

to be of this society, Heb. xii. 22, 23; Eph. ii. 19, 'Fellow-citizens with all the saints;' Eph. iii. 15, 'Of whom the whole family is named, whether in heaven or earth.' If to be of this society now be a privilege, though severed in distinct habitations, then what a comfort is it to be admitted to a greater nearness of converse with the patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and all the worthies of God. We love their company now; it is sweet to be in the assemblies of the saints on earth, to pray, hear, fast, and communicate together in the Lord's supper; much more in heaven; the saints are more lovely, other manner of saints than ever we knew them before.

Use. Well, then, let us love the saints of God now, for these are to be our everlasting companions: Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 'It is comely and pleasant to live together in unity.' We that look for one home, should we fall out by the way? All agree there; why should we not glorify God with one mind and mouth now? There are different degrees of light, which cause differences of opinion; but there are substantial and common truths enough, wherein we all agree, to bring us to a closer union. Certainly those beautefeous and coal-blowers should be hateful to all christians; the truest zeal and martyrdom will be enough in uniting christians.

SERMON V.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THESS. i. 7.

WE now come to the third thing, the time when our reward shall be fully accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.'

In the words observe—(1.) The person coming, 'The Lord;' (2.) His train and retinue, 'With his mighty angels.'

From thence observe two points—

1. There is a time coming when Christ shall be fully revealed from heaven, and appear in all his glory.

2. That when Christ cometh he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

For the first point.

1. What is this revelation? The coming of Christ is sometimes set forth by the word *ἀποκάλυψις*, revelation; sometimes by the word *ἐπιφάνεια*, appearing. The former is in the text, and in 1 Peter i. 13, 'Hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So 1 Cor. i. 7, 'Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' *ἀποκάλυψιν*, the revelation. Elsewhere the other word is used; as 2 Tim. iv. 8, Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Both are to the same effect.

The former we are now upon. It is used for these reasons—

[1.] There are many who never had a sight of his glorious person, his bodily presence is withdrawn from us; for Christ departed into the heavens long before we were born, not to deny the world any necessary satisfaction, but upon wise reasons. It was expedient he should go from us: John xvi. 7, 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.' And he is contained in the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21, 'Until the time of the restitution of all things.' There is a great distance between us and heaven, which though it doth not hinder his spiritual virtue and influence, yet it doth the enjoyment and sight of his bodily presence; we cannot see him nor hear him, though we feel his gracious operations in our souls: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy, &c. But at the last day he shall be revealed, or visibly manifested to be the head of the church, and the judge and avenger of his people. We shall find that our faith was not misplaced, that he is what we believed him to be, and that he was worthy to be loved and obeyed.

[2.] When he was upon earth he lived in a state of obscurity, his godhead peeping out sometimes through the veil in a miracle or so, but mostly obscuring and hiding itself; for his kingdom was not of this world. And this way of coming was necessary to try his people: John i. 11, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' The Jews will not believe that Christ was the true Messiah, because he came not in such a manner as to satisfy his own countrymen; but God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts. We walk here, 'not by sight, but by faith,' 2 Cor. v. 7. A dispensation of faith must neither be too bright nor too obscure.

[3.] Now his spiritual glory is seen but in a glass darkly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. We apprehend him by faith, but see him not face to face; though he be revealed to the soul, yet not so revealed as he will be at his second coming. Vision or beholding of his glory is reserved for heaven: 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.'

[4.] His kingdom is not always clear and visible in the world, though he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps. cx. 2. His interest to all appearance is many times suppressed in the world, though at other times it breaketh out again, and is owned in the world: Luke xvii. 20, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,' *μετὰ παρατηρήσεως*. It is not set up as other kingdoms are, with warlike preparation or visible pomp and glory.

[5.] His people and subjects are under a veil; their life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3; 'The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not,' 1 John iii. 2. It doth not now appear to the world, nor altogether to the saints themselves, what a blessed portion is made sure to them. The day of the manifestation of the sons of God is not yet come, Rom. viii. 19, either of the eldest and first-born, or of all the rest of the brethren; which is a comfort to us in our reproaches; if we be not revealed and manifested to be what we are, neither is the Son of God revealed to the full of his glory. In short, though Christ be revealed to us in the doctrine of the gospel, yet his excellency doth in part lie hid from his own children. We see him but darkly, and no

wonder if the world see him not, and know him not. And for believers, their glory is hidden under the veil of afflictions, infirmities, and imperfections.

2. That this time is coming is evident—

[1.] From the promise of his coming. This was the great promise ever kept afoot in the church. The scoffers took notice of it: 2 Peter iii. 4, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' There was an ancient promise long ago: Jude 14, 15, 'Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,' &c. It hath been revived in all ages by the Lord's messengers, Moses, David, Samuel, Joel, Zechariah, Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself and his apostles everywhere: John xiv. 3, 'I will come again; if it were not so, I would have told you.' God, that hath been faithful in all things, will not fail us at last. He hath ever stood to his word, how unlikely soever the things promised were. The believers of the old world were not deceived in the promise of his first coming in the flesh. Surely Christ would not deceive us with a vain hope, nor flatter us into a fools' paradise; we may rest upon his infallible word for his second appearance.

[2.] From the types whereby Christ was prefigured. I shall instance in one, which the apostle explaineth from ver. 24 to the latter end; see it.

[3.] There are ordinances appointed in the church, to keep afoot the remembrance of this promise; the word preached, the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye show forth the Lord's death till he come.' He hath left it as a monument of his faithfulness to revive our hopes and expectations. Would Christ institute a solemn ordinance for the remembrance of his appearing if he meant to come no more at us? The word declareth it: 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,' &c.

[4.] We have an inward pledge of it, the coming of the Holy Ghost into our hearts. At parting there is a taking and giving of tokens. Christ is not gone in anger, but about business, to set all things at rights for the great day of espousals. To prevent suspicion, he left the Spirit to stir up in us a certain and earnest expectation of that day: Rom. viii. 23, 'We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body;' and Rev. xxii. 17, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The time is determined, the marriage-day fixed, though unknown to us; but the Spirit dwelling in us sets us a-looking and a-longing for it.

[5.] Our constant experience of his love and care over us. There are frequent messages of love which pass between us and Christ, which show that he doth not forget us, and is not strange to us now. There is a constant intercourse kept up between every believing soul and his Redeemer; though he be absent from us in the body, yet we hear from him, and he is present with us in the spirit. We hear from him in the word, in prayer, and in the sacraments; and will he not come again, who is so mindful of us at every turn? If he forgot us in his exaltation, as

the butler forgat Joseph when he was at court, it were another matter. No; though our high priest be passed into the heavens, yet he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15. He will not always leave us liable to sinning and suffering. He is our life now, and therefore shall appear, and we with him in glory, Col. iii. 4.

[6.] Consider how much Christ's interest is concerned in it.

(1.) Partly that the glory of his person may be seen and fully discovered. His first coming was obscure, and without observation, for then he came in the form of a servant; but now he cometh as the lord and heir of all things, in power and great glory. Then he had for his forerunner John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Mat. iii.; but now he hath for his forerunner an archangel, by whose voice, as the trump of God, the dead shall rise out of their graves. Then he came with twelve disciples, a few poor fishermen, men of small condition in the world; now with legions of angels, *σὺν μυριάσιν ἁγίων*, Jude 14. At the first coming, he acted the part of a minister of the circumcision, preaching the gospel to the people of Israel only; now he cometh as the judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to all those who would own him as their Redeemer; now he cuts off all hope of pardon for ever from them who refused or despised his grace. Then he offered himself as a mediator between God and man, to God as an high priest, to us as an apostle, Heb. iii. 1; but now he cometh as a judge and avenger. Then he veiled his divine nature under the infirmities of his flesh, and did but sparingly emit the rays of his majesty; now he shall appear in the glory of his Father. Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures; now there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of his person, for all things are obvious and liable to sense. Heretofore he raised a few to life, now all the dead. Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, that he might be condemned to the ignominious death of the cross; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their final doom and sentence from his mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save; now to render to every one according to his works. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon; now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many, now he appeareth without sin unto the salvation of those that look for him, Heb. ix. 28. Not bearing our burden, but bringing our discharge; not as a surety, but a paymaster; not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil. Finally, he cometh, no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery to himself, and that for ever.

(2.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a dear rate, even with the price of his blood, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. And would he be at all this cost and preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph; and he that hath bought will possess. He loved his people unto death, and they loved him above their lives. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his office; for their sakes he came at first, and for their sakes he will return: John xiv. 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and I will

come again and receive you to myself.' When he hath gotten them together into one body and great congregation, he will solemnly present them to God, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me.' And then will introduce them into those everlasting habitations, where they may be for ever with himself.

(3.) With respect to the wicked, it is a part of his office to triumph over them in their final overthrow. God bringeth them down now by pieces, but then altogether. He got himself a glorious name when he triumphed over Pharaoh and his host, but that was but one enemy, and that only in the sight of Israel. Now all his enemies are put under his feet, in the sight of all the world: Isa. xlv. 23, 'Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess;' Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 'We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,' &c.; with Phil. ii. 10, 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' &c. He will make all those that have set light by him to see all his glory. The carnal now slight the merit and value of his sacrifice: Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?' *κοινων.* They neglect his grace: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' Refuse his counsels and invitations, Prov. i. 23, and Mat. xxi. 15. Cast off his government, Luke xix. 14; but then they shall see him in all his royalty.

(4.) That he may require an account of things during his absence; what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. xxv.; what his church hath done with his ordinances, and how things have been carried in his house: 1 Tim. vi. 14, 'Keep this commandment without rebuke unto the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Whether his officers have been diligent: 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom.' How they have dispensed the censures, whether they have eaten and drunk with the drunken, and beaten their fellow-servants, Mat. xxiv. 49; that is, encouraged the wicked and strengthened their hands with the suppression of the godly, and discouraged the most serious. Finally, who have violated the light of nature, or disobeyed the gospel, ver. 8.

Use 1. Believe it. Nature cannot easily contradict this truth, and scripture doth plainly assert it. If it were a vain conceit and fancy, you might entertain it with scorn, but it is an evident truth, constantly delivered in the word of God. And the whole frame of religion would fall to the ground if this were not granted. God would lose the glorious demonstration of his goodness and justice, Christ the honour of all his sufferings, and christians all their comfort and hope raised in them by the Spirit of God, the wicked all that awe which doth in part suppress their licentiousness, and the whole government of the world be dissolved. It is a great, it is a sure, and now it is a near day. God and all his creatures would never be brought together if there were not such a time. The law of nature would be in vain, and the gospel would be

false, if there were not such a time. Now, must man be unmanned, and the gospel, which is the wisest institution that ever the world was acquainted with, be condemned as a falsity, to justify your unbelief, and the cause and effect of it, your licentious living? Acts xvii. 31, 'God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' *πίστιν παρασχὸν πᾶσι*. He made sufficient demonstration of the truth of this doctrine in Christ's resurrection: Zech. xiv. 3, 'The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.' Rouse up your faith, adhere steadfastly to this truth, as a thing certain; Christ shall come, attended with all his glorious saints and angels, and the believer shall find the fruit of his interests in him.

2. Carry yourselves so that this day may be a comfort to you, and not a terror. It will be a terror to all guilty souls that have not entered into God's peace, 2 Peter iii. 14, a terror to all those that have not loved the Lord Jesus Christ above their own lives and interests in the world: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' A terror it will be to all that have opposed Christ's kingdom in the world, and discouraged serious godliness, and turned religion into a ceremony and dead form. A terror it will be to all those that love the present world, and the credit, pleasures, and profits thereof, and could not tarry till Christ came to distribute crowns, and pleasures, and honours at his right hand, but took up their happiness aforehand: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' A terror it will be to the scorers of godliness and the world to come, 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, but a comfort to the believers, that not only looked for, but loved this day, 2 Tim. iv. 8, thought it the greatest encouragement and happiness that could be offered to them to prepare for this day, 2 Peter iii. 11, that lived in a constant fidelity to Christ, and not only made conscience to do his will, but suffered all manner of inconveniences, 1 Peter iv. 13, rather than dispense with their duty to him: 'As ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, so, when his glory shall be revealed, ye shall be glad with an exceeding joy.' All that have been sober and mortified, loath to take up with a temporal happiness: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' 1 Thes. v. 8, 'Let us who are of the day be sober,' &c. We cannot keep up the lively expectations of better things unless we keep our hearts from vain delights.

3. Wait and hope earnestly for this time, because of the abundant grace and glory which shall be brought to us.

[1.] Grace: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Then we shall have the fullest and largest manifestation of God's love and favour to us. There is grace brought to us now by the revelation of Christ in the gospel, but hereafter more fully and perfectly. We see his grace in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification which we now attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and take us into his family, and give us to taste of his love, and to have a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service;

but it is another manner of grace then, when our pardon and approbation shall be ratified by our judge's own mouth, Acts iii. 19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into his presence and palace, John xii. 16, not only give us right, but possession; when we shall not only know Christ by faith, but by sight; when we shall see our nature united to the godhead, and not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, delighting in, and praising God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal companions in this work. This is grace seen in all its graciousness; surely then our only cry will be, Grace, grace.

[2.] Glory. What a glory is it that we must immediately possess in body and soul! It is said, 'We look for glory, honour, and immortality,' Rom. ii. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our bodies raised glorious bodies;' Phil. iii. 21, 'Our souls.' Then is the glory begun perfected: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' The weakness ceaseth; we then shall know God perfectly, and love him perfectly; we shall not be disquieted any more with jarrings and divisions; no more resemble the devil, but wholly be transformed into the image of God; bodies glorious, souls glorious, place glorious, company glorious, work glorious, pleasing a glorious God.

Second point. That when Christ cometh, he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

This is often asserted in scripture: Mat. xxvi. 27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;' Mat. xxv. 31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.'

There are two truths contained in this one proposition—(1.) That his angels are mighty angels, or angels of might; (2.) That he shall bring them along with him.

1. That they are mighty angels. They are said to excel in strength, Ps. ciii. 20. One angel in one night slaughtered many thousands of the Assyrians in Senacherib's camp. This is offered to our thoughts to show that the most potent creatures are infinitely inferior to our Redeemer, which is comfortable to the godly, and maketh his vengeance terrible to the wicked; this strength they have from God their creator, who giveth strength to all his creatures as it pleaseth him.

2. Why he bringeth them with him.

[1.] To show his glory and majesty, that they are at his beck and command. The most excellent of all creatures are his ministers and subjects, and all the heavenly hosts at his command: 1 Peter iii. 22, 'He is sat down at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.' And it is said, Eph. i. 22, 'That God hath set him far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.' And the apostle, when he would set forth the majesty of our Redeemer, telleth us that he was made far more excellent than the angels, whose ministers they are, and whom they are commanded to worship, Heb. i. 4, 6, 7, and who employeth his authority for the defence and comfort of the meanest of his people, ver. 14. They are subject not only to God, but to Christ as our mediator.

Look, as it is the glory of earthly kings to command mighty and powerful subjects: 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' Isa. x. 8, that so many princes owned him as their sovereign, and served under him as their commander; and when God speaketh of the Assyrian, he calleth him a king of princes, Neh. viii. 10, namely, as he had many kings subject and tributary to him; so this is the majesty of our Redeemer, that he hath those powerful creatures, the mighty angels, in his train and retinue.

[2.] Because he hath a ministry and service for them.

(1.) To gather the elect: Mat. xxiv. 31, 'He shall send his angels to gather together the elect from the four winds;' that is, from all parts and quarters of the world. There is no envy in holy and blessed creatures, we find the angels kindly affectioned to the salvation of lost man. When their Lord was incarnate, and so, in respect of his human nature, made a little lower than themselves, they disdain him not, but praised God at the birth of Christ: Luke ii. 13, 14, 'A multitude of the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest,' &c. They attend upon the dispensation of the gospel, and are present in our assemblies: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God, and the elect angels, that thou neglect not these things.' They are conscious to administrations in the church. When any sinner is recovered out of the apostasy, we read of joy in heaven, Luke xv. 7, 10. The people of God are now their charge, and hereafter their companions; and therefore they are contented to be employed by Christ about them. Now for their defence: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him.' Hereafter they convey the souls of the departing righteous unto Christ: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' To their rest in heaven. So at the last day they shall accompany them in their joyful retinue to their old beloved habitations. By their ministry he will gather the bodies of his redeemed ones from all parts of the world, after they have been resolved into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, that every saint may have his own body again.

(2.) To execute his sentence on the wicked: Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' So ver. 49, 'The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just.' It is their work, and they are employed about it, to consummate Christ's kingdom against God's enemies and the enemies of his children.

[3.] To show they are a part of that army which is commanded by the captain of our salvation, the blessed Son of God. Now they are a part of the army which is employed for the destruction of the kingdom of sin and Satan: Ps. lxxviii. 17, 'The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels; the Lord is among them in his holy place.' The psalmist speaketh of Christ as mediator and

king of the church. No kingdom hath such defence, and such potent and numerous armies to fight their battles, as the church hath. The angels join with the saints in overturning the kingdom of sin, Satan and antichrist. They join with us; their influence doth not always visibly appear; and therefore when the whole army are drawn forth in their glory, they come as a principal part. In the head of this army there will Christ appear at the end of the world. When he hath won the field, he will come in triumph to confound his conquered enemies, and to be glorified in his redeemed ones. And therefore his holy angels, who are concerned in the conflict, are not left out in the triumph.

Use. To quicken us to get our minds more deeply possessed with the majesty of our Redeemer. The scripture often representeth this argument to our thoughts, that he is head of all principalities and powers. Surely the representing Christ in his glory is a point of great concernment, or else the word of God would not so often insist upon it.

1. That we may admire the Mediator, and may not have mean thoughts of his being and office; but represent him to ourselves as a dreadful lord and king, who holdeth the most powerful creatures in subjection to himself. And shall poor worms make bold with his laws, when the angels are so ready to attend him at his beck and command, and that in the meanest services and ministries? If christians did know and considered how much of true religion consists in admiring the person of their Redeemer, they would more busy their minds in this work. Your obedience to the gospel in general dependeth upon it, that we may not slight his doctrine and benefits, Heb. ii. 1-3. After he had showed that Christ had obtained a more excellent name than the angels, he presently inferreth, 'If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?' So Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth,' when he gave the law by the ministry of angels.

2. To quicken us to thankfulness. That we may bless God for the honour done to our nature in the person of Christ; for it is God incarnate that is made head of angels, and principalities, and powers. God in our nature, whom all the angels of God are called upon to adore and worship. This was the great counterwork to Satan's desigus, for the devil's design was partly to dishonour God by a false representation of his nature, as if he were envious of man's happiness: Gen. iii. 5, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods;' to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so near to God. Now that this human nature should be so elevated and advanced, and be set far above the angelical nature in the person of Christ, admitted to dwell with God in a personal union; oh, let us admire the wisdom and goodness of God.

3. To strengthen our trust, and fortify us against all fears and discouragements in our service. Though the powers and authorities on earth and their messengers and hosts be employed against the saints, yet the captain of our salvation is in heaven, and all the mighty angels

are subject to him and at his disposal. By this means the prophet Elisha confirmed himself and his servant when the king of Syria sent chariots and horses and a great host to attack the prophet in Dothan : 2 Kings vi. 14, 15, 'And his servant saw it early in the morning, and said, Alas, master! what shall we do?' The prophet answered, ver. 16, 'They that are with us are more than they that be with them.' And then he prayed, ver. 17, 'Lord, open his eyes that he may see;' and the Lord opened his eyes, and 'behold the mountain was full of chariots and horses round about Elisha.' The Syrian king looketh to his outward force, but considereth not the power of God. God can make preparation for his people's defence when all the powers of the world are against them. Those fiery horses and chariots were no other but the angels of God; here is force against force, chariots and horses against chariots and horses; thus doth the prophet seek to put fear out of the heart of his servant. He desireth God would but let him see the outward force and strength in which the heavenly hosts did appear, thereby to confirm his mind; thus did the three children strengthen themselves: Dan. iii. 17, 18, 'Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' &c.; ver. 28, 'And God sent his angel for their deliverance;' ver. 25, 'The fourth was like the Son of God.' So Stephen, Acts vii. 55, 56, saw Jesus at the right hand of God in the midst of his angels. Nothing doth lessen created glory, and fortify us against the terribleness of the creature so much as this meditation.

4. To draw our hearts after Christ, and towards him; for the angels of God that worship him do know what he is: 'I will worship thee among the gods,' Ps. xcvi. 7; and Heb. i. 6, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' It is argument enough that the angels are witnesses, and take part with the saints: Ps. cxxxviii. 1, 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.'

5. To make us more reverent in our approaches to him. For he sits in the assembly of the gods; the holy angels are round about him, and observe undecencies: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' and Eccles. v. 6, 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, nor say before the angel, it was an error.' The angels in heaven observe our behaviour in God's worship: Luke xii. 8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God.' They speak well of us in heaven.

6. To quicken us to do what we can to promote the kingdom of God, even the increase of light, life, and love; for therein standeth the kingdom of God. In knowledge, as the devils are rulers of the darkness of this world, so the kingdom of God is begun in light; in life, not in formality and hypocrisy.
