

SERMON UPON MARK VII. 37.

He hath done all things well.—MARK vii. 37.

THIS is the attestation of the people to Christ's miracles. He forbade the publication of them, because he would not too openly discover himself till the resurrection; but they were surprised with such wonder and astonishment, that they could not hold their peace. If they admire and praise, Christ forbidding them, surely we should admire and praise, Christ commanding us. That which is spoken of the miracles of Christ is true of all his actions, 'He hath done all things well.' It is a good account of all the dispensations which pass through his hands.

Doct. That the works of the Lord are all good, exceeding good.

We will consider Christ's works—

1. More limitedly and restrainedly to the matter in hand; his works in the days of his flesh, especially his miracles.

2. More largely, extending the words to all his works, of creation, redemption, and daily providence.

1. In the limited restriction, this speech may be interpreted to imply either the matter or the manner of his actions, *bonum* or *bene*. He did nothing but what was good and well.

1. *Bonum*, good. It was Christ's work to do good, and only good, for the life, preservation, and welfare of man: Acts x. 38, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' The whole story of his life was nothing else but a catalogue of good works. You find him everywhere going up and down upon this errand, that he might give sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, liberty to the possessed, life to the dead. You will find him either feeding the hungry or healing the diseased, and having compassion on them that are faint, and raising the dead.

2. *Bene*, well. This may be represented negatively and affirmatively.

[1.] Negatively; and so—

(1.) Not vindictively. His miracles were not such as tended to destruction, but acts of succour and relief, except blasting the barren fig-tree, and permitting the devils to enter into the herd of swine; the one a notable emblem, and so the instruction countervailed the loss; the other showed the devil's rage, but Christ's lenity, and his power over Satan. Of all his miracles that ever he wrought, he never wrought

any in malice and revenge. He used not his divine power to make men blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily have done it, and might justly have done it. He rebuked his disciples when they called for fire from heaven against those that rejected his person, and showed that this furious zealous spirit did not suit with the meekness and persuasiveness of the gospel dispensation: Luke ix. 54, 55, 'When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' They considered not that this spirit was unsuitable to his design and business in the world, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

(2.) Not out of pomp and vainglory; which appeareth because none of his miracles were fitted for the stage, but done only upon weighty occasions, in case of great necessity, when humbly asked and believingly expected. If a miracle were asked in wantonness, he refused to do it; as Herod, to satisfy his vain curiosity, was desirous to have seen some miracles done by him: Luke xxiii. 8, 9, 'And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season; because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing.' Christ would not satisfy him in that point, nor let his divine power lackey upon men's idle humours. They that desire to show juggling tricks are not shy of doing their feats at any time. Besides, that ostentation had no influence upon him appeareth by his frequent injunctions of silence: 'He charged them to tell no man;' so often repeated in the Gospel, and in the verse before the text. When his own mother asked a miracle for the credit of her kinsfolk rather than the glory of God, he rebuked her: John ii. 1-4, 'And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were called to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

(3.) Not by conspiracy with the devil, or to befriend his design. This speech of the people is supposed to be a vindication or answer to the calumny of the pharisees, who, to divert the people from owning him as the son of David or true Messiah, said, Mat. xii. 24, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils;' which was the last refuge of their infidelity; for when they could not deny the evidence of the fact, they calumniate the power, as if it were done by co-operation with the devil, or magical imposture; which Christ refuteth by sundry arguments, but especially by this, that every kingdom, city, or family set against itself is ruined: ver. 25, 26, 'And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?' Therefore if Christ, who was a declared enemy to Satan, and came to draw off men from sin to God, should work by Satan, he would make Satan an enemy to himself, and lend his power to destroy that kingdom of

sin which by all means he seeketh to uphold, and so consent to his own ruin; for what was the great design of the Son of God but to dispossess Satan, and cast him out of his empire over the bodies and souls of men? and so Satan must cast out Satan, which is an unreasonable conceit.

[2.] Positively, he did all things well.

(1.) Suitably to the dignity of his person, or the nature and power of God, which was in him. God's nature is to do good: Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' This was Paul's witness of God, that he was ἀγαθοποιῶν, 'doing good,' not taking vengeance of their idolatries, but inviting them by many temporal mercies. So it is said of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was ἐνεργετῶν, 'doing well:' Acts x. 38, 'He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' Mark that clause, 'God was with him.' How was God with him? It was a plain proof of his divine power and authority: 'No man can do such miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,' saith Nicodemus, John iii. 2. *Object.* But God is with all his people: Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer—God was with Christ in another manner than he is with us. He is with us by his love and gracious assistance, as he doth own us, and defend us; but God was with Christ by personal union and inhabitation: 'The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not only with him, but in him, as he was true God, as well as man; and so he did all things becoming his divine power.

(2.) He did all things suitably to the nature of his office, which was that of a mediator; and so he did all things well. The Mediator came not to destroy, but to save: John iii. 17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' This mission was all in mercy and charity, not to punish and condemn man, but to save him from punishment. So John xii. 47, 'And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' His first coming was as a meek saviour and mediator, to purchase mercy, and to make an offer of life to lost man. So Luke ix. 56, 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;' not to kill any, but to preserve and rescue them from death and all that is evil. Therefore the people give him such a testimony as implied the true characters of a mediator; one that was God, and came from God, to succour and relieve men from all their miseries and necessities.

II. More largely; for these words, καλῶς πάντα πεποίηκε, 'he has done all things well,' are a full and proper account of all the works of God, not only of what the Mediator did in the days of his flesh, but of whatever he did or doth as God.

I shall instance—(1.) In the work of creation; (2.) The work of redemption; (3.) The works of daily providence.

1. In the work of creation; for by Christ God made the world: John i. 3, 'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' All the creatures owe their beings to Christ the Son of God; now all things were made well, and did show

forth the wisdom, goodness, and power of him that made them; for they were fit for the ends to which they were appointed: Gen. i. 31, 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.' Every day's work apart was good, and altogether very good; good for their kind, and good for the use and benefit of the whole in their proportion and correspondency.

2. In the work of redemption, all that Christ did was good or well done—(1.) As to the ends; (2.) As to the way that he took to accomplish these ends.

[1.] His end was to deliver us from all evil, and to bring us into the possession of all good.

(1.) To deliver us from all evil. There is the evil of sin and the evil after sin; now Christ came to cure us of the evil of sin: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,' Mat. i. 21. To deliver us from the flames of hell: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.' And surely they that are sensible of their own misery and condemned estate cannot but give him this acknowledgment, 'He hath done all things well.'

(2.) To bring us into the possession of all good. We are often inquiring, 'Who will show us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. Who will find out a full and proper happiness for mankind? Now Christ hath not only showed what is the true good, but procured it for us, and offered it to us, if we will not take up with lower things, but prefer the greatest good before the lesser. The chiefest and greatest is God, for beyond God there is nothing, God reconciled, and God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness by the way consists in our reconciliation with God, and our happiness at the end of the journey consists in the vision and fruition of God. This is happiness indeed, to know God, and to love him, and to be beloved by him. This was Christ's undertaking, to reduce man from his wanderings to God, that he might live in the knowledge and love of God now, and be brought into his immediate presence, that he might live in perfect vision and fruition of him hereafter. Our reconciliation with God through Christ is a great happiness: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' But the great good is when our nature is perfected, and by its most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object; and is most capable of his most perfect communications of grace to us, and shall for ever remain in the presence, sight, and love of God. Now what is sweeter than this blessed presence? Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

[2.] The way he taketh to accomplish these ends. There is his work without us and his work within us.

(1.) His work without us is either on earth or in heaven; on earth by his death, in heaven by his intercession. On earth by his death, and so he delivered us from all evil: Isa. liii. 5, '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.' And bringeth us to the enjoyment of all good: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might

bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' Christ's great end is to teach us to know and love God, and bring us to him. In heaven he is mindful of his office; it is his work in heaven to do mankind the greatest good: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' After he had vindicated the justice and holiness of God, and repaired the breaches made by sin, he is gone to heaven to finish the work of man's salvation by his constant intercession.

(2.) His work within us; he doth by his Spirit renew and sanctify us, and make us more like God; and so we are fitted for the vision and fruition of him. This sanctifying Spirit is said to be 'shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6; and Christ is said to be 'ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,' Eph. iv. 10. Our sun in his glory doth continually send down his beams and influences on earth, even the Spirit of the Father, to be the constant agent in the hearts of his people, to renew and heal their natures. Now by this short view you see he hath done all things well in the business of our redemption.

3. In the works of providence. His goodness is exemplified in the acts of daily providence: Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'He loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' There is no part of the world we can come into, but it is filled with the bountiful effects of his goodness to men. If he correct us, it is in a fatherly manner; if he suffer us to be tempted, it is not beyond what we are able to bear; if he afflicteth us with evil, it is for our good; if he deprive us of any comforts, yet he will not wholly leave us comfortless: John xiv. 18, ὀρφάνους, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.' If he cut us off by death, it is to free us from all other calamities, and bring us the sooner to our final happiness in heaven. In short, he is not severe upon all our failings, heareth those that seek to him in their troubles, delivereth the afflicted, succoureth the tempted, bindeth up the broken-hearted; and the short issue of all is, 'He doth all things well.'

Use 1. Let us give God this glory: Hitherto thou hast done all things well which thou hast done; others have found it so: Ps. xxii. 4, 5, 'Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them; they cried, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.' Never did any of his people address themselves to God in vain; all his people have had long experience of his mercy and fidelity; after humble, constant, importunate addresses, they received what they sought for. Now you must come in also with your attestation: Lord, thou hast done all things well. So the saints often do: Ps. xxii. 10, 'I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.' So Moses: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the rock; his work is perfect.' So David: Ps. cxi. 3, 'His work is honourable and glorious.' We were made and redeemed to declare the goodness of the Lord and his mighty works. Man is the mouth of the creation, by whom all the creatures praise God for his wise ordering of all things; it is the business of our lives: 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord,' Ps. cxviii. 17. In heaven we shall

give him this praise, Lord, thou hast done all things well ; there we shall know as we are known.

It is necessary for us—

1. That we may entertain a good opinion of God when he seemeth to deal hardly with his people, and may check temptations of doubting of his providence : Ps. lxxiii. 1, ‘ Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.’ We must hold fast this conclusion, that it be not wrested out of our hands.

2. It is very necessary to breed patience and humble submission under our personal afflictions : Ps. cxix. 71, ‘ It is good for me that I have been afflicted.’ There was a certain Jew called Gamzu, because, whatever beset him, he was wont to say, ‘ Gamzu, this also shall be for good.’ So let us say, This is good and that too ; nothing is bad that cometh from a good God.

3. That we may hope and depend on God that it will be so for the future. Our heavenly Father doeth all things well, therefore he will give light in darkness, comfort in trouble, and life in death ; nothing raiseth our trust so much as to be persuaded that God loveth us and careth for us, and will do all things for the best. Christ urgeth no more but this to suppress our distrustful cares : Mat. vi. 32, ‘ Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things.’ You have a father that is not ignorant and unmindful of you. What he will do Christ saith not, but that must be left to his fatherly love.

4. God expecteth from you the glory of his works. Not that God is affected with praise, but it doeth you good, and increaseth your love and esteem of him, to observe how he guideth all things for good : Rom. viii. 28, ‘ All things shall work together for good to them that love God.’

Use 2. Let us imitate our Lord, and learn of him to do all things well ; for Christ’s excellencies must leave an impression upon us. In our religion all is good. There is a good God : Ps. cxix. 68, ‘ Thou art good and doest good.’ From him cometh every good and perfect gift : James i. 17, ‘ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variable-ness, nor shadow of turning.’ A good Christ ; you have heard how he went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. There is a good Spirit : Neh. ix. 20, ‘ Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.’ And what is the operation of the Spirit of Christ ? First, to make us to be good : ‘ We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works,’ Eph. ii. 10 ; and then to quicken us to do good : Eph. v. 9, ‘ For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.’ There is a good word : Heb. vi. 5, ‘ And have tasted the good word of God.’ Now what remaineth but that we be a good people ? Goodness should be the constitution of our hearts, and doing good the business of our lives. Certainly that is a good religion which only employeth men to do good. Now we must not do good coldly and carelessly, but with a zeal : Titus ii. 14, ‘ Zealous of good works.’ And to whom must we do good ? Gal. vi. 10, ‘ As ye have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith.’ Nay, your enemies are not excepted : Mat. v. 44, ‘ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless

them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' And this doing good God expecteth from us in every relation and capacity. Magistrates, because of their eminent and public influence: Rom. xiii. 4, 'For he is the minister of God to thee for good.' So also ministers: 'Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts xi. 24, and therefore 'much people were added unto the Lord.' A man of a selfish, froward spirit hath no true zeal for God, nor compassion over souls, and is likely to do little good. And we must do good to one another: Rom. xv. 14, 'I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' Husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, all are to do good in their several relations: Eph. vi. 8, 'Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' They that are not good in their relations are nowhere else good; and therefore every one should make conscience of being good, and doing good in his relation, calling, and place; and so if there be any good thing done, though it be by a poor bond-servant, God will take notice of it.

Now the motives to this are these—

1. God's great goodness to you in Christ. God will be served not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; and we must serve him not as slaves, but as children; therefore his love should be instead of all motives to us: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' With all readiness of mind we should set ourselves to do good, out of a deep sense of his goodness to us in Christ.

2. The great reward which is appointed for us: Gal. vi. 9, 'And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' His free grace hath provided a rich reward for those that imitate Christ's example; they shall enter into the glory he is possessed of, and then they shall enjoy the full comfort of their laborious and expensive obedience.

3. This will honour our profession in the eyes of the world. Goodness and usefulness gaineth esteem much more than a rigid innocency: Rom. v. 7, 'Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.'

4. You will mollify the hearts even of your most froward adversaries: Rom. xii. 21, 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Goodness will reconcile their minds to the truth; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on their heads, melt them into kindness and gentleness.
