

every act *materially* good, that entitles a man to this privilege; but the same requisites that the * schoolmen assign to make a good prayer, are also necessary to every good work. The person, matter, manner, and end, must be good. Nor is it any single good act, but a *series* and *course* of holy actions, that is here meant. What a spur should this be to us all, as (indeed the apostle makes it, closing up the doctrine of the resurrection, with this solemn exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58. with which I also close mine) “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*”

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

SERMON XL.

The ASCENSION of CHRIST illustrated, and variously improved, being the second Step of his EXALTATION.

JOHN XX. 17.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

IN all the former sermons, we have been following Christ through his humiliation, from the time that he left the blessed bosom of the Father: and now having finished the whole course of his obedience on earth, and risen again from the dead; we must, in this discourse, follow him back again into heaven, and lodge him in that bosom of ineffable delight and love, which for our sakes, he so freely left. For it was not his end in rising from the dead, to live such a low animal life as this is, but to live a most glorious life, as an enthroned King in heaven: upon which state he was now ready to enter, as he tells Mary in the text, and bids her tell it to the disciples, “*Go, tell my brethren, that I ascend to my Father,*” &c.

In the former verses you find Mary waiting at Christ's sepulchre, in a very pensive frame: exceedingly troubled, because she knew not what was become of Christ, ver. 15. In the next verse, Christ calls her by her name, *Mary*; she knowing the voice, turned her-

* *Si bonus bona facit bene ad bonum*; i. e. If one is good, he does what is good in a good manner, and for a good end.

self, and answered, *Rabboni*. And as a soul transported with joy*, rushes into his arms, as desirous to clasp and embrace him. But Jesus said, "Touch me not," &c.

In which words we have Christ's inhibition, "Touch me not:" Strange that Christ, who rendered himself so kind and tender to all, that not only admitted, but commanded Thomas to put his finger into his wounds, should forbid Mary to touch him; but this was not for want of love to Mary; for he gives another reason for it presently, "I am not yet ascended;" i. e. say some, the time for embracing will be when we are in heaven. Then and there shall be the place and time, we shall embrace one another for evermore. So Augustin. Or, thou dost too much upon my present state, as if I had now attained the very *ακμῆ*, culminating point of my exaltation. When as yet I am not ascended; so Cameron and Calvin expound it. Or lastly, Christ would signify hereby that it was not his will and pleasure in so great a juncture of things as this, to spend time now in expressing (this way) her affections to him; but rather to shew it by hastening about his service. Which is

The *second* thing observable, viz. his injunction upon Mary, to carry the tidings of his resurrection to the disciples. In which injunction we have,

First, The persons to whom this message was sent, *my brethren*, so he calls the disciples. A sweet compellation, and full of love. Much like that of Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 4. save only that there is much more tenderness in this than that; for he twits them in the same breath with what they had done against him: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold;" but in this it is, "Go, tell my brethren," without the least mention of their cowardice or unkindness. And,

Secondly, The message itself, "Tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God;" *ἀναβαίω, I ascend*. It is put in the present tense, as if he had been ascending; though he did not ascend in some weeks after this; but he so expresses it, to shew what was the next part of his work, which he was to act in heaven for them; and how much his heart was set upon it, and longed to be about it, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." Not our Father, or God in common; but mine and yours in a different manner. Yours by right of donation, mine in a different manner. Yours by right of dominion, mine (in reference to my human nature) not only by right of creation, though so too; but also by

* Mary would embrace Christ, out of her great love to him, and joy that she had seen him again in the flesh. *Bucer. on the place.*

special covenant and confederation. * By predestination of my manhood, to the grace of personal union, by designation of me, to the glorious office of Mediator. *My Father*, as I am God, by eternal generation. As man, by collation of the grace of union. And your Father by spiritual adoption and regeneration. Thus he is my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. This is the substance of that comfortable message, sent by Mary to the pensive disciples. Hence the observation is,

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ, did not only rise from the dead, but also ascended into heaven; there to dispatch all that remained to be done for the completing the salvation of his people.

So much the apostle plainly witnesseth, Eph. iv. 10. "He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens," i. e. all the aspectable heavens. A full and faithful account whereof the several evangelists have given us, Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. This is sometimes called his *going away*, as John xvi. 7. Sometimes his *being exalted*, Acts ii. 33. Sometimes his *being made higher than the heavens*, Heb. vii. 26. And sometimes his *entering within the veil*, Heb. vi. 19, 20. All which are but so many *synonymous* phrases, expressing his ascension, in a very pleasant variety.

Now for the opening this act of Christ, we will bind up the whole in the satisfaction of these six questions. 1. Who ascended? 2. Whence did he ascend? 3. Whither? 4. When? 5. How? 6. and lastly, Why did he ascend? And these will take in what is needful for you to be acquainted with in this point.

First, Who ascended? This the apostle answers, Eph. iv. 10. "the same that descended," viz. Christ. And himself tells us in the text, "I ascend." † "And though the ascension were of Christ's whole person, yet it was but a figurative and improper expression, with respect to his divine nature, but it agrees most properly to the humanity of Christ, which really changed places and conditions by it." And hence it is that it is said, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to my Father." He goes away, and we see him no more. As God, he is spiritually with us still, even to the end of the world. But as man, "the heavens must contain him till the restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21.

Secondly, Whence Christ ascended?

* Mr. Henry Jeanes' second part of the mixture of scholastical and practical divinity, p. 273.

† *Ascensione totius fuit personæ, naturæ tamen divinæ non convenit nisi figurate: Sed humanæ naturæ maxime proprie convenit, &c.* Ames. Med. p. 114.

I answer, more generally, he is said to ascend from this world, to leave the world. That is the *terminus a quo*, John xvi. 28. but more particularly, it was from Mount Olivet, near unto Jerusalem. The very place where he began his last sorrowful tragedy. There, where his heart began to be sadded, there is it now made glad. O, what a difference was there betwixt the frame Christ was in, in that mount before his passion, and this he is now in, at his ascension! But,

Thirdly, Whither did he ascend?

It is manifest it was into the third heavens: the throne of God, and place of the blessed; where all the saints shall be with him for ever. It is said to be far above all heavens; i. e. the heavens which we see, for they are but the pavement of that stately palace of the great King. He is gone (saith the apostle) *within the veil*, i. e. into the most holy place. And into his Father's house, John xiv. 2. And he is also said to go to the "place where he was before," John vi. 62. back again to that sweet and glorious bosom of delight and love, from whence at his incarnation he came.

Fourthly, When did Christ ascend? Was it presently as soon as he arose from the dead?

No, not so, for "after his resurrection (saith Luke) he was seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And truly the care and love of Christ to his people was very manifest in this his stay with them*. He had ineffable glory prepared for him in heaven, and awaiting his coming, but he will not go to possess it, till he had settled all things for the good of his church here. For in this time he confirmed the truth of his resurrection, gave charge to the apostles concerning the discipline and order of his house or kingdom: which was but needful, since he intended that their Acts should be rules to future churches. So long it was necessary he should stay. And when he had set all things in order, he would stay no longer, "lest he should seem to affect a terrene life †." And besides, he had work of great concernment to do for us in the other world. He desired to be no longer here, than he had work to do for God and souls. A good pattern for the saints.

Fifthly, How did Christ ascend into heaven?

Here it is worthy our observation, that Christ ascended as a *public person* or forerunner, in our names, and upon our accounts ‡.

* The weakness of his disciples required the delay of his separation from them. *Ames.*

† *Ne terrenam vitam videretur meditari.* Ames.

‡ He by his entrance into heaven gives us the strongest consolation, for as he came down from heaven, not on his own, but our account, so he hath taken possession of heaven to prepare a place and habitation there for us. *Pareus on this place.*

So it is said expressly, Heb. vi. 20. speaking of the most holy place within the vail; *whither* (saith he) *the forerunner is for us entered*. His entering into heaven as our forerunner implies both his *public capacity* and *precedency*.

First, His *public capacity*, as one that went upon our business to God. So he himself speaks, John xiv. 2. "I go before to prepare a place for you." To take possession of heaven in your names. The *forerunner* hath respect to others that were to come to heaven after him, in their several generations; for whom he hath taken up mansions, which are kept for them against their coming.

Secondly, It notes *precedency*, he is our *forerunner*, but he himself had no *forerunner*. Never any entered into heaven before him, but such as entered in his name, and through the virtue of his merits. He was the first that ever entered into heaven *directly*, *immediately*, in his own name, and upon his own account. But all the fathers who died before him entered in his name. To the holiest of them all, God would have said as Elisha to Jehoram, 2 Kings iii. 14. Were it not that I had respect to the person of my Son, in whose name and right you come, I would not look upon you. You must go back again, heaven were no place for you. No, not for you, Abraham, nor for you, Moses.

Secondly, He ascended *triumphantly* into heaven. To this good expositors * refer that which in the *type* is spoken of David, when he lodged the *ark* in its own place, with musical instruments and shoutings; but to Christ, in the *antitype*, when he was received up *triumphantly* into glory, Psal. xlvii. 5. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."

A cloud is prepared, as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion †. "A cloud received him out of their sight," Luke xxiv. 51. And then a royal guard of mighty angels surrounded the chariot, if not for support, yet for greater state and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And oh what jubiliations of the blessed angels were heard in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! For look as when "he brought his first-begotten into the world, he said, let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. 1. 6. So at his return thither again, when he had finished redemption-work, there were no less demonstrations given by those blessed creatures of their delight and joy in it. The very heavens echoed and resounded on

* Molerus in loc. Geirus Aynsworth. † Mr. Case in his Pisgah.

that account. Yea, the triumph is not ended at this day, nor ever shall.

It is said, Dan. vii. 13, 14. "I saw, (saith the prophet) in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near to him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations and languages should serve him." This vision of Daniel's was accomplished in Christ's ascension, when *they*, i. e. the angels, brought him to the *Ancient of days*, i. e. to God the Father, who, to express his welcome to Christ, gave him glory and a kingdom. And so it is, and ought to be expounded*. The Father received him with open arms, rejoicing exceedingly to see him again in heaven; therefore God is said to "receive him up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. For that which, with respect to Christ, is called *ascension*, is, with respect to the Father, called *assumption*. He went up, and the Father received him. Yea, received so as none ever was received before him, or shall be received after him.

Thirdly, Christ ascended *munificently*, shedding forth, abundantly, inestimable gifts upon his church at his ascension. As in the Roman triumphs they did *spargere missilia* †, bestow their largesses upon the people: so did our Lord when he ascended; "wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive; and gave gifts unto men." The place to which the apostle refers, is Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18. where you have both the triumph and munificence with which Christ went up excellently set forth together.

"The chariots of God, (saith the Psalmist) are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that God might dwell among them." Which words, in their literal sense, are a celebration of that famous victory and triumph of David over the enemies of God, recorded 2 Sam. viii. These conquered enemies bring him several sorts of presents, all which he dedicated to the Lord. The spiritual sense is, that just so our Lord Jesus Christ, when he had overcome by his death on the cross, and now triumphed in his ascension, he takes the parts and gifts of his enemies, and gives them, by their conversion to the church, for its use and service: thus he received gifts, even for the *rebellious* ‡, i. e. sanctifies the

* See Deodat. and English Annot. &c.

† Princes, when triumphing after victory, use to disperse great presents and sums of money among the people, congratulating their triumph with joyous shouts.

‡ Thou dost raise up teachers of thy church, among those who hate and perse-

natural gifts and faculties of such as hated his people before, dedicating them to the Lord, in his people's service. Thus, (as one observes) Tertullian, Origen, Austin, and Jerome, came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold. Meaning they came into the church richly laden with natural learning and abilities. Austin was a Manichee, Cyprian a magician, learned Bradwardine a scornful, proud naturalist, who once said, when he read Paul's epistles, *Dedignabar esse parvulus*; he scorned such childish things, but afterwards became a very useful man in the church of God. And even Paul himself was as fierce an enemy to the church as breathed on earth, till Christ gave him into his bosom by conversion, and then no mere man ever did the Lord and his people greater service than he. Men of all sorts, greater and smaller lights, have been given to the church. Officers of all sorts were given it by Christ. Extraordinary and temporary, as prophets, apostles, evangelists; ordinary and standing, as pastors, and teachers, which remain to this day, Eph. iv. 8, 9. And those stars are fixed in the church-heaven by a most firm establishment, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Thousands now in heaven, and thousands on earth also, are blessing Christ at this day for these his ascension-gifts.

Fourthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended most comfortably, for whilst he was blessing his people, he was parted from them, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Therein making good to them what is said by him, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." There was a great deal of love manifested by Christ in this very last act of his in this world. The last sight they had of him in this world was a most sweet and encouraging one. They heard nothing from his lips but love, they saw nothing in his face but love, till he mounted his triumphant chariot, and was taken out of their sight.

Surely these blessings at parting were sweet and rich ones. For the matter of them, they were the mercies which his blood had so lately purchased for them. And for their extent, they were not only intended for them who had the happiness to be upon the place with him from whence he ascended; but they reach us as well as them; and will reach the last saint that shall be upon the earth till he come again. For they were but representatives of the future churches, Matt. xxviii. 20. And in blessing them, he blesseth us also. And by this we may be satisfied that Christ carried an heart full of love to his people away with him to heaven; since his love so abounded in the last act that ever he did in this

cute thy people; and from time to time, bring many of thy enemies to this thy kingdom.
Mol. on the place.

world: and left such a demonstration of his tenderness with them at parting.

Fifthly, He ascended, as well as rose again by his own power. He was not merely passive in his ascension, but it was his own act. *He went to heaven*. Therefore it is said, Acts i. 10. *He went up*, viz. by his own divine power*. And this plainly evinceth him to be God, for no mere creature ever mounted itself from earth, far above all heavens, as Christ did.

Sixthly, and lastly, why did Christ ascend?

I answer: His ascension was necessary upon many and great accounts. For,

First, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have interceded, as now he doth in heaven for us. And do but take away Christ's intercession, and you starve the hope of the saints. For what have we to succour ourselves with, under the daily surprises of sin, but this, "That if any man sin, we have an advocate [with the Father]:" mark that, *with the Father*; a friend upon the place: one that abides there, on purpose to transact all our affairs, and as a surety for the peace betwixt God and us.

Secondly, If Christ had not ascended, you could not have entered into heaven when you die. For he went to "prepare a place for you," John xiv. 2. He was, as I said before, the first that entered into heaven directly, and in his own name; and had he not done so, we would not have entered when we die, in his name. The Fore-runner made way for all that are coming on, in their several generations, after him. Nor could your bodies have ascended after their resurrection, but in the virtue of Christ's ascension. For he ascended, as was said before, in the capacity of our head and representative; to his Father, and our Father: For us, and himself too.

Thirdly, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have been inaugurated, and installed in the glory he now enjoys in heaven. This world is not the place where perfect felicity and glory dwell. And then, how had the promise of the Father been made good to him? Or our glory, (which consists in being with, and conformed to him), where had it been? "Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 25.

Fourthly, If Christ had not ascended, how could we have been satisfied, that his payment on the cross made full satisfaction to God, and that now God hath no more bills to bring in against us? How is it that the Spirit convinceth the world of righteousness,

* His divine power was the cause of his ascension.—But that which likewise contributed to it, was the condition of his glorified body, which can move upwards, as well as downwards. *Ames*.

John xvi. 9, 10. but from Christ's going to the Father, and returning hither no more? which gives evidence of God's full content and satisfaction, both with his person and work.

Fifthly, How should we have enjoyed the great blessings of the Spirit and ordinances, if Christ had not ascended? And surely, we could not have been without either. If Christ had not gone away, "the Comforter had not come," John xvi. 7. he begins where Christ had finished. For he takes of his, and shews it to us, John xvi. 14. And therefore it is said, John xvii. 39. "The Holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." He was then given as a sanctifying spirit, but not given in that measure, as afterwards he was, to furnish and qualify men with gifts for service. And indeed, by Christ's ascension, both his sanctifying, and his ministering gifts were shed forth, more commonly and more abundantly upon men. These fell from him when he ascended, as Elijah's mantle did from him, so that whatsoever good of conversion, edification, support, or comfort you receive from spiritual ordinances, he hath shed forth that, which you now see and feel. *It is the fruit of Christ's ascension.*

Sixthly, and lastly, If Christ had not ascended, how had all the types and prophecies, that prefigured and foretold it, been fulfilled? "And the scriptures cannot be broken," John x. 35. So that, upon all these accounts, it was expedient that he should go away. It was for his glory, and for our advantage. Though we lost the comfort of his bodily presence by it, yet if "we loved him, we would rejoice he went to the Father," John xiv. 28. We ought to have rejoiced in his advancement, though it had been to our loss; but when it is so much for our benefit, as well as his glory, it is a matter of joy on both sides, that he is ascended to his Father, and our Father: to his God, and to our God. From the several blessings flowing to us out of Christ's ascension, it was that he charged his people not to be troubled at his leaving of them, John xiv. And hence learn,

Inference 1. Did Christ ascend into heaven? Is our Jesus, our treasure indeed there? Where then should the hearts of believers be, but in heaven, where their Lord, their life is? Surely saints, it is not good that your love, and your Lord should be in two several countries, said one that is now with him. Up, and hasten after your lover, that he and you may be together. Christians, you ascended with him, virtually, when he ascended; you shall ascend to him, personally, hereafter; Oh that you would ascend to him, spiritually, in acts of faith, love, and desires daily. *Sursum corda*, up with your hearts, was the form used by the ancient church at the sacrament. How good were it, if we could say with the apostle, Phil. iii. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we

“look for the Saviour.” An heart ascendant, is the best evidence of your interest in Christ’s ascension.

Inf. 2. Did Christ go to heaven as a forerunner? *What haste should we make to follow him?* He ran to heaven: he ran thither before us. Did he run to glory, and shall we linger? did he flee as an eagle towards heaven, and we creep like snails? Come Christians, “Lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets you, and run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus, Heb. xii. 1, 2. The Captain of our salvation is entered within the gates of the new Jerusalem, and calls to us out of heaven to hasten to him; proposing the greatest encouragements to them that are following after him, saying, “He that overcomes shall sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne,” Rev. iii. 22. How tedious should it seem to us, to live so long at a distance from our Lord Jesus!

Inf. 3. Did Christ ascend so triumphantly, leading captivity captive? *How little reason then have believers to fear their conquered enemies?* Sin, Satan, and every enemy, were in that day led away in triumph, dragged at Christ’s chariot wheels, brought after him as it were in chains. It is a lovely sight to see the necks of those tyrants under the foot of our Joshua. He made at that day, “an open shew of them,” Col. ii. 15. Their strength is broken for ever. In this he shewed himself more than a conqueror; for he *conquered and triumphed too.* Satan was then trod under his feet, and he hath promised to tread him under our feet also, and that shortly, Rom. xvi. 20. some power our enemies yet retain, the serpent may bruise our heel, but Christ hath crushed his head.

Inf. 4. Did Christ ascend so munificently, shedding forth so many mercies upon his people? mercies of inestimable value reserved on purpose to adorn that day? *O then see that you abuse not those precious ascension-gifts of Christ, but value and improve them as the choicest mercies.* Now, the ascension-gifts, as I told you, are either the ordinances and officers of the church, (for he then gave them pastors and teachers,) or the Spirit that furnished the church with all its gifts. Beware you abuse not either of these.

First, Abuse not the ordinances and officers of Christ. This is a sin that no nation is plunged deeper into the guilt of, than this nation, and no age more than this. Surely God hath *written to us the great things of his law, and we have accounted them small things.* We have been loose, wanton, sceptical professors for the most part, that have had nice and coy stomachs, that could not relish plain, wholesome truths, except so and so modified to our humours. For this the Lord hath a controversy with the nation, and by a sore judgment, he hath begun to rebuke this sin already. And I doubt

not, before he make an end, plain truths will down with us, and we shall bless God for them.

Secondly, But in the next place, see that you abuse not the Spirit, whom God sent from heaven at his ascension, to supply his bodily absence among us, and is the great pledge of his care for, and tender love to his people. Now take heed that you do not vex him by your disobedience; nor grieve him by your unkindnesses; nor quench him by your sinful neglects of duty, or abuse of light. O deal kindly with the Spirit, and obey his voice! comply with his designs, and yield up yourselves to his guidance and conduct. Methinks, to be intreated by the love of the Spirit, Rom. xv. 30. should be as great an argument as to be intreated for Christ's sake. Now, to persuade all the saints to be tender of grieving the Spirit by sin, let me urge a few considerations proper to the point under hand.

Consid. 1. *First, He was the first and principal mercy that Christ received for you at his first entrance into heaven.* It was the first thing he asked of God when he came to heaven. So he speaks, John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you." No sooner had he set foot upon the place, but the first thing, the great thing that was upon his heart to ask the Father for us was, that the Spirit might forthwith be dispatched, and sent down to his people. So that the Spirit is *the first-born of mercies*; and deserves the first place in our hearts and esteem.

Consid. 2. *Secondly, The Spirit comes not in his own name to us,* (though, if so, he deserves a dear welcome for his own sake, and for the benefits we receive by him, which are inestimable,) *but he comes to us in the name, and in the love, both of the Father, and the Son.* As one authorized and delegated by them; bringing his credentials under both their hands and seals, John xv. 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father:" Mark, I will send him from the Father; and in John xiv. 26. the Father is said to "send him in Christ's name." So that he is the messenger that comes from both these great and holy persons. And if you have any love for the God that made you, any kindness for the Christ that died for you, shew it by your obedience to the Spirit that comes from them both, and in both their names to us, and who will be both offended and grieved, if you grieve him. O therefore give him an entertainment worthy of one that comes to you in the name of the Lord. In the Father's name, and in the Son's name.

Consider. 3. *Thirdly*, But that is not the only consideration that should cause you to beware of grieving the Spirit, because he is sent in the name of such great and dear persons to you, but he *dc-*

serves better entertainment than any of the saints give him, for his own sake, and upon his own account, and that upon a double score, viz. of his nature and office.

First, On the account of his nature; for he is God co-equal with the Father and Son in nature and dignity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 23. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue; the God of Israel said; the Rock of Israel spake to me." So that you see he is God. The Rock of Israel. God *omnipotent*, for he created all things, Gen. i. 2. God *omnipresent*, filling all things, Psal. cxxxix. 7. God *omniscient*, who knows your hearts, Rom. ix. 1. Beware of him therefore, and grieve him not, for in so doing you grieve God.

Secondly, Upon the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him. We are obliged, even on the score of gratitude and ingenuity, to obey him; for he is sent in the quality of an advocate to help us to pray; to indite our requests for us; to teach us what and how to ask of God, Rom. viii. 26. He comes to us as a Comforter, John xiv. 16. And none like him. His work is to take of Christ's *and shew it to us**, *i. e.* to take of his death, resurrection, ascension, yea, of his very present intercession in heaven, and shew it to us. He can be with us in a moment, he can, (as † one well observes,) tell you what were the very last thoughts Christ was thinking in heaven about you. It was he that formed the body of Christ in the womb, and so prepared him to be a sacrifice for us. He filled that humanity with his unexampled fulness ‡. So fitting and anointing him for the discharge of his office.

It is he that puts efficacy into the ordinances, and without him they would be a dead letter. It was he that blessed them to your conviction and conversion §. For if angels had been the preachers, no conversion had followed without the Spirit. It is he that is the *vinculum unionis*, bond of union betwixt Christ and your souls, without which you could never have had interest in Christ, or communion with Christ. It was he that so often hath helped your infirmities, when you knew not what to say; comforted your hearts when they were overwhelmed within you, and you knew not what to do; preserved you many thousand times from sin and ruin, when you have been upon the slippery brink of it in temptations. It is he (in his sanctifying-work) that is the best

* John xvi. 14.

† Mr. Tho. Goodwin.

‡ Luke i. 35. Isa. lxi. 1. Col. i. 19.

§ 2 Cor. ix. 6. John xvi. 9. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 John iii. 24. Rom. viii. 9, 26. John xiv. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 17.

evidence your souls have for heaven. It were endless to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, reader, dost thou not blush to think how unworthy thou hast treated such a friend? For which of all these his offices or benefits dost thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent as soon as ever he went to heaven, in his Father's name, and in his own name, to perform all these offices for you.

Inf. 5. Is Christ ascended to the Father as our fore-runner? *Then the door of salvation stands open to all believers, and by virtue of Christ's ascension, they also shall ascend after him, far above all visible heavens* *. O my friends, what place hath Christ prepared and taken up for you! what a splendid habitation hath he provided for you! "God is not ashamed to be called your God; for he hath prepared for you a city," Heb. xi. 16. In that city Christ hath provided mansions, and resting-places for your everlasting abode, John xiv. 2. and keeps them for you till your coming. O how august and glorious a dwelling is that, where sun, and moon, and stars, shall shine as much below your feet, as they are now above your heads? Yea, such is the love Christ hath to the believer, that, as one saith, if thou only hadst been the chosen of God, Christ would have built that house for himself and thee. Now it is for himself, for thee, and for many more, who shall inherit with thee. God send us a joyful meeting within the vail with our Fore-runner, and sweeten our passage into it, with many a foresight and foretaste thereof. And, in the meantime, let the love of a Saviour inflame our hearts, so that whenever we cast a look towards that place, where our Fore-runner is for us entered, our souls may say, with melting affections, *Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ*; and again, *Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift*.

* The hope of future inheritance is most fully secured to us in our Head, and we are set down together with him in heaven, Eph. ii. 6. *Synopsis purioris Theol. Disp.* 28. p. 542.