

[3.] To put in for a share in this blessed estate, that they may be some of those whom he loveth as he loved Christ.

Use 1. Caution to the carnal world. Do not hate those whom God thus loveth. To you they are accursed, but God counteth them precious: Isa. xliii. 4, 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.' To you they are the scurf and offscouring: 1 Cor. iv. 13, 'We are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things to this day.' But to God they are jewels: Mal. iii. 17, 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels.'

Use 2. Advice to the children of God, to promote the conviction and conversion of the carnal: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' Herein you imitate your master, and your own safety lieth in it.

SERMON XLI.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

—JOHN XVII. 24.

WE have hitherto seen Christ's prayers for the happiness of his church in the present world; now he prayeth for their happiness in the world to come. His love looketh beyond the grave, and outlasteth the life that now is; he cannot be contented with anything on this side a blessed eternity. Glory as well as grace is the fruit of his purchase, and therefore it is the matter of his prayers. Every verse is sweet, but this should not be read without some ravishment and leaping of heart. One saith he would not for all the world that this scripture should have been left out of the Bible. Certainly we should have wanted a great evidence and demonstration of Christ's affection. Every word is emphatical. Let us view it a little.

Here is a compellation, a request, and the reason of that request. The compellation, 'Father.' In the request there is the manner, how it is made, 'I will.' The persons for whom it is made, 'That they whom thou hast given me.' The matter of the request, in presence and vision, 'Be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' Or the matter is everlasting happiness, which is described by the place of enjoyment, and our work when we come thither. Now the reason of all is, the Father's eternal love to Christ, and in Christ to us, 'For thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.'

First, The compellation, 'Father.' The titles of God are usually suited to the matter in hand. Christ is now suing for a child's portion for all his members, and therefore he saith, 'Father.' God is Christ's father by eternal generation, and ours by gracious adoption, whence our title to heaven ariseth. And therefore it is called an inheritance:

Col. iii. 24, 'Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.' It is not simply wages, such as a servant receiveth from his master; but an inheritance, or a child's portion, such as children receive from parents. And it is very notable the apostle there speaketh of servants, who are saved, as God's sons. So our waiting for glory is expressed by 'waiting for the adoption,' Rom. viii. 23, because then we have the fruit of it. We hold heaven not by merit, nor by our purchase, nor by privilege of birth, but by adoption. The ground of expectation is put for the matter of expectation, 'waiting for the adoption.' And now we wait, because now we have *jus hæreditatis*; then we have possession.

Use 1. This notion represents the freeness of grace in giving us glory; we do not receive it as a debt, but as a gift. Nothing is more free than an inheritance. It was purchased by Christ, but it was given to us; we receive it by virtue of his testament, and the Father's promise. It is called an 'inheritance,' Eph. i. 18, 'What is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;' an inheritance cometh freely, and without burden and incumbrance. Thus we hold heaven by all kind of titles; we have it by purchase, and we have it freely. Christ maketh the purchase, and we possess the gift. It is a greater security to our hopes when we can look for heaven from a merciful Father and a righteous judge; it is just, Christ having paid the price. Therefore it is called, 'The gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Rom. vi. 20. It is the Father's gift, but for the greater honour to God, and security to us, it is Christ's purchase.

Use 2. It showeth the necessity of becoming sons to God if we expect heaven. Children can only look for a child's portion. The world is a common inn for sons and bastards; but heaven is called 'our Father's house;' none but children are admitted there: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' *Seeing* is often put for *enjoying*; yet the word is emphatical; they shall not have so much as a glimpse of heaven, but are cast into everlasting darkness. A man should never be quiet till he be one of the family, and can evidence his new birth. As they were put from the priesthood as polluted that could not find their genealogy, Ezra ii. 62, so, if you cannot prove your descent from God, you are disclaimed, and reckoned not to God's, but to Satan's family.

Use 3. It teacheth God's children with patience and comfort to wait for this happy estate: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' You do not yet know what adoption meaneth; the day of the manifestation of the sons of God is to come: 1 John iii. 3, 'Behold, now are we the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be.' 'It doth not appear,' therefore wait. There is the spirit of an heir and the spirit of a servant, as we read of the 'Spirit of adoption.' A servant must have something in hand, pay from quarter to quarter; they do not use to expect their master's possession; but an heir waiteth till it fall.

You may look upon the compellation as an expression of Christ's hearty good-will. When he sueth for our glorification, he improveth

all his interest in God, 'Father, I will.' When he pleadeth for himself, he useth the same compellation, ver. 1, 'Father, glorify thy Son;' ver. 5, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self.' Thus here Christ's heart is much set upon the happiness of his members; if there be any more endearing title, the Spirit of God here will use it: Father, if I can do anything, or have any room in thy heart or affection; 'Father, I will,' &c. When we would prevail, Christ biddeth us urge our interest: 'When ye pray, say, Our Father,' Luke xi. 2; so doth he. When we mediate for others, we are wont to mention our relation, as a circumstance of endearment; so doth Christ expressly mention his relation when his requests are of great concernment.

Secondly, The next circumstance is the manner of asking, *θέλω*, 'I will,' a word of authority, becoming him that was God and man in one person, who knew the Father's will, who had made a thorough purchase, and so might challenge it of right. So some observe he doth not say *ἔρωτώ*, but *θέλω*. But possibly it may bear a softer sense in this place; and thus is *θέλω* used elsewhere: Mark x. 35, *θέλομεν*, 'Master, we will that thou shouldst do to us whatever we desire thee;' if that look like an expostulation, or a capitulation rather than a request. See Mark vi. 26, *θέλω*, 'I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist;' Mark xii. 38, 'Master, *θέλομεν*, we would see a sign from thee.' Briefly, then, it doth not express his authority so much as the full bent of heart; only because he useth the word *will*, and because at least the manner of expression carrieth the force of a promise, which, if it be backed with his prayers, cannot fall to the ground; we may thence—

Observe the certainty of our glorious hopes. If 'I will' be not a word of authority, it looketh like a testamentary disposition. Christ was about to die, and now he saith, 'I will.' When Christ made his will, heaven is one of the legacies which he bequeatheth to us. This was his last will and testament, 'Father, I will.' You have the very words and form of a testament: Luke xxii. 29, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;' *διατίθημι*, the only word we have for a testament. Heaven is ours, a legacy left us by Christ.

But what power had Christ to dispose of it? Let me clear that by the way, since he saith, Mat. xx. 23, 'To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.' Christ's power of disposing is not denied, but he showeth only to whom it is given, not for by-respects, but according to God's eternal will and purpose. In the original the words run otherwise than they do in our translation, *οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι, ἀλλὰ οἷς ἡτοιμάσται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου*. There is no ellipsis which some have fancied; and it should be rendered thus, 'It is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared of my Father.' He doth not deny degrees of glory, he doth not deny his own power to distribute them, but only asserts that he must dispose according to his Father's will; not for outward and temporal respects of kindred and acquaintance, but as God hath given to every man his measure. Certainly Christ's will standeth good to all intents and purposes; for

as God he hath an original authority, and as mediator he doth nothing contrary to his Father's will; he is tender of that, as you see in the place alleged; so that the objection confirmeth the point.

Use 1. It is comfort to us when we come to die; thou hast Christ's will to show for heaven. When God's justice puts the bond in suit against us, then let faith put Christ's testament in suit. There is an old sentence against us, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die,' Gen. ii. 17, confront it with Christ's prayer. In life we should provide for death, and a comfortable departure out of the world. Hear for the time to come; it is good to have our comforts ready. Can a dying man have a sweeter meditation than Christ's words? 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am.' We know not how soon we may go down to the chambers of death, and become a feast for the worms. When we come to make our own will, we should think of Christ's 'Father, I will,' &c.

Use 2. It is an engagement to holiness. That is a part of Christ's will: 1 Thes. iv. 3, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.' How can I plead his will in one thing and not in another? *Hereditates habent sua onera.* Legacies have their burdens annexed. Christ will have an action against us if we do not fulfil his whole will; as a man that sueth for what is left him by will must take care that his claim be not invalidated. Did Christ ever say, I will that all that live as they list should at length come to heaven for all that? No; but, 'I will that all those whom thou hast given me,' &c. And therefore—

Thirdly, The next circumstance is the parties for whom he prayeth. It is as necessary to know for whom Christ prayed as for what; it is not enough to hear of a privilege, but we must consider which way our claim and interest doth arise. For 'those which thou hast given me;' that is, for all the elect, who are intended in this expression.

Observe, that there is a certain number given to Christ which cannot finally miscarry, but shall come to glory. But of that in former verses.

1. Who are given hath been already discussed. The elect are given, those that come to him from the Father: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.' They are given before all time, and therefore in time they come, and actually accept of grace. And as they come to him, so they keep there, for of those he can lose nothing: ver. 39, 'And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.'

2. But how are they given? By way of reward, and by way of charge; the one as his work, the other as his wages.

[1.] By way of reward: John xvii. 6, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' They were given to be members of his body, subjects of his kingdom, children of his family; Christ hath a special and peculiar interest in them. This was the bargain which he made with God, that he should be head of the renewed state. This was all the honour and benefit accruing to Christ by the covenant of redemption: Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands; he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' Christ was pleased with the bargain. Nothing could be added to the greatness of his person, who was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in glory and honour;

yet he was pleased to account it a good purchase to have a special title and interest in us, and rested satisfied, having gained sufficient by all his expense of blood and merit. We are all Benonis, sons of sorrow to him.

[2.] By way of charge: John vi. 37-39, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out; for I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; and this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.' God calleth Christ to account for the elect, and his number and tale must be full. The elect are given to Christ, not by way of alienation, but oppignoration, that he may guide them safe to glory; as the shepherd must give an account of the sheep to the owner that sets him awork. And so doth Christ at the last day: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me.' God looketh narrowly what is become of the elect; not one of the tale is wanting.

Use. Are you of this number? If you be given by God, you give up yourselves to him. Our faith is nothing else but our consent to God's eternal decrees. All the Father's acts are ratified in time by the creatures' consent. God giveth by way of reward and charge; so there is a committing and a consecrating both together.

1. Committing yourselves to Christ: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day;' *τὴν παρακαταθήκην μου*, by an advised act of trust. Can you put your souls into his hands? The Father is wiser than we; he knew well enough what he did when he left us in charge with Christ. It argueth a sense of danger, a solicitous care about the soul; and then an advised trust, grounded on the belief of Christ's sufficiency. Many think their souls were never in danger, therefore they are not careful about putting them into safe hands. Canst thou venture upon eternity on such assurances? Well, I have trusted Christ with my soul. Oh! it is the hardest matter in the world to trust Christ with our souls advisedly and knowingly. Presumption is an inconsiderate act, a fruit of incogitancy, and therefore very easy.

2. Consecrating: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service;' yield up yourselves to Christ. So David: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' Personal dedication showeth God's act is not fruitless. In a serious self-surrender, we must give up ourselves to God; not with any reservation, to use ourselves as our own, but absolutely to be at God's dispose, to live and act for him. O christians! if you would clear up your interest, this is your duty, for this is but making good his grant to Christ. It goeth under the name of our deed, but it is God's work in us. The altar, the sacrifice, the fire is sent down from heaven. It is God's giving, still the receiving is on our part; for by renouncing self, we enjoy self most. Do we out of a sense of duty thus give up ourselves? Do we make good our vows? God lendeth us to ourselves, to be employed to his honour.

Fourthly, The next thing is the matter of the request. Presence, and the beatifical vision, as the fruit of that presence.

First, 'That they may be where I am ;' that is, where I am according to my humanity presently to be ; for he doth not speak of the earthly Jerusalem, where he was then visibly and corporally.

Observe, first, it is no small part of our happiness that we shall be there where Christ is. Now Christ is with us, but then we are with him. It is the inchoation of our happiness that he is with us graciously : 'I am with you to the end of the world,' Mat. xxviii. 20. It shall be the consummation of our happiness when we shall be with him. Thus it is often expressed : 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' So David expresseth our state of blessedness : Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' This makes heaven to be heaven, because Christ is there ; as the king makes the court wherever he is, it is not the court maketh the king : John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there shall my servant be.' It is our happiness to stand always in our master's presence, a happiness that wicked men are not capable of, because of their bondage and estrangement from God. Therefore Christ telleth the carnal Jews, John vii. 34, 'Where I am, thither ye cannot come.' Wicked men have no grant, no leave to come. Paradise is still closed up against them with a flaming sword ; and they have no heart to come, because they cannot endure the majesty and purity of his presence.

But when shall we be there where Christ is ? Presently after death our souls shall be there, and at the resurrection, body and soul together.

1. Presently after death the soul is where Christ is. So Paul thought : Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ ;' that is, with him in glory, otherwise it were a loss of happiness for Paul to be dissolved. It is a sorry blessedness to lie rotting in the grave, and only to be eased of present labours, for God's people are wont to reckon much on their present service and enjoyment of God, though it be accompanied with affliction. Paul was in a strait, and he saith it is *πολλῷ μᾶλλον κρείσσον*, much more better to be dissolved. A stupid sleep, without the enjoyment of God, is far worse ; what happiness were that, to be in such a condition wherein we do nothing and feel nothing ? God's children are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence above the greatest riches and contentment in his absence : 'If thou goest not up with us, carry us not hence,' Exod. xxxiii. 15. Better be with God in the wilderness, than in Canaan without him. Therefore Paul would never be in such a strait, if this drowsy doctrine were true, that the soul lay in such an inactive state of sleep and rest till the resurrection. He would be no happier than a stone, or the inanimate creatures are. Again, Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief. Some, to evade this place, refer this day to *λέγω* ; but the pointing in all the Greek copies confuteth it, as also the sense of the place : *σήμερον* answereth to the thief's words, 'Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Christ promiseth more than he asketh, as God doth usually abundantly for us above what we can ask or think. He had reference to Christ's words to the high priest, 'The Son of man shall

come in his glory.' Now, saith Christ, I will not defer thy desires so long; heavenly joys attend thy soul. And others seek to evade it by the word *paradise*; it is a Persiac word, but used by the Hebrews for gardens and orchards, and by allusion for heavenly joys: the allusion is not only to the delights of an ordinary garden, but Eden, or that garden in which Adam was placed in innocency. The fathers fancied, *secretæ animarum receptacula, et beatas sedes*. But it is put for heaven itself in other places: 2 Cor. xii. 2, 'He was caught up into the third heaven,' which he presently calls *paradise*, ver. 4. So that presently souls, upon their departure out of the body, are immediately with Christ. Thus it is said, Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' presently, in the twinkling of an eye or the forming of a thought; which is a great comfort to us when we come to die; in a moment angels will bring you to Christ, and Christ to God. The agonies of death are terrible, but there are joys just ready; and as soon as the soul is loosed from the prison of the body, you enter into your eternal rest: it fieth hence to Christ, to be there where he is. To be short, certainly men enter upon their final state presently as soon as they die: 2 Peter iii. 19, 'He went and preached to the spirits in prison;' compare it with Heb. xii. 24, 'To the spirits of just men made perfect.' How can souls be perfect if they lie only in a dull sleep, without any light, life, joy, or delight, or act of love to God? We see the very present refreshments of sleep are a burden to the saints, because they rob us of so much time, cheat us of half our lives.

2. Completely at the resurrection. Believers consist of body as well as soul. Now it is said, 'That they may be there;' that is, their whole self shall be there where Christ is. And so it proveth the resurrection, and the translation of our glorified bodies into heaven. So our Lord showeth that our being there where he is shall completely be after his second coming: John xiv. 3, 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' Christ and we that are one cannot always live asunder; if he have any glory, we must have part of it; and therefore he will come again and take us to himself, that as coheirs we may live upon the same happiness: Rom. viii. 17, 'And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' As Joseph brought his brethren to Pharaoh, he bringeth us to God. As he took part with us in nature, so he will have us take part with him in glory.

Now the happiness of it will appear—

[1.] By the place, the third heaven, or *paradise*; as there was the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The spangled firmament is but the outside and pavement of that house where Christ and the saints meet. When we look upon the aspectable heavens, we may cry out, as David in his night-meditation, Ps. viii. 4, 'Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' The church is but *προθύρον καὶ προάυλιον*, the portal, as one saith, and entrance into heaven. If the visible heavens so affect us, how glorious is it within!

[2.] The manner of bringing us thither: 'I will come again and

receive you to myself,' John xiv. 3. Christ will not send for us, but come in person to fetch us in state, which will make our access to heaven the more glorious. Christ will come to lead his flock into their everlasting fold, to present his bride to God, decked and apparelled with glory. How glorious a sight will it be to see Christ and all his troops following him, with their crowns upon their heads! to see the triumphant entrance into those everlasting habitations, and to hear the applauses of the angels! Ps. xxiv. 7, 8, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, you everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' That was a private and a personal entry at his ascension; but now it shall be public and glorious; now death the last enemy is destroyed, then he is the Lord mighty in battle indeed.

[3.] Our perpetual fellowship with Christ in the presence and glory of his kingdom. Pray mark, there is a presence, and that is much, that we are called to heaven as witnesses of Christ's glory. The queen of Sheba said of Solomon, 1 Kings x. 8, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.' They that stand before the Lord and see his glory are much more happy. Zaccheus pressed to see him; the wise men came from the east to see him. It is our burden in the world that the clouds interpose between us and Christ, that there is a great gulf between us and him, which cannot be passed but by death; that God is at a distance; that our enemies often ask us, Where is your God? Now we shall be happy when we shall be in his arms, when we can say, Here he is; when our Redeemer is ever before our eyes, Job xix. 26, to remember us of the grace purchased for us, and we are as near as we can desire. Now we dwell in his family. David envied the swallows that had their residence in the temple: 'One day spent in thy courts is better than a thousand spent elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Then we shall always be about his throne, and we shall for ever feed our eyes with this glorious spectacle, Jesus Christ: his body shall be in a certain place, where all shall behold it. The three children walked comfortably in the fiery furnace, because there was a fourth there, the Son of God: Dan. iii. 25, 'Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' Again, this presence maketh way for enjoyment. It is not a naked sight and speculation; we are in the same state and condition with Christ: Rom. viii. 17, 'Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.' We shall be like him. Servants may stand in the presence of princes, but they do not make their followers fellows and consorts with them in the same glory. Solomon could only show his glory to the queen of Sheba, but Christ giveth it us to be enjoyed. And all this is perpetual and without change and interruption: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'We shall be for ever with the Lord.' We are then above fears, no more eclipses of God's face, no more trouble because of God's absence. Here we complain; the spouse sought Christ about the city: Cant. iii. 3, 'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' Here we are forlorn orphans, and often without his society. Upon earth his converse was so acceptable, that the apostles were loath to hear of his departure. Now it is

for a few days, he is not always abiding with us ; then we shall never be glutted, God is always fresh and new to the glorified saints.

Use 1. To show us the love of Christ ; his heart is not satisfied till we be in like condition with himself : Luke xxii. 30, ' Ye shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.' The greatest love that David could show to his friend was to admit his children to his table : 2 Sam. ix. 7, ' Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually,' said David to Mephibosheth ; and to Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 33, ' Come over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.' And when he would honour Solomon, 1 Kings i. 33-35, ' He put him upon his own mule, and caused him to sit on his throne.' So we be at his table and on his throne : Rev. iii. 21, ' To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' We enjoy the same blessedness which Christ doth. Adam was in paradise, we in heaven ; Adam with the beasts of the earth, we with God and holy angels ; Adam might be thrown out, we never. It is no matter if the world deny us a room to live among them ; they cast us out many times, but Christ will take us to himself.

Use 2. If the presence of Christ be no small part of our happiness, let us more delight in it here. We enjoy his presence in ordinances : Ps. xvii. 15, ' As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness ;' Ps. lxxxiv. 10, ' A day in thy courts is better than a thousand ; I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' This is heaven begun, to be familiar with Christ in prayer and hearing, &c. Let us often give him a visit. Oh ! shame thyself when thou art loath to draw near to God. Dost thou look for heaven ?

Use 3. Be willing to die. Why art thou backward to go to Christ ? Would Christ pray for an inconvenience ? You shun his company when he desireth yours, and he desireth your presence for your own sakes, that you may be happy. Love brought Christ out of heaven, that he might be with us ; he thought of it before the world was : Prov. viii. 31, ' My delight was with the sons of men.' He longed for the time ; when will it come ? We are to go from earth to heaven, from conversing with men to converse with angels ; why are we so loath to remove ? What could Christ expect but hard usage, labour, griefs, and death ? He came to taste the vinegar and the gall ; we are called to the feast of loves, to the hidden manna, to rivers of pleasures. If you love Christ, why should you be unwilling to be in the arms of Christ ? Let him be unwilling to die that is loath to be there where Christ is. Love is an affection of union, it desireth to be with the party loved, and can you be unwilling to die ? Death is the chariot that is to carry you to Christ : Gen. xlv. 27, ' When Jacob saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived.' What is there in the world to be compared with heaven ? Either there must be something in the world to detain us, or it is the terribleness of the passage, or else a contempt of what is to come, that you are unwilling to die. If you have anything in the world more worthy than Christ—father, or mother, or wife, or friend,

or brother, or present delights—it is a sign of a carnal heart: Ps. lxxiii. 25, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.’ Can you say so without dissembling? Quit them all then. It is not the company of angels, but Christ; it is not wife, children, relations (these must be loved in God, and after God); nothing within the circuit of nature, none so worthy as Christ. Now you are put to the trial when sickness cometh, and you see death a-coming; Christ hath sent his waggons, his chariots, to see if we be real. Or is it the terribleness of the passage? Doth nature recoil at our dissolution? Where is your faith? ‘Death is yours,’ 1 Cor. iii. 22. Christ hath assured you, and will you not trust his word? You love him little when you have no confidence in his word. Or else contempt of things to come; then why was all this cost to prepare a place for you? Why came Christ to lay down his life to purchase that which we care not for? What needeth all this waste? Christians! hear for the time to come. We know not how soon we may be sent for and put to the trial; it is good to be resolved, that we may say, The sooner the better.

Observe, secondly, Christ taketh great delight in his people’s company and fellowship. His heart is much set upon it.

1. I shall give you some demonstrations and evidences of it.

2. Reasons.

First, Evidences.

1. His longing for the society of men before the creation of the world: Prov. viii. 31, ‘I rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.’ Though Christ delighted in all the creatures, as they were the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness, yet chiefly with men, that are capable of God’s image, and upon whom he should lay out the riches of his grace. He thought on us before the world was, and longed for the time of his incarnation: When will it come?

2. In that he delighted to converse in human shape before the incarnation: Zech. i. 10, ‘The man among the myrtle trees;’ who is also called, ‘The angel of the Lord,’ ver. 11.

3. He took pleasure to spend time busily among them, whilst he was with them in the days of his flesh: John ix. 4, 5, ‘I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ His affection to the service made him go up and down doing good to men; he would not leave this ministration to his servants, but would do it in person, as long as he was in the world: John i. 14, ‘The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ Christ did not assume our nature, as angels assumed bodies for the present turn, but lived a good space of time, and conversed with men.

4. When it was necessary he should depart, he had a mind to returning before he went away and removed his bodily presence from us; his heart is upon meeting and fellowship again, of getting his people up to him, as in the text, or his coming down to us: John xiv. 3, ‘And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.’

5. Until the time that that meeting cometh, he vouchsafeth us his

spiritual presence : Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.' Whatsoever part or age of the world we fall into in this life, we are with Christ, and Christ with us ; not only with the church in general, but with every believer. With the church or assemblies of his people : 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20. With every particular believer : Christ is said 'to dwell in our hearts by faith,' Eph. iii. 17. There is a near familiarity between Christ and every believer ; every sanctified heart is a temple wherein he keepeth his residence. As God he is everywhere ; as to his human nature, the heaven of heavens contain it ; as to his gracious operation, and especial influence, so he dwelleth in the hearts of his people. 'He is with us in our duties : Exod. xx. 24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee.' Christ is present to entertain us ; we go to meet with Christ. In our dangers : Isa. xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.' The Son of God was with the three children in the furnace. When left alone, they are not alone. He would never have gone from us if our necessities did not require it. It was necessary that he should die for our sins, that they might not hinder our believing and coming to him. It was necessary he should go to heaven. If our happiness lay here, he would be with us here, but it doth not ; it is reserved for us in the heavens ; therefore he must go there to prepare a place for us, that we may be ever with him.

6. When gone away he will tarry no longer than our affairs require ; as soon as he hath done his work, he will come again and fetch us. When our souls are with him, that doth not fully content Christ ; he will come and fetch us into heaven in our whole persons, and then Christ and we shall never part more : 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'And then shall we ever be with the Lord.' Thus Christ is never satisfied till our communion be perfect and perpetual, till we are all with him in one assembly and congregation : Ps. i. 5, 'Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' Then all the elect shall meet in one general assembly, that Christ's mystical body may be fully complete ; not one member of his mystical body is wanting.

Secondly, Reasons.

1. Negatively ; there is not any want in himself, nor any worth in us. We are worthless and wretched ; Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one ;' Titus iii. 3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.' Christ hath no need of us, he was happy without us ; he lieth in the bosom of his Father, and hath been his delight from all eternity, and hath ten thousand times ten thousand angels to attend him. What want hath he of poor worms ?

2. Positively ; his affection and relation to them. Affection and self-inclination ; they are the members of his body : John xiii. 1,

‘Jesus having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end.’ There are both motives; he hath loved them, and they are his own.

[1.] He hath loved them, and love is all for union and near communion: Deut. vii. 7, 8, ‘The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, but because the Lord loved you.’ He hath no other reason but his own love; and therefore he will not leave till he hath brought them to their final happiness.

[2.] They are his own by election, purchase, resignation. They resign themselves to him, and so he hath a peculiar interest in them. He provideth for his own, they are members of his mystical body; ‘The fulness of him that filleth all in all,’ Eph. i. 23. Mystical Christ is not complete and full without them, though Christ personal be every way full and complete.

Use 1. Reproof. You see how Christ standeth affected to the society of his people, and so are all that have Christ’s Spirit; as Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,’ Heb. xi. 25. It is better to be afflicted for a season with God’s people, than to live with the wicked in pleasure for a season; both are for a season. But there are a sort of men whose spirit and practice is very contrary to this of Christ; who cannot abide the presence, much less the company and communion, of the saints. Christ cannot rest in heaven without the saints; and these men count themselves in a prison when they are in good company; it is their burden and trouble to have a restraint upon their lusts, to be confined to gracious discourse about heaven and heavenly things. Nay, their very presence is an eyesore. As in some of the commonwealths of Greece, they had their petalism and ostracism for men when they grew eminent and worthy, the baseness of popular government not consisting with conspicuous virtue; so these cannot endure holy strictness, or a size of grace above their dead-hearted profession.

Use 2. Comfort against the scorn and contempt of the world. Though you are cast forth as the sweepings of the streets, yet you are dear and precious with Christ. That company which is so disdained and rejected in the world is longed for by Christ; therefore ‘let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach,’ Heb. xiii. 13. The world casts us out, but Christ takes us to himself.

Use 3. Let us prize the communion and fellowship of Christ. It is but reason that we should prize that company that is so necessary for us, such a blessing to us. If he value ours, he is worthy of love, and he is our head; let us long to be with him. But wherein?

1. By looking after communion with him for the present. Certainly there is such a thing; the world looketh upon communion with Christ but as a fancy, as many among the heathens pretended to a secrecy with their gods; but the saints know the reality of it: 1 John i. 3, ‘And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’ Certainly there is such a thing as this. Now, this is either constant and habitual, or solemn and special.

[1.] Constant and habitual, as he dwelleth in our hearts by faith;

where Christ doth take up his abode and dwelling in the heart, renewing them by his Spirit, as the fountain of life: Gal. ii. 20, 'Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And the seed and hope of glory: Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory;' maintaining and defending them against all temptations: 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' There is no necessity, in order to the spiritual use, that his body be in the sacrament, received into the mouth and stomach; his human nature is locally present in heaven, but his Spirit is in us as a well of life. This is our constant communion with him.

[2.] Solemn and special, in holy ordinances. Our souls should run upon this, how we may find Christ there; as the spouse sought her beloved throughout the whole city: Cant. iii. 2, 3, 'I will arise now, and go about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways; I will seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' So doth the believing soul long to see Christ. If he longeth for our presence, we should desire his presence, and to enjoy as much as we can of it here in the world. It is heaven begun: 'As for me, I shall behold his face in righteousness,' Ps. xvii. 15. Not only to have bare ordinances, but to meet with God there, that we may never go from him without him. This is to begin heaven, to give Christ a visit, to be familiar with Christ in prayer, to seek after him in the Lord's supper, and never go from God without God: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' That glimpse he had once found made him long for more: Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' Spiritual communion will at last end in glory. You may change place, but not company.

2. Long to be with him, and to have immediate communion with him in heaven: Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ;' not to wish for death in a pet, to put an end to your troubles. Men look upon heaven as a retreat. Nay, do not merely look upon heaven as it freeth you from the torments of hell or the curse and vengeance of God, but as it giveth you communion with Christ: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' Therefore upon this account be more willing to depart. You that are old, and within sight of shore, wait for the happy hour. You that are sick, be forward to prepare for home. You that are young, you may live long, but you cannot live better than with Christ; be ready when God shall call you.

(1.) There is far more reason why we should long for Christ than Christ for us. He desireth your presence for your own sakes, that you may be happy; he is not solitary without you. You have all the reason in the world to be willing to go to Christ; the sooner the better.

(2.) If you have the hearts of christians, you will do so: Rev. xxii. 17, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' If you have heartily con-

sented to Christ, you will do so : Gen. xxiv. 58, ' They called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man ? and she said, I will go.' Christ saith, ' I will that they shall be where I am ; ' and the soul saith, I will be ever in a posture longing, waiting for this happy time. The children of Israel eat the passover with staves in their hands.

(3.) Experience puts us to this ; such as have any communion with Christ here will long after the completing of it in heaven : Rom. viii. 23, ' And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit ; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.'

(4.) If we desire it not, it is a sign of some corruption, too great an inclination to the pleasures and contentments of the world. Lot lingered in Sodom, Gen. xix. 16. Or that you have lost your evidences, and so think to appear before him as malefactors before a judge.

SERMON XLII.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
—JOHN XVII. 24.

SECONDLY, Now I come to our work and employment in heaven, ' That we may behold his glory.'

Observe, our work, or rather our happiness in heaven, mainly consists in the sight of Christ's glory : 1 John iii. 2, ' Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' We see him now under a veil, then in person : 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ' Now we see but through a glass darkly, then face to face.'

Here I shall show—(1.) What is this glory ; (2.) What it is to behold this glory ; (3.) Why our happiness lieth in it.

First, What is this glory ?

1. The excellency of his person. The union of the two natures in Christ's person is one of the mysteries that shall then be unfolded : John xiv. 20, ' At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' How he is God-man in one person, how the Father, Son, and Spirit are one. We were made for the understanding of this mystery. God had happiness enough in himself ; he made creatures on purpose, angels and blessed men, to contemplate his excellency.

2. The clarity of his human nature. It is happiness enough to see Jesus Christ upon his white throne : Rev. xxii. 4, ' They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.' We shall be eye-witnesses of the honour which the Father puts upon him as mediator. It will be a wonderful glory ; we want words to make it intelligible ; the visible sun hath scarce the honour to be Christ's shadow. We

may guess at it by his appearance on Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, Exod. xix., compared with Heb. xii. 18, 19; by the transfiguration, Mat. xvii., when the disciples were astonished; by the glimpse given to Paul, when a light from heaven shined round about him, Acts ix. 3; Paul was three days without sight, and could neither eat nor drink; by those emissions of light and glory, John xviii. 6, 'As soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.' All these apparitions were formidable, but in heaven they are comfortable. We are more able to bear it, the natural faculties being fortified; and we come to consider it as a glory put upon him for our sakes.

Secondly, What is this beholding? It is either ocular or mental.

1. Ocular; our senses have their happiness as well as the soul; there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind: 2 Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' He doth not mean present sense, and the present view of things; the life of faith is sometimes opposed to that; but now he meaneth our privileges in heaven. Job pointed to his eyes: Job xix. 26, 27, 'Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.' We shall see that person that redeemed us, and that nature wherein he suffered so much for us. God intendeth good to the body, he hath intrusted it with the soul, and the soul with so much grace, that he will not lose the outward cask and vessel. There is a glory to entertain our eyes in heaven; not only the beautiful mansion, and the glorious inhabitants, but the face of the Lamb. We shall be always looking on that book.

2. There is mental vision or contemplation. The angels, that are not corporeal, are said 'always to behold the face of our heavenly Father,' Mat. xviii. 10. Angels have no eyes, yet they see God. When we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye; a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes. And therefore God is called *ἀορατος*, 'the invisible God,' Col. i. 15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face; now we know but in part, then we shall know even as also we are known.' The mind is the noblest faculty, and therefore it must be satisfied in heaven, or else we cannot be happy. It is the mind maketh the man; it is our preferment above the beasts that God hath given us a mind to know him. Man is a rational creature, and there is as great an inclination to knowledge in the soul as in beasts to carnal pleasures. Drunkards may talk of their pleasures, and the gratifications of sense; but the pleasure and delight of the soul is knowledge. And besides this general capacity, there is a particular inclination in believers by grace; and therefore, that we may be completely happy, the mind must be satisfied with the sight of God.

Thirdly, Why our happiness lieth in beholding Christ?

1. It is the cause of all our fruition and enjoyment in heaven.

2. All fruition and enjoyment is resolved into it again.

1. It is the cause of all our fruition in heaven. Ocular vision maketh way for mental, and mental vision for complete holiness or

conformity to God, and conformity for love, and love for delight, and delight for fruition.

[1.] Ocular vision maketh way for mental. We go to heaven to study divinity in the Lamb's face: Rev. xxii. 4, 'They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.' There is an assembly sitting round about the throne, and the Lamb is in the midst of them, and there, by looking upon his face, they learn more of God. We need no other books than beholding his glory. We converse with Christ that we may know more of God. Thus we come to knowledge without labour and difficulty; Christ in his glory and eminency is bible enough.

[2.] Mental vision maketh way for likeness and conformity to God. Knowledge in this life changeth us: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.' Much more are we sanctified and made holy by the light of glory. The sight that we have of Christ in the gospel transformeth us: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'For 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 the Lord.' By looking upon Christ through the light of the Spirit we are made like him; but now in glory, when we see him face to face, we are more like him: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Moses, by conversing with God, his face shone. As a glass held up against the sun, the image and brightness of the sun is reflected upon it; so the more we behold Christ, the more we do bear the image of the heavenly; *τὴν ὄψιν ἀναχρῶννόμενος*, saith Basil, he dyeth his own spirit with a tincture of glory.

[3.] This light and conformity maketh way for love, that is, knowledge increaseth love. As light is, so is love; our affection is still according to the rate of our knowledge. In this world love is but weak, because light is imperfect; we love little, because we know little: John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked, and he would have given to thee living water.' And conformity is a ground of love, it is the highest pitch of love to love God out of the communion of the same nature. The lowest love is to love him out of interest, as the highest love is to love him out of a principle of holiness, not because he is good and bountiful, but because he is holy. Whilst holiness is weak, love is imperfect. We wander and estrange ourselves from him, and go a-whoring from him, for there is some suitableness between us and the creature as long as flesh remaineth; but when we are perfectly holy, there is no suitableness between us and anything but God, and the saints and angels which partake with us of his image. And we love the creatures for the need we have of them, as well as the suitableness of them to us; but when we are likened to God in holiness and in happiness, we are above these wants, we are above all baits and snares, so that our love is entirely carried out to God.

[4.] Love maketh way for delight. Can a man cleave to God, and not rejoice in him? Rejoicing in God is not only a duty but a reward: Isa. lviii. 14, 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' The

saints love God, and delight in him, in his essence and being, as much as in their own glory. This maketh heaven comfortable. It would be a torment to a carnal heart to be always thinking of God, and employed in acts of love and service to God; but the saints delight in him, they delight in his presence, and in their own happiness, because God is glorified in it. There is an inconceivable delight in seeing, knowing, and being beloved of God.

[5.] Delight maketh way for fruition; for the more we delight in God, the more doth God delight in us, and giveth us the actual fruition of himself for our blessedness, so that we are fully satisfied. It is fruition maketh us happy. We can only speak of it in general terms, the filling up of the soul with God, and of the 'glory that shall be revealed in us,' Rom. viii. 18. We are in God, and God in us; as fire in iron that is red hot, it seemeth all on fire. Thus can we prattle a little, and darken counsel with words.

2. Backward again. Fruition maketh way for delight. We enjoy God to the full, therefore we delight in him. We are bidden to rejoice in our pilgrimage: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' God hath made our work a part of our wages, to train us up by degrees. But now, when we come to heaven, we enter into our master's joy. It is our only work in heaven; painful affections have no more use. And joy maketh way for love; these mutual endearments pass between God and us to increase love. We delight in God, therefore we are never weary of him. And love maketh way for likeness, and light for likeness, *eadem velle et nolle*. There is the most perfect imitation and resemblance of God, because the most perfect love. And for light, there is light in this fire; blunt iron, if it be made red hot, pierceth deeper than a sharp tool: we have but one object. And likeness maketh way for knowledge: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' A dusky glass doth not give a perfect representation. Ignorance is the fruit of sin. Man never knew less than since he tasted of the tree of knowledge. Holiness clarifies the eye: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,' 1 John iii. 2. There is little proportion between God and men, and therefore we do not know him; when we are conformed to God, we are in a greater capacity to understand his nature. And then light, or mental sight, maketh way for ocular sight, that we may look upon Christ. It is a sweet employment to see the brightness of the Father's glory in Christ's face; there is God best to be seen at the rebound and by reflection; it is a delightful spectacle.

Use 1. To ravish your hearts with the contemplation of this happiness. Oh! what an affective sight is Christ's glory!

1. The sight itself is a privilege.

2. That we shall be able to see it with comfort.

1. The sight itself is a privilege. Abraham had a sight of his incarnation, when it was a thing long after to come, and it filled him with joy: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.' Simeon saw him when he was a child, and then said, 'Now it is enough;' Luke ii. 29, 30, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for

mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Zaccheus climbed up into a tree to see him. When he was grown up, Luke xix. 4, yet then he went up and down as the carpenter's son. Many saw Christ in person that had no benefit by him. So to see him by faith and spiritual illumination fills the soul with joy: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' To know Christ by hearsay is lovely and glorious; but now what will it be to see Christ in the midst of angels and blessed saints face to face? He is another manner of Christ than ever we thought him to be. It is ravishing to behold him in ordinances; feasts are poor things to be spoken of to that; but yet there is a veil upon his glory. Oh! that there should be such a glorious spectacle provided for us! It is God's own blessedness to see himself and enjoy himself.

2. That we are able to behold it, and that with comfort. That we are able to behold it: The world is a dark place, and we are weak creatures; our eyes now are like the eyes of an owl before the sun; we cannot take in a full representation of his greatness, nor bear the lustre of his majesty. God is sometimes represented as dwelling in light, to show the lustre of his majesty: 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.' And sometimes as dwelling in darkness, as noting the weakness of our apprehensions: Ps. xviii. 11, 'He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky.' We are dark creatures, and can but guess; all is mystery and riddle to us. The children of Israel cried out, 'We cannot see God and live;' Deut. v. 25, 'Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.' God is fain to dwell in the heavens, and fix his throne there; his glory would drive us to our wits' end, the very happiness of heaven would not be a mercy upon earth. And then, that we may behold it with comfort. God in Christ is not formidable. Wicked men shall see Christ, but they shall see him as a judge; but, saith Job, with these eyes shall I see my redeemer: Job xix. 25-27, 'I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom mine eyes shall behold, and not another's.' Every time we look upon Christ, we have the liveliest and sweetest sense of God's love, it bringeth to remembrance his passion and sufferings. Wicked men shall see him as a judge to their terror, as Joseph's brethren were ashamed to look on him, they cannot hold up their guilty heads; but we come to behold our best and beloved friend, to see him that laid down his life for us: John xv. 13, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.' To see such a friend will be comfortable.

Use 2. Strive to get an interest in so great a privilege. Who are those that shall have an interest in it?

1. They that are careful to serve Christ here: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be;' 'His servants shall serve him, and they shall see

his face,' &c., Rev. xxii. 3, 4. Those that have suffered with him and sighed with him, that have owned him now, a hidden Christ, shall have the honour to behold him a glorious Christ; they that encourage themselves with these hopes, One day I shall see Christ: Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' The true land of the living is heaven; the world is but the valley of the dead, or the place of mortality. The queen of Sheba took a long journey to behold the glory of Solomon, which yet was but a temporal, fading, and earthly glory.

2. They that begin their happiness here make it their study to know Christ: John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' there is the foundation and the beginning of it. Study Christ in his natures, person, offices; this is fit work for saints. Saith Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 'Show me thy glory.'

[1.] It is an increasing light, but to the wicked it is a growing darkness; *σκοτός ἐξώτερον*, 'outer darkness,' Mat. xxv. 30; there they are held in chains of darkness. You love darkness better than light, and you shall have darkness enough one day. Now there is a thick curtain and veil drawn between you and Christ, and hereafter there will be a deep gulf; but our work in heaven is to behold Christ's glory. Can a man look for it, and not follow on to know the Lord? None shall have a sight of Christ hereafter that do not know him now.

[2.] It must be such a light as carries proportion with the light of glory, that is, an affective, transforming light.

(1.) An affective light. Many may study to warm the brain, but not the heart: Rom. ii. 20, 'Which hast, *μόρφην τῆς γνώσεως*, the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' They may discourse more exactly than a good christian, have a map and model of truth in the brain; they dig in the mines of knowledge that christians may have the gold. Do you see him with any affection? Do you strive, above all things, to see his face? Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' It is David's *unicum*, Moses' ravishment, when he saw God's back parts: Exod. xxxiv. 9, 'If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us.' That is one effect of the sight of God; a man would not be without his company: 'I pray thee go amongst us;' as Absalom said, 2 Sam. xiv. 32, 'Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? It had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me;' as if he should say, Let him kill me rather than deny me the king's face. Prize this above all the world: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased;' Ps. lxxx. 3, 'Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.'

(2.) It is transforming: 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 the Lord.' Light and grace do always go together. It is such a looking upon Christ as Laban's sheep looked upon the peeled rods in the gutter; it maketh us more like Christ. Sight worketh upon the imagination in brute beasts; shall not the eye of faith be more strong to change than natural imagination? A bare empty contemplation will do you no good; those that find themselves to be the old man still, let them have never so much knowledge, it is no sign of grace, nor of an interest in glory.

Use 3. Let the foresight of this glorious estate wean thee from all inordinate affections to human and earthly glory. There is 'the lust of the eyes,' 1 John ii. 16. By the eyes we fire our hearts. Doth a stately glorious house allure thee? What is this to heaven, the palace of God, and the mansion of blessed spirits? Do glorious garments and apparel bewitch thee? What is this to our robes of righteousness, and those garments of salvation wherewith the saints shall be clothed in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God? Doth the face of earthly majesty astonish thee? What will it be to behold the Lord Jesus in all his majesty and glory? As the sun puts out the candle, so should the forethought of these excellences extinguish in us carnal desire, and dissolve the enchantment that would otherwise bewitch our souls, and make us impatient under the cross. Beware of the vanity of the eye, if it be consecrated to behold Christ's glory.

Fifthly, The next thing is the reason of all this, the Father's eternal love to Christ, and in Christ to us: 'For thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world,' that is, from all eternity, as the phrase is often used in this sense in scripture. But how was Christ loved from all eternity? I answer—Partly as the eternal Son of God: Prov. viii. 21–30, before the mountains were settled, before the hills were brought forth; partly as mediator, designed from all eternity, and so 'loved before the foundation of the world,' as he was 'slain before the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. Christ was our mediator from all eternity; not only before we were born, but before ever he came in the flesh. To the eyes of God all things are present, nothing is past, nothing is to come. But why is this made a reason? I answer—It is a reason:—

1. Of the last clause; the glory given to Christ is a fruit and evidence of God's eternal love to him as mediator; for so he is considered here; for whatever was given to Christ was given to him as mediator, for to the divine nature nothing can be given; though the Father be the fountain of the godhead, yet he is not so properly said to give glory to Christ as God, because he loved him.

2. Of the whole verse, and so you may conceive it either thus, that he improved his whole interest in the Father, conjuring him by his infinite and eternal love, or rather from love to himself inferreth love to us; thou hast loved me, and them in me; for we also are loved before the foundation of the world: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.'

The point to be discussed is, the eternity of God's love to Christ, and in Christ to us.

1. The eternity of God's love to Christ, as God, as his Son; the love of parents to children is but a shadow of it. We are finite, so are our affections. As his image: Heb. i. 3, 'Who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' Likeness is the ground of love. God loves Christ, not only as like him, but as being of the same essence with himself: 1 John v. 7, 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.' There is no created instance to answer it: all that we love are without us, but Christ is of the same essence with God. Then he loveth him as mediator and head of the church. He doth not only love us in Christ, but in a sort he loveth Christ in us, because of the complacency that he took in his obedience: John x. 17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.' God did therefore eternally love him, and glorify his manhood for his love to us.

2. In God's loving Christ he loved us. We are elected in him before the foundation of the world: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.' When God chose Christ to be mediator, he chose us in Christ. This is the method of the divine decrees. God from all eternity resolved to create man pure and innocent, but with a changeable will, to permit him to fall; and he resolved on the remedy, Christ, and in Christ to receive them to grace, and accept them to life again. First he loveth Christ, and then us in him; as a king doth not only love a subject that hath done him service, but all his friends and kindred, they are brought to court, and preferred for his sake.

3. This love to us was eternal also: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' So Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' But how then are we children of wrath by nature, the elect as well as others? Eph. ii. 3, 'And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.' *Ans.* That showeth the merit of the natural estate, not the purpose and decree of God. There are vessels of wrath, viz., the reprobate; and children of wrath, viz., the unregenerate elect; and children under wrath, viz., children of God under desertion. It notes not what God hath determined in his everlasting counsel, but what we deserve by nature and in the course of his justice.

Use 1. It is a ground of hope why we may look for everlasting life, because of God's eternal love. So it is urged here. There are two grounds of hope—the eternity of his love, and his love to Christ.

1. The eternity of his love. From eternity it began, and to eternity it continueth; before the world was, and when the world shall be no more: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children.' It is the weakness of man to change purposes; God's love is not fickle and inconstant. We have good purposes, but they are speedily blasted, but certainly God's eternal purpose shall stand. So that the great foundation of our hope is, the immutable love of God the Father. He that seeth all things at once cannot be

deceived; we are ignorant of futurity, and therefore upon new events change our minds. Whatever falleth out, God repenteth not: Rom. xi. 29, 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' His ancient love continues still. We have many backsliding thoughts; we think to love God, but new temptations carry us away, and so we are fickle and changeable; but God changeth not, he cannot deny himself.

2. His love to Christ, which is the ground of his love to us. It is the wisdom of God that the reasons why man should be loved should be out of man himself, in and among the persons of the godhead. The Son loveth us, because the Father requireth it; and the Father loveth us, because the Son merited it; and the Holy Ghost, that proceedeth from the Father and the Son, loveth us, because of the Father's purpose and the Son's purchase. And then the Holy Ghost's work is a new ground of love. As long as the Son is faithful to the Father, and God regardeth the obedience of Christ and the work of the Spirit, we are sure to be loved. But will not such an absolute certainty make way for looseness? It is possible it may with a carnal heart, for the very gospel is to some the savour of death unto death, but to the elect it cannot be. The great gift of God's eternal love is holiness: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' And so for Christ's love: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word.' And the Holy Ghost worketh us to this very thing: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'Through sanctification of the Spirit.' If we turn a wheel round, the wheel of necessity must run round. If God loveth us eternally, we must be holy. There is not only a necessity of precept, but of consequence; he hath not only commanded it, but it must be so.

Use 2. It commendeth God's love, that you may admire it. Remember it is eternal, of an old standing; and all that is done to us in time are but the issues and fruits of eternal love.

1. It is eternal, as ancient as God himself. There was no time when God did not think of us and love us. We are wont to prize an ancient friend: the oldest friend that we have is God; he loved us, not only before we were lovely, but before we were at all; he thought of us before we could have a thought of him. In our infancy we could not so much as know that he loved us; and when we came to years of discretion, we knew how to offend him before we knew how to love him and serve him. Many times God is not in all our thoughts, when he is thinking how to bless us and do us good. Let us measure the short scantling of our lives with eternity, wherein God showeth love to us. We began but as yesterday, and are sinners from the womb; the more liberal we find God to be, the more obstinate are we, yet he repenteth not of his ancient love. Certainly if God should stay till he found cause of love in us, we should never be loved.

2. Look to the effects of his love in time. We receive new effects of his love every day, but all cometh out of his ancient and eternal love in Christ; though the effects be new, the love is ancient. It is good sometimes to trace God in the paths of his love, by what strange

providences our parents came together, that we might have a being, how wonderfully were we preserved, that we might not be cut off in our natural estate! How were we converted many times, when we did think of no such matter! Everlasting love sets itself awork: Jer. xxxi. 3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' What could move God when Paul was in the heat of his persecution? How wonderfully did God take us in our month, send afflictions to stop the course and career of sin! 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'For when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.' How many disappointments did we meet with in a carnal course! As David said to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me. And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.' Oh! how sweet is it to see eternal love in all that befalleth us! It will be our speculation in heaven; we shall know as we are known, and be able to interpret all the windings and circuits of providence.

Use 3. It shameth us that we adjourn and put off our love to God till old age. When we have spent our strength in the world, and wasted ourselves in Satan's work, we dream of a devout retirement. Oh! consider, God's love to us is as ancient as his being; and are not we ashamed that we should put off God till the latter and more decrepid part of our lives? It is a commendation to be an old disciple, and God loveth an early love: Jer. ii. 2, 'Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals;' before our affections are prostituted to other objects. Under the law, the first-fruits were the Lord's; he should have the first. God's children are wont to return love for love, and like love; therefore let it be as ancient as you can. Do not say, Art thou come to torment me before my time? and dream of a more convenient season.

Use 4. It teacheth us to disclaim merit.

1. God's love was before our being and acting. Paul, out of a less circumstance, concludeth election not to be of works: Rom. ix. 11, 'For the children being yet unborn, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said, The elder shall serve the younger.' God's election is before all acts of ours; therefore we deserve nothing, but all is from God. It is not a thing of yesterday; our love is not the cause of God's, neither is it a fit reward and satisfaction.

Object. But doth not God foresee our good works, or at least faith and final perseverance? He knew who would believe the gospel, who would live holy, and who would remain in their sins.

I answer—If this were true, there were not such a gracious freedom in grace. It is true God foreseeth all things that shall be, but first he fore-ordaineth them. Prescience includeth and supposeth preordination. Things are not because they are foreseen; but they are foreseen, because they shall be. From predestination issueth faith, sanctification, perseverance. So that we are not chosen because we are holy, but to be holy: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' And to be rich in faith : James ii. 5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?' As Paul saith of himself, 1 Cor. vii. 25, 'I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful;' not that God foresaw that he was so. Our ordination to life is the cause of faith : Acts xiii. 48, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'

2. When we were, we were not lovely ; there was nothing to excite God to show us mercy. Our natural condition is described, Titus iii. 3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, *στύγητοι, μισούντες ἀλλήλους*, hateful, and hating one another.' All are abominable and worthy of hatred, yet one hateth another, as if he were lovely, and the other only abominable.

There are two causes of self-conceit ; we have not a spiritual discerning, and are partial in our own cause, and guilty of self-love.

[1.] We have not a spiritual discerning, *στύγητοι* ; we are filthy, deformed, hateful in the eyes of God, stink in the nostrils of God. If we see a deformed creature, overgrown with scurf and sores, or a stinking carcass, we turn away the head in great abomination, and cry, Oh, filthy ! yet we are all so before God. A toad, a stinking carcass, cannot be so loathsome to us as a sinner is to God. If a man had but a glass to see his own natural face, he would wonder that God should love him. Indeed we have a glass, but we have not eyes. What could God see in us to excite him to show mercy ? God is not blinded with the vehemence of any passion ; yea, the object is uncomely, uncomely to a spiritual eye, much more to the Father of spirits.

[2.] Self-love blindeth us, *μισούντες ἀλλήλους*. If men would hold together, and like one another, all would be well ; but now we cannot love one another and live with one another in safety, we seem such odd creatures. *Fratrum concordia rara est*. We are hateful creatures to God, to angels, to devils, to ourselves.

Object. But some are more civil and refined.

Ans. It is true natural corruption doth not break out in all with a like violence ; but a benumbed snake is a snake, a sow washed is not changed. As when the liver groweth, other parts languish ; one great lust intercepteth the nourishment of other corruptions.

Object. But do not some use free-will better than others ? Sure God loveth them more !

Ans. No ; 'Not according to the works which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,' Titus iii. 5. God's original motives to do good are from himself.

Use 5. We are not to measure God's love by temporal accidents. That which cometh from eternity, and tendeth to eternity, that is an evidence of his special love : Eccles. ix. 1, 'No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him ;' 'The pleasures of sin are for a season,' Heb. xi. 25, and afflictions are for a season ; but spiritual blessings in heavenly places, which come from heaven, and tend to heaven, which have no dependence upon this world, whether it stand or no, these evidence the best love, God's special mercy. Why, they

were devised before ever the foundations of the world were laid, and it is most of all showed when the world is at an end. Therefore moderate your desires of earthly things, which the apostle calls 'this world's goods,' 1 John iii. 17; they are of no use in eternity. And bear afflictions with more patience; you do but lose a little for the present, that you may be safe for ever. *Hic ure, hic seca, ut in æternum parcas.*

Use 6. It presseth us to get an interest in this eternal love. How shall we discern it?

1. By the scope and aim of your lives and actions. Do you labour for another world? 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal,' *μη σκοπούντων ἡμῶν.* What is your heart set upon, and what do you make your scope and aim? A child of God prayeth, professeth, in order to eternity. A man shall know his general scope by what satisfieth him. Are you contented with the world, to have your names written in earth, to have your whole portion in this life, for other things you will give God a discharge? Luther would not give God an acquittance, *valde protestatus sum me nolle sic a Deo satiari.* Grace must have eternity, for it would fain answer God's love; it would live for ever, for ever to praise God and serve God. All the world will not satisfy it without this eternal enjoyment of God.

2. Have you an eternal principle? Is there a life begun that cannot be quenched? Is the immortal seed conveyed into your hearts? 1 Peter i. 23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' Then certainly thou art loved from eternity, for thou hast a pledge of it. First or last there is a work wrought in their souls, that can never be undone and disannulled, something that is of an everlasting nature. And therefore what seeds of eternity hath God planted in your hearts? Common graces and moral virtues, these are of no long continuance; the soul must have an abiding work, an immortal work.

3. You may know it by this: you will be much in trial, whether this be wrought in you or no, whether there be such an eternal principle conveyed into your hearts. Morality is puffed up, never suspects itself, and common grace puts us into good moods, now and then gives some tastes and flashes: Heb. vi. 4, 5, 'They were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' Morality doth not labour to see that all is sure and safe, and common grace only gives us some taste and flashes; but a child of God is looking after the unction that will abide, the seed that remaineth; and is careful to see that there is grace, and to be increasing in grace, and is always examining whether it be real.