

but such a heart in the people of God! I remember it is a saying of Jerom, when he heard the revilings and blasphemings of many against Christ, and his precious truths, “* O (said he) that they “would turn their weapons from Christ to me, and be satisfied “with my blood!” And much to the same sense is that sweet one of Bernard, “† Happy were I, if God would vouchsafe to “use me as a shield.” And David could say, “The reproaches “of them that reproached thee, fell on me, Psal. lxxix. 9. Ten thousand of our names are nothing to Christ’s name: his name is *καλον ονομα*, a worthy name; and no man that gives up his name as a shield to Christ, but shall thereby secure and increase the true honour of it. And though wicked men, for the present may bespatter them, yet Jesus Christ will take it out of the dirt, (as one speaks), wipe it clean, and give it us again ‡. Oh, it is the least one can do, to interpose ourselves and all that is dear to us, betwixt Christ and the wrath of men, when he (as you hear) interposed himself betwixt you and the eternal wrath of God!

SERMON IX.

The first Branch of CHRIST’S Prophetical Office, consisting in the Revelation of the Will of God.

ACTS iii. 22.

A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.

HAVING, in the former discourses, shewn you the solemn preparations, both on the Father’s part, and on the Son’s, for the blessed design of reconciling us by the meritorious mediation of Christ; and given you a general prospect of that his mediation, in the former sermon; method now requires, that I proceed to shew how he executes this his mediation, in the discharge of his blessed offices of *Prophet, Priest and King*.

His *prophetical office* consists of two parts; one *external*, consisting in a true and full revelation of the will of God to men, accord-

* *Utinam in me convertant tela, et meo sanguine satientur.* Jer.

† *Bonum est mihi, si dignetur Deus me uti pro clypeo.* Bern.

‡ Oh, if I could be a bridge over the water for my Lord Jesus to walk upon, and keep his feet dry! Oh, if my poor bit of heaven could go between my Lord and blasphemy and dishonour! *said another worthy.*

ing to John xvii. 6. "I have manifested thy name to the men "thou gavest me." The other in *illuminating the mind*, and opening the heart to receive and embrace that doctrine. The first part is contained in the words before us; "A prophet shall the Lord "your God raise up," &c.

Which words are those of Moses, recorded in Deut. xviii. 15. and here, by Peter, pertinently applied to Christ, to convince the incredulous Jews, that he is the true and only Messiah, and the great Prophet of the church; whose doctrine it was highly dangerous to contemn, though out of the mouths of such (otherwise contemptible) persons as he and John were. And it is well observed by Calvin, he singles out this testimony of Moses, rather than any other, because of the great esteem they had for Moses, and his writings, beyond any others. Now in the words themselves are two general parts.

First, Christ, according to the prophetic office, described.

Secondly, Obedience to him, as such a prophet, strictly enjoined.

First, You have here a description of Christ in his prophetic office; "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you "of your brethren, like unto me." Where Christ is described,

1. By his title, *Prophet*, and that, *princeps prophetarum*, the prince of the prophets, or the great and chief shepherd, as he is stiled, Heb. xiii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 4. It belongs to a prophet to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretel things to come: all these meet, and that, in a singular and eminent manner, in Christ our prophet, Matth. v. 21, &c. John i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 11.

4. He is described by his type; a prophet like unto Moses, who therein typified and prefigured him. But is it not said of Moses, in Deut. xxxiv. 10. "that there arose not a prophet since "in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face?" True, of mere men there never arose so great a prophet in Israel, as Moses was; either in respect of his familiarity with God, or of his miracles which he wrought in the power of God*: but Moses himself was but a star to this sun. However, in these following particulars, Christ was like him. He was a prophet that went between God and the people, carried God's mind to them, and returned theirs to God, they not being able to hear the voice of God immediately †, Deut. xviii. 16, 17. "According to all that "thou desirest of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the "assembly, saying, Let me not again hear the voice of the Lord "my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die

* *Not like*, in the following particulars, namely, his familiarity with God, and miracles. *Est. on this place.*

† They who dreaded that majesty of God speaking from heaven, could not be afraid to hear it, when in flesh, and made like themselves.

“not.” And upon this their request, God makes the promise which is cited in the text; verse 17, 18. “They have well spoken that which they have spoken: I will raise them up a prophet like unto thee,” &c. Moses was a very faithful prophet, precisely faithful, and exact in all things that God gave him in charge, even to a pin of the tabernacle. “Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after: but Christ as a Son over his own house,” Heb. iii. 5, 6. Again, Moses confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which he wrought in the presence, and to the conviction of gain-sayers. Herein, Christ our Prophet is also like unto Moses, who wrought many, mighty, and uncontrolled miracles, which could not be denied, and by them confirmed the gospel which he preached. Lastly, Moses was that prophet which brought God’s Israel out of literal Egypt, and Christ his out of spiritual Egypt, whereof that bondage was a figure. Thus he is described by his likeness to Moses, his type.

3. He is described by his stock and original, from which, according to his flesh, he sprang; “I will raise him up from among thy brethren. Of Israel, as concerning the flesh, Christ came,” Rom. ix. 5. And “it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah,” Heb. vii. 14. He honoured that nation by his nativity. Thus the prophet is described.

Secondly, Here is a strict injunction of obedience to this Prophet, *Him shall ye hear in all things, &c.* By *hearing*, understand obedience. So words of sense are frequently put in scripture, to signify those affections that are moved by, and use to follow those senses. And this obedience is required to be yielded to this prophet *only, and universally*, and under great penalties*. It is required to be given to him only, for so [*him*] in the text must be understood, as exclusive of all others. It is true, we are commanded to obey the voice of his ministers, Heb. xiii. 17. But still it is Christ speaking them, by whom we pay our obedience: *He that heareth you, heareth me*: We obey them in the Lord, i. e. commanding or forbidding in Christ’s name and authority. So when God said, Deut. vi. 13. [“Thou shalt serve him,”] Christ expounds it exclusively, Matth. iv. 10. “Him only shalt thou serve.” He is *the only Lord*, Jude 4. and therefore to him only our obedience is required. And as it is due to him only, so to him universally; “Him shall ye hear in all things:” his commands are to be obeyed, not disputed. A judgment of *discretion* indeed is allowed to Christians, to judge whether it be the will of Christ or

* Him shall ye hear, i. e. Him only; so thou shalt serve him, Deut. vi. 13. is explained, *Him only*, Matth. iv. 10.

no. We must “prove what is that holy, good, and acceptable will,” Rom. xii. 2. “His sheep hear his voice, and a stranger they will not follow: they know his voice, but know not the voice of strangers,” John x. 4, 5. But when his will is understood and known, we have no liberty of choice, but are concluded by it, be the duty commanded never so difficult, or the sin forbidden never so tempting: and this is also required severely, under penalty of being destroyed from among the people, and of God’s requiring it at our hands, as it is in Deut. xviii. *i. e.* of revenging himself in the destruction of the disobedient. Hence the observation.

Doct. That Jesus Christ is called and appointed by God to be the great Prophet and teacher of the Church.

He is *anointed to preach* good tidings to the meek, and sent to bind up the broken hearted, Isa. lxi. 1. When he came to preach the gospel among the people, then was this scripture fulfilled, Matt. xi. 27. “Yea, all things are delivered him of his Father; so as no man knoweth whom the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” All light is now collected into one body of light, the Sun of righteousness; and he “enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world,” John i. 9. And though he dispensed knowledge variously, in times past, speaking in many ways and divers manners, to the fathers; yet now the method and way of revealing the will of God to us is fixed and settled in Christ: *In these last times he hath spoken to us by his Son.*

Twice hath the Lord solemnly sealed him to this office, or approved and owned him in it, by a miraculous voice from the most excellent glory, Matth. iii. 17. and Matth. xvii. 5.

In this point there are two things doctrinally to be discussed and opened, viz. What Christ’s being a Prophet to the church implies: and how he executes and discharges this his office.

First, What is implied in Christ’s being a Prophet to the church: And it necessarily imports these three things.

1. The natural ignorance and blindness of men in the things of God. This shews us that “vain man is born as the wild ass’s colt.”—The world is involved in darkness: The people sit as in the region and shadow of death till Christ arise upon their souls, Matt. iv. 15, 16, 17. It is true, in the state of innocency man had a clear apprehension of the will of God, without a Mediator: but now that light is quenched in the corruption of nature, “and the natural man receiveth not the things of God,” 1 Cor. ii. 14. *

* Heavenly things exceed the capacity of reason, for they are above what is called right reason; they contradict the wisdom of the flesh, for they are contrary to

These things of God are not only contrary to corrupt and carnal reason, but they are also above right reason. Grace indeed useth nature, but nature can do nothing without grace. The mind of a natural man hath not only a native blindness, by reason whereof it cannot discern the things of the Spirit, but also a natural enmity, Rom. viii. 7. and hates the light, 1 John iii. 19, 20. So that until the mind be healed, and enlightened by Jesus Christ, the natural faculty can no more discern the things of the Spirit, than the sensitive faculty can discern the things of reason. The mysteries of nature may be discovered by the light of nature; but when it comes to supernatural mysteries, there, *omnis Platoniorum caligavit subtilitus*, as Cyprian somewhere speaks, the most subtle, searching, penetrating wit and reason, is at a loss.

2. It implies the divinity of Christ, and proves him to be true God; forasmuch as no other can reveal to the world, in all ages, the secrets that lay hid in the heart of God, and that with such convincing evidence and authority. * He brought his doctrine from the bosom of his Father; John i. 18. "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him." The same words which his Father gave him he hath given us, John xvii. 8. He spake to us that which he had seen with his Father, John viii. 38. What man can tell the bosom-counsels and secrets of God? Who but he that eternally lay in that bosom can expound them?

Besides, other prophets had their times assigned them to rise, shine, and set again by death, Zech. i. 5. "Your fathers, where are they? And do the prophets live for ever?" But Christ is a fixed and perpetual sun, that gives light in all ages of the world: for he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. Yea, and the very beams of his divinity shone with awfulness upon the hearts of them that heard him; so that his very enemies were forced to acknowledge, that, "never any man spake like him," John vii. 46.

depraved reason: Nature stands in need of grace, for the right disposing of the mind to receive a supernatural object; and grace uses nature, that by strength of mind, clearness of judgment, and the light of good education, greater progress may be made in the study of the sacred writings. *Reynold. Animalis homo.*

* If the doctrine of Christ, and his discourses be examined, it will be as clear as sunshine, that his words are not the words of a man, or some prophet, but of the Father himself, that is, of the true God. For Christ not only brought his gospel and doctrine from the bosom of the Father, but likewise he taught, not as the Pharisees and other mere men, but *ως εξουσιαν εχων*, as one having divine authority, Luke iv. 23. which his enemies, the officers sent by the Pharisees, confessed in these words, "Never man spake like this man:" therefore as his words are the words of the Father, and were not spoken with human, but divine authority, so it is certain, that he must be the true God, since a divine effect argues a divine cause; and since there is but one only true God, Christ must be one, and co-essential with the Father. *Dietericus Analysis Evang. par. 3. p. 341.*

3. It implies Christ to be the original and fountain of all that light which is ministerially diffused up and down the world by men. Ministers are but stars, which shine with a borrowed light from the sun: so speaks the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Those that teach men, must be first taught by Christ. All the prophets of the Old, and all the prophets, pastors, and teachers of the New-Testament, have lighted their candles at his torch: it was Christ that "gave them a mouth and wisdom," Luke xxi. 15. What Paul received from the Lord, he delivered to the church, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Jesus Christ is the chief Shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4. and all the under-shepherds receive their gifts and commissions from him. These things are manifestly implied in Christ's prophetic office.

Secondly, We shall next enquire how he executes and discharges this his office, or how he enlightens and teacheth men the will of God. And this he hath done variously, gradually, plainly, powerfully, sweetly, purely, and fully.

1. Our great Prophet hath revealed unto men the will of God variously; not holding one even and constant tenor in the manifestations of the Father's will, but as the apostle speaks, *πολυμερως και πολυτροπως*, at sundry times, and in divers manners, Heb. i. 1. Sometimes he taught the church *immediately*, and in his own person, John xviii. 20. He declared God's righteousness in the great congregation, Psal. xxii. 22. And sometimes *mediately*, by his ministers and officers, deputed to that service by him. So he dispensed the knowledge of God to the church before his incarnation; it was Christ that in the time, and by the ministry of Noah, went and preached to the spirits in prison, as it is 1 Pet. iii. 19; that is, to men and women then alive, but now separated from the body, and imprisoned in hell for their disobedience. And it was Christ that was with the church in the wilderness, instructing and guiding them by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, Acts vii. 37, 58; and so he hath taught the church since his ascension. He cannot now be personally with us, having other business to do for us in heaven; but, however, he will not be wanting to teach us by his officers, whom, for that end, he hath set and appointed in the church, Eph. iv. 11, 12.

2. He hath dispensed his blessed light to the church gradually. The discoveries of light have been *πολυμερως*, that is, in many parts or parcels; sometimes more obscure and cloudy; as to the Old-Testament believers, by visions, dreams, Urim, Thummim, vocal oracles, types, sacrifices, &c. which, though comparatively, were but a weak glimmering light, and had no glory compared to that which now shines, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. yet it was sufficient

for the instruction and salvation of the elect in those times; but now is light sprung up gloriously in the gospel-dispensation: "And we all with open face, behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." It is to us not a twilight, but the light of a perfect day; and still is advancing in the several ages of the world. I know more (saith Luther) than blessed Austin knew; and they that come after me, will know more than I know.

3. Jesus Christ, our great Prophet, hath manifested to us the will of God plainly and perspicuously. When he was on earth himself, he taught the people by parables, and "without a parable he spake nothing," Matt. xiii. 3, 4. He clothed sublime and spiritual mysteries in earthly metaphors, bringing them thereby to the low and dull capacities of men, speaking so familiarly to the people about them, as if he had been speaking earthly things to them, John iii. 12. And so (according to his own example) would he have his ministers preach, "using great plainness of speech," 2 Cor. iii. 12. and by manifestation of the truth, "commending themselves to every man's conscience," 1 Cor. iv. 2. * Yet not allowing them to be rude and careless in expression, pouring out indigested, crude, immethodical words; no, a holy serious, strict, and grave expression befits the lips of his ambassadors: and who ever spake more weightily, more logically, persuasively than that apostle, by whose pen Christ hath admonished us to beware of vain affections and swelling words of vanity? But he would have us stoop to the understandings of the meanest, and not give the people a comment darker than the text; he would have us rather pierce their ears, than tickle their fancies; and break their hearts than please their ears. Christ was a very plain preacher.

4. Jesus Christ discovered truth powerfully; speaking "as one having authority, and not as the Pharisees," Matt. vii. 29. They were cold and dull preachers, their words did even freeze betwixt their lips; but Christ spake with power; there was heat as well as light in his doctrine: and so there is still, though it be in the mouth of poor contemptible men, 2 Cor. x. 4. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the casting down of strong holds: it is still quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged-sword; and piercing, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow," Heb. iv. 12. The blessed apostle imitated Christ; and being filled with his

* But the apostle does not design by this apology, that teachers should take the liberty to throw out every low, sordid expression, or whatever comes into their heads, without sense, method, solidity and judgment; for who a greater awakener of men's consciences than he? or who a stronger convincer of their judgments by the weight of his arguments? who, with a sweet, but heavenly power, captivates the affections. *Reynold.*

Spirit, spake home and freely to the hearts of men. So many words, so many claps of thunder, (as one * said of him) which made the hearts of sinners shake and tremble in their breasts. All faithful and able ministers are not alike gifted in this particular; but, surely, there is a holy seriousness and spiritual grace and majesty in their doctrine, commanding reverence from their hearers.

5. This Prophet, Jesus Christ, taught the people the mind of God in a sweet, affectionate, and taking manner: his words made their hearts burn within them, Luke xxiv. 32. It was prophesied of him, Isa. xlii. 2. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard on high. A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench. He knew how to speak a word in season to the weary soul," Isa. lxi. 1. "He gathered the Lambs with his arms, and gently led those that were with young," Isa. iv. 11. How sweetly did his words slide to the melting hearts about him! he drew with cords of love, with the bands of a man: he discouraged none, upbraided none that were willing to come to him: his familiarity and free condescensions to the most vile and despicable sinners, were often made the matter of his reproach. Such is his gentle and sweet carriage to his people, that the church is called the *Lamb's wife*, Rev. xix. 7.

6. He revealed the mind of God purely to men; his doctrine had not the least dash of error to debase it; his most enviously observant hearers could find nothing to charge him with: he is "the faithful and true witness," Rev. i. 5. and he hath commanded his ministers to preserve the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and not to blend and sophisticate it, 2 Cor. iv. 2.

7. And lastly, He revealed the will of God perfectly and fully, keeping back nothing needful to salvation. So he tells his disciples, John xv. 15. "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." He was "faithful as a Son over his own house," Heb. iii. 6. Thus you have a brief account of what is implied in this part of Christ's prophetic office, and how he performed it.

Inference 1. If Jesus Christ, who is now passed into the heavens, be the great Prophet and Teacher of the church; hence we may justly infer *the continual necessity of a standing ministry of the church*: for by his ministers he now teacheth us, and to that intent hath fixed them in the church, by a firm constitution, there to remain to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20. He teacheth men more personally, but ministerially. His ministers supply the want

* Augustine wished to have heard Paul from the pulpit, whom he called Christ's trumpet, and God's cloud; so many words, so many claps of thunder seemed to sound in his ears.

of his personal presence, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We pray you in Christ's "stead." These officers he gave the church at his ascension, *i. e.* when he ceased to teach them any longer with his own lips; and so set them in the church, that their succession shall never totally fail: for so the word *εθετο*, *he hath set*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. plainly implies. They are set by a sure establishment, a firm and unalterable constitution, even as the *times and seasons, which the Father hath put* [*εθετο*] *in his own power*: it is the same word, and it is well they are so firmly set and fixed there; for how many adversaries in all ages have endeavoured to shake the very office itself? pretending that it is needless to be taught by men, and wresting such scriptures as these to countenance their error, Joel ii. 28, 29. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and "daughters shall prophesy," &c. And Jer. xxxi. 34. "These "shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man "his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know "me from the least of them to the greatest of them." As to that of Joel, it is answered, That if an Old-Testament prophecy may be understood according to a New-Testament interpretation, then that prophecy doth no way oppose, but confirm the gospel ministry. How the apostle understood the prophet in that his prophecy, may be seen in Acts ii. 17. when the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost upon the apostles. And surely he must be a confident person indeed, that thinks not an *apostle* to be as good an expositor of the *prophet*, as himself. And for that in Jer. xxxi. we say,

1. That if it conclude against ministerial teachings, it must equally conclude against Christian conferences.

2. We say that cannot be the sense of one scripture which contradicts the plain sense of other scriptures: but so this would, Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

3. And we say, the sense of that text is not *negative*, but *comparative*. Not that they shall have no need to be taught any truth, but no such need to be taught the first truths: That there is a God, and who is this true God: They shall no more teach every "man his brother, saying, Know the Lord! for they shall all "know me." To conclude, God hath given ministers to the church for the work of conversion and edification, "till we all "come into the unity of the faith, to a perfect man," Eph. iv. 11, 12. So that when all the elect are converted, and all those converts become perfect men; when there is no error in judgment or practice, and no seducer to cause it, then, and not till then, will a gospel ministry be useless. But (as it is well observed) there is not a man that opposes a gospel ministry, but the very being of that man is a sufficient argument for the continuance of it.

Inf. 2. If Christ be the great Prophet of the church, and such a Prophet; then it follows, *That the weakest Christians need not be discouraged at the dulness and incapacity they find in themselves:* for Christ is not only a patient and condescending teacher, but he can also, as he hath often done, reveal that to babes, which is hid from the wise and learned, Matth. xi. 25. "The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple," Psal. xix. 7. Yea, and such as you are, the Lord delights to choose, that his grace may be the more conspicuous in your weakness, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. You will have nothing of your own to glory in; you will not say, as a proud wretch once said, *Ego et Deus meus*; "I and my God did this." Jesus Christ affects not social glory, he will not divide the praise with any. Well then, be not discouraged; others may know more, in other things than you, but you are not incapable of knowing so much as shall save your souls, if Christ will be your teacher, in other knowledge they excel you: but if ye know Jesus Christ, and the truth as it is in him, one drop of your knowledge is worth a whole sea of their gifts: one truth sucked by *faith* and *prayer* from the breast of Christ is better than ten thousand dry notions beaten out by racking the understanding. It is better in kind, the one being but natural, the other supernatural, from the saving illuminations and inward teachings of the Spirit: and so is one of those better things *that accompany salvation*. It is better in respect of effects; other knowledge leaves the heart as dry, barren, and unaffected, as if it had its seat in another man's head; but that little you have been taught of Christ, sheds down its gracious influences upon your affections, and slides sweetly to your melting hearts. So that as one "preferred the most despicable work of a plain rustic Christian, * before all the triumphs of Alexander and Cæsar;" much more ought you to prefer one saving manifestation of the Spirit, to all the powerless illuminations of natural men.

Inf. 3. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church; it follows, *That prayer is a proper mean for the increase of knowledge:* Prayer is the golden key that unlocks that treasure. When Daniel was to expound that secret which was contained in the king's dream, about which the Chaldean magicians had racked their brains to no purpose; what course doth Daniel take? Why, "he went to his house, (saith the text, Dan. ii. 17, 18.) and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions; that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning his secret." And then was the secret revealed

* *Si mihi duretur optio, eligerem Christiani rustici sordidissimum et maxime agreste opus, præ omnibus victoriis et triumphis Alexandri et Cæsaris.*

to Daniel. Luther was wont to say *, “ Three things made a di-
“ vine ; meditation, temptation, and prayer.” Holy Mr. Brad-
ford was wont to study upon his knees. Those truths that are got
by prayer, leave an unusual sweetness upon the heart. If Christ
be our teacher, it becomes all his saints to be at his feet.

Inf. 4. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church,
*We may thence discern and judge of doctrines, and it may serve us
as a test to try them by.* For such as Christ is, such are the doc-
trines that flow from him : every error pretends to derive itself from
him ; but as Christ was holy, humble, heavenly, meek, peaceful,
plain and simple, and in all things alien, yea, contrary to the
wisdom of the world, the gratifications of the flesh ; such are the
truths which he teacheth. They have his character and image
engraven on them. Would you know then whether this or that
doctrine be from the Spirit of Christ or no ? Examine the doctrine
itself by this rule. And whatsoever doctrine you find to encourage
and countenance sin, to exalt self, to be accommodated to earth-
ly designs and interests, to wrap and bend to the humours and
lusts of men ; in a word, what doctrine soever directly, and as a
proper cause makes them that profess it carnal, turbulent, proud,
sensual, &c. you may safely reject it, and conclude this never
came from Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ is after godli-
ness ; his truth sanctifies. There is a *Gustus spiritualis judicii*, a
spiritual taste, by which those that have their senses exercised, can
distinguish things that differ. “ The spiritual man judgeth all
“ things,” 1 Cor. ii. 15. “ His ear tries words, as his mouth
“ tasteth meats,” Job xxxiv. 3. Swallow nothing (let it come
never so speciously) that hath not some relish of Christ and holi-
ness in it. Be sure, Christ never revealed any thing to men, that
derogates from his own glory, or prejudices and obstructs the ends
of his own death.

Inf. 5. And as it will serve us for a test of doctrines, *so it serves
for a test of ministers ;* and hence you may judge who are autho-
rized and sent by Christ the great Prophet, to declare his will to
men. Surely those whom he sends have his *Spirit* in their *hearts*,
as well as his words in their *mouths*. And according to the mea-
sures of grace received, they faithfully endeavour to fulfil their
ministry for Christ, as Christ did for his Father : “ As my Father
“ hath sent me (saith Christ) so send I you,” John xx. 21. They
take Christ for their pattern in the whole course of their ministra-
tion, and are such as sincerely endeavour to imitate the great
Shepherd, in these six particulars following :

1. Jesus Christ was a *faithful Minister*, the “ faithful and true

* *Tria faciunt theologum, meditatio, tentatio et precatio.* Luther.

“witness,” Rev. i. 5. He declared the whole mind of God to men. Of him it was prophetically said, Psal. xl. 10. “I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.” To the same sense, and almost in the same words, the apostle Paul professed, in Acts xx. 20. “I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; and ver. 35. “I have shewed you all things.” Not that every faithful minister doth in course of his ministry, anatomize the whole body of truth, and fully expound and apply each particular to the people: No, that is not the meaning, but of those doctrines which they have opportunity of opening, they do not out of fear, or to accommodate and secure base low ends, withhold the mind of God, or so corrupt and abuse his words, as to subject truth to their own, or other men’s lusts: “They preach not as pleasing men, but God,” 1 Thess. ii. 4. “For if we yet please men, we cannot be the servants of Christ,” Gal. i. 10. Truth must be spoken, though the greatest on earth be offended.

2. Jesus Christ was a *tender-hearted Minister*, full of compassion to souls. He was sent to *bind up the broken in heart*, Isa. lxi. 1. He was full of bowels to poor sinners. “He grieved at the hardness of men’s hearts, Mark iii. 5. He mourned over Jerusalem, and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how oft would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!” Matth. xxiii. 27. His bowels yerned when he saw the multitude, as sheep having no shepherd, Matth. ix. 37. These bowels of Christ must be in all the under shepherds. “God is my witness, (saith one of them) how greatly I long after you all*, in [or after the pattern of] the bowels of Christ Jesus,” Phil. i. 8. He that shews a hard heart, unaffected with the dangers and miseries of souls, can never shew a commission from Christ to authorize him for ministerial work.

3. Jesus Christ was a *laborious painful Minister*, he put a necessity on himself to finish his work in his day; a work infinitely great, in a very little time; John ix. 4. “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” O how much work did Christ do in a little time on earth! “He went about doing good,” Acts x. 38. He was never idle. When he sits down at Jacob’s well, to rest himself, being weary, presently he falls into his work, preaching the gospel, to the *Samaritaness*. In this must his ministers resemble him; “striving according to his working, that worketh in them mightily,”

* In here is put for *inflar*, as, like unto, after the manner or pattern of, &c.

Col. i. 28, 29. An idle minister seems to be a contradiction *in adjecto*; as who should say, a dark light.

4. *Jesus Christ delighted in nothing more than the success of his ministry*; to see the work of the Lord prosper in his hand, this was meat and drink to him. When the seventy returned, and reported the success of their first embassy, "Lord, even the devils "are subject to us through thy name!" "Why, (saith Christ) "I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven." As if he had said, You tell me no news, I saw it when I sent you out at first: I knew the gospel would make work where it came. "And in "that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," Luke x. 17, 18, 21. And is it not so with those sent by him? do not they value the success of their ministry at a high rate? It is not (saith one) the expence, but the recoiling of our labours back again upon us, that kills us. Ministers would not die so fast, nor be grey-headed so soon, could they but see the travail of their souls. "My little children, (saith "Paul) of whom I travail again in birth, *παλινη ωδινια*, till Christ be "formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. As for those that have the name of shepherds only, who visit the flock only once a year, about shearing time; who have "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," (*forcipes et mulctra*) the shears and pail, Zech. xi. 15. woeful will be their condition at appearing of this great Shepherd.

5. *Jesus Christ was a minister that lived up to his doctrine: his life and doctrine harmonised in all things.* He pressed to holiness in his doctrine, and was the great pattern of holiness in his life, Matt. xi. 28. "Learn of me, I am meek and lowly." And such his ministers desire to approve themselves, Phil. iv. 9. "What "ye have heard, and seen in me, that do." He preached to their eyes, as well as ears. His life was a comment on his doctrine. They might see holiness acted in his life, as well as sounded by his lips. He preached the doctrine, and lived the application.

6. And lastly, *Jesus Christ was a minister that minded and maintained sweet, secret communion with God, for all his constant public labours.* If he had been preaching and healing all the day, yet he would redeem time from his very sleep to spend in secret prayer; Matt. xiv. 23. "When he had sent the multitude away, "he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone." O blessed pattern! Let the keepers of the vineyards remember they have a vineyard of their own to keep, a soul of their own that must be looked after as well as other men's. Those that, in these things, imitate Christ, are surely sent to us from him, and are worthy of double honour: They are a choice blessing to the people.