



SERMON V.*

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, &c.—Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

BELOVED in Christ, here there is, 1. A conclusion drawn from the doctrine of the former chapter, "*Let us run our race.*" 2. A reason, Many have gone before us, a whole cloud; it is a fair market-gate, a high street to heaven. 3. The way how we may come good speed in our race, get the gold, and win the bell, is set down in two things, viz. :

I. What we must quit for the gold. *a.* All weights and clogs of this clay world that retard us in our journey, and make our race toilsome. *b.* Sin that hangs fast upon us, and beguiles us.

II. What shall we do? What rule shall we follow? What airth shall we look to?

The Apostle says, Know ye not how they look who run a race? They look not over their shoulder, but ever straight before them, towards the end of their race. Look ye to Jesus in the end of your way. Now, the Apostle seems to go a little off the text: he sees a friend, even Jesus, and he cannot pass by

* Preached at a Preparation for the Communion, at Kirkcudbright, in the year 1634.

Him, but must speak a word of Him. In your race I shall let you see two things in Jesus.

1. Efficacy and power. He is the captain and leader of your souls in the course of faith, and He will not tire: when He begins, He will also crown and perfect your faith.

2. I will let you see another thing in Jesus: A good example. How wan He? His heart longed to be at the gold, as yours should do. He saw the glory in the end of His way. He suffered both pain and shame, and so was seen on it: and He is now set down on the throne of God. Now then, the Apostle, still dwelling on Christ (for he cannot win off Him) gives them a new exhortation to hold on; in which there is included the following things:—

1. Consider what that lovely person suffered of all men—how they gave Him the lie, and spake against Him. 2. Consider how little ye have suffered; ye have not yet resisted, and striven unto blood, as Christ did. 3. He gives a reason why they should do so; for fear they give over, faint, and fall a swoon. Having in chapter xi. spoken of the fathers who wan to heaven, through patient suffering, he compares them (v. 1.) to the cloud that led the Israelites, by day, through the wilderness. He sets the example of those before them to encourage them.

We see the way to heaven is now a high market gate, and paved by hundreds and thousands who have gone before us; and we should follow after. Are ye wanting a settled house and dwelling in the world? Then set forward, look for a city above. Indeed, says Abraham, I shall be witness of that, that ye shall receive the recompense of reward. Will ye rather suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Moses says,

I shall be witness then, that ye shall win home safe and sound. In the way ye may see a whole cloud of them as witnesses to lead you through the wilderness. Where away* can ye go, or what can befall you in your journey to glory, but in which the Lord's saints have gone before you? Are ye your alone,† and seeking God amongst many who live as they list? So was Noah, a walker with God, when all flesh had corrupted their ways. Let it be true ye have all taken from you goods, children, and health. So was Job handled! So the saints have set up steps, and way-marks, at every turn in your way; and cry, Ride about. And howbeit now, many fools think to win through at the nearest, yet they win not, but stick there. The saints' going before, in the way, is a great benefit to us; their falls, and the ill steps that cumbered them, ye must beware of. Ye must hold off adultery, for David stuck in that mire. Hold off drunkenness, for Noah and Lot wet their feet in that dub. Beware of mocking and persecuting the saints, for Paul's ship had almost sunk in that quicksand. See these dead carcasses lying on the road: Judas, Demas, Hymeneus, and Philetus, brake their necks, by attempting to go to Canaan and falling off again.

Make this use of holy men's lives, here condemned, who followed the devil, but were recovered again. Beware of those temptations and sins which so easily beset them. Here is a cloud of witnesses; the world and the fashions thereof, they did not follow. (Rom. xii. 2) "Be not conformed to this world," and the guises‡ thereof; and yet ye can justify yourselves in the daily transgression

* To what country.

† Solitary.

‡ Fashions.

of this divine prohibition. Wherefore is vanity in marriages and banquets? "It is the fashion," say they. Proud Scotland! poor Scotland! near cut out to thy skin; it is worm-eaten. Wherefore is such vanity in apparel? so that women are become indecent, and men like monsters. Men are taking whole baronies of land on their backs? "It's the fashion," say they. O! proud and poor Scotland; men are cut out to their skin, and women want not vanity enough; but are not cut to the bone. And wherefore comes swearing, and drinking, see ye not? No otherwise than from the fashion. "It is the fashion," say they: but if ye will follow such a cloud of fashionable witnesses, let me conclude ye will go to hell also; for I can assure you that is the fashion. Ye may keep that excuse till the day of judgment; and when God asks what ye have done, and wherefore ye did so; say ye, "Lord, for nothing but the fashion," and see how ye will win off.

"*Let us run the race.*"—But how shall we run? So run that ye may obtain. Many run upon hope of heaven, and get hell in the end. But hear what the Spirit of God says, Lay aside every weight; every clog. What is the weight? The world, the love of riches, honour, and lusts. He speaks to us as to men having their back burden of clay, or clogged with heavy lumps of earth, and great tatters and bunches of the world's glory. Nay, a number of devils, pride, lust, and covetousness, hang upon us. Give them a shake, says he; down with them. Let the ground bear all.

How hardly do cunning^o men enter into the king-

* Clever.

dom of heaven ! Methinks I see three sorts of men beguiled in their race to glory.

1. Some go not a step at all in the way to heaven ; for, going too near the hedge, they get a thorn in their foot, which swells it so that they must sit down, and lay it on their knee : and they sit there, and never make any further attempt towards heaven, till night come, and there they lie. One of those says (Job xxi. 15), "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" They say in plain terms, God is but a poor Master to follow ; it's long ere he be rich who follows Him ; therefore we will have none of Him. Luke xiv. 19, "One said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused," &c. "And the Pharisees who heard these things mocked at Him."

2. Another sort run a start after Christ for a time, as Judas, who in men's eyes followed him, till the devil meets him in the race, casts down a purse, and breaks his leg ; and syne went he over the brae. In John vi. ye see a number following Christ for the loaves. And Demas galloped awhile after Paul and the gospel, but he thought it a hungry trade ; and the world crossed his road, and after it he went. I say, The world, like a fair strumpet in her silks and velvets, came in his way, and gave him a kiss, and he ran to the gate,* saying, Sorrow have my part of the gospel and Paul, any more ! So Paul says (2 Tim. iv. 10), "Demas hath forsaken me, and has embraced this present world." But

3. Another sort are those who have some more love to the race, and yet they cannot want the world.

* The road.

Like the young man (Matt. xix. 21, 22) who came to Christ and said, he had kept the commandments from his youth; when Christ bade him sell all that he had, and give his goods to the poor, and come and follow Him, he went away with his heart in his hose, looking as if his nose were bleeding, for he had great possessions. So there are a number who would climb up the mountain to heaven, with thousands by the year, and with baronies, and a great bunch of clay, bound hard and fast upon the neck of their souls: and they think to hold foot with Christ, ride as hard as He pleases, and twenty stone weight of clay upon their soul! But they will be all mistaken; they will burst and die by the way; and shall never win to the top of the hill. Ask at them how they will win up to heaven, with their lusts upon their backs; they will say, "God will draw us, He will help and bear us." Indeed God makes His own people ride in chariots with Himself, and draws them (Cant. i. 2). But will ye make Christ a pack-horse to carry your clay, and your lusts? How long is it since He has carried our pack-mantle! Believe me, he is no cadger-horse. Demas and Judas, and the like, would have ridden after Christ, with all their bags of clay; but ken ye what Christ did with them? He threw them and their clay off at the broadside, and left them lying there, and posted away.

Question. What then shall we do to be quit of these weights? In answer,

1. *Direction.* The world is a foul way, like deep-watery new-tilled ground, where pound weights hang to every hecl of the traveller, and retard him; and as he shakes off one, another comes on, so that he cannot go fast on his way. Now the affections are the feet of the soul; take heed to your feet, and come

off the deep-wet land. Use the world as if ye used it not. There is a dry way to heaven; hold ye off the deep way, and be content with food and raiment. Go ye the way that Christ and the saints went before you; who scarce ever wet their feet. Indeed Jesus was never wet-shod in the world; He had so good mind of His errand, and His home, that the world got no room in His heart. They who will not keep this clean dry causeway, it is no marvel to see them stick in the miry world, be drowned, and never win home. It is with many, as was said (Hos. ii. 2), Their adulteries lie between their breasts; the world in a great bunch lies betwixt their breasts all night. Is it any wonder to see such heavy-headed mardels,* get the mell† in this race? like stiff horses, unmeet for a journey. And how can they once give a trot? Nay, they but walk in a circle. The

2. *Direction.* Satan and the world will play you foul play, and cast their feet before you, and give you a fall. But care not for that, rise again. But, I pray you, beware of sore falls, or sins against the conscience, light, and love. For the conscience is like an earthen vessel if ye break it, ye will not mend it again. Some, in their race, give their conscience such a backstroke, that they break their legs, and are never meet for the race again. But, whatever ye do, keep the conscience whole.

3. *Direction.* Cast off all things that make you heavy: make yourself light, that ye may be nimble, skip, and spur away. Run, run, look not behind you, remember Lot's wife. Although ye should be like to

* Unwieldy lumps; either from the French for a kerb-stone, or from the Gaelic, "mairdil."

† Maul; not the prize.

burst, tarry not. Ye will mend of a sweat, and a heat. God has a napkin to rub the sweat of you, and He has a chair and a cushion for you, against the race be ended, and He will lay your head in His bosom. Take a little pains in the day, for I promise you, ye shall get rest at even.

“Cast off the sin that doth so easily beset us;” or goes round about us.—This is the body of sin that remains in our nature; he speaks of it, as if one had us clasped in his arms. For original sin has us in fetters as captives; it is a thing we cannot win from, go where we please. It is like a ghost, ever in our eye: behind us, pulling us back; before us, standing in our way; at our right hand, hindering us to hear, pray, believe, repent, hope. It is like the wind in our face, or in the face of a weak traveller, that blows him some steps back, where he goes one forward. It is as a man going round about us. It is in the mind, darkening the judgment; in the will, thraving it in the contrary way. God bids us walk in the lowest room, down in the affections: but we do the contrary. And this sin, as weedbind goes about a tree, wraps about us in every good way. It is a serpent biting our heel, and cries, A lion in the way. When God draws, sin holds under, at meat, drink, and sleep. It is a joker;* it promises us much, but gives us the wind, and yet we believe it.

But here a question may be asked. How does the Apostle bid us shake off this sin, which dwells in us so long as we live? it is death and the kirkyard that makes us quit of this sin: How is it then that we can shake it off?

Answer first. The dominion of it we break by

* A mocker.

grace. Every woe heart * we have, for this indwelling sin, breaks a bone of old Adam, gives his back a crack, and makes him cry. As we repent, and advance in holiness, we break a leg, or an arm of this sin ; but for the root of it, God only, in death, can pluck it out. Yet we must be hacking, and cutting the branches, and roots of it, else we cannot make progress in our race. We must not take this defiling sin forward with us in our race. We must leave it when we start, and deliver it over to Christ, that He may put it on His cross, and nail it to His gallows.

Answer second. He speaks of sin, as of a thing going about us, like a stone wall, in our very way to heaven. Till, by regeneration, Christ make a gap in the wall, that we may pass over, there is no possibility of going one foot. And even when the wall is broken, we shall see this sin hanging on our legs and arms. This sin keeps a lodge by the gate for Satan, and is a common robber, who slays many by the way. 1. Some it tricks out of the way, and lays asleep in security ; like a drunken traveller, who sleeps in a moor, till the sun be down, then he awakes from his sleep and cries. 2. It blinds some, as Paul, while a Pharisee, and Papists, and chases them a wrong way (to hell instead of heaven), when they make a fashion of repentance to slay their sins ; and go again to their old pass. Such are those who, with willingness, walk softly, and go to sin again. Now, he sets down the exhortation, "Let us run the race." This is more than to walk and step at our own leisure. Running shews there is a set time, which will go away, a short day ; and that the way is long, and we have much to do to get sin slain. And therefore, we must to the way with

* Every sore heart.

speed, and run fast. In Matt. xi. 12, The kingdom of heaven is said to be taken with violence. Luke xiii. 24, "Strive to enter in." The word is, fight and throng in by force. When God by faith lets a man see heaven, he resolves that in he must be, come what will. Phil. iii. 13, 14, "Reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press forward toward the mark." The word is, "I follow after," I reach out my hand. The apostle means he ran that so his head and breast pressed forward before his feet, and his two arms reached out to catch hold of Christ. To speak so, he chases Christ and heaven, and they seem to flee from him, and he follows: so should we do. Then chase on; the prize seems to flee from us; but it cannot flee further than to heaven's gates, there we will get a hold of it.

But how will they do who say, "Hooly* and fair comes home against even?" And what needs all this din; all these prayers, and these flockings to communions? I hope to be in heaven as soon as the best of you. *Answer.* Beguile not yourselves, Loiterers, and drowsy persons, who go not one mile of twenty in a year; such as walk in a circle round about from pride, to lust; from lust to drunkenness; from that to covetousness; and from that to pride again; like as if they were in a fairies' dance, and run not at all. Can men come to heaven lying on their back? "The good lucky old religion made a sonsy world," say they. Yes, they use religion like a post-horse; as one wears out of fashion, they take another.

Heaven must be taken by violence. He speaks of heaven as of a fortified place, that must be forced

* Cautious and soft.

by fire and sword, ere they render it up. We are like drunken travellers, cast twenty miles behind; sometimes with lust, and sometimes with pride; and such companions cannot be put to the gate. They have a friend to Satan's messengers within; and when they knock, he cries, Coming, Master. Men have gotten a gate of their own ("like neighbour"—another, "the good old use and wont,") to walk as they please; and they are no gluttons of religion, neither of the word, nor communions. Religion, to them, is a good custom of going to the kirk.

"The race set before us."—This race is, by our Lord, set before us in His word; for men set the way to hell before themselves. God's word sets hell before no man as a way that He allows of. He sets not that before us, but behind our back. But men turn their face to hell, and not to heaven. Know, therefore, that this is a race of God's choosing, and not of our own; and the ill roads, the deep waters, the sharp showers, and the bitter, violent winds that are in our face, are of God's disposing. We will not get a better road, than our Lord allows us. He has called us to suffering, and not a stone is in our way by chance; but by His wise providence, all the waters are told; all the streams, the storms, and stones, that are in our way are written in His book. Our wanderings are numbered. It is our comfort that our Lord is looking on. God is like the nobleman who lays the cup in pawn; and appoints the bounds. He sets down the race in His word, with all the way-marks, and sets His Son at the end of the way, holding up in His hand the Crown of glory, and crying to the runners, To the gate with speed! See the prize. Win, and have it. As in a horse race, many are galloping and posting from one sin to another till they be at

hell ! and Satan, out of his own stables, furnishes them with fresh horses; and aye as one tires, immediately another is brought ! But not a step should we go, but as God has directed us. The kirk does not set this race before us : neither may king or kirk change our King Jesus' way, to cast us about dykes, into Rome's foot roads, and Antichrist's by-ways. Scotland's race is set down, Jer. viii. 6, "Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth in to the battle." The commonality are galloping on covetousness, the nobles on oppression, and the whole land on strange apparel; and some of all ranks in the three kingdoms are posting to hell on idolatry and masses.

When God's temple was last measured in this land, much was taken from Him. Either we must change our course, or look (1.) to lose the prize; or (2.) to want Christ's company and convoy; or (3.) to get leave to go all upon horseback in an ill course with patience. There is a necessity for hope and patience to wait on; because, at the place where they start, men see not the gold in the race : but must run the first mile; and not only the first, but to the end, before they sit down. He that falls back, within his own length of the score, or draws his bridle and sets up within a quarter of a mile, loses the race. We see not the prize here, neither is it before our senses, nor hard by our hand, but it is out of sight; we have nothing but God's promise for it, and some small arles.* Behold, "The husbandmen waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth." We must wait on, winter, spring, and summer, till harvest come; for howbeit ill weather, and a rainy season come, yet the husbandman folds not his hands, nor lays up the plough by the walls; and with patience

* Earnest.

works for the harvest ; for he knows God may, and will send a good and full crop. And what of a winter storm ! What albeit they mock and persecute us, and Satan send out his dogs to bark at us, to make us take a house over our heads ? Let us be going forward ; it will blow up fair again. Read Luke xxi. 19, " In patience possess ye your souls ; " verse 28, " Lift up your heads ; for the day of your redemption draweth nigh. " This condemns such as will not run one foot in this race, except the gold be in their hand, and they will have God paying interest, and giving wages in hand. But faith trusts God, and if ye get but one kiss of Him in this life, or the welcome of His bowels, with a sweet smile, and embrace in His arms, it is worth all ye can suffer for Him in this life. Got not Abraham a promise of the land of Canaan, and yet got it not in this life, but dwelt in tents, and hung by hope ! Ay, ye will not play, except God give you heaven in ycur hand ; as if God were a child, to give you the garland, ere the race be run. No, God's on-waiters come to honour in God's court ; the more the good servant is faithful he has the more to crave. He who takes all at once, and forenails* all before the term, will be a poor man. We, like fools, would forenail our heaven ; but it is best that God keeps all until the term day ; for he is a rich servant who, in the end, has his heaven to crave. No marvel then, that patience be needful. Satan runs up and down like a great warship, with twenty pieces of ordnance, shooting at all who are sailing for Canaan ; and roaring out, Surrender. But give not up ; suffer, suffer, take a shot, hold out Christ's white flag ; Christ will mend the gap that Satan's bullet has made. We fear ill

* Spends before he gets the money.

upon the land, for the abuse of the gospel; and indeed that there will be an onset. Have patience and ye will win the field.

“*Looking to Jesus.*”—Well kend the Apostle the devil would come our gate in his holiday clothes, with an “All these will I give thee.” And when we are running, he will cry, Here away! But, said the Apostle, Give him not one look, although he should burst. What have ye to do with him? “Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” Look to your forerunner, and follow Him in the race.

Then in this our following, we must look how Jesus ran. We must observe all the properties of his running, and do just as He did. 1. He yoked^o to the Jews, early in the morning, and was obedient to the law in the cradle. At twelve years of age He disputed with the doctors in the temple; He was still about His Father’s business, late and early. Yea, even upon the cross He was running. So run, young men, in your youth; start to the gate, break off, and run to your dying day; halve not your lives. If ye have lost time, and were too long in beginning, be like a man far behind, when he looks to the sun and sees it low, and remembers he has far to go; he sets the spurs to the horse. So rouse up your lazy souls and post. Post, post, heaven is waiting for you. A special virtue, or property, in a runner, is to look even before him: for if ye look over your shoulder, ye may possibly not break your neck, but ye will certainly miss a stride. If ye look at meadows, houses, and worldly pleasures by the way, ye will possibly fall and break your toes; therefore look aye home, straight out before you. Give not the world a look for the world. But very

* Set upon them.

often, after we have taken our leave of the world, and of sin, we have a strong inclination to be back again. While taking a hearty look of the world, a stone may take a man's foot in his journey, and break his leg.

2. Christ, in His race, got many lets, the devil came in with, "All these things will I give thee," to turn Him into His Inn, and to lay Him over the board.* The world set on Him; but they could not all make honest Jesus come one foot out of the road. Keep aye the high-way. Smart men will not come under trysting with juggling knaves, nor subscribe any writs, for fear they bring them under a sum, and then take their lands from them. Never, never come in communing with Satan and sin. Some fools give the devil writs, and subscribe a submission to the world and sin, and take the devil and their own hearts to be overseers. Beware of that work. Christ would have nothing to do with the world, in His journey. When they offered to make Him a king, He refused, and ran to the mountain, and there He prayed (John vi. 15). He took but His meat of it, and all He had was borrowed. He looked blunt-like on it; like a man who would fain have been away; and so was seen on it. We should be like some old men that want children, who quit all to their friends, and get a bond, for meat and clothing, all their days. Our love and affection should quit the world, and seek a bond of our Lord, for food and raiment, all our days, and be content therewith.

3. So run as Christ; He ran so as He left nothing undone. "Father, I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii). See that ye have all ended against night, that ye may say as Paul said

* The table.

(2 Tim. iv. 7), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." There are many who run as Paul, when a Pharisee, ran; but they know not where-away. Many forget their conscience by the gate,* as a drunken man forgets his sword at the Inn in which he lodged. Take all with you, your conscience, and faith. They who go to sea take all with them: for when the wind and tide has put them off land, they will not win back again, to fetch any thing they have left behind.

"*But what good will our looking to Jesus do us?*"— Very much, He is the Captain of our salvation, "the author and finisher of our faith." For Christ is all, He draws with His Spirit, and He leads us through the mire, and goes before us. And we have this advantage, when we faint, He looks back over His shoulder with a smile, takes us by the hand, and says (Luke xii. 32), "Fear not, little flock," &c. (John xvi.). "Yet a little while, and I am with you." Even as a loving guide says to the tired man, "We have but a little water or two to pass through: and see there is but yonder hill betwixt us and the town, ye are near the city." He will see you again, for He is a Captain indeed. In taking in a town, the soldiers will venture sometimes to scale the wall where the captain is; but it is not so here. Jesus Himself took the castle of heaven first: it cost Him blood to win in and break up the doors. Now He stands in the entry, and cries, Come in, I have broken up the gate, I have win the city; be not afraid, I shall warrant you. Therefore (Heb. vi. 10) He is called a fore-runner, He went before to open the doors, and the park-dykes,† and take the stones out of the way, and

* The road.

† The gates of the park.


~~~~~

says, Step forward, my brethren, be not frightened. So then, when we run, we are not to lean to our own strength, for fear we get a fall. He who thinks he has little need of Christ's help is ready to fall. He who knows not his own weakness fears not; and he who knows not his own heart has good cause to fear he may get a fall, and dash out all his brains."

"*The finisher of our faith.*"—We will not have Jesus pulling us to the gate, and leaving us there. No (1 Cor. i. 8), "Who shall also confirm you to the end." It is a work of Christ as Mediator, and written in the commission His Father gave Him, that He should lose none, but raise him up at at the last day (John vi. 39.) In Eph. v. 27, He presenteth His church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle. He shall get His bride, the church, all arrayed in His Father's clothes, in at heaven's gate, and slip her in His Father's hand, and say, Father, there her now! I have done my part; I have not laboured in vain. Let them be confounded who take this glory from Jesus, and give it over to that weather-cock, free will. For, here an argument that hell will not answer. The Father promised Christ a seed (Isaiah liii. 10). And a willing people (Psalm cx. 3). And the ends of the earth (Psalm ii. 8) to serve Him as a reward of His sufferings. Now, shall God crack His credit to His Son, and shall Christ do His work and get the wind for His pains, except free will say, amen? This were a bairn's bargain. No, it is a part of Christ's wages, that men's free will shall come with cap in hand, and bow before Him. He shall have a willing people.

We must digress a little, and speak of Christ's race. Observe, this is the apostle's manner, Christ comes in his way, and he cannot pass by Him: but he must

stand still and speak a word with Him, and give Him a kiss by the way. (Col. i. 14), "In whom we have redemption," &c. And there, ere he go further, he must run out upon Christ, and His nature, and offices. Verse 15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." See Rev. i., "Grace be to you, and peace from Jesus." Then he runs out, who is the "faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead," &c.

Learn a lesson. When Jesus comes in your mind, leave your way, and go and speak with Him a while, and go not soon from Him. Is He come? Let Him not go without a kiss. Oh! and alas! we oft times let Him go as He comes. But why do His friends commend Him so much? Even that you and He may fall in love together.

"*Who for the joy that was set before him.*"—He sets down a special virtue in Christ's running: who, for the eye-look\* to joy, "endured the cross, and despised the shame." Here is a question, What an eye-look to joy was this, that Christ had? What made Him run, seeing heaven was in His bosom? What needed He rejoice to be at home?

*Answer.* As He was God, nothing could be added to His joy. Yet, howbeit He carried the God-head about with Him, the sight and sense of the God-head was covered in the days of Christ's humiliation: there was a bar and a lock put on the God-head, that He saw not as He now seeth. In that, He took the pilgrim's lot with us, and was a traveller in respect of sense and clear light;—for, He as man was ignorant of some things then, as of the day of judgment, and

\* Regard to.

---

fruit on the fig-tree. He knew He would be nearer God; the God-head stood aloof from Him then.

2. The joy before Him was, the contentment He would have in His new Bride; the joy that He had won through hell, and gotten His errand. Sad and heavy would His heart have been, to have missed us: He was glad of the hire His Father had promised Him. It is natural for a man to rejoice when he gets the fruit of his labours: and there is thanksgiving, and joy in heaven for the conversion of sinners. And He gives thanks far more when they are redeemed fully (Heb. xii. 12). In the midst of the congregation, He sings praise to God His Father, for the children He had given Him; but more especially when He shall have ended all, and got the goods in His hand, that He bought so dear. He shall then sing for joy; and when Christ sings for thy redemption, and giveth thanks, thou hast far more cause to sing than He.

3. The joy set before Him was the glory to be manifested in Him, which He prays for (John xvii. 5) which "He had with the Father before the world was:" that joy that His Father will welcome Him with and (to speak with reverence) clap His head for His pains. As He rejoiced from all eternity with His Father (Prov. viii. 31), and was His Father's delight: so now He shall rejoice with His Father, He and He together in redeemed mankind. And the manhood with all His members, and the angels (for they rejoice at the conversion of sinners) shall rejoice with Him to see His body fulfilled, and to have them all under His wings.

4. Consider the sadness Jesus had, and the tears He shed in the days of His flesh; but that His Father dried, and wiped the blood and sweat off His face, and set Him in a place, where He should shed tears,

and die no more. So do as Jesus did. And why? Because never man endured out his longsome race but He who got a sight of heaven. See wherefore Abraham dwelt in tents, and Moses (Heb. xi.) "choosed rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin." He saw a sight that every one cannot see. Ye know a man who has been seven years away from his wife and children, coming home again and seeing the smoke of his own house, his heart rises a foot higher than it was before. Would ye run? Get a sight of the city. Get Christ's prospect, to see the joy set before you. Get the earnest of the inheritance, and ye will never rue the bargain. Whosoever has a mind for heaven, runs a while in blind zeal, until they sweat, and then grow lame, like a horse that is ill taken care of, after hard riding; so are those who never saw heaven afar off by faith. But a sight of the gold makes the runner spring and run. O what wrought this joy that was set before Him! It made Him endure the cross; His Father laid the cross on His back, and He carried it thirty-three years, and never gave it a shake to put it off. Oh, what crosses! Never man was handled as He was; for some are under some crosses, and free of others. When Satan and men struck Job, the Lord blessed him and upheld him: But on Jesus, all at once fell God, man, devils, law, justice, sin, and the curse! Ye cannot tell me what comfort Christ had, when He cried, "My God, my God!" That was a sore thraw for His back. O! the fire was hot then. But, when Christ was in His prison, in this dark night, there was a hole to let Him see day. He had His eye by faith upon the hope of the joy of the fair day before Him. He got a foul black day, all clouds of darkness about Him; but He said within

Himself, I will get my fair day when all this ill weather is away.

Now let me speak to a heavy heart ; that looks for a shower upon this land. And indeed it is black in the west ; the clouds are gathering ; the shower is coming. Take a house in time, yet fear not, a shower will not melt you, and Christ has a fire in His Father's house to dry your clothes. O ! but he who has faith to look up through yonder blue sky to see the throne of God and the Lamb, and to wait for the rending of the heavens, when Christ shall get through His fair head, with a great crown of gold upon it ; I say, he who gets faith to see, and wait for these, will give a leap, and a skip in his journey. Let us suppose Christ were bodily upon the earth, and a water betwixt you and Him : yea, a lake of fire betwixt you and Him ; I think ye would venture to be at Him. Now set out in your journey, set down your feet, and be not beguiled with the devil's apples, which he casts down in your gate. Christ, in the end of the journey, holds out His long arm, with a crown of glory, and shouts, and cries, Silly, tired bairns, Look here-away ! look up the brae, come this way.

Ye may ask what power had Christ to give His manhood to die for others. This would seem to be against justice ; as a king's subject has not power to slay himself, because in so doing he takes a subject from his prince. *Answer.* The subject is not altogether his own ; he owes his life to his king, and may not dispose of it, except he fail, against the king. But, howbeit, the manhood was God's creature, yet it was by the law of a personal union God's manhood, and God's flesh and blood ; and the God-head gave to the manhood absolute power to give his life for men, and to pledge Himself as the price of our redemption. See, then,

here a sweet mystery; the God-head furnished the sum to Jesus, and gave Him the price to pay; and the manhood gave it back to justice, as suffering and dead, for a ransom: law furnished the sum, and justice received it, and gave Christ our bond to tear in pieces.

Another fruit of our Lord's to-look\* to the joy that was set before Him, was, "*He despised the shame.*" What shame? Lighted there any shame on Christ? Ay, in truth! Heaven and earth wonder at an ashamed Christ. Look if Christ got not His part of it; when mickle black shame came upon Him. But how. Shamed by men, and shamed by God, I shall prove both.

One rascal struck Him on the head, another villain spat on His fair face: a great shame; they wagged their heads, and brake a jest upon Him. Take up holy Jesus now! say they. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him! Think ye not but that went to Christ's heart, to hear those black mouths make a mock of God's glory? Herod, and his men of war mocked Him. And see more shame yet; howbeit He was an honest man all His life, they conveyed Him out of the town, and the guard at His back: His enemies scoffing at him, and children wondering at Him. And what more? Dear Man! He went out at the ports,† bearing His own cross on His back! Of seventy disciples, twelve apostles, and all His friends, not one to help Him, or take an end, or a lift of the cursed tree! And they put a crown of thorns on Him, scorning His kingdom. Was not this to put the thieves' mark on Him? And what more? Might they not have said, This poor man has few friends? But His friends would take no part of His shame, and yet He took all their shame.

\* Eyelook. Regard to.

† Gates.

God shamed Him also. His Father said a curse and malediction light on Him, shame light on Him. Start not at this. I shall clear it. Sin has aye shame on its back : ye know that God made Him sin ; and if God made Him sin, and a curse, He behoved to bring shame on Him. For the shame that should have come on us, and the reproachful words that justice would have given sinners, they lighted on our Lord. Ye see when a thief is taken in the fang,\* and brought before the judge, and put to an assize, and challenged ; he looks down, and thinks shame to look any man in the face. When the judge says, How durst thou do it ? Silly man, he blushes, hangs his head, and never says a word. So God put Christ upon the pannel, arraigned Him before His tribunal, and accused Him for our sins. Christ could not deny them, but stood as a sheep dumb before her shearers. He hung His head before justice, and the honest Man took with the fault. He said he would die for the murderer, adulterer, swearer, idolater, drunkard, &c. Now there was reason here, that God should put Christ in this plea,† for the shamed man : because God's wise will is the rule of all justice. God made the first covenant that Adam should be legally for us, and the second covenant was so contrived that Christ should be for us. For Christ's manhood has a personality, not of its own, but of the God-head ; and by the law of a personal union, Christ should enjoy Himself. Now, because Christ had a legal personality from us, and as in His person under His sufferings He enjoyed not the fruits of that personality, but was plunged in fear and horror, while He said (John xii. 27), "What shall I joy?" yet the God-head (to speak so) was

\* Act of clutching the article. † Controversy.

like cork to make the manhood swim above, that it was not swallowed up with God's infinite wrath; and the manhood had personal legality from us, to bear the strokes by law due to us. Hence come and learn and be willing, with Christ, to want a limb of your credit for Him. He was shamed for you. O wonderful! An ashamed sinner is nothing, an ashamed devil is ordinary: but God ashamed, an ashamed Christ is a miracle! One honest man will suffer loss for another; but to take another's shame is a different thing: yet this rarity was in Christ. A man who is a cautioner for his waster friend, the judge counts not him the waster, he is still thought an honest man; only he pays the sum. But Christ our Lord, besides the sum He paid by law, He was as the dyvour, for our sins were laid upon Him: for He and we are so near here, that He is as us, and made sin for us.

*"And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."*—He was a good man, and endured all patiently, and so it was seen. He got much glory in the end; there could not but grace come of Him, He was so mild under His sufferings. (Phil. ii. 9), "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him," &c. Wherefore, then, is His sitting down nothing but an exaltation, a state of glory above men and angels. To Him is all power given; and He has received a name (Acts v. 31), "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Now to understand this the better, note that His sitting as God upon His Father's right hand is but the open manifestation of His glory, which He had before the world was. His rising as a man to this state hath two steps going before it.



1. The nature of man in Christ is made of the same metal with our nature, and therefore deserved a personal union: and therefore the God of grace raised the manhood above itself, to be married to the God-head. This is the first step of the Headship spoken of (Heb. i.), God has made Him "the heir of all things." For God indeed lifted man above Himself, in giving to the manhood no created personality, but the personality of the God-head; so as that blessed manhood, at one moment should subsist in the Word, and subsist in the infinite personality of the God-head: that the man Christ, and the God-head should be in one person.

2. Upon this, He resolved a free donation of Christ to the manhood, to be King, Priest, and Prophet, sufficiently qualified to grace us. This was grace also to the manhood, yet this grace was not given in such a measure to Christ, in the days of His flesh. Howbeit this grace, and the personal union did sufficiently bear Him up under all His sufferings.

3. After His sufferings, the manhood saw the God-head, in a more glorious manner, and enjoyed Him after an admirable manner, and is made a personal worker, and absolute commander of the world; a Prince, a Judge, a Lord, and next to God; over and above all creatures. That our Husband is so high, is great matter of comfort to the faithful. Men who have a friend at court are aye troubling him with suits and writs; we write not half many letters up to our Friend at court. He delights to speak of us to His Father, and to carry us in His heart, as the High Priest did the names of the twelve tribes on his breast: and to engrave us on the palms of His hands. Then see the gate, and follow Christ Jesus on the cross; the cross is your way. Christ got a

---

deeper gate ; His way was the cross, and the crown. Now, says the apostle, "Consider such an one," and yet spoken against by sinners : for sinners gave Him the lie. Look upon Him lest ye faint. (Psalm xxxi. 22), "I said in my haste, I am cut off before thine eyes." (Isaiah xlix. 14), "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me." Think not, ye will aye be alike stout in the journey ; sometimes ye will fall down, and Christ will have you a lifting ; but He is near you with His flagon of wine to comfort you. Amen.

