of God as may leave a stamp of humility and some impressions of the majesty and excellency of God upon us; and we should fall upon our faces, though not in a way of consternation, yet in a way of adoration. And because usually we bewray much slightness and irreverence in our converse with God and approaches to him, I shall press it a little.

1. I will show how the scriptures in the general do call for this holy awe of the majesty of God in all our worship: Ps. cxi. 9, 'Holy and reverend is his name,' and therefore never to be used by us but in an awful and serious manner: Ps. xcvi. 4, 'The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.' Whether we pray, or whether we praise God, still the heart must be deeply possessed with a sense of his excellency; and we must admire him above all created or imaginable greatness whatsoever, and so mingle reverence with our most delightful addresses to him. Again, Ps. lxxxix. 17, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.' Holy angels and sanctified men, who of all creatures have nearest access to God, should most adore and reverence him, because they are best acquainted with him, and have the clearest sight of him that mortal creatures are capable of. The angels are an assembly of holy ones, that always behold his face, therefore always lauding and glorifying God. So God is said to be terrible in his holy place, Ps. lxxviii. 35, whether heaven or the church. Indeed, the awful carriage of his people in his worship should be one means to convince of the excellency and majesty of God, 1 Cor. xiv. 25. The apostle sheweth there that an unbeliever, coming into the Christian assemblies when they are managed with gravity and awe, is 'convinced and judged, and will fall down on his face and worship God, and say, God is in you of a truth;' that is, seeing their humility, brokenness of heart, hearing their praises and admirations of God, and seeing their orderliness and composedness of spirit; whereas rudeness, slowness, and irreverence doth pollute and stain the glory of God in their minds.

2. Other addresses will not become faith and love.

[1.] Faith, for whosoever cometh to God must fix this principle in his mind, 'that God is,' Heb. xi. 6. We do not worship God aright if we do not worship him as believers; and if we worship him as believers, we will worship him with reverence and godly fear. Faith giveth us not only a thought of God, but some kind of sight of God, and sight will leave an impression upon the heart of reverence and seriousness. Surely a sight or believing thought of God should be able to do anything upon the soul. It is the great work of faith 'to see him that is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. We should in our whole conversation live as in his sight, and live as those that remember God standeth by and seeth all that we are about: but especially in our worship—we then set ourselves as before the Lord. Pray as to our Father that seeth what we do: Mat. vi. 6, 'Pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly.' Hear as before the Lord: Acts x. 33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;' then the soul should turn the back upon all other things, that the mind may be taken up with nothing but God.

[2.] No other worship will become love. Worship is an act of love and delight. Now love is seen in admiring the excellencies of that glorious being whom we love, and ascribing all to him, as being deeply affected with his goodness: Rev. iv. 10, 'The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him

that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' They fell down, not out of astonishment, but reverence, and cast their crowns before the throne. Whatever honour they have, they had it from God, and are content to lay it at his feet, from whom they have life, and being, and all things. They have such an high esteem of God that before him they cannot be too vile. They are unworthy to wear any crown in God's presence, and are content that their honour be a footstool to advance and extol his glory. Certainly those that are heartily affected to God will go about his worship, as with cheerfulness, so with humility and reverence.

*Secondly*, To take heed that our humility and reverence do not degenerate into servile fear and discouragement. It is apt to do so even in the best of God's people. We can hardly keep the middle between the extremes; our faith is apt to degenerate into presumption, and our humility into despondency of spirit, and our fear into discouragement and distrust. So hard a matter is it to 'serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling,' Ps. ii. 11, or to walk in the fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, to avoid this consternation, do two things:—

1. Consider how amiable God hath represented himself in Jesus Christ, and how near he is come to us; and within the reach of our commerce there is 'a new and living way through the veil of his flesh,' Heb. x. 20. So that, though our God be a consuming fire, yet there is a screen between us and this fire; though if he should draw away the veil, a glimpse of his glory would kill us, yet this glory being veiled, we may have 'access with confidence,' Eph. iii. 12. There are naturally in our hearts fears, estrangedness, and backwardness from God. But now God is incarnate, and hath been manifested in our flesh, we may have more familiar thoughts of him, and they are made more sweet and acceptable to us.

2. Get your own peace with God made and confirmed to you more and more: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' So Eph. ii. 18, he 'preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh, for through him we both have an access by one Spirit to the Father.' See the breach made up between you and God, and be very tender of putting it to hazards any more. God, that is a consuming fire to guilty souls, is a Sun of righteousness to the upright. When we are accepted in the Beloved, those thoughts of God which guilt will make amazing and terrible, will be through peace comfortable and refreshing.

II. Their comfortable and gracious recovery by Christ, ver. 7, 'And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, be not afraid.' He relieveth and helpeth them by three things:—(1.) His approach; (2.) His touch; (3.) His word.

1. His approach. He came to them, you must understand, having laid aside his glory which he had in the transfiguration, that he might more familiarly converse with them, and without prejudice. Because of their weakness and infirmity he layeth aside his majesty, and re-



assumeth the habit of his humiliation ; as Moses did put a veil upon his face, that the people might endure his sight and presence. God's appearing at first may be terrible ; but the issue is sweet and comfortable : a still, calm voice followed the earthquake, wind, and fire, 1 Kings xix. And God doth good to his people after he hath humbled them and proved them, Deut. viii. 16. Here, when the apostles lay like dead men, Christ came and put new life and strength into them. He came out of love and pity to them, that nothing more grievous might happen to them, either loss of life or senses. He would not let them perish in these amazements.

2. His touch. He touched them. Christ's touch is powerful, and a means of application. Usually thus Christ conveyed and applied his power : Mat. viii. 3, He touched the leper and cleansed him. Mat. viii. 15, He touched Peter's wife's mother and cured her of a fever. So Mat. ix. 19, He touched the two blind men and they received their sight ; and in many other places. So this touching of the apostles was to apply his power, and to recover them out of their trance.

3. His speech : ' And said, Arise, and be not afraid.' The glorious voice of the Father affrights them, and the gracious voice of the Son reviveth and refresheth them. He comforts those whom the terrors of the Almighty had cast down. He doth not chide them for their fear or little faith, as he doth at other times ; he considered the greatness of the cause, their natural infirmity, the governing of which was not in their power, and the terribleness and suddenness left no time for deliberation ; therefore he doth not chide them, but encourageth them. The like was done in other cases, as to Ezekiel in his trance : Ezek. ii. 1, ' Son of man, arise, stand on thy feet, and I will speak to thee.' So too the apostle John : Rev. i. 17, 18, ' When I saw him, I lay at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not ; I am the first and the last.' So here, be not afraid. We must reverence Christ, but not be scared at him. Such a fear as may stand with our duty is required, but not that which disableth us for it, or discourageth us in it ; that is no more pleasing to God than security.

[1.] Observe Christ's tender care over his disciples in their faintings and discouragements.

(1.) That he comforteth and reviveth his disciples. Christ alone can help us, and confirm us against our fears ; the disciples did not stir, but lay prostrate upon their faces, till he came and touched them, and said, ' Arise, be not afraid.' In all the troubles and perplexities of his people, he will be owned as the causer and curer of them : Hosea vi. 1, ' Come, let us return unto the Lord : for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' So Job v. 18, ' He maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth and his hands make whole.' As all our troubles and perplexities are from his hands, so must the healing be. If he make the wound, all the world cannot find a plaster to heal it ; and no wound given by himself is above his own cure ; and he woundeth not as an enemy, but as a surgeon, not with a sword, but a lancet. All other means are blasted till we come to him.

(2.) That he is exceeding ready, and hath great pity and tender-

ness towards them. As appeareth by laying aside his glory, and coming to the disciples, when they came not to him; and speedily, that he might not leave them long in the trance, lest worse effects should follow. And is he not like affected to all his people in their perplexities and troubles? Yes, verily. See Isa. lvii. 16, 'I will not contend for ever, nor will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' He speaketh as if he were afraid lest man's spirit should fail, being long overwhelmed with terror and trouble. So the apostle, 2 Cor. ii. 7, 'Comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' The Lord Christ is full of bowels and compassions, pitieth his people in their infirmities, fears, and troubles.

[2.] The manner and way which he taketh is considerable also—by touch and speech. The touch noteth the application of his power; and in his speech he saith, 'Arise, be not afraid.' Christ doth not love to confound, but comfort, his servants, and therefore taketh this double course, by secret power enlivening and strengthening their hearts: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'I cried unto the Lord, and thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul;' that is, God did secretly support him and strengthen him under the trouble. He doth it also by a word; therefore we read of God's speaking peace to his people: Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God will say, for he will speak peace to his people and his saints.' Besides an inward strengthening, there is a necessity of a word from Christ's own mouth ere we can cast off our discouragements. Besides his touching or his laying his right hand upon us, there is need of his word to us.

*Use.* It teacheth us what to do when we have serious thoughts of appearing before God. For the case in hand is about those that were affrighted and disquieted with divine visions, which was occasioned by natural frailty, and partly by a sense of sin. Now all of us must shortly come into God's presence, but who can dwell with devouring burnings? If your thoughts be serious, you will find that it is no slight thing to appear before God, who is our creator and our judge, and who is an holy and glorious God, to whom we have carried it very unthankfully and undutifully. Now who can relieve you in these perplexed thoughts but the Lord Jesus Christ? Get a word from him that your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged, Isa. vi. 7; and wait on him till he settleth your souls in the peace and hope of the gospel, Isa. lvii. 14; and then you are relieved in your agonies of conscience; stand up, be not afraid: the gospel is a sovereign plaster, but his hand must make it stick.

III. The event and issue of all, ver. 8, 'And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.' This intimateth two things:—

1. That this testimony from heaven did only concern Jesus Christ, for Moses and Elias vanish out of sight, and Jesus is left alone, as the person in whom God is well pleased, and all the church must hear him. When they are withdrawn, Christ remaineth as Lord and head of the church, and so it sheweth the ceasing of Moses's law, and the continuance and authority of the law of Christ. The apostle telleth us, 'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall

be done away.' They only prophesied, prefigured Christ to come, but now, upon the exhibition, the legal ordinances vanished.

2. That God manifesteth himself, for time, measure, and degree, as he himself seeth fit for our good ; for the vision is removed when the intent of it is obtained. Here the spiritual banquet doth not always last ; heaven is a perpetual feast, but we must not look upon earth to be feasted always with spiritual suavities. There is no permanency, but perpetual vicissitudes, in our enjoyments within time ; we have clear and cloudy days in the world, a feast, a desertion : Cant. v. 1, 2, ' I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk : eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. I sleep, but my heart waketh ; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled ; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' And ver. 6, ' I opened to my beloved ; but my beloved hath withdrawn himself and was gone.' After the greatest manifestations of Christ's love, there may be a withdrawing ; we cannot bear perpetual comforts, and God reserveth them for a better time, when we are more prepared for them. There must be day and night in this world, and winter and summer ; but in heaven it is all day, there is a perpetual sunshine, never clouded nor overcast.