

exix. 152, 'Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.' Among men, τὰ δίκαια κινούμενα, saith Aristotle; what one age counteth just and good, another counteth vain and frivolous, but God hath given us a settled rule. Not providence; it is to be observed, but it doth not always speak by way of approbation, nor point out the best way. Not impulse of spirit; this is to be regarded with other circumstances of a known duty: Acts xvii. 16, 'His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry;' Acts xviii. 5, 'Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.' Not necessity; man never was necessitated to sin. David's eating the shew-bread in necessity does not prove it; for ceremonials must give place to moral duties. But now observe the word, as if God himself spake from heaven: Gen. iii. 3, 'God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' What the word saith, God saith: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my paths.'

SERMON XXX.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.—JOHN XVII. 18.

IN the context our Lord had prayed for conservation and sanctification; first he saith, 'Keep them through thine own name,' ver. 11; then, 'Sanctify them through thy truth,' ver. 17. In this verse is the reason of the latter request, why he prays for sanctification for the apostles; and the argument which he uses is, 'I have sent them into the world.' It was at hand, and therefore it is spoken of a thing done, I am about to send; or it referreth to his election and choice, I have called them, that I may send them to preach the word. The same office which thou hast put upon me as a prophet I have put upon them, and therefore 'sanctify them.' They that are sent abroad to preach the gospel need special preservation and special holiness; their dangers are great, and so are their temptations. So much holiness as will serve an ordinary christian will not serve a minister. The measures of the sanctuary were double to other measures, and so should the graces of ministers be double to the graces of others. It is not enough that ministers excel in gifts, but they must also excel in holiness; they are to bear forth the name of Christ before the world, and therefore they should resemble Christ more than others do. This is the reason of the context: 'Sanctify them through, or by, thy truth; for I have sent them into the world, as thou hast sent me into the world.'

In the text there are two things:—

1. The mission of Christ.
2. The mission of the apostles. Together with the comparison between them both; *as thou hast sent me into the world, even so, &c.*

First, The mission of Christ, 'Thou hast sent me into the world.' Here you may consider—(1.) Who sends; (2.) The nature of this

mission, or what this sending is; (3.) The ends and purposes why Christ was sent.

1. Who sends. Christ saith to his Father, 'Thou hast sent me.' The Holy Ghost sends as well as the Father, yea, the Son sends himself. The Trinity are one in essence and in will, and their actions are undivided; why then doth he say to the Father, 'Thou hast sent me into the world'? I answer—It is chiefly ascribed to the Father, because it is his personal operation. In the economy of salvation, the original authority is said to reside in God the Father; he sent Christ, and the Spirit fits and qualifies him, and the Son he takes human nature, and unites it to his own person. Now there is a great deal of comfort in this, that the Father sends Christ. The Father, being first in the order of the persons, is to be looked upon as the offended party, and as the highest judge. All sin is against God, and it chiefly reflects upon the first person, to whom we direct our prayers, and who is the maker of the law, and therefore requires an account of the breach of it. It chiefly reflects upon the first person, to whom Christ tendered the satisfaction. Sin, it is a grieving of the Spirit, it is a crucifying of Christ, there is wrong done to all the persons of the Godhead; but in the last result of all, it is an offence to God the Father, and an affront to his authority; for all that is done to the other persons redounds to him. It is his Spirit that is grieved; and our Saviour thus reasoneth, Luke x. 16, 'He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me;' so that he is the wronged party. And again, he is the supreme judge. All the persons in the Godhead are co-essential and co-equal in glory and honour; but in the economy and dispensation of salvation, the Father is to be looked upon as judge and chief. Therefore Christ doth say, 'My Father is greater than I.' And all addresses are made to him, not only by us but by Christ: 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.' And Christ is said to be 'an advocate with the Father,' 1 John ii. 1. I say, in that court and throne that is erected the Father is supreme; and if it passeth God the Father, the business is done. So John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.' Pardon, comfort, grace, all comes from the Father, as the fountain and first cause. It is true it is said, Mat. ix. 6, 'That the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins;' but this is by commission from God the Father. Well, then, the Father sendeth Christ. Eli saith, 1 Sam. ii. 25, 'If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' There may be an umpire to compromise the difference between man and man, and award satisfaction to the party offended; but now who shall state the offence and compound the difference between us and God? Can there be an umpire above God, that can give laws to God? The sin is committed against the judge himself, the highest judge, from whom there is no appeal; and who is a fit person to arbitrate the difference? This is a doubt that would have remained to all eternity unsatisfied, a question that never could be answered. Where should we find an umpire between God and us, to have awarded a meet satisfaction? But now God himself is pleased to find out the remedy. Christ saith to the Father, 'Thou hast sent me;' his act is authoritative and above

contradiction. If God had not given us a mediator out of his own bosom there could have been no satisfaction, and we had for ever lain under the guilt and burden of our sins: Gal. iv. 4, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,' &c.; he consecrated him for this great purpose. Therefore he is said to seal him: John vi. 37, 'Him hath God the Father sealed;' a metaphor taken from them that give commissions under hand and seal. Christ is a mediator, confirmed and allowed under the broad seal of heaven, by God the Father, as the supreme judge. God hath awarded satisfaction to himself, and sent his own Son to make it.

2. What is this sending? It implies three things—(1.) The designation of the person; (2.) His qualification for the work; (3.) His authority and commission.

[1.] The designation of the person. This was an act of divine and voluntary dispensation, according to which the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, was sent to take our nature, and the office of a redeemer upon himself. In this choosing of Christ was the original and first rise of elective love. Augustine hath observed, in choosing Christ, what was the reason Christ was the person designed: Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' What is the reason we are elected and chosen above others? that God reveals himself to babes? and the things of his grace are hidden from the wise and prudent? 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Mat. xi. 26. The same reason is given for the election and choice of Jesus Christ to be the redeemer, that is given for our election; 'It pleased the Father;' that is all. That Christ might be the first pattern of free grace the Father chose the Son, that he might be the redeemer. It was congruous and very fit that the Son and heir of all things should give us the adoption of sons: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' He sent his Son that we might have the same relation to God by grace which Christ had by nature. By nature, he is the only-begotten Son of the Father; and this is that which is purchased for us, that we should become the sons of God; and the middle person of the Trinity is the fittest to be the mediator between us and God.

[2.] This sending implies his fitness and qualification to do the work for which he was sent. (1.) He had fit natures; (2.) He had fit endowments.

(1.) Fit natures. He was God-man: God, else how could he send? man, else how could he be sent into the world? This sending implies he was a person truly existing before he came into the world, as a man must be before he is sent, and therefore he is said to be 'sent forth from God;' Gal. iv. 4, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.' 'Sent forth,' that shows his being before he took flesh; Christ was somewhere from whence he was sent forth. And then, 'made of a woman,' that implies his incarnation. This sending doth suppose his divine nature, and imply his incarnation, or God's bestowing upon him a human nature. God he was, in the bosom of the Father, from whence he was sent forth into the world. Such an errand as Christ

came about required a God, no inferior mediator would serve the turn. Nothing but an infinite good can remedy an infinite evil. Sin had bound us over to an eternal judgment, and nothing can counterpoise eternity but the infiniteness and the excellency of Christ's person. His divine nature was requisite in many regards. Partly to give efficacy and virtue and value to his sufferings; and therefore it is said that we are 'purchased by the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28; the meaning is, the blood of that person to whom the divine properties belonged. God is a spirit, and hath not flesh, blood, and bones, as we have; how then are we said to be redeemed with the 'blood of God'? that is, the blood of him who was God; which makes it to be of infinite value, and enough to counterpoise that eternity of torment which we should have endured. Again, the dignity of his person conduced to the acceptance of one for all: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'And that he died for all,' &c., in the room and stead of all the elect; and therefore that there might be such a value in his sufferings, his person must be thus worthy; as they said to David, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2 Sam. xviii. 3. A general or commander given in ransom will redeem thousands of private soldiers; so the worth of Christ's person made him equivalent in dignity to the persons of all those whom he sustained; yea, much more, God was more satisfied from Christ, than if all the world had suffered, and all angels and men had been made a sacrifice. Again, God he must be, because of the exuberancy of his merit. Christ's suffering was not only a ransom from death, but the merit of eternal life. By his death he satisfied the old covenant, and ratified the new. The scriptures do not only set forth the death of Christ as a ransom for souls, but as a price given to purchase everlasting glory. A surety to an ordinary creditor, if he pay the debt, he only frees the creditor from bonds, but doth not bring him into grace and favour. But now Christ hath merited happiness for us, and not only freed us from wrath to come, and delivered us from bondage; there was a price paid to divine justice. Again, the dignity of his person was necessary by way of compensation for those circumstances of punishment which did not beseeem Christ. The civility of nations remits to princes and nobles some disgraceful circumstances; though the punishment is inflicted, yet the kind of death is changed, because of the dignity of their birth, and place in the commonwealth. So here; the sentence which passed upon men was eternal death; the sentence itself is not reversed, that would lessen the authority of the law, and the glory of God's justice. The truth is, there are some circumstances abated which stood not with the worthiness of Christ's person; as for instance, the eternity of the punishment is abated. Christ suffered but a few hours, because of the greatness of his sufferings, and the dignity of his person. A payment in gold is as full and valid as a payment in silver, though it may take up less room, because of the excellency of the metal; so here, the suffering and death of Christ was of full value, though it was despatched in a lesser time; the eternity, that is abated, because of the dignity and worth of his person. Once more, the godhead of Christ was necessary, that he may be able to discharge the office of a priest, as that he might satisfy on the cross, and know all those whom he did personate and represent before the tribunal of God. As the high

priest had the names of the twelve tribes upon his shoulders and upon his breast, Exod. xxviii. 12-29,—upon his shoulders, to represent them to God, and upon his breast, to show how dear they were to himself,—so Jesus Christ hath, as it were, the names of all those for whom he was to suffer and intercede; he was to know them man by man. And it was meet that he should know all the sins that were imputed to him; and therefore the person thus sent, for such a work as this was, must needs be God. Again, he must be God, that he might support his human nature, and overcome his sufferings. Jesus Christ was to be raised, and also to raise himself; he was to be raised by God the Father as a judge. As the apostles would not go out of prison till the magistrates came to fetch them out themselves, so God as judge is said to raise Christ, and exalt him; he must give him power to rise. But now Christ was also to raise himself: John ii. 19, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.’ He was to raise himself, to declare the glory of his person. Christ was to rise by his Father’s authority, and to rise by his own power. He was to rise by the Father’s authority; therefore, as a pledge of it, an angel is sent to roll away the stone, and open the prison-door, and let our surety out of prison, the debt being paid. And Christ was to rise also by the strength of his own godhead. Why? This was necessary for our satisfaction. He that would undertake our case, with comfort and satisfaction to the creature, had need be able to overcome divine wrath, for the creature could never have satisfied. If our surety were kept in prison, and held under wrath, we could have no security that the debt was paid; the great assurance that is given to the world is the resurrection of Christ: Acts xvii. 31, ‘Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead;’ this was his public acquittance and discharge. Again, it was necessary he should be God, for so much of his prophetic office as he accomplished upon earth. Christ came to bring the everlasting gospel out of the bosom of God, and to ratify it with miracles, to choose disciples to preach it, to give the Holy Ghost, to give them power to work miracles, suitable to the tenor of the gospel; as raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, &c. Thus his godhead was necessary to his work.

But now, upon his sending (and that is more formally and expressly intended in the phrase), he had new qualifications and a new power; for as God he could not suffer, therefore the manhood is bestowed upon him: Ps. xl. 7, ‘A body hast thou prepared for me.’ This is formally implied in that expression, ‘He sent him;’ that is, prepared a body for him. God’s sending of Christ doth not imply his change of place; for Christ, as God, before was everywhere; ‘the heaven of heavens could not contain him;’ but it implies the assumption of another nature. He was *sent*, that is, took flesh, assumed another nature into his own person. Now this was necessary, that Christ should be man, that he might have an interest in us, and have compassion on us, and be in a capacity to die for us. That he might have an interest in us, and be of our blood: the next of blood had a right to redeem, Ruth iii. 9. Therefore Christ, he took our nature, that he might be of our blood, that so he might have a right to redeem us, having an interest in us; and therefore he was not only man, but the Son of man. Christ

might have been true man, if God had formed him out of the dust of the ground, as he did Adam, he might have given him a true human nature. But Christ was not only man, but was of our stock and lineage; and therefore it is said, Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;' and ver. 11, 'For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one.' They are 'all of one.' How is that? Of one stock. Justice required that the same nature that had sinned should be punished. It was not fit our sins should be punished in the nature of an angel, nor in the nature of man that was made out of nothing, or out of the dust of the ground; but in one that was of the same stock. Again, that he might have compassion on us, as well as an interest in us. Christ hath a nature that inclines him to his office; besides his essential mercy as God, there is a human compassion, which ariseth from feeling and from experience: Heb. iv. 15, 'For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He took our nature, that he might have experience of our sorrows, miseries, temptations, and so entended his own heart by an experimental pity and compassion. As man, Christ had a feeling what it was to be in the state of men, that we might have an assurance of his pity. As a man that hath felt the racking of the gout and stone is more fit to pity others in the same case, so Jesus Christ, having had a feeling of the buffetings of Satan, and wrath of God, and of the neglects and scorns of men, feeling of all conditions that are miserable, his heart is the more entended, his human compassion is increased; and God would have it to be so for our greater assurance. Again, his human nature gave him a capacity to suffer. As God he could not suffer; and therefore when God would have no more sacrifices, but all were to be abolished; he prepared Christ a body: Heb. x. 5, God invested him with a human nature, that he might offer one sacrifice to abolish all the rest. Thus you see Christ was sent, that is, fitted by his two natures; his divine nature, that is supposed, and his human nature is formally included in that expression, 'He was sent;' that is, assumed a body, did not change place, but assumed a nature in his own person, that so he might be fit to deal with God for us.

(2.) And then he had fit endowments; he came to be loaded with graces and blessings, and with all kind of qualities to do men good: John x. 36, 'Him hath the Father sanctified, and sent into the world;' that is God's sending, his anointing of Christ as our head, 'with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' As the head of the high priest was anointed, and thence the oil dropped down to all the members: Ps. cxxxiii. 3, 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment;' so our head is anointed with the oil of gladness for our sakes. Christ received the Spirit without measure in our nature, as holiness, pity, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Look, as when an ambassador is sent forth, there is not only a designation of his person, but he is furnished for his employment and work; so is Jesus Christ sent forth, that is, his person not only designed and chosen in grace, and yet in wisdom, but also furnished with all manner of

endowments in our nature, grace and strength for his work as our head.

[3.] This sending implies authority, and noteth a commission sealed to him, so that he was an authorised mediator, or an ambassador with letters-patent from heaven. This is the principal thing intended in this sending, the call and authority Christ had to do his office: Heb. v. 4, 5, 'No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.' He was designed in the council of the Trinity; and as every ambassador hath letters of credence under the hand and seal of him from whom he is sent, that he may be acknowledged as his deputy to act for him, so Christ is sent as God's deputy into the world, to act and deal for him; and the apostles they are thus sent from Christ, to act and deal for Christ. Here the comparison chiefly holds: 'As thou hast sent me into the world,' that is, given me authority to execute the office of a mediator, 'so have I sent them;' I have given them authority to preach in my name, and to deliver the gospel to others. This sending of Christ, it maketh all that Christ doth in the Father's name to be valid, which is much for the comfort of our faith. Christ is not a mediator by the right, or merely by the desire of the creature, or by his own interposition; but he is sent and authorised; you may plead it with God, he hath sent him to save sinners. You know Moses, when he interposed on his own accord: Exod. xxxii. 32, 'Forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.' Though it was a high act of zeal in Moses, yet God refused it: ver. 33, 'And the Lord said to Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' So if Christ had been set up as mediator by the right and desire of the creature only, he might have been refused; but he was authorised by God; he did not glorify himself by invasion of the mediatory office, but had a patent from the council of the Trinity, indited by the Father, accepted by himself, sealed by the Holy Ghost, evidenced to the world by his personal endowments, and by his miracles. Thus you see what this sending is; it implies the designation of the Father, the qualification of his person for the work, and his authority to execute it in his name.

3. To what purpose was he sent into the world? I answer—To perform the whole duty of the mediator, but principally to redeem and instruct the world; those two offices of prophet and priest Christ performed upon earth. The apostle toucheth upon them: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Mark, the apostle mentioneth but two offices, but they were the highest in both the churches: the high priest was the highest officer in the Jewish church, therefore he saith he was the 'high priest of our profession;' and an apostle was the highest officer in the christian church, therefore he saith he was 'the apostle of our profession.' And he mentions but these two, because these were the two offices Christ chiefly performed on earth. He came to preach the gospel which we profess, so he is 'the apostle of our profession;' and he came to ratify it with his blood, so he is 'the high priest of our profession.' In short, he

came to deal with God and with men: to deal with God, and so is a high priest, to pacify God, to offer such a sacrifice as might satisfy God; and he came to deal with men, and so he is an apostle, to open the everlasting gospel, to bring it out of the bosom of God to our hearts. His kingly office was but little exercised upon earth; we have a glimpse of his kingly office, or rather of his divine nature, in turning the money-changers out of the temple; but it was little exercised upon earth. Why? Because this was the time of Christ's humiliation. Now the kingly office suits more with the exaltation of Christ; when he comes the second time, then he comes to exercise his kingly office, to reign, and scatter his enemies, and show his kingly power; but now he came to teach and to suffer. That is the reason why his kingly office is made the consequent of his resurrection: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Was not Christ king of the church, and king before his resurrection? I answer—As God, so he was a king from all eternity; and in the days of his flesh he was our mediator, therefore certainly king, priest, and prophet; but in the world he did not come to possess his kingdom, but only to preach it and divulge it. Therefore he saith to Pilate, John xviii. 36, 'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.' Christ came to bear witness that he was king, but did not come to possess his kingdom and act as a king. As soon as ever he was consecrated to be a mediator, he was king, priest, and prophet of the church. Look, as David was king before God as soon as he was anointed, long before he possessed the throne and was crowned at Hebron, 1 Sam. xvi. 13, for he was king when he wandered up and down, and was hunted like a flea or like a partridge upon the mountains; so Christ in the time of his humiliation was a king, but did not exercise his kingdom. Chiefly, then, he was sent into the world the first time to redeem and instruct the world. To redeem the world: 1 John iv. 10, 'God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This was Christ's first errand, to make satisfaction for sins; afterwards he will come to destroy his enemies at his second coming. And to instruct the world; that is of special consideration in this place: 'As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.' Christ sent disciples as a prophet, and in this sense he is the 'apostle of our profession;' an ambassador sent from heaven, God's representative; in this sense he is called 'the angel of the covenant,' Mal. iii. 1. The solemnest messenger that ever God sent into the world: Isa. lxi. 1, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek,' &c. Christ was anointed principally for this work, to preach the gospel; he came from heaven to show us the way of life: Heb. i. 1, 2, 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' He hath spoken to us by apostles, pastors, and teachers. Why doth he make mention only of Christ? Because in the roll of gospel preachers, Christ is the first, Christ's name is first enrolled, he was first in commission, and he sent forth apostles, and the apostles others. The

mystery of redemption was never clearly known till Christ came to preach it; then all the deep counsel of God for man's salvation came out, which was hidden before. Christ brought out of God's bosom the doctrine of the gospel.

APPLICATION.

We learn hence many things. As—

1. The distinction of the persons in the Trinity. Christ is a distinct subsistence from the Father; for he that sendeth and he that is sent are distinct. Mark, it implies a distinction, but not an inferiority; against the Arians. Persons equal by mutual consent may send one another; as the elders of Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas, but it doth not follow that they were inferior to the elders of Antioch. So here it implies distinction, but not inferiority.

2. The knowledge of Christ's person; he was 'sent into the world,' therefore is God-man. He was one that was sent, therefore had a being before he was incarnate; and was 'sent into the world,' therefore there was an assumption of the human nature.

3. It showeth us the love of God; he would not intrust an angel nor archangel with our salvation, but sent his Son: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' There is nothing too near nor too dear for us. It will take the more with us, if we consider the infinite complacency and contentment God had in Christ, yet he sent his Son. Man's love is defensive; he loves his children out of design of immortality, because he lives in them. God had no reason to do so; he had many reasons to the contrary, yet he sent his Son to die for us, when we were enemies. And his Son is sent; what to do? Not only to treat with us, not only to borrow a tongue to speak to us, but to take a body to die for us, to be substituted in our room and stead.

4. It informs us of the great condescension of Christ, that he submitted to be sent: Ps. xl. 7, 8, 'Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.' He was ready, when God would send him, like a servant ready to be despatched upon his errand. That Christ would be sent, that he would take our nature, not while it was innocent, but when it was guilty, liable to the wrath of God, when all mankind were proclaimed traitors and outlaws, and whoever partake of our nature was to partake of our sorrow; yet then was Christ sent: he came 'in the similitude of sinful flesh,' Rom. viii. 3. Christ did not partake of the infection of our nature; he was not a sinner, by being born of our stock; the infection was stopped by the Holy Ghost; but he took our nature, when it was sinful, tainted with sin, and in this message and errand he laid aside his majesty, and by an unspeakable dispensation he abstains from the full use and exercise of the godhead, not from the godhead itself. Therefore, he prays, John xvii. 5, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' He begs for his glory again, which he had laid aside for a while. It cannot be meant of the divine nature, for to that nothing can be given;

it cannot be meant of human nature, because that is not capable of the glory which Christ had before the world was. The meaning is, he desires to be restored to the full use of the godhead, from which he had abstained by an unspeakable dispensation a long time, and by the interposition of his human nature, the glory of the godhead was, as it were, eclipsed, as a candle in a dark lantern; and therefore he desires that the veil might be taken away, and he might return again to the full use of the godhead, having done his work. It is irksome to us to go back a few degrees in pomp and pleasure, even upon just and convenient reasons; but how did Christ condescend and stoop, when he was thus sent into the world by God for our sakes!

5. Here is some ground of comfort to them that believe; you may offer to God a mediator of his own choosing, one that was authorised by himself. When you plead with God, you may say, 'Lord, thou hast sent thy Son.' Or when you plead with your own hearts, you may urge them with this, 'God sent him to be helpful to my soul.' These things may be observed from the first thing, the mission of Christ.

SERMON XXXI.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.—JOHN XVII. 18.

SECONDLY, I come to the mission of the apostles, 'So have I sent them into the world, as thou hast sent me.' The words intimate a comparison between God's sending of Christ into the world, and Christ's sending the apostles into the world.

But how doth the comparison hold good? Christ was sent to redeem, they to preach; the apostles were no redeemers. Christ was sent, not only as a prophet, but as a priest, as we have seen before. And again, for the manner, Christ was sent by being incarnate, God-man in one person, he must be man, if sent; but they were men, and therefore there is a difference. Christ was sent as the supreme officer of the church, as God with original authority, they as ministers and servants. Christ could teach immediately, outwardly by his word, inwardly by his Spirit; they only outwardly. How then could it be said, 'As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world'?

I answer—There is an *ὁμοιότης*, not an *ἰσότης*, some likeness, but not an equality. As the union of the apostles is compared with the unity of the Trinity, so the mission of the apostles with the mission of Christ. The similitude holdeth in several things. They were authorised ministers and officers of the church, as Christ was. Christ was authorised by God, and the apostles by Christ; they were his deputies and representatives, as he was God's; that is the notion of *apostle*, or one sent, in the New Testament; not as bare messengers, but as proxies (see Hammond); and we read of 'messengers of the churches,' *ἄποστολοι*, the church's deputies and representatives. Yea, they had

power to send others, as Christ had. The world was bound to acknowledge them for such. To despise Christ was to despise God, whose deputy he was; and to despise them was to despise Christ; to hear them was to hear Christ, and to hear Christ was to hear God: Mat. x. 40, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me;' and Luke x. 16, 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.'

But why doth Christ urge this argument in this place, 'They were sent,' and 'sent as I was sent'?

I answer—It is an argument as to God, and it is a ground of hope to the apostles. An argument fit to be urged to God in prayer, 'they are sent as I was.' Thou didst send me to redeem the world out of thy grace, and they are sent to preach this redemption, and therefore it is fit they should be preserved and sanctified. It is a fit ground of hope for the apostles to meditate upon; they were sent as Christ was. If they be in great poverty, want the help and assistance of the world, so did Christ. All God's witnesses prophesy in sackcloth.

Well, then, here we have the first rise of a gospel ministry. Christ was sent by God, the apostles by Christ, and others are their successors, authorised and sent by them.

The points which I shall handle are two:—

1. The necessity of a call to the ministry.
2. The dignity of those that are so called. Both are implied in the word *sent*.

Before I enter upon the discussion, let none take offence that I apply that to the ministry in general which is spoken of the apostles in the text, 'I have sent them;' which I do for two reasons:—

1. Partly because we may compare ordinary ministers and the apostles together, if their mission be compared with Christ's. As Christ's mission had something extraordinary and peculiar, by which it was distinguished from the mission of the apostles, so the apostles' mission hath something peculiar; but both agree in this, that they must be sent; this they have in common: Rom. x. 14, 'How can they preach except they be sent?' Mark, the apostles were sent as Christ was sent (though Christ was sent to redeem, as well as to prophesy and teach), and so ministers are sent; they must be authorised, as well as the apostles, though the apostles had somewhat peculiar and proper to that office, as the infallibility of doctrine, power of working miracles, the largeness of their circuit, which was the whole world, whereas ordinary ministers are set over one church, and fastened to one place. Again, the apostles were appointed to write scriptures, and pastors and teachers to apply scripture. The apostles were authorised by Christ himself, received their call immediately from his mouth; ordinary ministers are called by a power derived; yet they both agree in this, that they serve in the work of the gospel, and that they are officers that must be called and sent; as not only they are the king's officers, who are immediately appointed by the king, but those also that are appointed by subordinate powers.

2. Partly because a part of the comparison lieth in this, that as Christ was sent by God, and had power to call others, so the apostles

were sent by Christ, and had a power to send and constitute others, and so the succession was to continue. That this was a part of their power appeareth, because Christ, when he gave them their commission, saith, 'He will be with them to the end of the world,' Mat. xxviii. 20; that is, with them in their persons and their successors, who are taken into the same patent and commission, and have a power to call others to the end of the world; and therefore the 'apostles ordained elders in every city,' Acts xiv. 23; and those elders ordained others, as the apostle giveth leave to Titus so to do: Titus i. 5, 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.' Christ was not only sent to be a prophet himself, but to authorise others; so the apostles not only were sent to preach the gospel themselves, but to authorise others, and they others, even to the end of the world.

This being premised, I come to handle—

First, The necessity of a call. That none can enter upon this work, or upon the office of the ministry, without a call, is, I suppose, out of controversy. All the difficulty will be to show you what a call is. Gifts merely do not make a call, but something else. Now a call is either extraordinary or ordinary.

1. Extraordinary, and that is an immediate call from God himself, by voice, vision, or oracle, or by Christ in person. So was Moses called to his office; so the Baptist, so the apostles; and so also was Paul called, because he not seen Christ in person, which it seemeth was necessary to the call of an apostle; he was called by Christ appearing from heaven; and therefore he saith, Gal. i. 1, 'Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ,' &c. Now this extraordinary call may be pretended, but cannot be expected in these latter days. Many have pretended to an extraordinary call. Eusebius in his sixth book tells us of some that pretended they had a book sent from heaven, according to which they were to instruct their disciples; and Sozomen speaketh of a monk that pretended that the instruction that he offered to the church was written by an angel; and since in all ages, especially in ours, do men pretend to illuminations, teachings, and voices within. Thus it may be pretended, but it cannot be expected; for an immediate extraordinary calling hath only place in establishing a new doctrine; but now the canon of faith is closed up: 'This doctrine of the kingdom is to be preached to all nations, till the end come,' Mat. xxiv. 14. And the ordinances of the church are settled, and put into a stated course till Christ come; and therefore we cannot reasonably expect new miracles and new calls. And besides, every extraordinary call is manifested by some vision, miracle, or special effect and gift of the Holy Ghost, by which the truth of that calling may be made out to others, and hath been always sealed with extraordinary effects, which are ceased in these days.

2. The ordinary call then is that which we should chiefly regard, and that is twofold—either inward or outward.

[1.] The inward calling, that is to be regarded in the first place. Be sure you be ministers of Christ's making. There can be no true calling unless you see God in it as well as men. And the Lord taketh

it to be his prerogative to bestow officers upon the church, *dabo evangelistam*; 'I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings,' Isa. xli. 27. He did not only appoint the office, but doth design the persons. Now, what is this inward call? I answer—God calleth us when he maketh us able and willing; the inclination and the ability is from God. The inclination: 'He thrusts out labourers into his harvest,' Mat. ix. 38; and the ability: 'He makes us able ministers of the New Testament,' 2 Cor. iii. 6; and both these are required of us. Ability there must be. Look, as princes count it a point of honour, when they send out ambassadors to foreign nations, to employ those that are fit, so it is for the honour of God that all his messengers should be gifted and fitted. Gifts and abilities are our letters of credence that we bring to the world, that we are called of God and authorised to this work. Certainly if the Spirit of God fitted Bezaleel and Aholiab for the material work of the tabernacle, much more doth spiritual work require proportionate abilities. It is true there is a latitude and difference in the degree of abilities, but all that can look upon themselves as called of God must be able and apt to teach. The apostle took this for a call: 1 Tim. i. 12, 'I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.' If ever God put us into the ministry, he first enableth us, and bestows suitable gifts and graces. But that is not all; a man must be willing too: 1 Tim. iii. 1, 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.' There must be a strong inclination, that carries us out to such a course of life, if the Lord shall give us a call; yea, in some cases, in the conscience of the inward call, a man may offer himself, his gifts to trial, and his person to acceptance, so it be done modestly, and not in a vainglorious confidence. As Antisthenes said in the case of magistracy, that a man should deal with magistracy as with fire; a man would not come too near the fire lest he burn himself; nor stand at too great a distance, lest he grow stiff with cold; so of the ministry, a man must not be too forward nor too backward. In some cases it is good to expect the fair invitation of providence; an inclination there must be, if the Lord vouchsafe a call. In some cases we may offer ourselves to the acceptance of the church, if the Lord see fit that we be chosen. But to return; he hath the inward call who is able and willing; I mean upon spiritual grounds, having first counted the charges, difficulties, duties, dangers of this calling. Well, then, if men be willing, but not fit, they are not called of God; or if fit, yet not willing, they have not warrant enough to undergo the difficulty; much more they that are neither fit nor willing, but only thrust themselves upon the office by the carnal importunity of friends, or corrupt aims at honour and secular advantage. Thus you see what the inward call is.

[2.] There is an outward call. The inward call is not enough; to preserve order in the church, an outward call is necessary. As Peter, Acts x., was called of God to go to Cornelius; and then, besides that, he had a call from Cornelius himself. So must we, having an inward call from the Spirit, expect an outward calling from the church, otherwise we cannot lawfully be admitted to the exercise of such an office and function. As in the Old Testament, the tribe of Levi and house

of Aaron were by God appointed to the service of the altar, yet none could exercise the calling of a Levite, or serve as a high priest, till he was anointed and purified by the church: Exod. xxviii. 3, 'And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to me in the priest's office.' The like is repeated, Num. iii. 3. So the ministers of the gospel, though called by God, must have their external separation, and setting apart to that work by the church; as the Holy Ghost saith, Acts xiii. 2, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Mark, the Spirit of God had chosen them, and yet calls upon the church, the elders of Antioch, to separate them for the work of the ministry. But now, in what order this is to be done, and by whom this separation is to be made, is the great controversy. Politicians, and with them Erastians, make it to be the magistrate's right; the Anabaptists, with some others, make it the people's right; papists and others give it to the bishops; others, to presbyters and elders of the church. To examine every claim at large would take up a great deal of time; let us compound the difference as well as we can. In short, there are three pretenders to the power of the external call—the people, the elders, the magistrate; and we may divide it among them, and give every one their share, and then the call will be complete. I say, there are but three pretenders, for we need not to speak of the bishops' plea, for bishops, and presbyters, or elders, in the scripture are all one. The apostle writes 'to the bishops and deacons at Philippi,' Phil. i. 1. The apostle taketh notice of no other officer in that church. And Chrysostom's gloss is of weight, What is the reason, the apostle saith to bishops? were there more than one of one city? The reason is, saith he, because bishops and elders or presbyters are the same. So when the apostle bids Titus, chap. i. 5, 6, 'Ordain elders in every city, if any be blameless,' &c., he adds, ver. 7, 'For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.' To lay aside this, then, we shall speak to the claim of the people, the elders, and the magistrate, and give every one its due; for in the external call there are three parts—election, ordination, and confirmation. Election, that belongeth to the people; ordination, which standeth in examination of life and doctrine, together with authoritative mission, that is the right of the presbytery; and confirmation, that belongs to the magistrate.

(1.) Election is the people's right. This appeareth because their consent and suffrage is required in all offices, even in the choice of an apostle. Acts i. 15, 26, the one hundred and twenty nominate Matthias in the room of Judas, and God decided it by lot; and in the choice of a deacon: Acts vi. 3, 'Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost,' &c.; and of an elder: Acts xiv. 23, 'And when they had ordained them, *χειροτονήσαντες*, elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord.' I know I tread upon thorns, but yet this seemeth to have been the constant practice of the church in after ages. Leo the great, in an epistle of his, is for *vota civium*, the vote of the people, in the election of ministers. And Cyprian more clearly before him, lib. i. epist. 4, *Videmus de autoritate divina descendere ut sacerdos, plebe*

presente, sub omnium oculis deligatur, et dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur—The minister should be propounded to the people, and approved by their vote and suffrage. And just before, *Plebs illa maxime habet potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi*—The people have a power to choose those that are worthy, and refuse those that are unworthy. Certainly all allow some consent to the people, a full use of the judgment of discretion ‘to try the spirits,’ 1 John iv. 1, and to distinguish ‘the voice of a stranger from the voice of a shepherd,’ John x. 5. It seemeth to be most agreeable to scripture that the people should by suffrage propound the person, and then he is to be authoritatively determined by the presbytery: Acts vi. 3, ‘Look out from among you seven men of honest report, &c., whom we may appoint over this business.’ The apostles did not take to themselves an absolute power, but referred the nomination to the people, though still they reserve the determination and ordination to themselves. Election is the people’s right, because he is chosen for their good; but ordination is the elders’ right, because that is done in the name of Christ, and therefore must be done by his deputies and proxies, as an evidence that the matter is confirmed by Christ, and that he accepts him for his servant in the work of the ministry. Christ himself, as head of the church, had his ordination from God, and his election from the church. God hath appointed him to be head of the church: Eph. i. 22, ‘And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.’ And the church ratifies it by her consent: Hosea i. 11, ‘Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head,’ &c. And it is notable that in Paul’s vision the call is managed by a man of Macedonia, that represented the people of that place: Acts xvi. 9, ‘A vision appeared to Paul in the night: there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.’ Not *Go thou*, but *Come over* and help us.

(2.) Ordination, which consists in the trial of gifts and authoritative commission, that is the right of the elders. That appeareth, because to them is the power of the keys given for the people’s good; and Acts xiii. 2, ‘The Holy Ghost saith, Separate to me Paul and Barnabas unto the work whereunto I have called them.’ Who were those that were to separate? They were prophets and teachers of Antioch, as appeareth ver. 1. And elsewhere the scripture speaketh of ‘the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,’ 1 Tim. iv. 14. Approbation of doctrine and life is the elders’ right, who are best able to judge of men’s fitness and abilities. To Titus, an officer, is this given: Titus i. 5, 6, ‘To ordain elders in every city: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife,’ &c. And then for imposition of hands, it is a custom most conform to apostolical practice; it is not founded on a precept, but only on apostolical practice.

(3.) Confirmation is the magistrate’s right. The christian magistrate hath his share, to see that all things are done orderly by the people and elders. Now magistrates are concerned, not only as principal members of the church, and of the first rank, but as *episcopi ad extra*, as nursing fathers, to whom care and inspection belongeth, that

all things be done decently, and according to the mind and will of God. The christian magistrate is *custos utriusque tabule*. And upon this ground would the apostle have us to pray for the conversion of magistrates, that they might be converted from paganism: 1 Tim. ii. 2, 'That under them we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty.' The magistrate is not only to interpose when differences arise about honesty, but also about godliness; there is *judex*, *index*, *vindex*. In all controversies the word is *judex*, in it the mind and will of God is declared; the minister is *index*, it is his office to preserve knowledge, and out of the word of God to show his mind and will; and the magistrate is *vindex*, he is to see that duty be not neglected, that the administrations of the church be not ill managed, and carried on contrary to Christ's appointment, because he is the 'nursing father of the church,' Isa. xlix. 23. Again, the magistrate is concerned as the head of the commonwealth, and so to consider who shall be encouraged by public maintenance, and allowed to preach publicly without disturbance, the commonwealth being concerned in it. And there wants not precedents in scripture for this. David and Solomon did exercise such a power. Solomon deposed Abiathar: 1 Kings ii. 26, 'And to Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death,' &c. And 'Jehoshaphat sent Levites and priests to teach in every city,' 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9. And as soon as magistrates turned christian in after ages, they were much concerned in the votes and suffrages of the church. The power of princes herein hath been much debated, especially by those that have pleaded the rights of princes against the encroachment of the Romish synagogue, who abundantly prove that the election of the pope himself is not valid without the consent of the emperor. So in ancienter history, Socrates showeth that when Ambrose was chosen by the people of Milan, the election was confirmed by the Roman emperor, lib. iv. cap. 25. And Theodoret showeth that when Athanasius had nominated one Peter for his successor, and the people had given consent, they solemnly asked the magistrate's leave and confirmation. I might heap up many other instances, but let these suffice.

Having spoken to the call, I come to show the necessity of a call. Now such a call, or authoritative mission is necessary—

1. In respect of God. God enableth those whom he employeth: 1 Tim. i. 12, 'I thank Jesus Christ my Lord, who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.' And this is the ground upon which Christ builds his prayer in this place, 'Sanctify them through thy truth;' for 'I have sent them into the world.' *Ἀυτόκλητοι*, those that run of their own heads without a call, cannot expect God's blessing, but those only that are regularly sent can expect the increase of gifts and success of their ministry; for the word worketh not by its own force, but by God's blessing. Blessing dependeth altogether upon the institution, and therefore the institution must be carefully observed if we would have the blessing. God is said to employ not only those who are called extraordinarily, but in the ordinary way. The elders of Ephesus had no extraordinary call, yet it is said, 'The Holy Ghost had made them overseers,' Acts xx. 28.

2. In respect of Satan. He will soon spy out our want of commission, as he did in the sons of Sceva: Acts xix. 14, 15, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?' I know Jesus as the Lord, Paul as an authorised minister, one that had a lawful commission, 'But who are ye?' And then the devil fell upon them, and wounded them, ver. 16. It is true, we have not such visible instances of the devil's power now as then, because God rules the world now by wisdom, not by power; but yet we may observe the secret power of the devil upon those that run of their own accord, and venture upon the office of the ministry without a call. None are more apt to be led aside into errors, and those of the grossest nature, than those that venture upon this office without a call. Origen's errors are by many ascribed to his neglect or want of ordination. And the Arians, saith the synod of Alexandria, were *fimosi vitio sue creationis*, infamous for want of a right call to the ministry, and therefore fell into that damnable error.

3. In regard of yourselves, that you may digest difficulties with the more patience. You can never endure anything with comfort but when you can thus say, I am in God's way, doing God's work. This is a great ground of patience. Conscience in a time of danger will take hold of the least faulty circumstance. Uzzah had little comfort in his stroke, because he was out of God's way: Jude 11, 'Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, &c., and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.' Korah was a sad instance.

4. In respect of the church. This external mission is necessary, that the church may receive you comfortably. It is made a character of Christ's sheep, 'not to hear the voice of a stranger,' John x. 5, nor of such as 'do not enter in by the door,' ver. 1. And in the Old Testament it is often said, 'Hearken not to them, for I have not sent them.' In the primitive church this was strictly observed. When Chrysostom was banished, and Arsanius unduly succeeded him, the people would not so much as hear him. Theodoret witnesseth that some of them would rather go into banishment than join with him in public worship. So when Felix was set over Rome instead of Liberius, against the consent of the church, the people would not enter while he was present, though Felix was orthodox, and nothing could be objected against his doctrine. This instance is approved by Luther in his comment on the Psalms of Degrees, and (in his way of expression) he saith, the same should be done to an angel or archangel, though he came with never so good tidings, if we knew they came without lawful commission.

Use 1. Information in two things—that the ministry is an office, and a standing office.

1. The ministry is an office, not a work of charity, which every one must perform; there must be fit persons sent; therefore it is said, Acts x. 41, that Christ appeared 'not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, whom he commanded to preach unto the people.' Therefore he that cannot say he is chosen of God for this work, must not take this honour upon him, lest he run before he be sent, and so they do but prattle, not preach, for preaching is an ordinance. So the Lord said to Ananias concerning Paul, Acts ix. 15, 'He is a chosen vessel before me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.' He is called 'a chosen vessel,' not in regard of

eternal election, but in regard of designation to the work of the gospel. Every one is bound by the law of charity to use his gifts to the edification of others, but still in a regular way. A king hath many subjects, but all his subjects are not courtiers and special servants. All members of the church are subjects of Christ's kingdom, but all are not officers, for these are chosen members.

2. That the ministry is a standing office. When Christ was about to depart, then he sendeth apostles with a promise that he would be with them to the end of the world. He sendeth them that they may send others, and so continue the succession. So that the apostles are not only sent by Christ, but the ministers of the gospel virtually, being sent by Christ's deputies; as they are the king's officers that are not only immediately created by the king, but by his power. Still God hath ever had an ordinary standing ministry in the church. In the Old Testament there were not only prophets, that were immediately called to deliver God's message, and to write scripture, but an ordinary ministry, to open the law and the prophets, and to preserve knowledge in the church: Mal. ii. 6, 7, 'The law of the truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips, &c. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.' Therefore the ordinary Levites are called *νομοδιδάσκαλοι*, teachers of the law. In the New Testament, Christ gave not only apostles to write scripture, but pastors and teachers to open scripture: Eph. iv. 11, 'He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.' The Bible is not enough for your edification without this institution; the same Christ that instituted apostles to write scripture, instituted pastors and teachers to open and apply scripture. This is always necessary, though religion be never so thoroughly planted in a nation, for we need continual remembrancers. And the end of preaching is not only to learn what we knew not before, but that we may have spiritual things always before our eyes, and in the view and consideration of conscience, and that the heart be always kept lively and soft and tender by the frequent droppings of the word, and that we may receive new influences of grace in God's way. Yea, for nations, how soon would they degenerate without a monitor and standing ministry, and all things would be wrapt up in error and darkness! This was the first occasion of idolatry among the nations, when their monitors ceased, and religion began to be confined to a few families. Experience will best show the necessity of such a standing office in the church.

Use 2. Reproof of those that invade the minister's office, and of those that countenance them. Jude says of them, 'They perished in the gainsaying of Korah,' Jude 11. God's judgments will overtake them. Korah's sin was levelling of offices in the church: 'All the Lord's people are holy;' why should any take a special office upon them? It is a horrible abuse. Remember the breach of Uzzah; God is jealous even of a circumstance in his institution. Christ himself had his call to authorise him: 'Thou hast sent me into the world;' therefore much more should you have a call to authorise you. If the work doth not lie within the compass of your office, you do not glorify God, and cannot please him; and it will be ill for your account; you

cannot, when you die, say as Christ, John xiv. 7, 'I have glorified thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do.' You do not glorify God with anything but that which he hath given you to do. It is notable that Christ would not intermeddle out of his calling. When one came to entreat him to 'speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him,' he said to him, Luke xii. 4, 'Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?' Who was fitter to judge than Christ? yet this was not the work he came about. If troubles arise, you cannot suffer them comfortably. All the disorders abroad will lie in a great measure upon your score. Invading of callings hath been the source of those mischiefs that abound among us. Augustine saith, *Pax est tranquillitas ordinis*, when all things keep their place. In natural things, elements, when out of their place, breed confusion; the sea out of its place makes an inundation; and the air out of its place, imprisoned in the bowels of the earth, causeth an earthquake. It is true in this case also; when men are out of their place it begets confusion and disorder. Never do I look for the peace of the church, and power of the gospel, till men have learned to keep within the compass of their callings. You pretend gifts and abilities; if you have a desire to the work for the work's sake, why do you not submit to the regular way of sending? The angel that appeared to Cornelius biddeth him send for Peter, Acts x. 5. Why did not the angel teach him himself? His commission was only to bring a message from God, not to preach the gospel; that was Peter's work, therefore he sent him to Peter. Nay, Christ himself sendeth Paul to Ananias, Acts ix. 6. If any should usurp the place of an ambassador, without the prince's leave and command, it would be accounted horrible pride. No prince can endure a servant whom he hath not chosen; and how then can Christ take it well at your hands? It is but an itch of pride, if we search it to the bottom. There are regular ways of exercising your gifts, in private meditation, and family instruction, and gracious conferences, by way of interchangeable discourse, with less pride and usurpation, and more spiritual profit and comfort, than in public sermons.

Use 3. Advice to ministers and people.

1. To ministers. Strive to make out your calling to your people, to evidence it to the consciences of your auditory, by your sincerity and success.

[1.] By your sincerity: 2 Cor. iv. 2, 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Success is not in our power, but yet our aim should be sincere. Delight not in vain applause; let not this satisfy thee, but that others may feel the power of truth. Let it not satisfy thee when thy hearers go away and say, Oh! how learnedly, how eloquently, with what subtlety and sublimity of reason doth he preach! what excellent gifts of memory, wit, elocution! This did not satisfy Christ. Christ had made an excellent sermon; a woman in the company cries out, Luke xi. 22, 28, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked! But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and

keep it!' It is far better, when they go away from hearing, to be more mindful of themselves than of us; of what is spoken to their consciences, rather than what are our gifts; condemning themselves, rather than commending us; bewailing their own hearts and lives, rather than applauding and admiring our sermons; smiting their own breasts, and saying, not so much, How well hath he preached! but how ill have I lived! how carnal am I, subject to sin!

[2.] By success. This you should covet above all things; this is the seal of your ministry in the people's consciences. Every ambassador sent out from a prince hath not only instructions and commands, but his commission sealed; so a minister must not only look to his instructions to preach the gospel, but for a seal of his ministry, as his letters of credence and recommendation. Now our seal is spiritual, as all other the parts of our administration are. What is this spiritual seal? God's owning and blessing our endeavours: 2 Cor. iii. 1-3, 'Do we begin again to commend ourselves; or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.' Success in the hearts of the people doth authorise our commission. So 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.' This is a proof that we come to you in Christ's stead, and speak in his name and power. It is not who can speak most finely and plausibly, but most effectually to the heart: 1 Cor. ii. 4, 'My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' That is the evidence, not luscious gifts. Carnal men may have these, for the good of the body, that have no inward calling. I remember Paul putteth the false teachers upon this experiment and proof of their calling: 1 Cor. iv. 19, 'I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.' I will not examine them by their speech, but by the spiritual efficacy of their ministry, which is the chiefest sign of God's approbation and blessing, not their pomp and eloquence. And therefore this is the seal that you should look after.

2. Here is advice to the people, to own them that are called, and sent to you in the name of Christ. Own their persons by a cordial submission to them: Heb. xiii. 17, 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account.' In the particular places where you are disposed by the care of providence, they are sent by God to you. There is much in the designation of God's providence, and cohabitation is an excellent friend to church communion. That is the sphere of your activity; where God hath appointed your dwelling, there you are in the greatest capacity to serve God, and to promote the ends of church-fellowship and communion. And do not only own the persons, but the calling of the ministers, as a gospel institution. Pray for it;—how importunately doth Paul beg the people's prayers everywhere!—

and countenance and plead for it in the gates. Wicked men could never obtain that power they have over ministers, were there not some backwardness and faintness in the people of God to own them. Herod could have put John to death, 'but he feared the multitude, because they counted him for a prophet,' Mat. xiv. 5. The putting down the ministry will not only be imputed to the violence of others, but to your coldness and ingratitude. Therefore let the world know by some public vindication that you are not afraid to own Christ's institutions. If we have a charter given us by a prince, how zealous are we that it might not be infringed! Whatever the world thinks of it, this is Christ's royal gift in the day of his inauguration: Eph. iv. 11, 'When he ascended up on high, he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.' Therefore stand, and plead for it more. Paul took notice, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 'At my first answer no man stood with me; but all men forsook me.' It is a crime to forsake ministers in their defence, much more to forsake the ministry. Are we so backward that we do not think Christ's gift worthy a public vindication? Nothing hath been accounted so near and dear to the church of God, that hath put them upon such frequent prayers and zealous endeavours, as this, that their ministers may not be taken from them. Therefore own their calling, and own the institution.

Before I come to speak to the dignity of ministers, I shall answer an objection or two against what hath been said.

Object. 1. If none but such as have an outward call are to preach, what call had the first reformers? I answer—

1. The first reformers, most of them had a lawful call, being pastors and teachers before the reformation; and though they had it from antichrist, as some plead, or the popish clergy, yet that did not make it less valid. The apostles say of Judas, Acts i. 17, 'He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.' Wicked Judas, *in foro ecclesie*, was a true and lawful apostle, and whatever he did by virtue of his office was valid and lawful. So the Roman clergy, they have obtained part of this ministry with us, and *in foro ecclesie*, at least before the reformation, were lawful ministers; it is disputable whether as yet God hath given such a total divorce, that all their ecclesiastical acts are nullities.

2. Others were stirred up by the special instinct of the Holy Ghost to undertake the work, and being received of their own churches, their call was valid; for things of order must give way to things of absolute necessity, and where an ordinary calling cannot be had, God calleth men out of order. It is the duty of all saints to contend for the faith; and when God, by a special instinct, stirreth up holy men to do this work, they are thereby authorised; especially when there is a general defection and corruption among the officers of the church. Who would expect the reformation of stews from bawds and panders? It is necessary the church should have pastors and teachers; and where ordination cannot be had, the election and consent of the people sufficeth, God especially accompanying them with his presence, and the men being furnished with gifts and necessary qualifications, both as to life and doctrine, for that office.

Object. or Case. 2. What shall be done in case of propagating the gospel, where no lawful call can be had, or all die at a time?

I answer—In extraordinary cases, God supplieth the want by extraordinary ways; that may be done at one time that is not lawful at another, especially in matter of order, as eating the shew-bread in case of necessity. Edesius and Frumentius, travelling into the Indies, had an opportunity of spreading the gospel; though the last afterwards returned, and was ordained by Athanasius. Natural bodies have their ordinary qualities; yet *ad fugam vacui*, they act contrary to them, as water will ascend contrary to the gravity of it. Before deacons were instituted, the apostles served tables, though it was a thing not meet for them: Acts vi. 2, ‘It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.’ Philip, of a deacon, was made an extraordinary evangelist, Acts viii.

SERMON XXXII.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.—JOHN XVII. 18.

SECONDLY, I now come to speak of the dignity that is put upon them that are called to the work of the ministry; they are sent by Christ as his deputies and ambassadors, as those who impersonate Christ, and represent him to the world: 2 Cor. v. 20, *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβένομεν*, ‘Wherefore we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’ Ministers are sent out as Christ’s proxies.

Here I shall show—(1.) Who are sent; (2.) From whom; (3.) To whom; (4.) Why, or about what business.

1. Who are sent? Principally the apostles, but secondarily the ordinary ministers of the gospel; the apostles as ambassadors extraordinary, but we as liegers and agents. The apostles were immediately sent by Christ, and furnished with extraordinary gifts, as infallibility of doctrine, gifts of miracles, gifts of tongues; as ambassadors are sent forth with more pomp and state than agents. But now ministers are sent by a power derived and delegated from Christ; and we have not like authority and infallibility as the apostles had, but the substance of the commission and of the work is the same; we are to open the mind of God to men, and in Christ’s name and authority to pray you to be reconciled to God. And therefore both apostles and ordinary ministers of the gospel, ordinary pastors and teachers of the church, are sent.

2. From whom they are sent. From Christ, who is the king of the church, though with the consent of all the persons in the Trinity. The Father sendeth, Christ sendeth, the Holy Ghost sendeth: Gal. i. 1, ‘Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.’ Paul raiseth up his commission as far as the grant and consent of God the Father. And the Holy Ghost sendeth: Acts xx. 28, ‘Take heed therefore unto

yourself, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.' So Acts xiii. 2, 'As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them.' In short, then, we are sent by the decree and will of the Father, qualified by the Holy Ghost, and commissioned by the authority of Christ as king of the church. And therefore the apostles were to tarry at Jerusalem till Christ was ascended, and seated on the throne, and seized upon the kingdom, and poured out the Holy Ghost upon them. None are sent but such are also called and chosen by the Holy Ghost, by whom also they are gifted, with respect to God the Father's consent, and Christ's authority.

3. To whom are they sent? I answer—To all, without any distinction of nation, sex, person, or condition: Mark xvi. 15, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Men send an embassy to kings and princes, but Christ to every mean creature, without any restraint. It is true, the motion and course of the gospel is directed by a special providence, to some places and not to others: Acts xvi. 7, 'After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not.' But doth the Holy Ghost hinder the preaching of the gospel? We must distinguish between the grant of power and the exercise of it. Though there be a general grant, that the pale of the church shall be enlarged, yet this grant is to be made good as the Lord will. There is a general grant that the gospel shall be preached unto all nations, but as for the exercise and making good this grant, God will have the world to know that the preaching of the gospel is a privilege and a special favour, and therefore he sendeth it to some and not to others, as a token of his love. It is a thing that doth not come by chance, or by the counsels of men, but by his special grant and designation. Therefore it is notable that the apostles were guided by the Spirit, not only in their doctrine, but in their journeys; and the external means are distributed by the will of God, as well as internal grace, that wherever it cometh we may acknowledge it as a special favour; to some it cometh later, to others sooner, but to all as God will. He oweth it to none; and therefore, though the pale be enlarged, and there is a general grant that all creatures that live within the precincts of the round world shall have the gospel in their turn, yet to some it is sent before others: Acts iii. 26, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you.' The Jews had the first offer and liberty of choice or refusal. So Acts xiii. 26, 'Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, unto you is the word of this salvation sent.' He doth not say, it is *brought* by me, but *sent*. The preaching of the gospel is governed by God's special providence and care; as the scriptures 'came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Peter i. 21. So it is not preached by the will of men. It is not your purses that procure it, nor your goodness that deserveth it, but good ministers are sent to you by Christ's special love and care, and so should you acknowledge it. I tell you, many have laboured for the gospel, fought for the gospel, and yet they have missed it,

because they do not consider him that hath the stars in his hand, and directeth and guideth their motions. God will have this mercy taken out of his own hand, as a special token of his love; therefore because they do not acknowledge God, though they fight, strive, and labour for it, yet the gospel is taken from them.

4. For what are they sent, or the end and scope of the gospel? Ever since the fall, there is a quarrel between God and man; and God might send heralds to proclaim war, as he sendeth ambassadors of peace 'to pray you to be reconciled,' 2 Cor. v. 20; that is the purport and drift of our message, to gain men to lay down the weapons of their defiance, and to accept of Christ, that in him they may find life and peace. God might send messengers into the world, as he sent Jonah to Nineveh, to warn the world of their destruction, or as he revealed the law upon Mount Sinai, to make men sensible of their bondage, and obnoxiousness to divine wrath and justice; but he sendeth messengers of peace, with an olive branch in their mouths, to tell the world of God reconciled, and God pacified by Christ, and invite them to be in favour and peace with God, that so they may enjoy communion with him in grace here and glory hereafter: Col. i. 27, 28, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory. Whom ye preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' There is the subject of our ministry, communion with Christ, and reconciliation with God by Christ, as 'the hope of glory;' the manner of managing it, 'with wisdom warning' every man; the persons with whom we treat, 'every man,' without distinction; and our aim and scope, 'that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'

Use 1. It informeth us of four things:—

1. The excellency and dignity of the ministry. They are Christ's ambassadors; they are sent, not as a post or letter-carrier, but as honourable messengers. An ambassador usually is one of the nobility, sent by a prince, or the supreme power of a nation; not to private men, but to their fellow-princes or states; not upon a light cause, but to treat of matters of moment; and not in a low or base manner, but with an equipage and pomp answerable to the dignity of him that sendeth. Or, in short, an ambassador is an eminent person, sent from some chief prince, with dignity and authority to transact affairs of the greatest moment; and because he representeth the person from whom he is sent, therefore credit and honour is to be given to him suitable to his place and office. Now the greater the king or potentate is from whom he is sent, the more honour is done him; if from an emperor, it is more honour than from an ordinary prince; and the greater and more welcome the business is, still the greater honour. If the nature of the business be to require satisfaction for injuries, to denounce war, yet still he is respected according to his place; but if it be a matter of peace, he is more welcome; or if it be to establish a correspondence of traffic between nation and nation, much more if it be about a treaty of marriage, and to propound terms of the highest amity and friendship, he is much more respected; and yet more especially if the state or prince to whom he is sent be inferior to the other that sent him. Now these are the terms upon which the

ministers of the gospel are sent; they are Christ's ambassadors, they are sent from the greatest monarch that ever was, from Christ, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords; and they are sent to miserable and wretched men, to rebels to the crown of heaven; and their message is not to denounce war, but to propose terms of friendship and amity, to tell you that God is willing to be reconciled to, and to be at peace with, his creatures. Oh! 'how beautiful upon the mountains should their feet be that publish such glad tidings!' Isa. lii. 7. It is an allusion to the dirty feet of travellers, that come about weighty business; the dirt of the journey doth not render them defiled, but beautiful. Nay, this is not all; they are furnished with authority, with power of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins: John ii. 23, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' To them are given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to open and shut; not as they please, but so as the Lord ratifies their regular proceedings in the court of heaven. They have a power, in God's name, to take up the controversy between God and you, and they bear God's name, that is, represent his person. And they are set forth with an answerable equipage, with plentiful gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are, as it were, their letters of credence, with gifts of knowledge, experience, and comfort, above the ordinary sort of christians.

2. It informeth us of the duty of the ministry, as well as their dignity; their duty both in their life and conversation, and in their ministry and calling.

[1.] In their life and conversation. Remember the gravity and state of ambassadors; you represent Christ's person, and you must be examples and patterns to others. You should not be guilty of levity, or be given to the pomp and vanities of the world, as others are; not only that you may not disparage your ministry, and hinder the ends of it, but that you may the better represent the person of him that hath sent you, and not disgrace Christ. An imprudent, vain, carnal minister is a disgrace to Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God.' Principally that text concerns ministers; so Beza, Calvin, and others expound it; for there he is comparing the ministry of the New Testament with the ministry of the legal dispensation; that as Moses, by conversing with God, his face shone, so ministers of the gospel have their glory too; by conversing with Christ, they carry away his image. So that a minister should be a representative of Christ. It is a spiritual dignity, not a temporal, to be Christ's ambassadors; and therefore you must excel, not in place only, but in grace: 1 Tim. iv. 12, 'Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' This is the duty of a minister, to appear like Christ's deputy, just as he was in the world. This will make way for your esteem, though young for age, and mean in birth and estate. The apostle doth not write to others, and say, 'See you do not despise Timothy;' but he writes to Timothy, 'Let no man despise thee.' Our disesteem cometh from ourselves, when we let fall the majesty of our conversations. Well,

then, let the dignity of your office be in your eye, that you may not be a disgrace to him that sent you, but may walk with all religious circumspection, gravity, and prudence.

[2.] In their ministry and calling there is also required faithfulness, gravity, and sincerity.

(1.) Faithfulness. Propound nothing to others but what you have in command from God, and what you know to be certainly agreeable to his will; as an ambassador must not go beyond his commission, that is, upon his own score, and to his own peril. When Christ gave us our commission, this he gave us in charge' Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Teach them all things which I have commanded you.' The first mischief in the church came from dogmatising; men would be wise above the word, and that made way for foul abuses, and they for heresies; when you press things without warrant, others question all. You shall see the Lord Christ often avoucheth how punctually he kept to his commission: John xii. 49, 'For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say and what I should speak.' Christ would not go a tittle nor hair's-breadth from his instructions. When we are adding to the word, others will detract from it. It is sweet when we can say, John vii. 16, 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;' this I have in charge from God; when we have clear evidence from the word, and a strong instinct from the Spirit to deliver such a message; not the visions of our own brain, but the counsel of God to the people.

(2.) With gravity. God's message must be delivered like his message, speaking 'as the oracles of God,' 1 Peter iv. 11; with affection, as having experience of it in our souls, feeling the divine power of the word on our hearts. And with authority: thou art delivering Christ's message, in the presence of Christ and his holy angels; and therefore it must not be delivered with frothy gayish eloquence, but with majesty and power. Vainglorious preaching, such as is intermixed with strains of wit, and fancies, and idle speculations, ill becometh God's ambassadors. Such speak as if they were in jest, not as if they had a serious message to deliver from God; this becometh the stage rather than the pulpit.

(3.) With sincerity. It is required of an ambassador that he be faithful to him that sent him. He is not sent abroad to seek his own ends, and enter into a confederacy with foreign princes, to gratify his interest by secret combinations, but must be faithful to him that sent him: Prov. xiii. 17, 'A wicked messenger falleth into mischief, but a faithful ambassador is health;' health to himself, and health to the prince that sendeth him; and therefore we must not seek ourselves, but be faithful to God. You seek yourselves most when you do not seek yourselves, when you are faithful to God, when you do nothing for fear or favour of men, but are bold upon the Lord's commission. Your work is to go for another, not for yourselves. God himself will reward his own messengers, and will set the crown upon their heads with his own hand. And that is one reason why he permits them to have bad entertainment in the world, that they may not take up with men, and that he himself might crown them, and give them their reward.

3. It informeth us of the mercy and love of God to mankind. He was the offended party, and yet he first sendeth about terms of reconciliation. In us there is *infirmities et animositates*, weakness and strength of stomach; though we have done the injury, yet we are not ready to offer terms of reconciliation. As David speaks of the mercy of the covenant in general, 2 Sam. vii. 19, 'And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?' Was it ever heard that he that is offended should be so solicitous and careful to send about agreement and reconciliation? But this God doth, not out of any need that he hath of our friendship, as men sometimes in policy seek to those who have injured them, for God is stronger than we; but out of pure love. The first ambassador God sent was his own Son: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;' and ver. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' Christ cometh out from the bosom of God. The law was delivered by an angel, but the gospel by Christ himself. And then God sendeth apostles with extraordinary gifts, and power of working miracles, to lay a foundation: 1 Cor. iii. 10, 'According to the grace that is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation.' And then pastors and teachers, men of like passions with ourselves, weak men, but furnished with gifts proper to their calling. There is a mercy in this institution. We cannot endure God's presence: Deut. v. 25, 'If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.' Moses trembled and quaked when a voice was heard out of the clouds and darkness. Therefore God sends men of like infirmities with ourselves, that our defects might be borne with patience, because they have experience of the hardness and obstinacy of their own hearts; and that our ignorance might be familiarly instructed, and knowledge dropped in by degrees; we are to learn by little and little, here a line, and there a line; God, in condescension to our weakness, hath appointed this help.

4. It informeth us of the madness of the world, that use Christ's ambassadors ill, when they come about such a message. It is against *jus gentium*, the law of nations, to offer violence to ambassadors; let their message be never so displeasing, their persons are secured by the civility of all nations. Yet Christ's ambassadors are often ill entreated: Mat. xxiii. 37, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!' It is England's sin to malign and hate God's messengers, though they come with terms of peace. Never was the ministry more evangelical, yet never more hated than now. What should be the reason of this madness? No calling is more profitable to human society, to civilise a people, to take them off from their brutishness and fierceness, and yet none more opposed. Partly out of a Gadarene temper; they grow weary of Christ's ministers. But chiefly out of a natural enmity against them. Since the fall, man is an enemy to his own happiness. In bodily miseries it is otherwise; a blind man loves his guide, and as Elymas, when stricken blind, they seek about for some to lead them. A sick man loveth his physician; but spiritual blindness and sickness is of another nature; men hate those that offer to lead them and cure them. The guilty world would fain take a nap and rest; and because God's mes-

sengers will not let them alone, therefore they hate them. Errors and lusts are touchy. *Mundus senescens patitur phantasias.* The world, as it grows old, is given to dreams and dotage, and is loath to be disturbed. A thief would have the candle put out that discovereth him. Christ's messengers, though instruments of common good, yet often meet with public hatred: Eph. vi. 20, 'For whom I am an ambassador in bonds, ἐν ἀλύσει, in chains.' A man would think he meant golden chains, because he speaks of his ambassadorship. No; he means hard iron chains, which he suffered for Christ's sake; and usually this is the lot of Christ's ambassadors.

Use 2. Advice both to people and ministers.

1. To people. If ministers be sent by Christ, then it adviseth you to respect their message, their calling, their persons.

[1.] Accept their message. When we speak for the honour and dignity of the ministry, we plead for a spiritual respect to them, not for a temporal domination and precedency in all meetings and companies. Our king whom we serve is a spiritual king; his kingdom is not of this world; he came not with external pomp and splendour; therefore these are not things we should look after. Though some respect is due to their persons, yet chiefly we plead for a respect to their doctrine. Do not despise the message which they bring, though their persons be obscure and despicable. Doctrines delivered from the scripture have a divine authority; it is God's message, as if it had been spoken from heaven. And therefore, if we must speak as the oracles of God, you must hear it as God's word: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' Never can you expect the word should work with you till you have this respect and reverence for it.

But you will say, Is all gospel that is delivered by one in office?

I answer—No; but you must humbly consider what is brought to you in Christ's name. When Ehud said to Eglon, Judges iii. 20, 'I have a message from God unto thee,' he arose out of his seat. See what it is, and let it move you more to look to your ways.

[2.] Respect the calling more. Many seek to undermine it, as if it were grown the burden of the christian world; others think disgracefully and meanly of it, as if it were below their parts or rank and place. Let me tell you it is the highest honour that can be put upon a creature to be Christ's messenger. No nobility of birth, antiquity of house, plenty of estate is to be compared with it; all worldly honours and titles are beneath it; and so shall we judge when once we come to see a prophet's reward. Do not think scornfully of the calling. It is a great mercy if God should choose any of thine to this work, the best and chiefest of thy family. The first-born were separated to God before the priesthood was settled upon the tribe of Levi. Usually men consecrate the worst to God, if any be lame, blind, unfit for work; like the deceiver, Mal. i. 14, 'Which hath a male in his flock, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.' I speak the more in this matter, because if God suffer the wickedness of the age

to go on, if maintenance go away, nobles must put their necks to the yoke, to serve Christ in this employment, as some have done in other churches.

[3.] Respect their persons. Something is due to them for the work's sake: 1 Thes. v. 12, 13, 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake;' Gal. iv. 14, 'Ye received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus;' whose deputy he was, though compassed with weaknesses. Certainly there is some good-will due to the persons that bring such glad tidings from heaven. We reward a messenger that bringeth a token from a friend, and these come to you from your best friend, Jesus Christ. There is a promise made to that respect that you show to the persons of Christ's messengers: Mat. x. 42, 'Who shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no-wise lose his reward.' It was said of Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, Acts v. 34, he was *τίμιος πάντι τῷ λαῷ*, 'in reputation among the people.' The original word signifies he was precious to the people. If a doctor of the law was in such esteem, something is due to the teachers of the gospel. Do not say we plead for ourselves; it is fit you should hear your duty pressed.

2. To ministers. It quickeneth you to your work, notwithstanding great afflictions, and the inconveniences you meet with in the world. Remember you are sent, as Christ was, to an unthankful world. It will hold good not only in regard of authority but condition: 'The disciple is not above his Lord,' Mat. x. 35, 'Nor he that is sent, greater than he that sent him,' John xiii. 16. Comfort yourselves against contempt. God hath vouchsafed this high favour and prerogative to you above many others that seemed worthy to be preferred before you, that have quicker parts and higher abilities; above the nobles and the princes of the world. You have no cause to envy them nor their greatness, though you are counted the dregs of the world, and made a daily reproach. Paul balanceth his office and his afflictions: Eph. vi. 20, 'For which I am an ambassador in bonds.' There is his ambassadorship and his bonds, the greatness of his office and the straitness of his condition; his dignity before God and the church, and his shame and disgrace in the world.

Use 3. Reproof to those that wrong Christ's messengers, their persons with reproach and violence, or their estate by sacrilegious hands, seeking to deprive them of their maintenance. Take heed what you do; the persons and goods of ambassadors are privileged. You rob God and Christ, whose receivers they are, and to whom these things are consecrated: Rom. ii. 22, 'Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' God will wink at the superstition of former times, that had no better light, when he will not at the unthankfulness, rapine, avarice, and robbery of these times; and therefore take heed what you do.

1. The affronts you put upon them redound to Christ, whose deputies and proxies they are. They represent his person, therefore he takes it as done to himself: Luke x. 16, 'He that despiseth you

despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' It goes up to God himself, from messengers to Christ, from Christ to God. As the Lord tells Samuel, 1 Sam. viii. 7, 'They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.' Christ counts it as done to himself in his own person.

2. It showeth you do not prize the word when you hate the messengers of it, when you offer violence to their persons, and rob them of their good names: Isa. lii. 7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' The messengers of Christ are precious to those that have received benefit by them. If ever you tasted the power of the word, certainly you would love the instruments more. Take heed of rotten hypocrisy. You profess you detest the persecutions of former times, of pagans, and antichrist, that so furiously persecuted the church; and, alas! you do the same when you oppose God's messengers, that live in your age, whom Christ hath put into office, to deliver his counsel to the people. So the scribes and pharisees: Mat. xxiii. 29, 30, 'Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Dathan and Abiram were as odious and accursed to the wicked Jews in Christ's days as the memory of Judas and Julian can be to us. Therefore do not flatter yourselves that you detest the persecution of former ages, when your heart is carried out with such rage and malice against the messengers of Christ now.

3. God will not always suffer it. Prophet-hating is a deadly sin. It is said of Herod, Luke iii. 20, 'He added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.' So 2 Chron. xvi. 10, 'Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing.' Were these scriptures written for our instruction, and yet are you guilty of prophet-hating, that seek, by sacrilegious violence to rob and deprive ministers of that which is their portion before God and men? So Hosea iv. 4, 'This people are as they that strive with the priest.' Enter your protest against it, have no hand in this sin.

THE END OF VOL. X.