

God, by the grace purchased by Christ: Heb. xiii. 21, 'Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' The rule is the will of God. This will is observed when we do every good work; this done is pleasing unto God.

4. Consider the profitableness of obedience, and how much it conduceth to our good: Deut. xiii. 10, 'To keep the commandments of God and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good.' Our labour is not lost or misspent. A godly course is refreshed by many sweet experiences for the present, and will bring in a full reward for the future: Ps. cxix. 56, 'This I had because I kept thy precepts.'

SERMON XXX.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.—
1 JOHN iii. 23.

THE apostle instanceth what commandments we should observe if we would keep a good conscience. Two are mentioned—faith in Christ, and an unfeigned love to the brethren; both are introduced by a preface suitable to the occasion. Therefore I shall first explain the preface; secondly, the particular duties mentioned.

First, In the preface take notice—

1. Of the unity, agreement, and fair accord between these duties; though two duties are mentioned, yet but one commandment.

2. The excellency of them, 'His commandment.'

1. The unity and agreement between gospel duties. He had said 'commandments' in the former verse; and here are two duties specified, yet these are not 'his commandments,' but 'his commandment,' a change of numbers often used by the sacred writers. The whole gospel is but one commandment: 1 Tim. i. 5, 'The end of the commandment is charity;' that is, of the gospel institution.

2. The excellency; this is the commandment which is signalised by Christ's authority, and expressly charged on us, and to which other duties are reduced. It is such an expression as you have, John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' The context there standeth thus; thousands being fed by a miracle, many followed him for the loaves, therefore Christ telleth them of spiritual bread. He came down from heaven, not to supply hungry stomachs, but to comfort hungry consciences: 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth for ever, which the Son of man shall give you; for him hath the Father sent.' That direction occasioned a question, What shall we do that we may labour or work the works of God? Christ answereth them, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' There is a *meiosis* in the expression; you talk of works, this is the work. As if a man should come to a charitable physician, Sir, I am grievously tormented

with such a disease, what shall I give you for the cure? and his answer should be, This is that you shall give me, to be confident of my skill and fidelity to help you, and use the means which I prescribe for your recovery: 'This is the work of God.' So here; this is the commandment.

Secondly, The particular duties mentioned are faith in Christ and love to the brethren.

1. Faith in Jesus Christ, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. The name of Christ is Christ himself, or Christ considered as revealed in the gospel; then we believe in the name of Jesus Christ when we believe all that is revealed in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, assent with an affiance to the doctrine concerning his person, offices, benefits, and the way how we come to attain them according to the covenant of grace. This is to believe in his name, to assent to what is said concerning his person and offices, and to consent to deal with him upon these terms, depending upon him to obtain these benefits in the appointed way. The same expression is used, John iii. 18, 'Because he believeth not in the name of the Son of God.' So Acts x. 43, 'Through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive the remission of sins.' So John xx. 31, 'These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life through his name;' that is, obtain salvation according to the way appointed in the scriptures or the new covenant.

2. For love: 'And love one another, as he gave commandment.' By 'one another,' he meaneth principally that christians should love one another. Christians are bound to love all men, even their enemies, Mat. v. 44. Yet seeing God is to be loved chiefly, and others in subordination to him, as Mat. xxii. 38, 39, it followeth that those ought to have most of our love who love God most, and are most beloved of him, and are made partakers of the divine nature, and resemble God most. But not only the duty, but the manner is here enforced: 'As he hath given us commandment;' and that is, that when the case requireth it, we must lay down our lives for the brethren: John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.' There is the substance of the duty, and then it followeth, 'As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' There is the manner again: John xv. 12, 13, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you: greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' meaning thereby, not only to commend his own love to us, to heighten our gratitude, but also to commend his example to us, and to heighten our charity and love to the brethren.

Doct. That faith in Christ and brotherly love are things intimately conjoined, and must always go together.

1. I shall speak of the nature of these two graces or duties apart.

2. Show how intimately they are and must be conjoined; and there speak—(1.) Of the inseparable connection between faith and love; (2.) The order, how the one groweth out of the other, as the effect out of the cause; first faith, then love.

I. I shall speak distinctly of the graces and duties; and there—

First, Of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. A subject necessary to be treated of, because the scripture is so full in assuring pardon and life

to believers, and because christians do so often ask us what that saving faith is by which they may assure their title and interest; and because a mistake in this point is of a dangerous nature. Therefore to open to you the faith by which the just do live cannot be displeasing to you. I shall do it in these considerations or propositions.

1. That faith in Christ and in his word is reckoned distinct from believing in God: John xiv. 1, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' We believe in God as an all-sufficient fountain of grace, and in Christ as an all-sufficient mediator, whom he hath sent to recover the lost world: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' To know God as the only supreme being to be worshipped, obeyed and enjoyed, and the Lord Jesus as our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as our guide, to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the benefits of pardon and life, which life is to be begun here and perfected in heaven.

2. That Christ executeth the office of mediator as king, priest, and prophet; for he is not only said to be sent, but anointed: Acts x. 38, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.' As priests, prophets, and kings were used to be anointed, so was Jesus Christ anointed, thence called both Christ and Messiah, which signifieth anointed: John xx. 31, 'That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;' and Acts ii. 36, 'God hath made that Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ.' Now one of these offices concerneth his mediation with God, the other his mediation with men. His priesthood implieth all that good which he procureth for us by his mediation with the Father. His prophetic and kingly office concerns his mediation with us, to bring us to be partakers, and interested in these things; both must be considered by faith: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Though his prophetic office be there only mentioned, yet his regal must not be excluded; for all truths are not laid down in one place. Both are mentioned, Isa. lv. 4, 'Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people,' *i.e.*, prophet and king. Now we must not so reflect upon his mediation with God as to overlook his mediation with men; for a mediator is not of one, but must deal with both parties; and therefore Jesus is a saviour, not only as our ransom and surety, but also as our teacher and king. Therefore they deceive you, and understand not the nature of faith, that make it conversant about one office only, as those do that confine it to the death and righteousness of Christ, and pardon of sin, and promise of pardon; as if faith only served to comfort them with the assurance of God's love, and were but a claim and application of privileges: this is to mangle Christ and the gospel, to reflect upon his mediation with God only, and not with man. Or if there be any consideration of his mediation with man, they rend his prophetic office from his kingly, while they look only to the privileges of the covenant, do not receive Christ Jesus as the Lord, that they may be ruled by his authority, and live by his laws. Nay, in his prophetic, they abstract privileges from duties, and promises from precepts, and so do not follow the order prescribed in his word and teaching, but take up a Christ according to their own fancy, and mis-

take a dream for faith. No; the Christ represented to us as an object of faith is a priest who died for us, and representeth his death and merit by his constant intercession, and, as the great prophet of the church, hath taught us the way of life, and as a king hath required obedience at our hands, under the promise of eternal life and the punishment of eternal death, binding us to do all that he hath required, that we may obtain the effect of his promises.

3. That the great business of the Mediator in the discharge of these offices is to recover us to God, which is done both by redemption and salvation. By redemption: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Salvation: John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' Now this is either begun or perfected; begun by regeneration and reconciliation. By regeneration: Titus iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' By reconciliation: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' And perfected in heaven, which is our complete salvation, or salvation to the uttermost: 1 Tim. i. 15, 16, 'This is a true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.' Then a full and mutual complacency: we delight in God, and God in us; we love him, and God loves us; we love him perfectly, and we have the perfect reception of his love to us, and the benefits flowing thence.

4. That this grace of recovery and restoration is revealed and declared to us in the word; for the gospel word is both the means and the matter of our faith. It is the means: 'For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' Rom. x. 17. And Christ prayeth, John xvii. 20, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word.' And it is the matter and object of our faith; for in the text it is said, we believe in the name of the Son of God; that is, all which is revealed concerning him in the scriptures, and the way of salvation and recovery offered by him. Christ is the object of faith, and the covenant of grace is the object of faith, called therefore, 'The word of faith,' Rom. x. 8. Now we make a gospel to ourselves if we pitch upon benefits only or promises only; for the word of faith consists of precepts as well as promises, and requires duties as well as it offers benefits. Therefore, as we expect pardon and life from God, we must perform the duties due from us to God and man.

5. That the acts of faith are three about this word of truth, or Christ revealed therein—assent, consent, trust or dependence.

[1.] Assent to the truth of the christian doctrine, that Jesus is such as the word representeth him to be, the Christ and the Saviour of the world, who came to recover us to God: John vi. 69, 'We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' This is the fundamental principle which supporteth all religion, and

enliveneth all the lesser truths, that they have the greater influence upon our hearts. This begets firm adherence to Christ, whatever temptations we have to the contrary: 1 John v. 5, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' Many have a human credulity that find no such effects, but not a cordial and hearty assent wrought in them by the Holy Ghost. They take up this opinion upon custom, education, and common inducements, but not as a divine testimony brought to us in the word, and sealed and confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit.

[2.] Consent to God's offer of Christ, that he may be our Lord and Saviour: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his name;' Col. ii. 6, 'And as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' Or to the covenant of grace, called 'A receiving the word,' Acts ii. 41. Accepting the benefits offered us, as our only happiness, resolving on the duties required as our constant work.

[3.] Trust or dependence on Christ, or as putting ourselves into his hands, that we may be recovered and saved from sin and punishment, and brought home to God in perfect happiness and glory: Eph. i. 11, 12, 'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ;' 2 Tim. i. 12, 'For I know whom I believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'

6. The modification of these acts is this, that this assent, joined with consent, is cordial and hearty: Acts viii. 37, 'If thou believest with all thine heart;' and both accompanied with a fiducial trust. Now this trust is practical, so as, forsaking all other things, we give up ourselves to the conduct of his word and Spirit.

[1.] It produceth mortification and self-denial. This is included in the nature of faith; for faith implieth a carrying off the heart from things visible and temporal to things spiritual, invisible, and eternal; in a recess from the world and worldly things, and an access to God and heaven: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'For we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;' 1 John v. 4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' We must forsake all other happiness and hopes in confidence of God's promise through Jesus Christ; in vow and resolution, as soon as we believe; actually, when anything in the world is inconsistent with our duty to Christ and fidelity to him: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it;' Luke xiv. 33, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' You cannot continue constant in the profession of Christ, nor uniformly perform the duties he requireth of you, unless your hearts be weaned from the world. Christ propoundeth the true happiness, to draw us off from the false happiness. Our accepting the one is a kind of quitting the other, or a lessen-

ing of it at least in our esteem, as a thing unworthy to come in competition with Christ or the benefits offered by him, or to obstruct the duty we owe to him.

[2.] A devoting and giving up ourselves to the conduct of his word and Spirit. Certainly all those that believe in the Son of God put themselves into his hands, taking his will for the rule of their lives and actions, and look to be kept by his power unto salvation: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' His word is their rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule.' His Spirit their guide: Rom. viii. 14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' His precepts show their duty, and by the strength of his Spirit they perform it; so that faith in the Son of God is such a trusting ourselves in his hands as begets fidelity to him. Faith and faithfulness are nearer akin than so, and we must trust Christ if we mean to be true to him. We have sincerity enough in the promise, and fidelity enough in the thing promised.

Secondly, Love to the brethren is the next thing to be opened: 'That ye love one another, as he gave commandment.'

1. There must be an internal affection. He doth not only press us to do good to one another, but to love one another. A real love there must be, otherwise the most glorious actions are insignificant as to our acceptance with God: 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3. A sincere love there must be to them for God's sake, for the goodness he hath endued them with, and for the service they may do him, or the relation they have to him as creatures or children; not for our own sakes, to barter courtesies with them. A selfish man can faithfully love none but himself, for he loveth all others for himself.

2. The persons; we must 'love one another.' We are to love all things with respect to God, his natural image in all his creatures, and his moral and spiritual image in his children. There is a love to every one without exception to whom there is an opportunity offered of doing them good. When the wounded man was passed by by the priest and Levite, the Samaritan performed the office of a neighbour; and Christ biddeth us go and do likewise, Luke x. 36, 37. But because love to our neighbour supposeth love to God, and floweth from it as a stream from a fountain, therefore chiefly to the children of God: 1 John v. 1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments;' 1 John iv. 21, 'This commandment we have from him, that he that loveth God, loveth his brother also.' We ought not to live to ourselves only, but for the benefit of one another, especially of our fellow-christians.

3. For the manner of exercising this love, it must be in a self-denying way; it is a Christ-like love, not only as we should love ourselves, but as Christ hath loved us; that is, to seek their benefit with our own loss. In two things Christ showed his self-denial—in washing his disciples' feet, and dying for sinners. By the first he taught us that, if we may be serviceable to one another, we should stoop to the meanest offices, John xiii. 3, 4. Surely this is more binding upon us who are all mutual servants to one another, as being fellow-members

of one body, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26 ; therefore we ought to employ ourselves in all the duties of love to our neighbour, though never so mean and never so laborious. The apostle speaketh of the labour of love, Heb. vi. 10. Though it be laborious and irksome to the flesh, yet the will and love of God must sweeten it. The apostle saith, Gal. v. 13, 14, 'By love serve one another, for all the law is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Love will make us stoop to the meanest duties, to the meanest persons. The other example is in dying for sinners ; so ought we to love the brethren at the dearest rates : 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' To prefer their good before our conveniencies and natural desires, especially where their spiritual good and the glory of God is concerned ; but alas ! few know how to prefer God's glory and their neighbour's good before the fulfilling their own fleshly lusts.

4. The fruits of this love are usually seen in giving and forgiving ; giving or parting with our estates for their relief : this I largely pleaded, verse the 17th ; and it is elsewhere pleaded from Christ's example : 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that through his poverty you might be made rich.' And he telleth them that this he said to prove the sincerity of their love ; if love be hearty, it will discover itself this way. So in forgiving, Eph. iv. 32, 'Forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' God hath forgiven greater miscarriages and disingenuities, Mat. xviii. ; therefore we must forgive with a readiness to do all duties of love and kindness to those that have done the wrong ; yea, none of us are so free from infirmities but that we need forgiveness ourselves, not only from God but men.

II. How these are conjoined, faith in Christ, and love to the brethren. And here, first, Of the connection, secondly, Of the order.

First, The connection. There is another sum and abridgment of the commandments given by Christ : Mat. xxii. 36, 37, 'Master, which is the great commandment in the law ? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' Other things are mentioned by another apostle : Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' All have their use, for they speak accommodately to their purpose ; Christ of the sum of the law given by Moses, Paul of the sum of evangelical doctrine or covenant, John with respect to the purpose of his exhortation : he might have reduced the sum of the gospel to one head, faith in Christ ; yet for more distinct explication's sake includeth love also ; and this not without good reason, for these things are often coupled in scripture : Col. i. 4, 'Since we heard of your faith in Jesus Christ, and the love which you have to all the saints.' So Eph. i. 15, 'After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints ;' 2 Thes. i. 3, 'Your faith groweth exceedingly, and your love towards each other aboundeth.' But above all, 2 Tim. i. 3, 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.' Now this connection must be always observed.

1. With respect to our own personal safety and the good of the church. Faith relateth more to our personal benefit: justification, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith;' sanctification, Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' salvation, 1 Peter i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' Love to the good of others, that we may have a tender care of the duty, honour, and prosperity of Christ's church. We are to build up ourselves in our most holy faith; and we are also to love and edify the body, which is by love, and that which every joint supplieth, Eph. iv. 16. Surely their welfare should be regarded as your own. Love is called by the apostle, Col. iii. 14, 'The bond of perfection.' Love is the tie and bond which knitteth all the members of the church together, that their several gifts and graces may be employed for the public, whereas otherwise they serve for mutual prejudice. Without love we should, as a besom unbound, fall to pieces; there would be no peace and safety, but only malice and reviling, and that too often mingled with our worship.

2. This connection is necessary, that grace may be found saving and sincere; for faith without love is dead, James ii. 17; and love without faith is no saving grace, but a natural inclination, but a little good nature: so that faith and love are in a manner the rivals of a christian, without which he cannot walk; and if any one be wanting, the other is dead and withered.

Second, For the order, first faith, then love; for faith produceth love, and the cause is before the effect. Faith apprehending the love of God in Christ, inflameth the heart in love to God again; and then we keep his commandments, and love other things for God's sake, Gal. v. 6. When faith hath kindled in our souls love to God, then we love God above all, we shall love God in all, and that most which hath most of God. Surely if you love God as God, it will teach you to love the brethren; the example of God's love in Christ will make some impression upon you, and you will love all that belongeth to God in the world.

Use 1. To reprove those that do little regard the planting, growth, or exercise of faith and love; you are not truly subject to God if you decline any of his commandments, much more if you neglect the great commandments of faith and love.

1. By many faith is little minded, believing in Christ is a mystical truth. Moral obedience is evident by natural light; for the law was written on the hearts of men, Rom. ii. 14, as well as in the book of God. Things seen by a double medium are greater. We are not sensible of the evil of unbelief, as we are of immoralities; but now the gospel is confirmed by the Spirit, it is a great sin: John xvi. 9, 'Of sin, because they believe not on me;' and a dangerous sin: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth not shall be damned;' John iii. 18, 19, 'He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' A double condemnation; we are under condemnation already; the sentence of the law is not reversed till we

believe in Christ, it is ratified in the gospel court if we refuse the remedy. Now Christ is come into the world, sufficiently revealed to be Lord and Saviour by the gospel, confirmed by miracles; therefore, this is a business of greater necessity than is usually minded or thought of.

2. And so love to the brethren is very rare: many are quite strangers to it, the best are very imperfect in it; witness the cruelties and frauds that are practised in the world, and the unmercifulness that christians use one to another upon all occasions. Alas! we that should be plentiful in doing good to one another, can hardly live quietly one by another; we that should pardon injuries, offer them, and instead of turning the other cheek to the smiter, we smite ourselves, as if we did bid defiance to all Christ's laws and counsels. We live as if he commanded us to be treacherous, envious, hurtful, designing others' ruin and destruction, and forbidding us to be tender-hearted, compassionate, ready to help and to do good to one another; as if love were too much recommended to us, and were known better by slandering, reviling, and backbiting, rather than by tenderness of each other's welfare and reputation; as if Christ had said, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, not because you love, but because ye hate one another.

Use 2. To exhort us to be tender of this double commandment.

1. Believing in the name of the Son of God; charge it on yourselves as your work when you are sinning, This is none of my business or work. The work of God is to believe in him whom he hath sent; that we should recover out of sin by Christ, and abandon it more and more, not live in the practice of it. When you are hunting after the world, or indulging carnal pleasures, this is not your work. God and heaven are the great objects faith is conversant about, and Christ is the means to bring me thither; nay, other duties are not the commandment, for without faith all is nothing; for in vain do men busy themselves about particular duties when they neglect the main, Heb. xi. 6. This, if sincere, draweth other things along with it; faith is the first stone in the spiritual building, 2 Peter i. 5, 6; faith is at the bottom of all: he that is to entertain a king will make reckoning of his train. All the privileges depend on this, pardoned, sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18; glorified, John iii. 16; communion with Christ, Eph. iii. 17. All blessings, Mat. xv. 28. God is at liberty to do for us what we desire; otherwise tied up by his own methods and instituted order: Mark vi. 5, 'And he could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief.'

Let it be your constant work, 1 John v. 13. No men believe so much but they may believe more; and the more you grow in faith the more you please God and honour him: Rom. iv. 20, 'Being strong in faith, giving glory to God.' And have more comfort in ourselves: Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing.' The more you believe, the more you know you do believe, and the more will God own your faith: John i. 50, 'Believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.' Weakness of faith is punished as well as total unbelief: Num. xx. 12, 'Because ye believed not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye

shall not bring the congregation into the land which I have given them.'

2. For love. We should grow in love as well as faith; he that maketh conscience of the one will make conscience of the other also; both are recommended by the same authority; the one is a necessary effect of the other. Can a man have a due sense of God's love, and not love what belongeth to God?

SERMON XXXI.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby know we that he abideth in us, by his Spirit which he hath given to us.—1 JOHN iii. 24.

HERE is the further happiness of those that make conscience of an entire and uniform obedience to God's holy will—(1.) Access to God in prayer; (2.) Success, ver. 22; (3.) Constant communion with God.

In the words, first, we have an excellent privilege, 'And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.'

Secondly, The proof, fruit, and evidence of it, 'And hereby know we that he abideth in us, by his Spirit which he hath given to us.'

1. The privilege, 'Dwelleth in him, and he in him.' Dwelling noteth the continued presence and influence of Christ.

2. The proof hereby: God is where his Spirit is. Mark, he doth not prove the former, our dwelling in God, for that is our duty as well as our privilege, but his dwelling in us, that needeth most to be confirmed: and in proving that he proveth both; for Christ dwelleth in none but those that dwell in him. The first is all we can handle at present.

Doct. A near, intimate, and constant conjunction with Christ is the privilege of those who make conscience of keeping the commandments.

First, What is this near, intimate and constant conjunction with Christ? It is expressed here by a mutual inhabitation.

1. Dwelling noteth nearness and intimacy; it is not dwelling by one another, but dwelling in one another: 'You in me, and I in you,' John xiv. 20; which noteth presence and influence. So John vi. 56, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' As meat is turned into the eater's substance, so they and Christ become one. Christ is present with and in the believer, that is, graciously present; not in substance at all, as man; for 'the heaven of heavens must contain him till the days of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord,' Acts iii. 21. Nor in substance only as God, for so he is everywhere: Jer. xxiii. 24, 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' But by his gracious operation and special influence upon them, whereby he conveyeth life, strength, and glory to them. Life: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the