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EXTRACTS FROM THE WORKS OF THE REV. JOHN

THE WORKS OF JOHN PRESTON, D.D. CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES 1:

Master of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, and some time Preacher of Lincoln’s Inn.

THE NEW COVENANT; OR THE SAINTS' PORTION.

GENESIS 17: 1 I am God All-sufficient; walk before me, and be you perfect: and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.

THESE words of God to Abraham contain a precept of sincerity, or perfect walking with GOD, "Walk before me, and be you perfect;" and also the motive thereunto, God's all-sufficiency, "I am God All-sufficient." As if he should say, If there were any defect in me, if you didst need or couldst desire anything that were not to be had in me, and you might have it elsewhere, perhaps thy heart might be imperfect in walking towards me; you might then step out from me to take in advantages elsewhere; but seeing I am All-sufficient, since I have enough in me to fulfill all thy desires, since I am every way an adequate object, so that all thy soul can wish for you may have in me, why then should you not consecrate thyself to me alone? Why then should you be uneven in thy ways, serving me some times, and sometimes the creature? For there is nothing in the creature but you rayest find it in me. "I am All-sufficient," therefore "walk before me and be perfect."

Yet these words contain somewhat more; "I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly." Here you see the ground of all our sincerity and perfect walking with GOD, which is the covenant that is between God and us. These words do the most briefly of any that I find in the Scriptures, express that covenant on both sides. Thus says the Lord unto Abraham, on the one hand, "I will be thy God;" on the other, "You shall be mine." Here is the sum of the covenant which in other places of Scripture is set forth more at large. Now the Lord here chews what a kind of God he will be to him, "I will be all-sufficient" to thee; Which consists in two things, if you compare this with Gen. 15: 1, "I will be thy buckler to preserve thee from all evil;" and again, "I will be thy exceeding great reward:" that is, I will not only be a shield, but will be a sun to thee; I will both preserve thee from all evil, and will fill thee with all good things. This is the covenant on God's part. And that which is required on Abraham's part is, that he be the Lord's, as the Lord is his; for so you see in the words following. The question only is, in what manner Abraham shall be the Lord's; how that shall be declared. Says he, it is not an empty relation, but you must show that you are mine by walking before me. And yet it must not be any kind of walking before the Lord, but it must be a perfect walking before him; "Walk before me and be perfect."
There are three points that we will gather out of the words. 1: That the cause of all departure from GOD, of ill unevenness in our ways towards God is from hence, that we do not think God to be all-sufficient. 2: That God is all-sufficient. 3: That whosoever has interest in God's all-sufficiency, must be a perfect man.

I. As the cause of our sincerity and perfectness arises hence, that we apprehend God to be all-sufficient, (for this proposition evidently arises from the words, and here lies the force of the argument, "I am all-sufficient," therefore "walk before me and be perfect;") so, my beloved, it is evident that the cause of every man's keeping off from GOD, the cause of his unevenness after he is come to him, is from hence, that men think not God to be all-sufficient. For if a man had enough in the Lord, he would never go out from him: but because he wants something, he desires something that is not in him, or he fears something that he thinks he cannot keep from him: hence it conies to pass that he steps out from GOD, he go out of the ways of his commandments.

II. The second point is, that God is all-sufficient. And to prove that he is so, I will propound to you but these two reasons: 1. Consider that all the comforts, all the excellency, all the beauty that is to be found in the creature, is but borrowed and derived. God is the Original; he is the first, the universal Cause of all. Hence we gather this, that there is an all-sufficiency in him, and in him only. So that no creature has any sufficiency at all in itself; for the creature adds nothing at all to his sufficiency, but all-sufficiency is comprehended in him: for if they be all derived and borrowed things, then they are in the creature but as far as it pleaseth him to communicate the same to them. 2. He is all-sufficient, because he only can be the Author of good and evil. There is no sufficiency at all in that which can do neither good nor evil. Now it is the property of the Lord to do both, as we see Jer. 10: 5, a place worthy our consideration, "The idols stand up as a palm-tree, but they speak not; they are borne, because they cannot go: fear them not, because they can do neither good nor evil." This is the argument whereby the Lord proves them to be idols, because they can do neither evil nor good. As if he should say, if they could do either evil or good, they were gods, and not idols. The same even may apply to any creature, considered in itself, without the influence and concurrence of God. If it were able to do either good or evil, you might worship it as God; for God only can do good and evil of himself: he only can make every man's life comfortable or uncomfortable; it is his prerogative royal, it belongs to him alone. There is no creature in heaven or earth, that is able to be the author of the least good, or the least hurt. As there is no evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it, neither is there any good in it.

But, you will say tome, "We find it otherwise in experience; we find that the creatures are able to do us good, and to do us hurt." You have an answer for that John 19:11: 'When Pilate said to our Savior, "Have 1 not power to crucify thee, or to loose thee" He answereth, "No: you have none at all of thyself. Indeed, you have a power, but it is given thee from above." And so it is with all the creatures we have to do with. Even men do us not (without God's commission, -) the least good, nor the least hurt. It is said of Pull and Tigliath-pileser, kings of Assyria, that the Lord stirred them up; and they carried his people away captive. If God had not stirred up their spirits, they had not done the least thing. Now, if a man be able to do nothing but as far as God sets him on work, it is nothing in itself, without God's commission. Now, if there be no man, nor creature in heaven or earth, that can do good or hurt, why should we be servants to men, why should we be subject to carnal fears? Surely it is hence,—we overvalue the creature; we think it is able to do something; we think that there is some sufficiency in it, and not all-sufficiency in God; if any creature were able to do good or hurt without the Lord, if they had any part or portion with him in being authors of our good, certainly they should have a portion of our service: for there is reason and equity in it that we should seek unto that which does us good, and serve it; and likewise if it could do us hurt. But now, seeing the Lord challengeth all to himse If, saying, "I am all-sufficient," there is no creature able to add to me more or less; seeing not the most powerful among men, no creature, is able alone to do us either good or hurt, why should we so much esteem and over-value it.

There are but two things that we need: one is, our everlasting happiness; the other is, the things of this life. For the first, the creature is able to do nothing, it is wholly excluded, for it is inferior to us. Add to this, there is a curse upon the creature, there is an emptiness in it. Besides, it is under the sun, and therefore it cannot help to the happiness that is above the sun. It is temporal, whereas we must have an eternal happiness, for our souls are eternal. So then, for the chief good of men, the creature is nothing at all; it helpeth but in particulars: Credit does but help against ignominy; learning against ignorance; health is but a remedy against sickness; riches are but an help against poverty: and so you may say of all the creatures in the world. But the Lord is universally good, he gives all things; and therefore " godliness is profitable for all things." He gives us all things to enjoy: that is, he fills the soul of man every way. Again, for the second thing we need; that is, the things that belong to this life. I confess, the creature helps us somewhat herein, but it does it only as an instrument. Now we thank not the hand, but the mind within that moves the hand to do a good turn; much less do we thank a dead, inanimate instrument. Let us look upon every creature and every man as God's instrument. When any man does you a kindness, or does you good, say, as the Scripture phrase is, "The Lord has given me favor in his sight." And so, when he does us hurt, say, "Such a man is but a mere instrument, whereby the Lord has poured out
some part of his displeasure upon me." And thus let your eye be upon the Lord altogether. But now, let us consider wherein God's all-sufficiency towards us consists; and that is in two things. 1. In keeping us from all evil. 2. In filling us with all good. 1. God is a buckler, to keep us from all evil; he is a buckler that compasses us round about. That speech was delivered upon this occasion: When Abra

ham had gone to war against those kings that came out against Sodom, the Lord delivered him, and afterwards told him: Abraham, as I have dealt with thee at this time, so fear not when thou fallest into the like distress; for I am thy buckler; I will defend thee from all evil, as I have done from this. Now, he is such a buckler that no creature can pierce through; he is such a buckler as covers all over. He is "a wall of brass;" and not so only, but is said to be "a wall of fire" about his children. That is, he is not only a wall that keeps them safe, but a wall of fire to consume all them that come against them: for a fire, you know, clothnot only defend those that are within the compass of it, but it burns those that come near it. Such a one is God to his children; and that is one thing wherein his all-sufficiencyconsists. 2. In filling us with all good; which is expressed in Ps. lxxxiv.

"The Lord will be a sun and a shield;" he will be a shield to keep off evil, and a sun to fill them with all comfort. "I am (says he,) thy exceeding great reward." As if he should say, Abraham, whatsoever is in me, all that I have, all my attributes arc thine, for thy use; my power, my wisdom, my goodness, whatsoever is mine in the world, I will give it for thy portion; and all that I have, are thine. And might he not well say, he was an "exceeding great reward" Who can understand the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of this," I am thy exceeding great reward" That is, you shall have all kind of comforts in me, and you shall have them in the highest and greatest measure. On the other hand, there is no sufficiency at all in the creature; it can do you, of itself, neither good nor hurt, as we said before. All the good and hurt that the creature can be supposed to do stands in one of these two things: 1. Either in making us happy, or miserable; or else, 2. In affording us subsidiary helps, such as we have need of. But in neither of them the creature, of itself, is able to do anything.

To what we have said before of the creatures' insufficiency, we will here add, that the creature is corporeal, the mind is spiritual; now a spirit can receive no happiness from a corporeal being. Therefore, in Heb. 12: 23, we are said to go to the "spirits of perfect men," as a suitable converse for a spirit. Again, that the creature is temporary, and not able to run the course with an immortal soul to its journey's end, but leaves it in the middle way, and therefore is not able to make it happy. Besides, the creature is finite, and therefore is not able to fill the soul; God is infinite, and therefore is able to do it. That no creature can do it, we see by continual experience. Take any comfort that you find in the creature, and when you have enjoyed it, still you want somewhat in it that it has not; but when you come to the Lord, and enjoy him, when your hearts are filled, still there is somewhat beyond in him; there is no stop, no restraint: and therefore he only can make the soul happy. Now the ground why God is only able to make the soul happy, is, because the soul is made for him; and there is nothing else answerable to it; This is that constitution of the mind that it cannot be filled with any thing besides God. The Lord might have so constituted the soul of man that the creature might have satisfied it; but he has not done so: for he has made it for himself, and therefore nothing can fill it but himself. So much for this, that in the matter of happiness the creature is able to do nothing.

But you will say to me, "This is a thing of which we make no doubt; but what do you say for ordinary uses, and for the vicissitudes of this life; is not the creature in these able to do good and hurt". As I said to you before, the creature is not able, considered without the influence of the first Mover, to do you the least good or hurt; as the words are, Jer. 10: 5, speaking of idols, "that can do neither good nor hurt, and therefore fear them not." As if he should say. If they could do you either good or hurt, you might fear them. And it is certa

in there is nothing. And might he not well say, "If they could do you either good or hurt, you might fear them. And it is certain, if any creature were able to do you any good or hurt, you might fear it; for God alters no law of nature. That which is in itself to be feared we may fear; that which is not to be regarded we may regard it. In nature and reason, a man would have an eye to the creature, if it were able to do you any good or hurt, you might fear it. And it is certainly, if any creature were able to do you any good or hurt, you might fear it; for God alters no law of nature. That which is in itself to be feared we may fear; that which is not to be regarded we may regard it. In nature and reason, a man would have an eye to the creature, if it were able to do you any good or hurt, you might fear it.

or hurt but myself."

Now, to make it appear plain to you that God only can help or hurt us, I will propound only these two things,

1. That all the creatures are absolutely at his disposing.

2. That when he has disposed of and distributed them to us, they cannot actually comfort or hurt us without a special hand of his. 1: I say, the creature is fully at his disposing; it is, as I said before, but God's instrument. All the creatures in this world are but as so many servants, which are in the Lord's house, prepared to wait upon his children, to convey such comforts to them as he has appointed them; so that there is not one creature in heaven or earth stirs itself to do you the least good but when the Lord commands it, and says, Go, comfort such a man; go, refresh him, do him good; it stirs not without a warrant, and without a special command from him. The bread and meat which you eat nourish you not, except he say, Go, and nourish such a man; the fire warms you not without his bidding; and so of all the creatures
else. Again, when he doth command them, they do it, and do it fully. Well, then, seeing all the goodness that we participate of, both by good and evil men, is from the Lord, either from his mercy or from his providence, we should learn to sanctify the Lord, both in our hearts and in our speeches; not by saying, I have gotten such and such things; but as Jacob said, "The Lord of his goodness has given me all this;" not Laban, not my own labor. If in any enterprise you have success, say not, I have done it; but say, as Abraham's servant said, "The Lord has prospered my journey." That is, the Lord does all in all; it is he that commands all; it is he that disposeth all.

Now, that the creature is thus guided and disposed by God, that it is able to do nothing without him, we will not instance in the unreasonable creatures, which you all believe to be at his command, but in those that seem to be at the greatest liberty; that is, the wills and under-standings of men. But in this, that the Lord guides these, take his own testimony, Prov. 29: 26, "Every man seeks the face of the ruler, but his judgment is from the Lord;" that is, men are deceived in this; they think the ruler, as of himself, can do something; because he seems to have much power to do good and hurt, and therefore they "seek his face:" anything he is not able to do, but what the Lord permits; what he prescribes to him to do, what he says he shall do, just so far he goes, and no farther; for, the whole judgment that a man had, is from the Lord. That is, all the good and evil that he doth, that mind of his from whence it; proceedeth, is guided and fashioned by the Lord, upon every particular occasion.

2. When the Lord has sent such a creature to thee, and you have it before thee, it is not able to comfort nor hurt thee without him. Put the case, if the creature be full of comfort, it is not able to yield that milk of comfort that is in it, except the Lord bring it forth, except the Lord apply in particular to thee. And the same I may say of any hurtful creature: be it never so pregnant with evil; yet it is not able to exercise it, except Lord bring it forth, except the Lord use it for such a purpose. As an ax, though it be never so sharp, yet if the workman do not use it to cut such a tree, to lop such a branch, it is not able to do it.

Now to apply. If the Lord be all-sufficient, we should learn how to guide our affections. Labor to see that fullness that is in God, and that emptiness that is in the creature. If the Lord be thus all-sufficient, then let your hearts be satisfied with him alone, let them be filled with him, let them be so bottomed upon him, and so strengthened by him, that you need not go out from him to fetch in any comfort from any creature whatsoever. We have but a short time to live in this world; the strength of our mind is the most precious thing; we should then labor to improve the thoughts and affections of our minds to the glory of God; we should be careful that the strength of our spirit be not bestowed upon things that are unworthy of it.

If the Lord be all-sufficient, why should you not bestow it altogether upon him? Why should you spend it upon the creature? Why should your mind be occupied about that? Why should you be subject to carnal griefs, fears, and desires? Surely, all these should be taken up about the Lord; for he looks for it at our hands: I am all-sufficient, (says he) therefore let all these be bestowed upon me.

The next use we are to make of this, that God is all-sufficient, is, to be content with him alone for our portion. This is of use both to those that are strangers to the life of God, and likewise to those that are within the covenant. 1. This is of use to those that are strangers to the covenant, to bring them in; for the Lord propounds that upon reasonable conditions. It is true, he requires of you absolute obedience, that you serve him altogether; but then withal he propounds to you an absolute and full ability, "I am all-sufficient." And as he requires you to leave all for his sake, so he promises that he will be to you in stead of all things. All your desires shall be satisfied, there is nothing that you need, nothing that you want, but it shall be supplied. 2. It will likewise be useful to those that are within the covenant of grace. For the believer will readily allow, that if he has God for his portion, it is enough; and being persuaded that he is enough, will be content with him alone. When the sun shines to you, though there be never a star, is it not day? So, though you have the Lord alone, and nothing but him for your portion, shall not he be sufficient to make you happy? Is he not all-sufficient, to fill you with comforts of all kinds? What then though you have nothing but him again, had you all these stars to shine to you, if the sun be set, it is but night notwithstanding. So you are but in a state of misery, if you take not the Lord alone for your portion. Take all the creatures, and you find by experience, that when they are enjoyed, you see an end of their perfection; you quickly find a bottom in them. The heart hasteth from this thing, to somewhat else; you now suck all the honey out of this flower; and when you have done so, you go to another, and to another, and no where does the soul find rest. But come to spiritual things; the more you use them, the more you find the beauty and excellency that is in them.

But, you will say, "There are many necessities, many uses, that I have of other things." Therefore I will go yet further. Dost you consider the Lord, what he is. Go through all his attributes, consider his almighty power, consider his great wisdom, consider his good ness, truth, and kindness; all these are thine. My beloved, God is not known in the world; we consider not aright what he says, when he says, "I will be thy God." Now to have the Lord himself, is more will if he should give thee all the kingdoms of the earth. Consider this, The power of God is thine, to work all thy works for thee; to make a passage for thee, when you art in a strait; to bring thy enterprises to pass; to deliver thee when you art in any affliction, out of which the creature is not able to deliver thee. Think what it is to have an interest in God's almighty
power, and think this is one part of thy portion. The Lord himself is thine, and all his power is thine. Consider likewise his wisdom: if you need counsel in any difficult case, if you would be instructed in things that are obscure, the wisdom of God is thine; you have an interest in it: it is thy portion, you shall have the use of it, as far as he sees it meet for thee. And so the justice of God is thine: to deliver thee when you are oppressed; to defend thee in thine innocency, and to vindicate thee from the injuries of men. So you may go through the rest of his attributes, and say within thine heart, All these are mine. Now, what a portion is it to have the Lord? If you hadst nothing but him, you hadst enough.

If the Lord be all-sufficient, then learn hence, thirdly, to have your eye only upon him, when you have any enterprise to do. If there be any cross, that you would have prevented; if there be any blessing, that you would obtain; if there be any affliction, out of which you would have deliverance, let your eye be to him alone, rest on him alone; for he is all-sufficient, he is able to bring it to pass. Therefore I say, whatsoever thy case be, look to him only, and you needest no other help. Say thus with thyself, The greatest means without God's help, are not able to bring this enterprise to pass, to work such a work for me; and the weakest with him is able to do it. You find Asa said, ”God is able to forgive” I say, My beloved, if you did not doubt of it, what is the reason, seeing you should have a doubt of it? You see, when he is put to it At the day of death, at the time of extremity, at that time when the conscience stirs up all its strength, and shows the greatness of his power in executing wrath upon evil men, so he shows the exceeding greatness of his power, and declares the glorious riches of his mercy towards those that turn unto him, in forgiving their iniquity, transgression, and sin; all kinds and degrees of sin, whatsoever they be that they have committed against him. When a man considers his sins, and looks upon them in the height, in the length, overcomes them, and rejoiceth against them, as a man rejoiceth against an adversary that he has subdued. Therefore herein we must labor to see God's all-sufficiency, that although our sins are exceeding great, yet the largeness of his mercies is able to swallow them up.

Now consider whether you are able to comfort your selves thus out of God's all-sufficiency. We do, for the most part, as Hagar did; when the bottle was spent, she fell a crying, she was undone, she and her child should die, and there was no more hope, till the Lord opened her eyes to see a fountain near her. The fountain was near her, but she saw it not; when she saw it she was well enough. Is it not so with us all? Because the bottle is dried up, because such a means is taken away, we think presently there is no more hope, although the fountain is near. The Lord himself is the fountain; it needs only that he open your eyes to see.

Again, if God be all-sufficient, let us be exhorted to make a covenant with him. If you will enter into covenant with him, he will be all-sufficient to you. Now for your farther encouragement to enter into covenant with GOD, that you may thereby experience his all-sufficiency, I shall show you wherein it consists. First, God is all-sufficient, to justify, and to forgive us our sins. Secondly, he is all-sufficient, to sanctify us, and to heal our infirmities. Thirdly, he is all-sufficient, to provide for us whatsoever we need; so that no good thing shall be wanting to us. These three parts of the covenant we find set down in divers places; but most clearly in Ezek. xxxvi. “I will pour clean water upon you, you shall be-clean, yea, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” There is the first part of the covenant, that he will cleanse us from our sins; from the guilt and punishment of them. Again, “A new heart will I give you, also a new spirit will I put into you, and I will take away your stony hearts out of your bodies, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” There is the second part of the covenant, consisting of sanctification. And the third is, “You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and I will call for corn, and I will increase it, and I will lay no more famine upon you, and I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you bear no more the reproach of famine among the heathen.” Here are the particulars set down; some are named for the rest: I will call for corn and wine; that is, for whatsoever you want. In opening these three parts of the covenant, I shall show you, that God is sufficient in all.

First, he is all-sufficient, to take away all our sins. It may be, you will say, “It is an easy thing to believe this; there is no difficulty at all in it.” But surely, whatsoever we say, we find in experience it is exceeding hard. Who is able so fully to believe the forgiveness of his sins, as he ought, when he is put to it? At the day of death, at the time of extremity, at that time when the conscience stirs up all its strength, when all a man's sins are presented unto their colors, who is able then to believe it? Therefore we had need to find out the all-sufficiency of God in this. For the greatness of his power is showed in nothing more than in the forgiving of sins. If you say, “Who doubts that the Lord is able to forgive”? I say, My beloved, if you did not doubt of it, what is the reason, seeing you can believe a smaller sin to be forgiven, that you question God's mercy, when great sins are committed? Certainly in doubting of God's mercy, men doubt likewise of his power, when they are not able to forgive: for as there is a power in his wrath, so likewise is there a power in his mercy. Hence if we doubt God's mercy, we must doubt of his power. We must consider whether we are able to comfort ourselves by these words, when we have no means, when we see our sins are great, when we see our hearts are black. But certainly, what a portion is it to have the Lord when he is able to provide for us whatsoever we need; so that no good thing shall be wanting to us? You see, the Lord is able to provide for us whatsoever we need; so that no good thing shall be wanting to us. Now, what a portion is it to have the Lord when he is able to provide for us whatsoever we need? Therefore we must labor to see God's all-sufficiency, that although our sins are exceeding great, yet the largeness of his mercies is able to swallow them up.
The second part of the covenant is his all-sufficiency in healing our sins, or in sanctifying us: when a man looks upon the ways of righteousness, and then upon the strength of his lusts, he is ready to say with himself, "How shall I be able to lead a holy life?" This is the answer to it. "God is all-sufficient." He that is able to bid light shine out of darkness, is able to kindle a light in thy dark heart. Though thy heart be never so averse, he is able to change it, and therefore say not, "I shall never be able to do it;" for he is able to take away all that reluctancy. For God does in the work of grace, as he does in the work of nature: he does not as we do: for when we would have an arrow go to the mark., when we throw a stone upward, we are not able to change the nature of it, but we put it on by force. But God carries every thing to their end, by giving them a nature suitable to that end. An archer makes an impression upon an arrow, but it is a violent impression; God carries every thing to that end, to which he has appointed it; but with this difference, he makes not a violent impression, but a natural impression. He causes the creature to go on of itself, to this or that purpose, to this or that end. And so he does in the work of grace; he does not carry a man on to the ways of righteousness, leaving him in the state of nature, taking him as he is, but he changeth a man's heart, so that he is carried willingly to the ways of GOD, as the creature is carried by a natural instinct to its own place, or to the thing it desires. This the Lord out of his all-sufficiency is able to do.

But you will be ready to object. "If the Lord be thus all-sufficient, if he be able thus to kindle light in the dark heart, to change a man's crooked and perverse spirit, to implant such habits into it, why am I thus Why am I no more able to overcome my sins Why do I come short of the performance of such purposes and desires Why do I find so many things in me contrary to the rules of sanctification, and to this all-sufficient power of God?" To this I answer: It may be it is because you observe not those rules by which God communicates this all-sufficiency, and power of his. What he that wishes to communicate it, yet there are some rules to be observed, which himself has given. That is, You must diligently attend upon his ordinances; you must be careful to abstain from the occasions he bids thee abstain from: if you fail in either of these, he has made thee no promise to help thee with his all-sufficiency. Sampson had great strength, as long as the Lord was with him. You know, the Lord told him, so long as he nourished his hair, (which was a symbol of God's presence,) so long he would be with him; but if he had not that, he would withdraw his presence; and so it is in this case: the Lord has appointed us to keep his ordinances, and so long he will be with us; but if we neglect the means of grace, or adventure upon the occasions of sin, the Lord is then discharged of his promise, as we may so say; the Lord then withdraws his power from us, as he did from Sampson. If you will needs touch that tree, if you will needs go into such a company, if you will needs gaze upon such objects: or, if again, you will neglect prayer, and hearing, and sanctifying the sabbath, if you will neglect to observe the rules that he has appointed; in all these cases, the Lord withdraws his all-sufficiency. And therefore lay the fault where it is; that is, upon your selves. God has made a promise unto those whose hearts are perfect with him; but it may be, thy heart is imperfect; it may be, there has been hypocrisy in thy heart, you host never been willing to part with all, to serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind all thy days. When once thy heart is brought to sincerity, doubt not that he will perform what you lookest for on his part. For it belongs to his part to give thee power and strength to do that which you desires to do. So much for the second part of the covenant.

The third part of the covenant, is to provide for us all good things belonging to this present life. Herein the Lord is all-sufficient to all those that are in covenant with him. I need not say much to make this good unto you. All things are his, whatsoever a man needs; riches are his; they are his creatures; they come and go at his command; honor is his; "I will honor those that honor me." He takes it to himself to bestow it as he pleases. Health and life are his; "the issues of life and death belong to him." Friendship is his; for he puts our acquaintance far from us," and draws them near to us. Go through all the variety of things that your heart can desire, and they are all his: he governs and disposes of them as he pleases; and therefore, certainly he is able to provide all things for you that your heart can desire; so that no good thing shall be wanting to you.

Labor then to see God in his greatness, in all his attributes, in his unchangeableness; to see him in' his eternity, in his power, in his providence. See what use the Psalmist makes of the attributes of God: "I said, O my GOD, take rue not away in the midst of my days! thy years endure from generation to generation; you past before times laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but you shall endure, even they all shall wax old as a garment." When a man sees the vanity of the creatures, he looks upon them all as things that will wax old as a garment. A garment that is new at the first, with long wearing will be so changed, but the Lord remains ever the same. So the Lord says, "The Lord is all-sufficient, more than any thing besides. Arc his creatures, he makes them all perfect with him; but it may be, thy heart is imperfect; it may be, there has been hypocrisy in thy heart, you host never been willing to part with all, to serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind all thy days. When once thy heart is brought to sincerity, doubt not that he will perform what you lookest for on his part. For it belongs to his part to give thee power and strength to do that which you desires to do. So much for the second part of the covenant.
Providence. It is nothing else, but to guide, govern, and direct all creatures to their several ends. Besides, how is it that you see things fitted one to another as they are Is it not the providence of God When you see the wheels of a watch fitted one to another, you say this is done by art, not by accident; even so, it is in nature; you see a fitting of one thing to another in the body, in the creatures, in every thing, in all the senses; and the setting of one thing to another spews, that there is an art that does it, which is the providence of God. Besides, we see all things go their course. Those things that come by accident fall out uncertainly, now one way, and then another; but we see all the works of nature go in a me-tan constant course. And lastly, if there be no providence in a family, it will soon be dissolved. So it is in the greatfamily of the world; there must be a government, or it cannot stand; and if there be a government, it cannot be by man; and if not by man, it must be by one that is God.

But it is objected, " We see manythings are casual, and that time and chance befalls every thing." It is true, there are chances that fall out in all these things, that we call casual or accidental, when something comes between a cause and the effect, and hinders. When a man is strong, and some accident comes between and hinders him from obtaining the battle; when a man has wisdom, and some accident comes between, and hinders him obtaining favor. This is that which we properly call chance. Now it is true, there is such a chance in the nature of the thing; but yet consider this; though, this chance be contrary to the particular causes, yet it has a cause, it is set forth from the universal cause; so that it is called chance, because it thwarts the particular cause; but it does not differ from the intention of the universal. Somewhat there is in all those causes, that is, the first of all causes; and therefore it is impossible that any thing should be totally by accident. Wheneuer you find this, it is so far from being casual, so far from coming by chance, if you look into it exactly, that then the providence of God is most seen. Those things that are done by particular causes, according to their intention, we usually ascribe it to them; but when there is an inter-current action comes, that we call chance, that belongs to the universal cause, and is to be ascribed to him; and hence it is, that the Lord usually in the administering of contingent things, turns things by accidental causes; because his own hand is most seen in it, and he gets the greatest glory by it. Then when you see such an inability in the creature, to bring its enterpris es to pass, labor to see God's almighty providence, and to be persuaded of it; to think with yourself there is not the least thing without his providence.

All the question is now, how far we practice this: let every man examine his own heart. First, if a man believe that all-sufficiency that is in GOD, why does he terminate his affections in the creature If there be nothing in the creature but emptiness, why do you love the creature Why do you fear it as you do If there be no-thing in the creature, but all be in him, we should see through the creature, we should look beyond it. Shishack was but the vial, through which God's wrath was poured upon Israel, 2 Chron. 12: So Cyrus was but the vial, through which God's goodness was poured upon Israel, Isa. xlv. If you did look upon every man, upon every friend, and every enemy, upon every creature, as an instrument of good or hurt to you, as an empty vial in itself, through which God pours either his goodness or his wrath, it would cause you not to stick upon the creature, not to wrangle with men, or be angry with them, seeing they are but the vials. It would cause you again not to be proud of the friendship of men, not to be se-cure in them, not to trust in them, not to think yourselves safe in them, seeing they are but vials, through which God pours his mercy upon you. " Use this world then as though you used it not." You would use all the things in the world, all the men in the world, as if you did not use them; if you did see an emptiness in them, and a fullness and all-sufficiency in God.

Moreover, if God be all-sufficient, why do we stick so much upon particular means, as to say, If such means are not used, I shall be undone. If he be all-sufficient, it is no matter what the means are, he is able to bring it to pass. It is usual with men to say, If such a thing fail me, I am undone. What are these but particulars This sticking upon particulars is a sign we think him not all-sufficient. If there be not a spark of light, but you walk in darkness, and seest nothing to help thee, if God be all-sufficient, trust in him. Let him that has no light, trust in the Lord. When we lose any particular means, it is but the scattering of a beam, it is but the breaking of a bucket, when the sun and the fountain is the same. Why should we be troubled at it When one means is broken, cannot God find out another When he said to P all, all the souls with him should be safe, all were not able to swim to shore, and the ship was not able to bring them to shore; but yet, some by broken board some by one means, and some by another, all got safe: so the Lord brings all things to pass in a strange manner, sometimes one way, sometimes another; he breaks in pieces manytimes the ship, that, we think, should bring us to shore, but casts us on such boards as we did not expect.

And so likewise, if God be all-sufficient, if he be thus exceeding great, consider, whether you seest thine own vileness, thy ignorance, thy emptiness. When Agur looked upon GOD, and saw his greatness, Prov. 30: he cried out, that he " had not the understanding of a man in him." Can you see thy emptiness, and the vanity of thy own knowledge Can you learn not to murmur against God in any of his ways Can you learn to bring under thy thoughts to the ways of God's providence Can you be content to see the Lord going all the ways that he Both, setting up evil men, and putting down good men, causing the churches to wither, and the enemies to prosper Can you see all this, and yet " sanctify him in thine heart" Art you able to say, that " he is holy in all his ways," and in this to see the greatness of GOD; and thy own folly and weakness Can you say, that " you art but dust and ashes," and say it in good earnest Then I will believe that you have seen God in his greatness; I will believe, that you have seen him in all his all-sufficiency.

Moreover, if God be all-sufficient, why are we then so ready to knock at other doors Why are we so ready to go to the creature, to seek help, and comfort, and counsel from it, and to knock so little at his door by prayer and seeking to him For, if you believed him to be all-sufficient, you wouldst be abundant in prayer, you wouldst take little time to look to others, thy chief business would be to look to him, not
only in praying to him, but in serving him, and pleasing him. We knock at his door, as well by the duties of obedience, as by prayer and seeking to him. If you think him to be all-sufficient, why dost you not do this.

Again: Lastly, if you think God to be all-sufficient, when you have any service or duty to do, either belonging to God or man, why dost you not resolve upon the doing of it, without looking to the consequence, whatsoever it be? For if he be all-sufficient, then all our care should be to do our duty, and to leave the success to him. A servant that thinks his master is able and willing to provide for him sufficiently at the end of the day or year, or the end of his service, will be careful to do his work, without making provision for himself. And so, if you be like God to be all-sufficient, you will seek no more, but to find out what thy duty is, how to keep a good conscience in such a business, in such a strait, in such a difficulty: but when thy will is over-running thy duty, and you lookest to the consequence, (if I do this and this, this will befall me,) that is a sign you think not God to be all-sufficient, you thinkst thy master cannot provide for thee; but you thinkest, I shall be poor when I have done this service, and therefore I will provide for myself. Not so did Daniel. He resolved to do his duty, and not to go a step out of the path. Well; he shall be cast into the lions' den; yet he keeps his resolution firm. It was enough for him to do his duty; he left the consequence to God, for he knew he was all-sufficient. So, I say, consider only what thy duty is upon every occasion, and never look to the consequence, either to the loss of preferments, of riches, or favor. For God is all-sufficient; he will order all things well.

Labour then to be persuaded of this truth, and apply it upon every occasion. When any command is presented, when anything is to be done, run W this principle; that shall help thee to do every duty, that shall preserve thee from every sin. For example: God has commanded us to deny ourselves in our profit, in our credit, and our pleasures; and many times it happens that we are to perform this duty in particular cases; and seriously then, that God is all-sufficient; it will make thee do thy duty thoroughly. What though you be a loser in thy credit; God is able to make it up. What though you be a loser in thy profit, as Amaziah was; it not he able to give thee the fourscore talents, said the prophet to him? What though you be a loser in thy pleasures, that you lose or want "the pleasures of sin for a season;" is he not able to make it up with "peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost?" And again: we are commanded to take up our daily cross, and not to take sinful courses to avoid crosses and afflictions; and surely, the way to perform this duty, is to be persuaded of God's all-sufficiency. Let a man think then that God is able to carry him through; that he is able to support him in the time of sufferings; that it is he that keeps the keys of the prison door; that opens and shuts when he pleases; that it is he that makes whole, and makes sick. "The issues of life and death belong to him."** Every man's judgment, though "he seek the face of the ruler, yet it is from him." Then let a man consider, that it is not the creature that inflicts any cross or affliction, but it is God that does it by the creature, and that will enable him to bear any cross, to pass through all variety of conditions, and not to turn from a strait way, but to go through the storm when he meets with it.

III. But then observe the third main point, which was, that whosoever has interest in God's all-sufficiency, must be a perfect man: that is, to take the word in the lowest sense, he must be sincere, he must have integrity of heart. I am all-sufficient, says God, therefore be you perfect, otherwise you have no interest in this all-sufficiency of mine. The point is clear, I shall not need to confirm it by any other places of Scripture, but rather show you what this perfection and sincerity of heart is. The best way to this is to open to you those Scriptures, by which it is presented to us.

And first, you shall find it often expressed by purity; "Blessed are the pure in heart," and "God is good to Israel, even to them that are of a pure heart." Now what is it to be pure? That heart is pure which is holy, which will mingle with no sin. It is true, sin may cleave and adhere to a man, as dross does to the silver; but though sin be there, yet the heart still casts it out of itself, it resists and rejects it, and cleanseth itself from it. Even believers have a fountain of original corruption in them, and from this fountain sinces rise continually; but though the scum arise, still the heart purifies itself, and casts it out; this is the property of a pure heart. With the impure it is quite contrary; there is not such a cleansing disposition in it, but there is a mixing of the precious and vile things together.

Secondly, He, whose heart is perfect before God, is said to have a single eye. Now that is a single eye, that looks but upon one object, and that is a single heart that looks but upon one thing. Likewise that is a double eye, and a double heart, that looks upon two objects, and is divided between two; that stands and looks upon God, and upon the world, and knows not which to choose; sometimes he is following the one, sometimes the other. The heart of an unsound man, of one that is not perfect, is not pitched upon God alone; but he has an eye upon God, and an eye upon credit; he has an eye upon God, and an eye upon wealth, upon his pleasures, or whatsoever it is. And in that regard a man is said to have "a heart and a heart," not as commonly it is taken, to make a show of one thing, and have another within; but it is a heart and a heart, when there are two objects upon which the heart is set, so that it is divided between two, and, as it were, cloven asunder. Now then, he is a perfect man that has a fixed resolution to cleave to God alone, that has his eye upon him, and nothing besides. This is a single heart, when a man resolves as Joshua did, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

A third expression there is in the Scripture, "You shall serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" so that he who has integrity of heart, he is a perfect man; that is, 1. he is a perfect man with God, that has a whole heart; that is, such a heart, whereof every part and faculty is sanctified; there is no part of it, but it is seasoned with grace; there is no wheel in all the soul, but it is turned the right way; there is not any
thing within him of which he can say, the bent of it is another way. 2. That has an eye to all the commandments, there is no duty but he gives up his heart to it: and again, there is no sin but his heart is averse from it, and he resists it to the uttermost. You see this expression, James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain." Take but this one instance, that this is the judgment of the Holy Ghost. Should a man have an eye to every commandment, and should he but fail in this one thing, not bridling his tongue, all the rest of his religion is but vain. Why Because he has not an eye to the whole law; and if a man fail in this, he is not a perfect man. And 3. He is perfect, that moreover has regard to all the ordinances of God. For, if a man will not use all God's ordinances conscionably, and in their season; if he do not pray, and receive the sacrament, and use the communion of saints, and fasting, in their season; and again, if he do not abstain from all occasions of sin, he is not a perfect man.

In order to know whether you are thus perfect, consider that property of a perfect heart expressed Phil. 3: 12, 14, "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may apprehend that, for which I am also apprehended by JESUS CHRIST. I press to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS; let therefore as many as are perfect, be thus minded." The meaning is this; this is my course, says the apostle: I have not yet attained to perfection; but this I do, I aim at the utmost, even at "the prize of the high calling of God in JESUS CHRIST." I aim even at the top of perfection, and I follow hard to it: and, says he, not only I, but "as many as are perfect, let them be thus minded;" where, by the perfect, he means, you see, not one that has already a perfect holiness, but one that is sound hearted. So you tied here these two properties of a man, whose heart is perfect with God. First, He aims at the highest degree of holiness; he looks at the very mark itself; he looks at the top, at the standard, at the utmost exact line of holiness, and he labors to square himself to it; and though he cannot reach it, yet it is his endeavor; be propounds not to himself a shorter journey's end than he should do, but his aim is even at the very top of perfection, at a perfect conformity to the image of CHRIST; for that is it the apostle here speaks of, that we may be conformable to the death and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. This was his aim. Whereas, on the other side, another does not so; but he sets a certain compass, a certain limit to himself; there he fixeth his staff; he does not intend to go any further; he does not intend to grow up to full holiness; he does not intend to be "holy, as the Lord is holy, in all manner of conversation." Secondly, He follows hard; he does not only make the mark his aim, but he follows hard after it; he does not loiter in the way; his constant and ordinary work is, every day to make his heart perfect; where he finds any crookedness, to set it straight again; where he finds any defect, to supply it; he still amends his heart, still brings it to a good temper; that is his work from day to day, to set it right and straight before God in all things.

He serves the Lord with all his might. A servant, when he slubbers over his work, it is an argument that he does it not with his whole heart, but as with eye-service; for when he does it heartily, he does it painfully, he does it thoroughly, exactly, and with all his strength. When a man does any thing truly, and in good earnest, he does it always exceeding diligently. Therefore that expression, which you find so often in the Scriptures, "You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy heart, and with all thy strength," is not an expression of the degrees of love. No, that is not the sole scope of that place, but it is an expression of the sincerity of a man's love; as if he should say, herein is the sincerity of a man's love; this is an argument that a man loves God truly, he loves him with all his heart, and with all his might. It is so in all things; when you do any thing for itself, you will do it with all your might.

When a man does a thing remissly, and perfunctorily, it argues always a divided intention; it is an argument that the whole mind is not set on it; whence that common saying, "He that will be excellent in every thing, is so in nothing." But whenever a man minds one thing, he will do it with all his might, because all the faculties, thoughts, and affections of the soul, are united, and drawn together into one point, they are still running in one channel. And therefore a man that has a sincere heart, that chooseth God alone, that says thus with himself, "I have but one Master to serve: I have but one to fear; I have God alone to look to; my business is with him in heaven; I think him to be all-sufficient, and an exceeding great reward," and will serve him with all diligence. If there be any work of his to be done, he will do it with all his might. That is the disposition of a man's mind, when once he is able to say as David says, Psalm 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek, to see the beauty of the Lord, to live in his temple." One thing have I desired, and that will I seek with all diligence. When a man desires but one thing, his mind will be exceeding intent upon it; and therefore you shall find this always to be in those whose hearts are upright with GOD, that they give them-selves up to his service; they give themselves up to do it with all diligence. A man that says, I hope my heart is upright with GOD, and yet is exceeding busy with other things, does the work of God negligently. He does but dissemble, when he says that he walks before him perfectly; for it cannot be. A man whose heart is upright, has this disposition in him, that his speeches, his thoughts, and his actions, are still busied about things that belong to the kingdom of GOD; holiness is the element he lives in; he would still be doing something that tends that way; by his good will he would be doing nothing else. Thus he serves the Lord with all his might, and that is an argument he has a sincere heart.

Thus having shown you that the cause of our departure from God is, the doubting of his all-sufficiency; and, in the second place, that he is all-sufficient; and again, thirdly, that whoever has an interest in God's all-sufficiency must be a perfect man; I proceed to show you, 1: What this covenant is that God makes. 2: With whom it is made. And 3: How we shall know whether we are in his covenant, or not.

I. What this covenant is. You must know that there is a double covenant; 1. A covenant of works; and 2. A covenant of grace. The covenant of works runs in these terms, "Do this, and you shall live, and I will be thy God." This is the covenant that was made with Adam in
The covenant of grace runs in these terms, “You shall believe, and take my Son, and accept of the gift of righteousness, and I will be thy God.” Between these two covenants you shall find a threefold difference, 2 Cor. 3 (*)

1. The first covenant was a ministration of the letter;

(* In the passage of Scripture here referred to the apostle is not contrasting the covenant of justice, or law of innocence, (termed not very properly the covenant of works,) made with man before the fall, and the covenant of grace made with man after the fall, but he is contrasting the two last dispensations of the covenant of grace, the Mosaic and the Christian, and showing, in a variety of particulars, the great superiority of the latter to the former. And when, in the epistle to the Galatians, chap. 3: 10, he asserts that, “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,” he does not speak of the law- given to our first parents before the fall, but wholly of the law of Moses, moral and ceremonial, signifying that as many as adhered to it, and confided in it for justification, rejecting the gospel, were under condemnation and wrath, being all manifest violators of it, the language of it being, ” Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, (the law of Moses,) to do them.”}

that is, in the first covenant there was no more heard or seen, but the naked commandment; there went with it no aptness, no disposition to keep it; they heard what the law was, they saw what God required, but there was no more; and those that were declarers of it were but the ministers of the letter, and not of the Spirit. 2. This covenant brings only a servile fear, and enmity; for when a man looks upon the author of this covenant, and hears no more but the law, and what it requires, he looks upon God as a hard Master; again, he looks upon his law as a heavy yoke, as an insupportable bondage, and therefore he hates it, and wishes there were no such law; he runs from it as a bond-servant runs from his roaster, as far as it is in his power. This is that which is said, Gal. 4: 24, ” Hagar gendereth to bondage;” that is, the covenant of works begets bondmen and slaves, not sons and freemen. 3. It is a ministration of death; that is, it propounds a curse to all those that do not keep it, and it shows no means to avoid it; and therefore a man is affected to it, and to God the author of it, as one is to an enemy that seeks his destruction. This arises not from hence, that the law of God is a cruel law, (for the law is good;) but it arises from the weakness of the flesh: as for example, if you would take a potter’s vessel, and dash it against a firm wall, the reason why the wall is the destruction of the vessel, is not any infirmity or weakness in the wall; but it is the weakness and brittleness of the vessel. And so in this case, the reason why this law, or covenant of works, is a ministration of death and enmity, is not because there is any imperfection in the law, but it is from the weakness of the flesh that is not able to keep the law.

Now, on the other side, the covenant of grace is, 1. A ministration of the Spirit, and not of the letter. 2. A ministration of love, not of enmity; of freedom, not of bondage. 3. A ministration of life and justification, and not a ministration of death and condemnation. When a man has looked upon the covenant of works, and sees death in it; sees a strict law that he is not able to keep; then comes the covenant of grace, and shows to him a righteousness that himself never wrought, to satisfy this law; shows him a way of obtaining pardon for the sins he has committed against the law, by the death and satisfaction of another. When he sees this, he sees withal the mercy of God giving this to him; and when he sees this, his opinion, his disposition, and affection is altered. He looks not on God now as upon a hard master, but as a God exceeding full of mercy and compassion; whence this follows, that his heart melts towards the Lord, and he comes and serves him with cheerfulness. He looks not now upon the law of God as an enemy, or as bondage, but a whole-some and profitable rule of direction, that he is willing to keep for his own comfort.

Now, when the heart of a man is thus softened, then the Spirit of God is sent into his heart, and writes the law of God in his inward parts. And look, what there is in the outward law, as it is written and laid before you, there shall be a disposition put into the heart that shall answer it in all things; there shall be a writing within answerable to the writing without; that, even as you see in sealing, when you have put the seal upon the wax, and taken it away again, you find in the wax the same impression, stamp answering to stamp, character to character, print to print. So it is in the hearts of the faithful, after they are once softened; the Spirit of God writes the law in their hearts, so that there is a law within answerable to the law without; an inward aptness, answering every particular of the law; an inward disposition, whereby a man is inclined to keep the law in all points. And it is not only put into the mind, as habits are, but it is so engraven as a natural disposition is; it is so rooted in the heart, so rivetted in, as when letters are engraved in marble. Now you must observe, that it is CHRIST that thus writes the law of God in the heart of man, which he does ordinarily, by means of the minister, (who is, as it were, the pen,) through
the power of the Holy Ghost, (which is, as it were, the ink;) for the means are not left to themselves, but the Lord must con cur with them immediately. The ministers are but co-workers with him; he holds their hands, as it were, when they write the epistle in any man's heart; it is he that guides the pen, it is he that puts ink into it, and therefore the epistle is his.

You now see the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. Now this covenant of grace is two-fold; it is either the Old Testament, or the New. They both agree in substance, but they differ in the manner of the administration, in the following points:

1. The New Testament, or the new covenant, is larger than the old; it extends to the Gentiles, whereas the first was confined to the Jews. 2. The Old was expressed in types, shadows, and figures: as for example, they had the blood of bulls and goats, they had the was hings of the body in clean water, they had offerings of incense, and the like; by which types other things are meant; as, namely, the death of CHRIST, and the satisfaction he gave to his Father by his death, the inward sanctification of the Spirit, and the works and prayers of the saints, sweet as incense; whereas now in the gospel, these things are taught us plainly; so that the Old and New Testament differ, as the image and substance; the one was expressed but in types and shadows, the other has the substance itself. 3. The Old Testament, or covenant, in itself is but weak and unprofitable: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope makes perfect," by which we draw near to God; that is, this was able to do nothing further than it led to that which was effectual; therefore it waxed old, and vanished away; but the second proved effectual to take away sin, and to sanctify us, and therefore it is an ever-lasting covenant. 4. They differ in the confirmation: the New Testament was confirmed by an oath, and by the blood of the testator, CHRIST; whereas the other was confirmed by the blood of goats, &c.; and accordingly the New Testament has new seals put to it, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, when the Old had only circumcision, and the Passover. 5. In the New Testament there is a more clear knowledge of things than in the Old, as we see, Heb. 8: 10, 11, "After those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest:" that is, they shall know much more; and that which they do know, they shall know in another manner: they shall know it more distinctly, more particularly. Moreover, as the knowledge is greater, so the promises are better. The main of the promises made in the Old Testament, (though the promise of salvation was not excluded,) were, that they should have, the land of Canaan, and outward prosperity; the New Testament meddles little with these things; but with promises of salvation, remission of sins, and sanctification by the Spirit. And again, there is a larger effusion of the Spirit under the New than there was under the Old Testa ment; the Spirit is now poured on us in a greater measure. Then it was distilled by drops; now the Lord has dispensed it in a greater abundance to the sons of men. In the time of the gospel there is a greater measure of grace, and it follows upon the other; "Grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST; that is, because there was more truth, and more knowledge, there went like-wise more grace with it. There is a greater revelation, so likewise there goes more grace. That is a sure rule, that all saving knowledge taught by GOD, carries grace proportionably with it. 6. The last difference is in the Mediator; Moses, a man like us, was the mediator of the Old Testament; that is, it was he that declared it, it was he that executed it; but we have a "High Priest that has obtained a more excellent office, inasmuch as he is the Mediator of a better testament." CHRIST is the Mediator of the new covenant; it is he that declares the covenant; and it is he that has reconciled the disagreeing parties; he has gone between them, as it were, and has undertaken for both sides: he has undertaken on God's part, these and these things shall be done; and he has undertaken on our part to give satisfaction by his death, and likewise to make us obedient to his Father.

You have heard what the covenant is in general. I shall now shew you what are the particular branches or parts of it; and they are three, answerable to the three offices of CHRIST. CHRIST you know is a priest, a king, and a prophet: it is he that makes good all the parts of the covenant, and he does it according to all his three offices; 1. As a priest he gives us remission of sins; 2. As a prophet he gives us knowledge; and 3. As a king he governs and defends us. Of the priestly office I shall say no more here: of the other two somewhat more largely.

As a prophet, CHRIST teacheth us knowledge. You "shall no more teach every man his brother," but " all shall be taught of me," says the Lord. It is another kind of teaching, when the Lord teacheth us knowledge, than that we can have from men. He is such a prophet as baptizeth with the Holy Ghost; such a prophet as makes men's hearts burn within them when he speaks to them; such a prophet as said to Matthew, " Follow me," and he did it; such a prophet as says to his ministers, " Go teach all nations, and I will be with you," and I will make you "able ministers, not of the letter, but of the spirit." This is the prophet that the Lord has raised up; the prophet that he promised he would raise like Moses, that should teach men after another fashion than all the prophets before were ever able to do. And that is the second part of the covenant.

We may know many things, but it is a hard thing to know as we ought to know. You "mayest know sin, and know it most exactly," but if this do not work upon thy heart; if the sin he not exceeding heavy upon thee; if it breed not in thee godly sorrow for it; if it does not amaze thee, as it were, with the filthiness and vileness of it; it is because you dost not yet know it as you oughtest to know. And how shall a man do then Go to CHRIST; he is the Prophet, he teacheth a man to see things so, that his heart, his will, and affections are moved with it. You are to
consider the covenant when you go to the Lord, and remember this is a part of the covenant, to teach men; and God has bound himself by an oath to perform it. God has sent his Son JESUS CHRIST to teach thee all things belonging to salvation; and so to teach the e, that you shall be in a right manner affected with it. And so likewise if you know GOD, you see him in his attributes; you hearest him often described, and artable to describe him to others; but for this, you findest not thy heart affected towards him; you seeest not that excellency and beauty that is in it him, so that thy heart is enamoured with him; you can not say you loves him " with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;" what will you do in this case Go to CHRIST the Prophet, and beseech him that he would teach thee to know the Lord. This is his promise; if you pray to him, and he do not it, urge him with this it is part of his covenant, that he has confirmed by oath, and must do it. And be assured of this, if we seek, and be earnest with him, he will teach us to know the Lord; and to know him so, that we shall love him with all our soul, and with all our strength. The like may I say of any thing else. Thus much for the se cond part of the covenant.

As to the third part of it, or that which CHRIST will perform to us, as he is a king, it consists in these three things: 1. To rule us. If you find thyself subject to unruly affections, which you can not master, it, is a part of his kingly office to setup his own government in thy heart, to " put his law into thy mind," and to write it in thy inward parts, that so you may be indeed subject to the kingdom of CHRIST. When a man sees nothing but the outward letter of the law, he will never yield obedience; but CHRIST comes as a king, and puts an inward disposition into the mind, that shall answer the letter without, and so he makes a man subject to his government. For example; this is the law without, " You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;" to answer which you shall see, Deut. 30: 6, " I will circumcise thy heart, and you shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength:" that is, I will put this affection, or this grace of love, within thy heart; there shall not be a law without only, but there shall be a grace within, a habit of love, answerable to the commandment. Without when this government is set up, and the law is put into our mind, then he makes us kings. For when men have so much strength within themselves that they can rule themselves, and walk in the way of righteousness, they are then made kings; and such kings the Lord makes all those that come to him. 2. To keep his people in peace. This the Lord does like as their king. His kingdom is spiritual; and therefore the main work of it is to give us inward peace and joy. You may have troubles in the world; it is the ordinary portion of the children of God. If we therefore not so much to expect outward peace; but God promises inward peace and joy: when you want it, ask for it; it is a part of God's covenant to give it. You may go to GOD, and beseech him to fill your hearts with this " peace that passes all understanding," and with this " joy which is unspeakable." Go, and beseech him to enrich your hearts with those riches that belong to salvation; and he will do it. 3. To give us victory over our enemies. This is the third part of CHRIST's kingly office; and that which was promised to Abraham, when he renewed his covenant upon the offering of his son, " You shall possess the gates of thine enemies." This is the great promise that God has made to us,

" that, being delivered from the hands of all our enemies, we might serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life," Luke 1: 74. You may challenge this covenant at his hands. When you are to wrestle with SATAN, or any temptation, say, " Lord, have you not said, that you will deliver me out of the hands of all mine enemies is it not a part of thy covenant" But that is not all neither; there is a promise, (and that is part of the covenant likewise,) that we shall overcome our outward enemies, so far as it is good for us, so far as God sees it meet; and therefore a man may go and challenge it at God's hands thus; " Lord, if it be good, if it be fit for me to have it, you have promised it, I shall have victory over them also." So you see what the covenant is. But there is one main branch of this covenant, that is general to all the three; that is, the giving of the Spirit. This pouring out of the Spirit upon us, is that which comprehends the life of the all the other three; that which enables us to do all the rest; that which makes us kings, and priests, and prophets; even as CHRIST himself was anointed with the Spirit without measure, that he might be a prophet, a king, and a priest.

II. Our next business is to show you with whom this covenant is made, and that is with all those who are perfect in the manner a bove described. For it was not made with Abraham only, but with him and his seed after him. Therefore it is with the perfect, with the faithful race; for " they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," Gal. 3: 7. " And they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," ver. 9. My beloved, it is a thing that is not sufficiently considered by us, how great a mercy it is, that God should be willing to enter into covenant; that he should be willing to make himself a debtor to us. He is in heaven, and we are on earth; he the glorious GOD, we dust and ashes; he the Creator, and we but creatures; and yet he is willing to enter into a covenant with us. This should teach us to magnify the mercy of GOD, and to be ready to say, as David did, What am I, or what is my father's house, that I should be raised hither to that I should enter into covenant with the great GOD; that he should come to a compact and agreement with me; that he should bind himself to become a debtor to me It is not a small thing to enter into covenant with GOD, to be in covenant with the King of kings. When there was a covenant between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, Jehoshaphat said, " There is a league between us; therefore my horses are as thy horses, and my people as thy people." And so it is between God and us; when there is a covenant between us, then his strength is our strength, and his armies are our armies, we have an interest in all. This great benefit you have; therefore you have cause, whoever is within the covenant, to bless the Lord, to magnify him for his great goodness, that he would enter into covenant with you.

But here consider what is the condition of this covenant of grace on man's part. That is only faith. And if you ask why faith is the only condition of this covenant I answer, 1. Because faith brings with it sanctification, and holiness of life. It draws with it all other graces, after this manner: he that believes God loves him; he that loves him must needs be full of good works. Besides, he that believes him, when God shall say to him, " I am thy exceeding great reward, see that you keep close to me, have an eye upon me, and walk with me from day to day," will be ready to do it. When God called Abraham from his father's house, and from his kindred, he was ready to leave them; when God would have him offer up his only son, he was ready to do it; whatsoever God bid him do, he would do it; he preferred God before his
own ease, before his own profit, before his only son whom he loved. Let any man believe as Abraham did, and of necessity his faith will produce good works. Let a man believe truly, and truth of belief will bring forth truth of holiness. Hear what St. James says, Jam. 2: "Abraham was justified by faith;" it is true; but Abraham's faith had works joined with it; for it was not a dead, a counterfeited faith, but a true faith; and being a true faith, Abraham had works as well as faith. So then faith is the condition of the covenant, because it is the ground of perfection and upright walking with God. 2. Because nothing else can answer the covenant but faith. The covenant is not a com mandment, but a promise. "I will give thee:" it runs all upon promises, "I will give thee a seed, and in that seed thou shalt be blessed." "I will give thee this good land," and so on. So that the covenant of grace stands on God's part all in promises. Now you know it is faith that answers the promise; for the promise is to be believed. If the covenant had stood in precepts and commandments, then it must have been answered by works and obedience; but since the covenant consists of promises, it must needs be by believing, and not by works.

Perhaps it may be asked here, but how is this covenant confirmed? For when a man hears that God will vouch-safe so much favor unto mankind, he might be ready to object, Alas! what are the sons of men, that the great God of heaven and earth should enter into such a covenant with us; that he should make us such promises; that he should make us heirs of the world; that he should bless us so as to make us his sons, so as to make us prophets, kings, and priests? I confess it is a covenant that needs confirmation; therefore the Lord has confirmed it: first, by his promise; says he, You have my Word for it; if that be not enough, I will con-firm it by an oath. And because he had no greater to swear by, he says, "By myself have I sworn," that I will make it good. And lest this should not be sufficient, he confirms it by the blood of CHRIST himself; by the death of the testator; and if this be not enough, he has added unto it sacramental seas, and has confirmed it likewise by them. He has given unto us the seals of baptism and the Lord's-Supper, as he gave unto them of old the seal of circumcision, and of the passover.

III. The last thing I proposed to show was this, how a man should know whether he be within the covenant, or not. The Scripture says, Abraham believed GOD, and therefore God reckoned him as a man that was righteous, and accepted him to be a partaker of the covenant. And so, if you believe in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, it is certain you are within the covenant of grace; you are by that faith put into it; for that is the only condition thereof, as was before observed. Now, whosoever truly believeth in CHRIST is ingrafted into him; and whosoever is in CHRIST, has received the Spirit of CHRIST; and if a man has not received the Spirit of CHRIST, he is not in him. Therefore, That you may know whether you have the Spirit, I will commend two places of Scripture to you. One is, Rom. 8: 15, "You have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, Abba Father; the same Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God:" the other, I John 5: 8, "There are three that bear record on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."

1. The spirit of bondage of necessity must go before; so that if you never had the spirit of bondage, certainly you never had the Spirit of adoption. For the apostle speaks of it here, as the common condition to all Christians, they do not receive the spirit of bondage again; you had it once, but now you have the Spirit of adoption: I say, every man must have this spirit of bondage; because no man can come to CHRIST, except the law be a schoolmaster to bring him to CHRIST. Now the law is not a schoolmaster; he teacheth no man, except the spirit of bondage work fear, and put an edge upon it. You may hear the law, and the threatenings and curses applied to you ten thousand times over, and yet no fear be bred in you, except the spirit of bondage join with it, and make it effectual. Though the spirit of bondage is not just alike in all; it is sometimes in a greater degree, sometimes less, but all have it more or less; sometimes its influence is not so much discerned. But God intends to bestow upon some men a great measure of grace, and therefore he gives the greater measure of the spirit of bondage. Because God means to teach them more to prize CHRIST, and to baptize them with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, therefore he baptizeth them with a greater measure of the spirit of bondage; they shall drink deeper of that spirit, because his intention is, they shall drink deeper of the Spirit of adoption.

The things which go with it are these three; the testimony of the blood, of the water, and of our own spirits. First, there is the testimony of the blood. When the spirit of bondage makes a man fear, it empties a man of all righteousness, as a man empties a cask, that there is nothing left in it; it pulls away all other props and stays from him: it leaves a man in this case, that he sees nothing in the world to save him, but the blood of CHRIST. When a man sees this, he takes fast hold on that, and will not let it go for any thing; and though he is told him, you shall have many troubles and crosses; you must part with all that you have; he cares not though it cost him his life; if he may have this blood to wash away his sins, it is enough; this he lays fast hold on. And when a man (does this), at that very hour he is entirely into covenant; he is translated from death to life. When a man can say, "I know I have taken and applied the blood of CHRIST; I rest upon it; I believe that my sins are forgiven; I grasp it; I receive it;" this is the testimony of the blood. But the Lord comes not by blood only, but by water also; that is, by sanctification; he sends the Spirit of sanctification, that cleanseth and washeth his servants; that washeth away, not only the outward filthiness, but the evil nature. He washeth every man in the church from top to toe. There is not one place in the soul, not one place in the conversation, but it is rinsed in this water. And then, when a man comes to find this, that he has been able to purify himself, and by the work of CHRIST's Spirit joining with him, to cleanse his conscience from dead works; this is the second testimony. Now follows the testimony of our own spirits, which gathers conclusions from both these, and says thus: "Seeing I have received the blood, and seeing I am able to purify myself, I conclude I am partaker of the covenant." Though a man could argue thus truly, "Whosever believe shall be saved, but I believe," this is the testimony of the blood only: but when a man can say, "I purify myself; I desire nothing in the world so much; I do it in good earnest;" this is the testimony of the water to the sign and testimony of the blood; which shows that it is true, that it is a lively hope. But some men say, this testimony of a man's own spirit may deceive him. I answer, it cannot; because though it be called the testimony of our own spirit, yet it is a spirit enlightened; it is a spirit sanctified with the Spirit of CHRIST.
But above all these is the testimony of God's Spirit. When a man has put to his seal that God is true, then the Lord seals him again with the Spirit of promise; that is, the Lord sends the Spirit into his heart, and assures him that he has received him to mercy. You will say, "What is the witness of the Spirit?" It is a thing that we cannot express. It is a certain Divine expression of light; a certain inexpressible assurance that we are the sons of God; a certain secret manifestation that God has received us, and put away our sins; "I say, it is such a thing that no man knows, but they that have it. Beloved, this is the testimony of the Spirit. I confess, it is a wonderful thing, and if there were not some Christians that did feel it and know it, you might believe there were no such thing; and that it were but a fancy or enthusiasm: but it is certain, there are a generation of men that know what this witness of the Lord is.

Indeed, you must remember this, to distinguish it from all delusions, this Spirit comes with the water and the blood; and therefore, if any man have flashes of light and joy, that witness he is in the covenant, and for all this has not the things that go before it, he may well take it for a delusion. So likewise if he have not the consequence of it, which is, the Spirit of prayer. So I will conclude all: He that has the witness of the Spirit, is able to cry, "Abba Father." If you have an assurance of a good state, and yet are not able to pray, you are deceived; for that is the property of the Spirit, it makes a man cry to God, and call him Father. You will say, "Is that such a matter? Every man can pray." Beloved, the Spirit of prayer is another thing than the world imagines it to be. He that has this Spirit is mighty in prayer; he is able to wrestle with God, as Jacob did. By the Spirit of adoption he "has power with God;" he is able to prevail with the Lord; and why Beca use he can speak to him as to a Father; he can "continue in prayer, and watch thereunto with all perseverance. He can speak to him as one that he is well acquainted with; he can cry, "Abba Father;" that is, he can pray with fervency and confidence; and there is no man in the world that is able to do it besides.
Master of Katherine-Hall in Cambridge, and some time Preacher of Gray's Inn.

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

THE LIFE OF DR. RICHARD SIBS.

RICHARD SIBS was born upon the borders of Suffolk, near Sudbury, and being trained, up at school, when he was grown ready for the university, was sent to Cambridge, in 1595, and was admitted into St. John's College; where he so profited in learning, and aproved himself by his blameless conversation, that he was promoted from one degree to another in the College; being chosen first Scholar, and then Fellow of that house. He also took all the degrees of the university, with general approbation and applause. It pleased God to convert him by the ministry of Mr. Paul Baines, whilst he was lecturer at St. Andrew's, in Cambridge. And when Mr. Sibs had been Master of Arts some while, he entered into the ministry, and shortly after was chosen lecturer himself at Trinity church, in Cambridge. To whose ministry, besides the towns men, many scholars resorted, so that he became a worthy instrument of be-getting sons and daughters unto God; as also of edifying and building up of others.

About the year 1625, or 1626, he was chosen Master of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, in the government whereof he continued till his dying day; and like a faithful governor, he was always very careful to procure and advance the good of that little house. For he pro-cured good means and maintenance by his interest in many worthy persons, for the enlargement of the college; and was a means of establishing learned and religious Fellows there; insomuch that in his time it proved a very famous society for piety and learning, both as to Fellows and Scholars.

But before this, about the year 1618, he was chosen Preacher at Gray's Inn; where his ministry found such general approbation and acceptance, that besides the learned lawyers of the house, many noble personages, and many of the gentry and citizens resorted to hear him, and many had reason to bless God for the benefit which they received by him.

His learning was mixed with much humility, whereby he was always ready to undervalue his own labors; though others judged them to breathe spirit and life, to be strong of heaven, speaking with authority and power to men's consciences. His care in the course of his ministry was to lay a good foundation in the heads and hearts of his hearers. And though he was a wise master-builder, and that in one of the most eminent auditorries for learning and piety, that was in the land; yet, according to the grace which was given to him, (which was indeed like that of Elisha, in regard of the other prophets, the elder brother's privilege, a double portion) he was still ta king all occasions to preach on the fundamentals to them, and amongst the rest, on the incarnation of the Son of God. And preaching at several times, and by occasion of so many several texts of Scripture concerning this subject, there is scarce any one of those incomparable benefits which accrue to us thereby, nor any of those holy impressions, which the meditation thereof ought to work in our hearts, which was not by him sweetly unfolded.

Indeed he was thoroughly studied in the Holy Scriptures, which made him a man of GOD, " perfect, throughly furnished unto every good work," and as became a faithful steward of the manifold grace of GOD, he endeavored to teach others the whole counsel of GOD, and to store them with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

He was a man that enjoyed much communion with GOD, " walking in all the laws of God blameless;" and, like John the Baptist, was " a burning and shining light," wasting and spending himself to enlighten others. He was upon all occasions very charitable, drawing forth not only his purse in relieving, but his very bowels in commiserating the wants and necessities of the poor members of CHRIST. He used sometimes in the summer-time to go abroad to the houses of some worthy person-ag es, where he was an instrument of much good; not only by his private labors, but by his prudent counsel and advice, that upon every occasion he was ready to minister unto the m. And thus
having done his work on earth, he went to receive his wages in heaven, peaceably and comfortably resigning up his spirit unto GOD, in the year 1635, and in the 58th year of his age.

THE FOUNTAIN OPENED;

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

REVEALED 1 TIMOTHY III. 16.

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory.

THERE are two things that God values more than all the world besides; the church, and the truth: the church, that is, the pillar and ground of truth, as it is in the foregoing verse: the truth of religion, that is, the seed of the church. Now, the blessed apostle St. Paul, being to furnish his scholar Timothy for the ministerial office, does it from two grounds especially; 1. From the dignity of the church, which he was to instruct and converse in; and, 2. From the excellency of the mysteries of the gospel, that saving truth. Hereupon he does seriously exhort Timothy to take heed how he conversed in the church of GOD, in teaching the truth of God.

The church of God is the house of GOD, a company of people that God cares for more than for all mankind besides; for whom the world stands; for whom all things are; "It is the church of the living GOD, the pillar and ground of truth." And for the truth of GOD, that must be taught in this church, that is so excellent a thing, that we see, the blessed apostle here uses lofty expressions concerning it. As the matter is high and great, so the apostle has expressions suitable. A full heart breeds full expressions. As no man went beyond St. Paul in the deep sense of his own unworthiness and of his state by nature; so there was no man reached higher in large and rich thoughts and expressions of the excellency of CHRIST, and the good things we have by him: as we see here, in setting forth the excellency of the ministerial calling. Being to deal with God's truth towards God's people, he sets forth evangelical truth gloriously;" Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory."

In these words there is a preface, and then a particular explication; there is the fountain, and the streams issuing from it; the root and the branches; there is, as it were, a porch to this great house. Great buildings have fair entrances; so this glorious description of the mysteries of the gospel has this fair porch and entry to it: without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. Then the fabric itself is parcelled out in these six particulars: 1. God was manifest in the flesh, 2. Justified in the spirit, 3. Seen of angels, 4. Preached unto the Gentiles, 5. Believed on in the world, 6. Received up to glory.

First, for the preface, whereby the apostle makes way to raise up the spirit of Timothy (and in him us,) unto a reverent and holy attending to the blessed mysteries that follow: without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. In this preface there is observable, 1. The thing
To observe somewhat from each of these, I shall begin with GODLINESS. Godliness is either the principles of the Christian religion, or the inward disposition of the soul towards them: the inward holy affection of the soul; the word implanted both. For godliness is not only the naked principles of religion; but likewise the Christian affection; the inward bent of the soul; suitable to Divine principle; a godly disposition, carrying us to godly truths. To prove that godliness includes the truths them-selves, I need go no further than the connection: in the last words of the former verse, the church is called the pillar and ground of truth; and then it follows. With-out controversy, great is the mystery (he does not say of truth, but) of godliness; instead of truth he says godliness. The same word implies the truths them-selves, and the disposition of the soul towards them; to show that both must always go together. Wheresoever Christian truth is known, as it should be, there is a supernatural light. It is not only a godly truth in itself, but it is embraced with godly affections. These blessed truths of the gospel require and breed a godly disposition; the end of them is godliness; they frame the soul to it.

Bengelius and many others adopt a different reading of this passage, thus: "That you may know how you oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. The mystery of godliness is the pillar and ground of truth, and confess it to be a great mystery." which reading is approved by Witsius, Aët Whitby, Doddridge, Wesley, and many other eminent commentators. According to this interpretation, by the mystery of godliness we are to understand that wonderful and sublime doctrine which is revealed in the gospel, and immediately specified in six articles, which sum up the whole economy of Christ upon earth.

Hence we may fetch a rule of discerning when we are godly, or what makes a true Christian. When a man nakedly believes the grounds of Divine truth, the articles of the faith, does that make him a true Christian No; but when these truths breed and work godliness. For, religion is a truth according to godliness, not according to speculation only, and notion. Wheresoever these fundamental truths are embraced, there is godliness with them. A man cannot embrace religion in truth, but he must be godly. A man knows no more of Christ and Divine things, than he values, esteems, and affects them, and brings the whole inward man into a frame to be like them. If these things work not godliness, a man has but a human knowledge of Divine things; if they carry not the soul to trust in God, to hope in God, to fear God, to love him, and to obey him; that man is not a true Christian.

Religious, evangelical truth, is wisdom; and wisdom is a knowledge of things directing to practice. A man is a wise man when he knows so as to practice what he knows. The gospel is a Divine wisdom, teaching practice as well as knowledge. Therefore, he that is godly believes right, and practiceth right. He that believes ill can never live well; for he has no foundation. And he that lives ill, though he believes well, shall be damned. Therefore a Christian has godly principles out of the gospel, and a godly carriage suitable to those principles. And indeed there is a force in the principles of godliness, (from God's love in Christ,) to stir up to godliness. The soul that apprehends God's truth aright cannot but be godly. Can a man know God's love in Christ incarnate, and Christ's suffering in the wilderness, and his love for us, the infinite love of God in Christ, and not be carried in affection back to God again, in love, joy, and true affiance. It cannot be. Therefore, it is not a cold, naked apprehension, but a spiritual knowledge, when the soul is stirred up to a suitable disposition and carriage, that makes godliness.

Now this godliness is a mystery. 1. The word signifies a hidden thing; it comes from the Greek word Mno, which means to shut or stop the mouth from divulging. The heathen had their mysteries among them in their temples, which they were prohibited from divulging. Therefore there was an image before the temple, with his finger before his mouth, skewing that they must be silent in the dis covery of hidden mysteries. But the gospel is called a mystery, not so much that it is secret, but that it was so before it was revealed. 2. That is called a mystery in the Scripture, the reasons of which are hid. So the calling of the Jews is called a mystery, though the thing be revealed; yet, that God should be so wondrously merciful to them, that is the mystery. When we cannot search into the depth of a thing, though the thing itself be discovered, that is a mystery. 3. A mystery in Scripture is taken for a truth hid under some outward symbol. Marriage is a mystery, because it conveys the hidden spiritual marriage between Christ and his church. The sacraments are mysteries, because in the one, under bread and wine, there are conveyed to us the benefits of Christ's body broken, and his blood shed; and in the other, under water, a visible outward thing, there is signified an inward cleansing.

In a word, the whole Christian religion is nothing but a continued mystery, a chaining together of mystery. A doctrine or truth which could not be discovered without supernatural revelation; or which had been long concealed, and when revealed was difficult to be believed through the prejudices of men, is frequently termed a mystery in the Scriptures: thus, that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and that they should be saved by faith in it, without obedience to the law of Moses, is called a mystery, Rom. 11:25, 16:25; Eph. 3:4-6, Col. 1:26, 27; and that not so much because, "the reasons of it are hid," as Dr. Sibbs observes, as because it has been, in a great measure, concealed from former ages of the church, and when revealed to and by the apostles, was received by the scribes, through the deep prejudices upon mystery. And the particular branches are called mysteries; as the union between Christ and the church is so called. But the whole gospel is here meant; as Christ says, Mark 4:1: "The mystery of the kingdom of God;" that is, the description of the gospel. For
what is the gospel The mystery of God's kingdom, of CHRIST's kingdom; a mystery, discovering how CHRIST reigns in his church; and a mystery of bringing us to that heavenly kingdom. So then, the whole evangelical truth is a mystery, and that for these reasons:

First, It is a mystery, because it was hid from all men) till God brought it out of his own bosom: first, to Adam in paradise, after the full, afterward to the Jews, and, in CHRIST's time, more fully to Jews and Gentiles. It was hid in the breast of God; it was not a thing framed by angels or men. After man was fallen into that cursed state, this design of saving man by CHRIST came not into the head of any creature. The thought of satisfying justice by infinite mercy; of sending CHRIST to die, that justice might be no loser, could arise in no other breast but God's. CHRIST bought it out of the bosom of his Father: " No man has seen God at any time; CHRIST, the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father," he discovers the Father, and his meaning to mankind. Who ever could have thought of such a depth of mercy unto fallen man, when God promised the blessed seed, Gen. 3: if God himself had not discovered it Therefore, this reconciling of justice and mercy is a mystery of heavenly wisdom. Again: it is a mystery, because, when it was revealed, it was revealed but to few. It was revealed at first only to the Jews, it was wrapped in ceremonies and types, and in general promises, to them; it was quite hid from most part of the world. Again: when CHRIST came; and it was discovered to the Gentiles, yet it is a mystery even in the church, to carnal men that hear the gospel, and do not understand it; that have the veil over their hearts: it is "hid to them that perish," "though it bener so open of itself to those that believe. In the fourth place, it is a mystery, because though we see some part of it, yet we see not the whole gospel; we see not all, nor wholly: " We see but in part, and know but in part," so it is a mystery in regard of the full accomplishment. Yea, and in the next place, it is a mystery in regard of what we do not now, but shall hereafter know. How do we know Divine truths now In the mirror of the word and sacraments. We know not CHRIST by sight; that manner of knowledge is reserved for heaven. Here, we know only, as it were, in a kind of mystery; we see Divine things wrapped up in the mirror of the word and the mysteries of the sacraments. Indeed, this, comparatively to the Jewish church, is to see the face of God in CHRIST; a clear sight: but, compared to what we shall have, it is to see in a glass, or mirror. If we look back, it is a clear sight; if we look forward, it is a sight as it were in a mystery. Even that little we do know, we do not know it as we shall know it in heaven.

But is the doctrine of the gospel itself only a mystery No: all the graces are mysteries, every grace. There is a mystery in faith. Is it not a mystery, that the earthly soul of man should be carried above itself, to believe supernatural truths, and to depend upon what it sees not? That a man should be as a rock, to stand immovable in the midst of a storm, is a mystery. That the soul should be turned universally another way; that the judgment and affections should be turned backward; that he that was proud before, should now be humble; that he that was ambitious before, should now despise the world; that he who was given to his lusts and vanities before, should now be serious on particular graces; " preached to the Gentiles to their worth; so these Divine truths find little acceptance in the world, because they are mysteries; not only mysteries to men, but to the principalities and powers in the unseen world. They are an excellent people, but they are veiled under infirmities of body and finiteness, in one person. The church itself is a mystical thing. For under baseness, under the scorn of the world, what is hid A glorious people. What is the church A company of men that are in the world, without glory, without comeliness and beauty; yet, notwithstanding, they have life in the root. " Our life is hid with CHRIST in GOD," Col. 3: 3. The church has a life, but it is a hidden life; a life under death. They seem to the world to die, but they are alive. This is excellently followed by St. Paul, " As dying, and yet we live; as poor, yet making many rich," 2 Cor. 6: 10. A strange kind of people; poor and rich; living and dying; glorious and base; yet this is the state of the church in this world. They are an excellent people, but they are veiled under infirmities of their own, and the disgrace and persecutions of the world. So we see both the doctrine itself, and the graces of the gospel, and the Head of the church, and the church itself, are nothing but mysteries.

Is it so, that religion is a mystery Then first of all, do not wonder that it is not known in the world; and that it is not only not known, but persecuted, and hated. Alas! it is a hidden thing; men know not the excellency of it. As great men's sons, in a foreign country, find not entertainment answerable to their worth; so these Divine truths find little acceptance in the world, because they are mysteries; not only mysteries in the tenet, but in the practice; therefore the practice finds such opposition in the world: " Father, forgive the m," says our blessed Savior, " they know not what they do." The world knows not what they do when they persecute religion and religious persons. The church is a mystical thing, and religion is a mystery; it is hid from them. Again, if it be a mystery, then it should teach us to carry ourselves suitably to it. Even the heathens carried them-selves reverently in their mysteries. Let us carry our-selves reverently toward the truth of God; towards all truths, though they be never so contrary to our reason; though they are mysteries altogether above nature. There are some seeds of the law in nature, but there are no seeds of the gospel in nature; therefore we should come to it with a great deal of reverence. St. Paul teacheth us an excellent lesson, Rom. 11: 33. When he entered into a depth that he could not fathom, does he cavil at it No: he cries, "Oh,
the depth! oh, the depth!" So in all the truths of GOD, when we cannot comprehend them, let us with silence reverence them, and say with him, "Oh, the depth!" Divine things are mysteries, the sacraments are mysteries; let us carry ourselves towards them with reverence.

Those that come with common affections, and a common carriage to holy things, profane them. We profane the sacrament, if we take the bread and wine as a common feast. As St. Paul says, "You discern not the Lord's body," 1 Cor. 11: 29. We profane mysteries, when we discern not. Beasts and beast-like men discern not the relation of things; these outward elements have reference to great matters, to the body and blood of CHRIST. They do not discern them from common bread and wine, though they be used to raise up our souls to the bread of life. So likewise, when we come to the Word of GOD, and look not to our feet, but come to the church, as if we went to some common place, without prayer, without preparation, this is to come profanely. When we come to converse with GOD, we must not come with common affections; we must carry ourselves holily in holy business, or else we offer to God strange fire. It is a shame for us in religious duties, not to labor to bring suitable dispositions. It is a matter of that con-sequence, that life and death depend upon it. You know what St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 11: 30, "For this very cause, some are sick and weak, and some sleep," some die: why for coming with common affections, for "not discerning the Lord's body," for not examining ourselves, for not having answerable dispositions to the greatness of the mysteries we go about.

Again, are these things mysteries, great mysteries? Let us bless GOD, that has revealed them, for the glorious gospel. Oh, how does St. Paul, in every epistle, stir up people to be thankful for these mysteries? What cause have the Gentiles, that were in the shadow of death before, to be thankful to God? What kind of nation were we in Julius Cesar's time as barbarous as the West Indians: the Canibals were as good as we. We that were so before, not only to be civilized by the gospel, but to have the means of salvation discovered, we at cause have we to be enlarged in thankfulness. And shall we show our thankfulness in provoking his majesty? There is nothing in the world that is a ground of such thankfulness as the glorious gospel; that brings such glorious things as it doth. Are there not thousands that sit in darkness The Romish church, is it not under the mystery of iniquity? And that we should have the glorious mysteries of the gospel revealed to us; that the veil should be taken off, and we should see the face of God in CHRIST; what a matter of thankfulness is it to all that ever felt comfort by it.

Again, it is a mystery: therefore it should teach us likewise, not to think to search into it merely by strength of wit, and study of books, and all human helps that can be: it must be unveiled by God himself, by his Spirit. If we set upon this mystery only with wits and parts of our own, then what our wits cannot penetrate into, we shall judge not to be true; as if our wits were the measure of Divine truth: with us, so much as we conceive, is true; and so much as we cannot conceive, is not true. What a pride is this in worms of the earth, that will make their own mortality of the soul is a matter of faith; and it is well proved by the light of reason. And it is a delightful thing to the heart of GOD, to know that his mysteries are known by his people. Oh, how dull the scholar is. Pride in great parts is a greater hindrance than simplicity in meaner parts. Therefore CHRIST glorifies God that he had "revealed these things to the simple," and concealed them from the proud. Let no one despair; for the "statutes of God give understanding to the simple," Psal. xix. 7. God is such an excellent teacher, that where he finds no wit, he can cause it. He has a privilege above other teachers; he does not only teach the thing, but he gives understanding to apprehend it. It is a mystery; therefore take heed of slighting Divine truths. The empty shallow heads of the world make great matters of
trifles, and stand amazed at baubles and vanities, and think it a grace to slight Divine things; This great mystery of godliness they despise. That which the angels themselves stand amazed at, and are students in, that the wits of the world slight and despise, or daily withal, as if it were a matter not worth thinking of. But I leave such to reformation, or to God's just judgment, that has given them up to such extremity of madness and folly. Let us labor to set a high price on the mysteries of godliness.

Let us now consider how we shall come to know this mystery as we ought, and to carry ourselves answerable to it. 1. We must desire God to open our eyes: that as the light has shined, so we may discern it. Though the mystery be now revealed by preaching, books, and other helps; yet to see this mystery, and make a right use of it, there is required a spiritual light to join with this outward light. And hence comes a necessity of depending upon God's Spirit. There must be an using of all helps and means, or else we tempt God. We must read and hear; and, above all, we must pray. This was David's manner, as you see Psal. cxxi. 13, “Open mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see wonders in thy law.” As if he had said, There are wonders in thy law, but my eyes must be opened to see them. He had sight before, but the desires of his heart were still a further and clearer sight. As the poor man in the gospel, when he was asked, “What wouldst thou have?” cried after Christ, “Lord, that my eyes may be opened.” So should every one of us (considering it is such a ravishing mystery,) cry after God and Christ, “Lord, that my eyes might be opened, that I may see the wonders in thy law;” that I may see the wonders in thy gospel, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Now the Spirit does not only teach us the truths of the gospel, but the application of those truths, that they are ours. This truth of the gospel is mine, the sacrament seals it to me. The preaching of the Word takes away the veil from the things, and the Spirit takes away the veil from our souls. It is the office of the Spirit to take the veil off the heart, and to enlighten our understanding; and like a Spirit of application to us in 1St. John. Therefore, says the apostle, “He has given us the Spirit, to know the things that are given us of God,” in particular. So the Spirit does not only bring a blessed light to the Scriptures, and skew us the meaning in general, but it is a Spirit of application, to bring home those gracious promises to every one in particular; to tell us the thing: that are given us of God; not only the things that arc, given to the church, but to us in particular. For the Spirit of God will tell us what is in the breast of God, his secret good will to the church. He loves the church, and he loves thee, says the Spirit. Therefore, he is called an earnest and a seal in our hearts, because he discovers not only the truth at large, but he discovers the truth of God's affection in all the privileges of the gospel, that they belong to us. What a blessed discovery is this; that not only reveals Divine truths to us, but reveals them so to us that we have our share and interest in them.

2. Again, if we would understand these mysteries, let us labor for humble spirits: for the Spirit works that disposition in the first place: “The humble, God will teach,” Psal. 25: 9. The humble, that will depend upon his teaching. We must be content to become fools, that we may be wise. We must deny our own understandings, and be content to have no more understanding in Divine things than we can carry out of God's Book, than we can be taught by God's Word and ordinances. This humility we must bring, if we would understand this mystery.

3. We must bring withal a serious desire to know, with a purpose to be moulded to what we know, to be delivered to the obedience of what we know; for then it will discover it to us. “Wisdom is easy to him that will understand.” Together then with prayer and humility, let us but bring a purpose and desire to be taught, and we shall find Divine wisdom easy. None ever miscarried in the church but those that have false hearts; that have not humble and sincere hearts, willing to be taught, if they have that, then God, that has given this resolution, that they will use the means, and will be taught, will suit it with teachers. God usually suits men with teachers fit for their dispositions.

4. Take heed of passion and prejudice; of carnal affections, that stir up passion, for they will make the soul that it cannot see mysteries that are plain in themselves. As we are strong in any passion, so we judge; and the heart, when it is given up to passion, transforms the truth to its own self. When the taste is vitiated, it tastes things not as they are in themselves, but as itself is; even so the corrupt heart transforms this sacred mystery to its own self, and oftentimes forces Scripture to defend its own sin. When the heart is deeply engaged in any passion or affection, it will believe what it lists; it will force itself to believe what it loves. Let us labor therefore to come with purged hearts to receive these mysteries. They will lodge only in clean hearts. Let us labor to see God and Christ with a clear eye, free from passion, covetousness, and vain-glory.

Thus much concerning godliness, as it is a mystery. The next thing observable is, that it is a GREAT MYSTERY.

1. Here I might be endless; for it is not only great, as a mystery, that is, as there is much of it concealed: but it is a great and excellent mystery, if we regard whence it came; that is, from the bosom of God, from the wisdom of God. If we regard all that had any hand in it, as God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the angels attending upon the church; the apostles, the pen-men; preachers and ministers, the publishers of it: it is a great mystery. 2. If we regard the end of it, which is, to bring together God and man; man that was fallen, to bring him back again to God: to bring him from the depth of misery to the height of all happiness: it is a great mystery in this respect. 3. Again, it is a great mystery, on account of the manifold wisdom that God discovered in the publishing of it; which was by certain degrees. First, in types; afterwards he came to truths. First, in promises; and then performances. First, the Jews were the church of God; and then came in the Gentiles. Thus the manner of conveying it from time to time, from the beginning of the world, displayed manifold and deep wisdom; it was a great mystery. 4. Again, it is a great mystery, for the work thereof; which is, it transforms those that know it into the likeness of
CHRIST; it gives spiritual sight to the blind, cars to the deaf, and spiritual life to the dead. Whatsoever CHRIST did in the days of his flesh to the outward man, that he does by his Spirit to the inward man. Even by the publication of this mystery, wonders are wrought daily. It is a great mystery, if compared to all other mysteries. Creation was a great mystery; for all things to be made out of nothing; order out of confusion: for God to make man a glorious creature of the dust of the earth: But what is this in comparison of God's being made a man: It was a great and wondrous thing for Israel to be delivered out of Egypt and Babylon: But what are those to the deliverance from hell, and damnation by the gospel: What are the mysteries of nature, the miracles of nature, such as the loadstone, to these supernatural mysteries: There are mysteries in the providence of God in governing the world; mysteries of SATAN; mysteries of iniquity. But what are all mysteries, either of nature or hell, to this great mystery of godliness.

Observe, the apostle says, it is so without controversy; “*; confessedly; under the broad seal of public confession, as the word signifies. It is a confessed truth, that the mystery of godliness is great. As if the apostle had said, I need not give you greater confirmation; it is, without question, a great mystery. But here see that you take the apostle's meaning right; for it is certain that carnal minds and profane wits of the age do controvert this great mystery. St. Paul therefore means that it is without controversy, upon these two accounts: 1. That in Itself - it is not to be doubted of. It is a great grounded truth, as clear as if the gospel were written with a sun-beam. There is nothing clearer, and more out of controversy, than sacred evangelical truths. 2. That as they are clear in themselves, so they are apprehended of all God's people. All that are the children of the church, that have their eyes open, without all doubt and controversy, embrace it. Things are not so clear in the gospel that all that are sinful and rebellious may see, whether they will or not; but to those that are disposed, and have sanctified souls, they are without controversy.

So much for the preface, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. Now we come to the particulars of this great mystery,

God manifest in the flesh.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH

This, and the other branches that follow, are all spoken of CHRIST. Indeed, the mystery of godliness is nothing but CHRIST, and that which CHRIST did. So that from the general we may observe this, that CHRIST is the scope of the Scripture. CHRIST is the pearl of that ring; CHRIST is the centre wherein all those lines end. Take away CHRIST, and what remains? Therefore, in the whole Scriptures, let us see that we have an eye to CHRIST; for all is nothing but CHRIST. The mystery of religion is, “CHRIST manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” All is but CHRIST. The reason why the Jews understand not the Scriptures better, is, because they seek not CHRIST there. Take away CHRIST, and you take away all out of the Scriptures; they are but empty things without him. Therefore, when we read them, let us think of somewhat that may lead us to CHRIST, as all the Scriptures lead (one way or other,) to him.

But to proceed; the apostle begins with this, “God manifest in the flesh:” that is, God the Son, the second Person in the holy Trinity, was manifest in the flesh; that is, in human nature. So God the Son put on the human nature; and not only so, but with it also our infirmities, weakness and miseries; and, which is more, he took our flesh when it was tainted with treason; our base nature after it was fallen. Now in that GOD, the second Person, appeared in our nature; in our weak, tainted, and disgraced nature, after the fall,--from hence comes, first of all, the enriching of our nature with all graces in CHRIST. In CHRIST there is abundance of riches; our nature in him is highly enriched. Hence comes again the ennobling of our nature. In that God appeared in our nature, it is much ennobled. When our nature is engraven into a higher stock, a mean graft into so glorious a stock as CHRIST, it is a high dignity. That our flesh is now married to the second Person, it is a wondrous advancement of our nature, even above the angelical: “He took not the nature of angels.” It was a great exaltation to our nature that God should take it into the unity of his Person. In the third place, the enabling of our nature to the work of salvation that was wrought in it, came from hence; God was in the flesh. From whence was the human nature enabled to suffer. Whence was it upheld in suffering, that it slid not sink under the wrath of God, God was in the flesh; God upheld our nature. So that the riches, dignity, and ability of our nature, to be saving and meritorious, all came from this, that God was in our nature. Hence it comes, likewise, that whatsoever CHRIST did in our nature, God did it; for God appeared in our nature. He took not upon him the person of any man, but the nature. And therefore, our Flesh and the second Person being but one Person, all that was done wasclone by the Person that was GOD, (though not as God.)
Hence comes also the union between CHRIST and us. We are sons of GOD, because he was the Son of man, God in our flesh. There are three unions: 1. The union of natures, God became man; 2. The union of grace, We are one with CHRIST; and, 3. The union of glory, The first is for the second, and the second for the third: God became man, that man might be one with God; God was manifest in the flesh, that we might be united to him and being brought again to God the Father, we might come to a glorious union. Hence likewise comes the efficacy of what CHRIST did. That the dying of one man should be sufficient for the whole world, it was, because God was in the flesh. Well then may the apostle call this, God manifest he the flesh, a mystery, and place it in the first rank. For God to be included in the womb of a virgin, “for happiness itself to become a curse, ” for Him that has the riches of all in Him, to become poor for our sakes, ” for Him that ever enjoyed his Father's presence, to want the beams of it for a time, that he might satisfy his Father's justice, and under go his wrath for our sins; ” there is matter of wonder indeed.

This teacheth us what to do, when we find any trouble arise in our consciences for sins and unworthiness. We should then cast ourselves upon GOD, that became flesh for us, and died for us; let us stay ourselves there. I am unworthy, a lump of sin; there is nothing in me that is good! Oh! but I have all in CHRIST; he has abundance for me; hisfulness is for me! " The fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily." Therefore, in all doubts in regard of sin and unworthiness, let us labor for faith; (for faith is a grace that carries us out of ourselves, and plants and fixes us in CHRIST;) let us consider ourselves as in him, and consider whatsoever is in him as being for us. Again, oppose CHRIST to the wrath of God, and the temptations of SATAN, for all will fall before this God manifest in the flesh. He is GOD, therefore he can subdue all; he is man, and the: _fore he will love us. " I know whom I have believed; ” him that is merciful, because he is man, and has taken, my nature; and him that can subdue all enemies, because he is GOD, God in the flesh: a fit foundation for faith to rely upon. Let us have recourse to this, therefore, in all temptations whatsoever. We cannot glorify God and CHRIST more than to go out of ours selves, and fix our comfort here. By this incarnation of CHRIST, we have communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; this brings us into fellowship with the blessed Trinity; and it teacheth us what thoughts we should have of GOD, even to have loving thoughts of him. Whence is it that we can call God Father From this, God was manifest in the flesh. Hence I can call God Father; can boldly go to him, and conceive of him as gracious and lovely. And whence is it that our persons are become lovely to God From this, God has taken our nature upon him; there-fore our nature is become lovely to him, and his is sweet and fatherly to us.

Let not SATAN, therefore, abuse our imaginations, if we have a mind to turn to God. For, indeed, there is no comfort to them that go on in their sins; " they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath;" they are in danger of damnation every minute of their lives; there is but a step between them and hell. But for such as intend to turn to GOD, God meets them halfway. We see the prodigal did but tenter a purpose to come to his father, and his father meets him. God in our flesh has made God peaceable to us. If we go to CHRIST, and lay hold on him for the forgiveness of our sins, God in him is become a loving, gracious Father to us. Oh 1 what boldness have we now to go to God in our flesh! To think of God absolutely, he is a consuming fire, every way terrible. But to think of God in our nature, we may securely go to him; " He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." We may securely go to GOD, our brother, to him that is of one nature with us, and now having our nature in heavens. Think of God born of a virgin, of God lying in the cradle, sucking the breast; think of God going up and down teaching and doing all good; think of God sweating for thee, hanging on the cross, shedding his blood, lying in the grave, raising himself again, and now in heaven, " sitting at the right hand of the Father," our Intercessor; conceive of God in this flesh of ours, lovely to us; and now our nature must needs be lovely to him. The nature of God must needs be lovely to us, since he has joined our poor beggarly flesh to the unity of the second Person. Let us think of.

God manifest in the flesh. To think of God alone, it swallows up our thoughts; but to think of God in CHRIST, it is a comfortable consideration. "None can ever see GOD, and live;" that is, God nakedly, or absolutely. Oh! but God manifest in our flesh, we may see; and it shall be our happiness in heaven to see him there; to see God "in our flesh face to face." We cannot too often meditate on these things; it is the life and soul of a Christian; it is the marrow of the gospel; it is the wonder of wonders: we need not wonder at any thing, after this. It is no wonder that our bodies should rise again; that mortal man should become immortal in heaven; since the immortal God has taken man's nature and died in it. All the articles of our faith, and all miracles, yield to this grand thing, God manifest in the flesh. Believe this, and believe all other.

Justified in the Spirit.

These words are added to answer an objection that may rise from the former. I-le was God manifest in the flesh; he vailed himself, he could not have suffered else. When he took upon him to be the Mediator, he must do it in abased flesh. If CHRIST (being GOD,) had not
abased himself, he could never have been put to death; SATAN and his instruments would never have meddled with him. But GOD, being vailed in the flesh, being clouded with our flesh and infirmities, he was taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain. He appeared to be nothing but a poor, debased, dejected man, and as such was persecuted, slandered, and slain in the world. He was thought to be a sinner. But it was no matter what he appeared, when he was vailed with our flesh, he was justified in the Spirit. To be justified here, implies two things: 1. A clearing from false imputations; and, 2. A declaring him to be what he was. When a man is cleared from that which is laid to his charge, he is justified; or he is declared to be that he is. “Wisdom is justified of her children;” that is, cleared from the imputations that are laid upon religion, and declared to be an excellent thing of all her children. So CHRIST was justified: he was cleared, not to be as they took him; and declared himself to be the Son of GOD, the true Messias, and Savior of the world.

He was justified in the Spirit; that is, in his Godhead. The Godhead showed itself in his life and death, in his resurrection and in his ascension. Though he was God in the flesh, yet he remained God still, and was justified to be so in the Spirit, in his Divine power. God has the name of the Spirit, from his purity, power, and vigor. So God is a Spirit; that is, pure, opposite to gross things, earth and flesh; and God is powerful and strong. " The horses of the Egyptians are flesh, and not spirit;" that is, they are weak; a spirit is strong. So much spirit as we have, so much strength. So, by the purity and strength of the Divine nature, CHRIST discovered himself to be true GOD, as well as true man: and this was in the time of his abasement. In the greatest extremity of his abasement, there was somewhat that came from CHRIST to justify him that he was the Son of GOD, the true Messias. There is no part of his abasement but some beams of his Godhead did break forth in it.

CHRIST was made flesh; but he took upon him the flesh of a virgin; could that be otherwise than by the Spirit, to be born of a virgin, she remaining a virgin When he was born he was laid in a manger. Indeed, there was God in the low estate of the flesh. Yea, but the wise men worshipped him, and the star directed them: there he was justified in the Spirit. He was tossed when he was asleept in the shi p, but he commanded the winds and the waves. He wanted money to pay tribute, as he was abased; but to fetch it out of a fish, there he was justified. The one was an argument of his poverty and meanness; but the other was an argument that he was another manner of person than the world took him for: that he had all the creatures at his command. He was apprehended as a malefactor; but he struck them all down with his word, "Whom seek ye"

Let us come to the greatest abasement: when he was on the cross, he hung between two thieves; yea, but he converted one of them. When the thief had so much discouragement to see his Savior hang on the cross, yet he sheaved such power in that abasement, that the very thief could see him to be a King, and was converted by his Spirit. He hung upon the cross; but at the same time there was such an eclipse that the whole world was darkened, the earth trembled, the rocks brake, the centurion justified him; " Doubtless this was the Son of God." Nay, at the lowest degree of abasement of all, when he struggled with the wrath of GOD, and was beset with devils, he triumphed. When he was visibly overcome, he then invisibly overcame. He was an invisible Conqueror, when he was visibly subdued. Did he not on the cross satisfy the wrath of GOD, and by enduring the wrath of GOD, free us from it and from SATAN, God's goaler, and reconcile us by his blood The chief works of all were wrought in his chief abasement. At length he died, and was buried: but he that died rose again gloriously; therefore he was mightily declared to be the Son of GOD, by raising himself from the (lead." That was the greatest abasement, when he lay in the grave; and especially then he was justified by his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory. So, if we go from CHRIST's birth, to his lowest degree of abasement, there was always some manifestation of his justification by the Spirit.

Now, CHRIST was justified in a double regard: 1. In regard of GOD, he was justified and cleared from our sins that he took up on hint. "I-He bore our sins upon the tree," and bore them away, that they should never appear again to our discomfort. He was made a "curse for us." But how came CHRIST to be cleared of our sins that lay upon him As by the Spirit, by his Divine nature, he saisid himself from the dead: so he was justified frank that which God laid upon him. He was our Surety. Now, the Spirit raising him from the dead showed that the debt was fully discharged, because our Surety was out of prison. All things are first in CHRIST, and then in us: he was acquitted and justified from our sins, and then we. 2. He was justified by the Spirit from all imputations of men; from the mis-conceits that the world had of him. They thought him to be a mere man, or a sinful man. Not so; he was more than a mere man: nay, he was more than a holy man; he was God-man. Whence were his miracles Were they not from his Divine power He overcame the devil in his temptations. Who can overcome the devil, but he that is the Son of GOD He cast out the devils, and dispossess them with his word. All the enemies of CHRIST that ever were, at length he conquered, and so "clecio ed himself mighty to be the Son of GOD." He healed the outward man and the inward man by his Divine power. He caused the spiritual as well as the bodily eyes to see; the dead to li ve, and the lame to walk. Whatsoever he did in the body, he did in the soul likewise. In those excellent miracles he was justified, and "declared to be the Son of GOD," especially in his resurrection and ascension, and daily converting of souls by his ministry; all being done by his Spirit, which is his vicar in the world, ruling his church, and subduing his enemies; so that he was every way "justified in the Spirit" to be GOD, to be the true Messias, prophesied of, and promised to the church. Therefore he was justified in his truth, that all the promises were true of him; and in his faithfulness, that he was faithful in performing the promises he made; he was

justified in his goodness and mercy, and all those attributes: thus he was justified in the Spirit."
He was seen, it is true; but he was seen with admiration and wonder. It implies the consequence of sight; sight stirs up affection, it stirs up the whole soul; therefore it is put for all the rest. They saw him with wonder. For, was it not a wonder that God should stoop so low as to be shut up in a virgin's womb? That CHRIST should humble himself so low as to be God in our flesh? Was not here exceeding wondrous love and mercy to mankind, to wretched man, having passed by the glorious angels that were fallen? And exceeding wisdom in God in satisfying his justice, that he might show mercy? It was matter of admiration to the angels to see the great God stoop so low, to be clothed in such a poor nature as man's. This doubtless is the meaning of the Holy Ghost; they saw it with admiration. And because CHRIST was thir' head, as the second Person, and they were creatures to attend upon him, therefore they so wondered at him as they attended upon CHRIST in all the passages of his humiliation and exaltation; in his life, in his death, in his resurrection and ascension. They saw him so as that they were witnesses of him to men; they gave testimony of him; so that it is a full word, in the intention of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, not only the angels, but all gave witness of him, from the highest heavens to hell itself; all witnessed CHRIST to be the true Messiah. In his baptism there was the Trinity; the Father, in a "voice from heaven," the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove." He had the witness of angels, of men of all ranks, Jews and gentiles, men and women; yea, the devils themselves oftentimes confessed him in the gospel. He was wit nessed of all ranks; they saw him, and gave evidence of him that he was the true Messiah. He was seen of angels. And they did not only see these things, but they wondered at the love, and mercy, and wisdom of GOD, in the head and members of the church, as we see in dice places; so, 1 Pet. 1: 12, "We preach the gospel, which things the angels desire to look into:" the very angels desire to pry and look with a admiration into the wondrous things of the gospel. So, in Ephes. 3: 10, "To the intent that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." There is somewhat done by CHRIST, by his incarnation, resurrection, and government of his church, that the very angels look into with wonder. They wonder at his wisdom in restoring mankind; and there is such a world of wonders in the government of the church, such manifold wisdom, that the very angels themselves look upon this with a admiration and great delight.

Now as CHRIST was seen and attended on by angels, so is the church of CHRIST. As the angels guarded and attended on him, so they guard and attend all that are his. For "are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. 1: 14. And they will not only be our attendants for a while, and then leave us, but they will continue to be so for ever. For, so long as the church has any relation to CHRIST, so long the angels shall respect the church. But the church has relation to CHRIST for ever; therefore the blessed angels shall have respect to CHRIST and the church for ever. You should observe that the angels have a double office; a superior office, and an inferior; and as the superior office is to attend upon GOD, to serve God and CHRIST, to minister to our Head; so the inferior is to attend his church, and to conflict with the evil angels that are about us continually. It is good for us to know our prerogatives, our privileges, and our strength, not to make us proud, but to stir us up to thankfulness, and to a holy carriage answerable. It is a point not much thought on by the best of us all; we forget it, and betray our own comfort. SATAN abuses us, to make us forget the dignity and strength that we have; and hereby we dishonor God, and wrong ourselves; and we likewise wrong the holy angels for want of a due consideration of these things. Well, then, let us think of this so as to make a due use of it. It is necessary oftentimes to think what a degree God has raised us to, in JESUS CHRIST; that we have this glorious attendance upon us, wherever we are. A Christian is a more excellent creature than he thinks of; he is continually attended by angels. Indeed we do not see them, as they were seen in former times, before CHRIST's incarnation; because now, since CHRIST is come, the governent of CHRIST is spiritual, and we are not supported with those glorious manifestations; but they are about us in an invisible manner. We have Elisha's guard about us continually, though we see them not. CHRIST's angels are our angels; they are angels even of children, of little ones. Nay, let a man be never so poor, even as Lazarus, he
shall have the attendance of angels, in life and death. This should comfort us when all the world besides forsake us, and set themselves in array against us, that we have, as it were, the life-guards of heaven appointed of God to attend us, and that "more are they that are for us, than they that are against us." It should likewise move us to a reverent carriage at all times and in all places; and moreover beget in us a thankful heart, that God has vouchsafed so to honor such vile unworthy worms.

Preached to the Gentiles.

CHRIST our blessed Savior, being the King of his church, it was not sufficient that he was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit; that is, declared by his Divine power, to be God; but he must have his nobles to acknowledge this too. Kings in their inaugurations, not only make good their own title, but they would have others acknowledge it; therefore it is said CHRIST was seen of angels, those noble and glorious creatures. But not only the greatest of the kingdom, but likewise the meaner subjects must know their king; there must be a proclamation to them, to Know who is to rule over them. Therefore, CHRIST being a general king, there must be a general publication of him all the world over; he must be "preached to the Gentiles."

To unfold the point a little, I will show, 1. What it is to preach. 2. What it is to preach CHRIST. And 3. What it is to preach CHRIST to the Gentiles.

1. To preach, is to open the mystery of CHRIST; to open whatsoever is in CHRIST; to eak open the box, that the savour may be perceived of all; in a word, to open CHRIST's natures, and person, what it is. To open the offices of CHRIST; first he was a prophet to teach, wherefore he came into the world. Then he was a priest, offering the sacrifice of himself; and then, after he had offered his sacrifice, he was a King; he was more publicly, and more gloriously known to be a King to rule. After he had gained a people by his priesthood and offering, then he was to be a King to govern them.

2. To preach CHRIST, is to lay open these things: and not only that, but likewise the states wherein he executed his office. First, the state of humiliation: CHRIST was first abased, and then glorified. The flesh he took upon him was first sanctified, and then abased; and then he made it glorious flesh. He could not work our salvation, but in a state of abasement; he could not apply it to us, but in a state of glory. So then, to preach CHRIST, is to open the merits of CHRIST, what he has wrought to his Father for us; to open his efficacy, as the spiritual Head of the church; what wonders he works in his children, by altering and raising of them, by fitting and preparing them for heaven; likewise to open all the promises in CHRIST, which are but CHRIST parcelled out. "All the promises in CHRIST are yea and amen." They are made for CHRIST's sake, and per-formed for CHRIST's sake; they are all but CHRIST, severed into so many particular gracious blessings. To preach CHRIST, is to lay open all these things, which are the inheritance of God's people. But it is not sufficient in preaching CHRIST, to lay open all these in the view of others; but in the opening of them there must be application of them to the use of God's people, that they may see their interest in them; and there must be an alluring of them. The preachers are the friends of the Bridegroom, that are to procure the marriage between CHRIST and his church. Therefore, they are not only to lay open the riches of the husband, but likewise to entreat for a marriage, and to use all the gifts and parts that God has given them, to bring CHRIST and his church together.

And because people by nature are is a contrary state to CHRIST; to preach CHRIST, is to begin with the law, to discover to people their state by nature. A man can never preach the gospel, that makes not way for it, by showing and convincing people what they are out of CHRIST. That he must he had, or else they die eternally. Now when people are convinced of this, then they get out of themselves to CHRIST. This therefore must be done, because it is that which makes way for the preaching of CHRIST; for, "a full stomach defiles an honey-comb." Who cares for balm, that is not sick? Who cares for CHRIST, that sees not the necessity of him? Therefore we see John the Baptist came before CHRIST, to make way for him; to level the mountains; to cast down whatsoever exalted itself in man. He that is to preach, must discern what mountains there are between men's hearts and CHRIST; and he must labor to lay flat all the pride of men in the dust. After this, the gospel is to be promulgated in this sweet manner; "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: and be not conformed to this world; but ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The law comes with cursed, cursed; but now in the gospel, CHRIST is preached with sweet alluring; "We as ambassadors, as if God by us did beseech you, pray you in CHRIST's stead, be reconciled to God." This is the manner of the dispensation in the gospel, even to beg of people that they would be good to their own souls. CHRIST, as it were, becomes a beggar...
himself; and the great God of heaven and earth begs our love, that we would so care for our own souls that we would be reconciled to him. It was fitter indeed we should beg of him; it was fit we should seek to be reconciled to him. But God so stoops in the dispensation of the gospel, that he becomes a suitor to us to be good to our own souls. As if he had offended us, he desires us to be reconciled. The wrong is done on our part, yet he so far transcends the doubtings of man’s nature, that he would have nothing to cause man’s heart to misgive, no doubts nor scruples to arise; he himself becomes a beseecher of reconciliation, as if he were the party that had offended.

Now this preaching is that whereby God dispenseth salvation and grace ordinarily; and he in wisdom sees it the fittest way to dispense his grace to men by men, in order to try our obedience to the truth itself. He would have men regard the things spoken, not for the person that speaks them, but for the excellency of the things. If some glorious creatures, as the angels, should preach to us, we should regard the excellency of the preachers more than the truth itself; we should believe the truth for the messengers’ sake. And again, God would knit man to man by bands of love; now there is a relation between pastor and people, by this ordinance of God. Moreover, the preaching of men is more suitable to our

condition. We could not bear to hear God speak, or any more excellent creature. And God magnifies his power the more, in blessing these weak means. Likewise it is more proportionable to our weakness, to have men, that speak out of experience from themselves, to preach the gospel, that they have felt the comfort of themselves; it works the more upon us. Therefore those that first preached the gospel were such as had first felt the sweetness of it themselves.

But some are ready to say, “Cannot I as well read privately at home?” Yes; but the use of private exercises, with contempt of the public, have a curse upon them, instead of a blessing. It is with such men as with those that gathered manna, when they should not; it stank, has God setup an ordinance for nothing For us to despise is not he wiser, to know what is good for us better than we do ourself. God accompanies his ordinance with the presence of his blessed Spirit. The truth read at home has an efficacy; but the truth unfolded has more. As we say of milk warmed, it is fitter for nourishment; and the rain from heaven has a fatness with it, and a special influence upon men, more than other standing waters. So that life, operation, and blessing, do not accompany other means, that accompany preaching; that be ing the ordinary means, where they may be had. Others perhaps may object, “Preaching is only for the laying the foundation of a church; it is not for a church when it is built: then, other helps; as prayer and the like, without this, may suffice.” But I say, those that have such conceits make themselves wiser than the Spirit of God. We learn from St. Paul, that “CHRIST, when he ascended on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men, some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the edifying and building up of the church,” Ephes. 4: 8, 11, 12. So that this ordinance is necessary for building up still; and for the knitting of the members of CHRIST together still: therefore that is a vain excuse.

Oh! but they cry, “What needs so much preaching. Less would suffice.” Thus some people come to despise this heavenly manna; but those that are acquainted with their own infirmities, think it a happiness to have plenty. For, we are dull, we are forgetful, we are unmindful; though we know, we do not remember; and though we remember, yet we do not lay things to heart and practice them. We are not only weak, and therefore we need all spiritual supports and helps that may be. The more we hear and know, the fitter we are for doing and suffering. Our souls are fitter for communion with GOD, for all affairs both of life and death. Therefore we cannot have too much care this way. Others object, that they know it well enough; and therefore they need not be taught. Let such know, that the Word of God preached, is not altogether to teach us, but (the Spirit going with it) to work grace, necessary to strengthen us in the inward man.” And those that say they know it enough, deceive themselves; they know it not. Religion is a mystery; and can it be learned at the first? There is no mystery but what requires many years to learn; and is religion, and the depths of it, learned so soon? Not ordinarily. There is a mystery in every grace, (in repentance, in faith, in patience,) that no man knows but those that have those graces. Let us therefore set a price upon God’s ordinance. There must be this dispensation: CHRIST must be preached. Preaching is the chariot that carries CHRIST up and down the world. The ordinance of preaching is a gift of all gifts. God esteems it so, CHRIST esteems it so, and so should we esteem it. So then there must be much preaching, and this preaching must be of CHRIST.

But, “What (say some) must nothing be preached but CHRIST” I answer, Nothing but CHRIST, or that which tends to CHRIST. If we preach threatenings, it is to cast men down, that we may raise them up; as, if a physician purge, it is that he may give cordials. Whatsoever is done in preaching to humble men, it is to raise them up again in CHRIST; all make way for CHRIST.

When men are dejected by the law, we must not leave them there, but raise them up again. Whatever we preach, it may be reduced to CHRIST, that men may walk worthy of CHRIST. When men have been taught CHRIST, they must be taught to “walk worthy of CHRIST, and of their calling,” that they may carry themselves fruitfully, holy, and constantly, every way suitable for so glorious a profession. The foundation of all duties must be from CHRIST; and the reasons and motives of a Christian’s conversation, the prevailing reasons of an holy life, must be fetched from CHRIST, and from the state that CHRIST has advanced us unto. So then CHRIST alone must be preached. But to whom To the Gentiles.
3. To preach CHRIST to the Gentiles is to publish to them the glad tidings of salvation through CHRIST: to declare to them all that is contained in the preaching of CHRIST: to declare him "a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel." It is not to be imagined in what misery the poor Gentiles were before the coming of CHRIST, except some few proselytes that joined themselves to the Jewish church; for the Gentiles worshipped devils. What were all their gods but devils? They were under the kingdom of SATAN, when the gospel came to be preached among them. They were translated out of the kingdom of SATAN into the blessed and glorious kingdom of CHRIST. Yet we see here, notwithstanding they were such kind of people, the mystery of the gospel is preached to them, even to the Gentiles: a mystery of mercy and grace! But this is not enough; upon proclamation of CHRIST, there must be homage of all those that he is proclaimed king to; therefore it follows.

Believed on in the world.

This point follows the other foregoing by a necessary order. For, preaching goes before faith; faith is the fruit of preaching. CHRIST is first preached to the Gentiles, and then believed on in the world. That is, the world must submit, and give homage to CHRIST, as the Savior of the world, as the mediator between God and men. The points considerable here are these: 1. That there must be a dispensation of salvation wrought by CHRIST, unto others. It is not sufficient, that salvation was wrought by "CHRIST manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit," but this salvation must be published and dispensed to others. Therefore he says, "Preached to the Gentiles." 2. That this publication and preaching must be of CHRIST: CHRIST must be published to the Gentiles; that is, to all. The church is enlarged since the coming of CHRIST. And, 3. The fruit of this preaching, CHRIST being thus dispensed to the Gentiles, the world believes.

There must be a dispensation of CHRIST. The equity of this may be seen even from things among men. It is not sufficient that physic be provided; but there must be an application of it. It was not sufficient, that there was a brazen serpent; but, the brazen serpent must be lifted up, that the people might see it. It is not sufficient that there is a standard; but the standard must be set up. It is not sufficient that there be a foundation; but there must be a building upon the foundation. Therefore there must be a dispensation of the mysteries of CHRIST. Here let us observe, that there are several degrees of the dispensation of salvation. There is, 1. The ordaining of salvation; that was before all worlds. 2. The promise of salvation; that was when Adam fell. 3. The procuring of salvation promised; that was by CHRIST, when he came in the flesh. 4. The promulgation and enlarging of salvation to all people; this was after CHRIST was come in the flesh. 5. The perfect consummation of salvation; that is in heaven. Now the execution of the promise, and the enlargement of it to all nations, was reserved to CHRIST's coming in the flesh. I do but touch this, to show that God has had a special care of this latter age of the world. Some account the first age of the world to be a golden age; but, indeed, we may invert the order; we live in the golden age, the last ages, when CHRIST was manifested. What is the glory of times and places? The manifestation of CHRIST. The more CHRIST is laid open with his unsearchable riches, the more God glorifies those times and places. And that is the golden age wherein the gospel is preached.

Let us labor then to value this inestimable benefit. Where the gospel is not preached, there the places are salt-pits, despicable places. Whatsoever they are else, they are under the kingdom of SATAN. It is the glory of a nation, to have the truth among them. The glory of Israel was gone, when the ark was taken: the religion and truth we enjoy is our ark; our glory is gone, if we part with that. Therefore, whatsoever God takes from us, let us desire that he would still continue the gospel of truth; that he would still vouchsafe to dwell among us, and not leave us. What were all things in the world besides, if we had not the blessed truth of God? We must leave all ere long. Therefore let us labor to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened, to conceive aright of the difference of things, and to value ours elves by this.
that CHRIST is manifested to us; and that we have an interest in CHRIST, more than by any portion in the world besides. For, then CHRIST will delight to be with us still, when we esteem, and prize, and value him.

Observe, after preached to the Gentiles, the apostle joins, Believed on in the world; to show that faith comes by hearing. Indeed, preaching is the ordinance of GOD, sanctified for the begetting of faith, for the opening of the understanding, for the drawing of the will and affections to CHRIST. Faith is the marriage of the soul to CHRIST. Now in marriage, there must not be a mistake and error in the person; therefore, that the person to whom we are to be married by faith, may be known to us, there is an ordinance of preaching set up, to lay open our own necessity, what we are without him, and to open the riches of our husband; whatsoever is glorious in CHRIST. " How shall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe without a preacher? We cannot have the spirit of prayer, with out faith; nor faith, without preaching. And the wise man says, "He that turns his ear from hearing the law," (under what pretence soever,) "his prayer shall be abominable."

In the ministry of the gospel there is not only an unfolding of the excellent things of CHRIST, but there is grace given by the Spirit to believe. And herein this publication differs from all others. Men may publish what they would have, but they cannot give hear ts to believe it. But in the blessed publishing of Divine truth, there is the Spirit of God accompanying it, to work what it publisheth. It opens the riches of CHRIST, and offers CHRIST, and CHRIST is given to the heart with it. It publisheth what is to be believed and known, and toge ther with it, there goes a power to do all. Therefore it is called the ministry of the Spirit; because what is published in the preaching of the Word, to those that belong to GOD, is accompanied by the Spirit to convey it to the soul. Therefore he says here, first preached, and then believed. We see here, that as CHRIST must be unfolded in preaching, so he must be believed on. We must rest upon no other thing, either in ourselves, or out of ourselves, but CHRIST only. And a whole CHRIST must be received. For believing is nothing but a receiving of CHRIST as a Lord and as a Savior; as a priest, to redeem us by his blood; as a prophet, to teach us; and as a king, to govern us.

But what manner of faith do we see in most men, that is not out of CHRIST what they list, to serve their own turn. As he died for their sins, so they are glad of him; but as he is a Lord and King, to rule and govern them, so they will have none of him; but, " turn the grace of GOD into wantonness." But, as we must rest and rely on CHRIST only, so we must receive him, and believe on him wholly. Faith looks upon CHRIST, as the main object of it, as it justifieth; but the same faith looks upon the whole Word of GOD, as truth revealed. It believes all Divine truths; all the threatenings and precepts of God. Faith chooseth not its object, to believe what it lists; but it carrieth the soul to all revealed truths. But, when we speak of justifying faith; then CHRIST, with the promises, and the mercy of God in CHRIST, is the first thing that the soul looks unto. CHRIST is the first object of faith, before any benefit or gift that we have from him. We must receive CHRIST, before we have any grace or strength from him. And a sanctified soul looks first to CHRIST, to the love of CHRIST, to the person of CHRIST, and then to his goods and riches. As a woman that is married regards first the person of her husband, and then looks to the enjoyment of his goods and inheritance; so faith looks to the person first. It knits us to CHRIST, to be in love with, and to embrace him; and then it looks to all the good things we have by him. for he cleaver comes alone; there is a world of good things in him; all that tends to grace and glory. Therefore, we that are ministers of the gospel, should especially look to unfold the riches of CHRIST; and those that are God's people, should especially desire to have CHRIST unfolded, and the riches of God's love in CHRIST. The soul that ever found the sting of sin, accounts nothing so sweet, as those things that concern its Husband and Savior. A carnal man loves to hear moral points, and glory. Therefore, we that are ministers of the gospel, should especially look to unfold the riches of GOD, more than by any portion in the world besides. For, then CHRIST should be believed on in the world. " Great is the mystery of godliness," CHRIST " believed on in the world." To join these together, the world, and believing, is almost as great a mystery, as to join God and man together. To bring an unbelieving, rebellious heart and believing together, is a great mystery, in divers considerations. First, if we consider what the world was; an enemy to CHRIST; and being so, slaves to Satan, idolaters, in love with their own inventions, which men naturally dote on. Here was the wonder of God's love, that he should vouchsafe it to such wretches; that the world, that is, all sorts of the world, from the highest to the lowest, should at length be brought to stoop to the cross of CHRIST. It was a mystery, that the world should believe; if we consider the inward malicious disposition of the world. Being in the strong man's possession, for these men to believe the gospel, sure it must needs a great mystery. Again, if we consider the parties that carried the gospel, where-by the world was subdued; a company of unlearned men, none of the deepest for knowledge; only they had the Holy Ghost, to teach and instruct them, which the world took no notice of, men of mean condition, of mean esteem, and few in number. And these men came not with weapons, or outward defense, but merely with the Word, and with sufferings. Their weapons were nothing but patience and preaching; offering the Word of CHRIST to infidels, and suffering their indignities. The world was not over come by fighting, but by suffering. So the lambs overcame the lions, the doves overcame the birds of prey, the sheep overcame the wolves. So meanness overcame greatness, ignorance overcame learning, simplicity overcame pride, baseness overcame glory. Again, if we consider the truth they taught; being contrary to the nature of man, contrary to his affections. What a kind of doctrine was this, to win such entertainment in the world as it did Such as made men deny themselves, deny their wits, their wills, their goods, their lives. Therefore, in this respect, it was a great mystery, that CHRIST should be believed on in the world. " Again, if we consider another circumstance, it adds to the mystery, that is, the suddenness of the conquest. In a short time after CHRIST, one man, St. Paul, spread the gospel almost all the world over. He conquered almost all the world. He spread the savour of the gospel like lightning, suddenly and strongly; because there was an almighty power and Spirit accompanying the glorious gospel. And thereupon it came to be thus effectual with the world.
The next thing I will touch shall be, that faith is put here for all graces. In these six clauses of this great mystery of godliness, there is only this one that is within us: " God manifests in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, received up into glory;" these are all without us: but this one, "believed on in the world," only is within us, and it is set down instead of all. For it draws all other graces after it; it enlivens and quickens the soul; it is the spring of spiritual life; it is the first grace of all. There are some degrees of the Spirit, perhaps, before it, but all graces have their quickening from faith; it infuses supernatural vigor into all the parts and powers of the soul; and into all graces whatsoever. Where CHRIST is "believed on in the world," all follows: love, patience, fortitude, and all other graces come from faith. Faith fetcheth spiritual life from CHRIST; it insures to us all whatsoever is good, it knits us to the spring of life, CHRIST; it is the grace of union. Even as SATAN, by unbelief, did infuse all his poison at the first; (for, by making our first parents stagger at the Word of GOD, came sin,) so by faith all obedience comes; all have their rising and beginning from faith. Let us labor by all means, therefore, to water this root. When we would have trees flourish, we pour water on the roots of them. Now the radical grace in a Christian's soul, is this believing; this relying upon CHRIST; a convincing persuasion, that GOD and CHRIST are mine. This is the radical grace of all others. Let us therefore water and cherish it by all means whatsoever. And to this end, let us desire to hear much of CHRIST, of his privileges, and promises; for the more of CHRIST we know, the more we shall believe.

Faith of necessity requires knowledge; therefore knowledge is put, for all other graces. "This is eternal life, to know thee, and JESUS CHRIST whom you have sent," John 17:3; and because it is an ingredient in all graces, it is a main ingredient in faith. The more we know, the more we shall believe; "They that know thy name, will trust in thee." Is it not so in human affairs? The more we know a man to be able, and loving, and faithful to his word, the more we shall trust him. Is it not so in Divine things? The more we know of CHRIST, of his riches and truth, the more experimental knowledge we have of him, the more we shall trust him. Therefore, by the knowledge that is gotten by the means, let us labor for an experimental knowledge, that so we may trust and believe in him more and more. Let us look to the passages of our lives in former times, how gracious God has been towards us; and let us search into the depth of our own wants and weaknesses, and this will force us to grow in faith more and more. The more we see of our own inability, without CHRIST, the more we shall cleave to him, and cast ourselves upon him. Those that have the deepest apprehensions of their own wants and weaknesses, usually have the deepest apprehensions of CHRIST, and grow more and more rooted in him. The searching of our own corruptions every day is a notable means to grow in faith; to consider what we should be, if it were not for God's mercy in CHRIST; and this will make us flee to the city of refuge. A search into our own conscience and ways will force us to live by faith, and to exercise faith every day in CHRIST JESUS. And this is to feed on CHRIST daily; to fly to CHRIST when we are stunned with sin and hunger; in the want of grace and strength to fly to him for a supply; and so to keep and increase faith. CHRIST is all in all to those that hope to be saved by him; CHRIST is the ground of our life, our comfort and happiness. Therefore we should make him to our friend and helper upon all occasions, and cleave to him in life and death. We cannot press this point of faith too much. Why are Christians called believers? Because believing is all. If we can prove the truth of our faith and belief, we pro ve all; if we be faulty in that, all is bad; " Whatsoever is without faith, is sin." All men's natural morality and civility are but counterfeits; they are not enlivened by faith in CHRIST. But I leave this, and come to the last clause.

Received up into glory.

This is the last branch of this divine mystery of godliness, but it is none of the least. CHRIST ascended, if we respect himself. He was received, if we look to his Father. Himself ascended, his Father received him. The apostle begins with, God manifest in the flesh; there is the descent: a great mystery! for the great God to descend into the womb of a virgin; to descend to the lowest parts of the earth! And then he ends with this, Received up into glory. The ascent is from whence the descent was. CHRIST ascended, and was received as high as the place was whence he came down. God manifest in the flesh, that is the beginning of all; received up to glory, that is the consummation of all. It implies his exaltation, his resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at the right hand of GOD, and his coming to judge the quick and the dead; but especially it means his glory after his resurrection, his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God. Glory implies an exemption from that which is opposite, a base condition; some great eminency and excellency, and a manifestation thereof. Though there be excellency, if there be not a manifestation of that excellency, it is not glory. CHRIST was inwardly glorious while he was on earth. He had true glory, but there was not a manifestation of it, and therefore it is not properly called glory; there was not a victory, and subduing of all that was contrary to his glory; for he was abased, suffered, and died. But after he was manifest in the flesh, and had done the work that he had to do, he was received up to glory; that is, his glory appearing, all abasement vanished; he was victorious over that.

The first degree of CHRIST's glory was in his resurrection. The clothes that he was bound with were left in the grave, the stone was removed; all things that might hinder his glory, that might abase him in body, in soul or condition, were removed. There was an excellency in all, that was before, in regard of manifestation. For his body; it was now an immortal, spiritual body; it could suffer no longer; it was not fed with meat and drink; it was so nimble, that he could move even as he would himself: so there was a glory put upon his body above the sun. There was a glory upon the soul; all that might hinder that, was subdued; for there was no sorrow, no fear, no grief, as there was in his soul before he was glorified: so both in body and soul he was more glorious. And then for his whole condition, that was glorious; he was
abased no longer; for now he was taken into the highest place of all, above the heavens. And as his place, so his government is most eminent; for he is "above all principalties and powers," and is gloriously "set down at the right hand of God." All being subject to him, he has the government of all. No person can be glorious, but either in body, or soul, or condition; CHRIST was glorious in all. For he was received up into the place of glory, to heaven, to the assembly of glory, to the presence of his Father, and the blessed saints and angels; and there is no question but there was a glorious welcome. If the angels came so cheerfully to proclaim his incarnation when he was born, and sang, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men;" what kind of triumph, do you think, was made by all the blessed company in heaven, when he was received thither, after his abasement 

And that this is a mystery, will easily appear. For was it a great mystery, that God should take our nature upon him? Surely then it must needs be a mystery, that God would be glorified in our nature. Was our nature advanced in his incarnation Much more was it glorified in his exaltation. Here was the mystery of the exaltation of our nature: God was as much abased as he could be, being born, and dying for us; our human nature was as much advanced as it could be, when God raised it up to heaven. God could be no more abased, remaining God; and man's nature can be no more advanced, remaining the true nature of man.

In this glorious condition into which CHRIST is received, he fulfils all his offices in a most comfortable manner. He is a glorious prophet, to send his Spirit to teach, and to open the heart; he is a glorious priest, to appear before GOD, in the holy of holies, in heaven for us, for ever; and he is a king there for ever, and from thence he rules his church, and subdues his enemies. So that, though he fulfilled those blessed offices in his state of humiliation on earth, as it became him in that state to suffer for us; yet it was necessary that he should enter into glory, to manifest that he was a King, Priest, and Prophet. For he was not manifested who he was indeed, till he was received up into glory. Till he ascended, we had not the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, sent from above, to apply, and to help us to make use of CHRIST; and all his benefits and riches; as it is said, John 7:39, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that JESUS was not yet glorified." So that, in regard of the manifestation of CHRIST's offices, and of the application of all the good we have by it, it is by CHRIST received up into glory. To come to some application.

First we must lay this for a foundation of what follows, that CHRIST ascended as a public person. He must not be considered as a particular person, but as the second Adam. As he took the nature of man in his incarnation; so he ascended into heaven in it, as a public person. As the first Adam was, so was CHRIST; and as in other things, so in his ascension to glory. In the second place, we must know that there is a wondrous nearness between CHRIST and us now. For, before we can think of any comfort by the glory of CHRIST, we must be one with him by faith; for "he is the Savior of his body;" there fore we must be his members; and being so, we are one with CHRIST. There is no relation in the world that is able to express the nearness between CHRIST and us; and therefore, when we speak of CHRIST ascended into glory, we must needs think of ourselves, and of our glory and advancement. He was taken up to glory in our nature, not only for himself, but for all his. As the husband of the church, he is gone before to take possession of heaven for his spouse. As a husband takes up land in another country for his spouse, though she be not there; so CHRIST has taken up heaven for us: "I go before, to prepare a place for you." And likewise he is in heaven as a glorious head, ministering virtue, comfort, and strength to us. All our power and strength comes from CHRIST now, as our head in heaven. And then we must consider CHRIST not only as an efficient cause, but as a pattern, how we shall be glorified; for all is first in him, and then in us. He was first abased, and so must we: and then he was glorified, and so shall we: we must be conform-able to his abasement, and then to his glory. "He is the first fruits of them that slept," he being the first fruits, we succeed. These things being premised as grounds, I come to make some use of this comfortable point.

When we have to deal with God the Father, whom we have offended with our sins, let us fetch comfort, amidst all our sins and infirmities, from hence; CHRIST is ascended into heaven, to appear before his Father as a Mediator for us, and therefore GOD turns away his wrath from us. We have a friend, a favorite in the court of heaven, the Son of God himself; at his Father's right hand, makes intercession for us. And there is no danger of his death; for "he is a priest for ever at the right hand of God." His very presenting himself in heaven speaks for us. As if he should say, "These persons that ask in my name, are such as I was born for, such as I died for, such as I was sent into the world to work the great work of redemption for." He wrought our redemption in his abased estate; but he applies it as he is exalted: for that end he appears in heaven for us, and pleads for us. For even as there is a speech attributed to Abel's blood, it crying, "Vengeance, vengeance," so CHRIST appearing in heaven for us, his blood cries, "Mercy, mercy; these are those shed my blood for: Mercy, Lord." The very appearing of him that shed his blood, cries for mercy at the throne of mercy; which is therefore a throne of mercy because he is there. He shed his blood to satisfy justice, to make way for mercy. Therefore, when we have to deal with GOD, think of CHRIST, now glorious in heaven, appearing for us. God can deny him nothing, nor deny us any thing that we ask in his name: we have his promise for it.

This is a ground likewise of contentment in all conditions, whatsoever our wants be. What though we want comforts on earth, when we have heaven provided for us? Shall not any condition content a man in this world, that has such a glorious condition to enter into? We should not so much as look up to heaven without comfort. We should say, "Yonder is my Savior, yonder is a house provided for me;" we should think and look upon heaven as our own place, whither CHRIST is gone before, and keeps a room for us. Likewise, when we think of the troubles of this world, of the enemies we have here, think of CHRIST taken up to glory, and think of CHRIST's order; first, he suffered, and then he entered into glory; so we must be content to suffer first, and then be glorious. CHRIST entered into glory in this order, and shall we think to come to heaven in another order than CHRIST did? If we are in CHRIST, all that we suffer in this world are sufferings of the
conformity, to make us suitable to our Head, and to fit us for glory. And our greatest abasements, what are they to the abasement of CHRIST? None was ever so low, and there is none so high. As he was the lowest in abasement, so he is the highest in glory. When he was at the lowest, in the grave, not only dead, but under the kingdom of death; then he rose gloriously, and ascended. So our lowest abasements are fore-runners of our highest advancement and glory.

And let this stir us up also to stand for CHRIST and the church, and not to be ashamed of religion: “He not ashamed to be called our brother;” no, not after his resurrection: “Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father.” He was not ashamed of it when he began to be in the state of glory. He is not ashamed of our nature now, having taken it up into heaven: he is not ashamed to own us here, and will not be ashamed at the day of judgment, to set us at his right hand. And shall we, for fear of men, for any earthly respect, be ashamed of our glorious head? Do we believe that we have a head that is glorious in heaven, “sitting at the right hand of GOD,” that ere long will come to “judge the quick and the dead;” and shall we be ashamed for a s corn, for a word, for a frown? Where is the Spirit of glory, the Spirit that should be in Christians that hope to be glorious? “He that is ashamed of me here,” says CHRIST, “I will be as ashamed of him at that day.” How can we think that CHRIST will own us, when we will not own his religion here? When we are ashamed to stand for him, shall we think to stand at his right hand? All base spirits, that are afraid of disgrace, of displeasure, of loss, of any thing but of him they should be afraid of; let them know there is no comfort for them in CHRIST’s exaltation: for if they had any communion with CHRIST, he would infuse another manner of spirit into them. Let us therefore stand for CHRIST; we have a glorious head, a glorious hope, a glorious inheritance. And let us go on with encouragement in good duties, with a spirit of faith. For, wherefore is CHRIST in heaven, but to rule his church by his Spirit; “to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men”? Let us therefore go on with confidence that CHRIST in heaven will give us his Spirit to subdue our corruptions. He is in heaven, to rule his church; and what is his kingdom, but the subduing of our spirits by his Spirit, to be more humble, and more holy and gracious every way? Let us not think that our corruptions will be too hard for us, but go on in a spirit of faith that CHRIST, who died for us as a priest, will rule us as a king. Let us not despair; though we carry corruption about us, we shall overcome all. He will “lead captivity captive,” and overcome all in us, as he did in his own person. He that overcame for us, will overcome in us, if there be a spirit of faith to depend upon him.

Again, the mystery of CHRIST’s glory tends to godliness, to stir us up to heavenly-mindedness. The apostle divinely enforces this, Colossians 3:1, “If ye be risen with CHRIST, seek the things that are above.” From our communion with CHRIST, rising and ascending into heaven, and sitting there in glory, he enforced heavenly-mindedness; that our thoughts should be where our glory is, where our head and husband is; and certainly there is nothing in the world more strong to enforce an heavenly mind than this. CHRIST, our head and husband, is taken up into glory; there is our inheritance, there are the great many of our brethren, there is our country, there is our happiness. We are for heaven, and not for this world. This life is but a passage to that glory that CHRIST has taken possession of for us; and therefore, why should we have our minds grovelling here upon earth? Certainly, if we have an interest in CHRIST, who is in “glory at the right hand of GOD,” it is impossible but our souls will be raised to heaven in our affections, before we are there in our bodies. All that are Christians are in heaven in their spirits and conversation beforehand. Our dull earthly souls, being touched by his Spirit, ascend up. The iron, when it is touched with the loadstone, follows it, ascends up to it. If our hearts were as heavy as iron, if we have communion with CHRIST, and have our hearts once touched by his Spirit, this meditation, that CHRIST our head is in glory, and that our happiness is there, will purge and refine us from our earthliness, and draw up our iron, heavy, cold hearts to heaven, whether CHRIST is ascended. And it is not only meditation of these things, that will cause us to be heavenly-minded, but CHRIST, as a head of influence in heaven, conveys spiritual life to draw us up. When I am ascended, I will draw all men after me.” There is a virtue from CHRIST that does it; there is an influence issuing from CHRIST our head, to make us heavenly-minded indeed.

To conclude all, as the soul of man is first sinful, and then sanctified: first humble, and then raised; so our meditations of CHRIST must be in this order: first, think of CHRIST as abased and crucified, (for the first comfort that the soul has is in CHRIST “manifested in the flesh,” before it come to be “received up into glory.”) Let us have recourse to CHRIST in the womb of the virgin; to CHRIST born, and lying in the manger; going up and down doing good; hungering and thirsting, suffering in the garden, sweating water and blood, nailed on the cross, crying to his Father, “My GOD, my GOD, why has you forsaken me?” finishing all upon the cross, lying three days in the grave; and all for us, to expiate our sin; to satisfy for our disobedience; and then think of hire exalted at the right hand of God. Oh! here will be comfortable thoughts for a wounded soul, pierced with the sense of sin, assaulted by SATAN: to think thus of CHRIST, abased for our sins; and then to think of him taken up into glory. I say, in this order we shall have comfortable thoughts of CHRIST. But to think of his glory in the first place, would dazzle our eyes. It would terrify us, being sinners, to think first of his glory, being now ascended; but when we think of him as descended first, we can bear the sight, and it, will afford much consolation. Who is this that is taken up into glory? Is it not he that was “manifest in our flesh” before? This will be comfortable. Therefore, let us first begin with CHRIST’s abasement, and then we shall have comfortable thoughts of his exaltation.

These points are the main grounds of religion; having an influence on our lives and conversations above all others. Other points have their life and vigor from these grand mysteries, which are the food of the soul. Therefore, let us often feed our thoughts with the sweet things of CHRIST’s abasement and glory; considering him in both, as a public person, the second Adam, and our Surety; and then labor to have virtue from him, fitting us in body and soul for such a condition. The very meditation of these things will put a glory upon our souls; and the believing them will transform us from glory to glory.
THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

CELEBRATED BY ANGELS. LUKE 2: 13, 14.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of that heavenly host praising GOD, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.

THE words are few and pregnant; very precious, having much excellency in a little quantity. The heavens never opened but to great purpose. When God opens his mouth, it is for some special end; and when the angels appeared, it was upon some extraordinary occasion. This was the most glorious appearance that ever was, setting aside that which was at CHRIST's baptism; when all the Trinity appeared; when the heavens opened, and the Father spoke, and the Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove, upon the head of CHRIST. But there was never such an appearance of angels as at this time; and there was great cause. For there was never such a ground for it, whether we regard the matter itself, the incarnation of CHRIST, such a thing as never was from the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be in this world; for God took man's nature on him, the Creator became a creature: or whether we regard the benefit that comes to us thereby; for CHRIST by this means brings God and man together since the fall.

CHRIST is the accomplishment of all the prophecies, of all the promises; they were made in him and for him; therefore he was the expectation of the gentiles. Before he was born, he was revealed by degrees: first, generally, that he should be "the Seed of the woman;" then more particularly to Abraham, that he should be his seed; then he is limited to one tribe, Judah, that he should come of that; then to one family, the house of David; and then more particularly it was foretold, "a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son;" then the place is pointed out, Bethlehem; at last, when he came, John the Baptist pointed him out with the finger, "Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world." Even as after midnight the sun grows up by little and little, till his beams strike forth in the morning, and after appear in glory; so it was with the "Sun of Righteousness;" as he came nearer, so he discovered himself more gloriously by degrees, till he was born indeed; and then you see a multitude of angels celebrate his nativity.

Now, as before his birth he was revealed by degrees, so, after his incarnation, he was revealed to all sorts; to the old, in Simeon; to women, in Anna, a prophetess; to wise men, and to simple shepherds; to all ranks of men. And to whomsoever the incarnation of CHRIST was revealed, they all entertained it with joy. The angels sang and praised GOD; Simeon was content then to die; Zacharias breaks forth, "Blessed be the God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people;" and the shepherds went away rejoicing. And although CHRIST lay in the manger, yet there were some circumstances that sheaved the greatness of his person: the wise men came and adored him, and an host of angels praised him.

In the former part of these words we may consider, 1. The apparition of angels. 2. To whom they appeared, poor shepherds. And, 3. The end of their appearing; to celebrate CHRIST's birth Now in that the angels appeared to poor simple shepherds, rather than to great and honorable men, we may learn, that God will confound the pride of men, - that set so much by that which God so little respects And in that the angels appeared to them in the midst of their business, "as they were keeping watch over their flock by night," we may observe, that God's people, (as Moses, and others,) have had the sweetest intercourse with God in their affairs. We many times meet with comfort in our callings, that otherwise we should never have. And in that they appeared to them in the night, We may learn, that God discovers himself in the night of affliction. Our sweetest and strongest comforts are in our greatest miseries. God's children find light in darkness; nay, God brings light out of darkness itself.
Now, this glorious apparition to the poor shepherds, as it served to confirm their faith then, so in them it serves to confirm ours now; for if one or two witnesses con-firm a thing, what shall a multitude do if one or two men confirm a truth, much more an host of heavenly angels. Therefore it is base infidelity to call this in question, that is confirmed by a multitude of angels. Again, such an apparition must needs be an unspeakable comfort to these poor men in their low condition. From whence we may observe by the way, that as for one Christian to confirm and comfort another in the ways of religion is the work of an angel, so for one man to discourage another is the work of a devil. I shall add no more here concerning the apparition, nor the persons to whom it was made, but proceed to the end of the angels appearing, which was to celebrate the birth of CHRIST. And here we will consider, first, the celebration itself: "There was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." The word translated praising, signifies also singing. It implies praise expressed in singing. The angels were joyful at the birth of Christ their Lord. Joy is no way better ex-pres sed than in praising God; and it is a pity that such a sweet affection as joy should run in any other stream. God has planted this affection in the creature, and it is fit he should reap the fruit of his own garden.

We will next consider the matter of their celebration and gratulation, which was this: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will towards men." First, the angels begin with the chief end of all, the glory of God; it is God's end, it was the angels' end, and it should be ours too. "Glory to God on high." Then they wish the chief good of all; that whereby we are fitted for this end, peace. God cannot be glorified on earth, unless there be peace wrought: for man else conceives God as an enemy. By this peace we are fitted to glorify God. If we find reconciliation with God through JESUS CHRIST, then the sense of God's love in the work of reconciliation will inflame our hearts to glorify God; therefore, next to the glory of God, they wish "peace on earth." Then, thirdly, here is the ground of all happiness, from whence this peace comes, from God's good will, from his good pleasure, "good will towards men." So, if we go back again, the good will and pleasure of God is the cause and ground of peace in CHRIST.; and peace in CHRIST puts us into a condition, and stirs us up to glorify God. To begin with the first,

Glory to God in the highest.

The angels, those blessed spirits, begin with that which is the end of all. God's end, in all things, is his own glory: he path none above himself, whose glory to aim at. And the angels wish, Glory to God in the highest heavens.; That is the place where his majesty most appears: and indeed the is more glorified there than anywhere in the world. Many there are who do not glorify God at all here on earth. Many there are whose whole life is nothing but a dishonoring of God. The best, in some sense, cannot perfectly glorify God till they are in heaven: and yet, in some sort, we may glorify God more on earth than in heaven. It may seem a paradox, but it is true. Here upon earth we glorify God in the midst of enemies. He path no enemies in heaven; there all are of one spirit. Here upon earth we live not only among devils, but men led with the spirit of the devil, where God is dishonored; and if here we take God's side, and stand for God's cause, we, in some sort, honor God more here than we are capable to do in heaven, where there is no opposition.

God is always glorious; but, alas! few have eyes to see it. But I take glory here for the excellency and eminency of the good ness and greatness of God, discovered and taken notice of. In the former part of the chapter, light is called the "glory of the Lord." Light is a glorious creature; nothing expresses glory so much as that; it carries its evidence in itself; it discovers all other things, and its elf too. So excellency and eminency will discover itself to those that have eyes to see it; and being manifested and taken notice of, is glory.

In that the angels begin with the glory of God, I might speak of this doctrine, that "the glory of God, the setting forth of the excellencies and eminencies of the Lord should be the end of our lives, the one thing we should aim at." The angels here begin with it, and we begin with it in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be thy name!" But this being a general point, I will pass it by, and come to the particular, in which it will more comfortably appear; as this glory shines in CHRIST, in the incarnation of CHRIST, there is matter of glorifying God, both to angels and men.

I take the incarnation of CHRIST as a foundation of all the other good we have by CHRIST. Glory to God on high, now CHRIST is born; why Only that he is born No; but by reason of this incarnation, there is a union of the two natures, God and man; so that by the incarnation now CHRIST is man, and a holy man; the human nature in CHRIST is pure and holy, being sanctified by the Spirit and united to God. Now CHRIST being not only man, but pure man, and God-man, hence it is that he comes to be qualified for all that he did and suffered after; it was from hence that they had their worth. Well, then, the incarnation of CHRIST, together with the benefits thereof, such as redemption,
adoption, and whatever else we gain thereby, is that wherein God will show his glory most. The glory and excellency of God do shine in his love and mercy in CHRIST. Every excellency of God has its proper place or theatre, where it is seen: as his power in the creation; his wisdom in his providence; his justice in hell; his majesty in heaven; but his bowels of tender mercy do most of all appear in his church, among his people; to whom he shows the excellency of his goodness in the incarnation of CHRIST, and the benefits we have by it.

Many are the attributes and excellencies of God that shine in CHRIST; as, his truth; " All the promises of God are yea and amen in CHRIST;" in him there is an accomplishment of all the promises. His wisdom, in that he could reconcile justice and mercy, by joining two natures together; that he could join two attributes seeming contrary, justice and mercy. To reconcile man, by reconciling justice and mercy; and by such an excellent way as that God should become man; to reconcile justice and mercy by such a Person as should satisfy justice, and give way to mercy, that is, by CHRIST; this was great wisdom. He became our Surety, who is God as well as man. If no creation can satisfy God, God can. The second Person in the Trinity took our nature, and died for us. God must be satisfied; and when no creature in heaven or earth can do it, his own Son must. Here was the glory of his justice. But the main of all is, his mercy and goodness, which set him on work to contrive this great work of redemption, by the incarnation and death of CHRIST; his infinitely rich, glorious, abundant mercy, that is the main thing wherein God is glorious now in CHRIST.

There are no words, large enough to set out the goodness and mercy of God in JESUS CHRIST. Therefore I will only speak of this attribute because this has the pre-eminence among all the others. For after the fall, man being miserable and sinful, what attribute can exalt itself

but mercy to misery, and grace to sinful man, in pardoning his sin Considering in what state man stood after he had transgressed, there was no other attribute could exalt itself but grace and mercy, to triumph over misery and sin. Therefore, Glory to God in the highest heavens, especially for his free grace and mercy in CHRIST.

Now then reflect. Does the grace, and love, and mercy of GOD, appear, and spew themselves in JESUS CHRIST I beseech you, then, let us remember it, especially in the greatest extremities, for it answers all objections, the greatest and strongest that can be made. The sinner will object, "My sins are great, of long continuance and of a deep dye." Look then upon God in CHRIST, and consider his end in the incarnation of CHRIST; it was that his mercy should be exalted, and triumph over all men's unworthiness. The greater thy sins are, the greater will be the glory of his mercy in forgiving thee; and that is it God seeks for now, to be glorious in his mercy. Again, thy heart tells thee, that if there be any mercy spewed to such a wretch as you art, it must be no ordinary mercy. It is true, God's mercy is no ordinary thing; of all attributes, he will triumph in that. The glory of his mercy is, that he seeks to have of men, by the redemption wrought by CHRIST, above all things whatsoever. What! wouldst you have infinite mercy You have it in CHRIST. Perhaps thy sins have abounded. God's grace abounds much more. It may be thy sins are as mountains. God's grace is as the ocean to cover those mountains. "But is it possible for God to forgive such a wretched sinner as I, who have been a blasphemer, an adulterer, a Sabbath-breaker, a covetous, unjust person, who have every way broken all the laws of God?" It were not with men: But, says GOD, " My thoughts are not as your thoughts: "my thoughts are as far above your's as the heavens are above the earth. Therefore bound not the infinite mercy of God with thy narrow thoughts, but let it have its scope; especially in plunges and assaults, and in times of distress, such as the best of us fore bound not the infinite mercy of God with thy narrow thoughts, but let it have its scope; especially in plunges and assaults, and in times of distress, such as the best of us

You have heard now of the joy of the angels, of their manner of celebrating the birth of CHRIST; and if the angels should now leave heaven, and come down upon earth and take upon them bodies, how would they celebrate the incarnation of CHRIST? You see here they sung, "Glory to God on high;" and this would be the course wherein they would carry themselves to glorify God answerable to their song. So should we do, if we will be like the blessed angels. We see how to celebrate the nativity of CHRIST; we need not go to fetch joy from hell. If the devil should be incarnate, and come to live among men, he would celebrate the incarnation of CHRIST no otherwise than men do, in many places. Then, if we would not have our portion with devils, let us not imitate them. What! has God been so rich in love to us as to take our miserable nature upon him? Here is matter of joy: and shall we be beholden to the devil for joy, when we should rejoice for CHRIST I desire repentance and reformation of what has been amiss in this kind. And if there be any that have been guilty, let them take it to heart, and truly repent and amend their ways. Consider the monstrous ingratitude, the preposterous behavior of those who celebrate the nativity of CHRIST in this brutish, devilish manner. What! because CHRIST was born, shall we therefore give liberty to all to looseness, as if CHRIST came to bring Christians to licentiousness Shall we, instead of repenting, run further and further into guilt? Is that the reasoning of the Scriptures No; they say, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand;" for CHRIST and the fruits of the gospel are at hand. "The grace of God has appeared in CHRIST;" what! to teach us to be more disorder than at other times. Oh, to live soberly, justly, and godly in this present world.

I shall next show you, 1. How we may know whether we glorify God for CHRIST, or not. 2. What are the hindrances that keep us from it. And, 3. The means how we may come to glorify God. And first, in order to know whether we glorify God. Do we exalt God in our soul,
above all creatures Do we lift him up in his own place, and let him be in our souls, as he is in himself, in the most holy Then we agree with the blessed angels in giving him glory. God is glorious, especially in his mercy and goodness; let him be so in our hearts, above all our unworthiness and sin: for God has not glory from us till we give him the highest place in our love, and so, and delight. And this especially appears in opposition to other things, when we will not offend God for any creature. Therefore, let us ask our own thoughts often, what that is that our delight, and joy, and love is spent on and runs after Is it the sweet love of God in CHRIST, the excellent state we have in CHRIST It is an excellent sign. Let us examine what is highest in our souls:

"The loving-kindness of the Lord is better than life itself," says the Psalmsist. Then we give God glory, when, for his sake, we set light by life itself. When we are ready to part with all; with father and mother, and houses and lands, and all, for CHRIST; then with the angels we say, " = Glory be to God on high!"

Then again we give glory to God for CHRIST, when we take all the favors we have from God in CHRIST; when we see CHRIST in every thing. "All things are ours be-cause we are CHRIST's. It is by CHRIST that we are heirs, that we have any comfortable interest in the favor of God; therefore, when we accept all in CHRIST, and give God in CHRIST the glory of all, we give glory to God. Again, we give glory to GOD, when we all join together and stir up one another, and labor to promote the knowledge of God in CHRIST all the ways we can; when every inc in our place and calling, magistrates and ministers, and every one in our families, labor that CHRIST may rule there, that God in CHRIST may be known. Where there is a zeal for God's glory, and a disposition to glorify GOD, there will be a stirring up one of another, angels stirring up men, and men angels, and a wishing that God may have glory in heaven and earth. Again, we glorify God in CHRIST when we see such mercy in CHRIST as does so transform us, that, from an inward change, we have always a blessed disposition to glorify God. This is the difference between the glass of the gospel, and the glass of the law, and of the creatures. In the law, we see the beams of the justice of GOD, and the beams of his power and goodness in the creation; but this does not change and transform us to be good and gracious. But when we see the glory of GOD, of his goodness and infinite mercy shining in the face of JESUS CHRIST, it change the soul to be like unto CHRIST. There-fore, if we find that the knowledge of God in CHRIST has changed our dispositions, it is a sign then we give glory to God indeed.

One main hinderance is a vail of ignorance spread over our hearts, which hinders us from seeing the glorious light of God shining in JESUS CHRIST; and thereupon, instead of that blessed disposition that should be in the soul, there comes an admiration of, and a delight in, base things. This ignorance is partly from the natural darkness of our own hearts, and sometimes from the policy of SATAN, who casts dust in our eyes, and labors that we may not see the glory of God in the gospel. It is then no wonder, if where the gospel is not preached, the devil has a kind of reign, and God is not honored at all; because the devil is the prince of darkness, and rules in darkness.

Another great hindrance is, unbelief. This, like ignorance, is another vail overspreading the wart. And though the vail of ignorance be removed, and a man comes to hear of the mercy of God in CHRIST JESUS, and see so clearly the scheme of redemption, that he is able to discourse well upon it; yet, not seeing it in a proper and spiritual light he believes it not with a proper and effectual faith; so that there still remains a vail of unbelief upon his heart. And one or other of these two vails (or it may be both of them,) is the cause why we see not the light of God shining in the gospel, and why we do not glorify him. There are wondrous things in the gospel; but if we want either light or sight to see them, what does it avail If the light shine round about us, and the “god of this world hash blinded our eyes,” how can we glorify God.

It cannot be, if we want a heavenly, spiritual light, suitable to the things: for a natural man, by the light that he Lath, cannot judge sufficiently of them. The main hindrances there of glorifying God are, the vail of ignorance and unbelief.

Another great hindrance of glorifying God is, when men lift up their sins above the mercy of God in JESUS CHRIST. This is to take away God and CHRIST altogether. For if the mercy and bountiful goodness of God were not greater than our sins, it were not the mercy and bounty of a God. But there are but few of these that miscarry; God usually shines upon them at the last. There are three ranks of men; some arc profane, dead, loose Christians, that never were under the law, that never under-stood the corruptions of nature, nor themselves. Some again are brought from that to understand themselves a little too much; that are under the law, and feel the flashes of God's wrath. And some, in the third place, are brought from hence to be under grace. That is the only happy condition, to be under the grace of God in CHRIST. Some meal of the first rank never come to the second; they never understand what sin is, and what the wrath of God is; they will give their conscience no leisure to tell them what their condition is; but if they sonic not to the second step, there is very small hope of their coming to the third. But there is hope of the

second that they will come to the third rank. Now, as those of the third rank glorify GOD, by submitting their sins to his mercy in CHRIST JESUS, so the second hinder God of much glory, and themselves of much comfort; though, as I said, few of them miscarry at last.
Now, in the third place, as a means to attain to this duty of glorifying GOD, let us beg of him the Spirit of revelation, to discover to us the things that make for our peace in their own proper light, for they are spiritually discerned. Therefore the apostle desires of God the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to discover these things to us; not only that they are truths, but that they are truths to us. For unless we know these things belong to us in particular, we cannot glorify God as we should. Oh! but when there is a spirit of approbation to make these our own, that God in CHRIST loves us, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20, then the soul cannot but break forth with the angels here, "Glory to God on high." Therefore, beg the Spirit to reveal to thee thy part, that God is thy Savior, and that thy sins are forgiven; beg of God to take away the vails of ignorance and unbelief, and openly to reveal his fatherly bowels and tender mercy to thee in CHRIST. It is the end of our lives, and should be the pitch of our desires, to glorify God. Therefore, I say, let us desire God to reveal himself so far to us, to be our Father in CHRIST, that we may glorify him. Surely it is a forcible plea; God will do that which is suitable to his end; "He has made all things for his own glory," especially the work of redemption in CHRIST, for the glory of his rich mercy, and we should desire a sense of his mercy and love for this end, that we may be fitter to glorify God. This is one excellent way to help us to glorify God: for we cannot glorify him till we know we are at peace with him. And this was the end of the angels in wishing peace upon earth; that God being reconciled, and peace being established in men's consciences, they might glorify God. The reason of this will be more clearly seen, in considering the second part of the angels' song; to which let us proceed.

Peace on Earth.

The same holy affection in the angels that moved them to wish God to have his due of glory from the creature, moves them to wish peace to men likewise; because, as I have just now observed, we cannot glorify God till we have the knowledge of our peace with him in CHRIST. "But why cannot we glorify God without this knowledge?" The reason is, peace comes from righteousness. CHRIST is first the King of Righteousness, and then King of Peace. Now, unless the soul be assured of righteousness in CHRIST, it can have no peace. We cannot heartily wish for the manifestation of the glory of him that we think is our enemy; therefore, we cannot glorify him till we know we are at peace with him. And this was the end of the angels in wishing peace upon earth; that God being reconciled, and peace being established in men's consciences, they might glorify God. The reason of this will be more clearly seen, in considering the second part of the angels' song; to which let us proceed.

1. There is a scattering and a division from GOD, the Fountain of good, with whom we had communion in our first creation. His delight was then in his creature; but we lost that blessed communion, and our sins have separated between God and us. 2. There is a separation between the good angels and us; for they, being good subjects, take part with their prince, and therefore join against rebels. Hence it is, that, upon the sight of angels, the very hearts of men have been sometimes stricken, considering that there are no good terms between us and the angels till we come to CHRIST again. 3. There is a division and scattering between man and man. Since the fall, there is a spirit of division among men, till the gospel again bring peace; especially there is no sound peace between men in the state of nature, and others that are God's children. 4. There is a division and separation between man and the other creatures. They are ready to be in a range against any man that is in the state of nature. If God do but give them leave, they presently make an end of sinful men. 5. Men have no peace with them-selves. They speak peace to themselves; but, alas! God speaks none to them. They make a covenant with death and hell; but death and hell make no covenant with them. So it is a forced peace; it is a dead sleep. They consider not themselves, and the war they are in with GOD, with the angels, with other men, with other creatures, and with themselves. They suppose all is peace; whereas it is but a truce, that they take up for a time. When God opens their conscience, there is a hell in their hearts, that when let loose, makes them to suffer a hell upon earth; they enter into the pains of hell before their time." So there is no peace to the wicked" at all; but, since the fall, there is a separation between God and man, between angels and man, between man and man, between man and the creatures, between man and himself.

Now, CHRIST at his coming brings all into one again; he brings God and man together again, by offering him-selves a sacrifice, by making full satisfaction to the justice of God; and sin, which is the cause of his displeasure, being taken away, God being gracious and merciful, his mercy runs amain on us. Sin only separates between God and us, and that CHRIST takes away; therefore he is called by St. Paul, "CHRIST our Peace;" and by Isaiah, "The Prince of Peace." He was qualified to be our peace, as being a friend to both parties; having married our nature on purpose that he might, in our nature, bring God and us together. If then we be at peace with GOD, all other peace will follow. For good subjects will be at peace with rebels, when rebels are brought in subjection to their king, and all join in one obedience; therefore, by this means, the angels are brought to be at peace with us. And as for men, there is a spirit of union between them. The same
Now, this blessed peace, in all the branches of it, is founded in CHRIST; CHRIST is the cause and the foundation of it: for though these words were spoken at the incarnation of CHRIST, yet we are to refer them to the whole work of his mediatorship in the state of his abasement and his state of exaltation; our peace is wholly founded upon him. He was born, and became man, and became sin; that is, a sacrifice for sin for us; he became a curse for us, to establish a peace, and to satisfy God's anger; and then he rose again, to show that he had fully satisfied God's anger, and that peace was fully established. Therefor the Holy Ghost was sent after the resurrection of CHRIST, as a testimony that God was appeased; and now CHRIST is in heaven, he is ever there as a priest, to make intercession for us. So that CHRIST is our peace, from his incarnation to his death, from thence to his resurrection and ascension, and intercession. All peace with GOD, with angels, and with creatures, is established in CHRIST.

This should teach us, that whatever intercourse we have with God the Father, we should take CHRIST with us. We must not offer sacrifice without the high-priest. Let us offer nothing to God without CHRIST. There is no intercourse between God and us, till we be reconciled in CHRIST, in whom we must offer all our sacrifices. Therefore, let us not own an absolute God in our devotions; but let us think of God reconciled in CHRIST, and at peace with us, and a Father in covenant in CHRIST, and then our persons, and prayers, and all shall be accepted. CHRIST is the true Mercy-seat; in looking to whom, God frees us from the curse of the law. Jerusalem was the glory of the world, and the temple was the glory of Jerusalem; but the mercy-seat was the glory of the temple, because that pointed to CHRIST, in whom we have intercourse with God the Father.

But why does he say, Peace on earth 1: Because peace was wrought upon earth by CHRIST, in the days of his flesh, when he offered himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to his Father. And, 2. Because here on earth we must be partakers of it. We oftentimes defer to make our peace with GOD from time to time, and think there will be peace made in another world. Oh! beloved, our peace must be made on earth. "We must live godly and righteously, and soberly in this present world;" we must "enter into the kingdom of heaven here." Further entrance must be ministered here, by "growing in grace daily." If heaven be not entered into here, it shall never be entered afterwards; for the church is the seminary of the heavenly paradise. All that are taken to heaven, to be set there for ever, are set in the church, and grow up there awhile under the means of salvation. Therefore, labor to have this peace on earth, or else you can never glorify God on earth; and if we glorify him not on earth, we shall never do it in heaven.

I would now give a few directions to maintain this peace continually. To walk with GOD, and to keep our daily peace with GOD, requires a great deal of watchfulness over our thoughts, (for he is a Spirit;) and over our words and actions. Watchfulness is the preserver of peace. Where there is a great distance between two that are at peace, it is not kept without acknowledgment of that distance, and without watchfulness. It is not here as it is in a peace that is between two kings that are co-ordinate one with another; but it is a peace between the King of heaven and rebels, that are taken to be subjects; therefore we must walk in humble terms. "Walk humbly with thy God." We must watch over our carriage, that we do not "grieve the Spirit of God." For then, if the first peace be not quite taken away, yet God interdicts our comfort. If we do not watch against sin, we cannot enjoy daily peace; but God will stiffer our knowledge to lash our conscience, and to make us more miserable than a carnal man, that never had a sight of his goodness. Oh! the misery of a man that once had peace, and then lost it, and then knew not how to gain it again. But why does he say, Peace on earth? Because peace was wrought upon earth by CHRIST, in the days of his flesh, when he offered himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to his Father. And, 2. Because here on earth we must be partakers of it. We oftentimes defer to make our peace with GOD from time to time, and think there will be peace made in another world. Oh! beloved, our peace must be made on earth. "We must live godly and righteously, and soberly in this present world;" we must "enter into the kingdom of heaven here." Further entrance must be ministered here, by "growing in grace daily." If heaven be not entered into here, it shall never be entered afterwards; for the church is the seminary of the heavenly paradise. All that are taken to heaven, to be set there for ever, are set in the church, and grow up there awhile under the means of salvation. Therefore, labor to have this peace on earth, or else you can never glorify God on earth; and if we glorify him not on earth, we shall never do it in heaven.

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And because it is a difficult thing to maintain peace with GOD, in regard of our indisposition, we should renew our covenant and purposes everyday. And if we have fallen into any sin, let us make use of our great Peace-maker, CHRIST, who is in heaven to make peace between God and us. Let us desire GOD, for his sake, to be reconciled unto us; for God is in CHRIST reconciling us unto himself. Let us desire him to testify it to us by his Holy Spirit. Again, take that direction of the apostle, When we find any trouble in the world, not to trouble ourselves over much, Cast your care upon God. Let your requests be made known to God with thanksgiving. Pray for future favors, and thank him for past. Then "the peace of GOD, that passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in CHRIST JESUS." Perhaps we shall not have what we pray for; but if we have not that, we shall have the peace of GOD, that passes all understanding. Again, if we would maintain this peace, let us be always doing somewhat that is good, and pleasing to God. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things;" and then "the God of peace shall be with you." The thoughts must be exercised that way, and there must be a practice of what we think of; and this will be a means to maintain this peace with God.

Now, to stir us up the more to search the grounds of our peace; let us consider the fearful state of a man that has not made his peace with God. However CHRIST has died, that will not serve the turn, unless a man take him by faith. If CHRIST be food, and he be not eaten, if he
be a foundation, and we do not build on him, what benefit is it to us Therefore, those that have not been brought by the Spirit of God to communion with CHRIST, alas! they are under the wrath of God; and however God does use them, as princes do traitors in the tower, giving them the liberty of the prison, yet the sentence of death is not revoked. All the delights of a prisoner do not content him; he knows he is on ill terms with his prince; so, till we have made our peace with GOD, alas! we have not sued out our pardon; all our delights are but as those of a prisoner in the tower. Therefore, ask thy soul, Have you sued out thy pardon Is there reconciliation wrought between God and thee

If we do not make our peace with GOD, what a case are we in God himself ere long will appear our enemy; CHRIST, who we think will save us, will be our Judge, and a terrible Judge: " If his wrath be kindled, who shall abide it" As for the Holy Ghost, how can they look for comfort from him They have grieved Him; therefore he will grieve their conscience. The Holy Ghost, as he is the God of all comfort and consolation, so he is the ground of all terror to wicked men, when he has knocked at their hearts, by the ministry of his Word, to open and to let him in, but they would not. The angels are ready executioners of God's vengeance upon any occasion; and other creatures wait but for a command from GOD, to execute his wrath upon sinners. The heavens are ready to rain upon them as in the flood; the earth is ready to swallow them, as it did Korah; the beasts that carry them, and all the creatures they use, wait but for a command from God to destroy them; their meat to choak them; the air to infect them; the water to drown them; while they are at variance with God. As for the devils, they will be ready to be tormentors of the wicked. They that tempt to sin now will torment for it hereafter. And for the damned spirits, they are all in that cursed condition with themselves; therefore, "where shall the ungodly appear" Ere long, when, nee shall they hope for comfort. Neither from GOD, nor angels, nor devils, nor wicked men, nor good men,â€”none of them all will yield them comfort. They are all ready y-to serve the Lord of Hosts against his enemies.

Indeed, God shows his patience here; but when God's wrath comes, at the day of judgment,â€”when God has forsaken sinful men,â€”when GOD, the Judge of all, has said, " Depart, ye cursed,"â€”no creature shall minister to them the least comfort; the sun shall shine upon them no more; the earth shall bear them no longer; and as we see Dives had not a drop of water to comfort him in those flames, no more shall any miserable wretch that comes into that place of torment. Therefore, if we be not at peace with the Lord of Hosts, every creature is ready to be in arms against us.

Let us not therefore delude ourselves, but get into CHRIST, get into the ark in time; that when any public calamity shall come, we may be safe in CHRIST. If we are at peace with GOD, by faith in CHRIST, every thing will minister comfort to us; we cannot think of God but as our Father; of CHRIST but as our Redeemer and Reconciler, that has brought God and us together: the Holy Ghost takes upon him the term of a Comforter for such; angels are ministering spirits. As for the church itself, GOD's people, they have a common stock of prayers for us; every one that says, Our Father, thinks of us; and for all other things, they are at peace with us. As Job says, "The stones in the street," nay, the stone in a man's body, the terrible pangs that come from that disease, they have a blessing upon them: in the greatest extremities, a soul that is at peace with GOD, however God does not deliver him from the trouble, yet he delivers and supports him in the trouble; and as the troubles increase, so his comforts increase; and the very troubles themselves are at peace with him: all work for the best " to them that love God." And in the greatest confusions and tumults of states, " the righteous is afraid of no ill tidings," Psal. exi.; because his heart is fixed upon God's love in CHRIST; while the wicked, when war and desolation, and signs of God's anger appear from heaven, " shackle as the trees of the forest."

When death comes, then is the upshot of all. Oh! the miseries of a man in the evil day, that has not made his peace with God! While to the godly the sting of death is taken away. He that has made his peace with GOD, can say, with old Simeon, "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He is willing to yield his soul to GOD, because he is at peace with him. Their graves are their beds, and their souls rest with him. They die in peace, and commend their souls to GOD, " as to a faithful Creator," as St. Paul says, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth is reserved for me a crown of righteousness; and not for me only, but for all those that love his appearing." Oh! the comfort of him in the hour of death, that has made his peace with God! "Blessed are those that die in the Lord," in the peace of the Lord: "they rest from their labors."

And after death, what comfort are those in that have made their peace with God in CHRIST The godly have comfortable thoughts of those blessed times to come. They cannot think of death and judgment without much comfort." Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near. Therefore, let us not conceive slightly of this peace. It is not a freedom from petty ills, and an advancement to a little good; but it is a freedom from ills that are above nature; from the wrath of GOD, before which no creature can stand; no, not the angels themselves; from hell and damnation; from the curse of GOD, and from the kingdom of SATAN. It is a freedom from that condition that all the powers of the world shall tremble at, and an advancement to the greatest good. It is a freedom from bondage, and an advancement to son-ship. Therefore, let us have high thoughts of this peace, as the angels had, when they sang, "Glory to God on high, on earth peace,"
God-will towards men.

This is the spring and root of all. The angels begin with, "Glory to GOD," and then they come to "peace among men." Now, there is no peace but issues from grace; grace is God's good will and pleasure; there-fore the angels say, " Good will towards men." We may learn hence, 1. That God has now a gracious good-will towards men. 2. That this good-will is the foundation of all good. 3. That this is founded upon CHRI ST.

1. God now shows good pleasure towards men. I speak of this but as it makes way for the other. Only by the way I shall observe, that the love that God bears towards man, as it is a propension in him to do good, is love: as it is free, it is his good pleasure, or grace; as it is to persons in misery, it is mercy. The foundation of all is love; but the terms differ according to circumstances. Good pleasure and grace imply freedom in the party loving; and mercy implies misery in the party loved. Now this free good will and grace is towards men. He says not, towards angels. It is more towards men than even to good angels, (in some sort;) for man is taken to be the spouse of CHRI ST, good angels are not so. Neither is it good will to evil angels, for their state is determined; there is no altering of their condition.

2. This good will of God to restore lapsed man, by the sending his Son, is the ground of all good to man, and has no ground but itself. God's grace and love to the creature is altogether independent, in regard to the creature; God fetcheth not reasons of his love from that, but from his own bowels. What is the foundation of the covenant of grace CHRI ST. " God so loved the world, that he gave his o nly Son." There is nothing freer than a gift; CHRI ST is a gift; he came freely from GOD, who gave " him to death for us all." And whatsoever good thing we have in CHRI ST, it comes freely too. He that gave CHRI ST freely, "shall he not also with him freely give us all things" "The very grace to keep the covenant, repentance and faith, they are the free gift of God." " I will take away your stony heart, and give you new hearts, and cause you to walk in my statutes." "God does his part and ours too, to spew not only that the covenant of grace is a covenant of wondrous love, to give us grace here, and glory hereafter; but that the foundation is of grace, and that the performance on our part is of grace likewise. Nay, it is of grace that he would enter into covenant at all. He humbled himself wondrously in vouchsafing to enter into covenant; it was humiliation on God's part, and exaltation to us; therefore, as it is in Zechariah, we may cry, " Grace! grace!" There is nothing but grace and free love in the whole carriage of our salvation. But if whatsoever good comes to man, be merely from God's good will, let us empty ourselves, and give him the glory of all. It is easily spoken and heard, but not so easily done; for man naturally is proud; and for flesh and blood to be brought to go out of itself, to give the glory of all goodness and happiness to God's free grace, is hard to proud nature. But we must beg grace of God to work our hearts to this, more and more to empty ourselves of ourselves, and to give God the glory of all. But,

3. This free love and grace of God is only in CHRI ST; therefore the angels pronounce at the birth of CHRI ST, " Good will to men." "What we have by grace, we have only by CHRI ST; (because he has given satisfaction to God's justice, that so grace may be conveyed, and derived unto us, without any prejudice to any other attribute in God;) and the embracing power and grace in us is faith. I say, whatsoever we have from God's free love, we have it in CHRI ST. The free love of God is grounded in CHRI ST. God cannot look upon us but in him; therefore all is CHRI ST. We are called in CHRI ST, justified in CHRI ST, sanctified by the Spirit of CHRI ST, glorified by CHRI ST: " We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in CHRI ST." The whole Trinity have a wondrous complacency in looking upon mankind: God loves us, as redeemed by CHRI ST; CHRI ST loves us, as given by the Father to him to redeem; the Holy Ghost has a special regard to us, as seeing the love of the Father in giving us, and of the Son in redeeming us. And surely it should be our chief delight too, to see how God has given us to CHRI ST to save; how CHRI ST has redeemed us; and how the Holy Ghost witnesseth this love to our souls, and applies it to us.

The first use we shall make of what has been said, shall be to observe, that all that are not in CHRI ST, he open to the venge an ce and wrath of God. Again, if all God's good will and pleasure be in CHRI ST, as our High-priest; without whom we can offer no sacrifice, then we should look to God in CHRI ST; love God in CHRI ST; per-form service to God in CHRI ST; pray to God in CHRI ST; give thanks to God in CHRI ST; desire God. in CHRI ST to make all things acceptable for CHRI ST's sake, because it is in CHRI ST that God has any good will and pleasure to us.

But how shall we know whether God's good will be to us in CHRI ST, or not How shall I know that I am in the state of grace The Holy Ghost must ascertain this. For as the work of salvation was so great, that only God could satisfy God; so the doubts of man's heart, and the guilt of his conscience, when it is upon him, and the fear of God's wrath, upon such guilt, is such, that God must assure him that he is reconciled to him; God the Son must reconcile God the Father; and God the Holy Ghost must seal and ascertain this to the soul. The soul will never
be quiet, before it see and know in particular, God reconciled in CHRIST; the Spirit, that is GOD, that is above conscience, must seal it to the soul. Being above conscience, he can quiet our conscience.

Now this Spirit that worketh this in us, and assures us of God's good pleasure, alters and changes our dispositions, that we shall have a good pleasure in God; (for there is a mutual good pleasure; God has a pleasure in us as his, and we have a good pleasure in GOD, wrought by the Spirit;) the Spirit not only witnesseth, but worketh this sweet and gracious disposition to God; God delights in us, and we in God. God delights in the church above all things; the church is his spouse, his body, his friends, his children; and those that have the Spirit of God delight in them too. "My delight is in the sons of men," says CHRIST; which he showed by taking the nature of man upon him. So all that have the Spirit of CHRIST delight in the church and people of God.

God delights in obedience more than sacrifice; God's people, that he delights in, yield their bodies and souls a sacrifice to God; God accepts them in CHRIST, and he is acceptable to them in CHRIST JESUS; and they seek out what pleases him, and is acceptable to him. As the sons of Isaac sought out what might please their old father, so God's children seek out what duities God relisheth best. Thanksgiving is a sacrifice, with which God is well pleased. Is it so Then they will seek out that, that they may please him. GOD, by his Spirit, will work in them a disposition to please him in all things; therefore the people of God are said to be a free people, zealous of good works. The Spirit infusiong the love of God in CHRIST to them, sets their wills at liberty to devise to please God in all things. Therefore, if we have tasted God's good will towards us, we have a good pleasure to him again. WHATSOEVER is God's pleasure shall be our pleasure; what pleases him shall please us. If it please hire to exercise me with crosses and afflictions, what pleases God shall please me; for when he has once loved me freely in CHRIST, every thing that, comes from him, tastes of that free love and mercy; all " the ways of God are mercy and truth." His way of correction is a way of love; therefore, if it please him, it shall please me; my will shall be his.

But if we do not find ourselves yet to be the people of God's delight, what shall we do Attend upon the means of salvation, the gospel of peace, and wait the good time, and do not stand disputing. Disputing and cavilling hinders many; therefore leave disputing, and fall to obeying. God has a gracious purpose to save all that repent of their sins, and believe in CHRIST. This is gospel. "I will leave secret-things, for they belong to God; revealed things only belong to me." I will desire of God his Spirit, to repent of my sins, and to cast myself into the arms of his mercy in CHRIST, and then let God do as he pleases. If I perish, I will perish in the arms of CHRIST. If you doubt test whether God love thee or not, cast thyself upon the love of God in CHRIST, and then it is out of question. Whoso ever has grace to cast himself upon the free love of GOD, he fulfils the covenant of grace. Stand not disputing and wrangling, but desire grace to obey, and then all questions concerning thy eternal estate are resolved; all is clear.

There is not a man, however bad, but would have pardoning mercy; he is content to have God to pardon his sin; but he will not take the whole mercy and love of God in CHRIST; curing, healing mercy. Men will have one mercy, but not another; but we shall never be saved without entire mercy; healing as well as pardoning. God does not only pardon the sins of those whom he loves, but he heals their nature, and makes it like unto CHRIST's, holy and pure. And those that have not the Spirit, who desire not altering, changing and healing grace, as well as pardoning grace, are hypocrites. Let us remember this especially, because most men are deceived in this. They think, " Oh! God is merciful, and his love is free in CHRIST; and though I am unworthy, yet God will have mercy upon me!" But have About a secret desire to partake of God's whole mercy, to make thee good, as well as to make thee his son, and entitle thee to heaven To have thy nature altered To see the deformity of sin, and the beauty of grace Hadst thou rather have the image of God upon thee, than any favor in the world beside Hadst thou rather be freed from the bondage of sin, than have any other deliverance if it be thus, there is good hope concerning thee; if other-wise, thy case is dangerous; and you art but an hypocrite, deceiving thy own soul.

To conclude all: the love of God is a love that reached to the filling of nature, with all the happiness it is capable of. In this world, in all misery, one beam of God's loving-kindness will scatter all clouds whatsoever. What raised the spirit of Daniel in the lion's den Of the three young men in the midst of the furnace Of St. Paul in the dungeon The beams of God's love in CHRIST brake into the prison, into the furnace, into the dungeon. A few beams of that will enlarge the heart more than any affliction in the world can cast it down. That is excellent which Moses says, Deut. xxxxii. 16, where, after recounting the many blessings of Joseph, he closes all with the chief and spring of all the rest; " The good pleasure of him that dwelt in the bush." You know that God appeared in the bush, when it was flaming. The flaming bush showed the state of Israel, in the midst of the furnace of persecution. The bush, though burning, was not consumed. Why Because the good will of God was in the bush. So let us be in any persecution, or like Moses's bush, all on fire, yet the fire shall not consume nor hurt us. Why The good pleas-ure of him that dwelt in the bush is with us.â€”I will be with thee in the fire, and in the water," says God; not to keep thee out, but I will be with thee in it. So that in the greatest persecutions that can be, the " good will of him that dwelt in the bush will be with us;" so that we shall not be consumed, though we be in the fire; though we be afflicted, we shall not despair. Why The good pleasure of God dwells in the bush, in the church. In the midst of afflictions and persecutions, he is with us. Who can be miserable, that has the presence of GOD, the favor and good will of God
A DISCOVERY

OF THE

NEAR UNION AND COMMUNION

BETWEEN

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH,

AND CONSEQUENTLY

BETWEEN HIM AND EVERY BELIEVING SOUL;

DELIVERED IN

DIVERS SERMONS

ON THE

FIFTH AND SIXTH CHAPTERS OF THE CANTICLES. CANT. 5. 1, &c.

I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey:

I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!
OTHER books of Solomon he more obvious and open to common understanding; but as none entered in to the holy of holies, but the high-priest; so none can enter into the mystery of this song of songs, but such as have communion with CHRIST. Songs, and especially marriage-songs, serve to express men’s own joys, and the praises of others. So this book contains the mutual joys and mutual praises between CHRIST and his church. And as CHRIST and his church are the greatest persons that partake of human nature, so whatso ever is excellent in the whole world, is borrowed to set out the excellencies of these two great lovers. It is called Solomon’s Song, who, next unto CHRIST, was the greatest son of wisdom that ever the church bred: but in this argument there is no danger for the deepest wit to over-reach; for the knowledge of the love of CHRIST to his church is above all knowledge. The angels themselves may admire it, though they cannot comprehend it. It may well there fore be called the Song of Solomon; the most excellent song of a man of the deepest apprehension, and of the highest matters, the intercourse between CHRIST, the highest Lord of lords, and his best beloved spouse.

There are divers things in this song, at which a corrupt heart, (unto which all things are defiled,) may take of-fence; but to the pure all things are pure. Such a sinful abuse of this heavenly book, is far from the intention of the Holy Ghost in it, which is, by stooping low to us, to raise us higher unto him; that by taking advantage of the sweetest passage of our life, (marriage,) and the most delightful affection, (love,) in the sweetest manner of expression, (a song,) he might carry up the soul to things of a heavenly nature. As amongst other ways of mortification, there are two remarkable ones; 1. By embittering all earthly things unto us, whereby the affections are deadened to them. And 2. By showing more excellent objects; that the soul issuing more largely and strongly into them, may die unto other things: so the Holy Spirit has chosen this way in this song, by elevating our love, to take it off from other things, that so it might run in its right channel. Some think this song contains a story of the church in several ages. But howsoever that be, it hinders not, but that most passages of it agree to the spiritual state of the church in every age.

In this song there is,

1. A strong desire of the church of nearer communion with CHRIST; and then,

2. Some declining in affection.

3. After this we have her recovery of love; after which,

4. The church falls again into a declining of affection, whereupon follows a further strangeness of CHRIST to her; which continues until,

5. The church perceiving CHRIST’s constant affection unto her, notwithstanding her unkind dealing, recovers and cleaves faster to CHRIST than ever before. Chap. 3.

These passages agree to the experience of all Christians. And this observation must carry strength through this whole song, that there is the same regard of the whole church, and of every particular member, in respect of the chief privileges and graces that accompany salvation. And as the whole church is the spouse of CHRIST, so is every particular Christian. And as the whole church desires still nearer communion with CHRIST, so does every particular member.

Before I come to treat of the words here chosen, I shall observe to you, that this chapter is not so well divided from the former, as it might have been; for it were better, that the last verse of the former chapter were added to the beginning of this. And therefore by reason of the connection of the one with the other, I will first speak somewhat of that verse, to make way for that which follows. “Awake, O North wind, and come you South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits,” Cant. 4: 16. The words contain, 1. A turning of CHRIST’s speech to the winds to blow upon his garden. With the end why; “That the spices thereof may flow out.” 2. We have an invitation of CHRIST by the church to come into his garden; with the end, “To eat his pleasant fruits.” It may be a question, whether this command be the words of CHRIST, or the desire of his spouse. But it is certain the words are spoken by CHRIST, because he calls it, “My garden;” and the church afterwards invites him to eat of Ms “pleasant fruit,” not her’s: and yet the words may be likewise an answer to a former secret desire of the church. The order is this: the church being sensible of
some deadness of spirit, secretly desires some further quickening. CHRIST then answers those desires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her. For, ordinarily CHRIST first stirs up desires, and then answers the desires of his own Spirit.

For the first point named, we see here, that CHRIST sends forth his Spirit, with command to all means, under the name of North and South wind, to further the fruitfulness of his church. The wind is nature's fan. What the winds are to the garden, that the Spirit of CHRIST, in the use of the means, is to the soul. From CHRIST's commanding the winds, we may in general observe, that all creatures stand in obedience to CHRIST, as ready at a word, whosoever he speaks to them. They are all, as it were, asleep until he awaketh them. He can call for the wind out of his treasures when he pleases; he holds them in his fist. Which may comfort all those that are CHRIST's, that they are under one that has all creatures at his beak to do them service, and at his check to do them no harm. This drew the disciples in ad mission to say, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the seas obey him!" And cannot the same power still the winds and waves of the churches and states, and cause a sudden calm, if (as the disciples) we awaken him with our prayers. Again: in that CHRIST spake to winds, contrary one to another, both in regard of the coasts from whence they blow, and in their quality; yet both of which are necessary for the garden; we see, that the courses that CHRIST takes, and the means that he uses with his church, may seem contrary, but by a wise ordering, all agree, in the wholesome issue. A prosperous and an afflicted condition are contrary; a mild and a sharp course seem to cross one another; yet they sweetly agree in this, that as the church needeth both, so CHRIST uses both for the church's good. The North is a nipping wind, and the South a cherishing wind; therefore the South wind is the welcomer after the North wind has blown. But howsoever, all things are ours, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," 1 Cor. 15: 58. "All things work together for good to us, being in CHRIST." Hence it is, that the manifold wisdom of CHRIST maketh use of such variety of conditions; and hence it is, that the Spirit of CHRIST is mild in some men's ministries, and sharp in others. Nay, both mild and sharp in the very same minister, as the state of the souls, they have to deal withal, requires.

Sometimes again, the people of God need purging, and sometimes refreshing. Whereupon the Spirit of God carries itself suitably to both conditions. And the Spirit in the godly themselves draws good out of every condition. Sure they are, that all winds blow them go and; and were it not for their good, no winds would blow upon them. But as these times of ours, by long peace and plenty, grow cold, heavy, and secure, we need all kinds of winds to blow upon us, and all little enough. Time was when we were more quick and lively; but now the heat of our spirits is abated. We must therefore take heed of it, and quicken those things that are ready to die; or else instead of the North and South wind, God will send an East wind that shall dry up all. Again, if CHRIST can bind up, or let loose all kinds of winds at his pleasure, we should remember, that if means be wanting or fruitless, "It is he that says to the clouds, drop not; and to the winds, blow not." Therefore we must acknowledge him in the want or plenty of means. The Spirit of CHRIST in the use of means is a free agent; sometimes it blows strongly, sometimes more mildly, sometimes not at all. No creature has these winds in a bag at command; and therefore it is wisdom to yield to the gales of the Spirit.

For the clear understanding of what we are to speak of, let us observe, 1. Why the Spirit of God in the use of the means is compared to wind. And then, 2. Why the church is compared to a garden. The Spirit of God is compared to wind, in respect, 1. That as "the wind bloweth where it listeth," so the Spirit of God blows freely. 2. That as the wind (especially the north wind) has a cleansing force; so the Spirit of God purgeth our hearts from dead works to serve the living God. 3. That as the wind disperseth and scattereth clouds, and makes a serenity in the air; so does the Spirit disperse such clouds as corruption and SATAN raise up in the soul, that we may clearly see the face of God in JESUS CHRIST. 4. That as the wind has a cooling and a tempering quality, and tempers the distempers of nature, (as in some hot countries, there are yearly winds, which blow in summer, tempering the heat); so the Spirit of God allayeth the heats of fiery temptations, and bringeth the soul into a good temper. 5. That as the wind being subtle, searcheth into every corner; so the Spirit is of a searching nature, and disperseth, between the joints and the marrow, between the flesh and the spirit; searching those hidden corruptions, that nature could never have found out. 6. That as the wind again bears down all before it, beats down houses and trees, like the cedars in Lebanon, turns them up by the roots, and lays all flat; so the Spirit is mighty in operation; there is no standing before it. It brings down mountains, and every high thing that exalts itself, and lays them level. Nay, the Roman and those other mighty empires could not stand before it.

Observe here the order. of things one under another. To the prospering of a flower or plant in a garden, not only soil is needful, but air and wind also, and the influence of heaven: and God commanding, as here, "the winds to blow upon his garden." So in spirituals things, there is a chain of causes and effects: prayer comes from faith, Rom. 10: 14. Faith from the hearing of the word; hearing from God's sending. And if the God of nature should take away one link of nature's chain, the whole frame would be disturbed.

Well! That which CHRIST commands here, is, for the winds to blow upon his garden. And we need this blowing, our spirits will be becalmed else; and SATAN will be sure by himself, and such as are his bellows, to blow up the seeds of sinful lusts in us. For there are two spirits in the church; the one always blowing against the other. Therefore the best had need to be stirred up; otherwise, with Moses, their hands will fall down. Now we need blowing 1. In regard of our natural inability. 2. In regard of our dullness and heaviness cleaving to nature occasionally. 3. In regard of contrary winds from without. For ravan has his bellows filled with his spirit, that hinder the work of grace all they can; so that we need not only CHRIST's blowing, but also his stopping other contrary winds that they blow not, Rev. 7: 1. 4. In regard of
the condition of the new covenant: wherein all beginning, growth and ending is from grace, and nothing but grace. 5. Because old grace, without a fresh supply, will not hold against new crosses and temptations. Therefore, when CHRIST draws, let us run after him; when he blows, let us open unto him. It may be the last blast that ever we shall have from him. And let us set upon duties with this encouragement, that CHRIST will blow upon us; not only to prevent us, but also to maintain his own graces in us. But Oh! where is this stirring up of ourselves, and one another upon these grounds

2. We are to observe, Why the church is compared to a garden. CHRIST uses all manner of terms to express himself and the state of the church, to show us, that wheresoever we are, we may have occasion of heavenly thoughts. His church is his temple, when we are in the temple; it is a field when we are there; but more particularly the church is resembled to a garden: 1. Because a garden is taken out of the common waste ground, to be appropriated to a more particular use. So the church of CHRIST is taken out of the wilderness of this waste world to a particular use. It is in respect of the rest, as Goshen to Egypt, where in light was, when all else was in darkness. And indeed wherein does the church differ from other soils, except CHRIST has taken it in it is the same soil as other grounds are, but he dresseth it and fits it to bear spices and herbs. 2. In a garden nothing comes up naturally of itself, but as it is sown or planted. So nothing is good in the heart, but as it is planted by the heavenly husbandman. We need not sow the wilderness, for weeds prosper naturally. The earth is a mother to weeds, but a step-mother to herbs. So evil passions grow naturally, but nothing grows in the church, but as it is set by the hand of CHRIST. 3. Further, in a garden there is variety of flowers and spices; so in a Christian there is somewhat of every grace. As some cannot hear of a curious flower, but they will have it in their garden; so a CHRISTian cannot hear of any grace, but he labors to obtain it; he labors for graces for all occasions. He has for prosperity, temperance and sobriety; for adversity, patience and hope; for those that are above him, he has respect and obedience; and for those under him, suitable usage in all conditions of Christianity: for the Spirit of God in him is a seminary of all spiritual good things. 4. Again, of all other places, we most of all light in our gardens, and take care thereof by fencing, weeding, watering, and planting. So CHRIST's chief care and delight is for his church. He walks in the midst of the " seven golden candlesticks;" and if he defend and protect states, it is that they may be a harbour to his church. 5. Lastly, a garden stand's always in need of weeding and dressing; continual labor must be bestowed upon it; so in the church and hearts of Christians, CHRIST path always somewhat to do, we should else soon be over-grown and turn wild: in which and the like respects, CHRIST calls upon the winds to blow upon his garden.

Now to make use of this. If the church be a severed portion, " We should walk as men of a severed condition from the world;" not as men of the world, but as Christians; to make good that we are so, by feeling the graces of God's Spirit in some comfortable pleas ure, that so CHRIST may delight to dwell with us; and by being subject to his pruning and dressing. For, it is so far from being an ill sign, that CHRIST is at cost with us, in following us with affliction, that it is rather a sure sign of his love. For the care of this blessed husbandman is to prune us so as to make us fruitful. Likewise, let us learn hence, not to despise anynation or person; seeing God can take out of the waste wilderness whom he will, and make the desert an Eden. Again, let us bless God for ourselves, that our lot has fallen in such a pleasant place, to be planted in the church, the place of God's delight. And this also should move us to be fruitful; for though men will endure a fruitlesstree in the wilderness, yet who will endure it in their garden Dignity should mind us of duty. It is strange to be fruitless and barren in this place that we live in; being watered with the dew of heaven, under the sweet influence of the means. How fearfully is this fruitless estate threatened by the Holy Ghost. Heb. 6: 8. It is said to be near unto cursing and burning. And John Baptist declares, " Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," Matt. 3: 10. Lastly, In that the church is called CHRIST's garden, this may strengthen our faith in God's care and protection. The church may seem to be open to all incursions, but it has an invisible hedge about it, a wall without it, and a well within it. God himself is a wall of fire about it, and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it, to refresh and comfort it. As it was said of Canaan, so it may be said of the church, the eye of the Lord is upon it all the year long, and he waters it continually. From which especial care of God over it, this is a good plea for us to GOD, I am thine, save me; I am a plant of the Lord, and comfort it. As it was said afore, nothing is in me, but what is thine, there-fore cherish what is thine. So for the whole church, the plea is good; the church is thine; hence it, water it, defend it; keep the wild boar out of it. Therefore the enemies thereof shall one day know what it is to make a breach upon God's vineyard. In the mean time let us labor to keep our hearts as a garden, that nothing that defileth may enter.

Let us next consider the end of this blowing upon the garden; which is, you see, " That the spices thereof may flow out." Good things he dead and bound up in us, unless the Spirit let them out. We ebb and flow, open and shut, as the Spirit blows upon us, without blowing, no flowing. We may observe from hence, that we need not only grace to put life into us at the first, but likewise grace to quicken and draw forth that grace that we have. This is the difference between man's blowing and the Spirit's. Mau, when he blows, (if grace be not there before,) spends all his labor upon a dead coal, which he cannot make take fire. But the Spirit first kindles a holy fire, and then increases the flame. CHRIST had, in the use of means, wrought on the church before, and now further promoteth his own work. We must first take in, and then send out. First, be cisterns to contain, and then, conduits to convey. The wind first blows, and then the spices of the church flow out. We are first sweet in ourselves, and then sweet to others.

We see further from hence, that it is not enough to be good in ourselves, but our goodness must flow out; that is, stream forth for the good of others. We must labor to be (as was said of John,) burning and shining Christians for CHRIST is not like a box of ointment shut up; but like that box of ointment that Mary poured out, which perfumed the whole house. For the Spirit is herein like wind, it carries the sweet savour of grace together. A Christian, so soon as he finds any rooting in GOD, is of a spreading disposition, and makes the place he lives in the better for him. The whole body is better for every good member; and, as we see in Onesimus, the meanest persons, when they become to be good, are useful and profitable. Then we have what we have to purpose, when others have occasion to bless God for us, for
In the next place we have CHRIST invited by the church to come into his garden; with the end thereof, to eat his pleasant fruits. "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. These words chew: the church's further desire of CHRIST's presence, to delight in the graces of his own Spirit in her. She invites him to come and take delight in the graces of his own Spirit. And she calls him beloved, because all her love is spent on CHRIST, who gave himself to a cursed death for her. Our love should run no other way, therefore the church calls CHRIST her beloved. CHRIST was there before, but she desires a further presence of him. Whence we may observe; that, wheresoever grace is truly begun, there is still a further desire of CHRIST's presence, and approaching daily more and more to the soul. The church never thinks CHRIST near enough, until she be in heaven. The bride always cries, "Come, Lord JESUS, come quickly." Now these degrees of CHRIST's approaches to the soul until his second coming, are, that he may manifest himself more and more in defending, comforting, and enriching his church with grace. Every further manifestation of his presence is a further coming. "But why is the church thus earnest? First, because grace helps to see our need of CHRIST, and so helps us to prize him the more; which high esteem breeds an earnest desire after him, and a desire of further likeness to him. And, Secondly, because the church well knows, that when CHRIST comes to the soul, he comes not alone, but with his Spirit; and his Spirit with abundance of peace and comfort. This she knows, what she needs has of his presence, that without him there is no comfortable living. For wheresoever he is, he makes the soul a kind of heaven, and all conditions of life comfortable. Hence we may see, that those that do not desire the presence of CHRIST in his ordinances, are (it is to be feared,) such as the wind of the Holy Ghost never blew upon. The Spirit in the spouse is always saying to CHRIST, "Come." It is from the Spirit that we desire more of the Spirit; and from the presence of CHRIST, that we desire a further presence and communion with him.

Now let us consider the end and reason why CHRIST is - desired by the church to come into his garden, and that is, "to eat his pleasant fruits," or, in other words, to give him contentment. And is it not fit that CHRIST should eat the fruit of his own vine, have comfort of his own garden, taste his own fruits The only delight CHRIST has in the world, is in his garden. And that he may take the more delight in it, he makes it fruitful; and those fruits are precious fruits, as growing from plants set by his own hand, relishing of his own Spirit, and so fitted for his taste. Now the church, knowing the fruits of grace in her heart, desireth that CHRIST would delight in his own graces, and kindly accept of what she presented him with. We see from hence, that a gracious heart is privy to its own grace and sincerity, and so far as it is privy, is bold with CHRIST in a sweet and reverent manner. So much sincerity, so much confidence. If our heart condemn us not of insincerity, we may in a reverent manner speak boldly to CHRIST. It is not fit there should be strangeness between CHRIST and his spouse; neither indeed will there be, when she is on the growing hand. But mark the order: first, CHRIST blows, and then the church says, "Come." CHRIST begins in love, then love draws love: CHRIST draws the church, and she runs after him. The fire of love melts more than the fire of affliction. Again, we may see here in the church a carefulness to please CHRIST. As it is the duty, so it is the disposition of the church of CHRIST to please her husband. Thus far of the church's invitation of CHRIST into his garden: now follows his gracious answer in the first verse of this fifth chapter, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my spice: I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" These words contain in them an answer to the desire of the church, in the latter part of the verse formerly handled: and then, ver. 2, is set forth, the secure state of the church at this time: "I sleep, but my heart waketh." In setting down whereof, the Holy Ghost here by Solomon shows likewise the loving intercourse between CHRIST and the church. CHRIST, upon the secure state of the church, desires her, "to open unto him," ver. 2. Which desire of CHRIST is put off with poor and slender excuses, ver. 3, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? The consequence of these excuses is, that CHRIST goes away from the church, ver. 6. "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone," Whereupon she is restless, and inquires after CHRIST from the watchmen, who misuse, "wound her, and take away her veil from her," ver. 7. However, the church for all this gives not over searching after CHRIST, but asks the daughters of Jerusalem what was become of her beloved, ver. 8, and withal in a few words, but full of large expression, she relates her case unto them, that she was "sick of love," and so chargeth them Co tell her beloved, if they find him. Whereupon a question is moved by them, ver. 9, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved" She takes occasion hence (being full of love, which is glad of all occasions,) to speak of him, to burst forth into his praises, from ver. 1O, to the end of this chapter.

The church here in her encomiums of CHRIST, sets him forth. 1. In general; beyond comparison above all others, to be "the chiefest among ten thousand," ver. 1O. And 2. In particular; describing him as lovely in every part and feature. The issue whereof was, that the daughters of Jerusalem became likewise enamoured with him, chap. 6:1: And thereupon also inquire after him: "Whither is thy beloved gone Whither is thy beloved turned aside P Tell us, that we may seek him with thee." Upon this demand the church answers, "My beloved conveying comfort to them by us. And for our furtherance herein, the winds are called upon to awake, and blow upon CHRIST's garden, that the spices thereof may blow out.
is gone down into the garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies," chap. 6: 2. And then make s a triumphant close, ver. 3, " I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feeds among the lilies." All which will better appear in the particulars themselves.

The first thing then which offereth itself to our consideration is, CHRIST's answer to the church's invitation: " I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved! " In this verse we have, 1: CHRIST's answer to the church's petition: ' I am come into my garden." II. A description of the church: " My sister, my spouse." III. CHRIST's acceptance of what he had gotten there; " I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey." 4: An invitation of all CHRIST's friends to an abundant feast: " Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved! "

I. In that CHRIST makes such an answer unto the church's invitation, " I am come into my garden," we see that CHRIST comes in to his garden. It is much that he who has heaven to delight in, will delight to dwell among the sons of sinful men; but this he does for us, and so takes notice of the church's petition, " Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit:" the right speech of the church that gives all to CHRIST; who, when she has made such a petition, hears it. God first of all makes his church lovely, planteth good things therein, and then stirs us in her good desires; both fitness to pray for an inward disposition and holy desires: after which, CHRIST, hearing the voice of his own Spirit in her, and regarding his own preparations, answers them graciously. Whence we may observe, that God stirs up holy desires in us, and then answers the desires of his Holy Spirit in us. Let this, therefore, be a singular comfort to us, that as in all wants, so in that of friends, when we have none to go to, yet we have GOD, to whom we may freely pour out our hearts; there being no place in the world that can restrain us from his presence, or his Spirit from us. Again; if GOD be thus ready to prepare our hearts, and his ear to hearken thereunto, let us stir up our hearts to make use of our privileges.

What a prerogative is it for a favorite to have the ear of his prince? Him we account happy. Surely he is much more happy that has God's ear; that has God to be his Father in the covenant of grace; that has him reconciled, and can upon all occasions pour out his heart before him, who is merciful and faithful, wise and most able to help us. Why are we discouraged therefore and why are we cast down when we have such a gracious God to go to in all our extremities? He that can pray, can never be uncomfortable. This should also stir us up to keep our peace with GOD, that so we may always have access unto him, and communion with him. What a sad case is it to lose other comforts, and to be in such a state, that we cannot go to God with any boldness. It is the greatest loss of all when we have lost this spirit of prayer. For if we lose other things, we may recover them by prayer. But when we have lost this boldness to go to GOD, and are afraid to look him in the face, (as malefactors the judge,) this is a woeful state indeed.

Now there are divers cases wherein the soul is not in a state fit for prayer. As that first, " If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not regard my prayer." If a man purposeth to live in any sin against GOD, he will not regard his prayer. Therefore we must come with a resolute purpose to break off all sinful courses, and to give up ourselves to the guidance of God's Spirit. And this will be a forcible reason to move us thereunto, because so long as we live in any known sin, God neither regards us nor our prayers. The very sacrifice of the wicked is abominable. Another case is, when we will not forgive others. Why are we discouraged therefore and why are we cast down when we have such a gracious God to go to in all our extremities? He that can pray, can never be uncomfortable. This should also stir us up to keep our peace with GOD, that so we may always have access unto him, and communion with him. What a sad case is it to lose other comforts, and to be in such a state, that we cannot go to God with any boldness? It is the greatest loss of all when we have lost this spirit of prayer. For if we lose other things, we may recover them by prayer. But when we have lost this boldness to go to GOD, and are afraid to look him in the face, (as malefactors the judge,) this is a woeful state indeed.

Again, in that CHRIST is thus ready to come into his garden upon the church's invitation, we may further observe, that CHRIST is ready to vouchsafe his gracious presence to his children, that call earnestly upon him. But some may say, " How shall we know that CHRIST is present with us? " We may know it in the word and sacraments, and in the communion of saints; for these are the conveyances whereby he manifests himself. As we need not take the sun from heaven to know whether it be day; which may be known by the light, heat, and
fruitfulness of the creature; and as in the spring, we need not look to the heaven to see whether the sun be come near us or not; for looking on the earth, we may see all green, fresh, lively, and vigorous: so it is with the presence of CHRIST; we may know he is present, by that light which is in the soul. And there is, together with light, a heat above nature; the affections are kindled to love the best things, and to join in them. And, together with heat, there is strength and vigor to carry us to spiritual duties, framing us to a holy communion with God and one another. And there is every way cheerfulness and enlargement of spirit; as it is with the creature when the sun approacheth. For these causes the church desires CHRIST, that she may have more light, life, heat, vigor, strength, and that she may have more cheerful and fruitful in duties. The soul, when it is once made spiritual, does still desire a further and further presence of CHRIST, to be made better and better.

What a comfort is this to Christians, that they have the presence of CHRIST so far as shall make them happy! Nothing but heaven (or rather CHRIST in heaven) itself, will content the children of God. In the mean time, his presence in the congregation makes their souls, as it were, heaven. If the king’s presence, who carries the court with him, makes all places where he is a court; so CHRIST carries a kind of heaven with him wheresoever he is. His presence has with it life, light, comfort, strength, and all. For one beam of his countenance will scatter all the clouds of grief whatsoever. It is no matter where we be, so CHRIST be with us. If we are with the three children in a fiery furnace, it is no matter if a fourth be there also. If CHRIST be with us, nothing shall hurt us. In a dungeon, if CHRIST's presence be there by his Spirit, all is comfortable. It can change the nature of all things, sweeteneth every thing.

II. Let us next consider, the description of the church, “My sister, my spouse.” In these sweet compellations there is both affinity and consanguinity; 1. His sister, by blood; 2. His spouse, by marriage; all the bonds that may tie us to CHRIST, and CHRIST to us. 1. We may observe from hence, that CHRIST is our brother, and the church and every member thereof is his sister. “I go,” says CHRIST, “to my Father, and to your Father, to my GOD, and to your God.” “Go,” says he, “and tell my brethren.” This was after his resurrection. His advancement did not change his disposition. Go, tell my brethren that left me so unkindly; go tell Peter that was most unkind of all, and most cast down with the sense of it. He became the church by incarnation. For, all our union is from the first union of two natures in one person. CHRIST became “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” to make us spiritually bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Therefore, let us labor to be like to him, who for that purpose became like to us, “Immanuel, God with us,” that we might be like him, and “partake of the Divine nature.” CHRIST was not ashamed to call us brethren, nor abhorred the virgin's womb. He took our base nature; and not only our nature, but our curse. He was not ashamed of us, and shall we be ashamed to own him? Against this cowardice our Savior pronounceth this thunderbolt: “He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father, and the holy angels,” Mark 8: 38. This should be a motive to have good Christians in high estimation, and to take heed how we wrong them; for their brother will take their part.” Saul, Saul, why persecutest you me? says the Head in heaven, when his members were trodden upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian than the world imagines; for CHRIST takes it as done to himself. Absalom was a man wicked and unnatural, yet he could not endure the wrong done to his sister Thamar. And has CHRIST no affections, think you, now he is in heaven, to her that is so near him as the church is? Howsoever he suffer men to tyrannize over her for awhile, yet it will appear, ere long, that he will take the church's part, for he is our brother.

The church is the daughter of a king, begotten of God; the sister and spouse of a king, because she is the sister and spouse of CHRIST, and the mother of all that are spiritual kings. The church of CHRIST is every way royal. Therefore we are kings, because we are Christians. Hence the Holy Ghost does add here to sister, spouse, indeed, taking the advantage of such relations as are most comfortable to set out the excellent relation that is between CHRIST and his church. Riches, beauty, marriage, nobility, and the like, are scarce worthy of their names; these are but empty things, though our base nature make great matters of them; yet the reality and substance of all these are in heavenly things. True riches are the heavenly graces; true nobility is to be born of GOD, to be the sister and spouse of CHRIST. True pleasures are those of the Spirit, which endure for ever, and will stand when all outward comforts vanish. That mystical union is set down with such variety of expressions, to show, that whatsoever is scattered in the creature severally, is in him entirely. He is both a friend and a brother, a head and a husband to us, therefore he takes the names of all.

We may observe further from hence, that the church is the spouse of CHRIST. It springs out of him, as Eve out of Adam. The spouse of CHRIST was taken out of his side, when it was pierced; the church rose out of his blood and death; for he redeemed it, by satisfying Divine justice. We were in such a condition, that CHRIST must redeem us, before he could wed us. First, he must beincarnate in our nature, before he could be a fit husband. And then, because we were in bondage and captivity, we must be redeemed before he could marry us. “He purchased his church with his own blood.” CHRIST has a right to us, for he bought us dearly. Let us then often think of this, and shall we be ashamed to own him? Against this cowardice our Savior pronounceth this thunderbolt: “He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father, and the holy angels,” Mark 8: 38. This should be a motive to have good Christians in high estimation, and to take heed how we wrong them; for their brother will take their part.” Saul, Saul, why persecutest you me? says the Head in heaven, when his members were trodden upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian than the world imagines; for CHRIST takes it as done to himself. Absalom was a man wicked and unnatural, yet he could not endure the wrong done to his sister Thamar. And has CHRIST no affections, think you, now he is in heaven, to her that is so near him as the church is? Howsoever he suffer men to tyrannize over her for awhile, yet it will appear, ere long, that he will take the church's part, for he is our brother.
Again, if CHRIST be so near us, let us labor for chaste affections; not cleaving to base things. Our affections are never rightly bestowed, but when they are set upon CHRIST; and upon other things as they stand with the love of CHRIST. For the prime love, when it is rightly bestowed, orders and regulates all other loves whatsoever. No man knows how to use earthly things but a Christian, that has first pitched his love on CHRIST; and then seeing all things in him, and in all of them a beam of that love of his, intending happiness to him, he knows how to use every thing in order. Therefore let us keep our communion with CHRIST, and esteem nothing more than his love, because use he esteems nothing more than ours.

III. The next branch is, CHRIST's acceptation, "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have gathered my honey-comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk." So that, together with CHRIST's presence, here is a gracious acceptation of the provision of the church, with a delight in it, and withal a bringing of more with him. The church had a double desire: 1. That CHRIST would come to accept of what she had for him of his own grace, which he had wrought in her soul; and 2. She was also persuaded that he would not come empty, and only to accept of what was there; but also would bring abundance of grace and comfort with him. There-fore she desires acceptation and increase; both which desires he answers. He comes to his garden, shows his acceptation, and withal he brings more. "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk;" that is, I have taken contentment in thy grace. From whence we observe, that God accepts of the graces of his children, and delights in them. But if so be that God accepts the performances and graces, especially the prayers, of his children; let it be an argument to en-courage us to be much in all holy duties. It would deaden the heart to perform service where it would not be accepted. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amiss is pardoned; when a broken desire, a cup of cold water shall not be unrespected; nay, unrewarded, what can we desire more? It is infidelity, which is dishonorable to GOD, and uncomfortable to ourselves, that makes us so barren and cold in duties.

But this is not all. God not only accepts and delights in the graces of his children, but CHRIST likewise comes with an enlargement of what he finds. It is not only true of his last coming to judge the quick and the dead, "I come, and my reward is with me;" but also of his in-termediate comings. When he conies to the soul, he conies not only to accept what is there, but still with his reward with him, to recompense all that is good with the in-crease thereof. Let us then be stirred up to have communion with CHRIST by this motive, that thus we may have an increase of grace. Let us labor to be such as CHRIST may delight in; for our graces are honey and spices to him; and where he tastes sweetness, he will bring more with him. To him that overcometh, he promises the hidden manna. They had manna before; but he means they shall have more abundant communion with himself, who is the hidden manna. The graces of the Spirit of CHRIST delight him, as honey and wine do us, because in the covenant of grace he filleth us by the Spirit of grace, to have comfort in us, as we have in him. For, except there be a mutual joy in one another, there is not communion. Therefore CHRIST furniseth his church with so much grace as is necessary for a slate of absence here, that may fit her for communion with hint for ever in heaven.

Mark, now, how CHRIST draws his friends on: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" Wherein we find CHRIST, out of the largeness of his affections, multipleteh new titles, beloved and friends. Friendship is the sweetness, intimateness, and strength of love. In our friends, our love dwells and rests itself. Conjugal friendship is the sweetest friendship. All the kinds and degrees of friendship meet in CHRIST toward his spouse. It is the friendship of a husband, of a brother; and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendship is, all is too little to express the love of CHRIST. In friendship, there is mutual consent, an union of judgment and affections; there is a mutual sympathy in the good and ill one of another, as if there were one soul in two bodies. And there is likewise liberty, which is the life of friendship. There is a free intercourse between friends, a free opening of secrets. So here CHRIST opens his secrets to us, and we to him. We lay open all our cares and desires before him; and CHRIST's Spirit reveals the secrets of CHRIST's heart to us concerning our salvation. In friendship also there is comfort one in another. CHRIST's delight was to be with the sons of men, and ours as to be with him. And in friendship there is a mutual honor and respect one of another. But here is some difference in this friendship; for though CHRIST calls us friends, and therein in some sort brings himself down to us, yet we must re-member that this is a friendship of unequals. CHRIST's honoring of us is, his putting honor upon us; our honoring him is the giving him the honor due to his name. This friendship must be maintained by due respect on our parts. As he is our friend, so he is our king, and knows how to correct us if we forget our distance. And as CHRIST's friendship is sweet, so it is constant in all conditions. If other friends fail us, this Friend will never fail us. If we are not ashamed of him, he will not be ashamed of us. I-Tow comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort this title of friend afforded; it is a comfortable, a fruitful, and an eternal friendship.

IV. We come now to the invitation of all CHRIST's friends to partake of an abundant feast. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" Wherein we find CHRIST, out of the largeness of his affections, multipleteh new titles, beloved and friends. Friendship is the sweetness, intimateness, and strength of love. In our friends, our love dwells and rests itself. Conjugal friendship is the sweetest friendship. All the kinds and degrees of friendship meet in CHRIST toward his spouse. It is the friendship of a husband, of a brother; and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendship is, all is too little to express the love of CHRIST. In friendship, there is mutual consent, an union of judgment and affections; there is a mutual sympathy in the good and ill one of another, as if there were one soul in two bodies. And there is likewise liberty, which is the life of friendship. There is a free intercourse between friends, a free opening of secrets. So here CHRIST opens his secrets to us, and we to him. We lay open all our cares and desires before him; and CHRIST's Spirit reveals the secrets of CHRIST's heart to us concerning our salvation. In friendship also there is comfort one in another. CHRIST's delight was to be with the sons of men, and ours as to be with him. And in friendship there is a mutual honor and respect one of another. But here is some difference in this friendship; for though CHRIST calls us friends, and therein in some sort brings himself down to us, yet we must re-member that this is a friendship of unequals. CHRIST's honoring of us is, his putting honor upon us; our honoring him is the giving him the honor due to his name. This friendship must be maintained by due respect on our parts. As he is our friend, so he is our king, and knows how to correct us if we forget our distance. And as CHRIST's friendship is sweet, so it is constant in all conditions. If other friends fail us, this Friend will never fail us. If we are not ashamed of him, he will not be ashamed of us. I-Tow comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort this title of friend afforded; it is a comfortable, a fruitful, and an eternal friendship.

Mark, now, how CHRIST draws his friends on: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly!" There is no danger of taking too much. Where the spring is infinite, we can never draw the wells dry. We can never sucke the breasts of his consolation too much; and the more strong and cheerful we are, the better service we shall perform, and the more it will be accepted. If any be hindered by conceit of
unworthiness, if affected deeply with it, let them consider what kind of men were compelled to the banquet; the blind, the lame. See a lively picture of God's mercy in the example of the prodigal; he fears sharp chiding, and the father provides a rich banquet; he go to his father, but the father runs to meet him. Did CHRIST ever turn back any that came unto him, if they came out of a true sense of their wants Nay, but he says, " Whosoever cometh to me, I will by no means cast him out."

But let us inquire particularly, what it was that CHRIST took delight in, and invites others to delight in. We find it was myrrh and spice, honey and honey-come, wine and milk; which show, 1. The sweetness. 2. The variety. 3. The use of grace and spiritual comfort. Myrrh and spices: 1: Refresh the spirits; and, 2. Preserve from putrefaction, which are therefore used in embalming. If the soul be not embalmed with grace, it is a noisome carrion soul; and as it is in itself, so whatsoever cometh from it is abominable. Again, milk and honey nourish and strengthen, and wine increases spirits, and allayeth sorrow and care. "Give wine to him that is ready to die." The sense of the love of CHRIST is sweeter than wine, it banisheth fears, and sorrow and care.

From this mutual delight between CHRIST and his spouse, we may observe next, that there is a mutual feasting between CHRIST and his church. The church bringeth what she has of his Spirit, and CHRIST comes with more plenty. There is not the meanest Christian in whom there is not somewhat to welcome CHRIST withal; but CHRIST sends his provision before, and comes (as we say,) at his own cost; he sends a spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of obedience. Some are content to invite others, but are loath to go to others; they would have wherewith to entertain CHRIST, but are unwilling to be beholden to CHRIST. And some are content to have benefit by CHRIST, as his righteousness to cover them, but they desire not grace to entertain CHRIST. But a heart truly gracious, desireth both to delignt in CHRIST, and that CHRIST may delight in it: it desireth grace together with mercy, holiness with happiness. CHRIST could not delight in his love to us, if we by his grace had, not a love planted in our hearts to him.

But to speak more largely of this feast. We see it pleases CHRIST to vail heavenly matters with comparisions fetched from earthly things, that so he may enter into our souls the better by our senses. So here CHRIST maketh us a feast, a marriage-feast with the king's son, of all feasts the most magnificent. 1. This is a feast, in regard of the choice rarities we have in CHRIST. The comforts we have from CHRIST are the best comforts; the peace, the best peace; the privileges, the highest privileges. "His flesh," crucified for us, to satis fy Divine justice,” is meat-in-deed; his blood,” shed for us, "is drink indeed;” these feed our souls, and that to eternal life. The love of God the Father in, giving CHRIST to death, and CHRIST's love in giving himself, together with full contentment to Divine justice, is the gift that the soul especially feeds on. If he giveth himself, will he not give all things with himself. 2. As in a feast there is variety, so CHRIST maketh a feast of variety of choice things for his spouse. "CHRIST is made to us of GOD, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" that we should not be too much cast down with thoughts of our own folly, guilt, unholliness and misery. There is that in CHRIST which answers to all our wants, and an all-sufficiency for all degrees of happiness. All the graces and comforts we have, and the promises whereby they are made over unto us, are but CHRIST applied in several ways, as the need of every Christian shall require. CHRIST himself is the ocean, issuing into several streams, to refresh the city of God. We can be in no condition but we have a promise to feed on; and " all promises are yea and amen;" made to us in CHRIST, and performed to us for CHRIST. 3. Therefore, as we have in CHRIST a feast for variety, so for sufficiency of all good. No man go hungry from a feast. In CHRIST there is not only abundance, but redundance; as in clouds to drop down showers, as in the sun to send forth beams. As CHRIST is full of grace and truth, so he fully dischargeth all his offices. There is an overflowing of all that is good for our good. He that could multiply bread for the body, he can multiply grace for our soul. If he giveth life, he giveth it in abundance: if he giveth water of life, he giveth rivers, not small streams: if he giveth peace and joy, he giveth it in abundance: his scope is to fill up our joy to the full. As he is able, so " is he willing to do for us much more abundantly than we are able to think or speak." In a feast, there is variety of friendly company; so here friends are stirred up to refresh themselves with us. We have the blessed Trinity, the angels, and all our fellow members in CHRIST to come with us.

But here is the mystery, the founder and master of the feast is CHRIST himself, and he is both guest and banquet and all. All graces and comforts are the fruits of his Spirit, and he alone that infused the soul can satisfy the soul. He that is above conscience. He is that Wisdom that sends forth maidens, Prov. 9: 3, his ministers, to invite to his feast. It is he that comforts arc the fruits of the Spirit, and he alone that infused the soul can satisfy the soul. He that is above angels, and all our fellow members in CHRIST to come with us, the ministry of the Word and sacraments. By these we come to enjoy CHRIST, his comforts and graces; and by this feast of grace we come at length to the feast of glory; where we shall be satisfied with the image of GOD, and enjoy fullness of pleasure for evermore. Upon the whole, we cannot please CHRIST better than by a cheerful taking part of his rich provision: and a Christian aims to " rejoice always in the Lord," and that from enjoying our privileges in him. We are not bidden to mourn always, but to " rejoice always." Indeed, we have causes of mourning, but it is that the seed of joy should sown in mourning; and we can never be in so forlorn a condition wherein, if we understand CHRIST and ourselves, we have not cause of joy. We should labor then to bring with us a taste for these dainties, and an appetite to them. The soul has a taste of its own; and as all creatures that have life have a taste to relish and distinguish that which is good for them, from that which is offensive; so, wheresoever spiritual life is, there is likewise a taste suitable to spiritual things. And if there were not a taste in the soul, we could not delight in GOD, and his rich goodness in CHRIST.
A further observation we shall make upon this gracious invitation of CHRIST to his friends to partake of his graces and dainties, is, that as he therein comes stored with further grace and comfort for his people, and stirs up both the church, and all that bear good will to it, to delight in the graces and comforts of his church; so we ought to rejoice in the comforts and graces of others, and of our selves. A Christian should not only examine his heart for the evil that is in him, to be humbled, but what good there is, that he may be thankful. And since CHRIST accepts the very first-fruits, and delights in them, we should know what he delights in, that we may go boldly to him, considering that it is not of ourselves, but of CHRIST, whatsoever is good. Therefore we ought to know our own graces. And here we have need to have CHRIST's Spirit to help us to know what good is in us. And CHRIST, when he will have us comfortable indeed, will discover to us what cause we have to rejoice, and show us what is the work of his own Spirit. And we should not only rejoice on our own accounts, that we have found favor in the sight of GOD, and are made partakers of his grace, but also in the happy condition of every good Christian. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner: even so all true-hearted Christians should joy in the graces one of another. Want of joy shows want of grace. There is not a surer character of a SATANical disposition than to look on the graces of God's children with a malignant eye. All that have grace in them are of CHRIST's and of the angels disposition: they joy at the conversion and growth of any Christians. Such are styled here, Friends, and beloved; and indeed none but friends and beloved can love as CHRIST loves, and delight as CHRIST delights.

From discoursing on this loving intercourse between CHRIST and his church, we shall proceed to consider the church in a diffe rent situation; which she expresses thus, ver. 2, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." We find here a great change in the spiritual condition of the church. After she had recovered herself out of a former desertion, expressed in the beginning of the third chapter, she now falleth into a deeper desertion from the remainder of corruption getting strength. She now falleth asleep: then she was awake in the night, and sought her Beloved: here is no present awaking, no seeking; there no misusage by the watchmen, as here: there she finds him more speedily; here she falls sick with love before CHRIST discovereth himself.

Before we come to the words, observe in general, that the state of the church and every Christian is subject to many spiritual alterations. Like as we see in Abraham, sometimes strong in faith, sometimes fearful: in David, sometimes standing, sometimes falling; sometime recovering himself, and standing faster; sometimes triumphant, "The Lord is the light of my countenance, whom shall I fear?" Sometimes again crying out, "I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul." There is no creature subject to so many changes as man. From a state of innocency he fell into a state of corruption; from that by grace is restored to a state of grace; and from grace to glory. But it should be our care to watch, lest corruption gather head, and ill humors break out, and to strive for an even frame of soul here, till we come thither, where our condition shall be as now CHRIST is, and as heaven is, altogether unchangeable.

To come to the words: They contain, 1. A confession, "I sleep," and, 2. A correction; "but my heart waketh." The church has a double aspect; one to the ill, her sleeping; the other to her good, her heart, in some degree, awaked. We see here, that after a feast the church falleth asleep. But we must not here conceive this sleep to be that dead sleep that all men are in by nature; nor to be that judicial sleep, that spirit of slumber, which is a further degree of that natural sleep to which God giveth some as a seal of their desperate condition; but here is meant that sleep that arises out of the remainder of corruption unsubdued, and prevailing over, the better part. By comparing the state of the church here, with the state of it in the third chapter, we find that where a careful watch is not kept over the soul, there, after a recovery, will follow a more dangerous distemper. It is best therefore to deal thoroughly with our hearts, else we shall dis honor our own beginnings. Unless we stand upon our guard, the flesh will get the upper hand. The best are no farther safe, than they are watchful. What great need have we then to shun this sleepy temper, which for the present so locks up "the everlasting gates" of our soul, "that the King of Glory cannot enter in," and to strive for this blessed heart-waking disposition, which may help us at all times to see our dangers; and by God's blessing recover us out of them; as here the church does at length, though first beaten by the "watchmen," and in a world of perplexities, ere she can receive her former communion with CHRIST. We find by experience what a woful thing it is for the soul, which has once tasted how gracious the Lord is, to be without a sense of God's love. When it looks upon sin as the cause of this separacion; this is as death unto it. Therefore the church's former care must be our warning, how we grieve the Spirit, and so fall into this spiritual sleep. We may observe farther, in these words, the ingenuousness of the church in laying open her own state. And it is the disposition of God's people to be ingenuous in this respect. And there is good reason: for this ingenuous dealing, (besides that it is giving glory to GOD,) easeth the soul. Whilst the arrow's head sticks in the wound, it will not heal. Sin unconfessed is like a broken piece of iron in the body: it must be gotten out, else it will by festering, cause more danger. It is like poison in the stomach, if it be not presently cast up, it will infect the whole body. Is it not better then to take shame to ourselves now, than to be ashamed hereafter before angels, devils, and men? The cause of God's severe dealing with us, is, that we should deal severely with ourselves. The best trial of religion in us, is, by those actions whereby we reflect on ourselves, by judging and condemning of ourselves; for this argueth a spirit without guile. Sin and shifting come into the world together.

Mark further, another sign of a gracious soul is, To be abased for lesser defects, sleepiness and indisposition to good. One would think drowsiness were no such great matter: O! but the church had such sweet acquaintance with CHRIST, that every little indisposition that hindered any degree of communion was grievous to her. Many confess great fulls, but how few are humbled for dullness of spirit, want of love, of zeal, and cheerfulness in duty! This, accompanied with striving against it, argues a good spirit. A carnal man is not more humbled for gross sin, than a Christian for defects in good actions, when it is not with him as it has been, and as he would. The reason is, where there is a clear light, there motes are discernible: and spiritual life is sensible of any obstruction. This go in the world for unnecessary nicety. The world straightheth not at those gnats. But those upon whose hearts the Sun of Righteousness has shined, have both a clear sight and a tender heart.
You see here, that a Christian has two principles in him, that which is good, and that which is evil, whence issueth the weakness of his actions and affections. They are all mixed, as are the principles from which they come forth. We may observe further, that a Christian man may know how it is with himself, though he be mixed of flesh and spirit; he has a distinguishing knowledge and judgment, whereby he knows both the good and evil in himself. In a dungeon where there is nothing but darkness, both on the eye that should see, and on that which should be seen, he can see nothing; but where there is a supernatural principle, there the light of the Spirit searcheth the dark corners of the heart. A man that has the Spirit knows both; he knows himself and his own heart. The Spirit has a light of its own, even as reason has. Shall a man that is merely natural reflect upon his state, and know what he knows, what he thinks, what he doth? And may not the soul that is raised to a higher state know as much? Undoubtedly it may. Beside, we have the Spirit of God, which is light, and self-evidencing. It shows unto us, where it is, and what it is. The Spirit of God is a discerning Spirit, it discovereth what is flesh and what is spirit.

I sleep. It is one use of our body to help us in spiritual expressions. So here the church fetcheth a comparison from the body to express the state of the soul. I sleep. And indeed bodily and spiritual sleep resemble each other, in the causes, in the effects, and in the dangerous issue. With regard to their causes: as natural sleep arises oft from weariness and want of spirits; so there is a spiritual sleep arising from discouragements, and too much expense of the strength of the soul upon other matters, upon impertinencies that concern it not. Again, as some are brought to sleep by music; so many by flattering enticements and insinuations of others are cast into a spiritual sleep. Again, sleep often arises from want of exercise; so when there is a cessation from spiritual exercise, there followeth a spiritual sleep. Exercise keeps waking. Again, sometimes sleep is caused by some kind of poison, especially the poison of asps, which kills in sleeping: and do not sinful delights do the like to the soul? Insensible evils are the most dangerous.

With regard to their effects, the bodily and spiritual sleep are also alike. Men will draw the curtains and shut out light, when they mean to compose themselves to rest; so when men favor themselves in some ways, not allowable, they are afraid to be disquieted by the light. Light discovereth, awaketh, and stirreth up to working. And men, when they are loath to do what they know, are loath to know what they should do. "They that sleep, sleep in the night." Much of the anger that men bear against the Word laid open to the m, is because it will not suffer them to sleep quietly in their sins. There cannot be a worse sign than when men will not endure wholesome words. In sleep, men dream of false good, and forget true danger. Many dream of meat, and when they awake, their soul is empty. Vain hopes are the dreams of waking men, as vain dreams are of sleeping and carnal men, whose life is but a dream. In sleep there is no exercise of senses or motion; as then men are not sensible of good or ill. Motion followeth sensibility. What good we are not sensible of, we move not unto. Hence sleep is akin to death, for the time depriving us of the use of all our senses. It is all one to have no senses, and not to use the sense. As then men are not sensible of good or ill, so are men in sleep. There is no temptation, no sin, no judgment, but a secure, drowsy soul, is open for. And therefore watchfulness is so often enforced by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures.

They are likewise alike in danger. In sleep the most precious thing—men carry about them, is taken away with-out resistance; and they are ready to let loose what they held fast before, were it never so rich a jewel. And it is so in spiritual sleepiness. Men suffer the procession of the truth to be wrung from them without much with-standing; and with letting fall their watch, let fall like-wise their grace, and are in danger to be robbed of all. There is no danger but a man in sleep is fair for, and exposed unto. Sisera was slain asleep, and Ishbosheth at noon-day. There is no temptation, no sin, no judgment, but a secure, drowsy soul, is open for. And therefore watchfulness is so often enforced by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures.

Having thus treated of the confession of the church, I proceed now to say something of the correction, expressed in these words, "But my heart waketh." The word heart, you know, includes the whole soul. For the heart is put for the understanding; as we say, an understanding heart. To lay things up in our hearts; there it is memory; and to cleave in heart is to cleave in will. To rejoice in heart, means in the affection. So that all the powers of the soul, the whole inward man, (as Paul calls it) is understood by the heart. But what is that good of the church confesseth, when she says, "My heart waketh." First, though she be in a sleepystate, yet she has her judgment. Sound. And again, though she be asleep she has a working in the will, choosing the better part which she will cleave to. The child of God, though asleep, has a general purpose to please God in all things, and no settled purpose to sleep thus. Answerable to his judgment therefore he chooseth the better part and side; he owns God and his cause, even in evil times, cleaving in resolution of heart to the best ways, though with weakness. His conscience likewise is awake in some degree. So the conscience of God's children is never so sleepy, but it is awake in some measure; there is so much life in it, as upon speech or conversation, there will be an opening of it, and a yielding at length to the strength of spiritual reason. And answerable to these, inward powers is the outward obedience of God's children, in their sleepystate. They go on in a course of obedience, though coldly, and not so as to give others a good example, or yield themselves comfort.

But how shall we keep our souls awake? Think that ere long we shall be drawn to an exact account before a strict judge: and shall all our eyes then be sleeping and careless? These and such like considerations we should propound to ourselves, that so we might have waking souls. Moreover it conduceth much to the awakening of the soul to keep faith awake. It is not the greatness, alone, but the presence of great things that moves us. Now it is the nature of faith to present things powerfully to the soul; for it sets things before us in the Word of Jehovah, that made all things of nothing, and is Lord of his Word, to give a being to whatsoever he has spoken. Faith is an awakening
grace, keep that awake, and it will keep all other graces awake. When a man believes, that all these things shall be on fire ere long; that heaven and earth shall fall in pieces; that we shall be shortly called to give an account of the things done in the body; when faith apprehends, and sets this before the eye of the soul, it affects the same marvelously. Therefore let faith set before us some present thoughts according to its temper; sometimes terrible things to awaken it out of its dullness; sometimes glorious things, to promote and quicken, to awaken it out of its sadness. When we are in a prosperous estate, let faith make present all the sins and temptations that usually accompany such an estate; if in adversity, think of what sins may beset us there; this will awaken such graces in us, as are suitable to such an estate, for the preventing of such sins and temptations, and so keep our hearts in exercise to godliness. Withal, labor for abundance of the Spirit of God; for what makes men sleepy and drowsy, The want of spirits, whereby the strength sinks and falls. Christians should know, that there is a necessity, if they will keep them-selves waking, to keep themselves spiritual. Pray for the Spirit above all things; it is the life of our life; the soul of our soul. What is the body without the soul, or the soul without the Spirit? What a dead lump. And let us keep ourselves in such good ways, that we may expect the presence of the Spirit to be with us, which will keep us awake.

Again, we must keep ourselves in as much light as may be; for all sleepiness comes with darkness. Let us keep our souls in perpetual light. When any doubt or dark thought arises, upon, yielding thereunto there comes a sleepy temper. Sleepiness in the affections arises from darkness of judgment. The more we labor to increase our knowledge, and the more the spiritual beams of it shine in at our windows, the more shall we be able to keep awake. Another means to keep the soul awake is to labor to preserve it in the fear of God. Fear is an awakening affection, yea one of the most awakening. For, naturally, we are more moved with dangers, than stirred with hopes; therefore that affection that is most owning and awakening affection. It is one character of a Christian, who, when he has lost almost all grace, (according to his feeling) yet the fear of God is always left with him. God makes that the bond of the new covenant: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." One Christian is better than another, by how much he fears more than another. Of all Christians, mark, those are most gracious, spiritual, and heavenly, that are the most awful, and careful of their speeches, courses, and demeanors; tender, even of offending God in little things. Always as a man grows in grace, he grows in awfulness, and in jealousy of his own corruptions. Therefore let us preserve, by all means, this awful affection, the fear of God. Let us examine the state of our own souls, which will preserve us in a waking state. It is a notable means to keep us awake when we keep our hearts in fear of such sins, as either by our calling, custom, company, or the time we live in, or by our own disposition, we are most prone to.

In the last place, it is a thing of no small consequence, that we keep company with waking and faithful Christians, such as neither sleep themselves, nor willingly suffer any to sleep that are near them. It is a report and a true one of the sweating-sickness, that they were kept awake, by those that were with them, escaped; but the sickness was deadly if they were suffered to sleep. It is one of the best fruits of our spiritual good acquaintance to keep one another awake. It is an unpleasant work on both sides. But we shall one day cry out against all them, that have pleased themselves and us, in rocking us asleep, and thank those that have pulled us with fear out of the fire, though against our wills.

The church having so freely and ingenuously confessed what she could against herself, proceeds yet further to acquaint us with the particulars of her disposition, ver. 2, "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh." Wherein we find, (which is a good sign) that she was not in a dead sleep, but that she heard and discerned the voice of her beloved; and more than that, that she remembered all his sweet words and allures, whereby she pressed her to open unto him, saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled;" which is set out, with a further moving argument of those inconveniences which CHRIST had suffered in his waiting for entertainment in her heart: "For my head is filled with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." All which aggravates her offence, and his patience towards miserable sinners; that he should wait so long for admission into our wretched souls, that he may govern them by his Spirit.

From the church’s hearing and discerning the voice of her beloved, we may observe that a Christian soul does know the voice of CHRIST, even in a sleepy state: but much more when in a lively frame. God’s believers are CHRIST’s sheep; now “my sheep (says CHRIST) hear my voice.” It is the ear-mark (as it were) of a Christian, one of the characters of the new man, “to taste words by the ear,” (as Job says;) he has a spiritual taste, a discerning relish in his ear; for he has the Spirit of God, and therefore relisheth what is suitable to the Spirit. Now the voice of CHRIST without in the ministry, and the Spirit of CHRIST within in the heart, are suitable each to other. Another point we may gather from hence, is, that, take a Christian at the lowest, his heart yearns after CHRIST; acknowledging him to be his beloved. There is a conjugal chastity in the soul of a true Christian, holding firm to the covenant and marriage between CHRIST and it; he keeps that inviolable. Though he may be drowsy, yet there remains a conjugal, spouse-like affection.

We come now to make some observations on CHRIST’s carriage towards the church in order to gain admittance. And 1. He knocketh; 2. He bespeaks her with sweet and friendly complaiations and 3. He lays before her his great patience and the inconveniency he suffered in waiting long for admittance. From whence we may observe in general, that CHRIST still desires farther and further communion with his church. Even as the true soul, that is touched with the Spirit, desires nearer and nearer communion with CHRIST: so he seeks nearer and nearer communion with his spouse by all sanctified means. CHRIST has never enough of the soul. Again, we may see from hence, that CHRIST takes not the advantage of the sins of his church, to leave her altogether. Though the church be sleepy, CHRIST contin ues knocking. The church of Laodicea was a lukewarm, proud, hypocritical church; yet, “behold (says CHRIST) I stand at the door and knock.”
And here he does not stand knocking, but he wizh suffereth indignities, the dew to fall upon him. CHRIST therefore refuses not weak sinners: he that commands that we should **receive him that is weak in the faith,** will he reject him that is weak and sleepy? No. What father will neglect his child for some failings and weaknesses Nature will move him to respect him as a child.

How merciful is CHRIST both by his office, and by his nature. He took our nature upon him, that he might be a merciful Redeemer. And then as GOD, also he is Love. Whatsoever God shows himself to his church, he does it in love. If he be angry in correcting, it is out of love. If merciful, it is out of love. If he be powerful in defending his church, and revenging himself on our enemies, all is love. **"God is love,"** (says John) that is, He shows himself only in expressions of love to his church. So CHRIST, as GOD, is all love to the church. Like wise CHRIST, as man, was man for this end, to be all love and mercy. Take him in his office, as JESUS to be a Savior, he carrieth salvation in his wings.

Let us more particularly consider the means that CHRIST uses in order to gain admittance. And here how excellently is the expression of CHRIST's mercy, love, and patience set out. in the first thing (He knocked). The expression is taken from the fashion of men, in this kind; God condescending to speak to us in our own way. He knocks that we should open and let him come into our hearts, into our more intimate affections. But how does he knock Every kind of way. Sometimes there is a calling for entrance by voice; and when a voice may serve, there needs no further knocking. Sometimes both by voice and knocking. If the voice will not serve, knocking comes after. So it is here, CHRIST does knock and speak; uses the voice of his Word, and knocks by his works; and both together sometimes. But whether by works of mercy or of judgment, he labors to raise the sleepy soul. CHRIST usually begins to call with mercy. All the creatures and blessings of God carry in them (as it were) a voice of God to the soul, that it would entertain his love. There goes a voice of love with every blessing. And the love, the mercy and goodness of God in the creature, is better than the creature itself. As we say of gifts, the love of the giver is better than the gift itself. So the love of GOD, in all his benefits, is better than the thing itself. Every creature and benefit speaks as it were to us; we serve thee, that you may serve him, that made thee and us. There is a speech (as it were) in every favor. If favors cannot prevail, then come corrections, which are the voice of God also "Hear the rod and him that smiteth." **But has the rod a voice** "Yes; for what do corrections speak, but amendment of the fault we are corrected for? So we must hear the rod, all corrections; they are as knockings, that we should open to God and CHRIST. And because corrections of themselves will not amend us, GOD, to this kind of knocking, adds a voice; he teacheth and corrects together. **Happy is that man that you correctest, and teachest out of thy law,**" says the Psalmist. Correction without teaching is to little purpose; therefore God adds instruction to correction. He opens the conscience so, that it tells us, it is for this that we are corrected. Both blessings and corrections are from GOD, they will not away, (especially corrections) till the y have an answer; for they are sent of GOD, who will be sure to have an answer, either in our conversion, or confusion, when he begins once.

Many other ways God uses to knock at our hearts. The examples of those that are good call upon us. The examples of God's justice upon others are speeches to us. He knocks at our door then. He intends our correction, when he visits another; so that if we amend by that, he needs not take us in hand. But besides all this, there is a more near knocking that CHRIST uses to the church: his ministeria knocking. In the days of his flesh he was a preacher and prophet himself, and now he is ascended into heaven, he has given gifts to men, and men to the church, by whom he speaks to the end of the world; they are CHRIST's mouth. As we said of the penmen of the Holy Scripture, they were but the hand to write, CHRIST was the head to indite: so in preaching and unfolding the Word, they are but CHRIST's mouth and his voice, as it is said of John; and as it is said of Noah's time, "The Spirit of CHRIST preached in the days of Noah to the souls in prison." And now he is in heaven, he speaks to them. And CHRIST is either received or rejected in his ministers. **He that heareth you, heareth me; he that despises you, despises me." CHRIST speaks by his ministers, and they use all kinds of means that CHRIST may be entertained ed. They move all stones, as it were, sometimes threatenings, sometimes intreaties; sometimes they come as sons of thunder, sometimes with the still voice of promises. And because one man is not so fit as another for all varieties of conditions and spirits; therefore God gives variety of gifts to his ministers, that they may knock at the heart of every man by their several gifts. John the Baptist, by a more thundering way of preaching, to make way for CHRIST to come, threateneth judgment: but CHRIST comes with, **"Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth"** (Matt. 5:3). And here he does not stand knocking, but he wizh suffereth indignities, the dew to fall upon him. CHRIST therefore refuses not weak sinners: he that commands that we should **receive him that is weak in the faith,** will he reject him that is weak and sleepy? No. What father will neglect his child for some failings and weaknesses Nature will move him to respect him as a child.

But because of itself this ministry is a dead letter, therefore he joins that, which knocks at the heart together with the Word; even the Spirit, which is the life and soul of the Word; and when the inward word or voice of the Spirit, and the outward word or ministry go together, then CHRIST does effectually knock, and stir up the heart. Now this Spirit with sweet inspirations moves the heart, lightens the understanding, quickens the dull affections, and stirs them up to duty; as it is, Isa. 30: 21. "And thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk in it." The Spirit moves us sweetly agreeable to our own nature; it offers not violence to us but so as in Hosea. 1: 4, "I drew them by the cords of a man;" that is, by reasons and motives befitting the nature of a man. And besides his Spirit, God has planted in us a conscience to call upon us, to be his vicar, a God in us to do his office, to call upon us, to direct us, check, and condemn us. And whilst CHRIST thus knocketh, all the three persons maybe said to do it. For there is the Father and the Spirit with CHRIST, who doeth all by his Spirit, and from whom he has commission. Therefore God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost knock at the heart. **"Open to me, my love, my dove, my undefiled;"** but CHRIST especially by his Spirit, because it is his office. Therefore let us take notice of this voice of CHRIST in the Word, and not think as Samuel thought, that Eli spoke when God spoke; let us think that God speaks to us in the ministry, that CHRIST comes to woo us, and win us thereby. And we ministers are the friends of the bride-groom, who are to hear what CHRIST says to the
church; and we must pray to him, that he would teach us what to teach others. We are to procure the contract, and to perfect it till the nuptials are in heaven; that is our work. And you that are hearers, if you do not regard CHRIST's voice in the ministry; know there is a voice you cannot shake off, that peremptory voice at the day of judgment, "Go, ye cursed into hell-fire."

But our adversaries say, "How shall we know that the Word is the Word of God For this heretic says thus, and this interprets it thus." This is the common objection of the great rabbies amongst them. We answer, God's "sheep hear his voice;" when his Word is unfolded, his Spirit goes together with it, breeding a relish of the Word in the hearts of the people, whereby they are able to taste and relish it; and that has a supernatural power and majesty in it, which carries its own evidence. How shall we know light to be light It carries evidence in itself that it is light. How know we that the fire is hot Because it carries evidence in itself that it is so. So if you ask, how we know the Word of God to be the Word of God I say, it carries in itself inbred arguments and characters, so that the soul can say, this Word can be none other but the Word of God; it has such a majesty and power to cast down, and raise up, and to comfort, and to direct, that it carries with it its own evidence. Thus we answer them; which they can answer no way but by cavils. God's sheep hear the voice of CHRIST. He speaks, and the church understands him, "and a stranger's voice they will not hear," John 10: 5. And indeed, this is the only sure way of understanding the Word to be of GOD, from an inbred principle of the majesty in the Word, and a powerful work thereof on the soul itself; and an assent so grounded, is that which makes a sound Christian.
To make some use of this consideration of CHRIST's various and frequent knocking at our hearts. First, think well of CHRIST. Time will come, that the devil will set upon us with sharp temptations, fiery darts, temptations to despair, and present CHRIST amiss, as if he were not willing to receive as: but seeing he knocks at our hearts, uses mercies and judgments, the ministry of his Spirit, and consciences, and all; will he not entertain us, when we come to him, that seeks this entertainment at our hands Certainly he will. And we need not wonder at this his willingness to receive us, when we first know that God became-man, and Life itself came to die, and to be a curse for us. He has done the greater, and will he not do the less. Such considerations as these being mixed with the Spirit, are effectual for the conversion of poor souls. Is there such love in God to become man, and to be a savior to woo me for my love. Surely thinks the soul then, he desires my salvation and conversion. And to what kind of persons does he come? None can object unworthiness: I am poor; he conies to the poor: I am laden and wretched; he says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden." I have nothing; he says, "Come and buy honey, milk, and wine, though you have nothing." You can object nothing, but it is taken away by the Holy Ghost, wisely preventing all the objections of a sinful soul. This is the beginning of con-version; and when we are converted, these thoughts with admiration of CHRIST's condescending, are effectual to give CHRIST further entrance into the soul.

Oh! but take heed that these make not any secure. For if we give not entrance to CHRIST, all this will be a further aggravation of our damnation. How will this justify the sentence upon those hereafter, that now bid CHRIST depart from them? What do profane persons in the church, but bid CHRIST depart from them? Especially in the motions of his Spirit? They entertain CHRIST in the outward room, they know a little of him in the brain; but in the heart, the secret room, he must not come. Is it not equal, that he should say to such, "Depart ye cursed, I know you not:" You would not give entrance to me, I will not now entertain you. Where God magnifies his mercy in this way, inviting by judgments, mercies, ministry, and Spirit, if they be despised, he will magnify his judgment hereafter: Let us then consider, the greater means the greater judgments, if we be not won by them. Therefore, let us labor to hold CHRIST. Let him have the best room in our souls. Let us give up the keys to him, and desire him to rule our understandings, to know nothing but him, and what may stand with his truth. Let us desire that he would rule in our wills and affections, sway all that is in us; for that is his meaning, when he says, "Open to me;" so that I may rule, as in mine own house, as the husband rules in his family, and a king in his kingdom. He will have all yielded up to him. The reason why men are so loath to open to CHRIST is, because he requires all. But what shall we lose by giving all to him? Do we entertain CHRIST to our loss? Does he come empty? No; he comes with all grace. His goodness is a communicative, diffusive goodness. He comes to spread his treasures, to enrich the heart with all grace and strength to bear all afflictions, to encounter all dangers, to bring peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He comes indeed to make our hearts, as it were, a heaven. Do but consider this, he com es not for his own ends, but to empty his goodness into our hearts. And if we wait we lose no-thing thereby, but are gainers by it. The longer we wait, he comes with more abundant grace and comfort in the end, and shows himself more rich and bountiful.

Consider we next the sweet and friendly compellations that CHRIST uses to his church, in order to gain admittance: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." Here CHRIST first addresses the church as his sister. We observed before, that the church of God is CHRIST's sister and spouse; we are knit to him both by consanguinity and by affinity. The nearest affinity is marriage, and the nearest consanguinity is sister. So there are all bonds to knit us to CHRIST. Whatsoever is strong in any bond, he knits us to him by it. Is there any love in a husband, a brother, a mother, a friend? Is there any love scattered in any relation? Gather it all into one; and all that love, and a love to his church. All bonds knit us to CHRIST.

He next calls her, "My love;" that is, my beloved, whom I love with the strongest bowels of affection. CHRIST's love is so great to his church and children, and so continual to it, that his church and people, and every Christian soul, is the seat of his love. He loves all his creatures; they have all some beams of his goodness, (which he must needs love,) therefore he loves them as creatures; and as they are more or less capable of a higher degree of goodness; but for his church and children, they are his love indeed. But what is the ground of such love? He loves us because he sees his own graces in us. He loves what is his in us. Before we are actually his, he loves us with a love of good will, to desire all good to us; but when we have any thing of his Spirit, that our natures are altered, he loves us with a love of friendship; with the love of an head, husband, friend. He loves his own image. If we consider also what he has done and suffered for her, we may well say, the church is his love. He called us when we resisted; and then also he justified us, and clothed us with his own righteousness; and after feeds us with his own body. As the soul is the most excellent thing in the world, so he has provided for it the most excellent dainties and ornaments. But we shall never see fully what his love is, till we be all in one place, till we meet him in the mansions of bliss and glory, whither he is gone before to prepare a place for us. It were an infinite argument to follow to chew the love of CHRIST, which is beyond all knowledge; it is too large to us; to know all the dimensions of it, which we should ever think, speak, and meditate of; because the soul is then in the most fit temper to serve, love, and glorify GOD, when it is most apprehensive of his great love. The love of CHRIST to us -ward is a five love, a pre-venting love. He loved us before we could love him; he loved us when we resisted him, and were his enemies. Likewise it is a most tender love, as you have it, Isai. xlix. 15, " Can a mother forget her sucking child If she could, yet will I not forget thee: you art
written on the palms of my hands." He has us in his heart, in his eye, in his hand, in a mother's heart, and beyond it; he has a tender eye and a powerful hand to maintain his church.

There is no love comparable to this love of CHRIST, which is above the love of women, of father, or mother; therefore he gave himself (the best thing in heaven or in earth,) to show his love. When he was God equal with his Father, he loved his church, and gave himself for it. How could he discover his love better than to take our nature How could he come nearer to us than by being incarnate, so to be borne of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? He draws things nearer wheresoever it is. It drew the Son of God out of heaven to the womb of the Virgin, there to be incarnate, and after that, not only to be a man, but a miserable man, because we could not be his spouse unless he purchased us by his death. How sweet was the love of CHRIST to heal us, not by scouring, or lancing, but by making a plaster of his own blood, which he poured out for those that shed it in malice and hatred. What a wondrous love is it, that he should pour forth tears for the soul that shed his blood! That he prayed for those that persecuted him! And what wondrous love is it now that he sympathizeth with us in heaven, a countenancing the least harm that is done to the least member he has, as done to himself! "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou one?" And that he should take us into one body with himself. And he does not content himself with anything that he can do for us here; but his desire is, that we may be one with him more and more, and be for ever with him in the heavens. We may especially know his love by this, that it draws us upwards, and makes us heavenly-minded; it makes us desire further and further communion with him. There is an attractive force in CHRIST's love; wheresoever it is, it draws the heart and affections after it.

Let us then often warm our hearts with the consideration hereof, because all our love is from this love of his. Oh! the wonderful love of GOD, that both such transcendent majesty and such infinite love should dwell together! We say, majesty and love never dwell together, because love is an abasing of the soul to all services. But herein it is false; for here majesty and love dwell together in the heart of one CHRIST; which majesty has stooped as low as his almighty power could give leave.

Nay, it was an almighty power that he could stoop so low, and yet be GOD, keeping his majesty still. For God to become man, to hide his majesty for a while, not to be known to be GOD, and to hide it so far as to die for us. What an almighty power was this, that could go so low, and yet preserve himself GOD still? Yet this we see in our blessed Savor. The greatest majesty met with the greatest abasement that ever was, and all out of love to our poor souls. There was no abasement that ever was so low as that of CHRIST for us, to want for a time even the comfort of the presence of his Father. For him to live so long out of heaven, and oft-times without comfort, that he might be a sacrifice for our sins, what a condescending was this! It is said, Psal. 6, that God "stoops to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth." It is indeed a wondrous condescending that God will look upon things below; but that he should become man, and suffer as he did here, this is humility to astonishment. We think humility is not a grace be-coming the majesty of GOD: it is not indeed; but there is some resemblance of that grace in CHRIST, that he should wail himself with flesh, and all out of love to us. The consideration of these things is wondrously effectual, as to strengthen faith, so to kindle love.

Next follows, "My dove." When CHRIST was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared in the shape of a dove, to discover that CHRIST had the disposition of a dove, and be meek and gentle; as likewise to show what his office should be. For even as the dove in Noah's ark was sent out, and came again to the ark with an olive-branch, to show that the waters were abated; so CHRIST was to come with an olive-leaf of peace and reconciliation in his mouth, to show that God's wrath was appeased. No, the Spirit that framed him to be like a dove, frames the church to be like a dove; "as the ointment that was poured on Aaron's head ran down upon the skirts of his garment is."

The church is compared to a dove, 1. Because it has the like disposition as is found in a dove. There is some good in all creatures; there is none but has a beam of God's majesty, of some attribute; but some more than others. There is an image of virtue even in the inferior creatures. Therefore the Scriptures send us to them for many virtues, as the sluggard to the ant. And indeed we may see the true perfection of the first creation more in the creatures than in ourselves: for there is no such degeneration in any creature as there is man. The first property of a dove I shall mention is meekness. And the church is meek, both to God and man, not given to murmurers and revenge. Hereby we show ourselves to have the Spirit of CHRIST. And this grace disposeth us to a nearer communion with God than other graces. It is a grace that God most delights in, and would have his spouse to be adorned with. Moses, we read, was a mighty man in prayer; and a special means to fit him thereunto was, he was the meekest man on earth. Therefore in that grace we must especially be like this meekest creature, which has no way to revenge itself. Again, the dove is a simple creature, without guile. There is a simplicity that is sinful, when there is no mixture of wisdom in it; and there is a simplicity wherewith God is simple. There is nothing contrary in him; there is no mixture of any thing opposite. So there is a good simplicity in us when there is no mixture of fraud, no duplicity in the soul. In this we are to be like doves. Again, this creature is a faithful creature; that is mainly here aimed at; it is faithful to the mate. So the Christian, by the Spirit of GOD, is made faithful to CHRIST; keeps the judgment chaste; is not tainted with errors and sins; keeps his affectio n chastely, sets no thing in his heart above CHRIST; "Whom has he in heaven but him, and what is there on earth he desires besides him?"

Again, this creature is of a neat disposition; it will not lodge where it shall be troubled with stench; and it likewise feeds on pure grain. So the Christian soul in this respect is like a dove, that will not feed upon sinful pleasures, but upon CHRIST and spiritual things. A natural man feedeth upon dust, earth, and earthly things; but a Christian will not feed on that which is base and earthly, but upon heavenly and spiritual things.
Again, 2. The church is compared to a dove on account of its mournful, suffering condition. The dove is molested by all the birds of prey, it being the common prey of all ravenous birds. So the poor church of God is persecuted and molested. But, what defense has God's church? Why, none but flight: even as the dove has nothing but flight; it has no talons to wound. So we are to fly to God as to our mountain, fly to the ark that God may take us in. The church of God has no other refuge but to be housed in God and Christ, her ark. A mourning state is likewise generally the lot of the church; as Hezekiah says of himself, Tsai. xxxiii. "He mourned as a dove, and chattered like a crane."

She, like the turtle, mourns in all afflictions, deserts, and molestations of wicked men; she mourns to God, who hears the bemoanings of his own Spirit in her, and woe to all other birds, the birds of prey, when the turtles mourn because of their cruelty; it is a presage of ruin to them, when they force the turtle to sorrow and mourning. So much for the title of dove.

The last compellation is, "My undefiled." The church is undefiled, especially in that it is the spouse of Christ, and clothed with the robes of his righteousness. For there is an exchange as soon as ever we are united to Christ; our sins are laid upon him, and his righteousness is made ours. Christ and his church are not to be considered as two, when we speak of this undefiledness, but as one. And the church having Christ with all that is Christ's, they have the field and the pearl in the field together; and Christ giving himself to the church, he gives his righteousness, which is the church's. The conscience knows its own imperfection: so it is defiled, and accuses of sin. Yet as it looks to Christ, it sees itself pure, and purged from all sin. Here is the victory of faith in the deepest sense of sin, pollution, and defilement in ourselves, at the same time, to see an absolute and perfect righteousness in Jesus Christ. Herein is the triumph of faith, whereby it answers God. And Christ, who sees our imperfections, (but it is to purge and cleanse them away, not to condemn us for them,) at the same time sees us in his own love, clothed with his righteousness, as one with himself, endowed with whatsoever he has; his satisfaction and obedience being ours as verily as anything in the world is. Thus he looks on us, and faith looks upon him too, and together with the sight and sense of sin, it apprehends righteousness, perfect righteousness, and so is undefiled. This is the main point in religion, and the comfort of Christians to be lost in themselves, as it were, and to be only "found in Christ," not having the own righteousness, but the righteousness of God in him." This is a mystery which none knows but a believing soul. No one sees corruption more, none sees themselves freed more; they have an inward sight to see de corruption, and an inward faith to see God reconciled. And surely there can be no greater honor to Christ than this, in the sense of sin, of wants, imperfections, stains, and blemishes, to wrap ourselves in the righteousness of Christ, with boldness to go clothed in the garments of this our elder Brother to the throne of grace. This is an honor to Christ, to attribute so much to his righteousness, that being clothed the rewith, we can boldly break through the fire of God's justice, and all those terrible attributes, when we see them all, as it were, satisfied fully in Christ. For Christ with his righteousness could go through the justice of God, having satisfied it to the full for us. And we, being clothed with this his righteousness and satisfaction, maygo through too.

But besides this, there is another quality in the church, in respect to which she is called "undefiled," that is, in purity of disposition, tending to perfection. For we are chosen unto perfection, and to be holy in his sight, and perfectly holy, undefiled, and pure. What did God aim at in choosing us? Did he aim at these imperfect beginnings to rest there? No; we were chosen to perfection. For as in this natural life, with regard to the body, God purposed that we should not only have all the limbs of men, but grow from infancy to perfection; so, no question, he intends for the soul that we should not only have the lineaments of Christianity, a sanctified judgment, with affections in part renewed; but he has chosen us to entire perfection. And indeed it is the character of a judicious, believing Christian soul, that he can value the righteousness of Christ out of himself, laboring, living, and dying, to appear in that, and yet comfort himself during this conflict between the flesh and the spirit, that in time this inherent grace shall be brought to perfection. And Christ's desire is, that the work of grace should be perfected in us. The end of redemption is the righteousness of Christ out of himself, laboring, living and dying, to appear in that, and yet comfort himself during this conflict between the flesh and the spirit, that in time this inherent grace shall be brought to perfection. And Christ's desire is, that the work of grace should be perfected in us. The end of redemption is, that he might purg the church here, and make it a glorious spouse in heaven. He looks upon us as we shall be ere long; and therefore he says, "To be dead to sin," while we are dying to it. As a man when he is condemned, and going to his execution, is a dead man; so there is a sentence passed upon sin and corruption; it shall be abolished and die. Therefore it is dead in sentence, and dying in execution. So we are said, "To sit in heavenly places with Christ," because he means to bring us thither. Thus faith looks upon Christ, and Christ looks upon us. This should comfort us in weakness, that God regards us not in our present imperfections, but as he means to make us ere long.

What should we do then, if Christ does make his church thus, "His love, his dove, his undefiled," but lay open our souls to his love, and reflect love to him again? This perpetual intercourse between Christ and his spouse, is her main happiness here, and her eternal happiness in heaven. In looking on him, who has done so much for us, he shines on us, and we look back again upon him. A Christian should say, My love was crucified, my love died, my love is in heaven; and for the things on earth, I love them as they have a been of him in them, as they lead me to him; but he is my love, there my love is pitched, even upon him. This is the ground of these scripture phrases, Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And "set your affections on things above." Why Christ our love is there. The soul is more where it loves, than where its residence is. It dies, as it were, to other things, and lives in the thing it loves; therefore our thoughts and affections, our joy and delight, should be drawn up to Christ; for in deed his love has such a magnetic force, that where it is, it will draw up the heavy iron, the gross soul, and make it heavenly; for there is a binding, a drawing force in this excellent affection of love.

Again: since he accounts us undefiled, because he means to make us so, and now looks on us as we shall be, in all our infirmities, let us comfort ourselves thus; "It shall not be always thus with me; this flesh of mine shall decay as Saul's house, and the spirit at last shall
conquer in all this. I am not chosen to this beginning, to this conflicting course of life; I am chosen to triumph, to perfection of grace. This is my comfort, I shall get the better at last." Let us still rejoice, in that we are chosen to sanctification, which is a little begun, being an earnest of other blessings. Let us not rest in the pledge, or in the earnest, but labor for a further pledge of more strength and grace. For those that have the Spirit of CHRIST, will strive to be as unsotted and as heavenly as they can, to fit themselves for that heavenly condition as much as may be; and because they cannot be in heaven now, yet they will converse there as much as they can; and because they cannot the with such company altogether, they will be as much as may be, laboring as they are able, to be that which they shall be hereafter. Imperfection contents them not; and there-fore they pray still in the Lord's prayer, " Thy kingdom come." Nothing contents them but perfection.

We now consider the excusses the church made for not opening immediately to her Beloved, as they are set down, ver. 3., " I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Notwithstanding all CHRIST's persuasion, yet we find the church draws back, and seems to have reason so to do. " I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on again?" to let thee in; " I have washed my feet, (a phrase taken from the custom of those hot countries,) how shall I defile them?" to rise and open the door to thee There is a spiritual meaning herein; as if she had said, I have some ease by this sleepy profession, some freedom from evil tongues, and some exemption from some troubles I was in before, I was then too indiscreet; will you call me again to those troubles that I have wisely avoided No; " I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" I am content to have with CHRIST. To instance in some particulars.

A Christian's life should be nothing but a communion with CHRIST, a walking in the Spirit. He should adorn his profession by a lively performance of all duty, and be exemplary to others; and should be in such a frame, that he should walk continually "in the comforts of the Holy Ghost;" undismayed and undaunted, " and abound in the fruits of the Spirit," and do all the good he can wheresoever he cones. He should " keep himself unsotted from the world, " go against the stream, and be continually in such a temper, that it should be the joy of his heart to be dissolved And to be with CHRIST. But will nature endure this, think you No, it will not. You shall see this more particularly in the next observation.

One way, whereby our nature hinders this communion with CHRIST, and the shining of a believer in a Christian course, is by false pretences, reasons, and excuses. The flesh never wants excuses and pretences to shift and shuffle off duties; there was never yet any careless, sinful course, but it had the flesh to justify it with one reason or other; there was never, yet any man came to he II, but had some pretence for coming thither. And therefore it is good to understand the shifts of nature, and the pretences which it has. As it is good to know the truth of GOD, and of CHRIST revealed in his Word, so it is to know the falseness and deceitfulness of our own hearts. Every one has his several pretexes, as his state and condition is. We think we should be losers, if we should give ourselves to that degree of godliness which others do; whereas God does curse those blessings which men get with neglect of duty to him. Whenever any one enters upon a Christian course, how many objection will be immediately brought " You shall lose the favor of such an one." Never care for that favor you can not keep with God's. The favor of man is a snare, take heed of that favor that snares thee. You losest the favor and company, but you gainest the favor of CHRIST, and the company of angels. " Yea, but the world will rail on me, and reproach me with my old sins." Care not:
God will do thee good for that: as David said, when Shimei cursed him, "Yea, but I shall lose my pleasure." Oh! but carnal pleasures end in death. They are at best but pleasures of sin for a season; and you shall not lose by the change; for "the ways of wisdom are pleasantness;" however outwardly it seems, yet there is a paradise within. "But if I be thus precise, the times are so bad, I shall be alone." Complain not of the times when thou makest them worse. You should make the times better. The worse the times are, the better he thou; for this is thy glory, to be good in an evil generation. What brings destruction on God's people, but their joining with the wicked When they joined with the children of men, then came the flood. Those likewise that are worldly have excuses also: "But I must attend to my calling: He that provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel." As if God had set up any calling to hinder the calling of Christianity. As if that were not the greatest calling, and the best part that will abide with us for ever. As if it were not the part of a Christian to redeem time from his calling for the duties of Christianity. "I have no time, say you, what will you. have me to do" Why, what time had David He meditated in the'law of God day and night; and yet he had the affairs of a kingdom on his hands.

Thus every one, as their state and condition is, have several pretences and excuses. Those that are young say, "We have time enough for these things;" whereas, (besides the uncertainty of life,) the custom of sin, the engaging our hearts deeper and deeper into the world, makes it a more difficult thing to be a Christian. It more and more darkens our understanding, and estrangeth our affections from good things. Time is a special mercy; but when you have not time only, burthe means, good company, and good motions, consider you may never have such a gale again; thy heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Again, who would want the comforts of religion even for the present? As Austin says, "I have wanted: thy sweetness too long." What folly is it to want the sweetness and comfort of religion, so long as we may have it? Others pretend the uncomfortatleness of religion; whereas indeed there is no sound comfort without having our hearts in a perfect communion with CHRIST. There is no pleasure like the pleasure of serving God. As the fire has light and heat always in it; so there is no holy action that we perform thoroughly, but, as it has an increase of strength, so of comfort and joy annexed to it. There is a present reward annexed to all things that are spiritually good; they carry with them present peace and joy.

These and a thousand like discouragements men frame to themselves. "My health will not serve; I shall en-danger my life." There is a lion in the way, says the sluggard, who, with his excuses, "thinks himself wiser than the wisest in the city." There is none so wise as the sluggard. For belly policy teacheth him a great many excuses, which he thinks will go for wisdom; because by them he thinks to sleep in a whole skin. Yet he is but a sluggard for all that; and though he plead, Yet a little while, poverty (not only outward, but spiritual poverty,) and barrenness of soul, will come upon him as an armed man.

But what course should we take that we may retain a relish of heavenly things, so as not to loath religious exercises, or put them off with excuses? First, Resolve not to consult with flesh and blood: for it always counsels us for ease, as Peter counselled CHRIST. We have a nature in us like unto Peter's; it still says, "Sparce, pity thyself." If men were in a city environed round with enemies, would they consult with them what they should do for the defense of the city Were it not a mad part? And is it not a greater madness when Christians consult with flesh and blood what they should do in duties of obedience? We should take heed therefore of consulting with our enemy; of listening to the counsel of flesh and blood; especially when the matter comes to suffering; for on that, of all other things, flesh and blood draw back. Every one has a Peter in himself, that a stall, "Spare thyself;" you are indiscreet to venture thyself upon this and that hazard. But where the judgment is convinced of the goodness of the cause, go on, whatever the suffering be. It is not necessary that we should live in riches, honors, pleasures; but it is necessary that we should live good Christians. Therefore when flesh and blood object, consult not with them: First, because they are enemies, and therefore to be suspected. Secondly, because it is said, "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." There is no following of CHRIST, considering flesh is so full of cavils and excuses, unless we practice that heavenly lesson, to deny ourselves, our whole selves, our wit and reason, our will and affections in the matters of God. Say nay to all the sluggishness of the flesh. Silence all presently, as soon as ever they discourage thee from holy ways. Consider whence they come; (which is enough,) from God's and our enemy, and the worst enemy we have, that lieth in our own bosom.

Withal, in spiritual courses, let us arm ourselves with resolution. First, conclude it is so, or not so. Let our judgments be convinced; and get resolution from soundness of conviction, that such things are good, and that they are best for us; and be for us at this time; the sooner the better; that there is an absolute necessity to have them, and that they are everlastingly good. And further, let us be able by sound reasons to justify the ways of GOD, and to answer cavils, to give an account of what we do to ourselves and to others. To have reasons ready from Scripture is an excellent thing; when we are able to justify whatsoever we do by the Word, against all the quarrels of our own hearts and others. When we are led to do things only by the example of others, then we are often put to it on the sudden by temptations. Let us therefore labor to do things upon good grounds, and be able to justify all the ways of religion, by reasons unanswerable, that may silence corrupt nature, and stop the mouth of the devil himself. And let us be, not only inured to the yoke of religion, but likewise to endure difficulties, opposition, and hardship; as the apostle urges on Timothy, "To endure hardship and afflictions." If the thing be good and warrantable, disregard the speeches of the world. What are the speeches of a company of men in the state of nature, that we should regard them so, as to endure hardship in such things, of the goodness whereof we are convinced But in these days men take up a delicate profession of religion. Aten will be religious, but they will suffer nothing. They will part with nothing, be at no loss, suffer no crosss, be at no pains with religion. This delicate profession (if any thing among us,) threateneth the removing of the gospel we enjoy. How will they suffer afflictions for the gospel, (if such times come,) that will not part with a corrupt fashion, a superfluity? Now He re is a profession of religion indeed, that will not endure so much as a check. This extreme tenderness in the matters of God and salvation, is the cause why many eternally perish.
Again, remember to do all things to GOD, and not to man; and then, whatsoever discouragement there is from men, we should not be discouraged. We hear men continually complain of others that are unthankful, and why should we do any thing for them. Why do it to God. Let us do justice and show mercy, and God will accept it, though men do not. It is best to have God's reward. In this world it is good to meet with unthankful persons, because else we should meet with outward reward here. It is good to do somewhat for God's sake, and for religion; to say, let people he as thankful as they will, I did it not altogether to you, but to God. If a man regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never do that -which is good; people in the world are so unthankful to those that wish them best, and that do best to them. If a man do a thing to God, and do it out of duty and conscience, he may hold on, though he have never so many discouragements in the world. Lastly, let us help ourselves to go through all discouragements, whatever they be, with setting the glory to come before our eyes. Let us look unto the reward of reward, not to the present discouragement. What makes a soldier fight hard for victory? The sweetness of the triumph. Consider the issue which followeth a careful Christian life; a near and perfect walking with God. Upon this ground the apostle exhorts us, " to be abundant in the work of the Lord; knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

We shall now see the consequence of all those excuses of the church, whereby she puts off CHRIST, as it is set down, ver. 4, 5, 6, " My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock. I rose to open to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. " There are three things here observable: 1. The consequence of the church's drowsiness; CHRIST's with-drawing himself. 2. His gracious dealing when he with-drew himself. And, 3. The success of CHRIST's departure: which is set forth in these instances; 1. The church's bowels were moved in her, which were hard before. 2. She rose up out of her bed, wherein formerly she had composed herself to rest. And, 3. She sought and called after him.

The first doctrinal point which is to be observed out of these verses, is, That CHRIST does sometimes leave his children, as he did the church here. But what kind of leaving is it? CHRIST's withdrawings of himself are either in regard of outward or inward comforts and helps,

1. CHRIST leaves his church sometimes, by taking away the means of salvation, the ministry, or by taking away outward comforts; which withdrawing, especially if he accompany the taking of them away with some signs of his displeasure, or sense of his anger, do es embitter all losses; when they come from CHRIST, as a testimony of his anger for our former unkindness. 2. Sometime his forsaking is more inward; and that is double; either in regard of peace and joy, inward comfort that the soul had wont to feel in the ordinances of CHRIST; or in regard of strength and assistance, when he leaves men to themselves to fall into some sin. And that CHRIST thus leaves his church, is true of all, both of the body and of each particular member. But observe this second point, that the cause rests in ourselves why CHRIST withdraws comfort from our souls; and if we search our own hearts we shall find it so. And the usual causes are these, 1. When we are unkind to CHRIST, and repel the sweet motions of the Spirit. The church used CHRIST unkindly; therefore he left her.

2. When we improve not the precious means of salvation that we enjoy: a discontinuing of religious exercises. He withdraws himself from our souls, when we neglect the means, and stir not up the graces of God's Spirit.

3. When we are careless of our conversation or company. This will cause a strangeness between CHRIST and the soul, when we cast ourselves imprudently into company in whom the Spirit is not. Evil company is a great damp; it causes a Christian to lose his comfort much.

4. When we linger after carnal liberties and case.

5. When we yield to carnal policy and shifts to go on in a lukewarm course. 6. When we linger after earthly things and comforts. When we prize not the communion that should be between the soul and CHRIST, as we ought; saying, " Whom have I in heaven but thee And thy loving kindness is better than the life itself;" it is just with CHRIST to make himself strange. Where love is not esteemed, it is strange d. And, 7. Allen we tremble not at God's judgments and threatenings, and at the signs of them. Therefore if we do not enjoy more acquaintance with CHRIST than we do, and walk more in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; let us lay our hand upon our mouth and justify CHRIST. It is just with thee to deal thus with me, that have dealt so unkindly with thee. So to justify GOD, and accuse ourselves, is the best way to recover spiritual comfort.

A third point to be observed is, though CHRIST leave us, upon our drowsiness and unworthy carriage towards him, yet notwithstanding he leaves some footsteps of his grace upon the soul. He stands at the door and leaves myrrh behind; something in the heart that causes a
hankering after him. So here, howsoever CHRIST had withdrawn himself from the church, yet he left behind him a Spirit of grace, to affect her heart with sorrow and shame, and to stir up her endeavors to seek after him, "I rose to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped myrrh, and my fingers sweet-smelling myrrh." Observe here, that CHRIST's grace is the cause of our grace. He first leaves myrrh, and then her fingers drop myrrh. "Out of his fullness we receive grace for grace;" that is, our grace is answerable to the grace of CHRIST. We have all from him; favor for his favor; because he is beloved, we are beloved; we have the grace of sanctification from him. He was sanctified with the Spirit, therefore we are sanctified; he is the Son of GOD, therefore we are sons; he is the Heir of heaven, there-føre we are heirs; so that of his grace it is we receive all; we have our myrrh from his myrrh. And this should teach us the necessity of depe ndence upon CHRIST, for whatsoever we have or would have; and likewise of endeavoring after grace; because we find the church's fingers dropped myrrh when she opened the door, aíd stirred up herself to endeavor. When first her bowels were moved, then she hastened to the door, and then her hands dropped myrrh; so that we find experience of the grace of CHRIST, especially when we stir up ourselves to endeavor. "Arose and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee," says David to Solomon; so let us rouse up ourselves to endeavor, and we shall find a gracious presence of CHRIST, and a blessed assistance of the Spirit. "To him that -has shall be given:" if he exercise and stir up the grace of God in him. Therefore let us stir up the graces of God in us; let us fall upon actions of obedience, second them with prayer; whatsoever we pray for and desire, set upon the practice thereof. We mock GOD, except we endeavor for that which we desire. Keep not off and say, I am dead and drowsy, therefore I shall be still so. You are deceived. Fall upon obedience and the practising of holy duties, and in the midst thereof you shall find the presence and assistance of God's Spirit that will comfort you.

This fourth point likewise arises from the forementioned verses, that the church, by reason of this gracious dealing of CHRIST, leaving somewhat behind her him, is sensible of her former unkindness, and restless still she have recovered her former communion with him. For that expression, "He put his finger in by the hole of the door," implies, that CHRIST, before he departed, left by his Spirit an impression on the church's heart, which deeply affected her to seek after him. The finger spoken of is nothing but the power of his Spirit, (as the usual Scripture phrase is, "This is God's finger." "God's mighty hand," without which all ordinances are ineffectual. It follows, "her bowels were moved after him;" which implies a work of the Spirit upon her, whereby her heart was moved to seek after CHRIST. Behold in this his dealing the mercy of CHRIST. He will not suffer the church to be in a state of security, but will rather bring her to a state of grief and sorrow. So she says of herself, "My bowels were moved in me;" that is, my heart was affected, full of grief for my unkind dealing with CHRIST. Hereby those affections were stirred up that were before asleep. God has planted affections in us, and joined them with conscience, as the executioners with the judge. So that when conscience accuses of any sin, either of omission or commission, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus, to prevent eternal damnation, God has set up a throne in our own hearts to take revenge by our own affections, godly sorrow, and mourning.

We may observe hence, that even sins of omission bring shame and sorrow; and in the issue, through CHRIST's sanctifying them, these which they breed, consume the parent; that is, sin brings forth shame and grief, which are a means to cure sin. Would we, the re-fore, prevent shame and grief? We must take heed then of security, the cause that leads to them; yea, of sins of omission, wherein there is more danger than in sins of commission. Let us think as slightly as we will of sins of omission and carelessness, they are enough to bring men to hell. It is not required only that we do no h ail's, and keep ourselves from outward evils; but we must do good in a good manner, and have a care to be fruitful and watchful. A dead secure state is so hateful to GOD, that he will not endure it; it either goes before or after the church's heart, which deeply affected her to seek after him. The finger spoken of is nothing but the power of his Spirit, (as the usual Scripture phrase is, "This is God's finger." "God's mighty hand," without which all ordinances are ineffectual. It follows, "her bowels were moved after him;" which implies a work of the Spirit upon her, whereby her heart was moved to seek after CHRIST. Behold in this his dealing the mercy of CHRIST. He will not suffer the church to be in a state of security, but will rather bring her to a state of grief and sorrow. So she says of herself, "My bowels were moved in me;" that is, my heart was affected, full of grief for my unkind dealing with CHRIST. Hereby those affections were stirred up that were before asleep. God has planted affections in us, and joined them with conscience, as the executioners with the judge. So that when conscience accuses of any sin, either of omission or commission, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus, to prevent eternal damnation, God has set up a throne in our own hearts to take revenge by our own affections, godly sorrow, and mourning.

"My bowels were moved in me," said the church; and good reason; it was a suitable correction of the sin wherein she offended. For CHRIST's bowels were turned towards her in love; in which case she neglecting him, it was fit she should find moving bowels in another sense, in shame and mourning. CHRIST here leaves her to seek after him; that had waited and attended her leisure before. For it follows, "My soul failed when he spoke;" "that is, her soul failed when she remembered what he had spoke, when he stood at the door, and said," Open to me my sister, my love, my undefiled, for my head is wet with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. When God's Spirit had wrought upon her, then she remembered what CHRIST had said. All those sweet allurements were effectual now unto her; especially when she saw that after those allurements CHRIST had withdrawn himself; (for that is the meaning of these words, "My soul failed when he spoke unto me.") He did not speak now; but her soul failed after he spoke; for so it should be read; that is, after she remembered his speech to her; for now when she opened he was not there, therefore he could not speak to her. Labor we all of us then to be diligent and careful to hear and attend upon the ordinances of God; for howsoever what we hear is not effectual for the present, but seems as dead seed cast into the heart, yet GOD will give it a body after, as the apostle speaks, at one time or other. That which we hear now, the Holy Ghost will bring to our remembrance when we stand in most need of it.

"My soul failed when he spoke," says the church; that is, she was in a spiritual swoon upon his with-drawing. Whence we may observe, that CHRIST does leave, his church sometimes; so that their hearts fail them for want of his presence. This fainting of the soul is sometimes upon an apprehension, as if GOD and CHRIST were become enemies; sometimes for the absence of CHRIST's love, though it feel no anger. Even as a husband's not looking lovingly upon his wife as he used to do, is enough to cast her down. Nay, moreover, when a man finds not assurance in holy duties as formerly, when his heart is shut up, and he cannot pray as usual; when he finds he cannot bear afflictions with wonted patience; when he hears not the Word of GOD with that delight and profit as he was wont; when he feels not that relish in the ordinances of GOD as he was wont; he concludes, certainly CHRIST has withdrawn himself; GOD has hid his face; whereupon he is cast down, his spirits fail.
Summer and winter arise from the presence and absence of the sun. So what makes the summer and winter in the soul, but the presence or absence of CHRIST? What makes some so vigorous beyond others, but the presence of the Spirit? As it is in nature, so it is here; the presence of CHRIST is the cause of all spiritual life and vigor. When he withdraws his Spirit a little, the soul fails. The child of God cannot be content without the presence of God and his Spirit; enlightening, quickening, strengthening, and blessing him. When he finds not his presence, when CHRIST his life is absent, he is presently discouraged. When a man's life fails, all fails. When, therefore, a man finds his spiritual taste not as it was before, then he is never quiet till he has recovered his life again.

Upon the church's swooning at the absence of CHRIST, she next acquaints us of the method she took for the recovery of his presence: she falls to prayer. Action follows affection. After her bowels are moved she arises and opens; but her beloved being gone, she further manifests the sincerity of her affection, by making after him. "I sought him," but for the present in vain; whereupon she complains, "but I could not find him: I called, but he made no answer." One of the greatest discouragements of all others is, when prayer has no answer. This is the complaint, but indeed an error, of the church; for CHRIST did hear the church, though he seemed to turn his back. Now how shall we carry our selves when our hearts fail of that we seek for; when we pray without success, and find not a present answer? We must hope against hope. The nature of faith is to break through all opposition, to see the sun behind a cloud; nay, to see one thing contrary in another, life in death, a calm in a storm. Stir up your grace; for as nature joining with physic helps it to carry away the malignant humors; so by the remainder of the Spirit that is in us, let us all set our graces on work until we have carried away that which offends the soul, and not sink under the burden. For this is a special time for the exercising of faith, hope, love, diligence, care, and watchfulness.

The church, after setting down her own exercise in her desertion, sets out the outward ill dealing she met with, and that from those that should have been her greatest comforters. "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." Thus we see how trouble follows trouble; one depth calls upon another. Inward desertion and outward affliction go many times together. The troubles of the church many times are like Job's messengers; they come fast one upon another; because God means to perfect the work of grace in their hearts, all this is for their good. The sharper the winter is, the better the spring. Learn hence, first, that it is no easy thing to be a Christian. We see here, after the church had betrothed herself to CHRIST, and entertained him in her garden, she falls into a state of security and sleep, whence CHRIST labors to rouze her up. Then she uses him unkindly; after which he withdraws himself, even so far that her heart fails her; then (as if it were not enough,) the watchmen that should have looked to her, smite her, wound her, and take away her veil. See here the variety of changes in a Christian, not long in one state. But you will say, "All Christians are not thus tossed up and down, deserted of GOD, and persecuted of others." I answer, Indeed there is difference. It is a mystery of the sanctuary, which no man in the world can give a reason of; why of Christians, equally beloved of GOD, some should have a fairer passage to heaven, others more rugged. It is sufficient for us if God will bring us any way to heaven, as the blessed apostle says, "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead."

"But who are the watchmen here meant?" They are especially governors of state and church. The expression is taken from the custom of cities that are beleaguered. They have watchmen to descry the danger they are liable unto. So magistrates are watchmen of the state; ministers are the watchmen for souls, watching over them for good. "But why does God use watch-men?" Not for any defect of power in him; but, 1. For demonstration of his goodness; for he is the great Watchman, who watcheth over our commonwealths, churches, and persons; he has an eye that never sleeps; "He that watcheth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps;" he manifesteth his goodness in that he will use a variety of subordinate watchmen. And likewise, 2. To show his power in using many instruments; and his care for us. And in this, that God has set over us watchmen, (ministers especially,) it implies that our souls are in danger. Indeed there is nothing in the world so beset as the soul of a poor Christian. Who has so many enemies as a Christian? And among them all, the worst is nearest to him, even himself. Therefore there must needs be watchmen to discover the deceits of SATAN and his instruments, and of our own hearts; to discover the dangers of Jerusalem, and the errors and sins of the times wherein we live.

Come we now to the carriage of the watchmen; they smote the church and wounded her many ways, (though it be not discrediterated here in particular,) as with their ill life, and sometimes with corrupt doctrine, and other whilsts with bitter words, and unjust censures; as we see in the story of the church, especially in the Balmills church. But not to speak of them, come we nearer home, and we may see amongst ourselves those that are watchmen, and should give us encouragement, who smite and wound the church, and take away her veil.

They took away the veil; that is, that wherewith the church was covered. You know in the times of the Old Testament a veil was that which covered women; and it was in one respect a token of modesty and subjection; in another an honorable ornament. So then the watchmen took away that which made the church comely, and laid her open, and as it were naked. Now the church's veil is taken away by false watchmen: 1. As it is a token of subjection, when by their false doctrines they labor to draw people from CHRIST, and their subjection to...
him. They that draw the people to themselves, (as in popish churches,) that desire to sit high in their consciences, and so make their church undutiful, take away the veil of subjection, and so force CHRIST to punish the church. And, 2. As the veil is for honor and comeliness, so the watchmen take it away when they take away the credit and esteem of the church, when they lay open the infirmities and weaknesses of the church. It is strange that the watchmen should do this; yet notwithstanding often-times it falls out so, that those who by place are watch-men, are the bitterest enemies of the church. Who were bitterer enemies to her in CHRIST's time than the scribes, pharisees, and priests And who in the time of the prophets, than false priests and prophets.

Now what is the reason that those men that should be encouragers are rather dampers of the church's zeal? Sometimes it falls out from a spirit of envy in them at the graces of God's people, which are wanting in them -selves. Sometimes from idleness, which makes them hate all such as provoke them to diligence. This should teach us to be in love with CHRIST's government, and to see the vanity of all things here below, though they be never so excellent in their institution. Such is the poison of man's heart, and the malice of SATAN, that at they turn the edge of the best things against the good of the church. What is more excellent than magistracy, yet manytimes the point of the sword is directed the wrong way. So ministers are CHRIST's ambassadors, and should, as CHRIST would do, strengthen the feeble knees and bind up the broken-hearted; but alas! we see the edge of the ordinance is often turned another way, by the corrupt, proud, unbroken hearts of men, and the malice of Satan.

Again, it should teach us, not to think the worse of any for the disgraces of the times. The watchmen here take away the veil of the church, and her forwardness is disgraced by them. Let us take heed therefore that we entertain not rash, hard thoughts of others, upon the entertainment they find in the world, or among those that have a standing in the church; for so we should condemn CHRIST himself, who was judged of the priests, scribes, and pharisees in his times. And this has been the lot of the church in all ages; the true members thereof were called heretics and schismatics; the veil was taken off. It is the pride of man's heart, that when it cannot raise itself by its own worth, it will endeavor to raise itself by the ruin of others' credit through lying slanders, as was the devil's practice. So the credit of the church must be first taken away, and then she is wounded. It is a usual proverb, those that kill a dog, first make the world believe he was mad: so they always first traduced the church to the world, and then persecuted her. In this case, it is the innocence of the dove that is to be labored for, and withal the wisdom of the serpent. And if that will not avail, (as it may not; for CHRIST was wisdom itself, yet he suffered most,) when wisdom and innocency will not avail to ward off sufferings, then we must labor for patience, knowing that one hair of our heads shall not fall to the ground without the providence of the Almighty. Only let us commend our case, as CHRIST did, by faith and prayer to God that, judges, and leave all to him.

After all this ill usage that the church met with from the watchmen, she carries her complaint to other professors less eminent than they. " I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you see my beloved, tell him, that I am sick of love." Whence we may learn, that if we find not comfort in one means, we must have recourse to another. If we find not CHRIST in this ordinance, seek him in that; and perhaps we shall find him where we least thought of him. Sometimes there is, more comfort in the society of poor Christians, than of the watchmen themselves. In this solemn charge here given by the church, we have observable, first, the par-ties charged, the daughters of Jerusalem; the daughters of the church, which is called Jerusalem, from these resemblances between Jerusalem and the church; as, 1. Jeru salem was a city compact in itself, (as the Psalmist says;) so is the church, the body of CHRIST. Jerusalem was chosen from all places of the world, to be the seat of God: so the church is the seat of CHRIST. He dwells there, in the hearts of his children. In Jerusalem records were kept of the names of all the citizens of the church, in the book of life in heaven. The daughters of Jerusalem, therefore, are the true members of the church, and nourished in the church.

We have likewise observable, secondly, the charge given to the daughters of Jerusalem. " If you find my beloved, tell him, that I am sick of love." That is, I charge you, as you love my sister, as you love CHRIST, as you tender my case, that is, I charge you, as you love me your sister, as you love CHRIST, as you tender my case, that is, I charge you, as you love me your sister, as you love CHRIST, as you tender my case, that is, I charge you, as you love me your sister, as you love CHRIST, as you tender my case, that is, I charge you, as you love me your sister, as you love CHRIST, as you tender my case.

The point observable here is, that at such times as we find not our spirits enlarged, then is a time to desire the love of CHRIST. Talk with a wan that is in any heat of affections, you talk with one that is not at home. The soul is more where it loves...
than where it dwells. Surely where the love of CHRIST is in any strength, it draws up the soul, so that a man oftentimes in his calling and ordinary employments does not heed them, but passes through the world, as a man at random: he regards not the things of the world; for CHRIST is gotten into his heart, and draws all the affections to himself. Where love is strong, it cares not what it suffers for the party loved; nay, it glories in it. As it is said of the disciples, when they were scourged for preaching the gospel, it was a matter of glory to them. Where the love of CHRIST is, labor is no labor, suffering is no suffering, trouble is no trouble. Labor we therefore every day, more and more, to have larger and larger affections to CHRIST. The more a man loves CHRIST, the more joyful he is, when he thinks of those mutual embracings, when CHRIST and his soul shall meet in heaven. In the mean time he thankfully frequents the places where CHRIST is present in the Word and sacraments.

Upon this charge of the church to the daughters of Jerusalem, they reply unto her, wondering at her earnestness: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O you fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that you dost so charge us? The church is the fairest among mankind in the judgment of CHRIST, so he calls her, Cant. 1: 8, "O you fairest among women;" and here the fellow-members of the church term her so too. But how comes she to be thus fair? In regard that she is clothed with CHRIST's robes. We were all ennobled with the image of God at the first; but after we had sinned, we were bereft of that image; therefore now all our beauty must be clothing, which is not natural but borrowed. The beauty of the church now comes from the head of the church, CHRIST; she shines in the beams of her husband; (as the woman clothed with the sun, mentioned Rev. 12:) not only in justification, but in sanctification also. 2. She is fair, as from CHRIST's imputative righteousness, so from his righteousness inherent in her, the graces she has from him; for of him we receive grace for grace. There is never a grace, but it is beautiful and fair; for what is grace, but the beams of CHRIST, the Sun of Righteousness? So that all must be fair that comes from the first Fair, all beautiful that comes from the first Beauty. "But she is black." She is so indeed, and she confesseth herself to be so, Cant. 1: 5, "I am black but comely;" she is indeed black in regard of the afflictions and persecutions she meets with in this world. She is black also, through the envy of the world, that looks more at her faults than virtues. Lastly, she is black, in respect of her infirmities, being subject to weakness and passions as other men. The beauty of the church is inward and altogether undiscovered to the carnal eye.

"What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?" We see, these of the church here were stirred up by the examples of other members of the church to be inquisitive after CHRIST. Hence observe, there is a wondrous force in the examples of Christians to stir up one another. Let us labor therefore to be exemplary to others, and to express the graces of God; for thus we shall do more than we are aware. There is a secret influence in a good example, though a man say nothing. There is a way to profit from a good man, though he hold his peace. His course of life speaks loud. We owe this to all, even to them that are without, in order to give occasion to stir us up to it, that answerable to the good we do in this kind shall be our comfort in life and death, and our reward after death. For the more spreading our good is, either in word, life, or conversation, the more our consciences shall be settled in the consideration of a life well spent. Our reward shall be answerable to our communication and diffusion of good. Otherwise, it will be heavy on our consciences, not only in this life, but at the day of judgment, and after, when we shall think not only of the personal ill that we stand guilty of, but exemplary ill also. It should move us also to look to all good examples. Wherefore are good examples, but that we should follow them? We shall not only be a nswerable for abuse of knowledge, but also of good examples we have had and neglected. Does God kindle lights for us, and shall we not walk by their light? It is a sin not to attend to and consider the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, the works of nature and Providence; much more not to regard the works of grace.

But let us observe here, the church coming to the daughters of Jerusalem, and speaking of CHRIST, her beloved, that she is "sick of love;" the daughters of Jerusalem are inquisitive to know CHRIST more and more. Here is the benefit of holy conference. One thing draws on another, and that draws on another, till at length the soul is warmed with the consideration of heavenly things. Sometimes though we know that which we ask of others as well as they do; yet notwithstanding, good speeches will draw us to know it better, by giving occasion to speak more of it, wherewith the Spirit works more effectually and imprints it deeper; so that it shall be a more rooted knowledge than before. For that does good that is graciously known; and that is gracious ly known that the Spirit seals upon our souls. Perhaps the knowledge I have is not yet sealed sufficiently, it is not rooted by conference. Though I hear the same things again, yet I may hear them in a fresh manner, and so may have them

sealed deeper than before. Experience finds these things to be true. Christians should be inquisitive concerning the right path which leads to heaven; inquisitive of the excellency of CHRIST. It is good to raise questions of the practice of all necessary points, and to improve the gifts of others that we converse with, to give satisfaction. Perhaps God has laid up in others satisfaction to our souls, and has so determined that we shall be perplexed with scruples, till we have recourse to some, whom he has appointed to be helpful to us in this kind. Many go mourning a great part of their days, because they do not open their state to others. You see here the contrary practice of these professors; they double the question to the church, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O you fairest among women, what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that you dost so charge us"

Now comes the church's answer to these professors' questions, setting forth her beloved's beauty: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." We will take that which is safe, because we will have sure footing (as near as we can) in this mystical
portion of Scripture. A complexion mixed of white and ruddy, is the most beautiful, therefore the church sets out the beauty and spiritual excellency of CHRIST thereby. But this may be understood of that most excellent mixture that makes such a gracefulness in CHRIST. In him there is wonderful purity and holiness, and yet a wonderful weakness. There is the great GOD, and a piece of earth, in one person; a body pierced, and a glorious shining, body; humility and glory; justice, wonderful justice, and yet exceeding love and mercy; justice to his enemies, merciyo his children. Therefore Bernard says well, " When I think of CHRIST, I think at once of GOD, full of majesty and glory, and at the same time of man, full of meekness, gentleness, and sweetness." So let us consider CHRIST as the great GOD, and such a meek man; the one to establish out, souls, that he is able to do great matters, the other to draw us to him because he loves us. We are afraid to go to GOD, a consuming fire; but let us think we go to our brother, to one that loved us more than his own life, and this will endear him to us, and make him lovely in our eyes. Indeed he is spiritually lovely, " the chiefest of ten thousand." The church sets him out by comparison, a standard-bearer of ten thousand. For, as the goodliest men use to carry the ensign, the banner; so he, the goodliest of all others, is the standard-bearer. What is excellent in the heavens The sun So CHRIST is the Sun of Righteousness. The stars He is the bright morning star. The light " He is the light of the world." Come to all creatures, you have not any excellency among them , but CHRIST is styled from it: " He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, the lily and the rose, and the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, the tree of life." There is not a thing necessary to nature, but you have a style from it given to CHRIST, to show that he is as necessary as bread and water, and the food of life. When we see light, therefore, think of the true Light; when the sun, think of the Sun of Righteousness. So remember the bread and water of life in our common food. Therefore the sacraments were ordained, that as we go to the sea by the conduct of rivers, so we might go to the sea of all excellency and goodness, by the conduct of these rivers of goodness to be led by every excellency in the creature to that of our Mediator, CHRIST, who is " the chiefest among ten thousand."

To come more particularly to speak of his excellencies. Omitting his two natures in one person, God and man, consider his offices, a King, Priest, and Prophet. He being the chief in all these, all good kings before him were types of him; as also the prophets and priests. He was all in one. Never any before him was king, priest, and prophet; as he was King, Priest, and Prophet in one. Such a king, as is King of kings, and subdueth things unconquerable to all kings, the world, death, hell, and sin: such a king as rules over the soul and conscience of earth, in one person; a king against all discouragements; for it sets CHRIST against all, who is the " chief of ten thousand."

Again, as a priest: such an high-priest as offered him-self a sacrifice by his eternal Spirit. He, as GOD, offered up his manhood: such a priest as has satisfied the wrath of GOD, and reconciled God to man: such a priest as never dies, but lives for ever to make intercession for us in heaven, by virtue of that sacrifice which he offered in the days of his flesh. He was both priest and sacrifice: such a priest as is touched with our infirmities, so mild is he and gentle: so full of pity and mercy. No priest to this priest; God only smelt a sweet smell from this sacrifice. And for his prophetical office: he is a prophet beyond all others; such a one as can instruct the soul. Other men can propound doctrines, but he can open the under-standing, and has the key of the heart, the key of David, which can open the soul. By his Holy Spirit he can make the simple full of knowledge. He is such a prophet as has his chair in the very heart of a mail. This great bishop of our souls, the Angel of the covenant, the Messenger of the Father, is the " chiefest among ten thousand;" whether you consider him as a King, Priest, or Prophet.

Let us then that profess ourselves to be in CHRIST, to be joined to him that is thus excellent, make him the rule of our choice in other things. In the choice of friends, choose such as are friends to CHRIST. Take heed of society with idolaters or with profane persons. If we are joined to CHRIST, then let us join to none but those that we can enjoy with CHRIST. In marriage let the rule of choice be the love of CHRIST. And let the measure of our respect to all things be the respect to CHRIST. Let us measure our love to wife and children, to kindred, friends, and to all creatures whatsoever, so as it may stand withlove to CHRIST. Obey in the Lord, marry in the Lord, do all things in the Lord, so as may stand with the love and allowance of the Lord. And if CHRIST be set in the highest place in our heart; if we crow him there, and make him King of kings and Lord of lords, in a hearty submitting of all the affections of the soul to him; wh ile the soul continues in that frame, it cannot be drawn to sin, discomfort, and despair. The honors, pleasures, and profits of men, what are these to CHRIST? When the soul is rightly possessed of CHRIST and of his excellency, it disdains that any thing should come in competition with him. Again, this exalting of CHRIST stands firm against all discouragements; for it sets CHRIST against all, who is the " chief of ten thousand." The soul will set CHRIST against the wrath of GOD, against SATAN and all our spiritual enemies. CHRIST is the Angel of the covenant. SATAN is a lion, a roaring lion; CHRIST is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; SATAN a serpent, a dragon: but CHRIST is the true brazen serpent, the very looking upon whom will take away all the stings of SATAN. Faith overcometh the world; all things in the world; on the right hand, pleasures, and profits, and honors; and on left hand, threatenings, pains, losses, and disgraces, by setting CHRIST against all. If we would thus value CHRIST, we must beg of God a Spirit that we may judge aright of our corruptions. For in what measure we discern the heighth and breadth, and depth of our corrupt nature, in that measure shall we judge of the heighth, and breadth, and de pth of the excellency of CHRIST. The sweetest souls are the most humble souls. Those that love CHRIST most, are those that have been stung most with the sense of their sins. " Where sin most abounds," in the sense and feeling of it, " grace much more abounds " in the sense and feeling of that. Did ever soul love CHRIST more than that woman that had so many devils cast out of her? It is our Savior CHRIST's own reason, therefore those two go always with the true church: 1. The true knowledge of the corruption of nature: and 2. The true feeling of it, with hearty sorrow for it. In popery they slight--original sin; actual sins are venial sins; and many sins are no sins. And therefore they think
so slightly of CHRIST, that they join saints, works, and satisfactions, with him; because they know not the depth of the ma-lady, how black sin is, what a cursed estate we are in by nature. They have slight, shallow, and weak conceits of sin, therefore they have weak and shallow conceits of CHRIST, and of his righteousness.

The church had given a general description of CHRIST before, as the chiefest among ten thousand; she now descends to particulars: "His head is as fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven."

As God and man, his head is as fine gold; that is, his government is a most sweet and golden government. Dan. 2: you have an image of the monarchies, the first whereof had a golden head, which was the Chaldean. The best monarchy is set out by the best metal, gold. So CHRIST, the head of the church, is a precious head, a head of gold. A head has an eminency above all other, an influence and motion above all other parts. So this head of CHRIST is more eminent than all, governs the whole church, and has influence on all. " In him we live, and move, and have our being." "His locks are bushy and black as a raven." I think this is but complimental, to fill up the other, therefore not particularly to be dwelt upon. "His eyes are as doves' eyes by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and filthy set." His eyes are as doves' eyes, cleansed and washed, that they may be the clearer and sec better. The dove has many enemies, especially the rds of prey; therefore God has given that creature a quick sight. Thus the Scripture helps us to conceive of the quickness of CHRIST's eye. Rev. 5: 6, CHRIST is set forth, as having seven eyes, and seven horns. He has not only horns of power, as the enemies have horns of violence; but seven eyes: that is, a quick sight to see all the dangers the church is in. Seven is a word of perfection; and in that he is said to have seven eyes it means, that he hath many eyes, an accurate sight. He has an eye of providence over the whole world. All things are naked and open before his eyes; he can see through us; he knows our very hearts and reins; which he must do, because he must be our judge. He that is judge of all, had need to have eyes that will pierce through all. "His cheeks are as beds of spices, and as sweet flowers." Cheeks are the grace of the face; they are used here to denote the presence of CHRIST; not only his glorious presence in heaven, but his spiritual presence in his ordinances here: this is as spices and flowers. Indeed, cheeks, face, and presence present colours to the eyes; and not smells; as spices and flowers, which are the object of another sense. But you must note, that CHRIST is the object of all the senses. He is not only beauty to the eye, but sweetness to the smell and to the taste. Therefore faith has the name of all the senses, to see, hear, taste, and smell, and does all, because it carries us to CHRIST, that is instead of all to us.

In speaking of the particulars that follow, we are to be very wary, for we have not that foundation as we have in other generals. No doubt the Spirit of God did more intend to set out the large affection that the church had to CHRIST, than to insinuate any great particularity in every one of these: therefore let us only cull out, and take those things that are of more easy explication. "His lips are as lilies dropping down sweet myrrh." That is, his doctrine is as sweet as the lilies, and like myrrh, keeping from putrefaction. The speech of CHRIST makes the soul sound that embraceth it. This is one excellency of CHRIST and his truth, that it preserves the soul in a pure state. There is nothing keeps the soul but the Word; whereas, on the other side, error is of a putrefying nature, corrupting and defiling the soul. What was ever more sweet than the truth of CHRIST? When he spake himself, they all hung upon his lips. Grace was in his lips; all was sweet that came from him; his words were dyed in the affections of his heart. In the learned language, the same word signifies speech and reason; therefore CHRIST's speeches were sweet, because his heart was full of love, mercy, and goodness. Be-loved, let us hence take a trial of ourselves what our condition is; whether the words that come from CHRIST, when he speaks in his ministry to us, be sweet or not. The word to some men, is like the northern air, which parcheth and cattail. Ahab could not endure the breath of Elijah; nor Herodias the breath of John the Baptist; nor the pharisees the breath of Stephen and Paul. So many now cannot endure the breath of Divine Truth when it cuts and pierces. These words are arrows that stick; if they stick not savingly, they stick killingly. But if we cannot endure CHRIST's breath, we are not his spouse; nor have any communion with him.

"His hands are as gold rings set with beryl." Hands are the instruments of action. CHRIST's actions are precious. Whatever he doth to the church, nay even when he does use evil men to afflict, he has a hand there, a golden, a precious hand. In the evil hand of wicked men GOD doth all things by CHRIST; he is as it were GOD's hand which all things pass through. "His belly; that is, his inward parts: in the Hebrew it is used for the inward affection that was filled with all graces that might make him lovely. All the treasures of wisdom are in him; he has a golden head, which was the Chaldean. The best monarchy is set out by the best metal, gold. So CHRIST, the head of the church, is a precious head, a head of gold. A head has an eminency above all other, an influence and motion above all other parts. So this head of CHRIST is more eminent than all, governs the whole church, and has influence on all. " In him we live, and move, and have our being." "His locks are bushy and black as a raven." I think this is but complimental, to fill up the other, therefore not particularly to be dwelt upon. "His eyes are as doves' eyes by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and filthy set." His eyes are as doves' eyes, cleansed and washed, that they may be the clearer and see better. The dove has many enemies, especially the rds of prey; therefore God has given that creature a quick sight. Thus the Scripture helps us to conceive of the quickness of CHRIST's eye. Rev. 5: 6, CHRIST is set forth, as having seven eyes, and seven horns. He has not only horns of power, as the enemies have horns of violence; but seven eyes: that is, a quick sight to see all the dangers the church is in. Seven is a word of perfection; and in that he is said to have seven eyes it means, that he hath many eyes, an accurate sight. He has an eye of providence over the whole world. All things are naked and open before his eyes; he can see through us; he knows our very hearts and reins; which he must do, because he must be our judge. He that is judge of all, had need to have eyes that will pierce through all. "His cheeks are as beds of spices, and as sweet flowers." Cheeks are the grace of the face; they are used here to denote the presence of CHRIST; not only his glorious presence in heaven, but his spiritual presence in his ordinances here: this is as spices and flowers. Indeed, cheeks, face, and presence present colours to the eyes; and not smells; as spices and flowers, which are the object of another sense. But you must note, that CHRIST is the object of all the senses. He is not only beauty to the eye, but sweetness to the smell and to the taste. Therefore faith has the name of all the senses, to see, hear, taste, and smell, and does all, because it carries us to CHRIST, that is instead of all to us.
is made a storehouse of all that is good for us. CHRIST is lovely to God his Father, in whatsoever he did or suffered. God loved him especially, because he was obedient, even unto the death of the cross, therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow both in heaven and earth." The angels look upon him with admiration, they attend him, and account an honor to wait upon him. He is lovely to all above us, and shall he not be lovely to us

But you will say, "Was he lovely when he was nailed on the cross, hung between two thieves; when he wore a crown of thorns, was whipped, lay grovelling on the ground; when he sweat water and blood; when he was laid in his grave" Oh! yes, then he was most lovely of all to us. By how much the more he was abused for us, this makes him more lovely. When greatness and goodness meet together, how goodly is it! Majesty alone is not lovely, but awful; but joined with such condescending grace is wondrous amiable. How lovely a sight is it to see so great a person to be so meek and gentle It was so lovely in the eyes of the disciples, that they stood and wondered to see him, who was the eternal Word of God, condescending to talk with a poor Samaritan woman. And what loveliness of carriage was in him to Peter, after he had denied and forsaken him, yet to love him as much as ever he did before. In a word, what sweetness, gentle ness, bowels of meekness and compassion, did he always discover to all those that were in misery!

Is CHRIST altogether lovely, so lovely to us, and so beloved of God the Father Let us then rest upon his righteousness; for God cannot refuse that righteousness, whose subject is altogether lovely. Let us come clothed in the garments of our elder brother, and then we need not doubt of acceptance; for if we put on CHRIST's righteousness, we put on God's righteousness, and then how can God hate us No more than he hates his own Son; nay, he loves us, and that with the same love wherewith he loves him; for he loves whole CHRIST mystical, head and members. Let this strengthen our faith then, that if CHRIST be so altogether lovely in himself and to the Father, then we may rest ourselves on the acceptance of his mediation that is so beloved a mediator. Again, if CHRIST be so lovely, here only we have where-upon to spend the marrow of our best affections. Is it not pity we should lose so much of our affections as we do upon other things CHRIST is altogether lovely, why should we dolce upon other things, and set up idols in our hearts Is he altogether lovely, and shall no t he altogether our affections Let us labor to place all our love, joy, and delight upon CHRIST, "who is altogether lovely." When we suffer a pure stream to run through a dirty channel, our affections to run after the things of the world, which are worse than ourselves, we lose our affections and ourselves. Let therefore the whole stream of our affections be carried unto CHRIST. Love him, and whatsoever is his; for he being altogether lovely, all that comes from him is lovely; his promises, his directions, his counsels, his children, his sacrament: are all lovely. Whosoever has the stamp of CHRIST upon it, let us love it; we cannot bestow our hearts better. To lose ourselves in the love of CHRIST, and to forget our-selves and the love of all, yea, to hate all in comparison of him, and to account all dungh and dross compared with CHRIST, is the only way to find ourselves. And indeed we have a better condition in him, than in the world, or in ourselves. Severed from him, our condition is vain, and will become nothing; but whatever we may have in him is admirable and everlasting. We cannot conceive the happiness which we poor wretches are advanced to in CHRIST, and what excellent things abide for us from the love of God to us in CHRIST. There, fore let us labor to kindle in our hearts an affection towards CHRIST, all that we can, considering that he is thus lovely.

Let us now make a trial, whether CHRIST be thus lovely to us or not. How do we value him What place should he have in our hearts If he be the chief of ten thousand, let us rather offend ten thousand than offend him. Let us say with Asaph, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" and when the soul can say to CHRIST or any that is CHRIST's, (for I speak of him in the latitude of his Truths, promises, sacraments, and communion with his children,) "What have I in heaven but thee!" then it is in a happy condition. In the next place, are we ready to suffer for CHRIST We see the church here endures anything for CHRIST. She was misused of the watchmen, and her veil taken away, yet notwithstanding she loves CHRIST still. Do we stand ready to suffer for CHRIST, to be dis graced and censured, and yet are we resolved not to give over Nay, do we love CHRIST the more, and stiffen to his truth the farther Certainly where the love of CHRIST is, there is a spirit of fortitude. You have some that for frowns of greatness, fear of loss, or hope of rising, will warp their conscience and do any thing. Where now is love to CHRIST He that loves CHRIST, loves him the more for his cross. The more we suffer for him, the more dear he will be to us. For he does present himself in love and comfort most to those that suffer for him; therefore their love is increased.

Again, where love is, there it enlargeth the heart, which being enlarged enlargeth the tongue also. The church has never enou gh of commending CHRIST, and of setting out his praise. Love will alter a man's disposition, as we see in experience. Love will make a roan of base nature liberal; him that is slow of speech, eloquent. Let a man love CHRIST, and though before he could not speak a word in commendation of him, you shall have him speaking and laboring earnestly in the praises of God. Those that cannot speak of CHRIST, or for CHRIST, where is their love Put any worldly man to speak of what he loves, he has wit and words at will; but put him to a theme of piety, and he is out of his element. But it is not so with those that have felt the love of God in CHRIST. How full is St. Paul He cannot speak of CHRIST, but he is in the height, breadth, length, and depth of the love of God in CHRIST, and the knowledge of God above all knowledge I Again, the church here is never content till she find CHRIST. Whosoever she had, nothing contents her while she wants her be-loved; she goes up and down inquisitive after him till she find him. So it is with a Christian, if he have lost (by his own fault,) his former communion with CHRIST, he will not rest nor be satisfied, but searcheth in the use of this and that means; he runs through all God's ordinances till he find CHRIST; nothing in the world will content him, neither honor, riches, place, nor friends, till he find that which he once enjoyed, but has now lost, the comfort and assurance of God's love in CHRIST. If a man can sit down contented with other things, and want CHRIST and the assurance of salvation, it is a sign that man is in an ill condition. The desire of a Christian soul is ever after CHRIST; it longs oftentimes even to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST. The saints in the New Testament are set out by this description, they were such as loved the appearing of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. How can it be otherwise If they love CHRIST, they love the appearing of CHRIST, wherein we shall be made lovely as he is lovely.
You see how large the church is in setting out the excellency of her beloved; and then she shuts up all, (being able to say no more,) justifying our cause. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend," Illo you wonder that I seek so much after him Or, wonder, you, or Christians, when they take such pains to keep their communion with CHRIST, in a holy walking with God. These are no wonders, if you consider how excellent CHRIST is, what he has done for us, and what he keeps for us in another world; that he will preserve us to his heavenly kingdom, till he put us in possession of that glorious condition that he has purchased. Let the heart of men dwell upon these things, and you shall see that God's children are rather to be blamed that they are not more careful, watchful, and industrious, than to he taxed that they are so much.

Now the daughters of Jerusalem hearing the church express her affection for her beloved so ardently, and give so glorious a description of him, they inquire of her father, "Whither is thy beloved gone? O you fairest among women Whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?" And indeed if their former question, "What is CHRIST above all others," be answered satisfactorily, this will follow, Where is he? How shall I seek him? For if we did once know what CHRIST is, we should be sure, with the daughters of Jerusalem, to ash, Whither is he gone? that even may seek him with thee. Now because it is the special office of the ministry to unfold the hidden mysteries of CHRIST, labor we therefore to be always speaking somewhat about CHRIST, or tending that way. When we speak of the law, let it drive us to CHRIST; when of moral duties, to teach us to walk worthy of CHRIST. CHRIST, or some what tending to CHRIST, should be our theme and mark to aim at.

Thus far of the question. Now we have the church's answer to the daughters of Jerusalem. "My beloved is gone into his garden, to the beds of spicces, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." The questions were put for a bare satisfaction, but from a desire they, that proposed them, had to seek CHRIST; therefore the church answered, "My beloved is gone into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens." The church directly answers the question; for there is no envy in spiritual things. In grace and glory all may share alike. God has two gardens, one on earth and one in heaven. The church's garden is his garden on earth; and every particular church is a bed of spices; in regard that many Christians are sown there, that CHRIST's soul delights in it as in sweet spices. "To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." that is, having first planted them, he comes to gather them, and transport them out of the garden here to the garden in heaven. Those that are good plants in the paradise of the church, shall be glorious plants in the paradise of heaven. Christians are compared to lilies for their purity and whiteness, being unspotted, first, in justification; and afterwards in holiness, wherein at length (though they may have gotten some fresh spots,) they shall be wholly unspotted. It is the end (Eph. 1: 4,) they are chosen to, "to be holy, without blame before him, in love."

This may comfort us in all wants whatsoever: God will take care of us. CHRIST uses this argument; GOD, says he, "clotheth the lilies of the field;" he cares ever, for the meanest plants, "and will not take care for you, O ye of little faith" Does he care for lilies? that are today, and to-morrow are cast into the oven, and shall he not care for the lilies of paradise Undoubtedly he will. Our Savior CHRIST's reason is undeniable; he that puts such a beauty upon the poor plants that flourish in the morning and wither before night; he that puts such a beauty upon the grasp of the field, will he not put more excellency upon his children Will he not provide for them, feed them? Undoubtedly he will. CHRIST is said to gather these lilies; that is, he will gather them together. CHRIST will not have his lilies scattered; though he leaves them oflone for awhile, yet he will gather them to congregations and churches. The name of a church in the original is, ecclesia, which is nothing but a company gathered out of the world. Do we think that we are lilies, a by nature No, we are thorns and briars, God makes us lilies, and then gathers us to other lilies, that one may strengthen another. The Spirit of God in his children is not a spirit of separation of Christians from Christians; but a spirit of separation from the waste wilderness of tile world. The Spirit of God severs thorns, and gathers lilies; gathers Christians together in the church, and will gather them forever into heaven.

Now follows a kind of triumphant acclamation upon all the former passages. When the church had spoken formerly of her ill de aling with CHRIST, and how he thereupon absented himself from her, she shuts up all with this, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies." She now begins to feel some comfort from CHRIST, who had estranged himself from her for awhile: O! says she, notwithstanding all my sufferings, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Words passionately expressing long looked for consolation, and the wondrous joy and content, the church now had in CHRIST, having her heart inflamed with love unto him, up on his manifesting himself to her soul. Affections have eloquence of their own. Fear hath a proper expression. Love vents itself in broken words and sighs, in a peculiar eloquence suitable to the height of the affection. So that here is more in the words breathed from such an inflamed heart than in ordinary construction can be picked out.

And, first, they express the union of persons which is before all comfort and communion of graces; "I am my beloved's; and my beloved is mine," CHRIST's person is ours, and our persons are his; for as it is in marriage, if the person of the husband be not the wife's, his goods are not hers, (for these come all to her, because his person is hers,) so it is in this mystical marriage; that which entitles us to communion of graces, is union of persons between CHRIST and his church. And indeed nothing else will content a Christian; he would not care so much for any ordinance, not for heaven itself, if he had not CHRIST there.
From this union of persons comes a communion of all other things whatsoever. If CHRIST himself be mine, then all is mine: what he has done, what he has suffered is mine; his privilege to be the Son of GOD, and heir of heaven, is mine. Why- because he himself is mine. So it is here with the church: "I am my beloved's," my person is his, to glorify him, and to lay it down when he will; my goods are his, my reputation his; I am content to sacrifice all for him; I am his, all mine is his. So you see there is mutual union and communication. The original hereof is CHRIST's uniting and communicating himself to his church first. What has the stream or circuit in it, but what is had" from the spring "We love him, because he loved us first." It was a true speech of Augustine, Whatever is good in the world or lovely, it is either God or from God; it is either CHRIST or from CHRIST. It is said in nature, love des cends; the father and the mother love the child, before the child can love them. Love, indeed, is of a fiery nature; only here is the dissimilitude, fire ascends, love descends; it is stronger descending from the greater to the less, than ascending from the meaner to the greater. God loves us more than we can love him. Neither is there only a' priority of order, (he loves us first, and then we love him;) but also of causality, he is the cause of our love; not by way of motive oily, (he loves us, and therefore from an ingenuous spirit we must love him again;) but he gives us his Spirit, circumcisceth our hearts to love him; for all the motives or moral persuasions in the world, without the Spirit, cauout make us love. We are taught of God to love one another, our brethren whom we. see daily; much more need we be taught to love him whom we never saw: so that his love kindles ours by way of reflection. God works both parts, his own and our parts too; our love to him, our fear of him, our faith in him; he works all, even as he shows his own love to us. If God love us thus, what must we do Meditate upon his love; let our hearts be warmed with the consideration of it; let us bring them to that fire of his love, and then they will wax hot within us, and beg the Spirit; Lord you have promised to give thy Spirit to them that ask it, and to circumcise our hearts to love thee, and to love one another; give thy Holy Spirit as you have promised. In fine, these words, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," to join them both together, implies a mutual propriety; CHRIST hath a propriety in me, and I in CHRIST. CHRIST is mine, and so as I have none in the world beside." Whom have I in heaven but CHRIST And what is there in earth in comparison of him" He is mine, and mine in a peculiar manner; and I am his in a peculiar manner.

Again: these words imply mutual love. All is mutual in them; mutual propriety, mutual peculiarity, and mutual love. I love CHRIST so as I love nothing else; as CHRIST loves me and every Christian more than any thing else. He loves all, and gives outward benefits to all, but to me he has given himself. As the husband loves all in the family, his cattle and his servants, but he gives himself to his spouse. So CHRIST is mine, himself is mine, the utmost of my power Likewise there is implied a mutual complacency in these words. CHRIST has a complacency and resting in the church, and the church has a sweet resting contentment in CHRIST; CHRIST in us, and we in him. A true Christian, when vexed and in trouble, can rely on this, I have yet a loving husband, yet I have CHRIST.

Let this put us upon a search into ourselves, what we have recourse to when we meet with afflictions. Those that have beastly souls have recourse to carnal content-relents, to good fellowship; whereas a soul that has any acquaintance with God in CHRIST, so that it may say, CHRIST is mine, and I am CHRIST's, will find contentment and rest in him, whatsoever it meets with in the world. "But how comes CHRIST to be ours" CHRIST is ours by his Father's gift: God has given him for us. CHRIST is ours by his own gift; he has given himself for us. And CHRIST is ours by his Spirit, that witnesseth so much to our spirits, for the Spirit is given for this purpose, to shew us all things that are given us of GOD, whereof CHRIST is the chief. Therefore the Spirit of CHRIST tells us that CHRIST is ours; and CHRIST beign ours, all that he has is ours. That you may the more fully feed on this, study the excellencies of CHRIST in the Scriptures; the riches and honor that he has, the favor he is in with his Father, with the intercession that he makes in heaven; study his mercy, goodness, of fices and power, and then come home to yourselves, saying, "All this is mine, for CHRIST is mine; the love of God is mine, for God loves him, and therefore he loves me, because we are both one. He loves me with the same love as that with which he loves his Son. Thus we should make use of this, that CHRIST is ours.

"But how are we, CHRIST's" 1. We are his by his Father's gift; for God gave him for us, and gives us to him, as it is in the excellent prayer, John 17: 6, "Father, thine were, and you gayest them me." I had not them of myself first, but thine they were; thou and myself are CHRIST's. He has my soul, my affections, my body, and all; he has a propriety in me, and a peculiarity in me; he has my affection and love to the uttermost, as I have his. And they imply mutual fairer liability. CHRIST is familiar to my soul, and I to CHRIST. He discovers himself to me in the secret of his love, and I discover myself to him in prayer and meditation, opening my soul to him upon all occasions. God's children have a spirit of prayer, which is a spirit of fellowship, and talks (as it were,) to God in CHRIST. It is the language of a new-born Christian: he cries to his Father. There is a kind of familiarity between him and his God in CHRIST, who gives the entrance and access to God.
Then again they imply mutual likeness. He is mine, and I am his; the one is a glass to the other. CHRIST sees himself in me, I see myself in him. For this is the issue of spiritual love, especially that it breeds resemblance of the party loved in the soul that loves. I am his, I resemble him; I am his, I carry his picture in ray soul. CHRIST out of love became like me in all things, except wherein I am like the devil; and if he became like me, I will be as like him as possible. Every Christian carries the character of CHRIST's disposition. You may know CHRIST in every Christian; for as the king's coin carries the stamp of the king, Caesar's coin bears Caesar's superscription; so every Christian soul is God's coin, and he sets his own stamp upon it. Again: these words, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," imply mutual care that CHRIST and the soul have one of the good of another. As CHRIST has a care of our good; so a Christian must needs have a care of CHRIST's good, of his children, religion, and truth. What will such a soul say. Shall CHRIST care for my body, soul, and salvation, and stoop to come from heaven to save me, and shall I have no care for him and his glory He has left his truth and his church behind him, and shall not I defend his stand, and for the poor church to gayest them me to redeem them; I die for the; 1 sanctify myself for them, that they may be sanctified. 2. We are his by redemption: CHRIST took our nature, that he might die for us to purchase us. We cost him dear. As that forw ard woman wrongfully said to Moses, "You art a bloody husband unto me:" so CHRIST may without wrong say to the church, You art a spouse of blood to me. They were indeed to be his spouse; but first he must win us by conqu est, in regard of SATAN, and then satisfy justice. We were in such debt by sin, lying under God's wrath, so that till all debts were paid, we could not, in the way of justice, be given as a spouse to CHRIST. 3. We are CHRIST's by marriage also; for when he purchased us, and paid so dear for us; when he died and satisfied Divine justice, he did it with a purpose to espouse us to himself. We have nothing to bring him but debt and misery, yet he took upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might wed us, and take us to himself. 4. We are his by consent: we have passed our-selves over unto him, he has given himself to us, and we have given ourselves to him back again.

To come to some uses of this, if we are CHRIST's, as CHRIST is ours. 1. It is a point of wondrous comfort, God will not su btr his own to want. When we are of CHRIST's family, and not only of his body but of his body, his spouse, can we think he will suffer us to want which is needful 2. If he catches us against all the accusations of SATAN. I am CHRIST's. If SATAN has any thing to say, let him go to CHRIST. So in all temptations, send SATAN whither he should be sent; that is, to CHRIST. 3. This is ground of comfort for the time to come, we are CHRIST's as well as he is ours. What a plea does this put into our mouths, for all things that are beneficial to us Lord, I am thine, save me," (says the Psalmist) Why save me Because I am thine. "I am thine, Lord, teach me and direct me." The husband is to direct the spouse, the head should direct all the senses. All the treasures of wisdom are in CHRIST, as all the senses are in the head for the good of the body. Allfulness dwells in him; there-fore plead with him, I want wisdom, teach me how to behave in troubles, in dangers, in fears. If it be an argument strong enough amongst men, (weak men,) I am thine, I am thy child, I am thy spouse: shall we attribute more merr y to ourselves, than to the God of mercy and comfort, who planted these affections in the creature Shall he make men tend more to ourselves, than to the God of mercy and comfort, of his children, religion, and truth. What will such a soul say, Shall CHRIST care for my body, my soul, and Christ? The answer is, All that the church or any particular Christian suffers in this world, it is but that there may be a conformity between the spouse and the husband. The head wore a crown of thorns, and went to heaven through misery and abasement in the world, the lowest that ever was: and it is not meet that the church should go to heaven another way. And what hurt do afflictions do They only drive the church nearer to CHRIST. The church has never sweeter communion with CHRIST than under the greatest crosses; and therefore they many times have proved the ground of the greatest comforts. Thus we see what springs from this, that CHRIST is ours, and that we are CHRIST's. Let us carry this with us even unto death; and if times should come that God should honor us by serving himself of us in our lives, I pluck if CHRIST will have us. spend our blood, consider this, I am not mine own, it life no r death; and it is my happiness that I am not mine own; for if I were mine own, what should I do with myself I should lose myself, as Adam did. It is therefore my happiness that I am not mine own, that I am not the world's, that I am not the devil's, that none else has to do with me, to claim any interest in me, "but I am CHRIST's. If I do anything for others, it is for CHRIST's sake.

See hence the nature of faith; for these are the words of faith, as well as of love. Faith has two branches, it does give as well as take. Faith receives CHRIST, and says, CHRIST is mine; and the same faith says, I am CHRIST's. Indeed, our souls are empty; so that the tails

work of faith is to be an empty hand; Mendica manes, (as Luther calls it,) a beggar's hand to receive; but when it has received, it gives back again both ourselves and all we can do. Where faith is, there will be a giving of ourselves and our goods, our strength, and all, back again. This discovers a great deal of false faith in the world; for undoubtedly, if it were true faith, there would be a yielding back again. Again, these words discover the mutual coherence of justification and sanctification, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." CHRIST is mine; his righteousness is mine for my justification and I am CHRIST's; there is a return of faith in sanctification. The same Spirit that witnesseth CHRIST is ours; sanctifies our disposition, that we can say, I am CHRIST's: It serves to instruct us therefore in the necessary connection of these two, justification and sanctification, against the idle slander of Papists, that sinnfully traduce that do crine, as if we severed justification from sanctification. No; we hold here, that whenever CHRIST is ours, there is a Spirit of sanctification in us to yield all to CHRIST, though this resignation be not presently perfect.
This likewise helps us to understand the covenant of grace, and the seals of the covenant, what they enforce and comprise; not only what God will do to us, but the duty we are to do to him again, though we do it in his strength. A covenant holds not on one side, but on both; "CHRIST is mine, and I am CHRIST's. I will be their GOD," but they must have grace "to be my people," and then the covenant is made up. The covenant of grace is so called, because God is so gracious as to enable us to perform our own part. And so in the seals of the covenant. In baptism, God does not only bind himself to do thus and thus to us, but binds us also to do again to him. So in the communion we promise to lead a new life; therefore we must not think all is well, when we have received our Maker, though we continue in a fruitless course of life. No; there is a promise in the sacrament, the seal of the covenant of grace, to yield up our-selves to God. We see here the nature of faith in the whole church, is the same that is in every particular, and the same, in every particular, as it is in the whole church. The whole church says, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine;" I appropriate him. There is a spirit of appropriation in the whole; and there is so in each particular. Every Christian may say with Paul, "I live by faith in the Son of GOD, that has loved me, and given himself for me;" and with Thomas, "My God and my Lord."

It follows, "He fedeth among the lilies." The church here shows where CHRIST feeds. He both feeds his church among the lilies, and delights himself to be there. The one follows the other; especially it is meant of the church; those that are his. He feeds among the lilies. How Lilies are such a kind of flowers as require a deal of nourishment, and grow best in rich ground; therefore, when she says, "He feeds among the lilies," the meaning is, he feeds his church and people in rich pastures; in such grounds as are sweet and fruitful; such are, his holy Word, and the communion of saints; these are especially the pastures wherein he feeds his church. The holy truths of God are the food of the soul, whereby it is cherished and nourished up to life everlasting. The whole book is a kind of pastoral; therefore CHRIST in many places of this book, takes upon him the carriage (as it were) of a loving shepherd, who labors to find oat for his sheep the fruit fullest and sweetest pastures, that they may grow up as calves of the stall.

If you ask why we must grow up and be fed still I. Do but ask your own souls, whether there be not a perpetual renewing of corruption. Therefore we have need to feed every day anew upon the promises; upon old promises with new affections. Somewhat breaks out ever and anon; which abaseth the soul of a Christian, that makes him go with a sharp appetite to the blessed truths that feed his soul. 2. Again, we need a great deal of strength, which must be fetched from the blessed Word of GOD, whereby we are able to withstand all the power of the devil. Therefore, you may see what kind of atheistical creatures those are, and how much they are to be regarded, that turn off all with a compendium in religion, "Tush! if we know that we must believe in CHRIST, we know enough." As if there were not a necessity of growing still further and further in distinct knowledge. Alas! the soul needs to be fed continually, it will stagger else, and be insufficient to stand against temptation, or to perform duties. You may see further, that there is fullness no where but in God's house; that there, and there only, is that which satisfies the soul. Not only the promises, but the very rebukes of the Scripture, are sweet. They are rebukes of a friend, and feed the soul; for we have many corruptions which hinder our communion with God; so that a Christian delights to have his corruptions rebuked; for he knows if he leaves them, he shall grow into further communion with CHRIST, wherein stands his happiness in this world, and the fullness of his happiness in the world to come.

If this be so, let us know then, that when we come to religion, we lose not the sweetness of our lives, but only translate them to a far more excellent condition. Perhaps we fed before upon (as it were) gravel, but now we have holy truths to delight our souls. Believe it, a man never knows what comfort is till he be down-right and sincere in religion. Therefore Austin says of himself; "Lord, I see my former life was nothing but husks, empty things; now I know where sweetness is; it is in thy Word and truth." Therefore let us not misconceive of religion, as of a dull thing, wherein we must lose all comfort. No; we have no comfort till we be religious indeed. CHRIST feeds not his among the thorns and briers. Dost you think he feeds thee among unsavoury, harsh things No; "he feeds among the lilies." Let us make us e of this for our souls' comfort, to make us in love with the ways of CHRIST. The like place you have, Isai. xl. 11, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gentlylead those that are with you." So he leads them into the pastures, and feeds them plentifully and sweetly; not only with sweet things, but with tender care. As a shepherd, he takes into his bosom the poor lambs that cannot walk themselves; and the sheep that are heavy with young, he cares for them. He gently leads them that are poor, weak Christians, that struggle with many temptations and corruptions. CHRIST has a tender care of them, he carries them (as it were) in his bosom and in his arms, and leads them gently; for indeed all CHRIST's sheep are weak, every one has somewhat to complain of; therefore he feeds them tenderly and sweetly, or else they might perish. Consider then the necessity of spiritual strength, that we have need to grow up more and more in Christianity. To be feeding still, we have need of strong faith and strong assurance that CHRIST is ours, and that we are his. Let us often frequent every ordinance of GOD, and we shall find CHRIST blessing his own ordinances. So that we shall be able to say, in truth of heart, experimentally and feelingly with the church, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feeds among the lilies."
EXTRACTS FROM THE WORKS OF THOMAS GOODWIN, D.D.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS GOODWIN, D.D.

DR. THOMAS GOODWIN was born at Rolesby, in Norfolk, October 5, 1600, and was first of CHRIST-College, and then of Katherine-Hall in Cambridge. He was in the university a frequent hearer of Dr. Preston and Dr. Hill, and afterwards himself a celebrated preacher there, and an instrument in turning many to the love and practice of serious religion. In 1628, he was chosen to preach the lecture to the town of Cambridge, at Trinity-Church, and he held it till 1634, when he left the university. In 1639, he went over to Holland, and became pastor of a church in the city of Arnheim. He returned into England at the beginning of the Long Parliament, and became pastor of a church in London, and one of the Assembly of Divines. He took a brief account of the transactions there, in fourteen or fifteen volumes in octavo, that are yet preserved. Oliver Cromwel made him president of Magdalen-College in Oxford, and one of the tryers of nii Misters. In the common register of the university, he is said to be in Scriptis in re Theologica quamplurimis orbi notus. He was removed from his presidency quickly after the king's return, in 1660, and afterwards retired to London, where he continued the exercise of his ministry as long as he lived. He was a very considerable scholar, and an eminent divine; and had a very happy faculty in descanting upon Scripture, so as to bring forth surprising remarks, which yet generally tended to illustration. He died February 23, 1679, aged 50 years.

A CHILD OF LIGHT

WALKING IN DARKNESS;

Or, a TREATISE shewing the Causes by which, the Cases wherein,

and the Ends for which God leaves his Children to distress of Conscience.

ISAIAH 50:10.
Who is among you that heareth the Lord, that obeyed) the voice of his servant,

that walks in darkness, and has no light'

Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

CHAP. 1

That a child of God may walk in darkness.

That thereby distress of conscience, and desertion is meant.

We will first inquire what is meant by walking in darkness in this place. Now, 1. Walking in darkness, as it is taken in 1 John 1: 6, for living in sin, in the commission of known sins, or omission of known duties, cannot be meant here. For CHRIST would not have encouraged such to trust in God. God is light, and there can be no fellowship between him and such darkness. Nay, the Holy Ghost reproves such as lean on the Lord, and yet transgress. And besides, the text speaks of such, who for their present condition, fear GOD, and are obedient to him, which, if they thus walked in darkness, they could not be said to do. Neither, 2. is walking in darkness to be meant of walking in ignorance, as it is taken John 12: 35. For, one that has no light in that sense, can never truly fear GOD, nor obey him. "The heart that wants knowledge is not good," says Solomon; and why Because so to walk in darkness is accompanied with "walking in vanity of mind, " Eph. 4: 18. This walking in darkness therefore is meant of discomfort and sorrow. We often find in Scripture, darkness to be taken in this sense: as, on the contrary, light, because it is so pleasant a thing to behold, is put for comfort. And that so it is taken here, is evident by that which is opposed in the next verse, " Walk ye in your light, yet ye shall he down in sorrow." But the question is, of what kind of sorrow this is meant. Whether that arising from outward afflictions, or inward distress of mind. Whether by reason of man's ordinary infirmities, or of a wounded spirit. It is not to be restrained to outward afflictions, which arise from things of this world; or from the men of the world; (though to walk in darkness is so taken, Isaiah lix. 9. And I will not exclude it here; for to those also in this condition, the best support is to trust in God; and it is the safest way to interpret Scripture in the largest sense; but yet that cannot be the principal meaning of it;) for he adds, and has no light, that is, no comfort. Now God's people, when they walk in the greatest outward darkness, may have, yea, often use to have, most light in their spirits; but here is such a state spoken of, such a darkness as has no light in it. Therefore it is principally to be understood of the want of inward comfort in their spirits; and so of that darkness which accompanies the want of the sense of God's favor.

The reasons why it is thus to be understood here, are, first, because the remedy here prescribed is, faith: to stay himself upon GOD, and that upon his God; he puts in his God emphatically; because that is the point he is troubled about, and concerning which he is in darkness, and of which the prophet would have such an one to be persuaded. And that is it which faith, propounded here as the remedy, does in the first place look unto. Secondly, The prophet in the foregoing verses had spoken of justification, whereby God pardons our sins, accepts our persons; and having expressed his assurance of this: " God is near that justifies me, who shall condemn" because there might be some poor souls, who truly fearing GOD, yet might want this assurance; and upon the hearing of this, might be the more troubled, because not able to express that confidence which he did: therefore he adds, "Who is among you Chet feareth the Lord, and walks in darkness let him trust in the name of the Lord." As if he had said, though you want assurance of this, yet be not discouraged; but exercise faith; go out of yourselves, rely upon CHRIST.
The Particulars of the Distress contained in these two phrases: Walking in darkness; having no light.

THE second thing to be inquired into is, What is the condition of such an one who is thus in darkness, and has no light? Light," says the apostle, Eph. 5: 13, "is that whereby things are made manifest;" that is, to the sense of sight, to which light properly belongs. When therefore he says, he has no light, the meaning is, he wants the sensible testimony of God's favor to him; he sees nothing that may give present witness of it to him. God's favor and his own graces, and all the sensible tokens and evidences thereof, which are apprehended by spiritual sight; are become as absent things, as if they were not, or never had been. That light which ordinarily discovers these as present, he is clean deprived of. To understand this we must know, that GOD, to help our faith, vouch safeth threefold light to his people, to add assurance and joy to their faith; which is to faith, as a back of steel to a bow.

First, the immediate light of his countenance, which is a clear evident beam and revelation of God's favor, immediately testifying that we are his; which is called the testimony of the Spirit, which David desired more than all worldly things: " Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon me." When this is utterly withdrawn, then a man is said to have no light. Such was Jonah's case, "I am cast out of thy sight," says he. And so God dealt with David often, and sometimes a long time together, wherefore he inquires complaining, " How long wilt you hide thy face from me" Psalm 13: 1. Yet, notwithstanding this hiding of God's face, the real gracious influences, and effects of his favor may be continued, upholding, strengthening, and carrying on the soul, still to obey and fear him. For, when CHRIST complained, "My God! my God! why has you forsaken me" (when as great an eclipse, in regard of the light of God's countenance, was upon his spirit, as was upon the earth,) yet he never obeyed God more; was never more strongly supported, than at that time; for then he was obeying to the death.

The second light which God vouchsafeth his people ordinarily to help their faith, is the sight and comfort of their own graces, unto which so many promises belong; as, of their love to his people, fear of his name, desire to obey him. So that often when the sun is set, yet star-light appears; that is, though the immediate presence and evidence of his favor shines not on the soul, yet his graces appear, as tokens of his love. So that the soul knows there is a sun still, that gives light to these stars, though it sees it not. Now a soul that has true grace may, at some times, want light to see his graces: as they in the storm, Acts 27: 20, so he, in temptation may come to have neither sun-light, nor star-light; no light, as in the text.

But, Thirdly, though he want the present light of God's countenance, and the sight of present grace, yet he may have a comfortable remembrance of what once he had still left; and so long is not utterly in darkness. Therefore further know that the state of one that fears God and obeys him, may be such, that he may have no comfortable light, or remembrance of what grace formerly he had. Yea, it may be, he calls all into question. Thus David in Psalm 30: 6, 7, though his heart was a little before full of joy, and assurance of God's favor; yet God did but hide his face, and all was gone: " I was troubled," says he; he could not see what was but a little past him. And the reason of these two last assertions is as evident as the experience thereof. For graces in us shine, but with a borrowed light, as the planets do, with a light borrowed from the sun. So that, unless God shine, and give light to thy graces, they will not appear to comfort thee. For our spirit, (that is, our graces,) never witnesseth alone; if God's Spirit joineth not in testimony therewith, it is silent. " The Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit," Rom. 8: 16. Now therefore, when God has withdrawn his testimony, then the testimony of our hearts, and of our own graces, has no force in it. For although it is true, that every man, having the power of reflecting upon his own actions, can discern what thoughts are in him, and what affections; yet he may still question whether those affections of sorrow for sin, or fear to commit it, be genuine, spiritual affections. For though the natural spirit, which is in a man, knows the things of a man; that is, his own thoughts and affections; yet, what is the true goodness of them he cannot know, without the supernatural light of the Spirit of God; who, as he is the giver of that grace in us; so "is given of GOD, that we may know the things which are given us of GOD," 1 Cor. 2: 8, 12.

Let us now consider the other phrase; and what is intimated when, as it is said, he walks in darkness. First, To walk in darkness, implies to be in doubt whither to go: so John 12: 35, " He that walks in darkness, knows not whither he goes." And thus the soul of one that fears God
may he filled with doubts, whether God will be merciful to him or not: and not know what God means to do with him, whether he shall go to heaven or

bell. And, Secondly, those in darkness are apt to stumble at every thing. So one effect of darkness, mentioned Isaiah fix. 1O, is to "stumble at noon-clay." So take a soul that is left in darkness, and it will stumble at all it hears out of the word, either at conference, or at sermons; at all it reads, at all promises it meets with. Oh, (thinks I,) that there should be such glorious promises, and not belong to me! Such an one misapplies all God's dealings, and the Scriptures against himself, and refuses comfort. And, Thirdly, darkness is exceeding terrible and full of horror. Then children are in the dark, they think they see fearful sights. So the soul of one that fears God may be filled with fears and terrors from God's wrath, and of God being an enemy to him.

CHAP. 3

The Causes of this Distress: First, the Spirit; whether he has any hand therein, and how far.

I PROCEED now to show, First, the causes; Secondly, the cases wherein; Thirdly, the ends for which God leaves his children in such distresses. The causes of this are three. 1. God's Spirit. 2. A man's own heart. 3. SATAN.

First, for God's Spirit: although he has a hand in some part of this disquietness; yet we must take heed how we put upon him any of those doubts and desperate fears of the wrath of God; for the Spirit is not the direct or positive cause of them. For a more distinct understanding of this, I will show how far the Holy Ghost proceedeth in it, and puts forth his hand towards creating distress of soul; and what SATAN's work is, where he strikes in; and then wherein our own hearts contribute to work further and deeper distress.

1. Thus far then the Spirit of God may go: he may suspend his testimony, and the execution of his office of witnessing, adopt him. 11O mat withdraw his comfortable presence, and hide himself for a moment, and conceal his love. Even when SATAN comes and gives in a false evidence, and our own hearts thereupon likewise condemn us, the Holy Ghost may stand by, as it were, silent, and say nothing to the contrary, but forbear to contradict SATAN by any loud testimony, as he does at other times.

2. He may reveal God as angry with a man, for such and such sins, and make him sensible thereof; not barely by concealing his love, but by making impressions of his wrath upon his conscience. Thus Isaiah 1vi. 17, 18, God not only says, "I hid me and was wroth," (that is, expressed my wrath by hiding myself,) "but I smote him and was wroth:" and yet. 16, it is intimated, "he con-tended and was wroth," (that is, fought against him,) as Isaiah liii. 1O, and this with his wrath upon his spirit. For it follows, that the spirit was ready to fail, and the soul which he had made. It was the spirit which God shot at and wounded, and that so deeply that it was ready to fail. Solomon calls this, by way of distinction, a wounded spirit, which who can bear And differeth it from all other afflictions upon the outward man, (which strike the spirit but through the clothing of the body,) for, says he, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity:" that is, all such outward afflictions, wherein it suffers but by way of sympathy; but when the spirit itself is laid bare and naked, and wounded immediately by God's wrath, (which only can reach it, and wound it,) who can bear this.

3. The Holy Ghost may proceed yet farther herein; so far as to shake over him the rod of his eternal wrath, especially when he has provoked CHRIST by presumptuous sins, in order to prevent his going on frowardly in the way of his heart; and this, both by presenting to him all those threatenings, which conditionally threaten, even to believers, eternal damnation: such as that, "If ye live after the flesh, ye (even you believers,) shall die:" for there is truth in all such threatenings. And again, by representing to him all those examples of men, in whom, for their going on in sin, "his soul has had no plea-sure," and of God's dealings with them: as how he swore against many of the Israelites, for their provocations of him, "that they should never enter into his rest;" and all this with this end, to startle and awaken him; and
with this intimation, that for such and such sins, God might in like manner deal with him. These, and the like examples, does the Spirit of God set before the believing Hebrews, and the believing Corinthians.

CHAP. 4

How SATAN and our hearts increase this darkness by false conclusions from the Spirit's work.

THE Spirit of God having proceeded thus far in causing such darkness and terrors of conscience in them that fear him; SATAN and their own hearts, (unto which he may and doth, often further leave them,) may take occasion from these dispensations of the Holy Ghost, (which are all holy, righteous, and true,) to draw forth false and fearful conclusions against themselves, and start amazing doubts and fears of their utter want of grace, and lying under the curse of eternal wrath at the present, yea, and of eternal rejection for the future. When this is the case with any, they are cast into a further darkness and bond-age, than the Holy Ghost was the cause of, or intended; while they interpret that withdrawing of his light and presence, and hiding himself, to be a casting them off; misconstrue that temporary wrath, chastising, and wounding their spirit for the present, to be no other than the impressions and earnest of God's eternal vengeance; and misconceive the application of all those threatenings of eternal damnation, (made by the Spirit, but under the condition of such and such courses for the future,) to be absolute against their persons. And because such examples of men cast off are presented to them, to show them what advantage God might take against them; they mistaking, think they read their own destiny laid before them, and conclude that God will do so with them. The apostle says of sin, "Sin taking occasion by the commandment, (he misunderstanding the scope of it, when a pharisee,) deceived me:" and yet "the commandment is holy, just, and good," Rom. 7: 11, 12. So SATAN and our hearts, by occasion of the dealings of the Spirit, (which are righteous and true, as himself is, who is the Spirit of truth and leads into truth,) deceive poor men, and lay them in their apprehensions "among the slain whom God remembereth no more," Psalm lxxxviii. 5.

But we must warily sever the work of God's Spirit herein, from that of SATAN and our own hearts; not attributing such desperate conclusions to the Spirit. Thus that depth of sorrow wherewith that humbled Corinthian was well nigh swallowed up, 2 Cor. 2: 7, is ascribed unto SATAN, when, ver. 11, it is made and termed one of his devices; which word does in part refer to the Corinthian's sorrow. Thus David also imputes that his questioning, Psalm lxxvi. ver. 7, whether God would be merciful to him, unto his own heart: this is my firmity, says he, ver 10; so that the blame herein is to be divided between SATAN and our own hearts.

CHAP. 5

How our own hearts are the causes of this darkness: the principles therein, which are the causes of it.

THAT our own hearts should be the causes, of such distress and darkness, when the Holy Ghost thus deals, with us, is no wonder: 1. Because, as we are creatures, there is such a weakness and infirmity in us, as David speaks; by reason of which, if God does but hide himself and withdraw his presence, (which supporteth us in comfort, as in being,) we are ready presently to fall into those fears. The
Psalmist says of all the creatures, "You hidest thy face, and they are troubled:" and this by reason of their weakness and dependence upon God: and much more might David say, " You didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

2. There is not only such a weakness in us as we are creatures: but also an innate darkness in our spirits, as we are sinful creatures. Since the fall, our hearts of themselves are nothing but darkness; and therefore no wonder, if when God draws but the curtains, and shuts up the light from us, that our hearts should conceive such horrid fears and doubts. The apostle compareth this native darkness of our hearts unto that chaos and lump of darkness, which, at the first creation, covered the face of the deep: when he says, that GOD, " who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST," 2 Cor. 4: 6. So that no longer than God continues to shine, either with the light of comfort or of grace, no longer do the hearts, even of believers, retain light in them. And if at any time he withhold that light, then our hearts presently return to their former darkness. And then does that vast womb of darkness conceive, and form all these fears and doubts within itself: considering what that our hearts are a great deep also; so deep in darkness and deceitfulness, that no plummet can fathom them. " The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it" Jer. 17: 9. Darkness covereth not only the face of this deep, but it is darkness to the bottom, through darkness. No wonder then, if when the Spirit ceases to move upon this deep with beams of light, it cast us into such deeps and darkness as Heman speaks of, Psalm lxxviii. 6, and frameth in itself such hideous apprehensions and desperate conclusions of a man's own state.

3. Especially seeing there is so much strength of corrupt reason in men, ready to invent strong arguments to confirm those sad fears and darkened apprehensions. For, as. it is said of the Gentiles, that, when " their foolish hearts were darkened, (that is, left and given over to their own natural darkness,) they became vain in their imaginations," or, (as the original has it,) in their reasonings, Rom. 1: 21, and this even in those things which God had clearly revealed in his works: so may it be said even of those who have been most enlightened, that their hearts are apt to become much more vain in their reasonings about, and in the judgments of their own states before GOD, out of his word and dealings with them, if God once leave them unto darkness. And this that great caveat given to professors by St. James gives to understand, when they are exhorted to take heed, that in hearing the word they be not found deceiving themselves by false reasonings, Jam. 1: 22. So the original, TJuQAO71Vc.evoi eaurts, expresses it, which is as if we should say, "false reasoning themselves;" as we use to say in a like phrase, "befooling themselves." And this is spoken of judging of their own states; concerning which men are more apt through self-love to make (to speak in that phrase of the apostle,) false syllogisms, than about any other spiritual truth whatever. And as unsound hearers of the word are thus apt, through misapplying the word they hear, to frame and draw from thence (as he intimates,) multitudes of false reasons to maintain to themselves a good opinion of their state; so, on the contrary, in those who have weak faith, all that carnal reason, (which remains in a great measure unsubdued in them,) is as apt to raise and forge strong objections against the work of faith begun, and as peremptorily to conclude against their present state by the like misapplication of the word; but especially by misinterpreting God's dealings towards them.

The reason of all this is as evident as the experience of it. To instance in general: reason is of itself a busy principle, that will be prying into, and making false glosses upon all God's matters, as well as our own; and trying its skill, in arguing upon all his dealings with us. Thus Jeremy must needs be reasoning with God about his dispensations towards wicked men, chap. 12: 1, 2; and, Job, of his dealings with himself, chap. 13: 3. And reason being likewise the supreme principle in us by nature, and our highest difference as we are men; there-fore no wonder if, when we are left to ourselves to walk in darkness, we walk as men, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 1: 3; and, to use Solomon's words, "do lean to our own wisdom;" even because it is our own, and was brought up with us. Reason is our great Ahitophel, (a busy principle, that will be prying into, and making false glosses upon all God's matters, as well as our own; and trying its skill, in arguing upon all the Spirit's dealings with us,) our guide with whom we have taken so much sweet counsel in all our worldly affairs. In them indeed we should make use of its advice; but we too often take it into the sanctuary with us, "and walk in company with it into the house of God;' that is, we suffer it to meddle in matters that pertain to the sanctuary, and to debate and conclude of our spiritual state, as well as of our temporal. "I thought," says Asaph, Psal. lixiii. 16, "to know this," that is, he thought to have comprehended God's mind in those his dispensations, by the discussions of reason: whereas, "after he had gone into the sanctuary," ver. 17, with faith alone, and thereby consulted with the word, he confesseth his own best reason to have been as ignorant of God's meaning, and of those rules he proceeds by, in those his dispensations, even as a beast, (ver. 22,) is of those principles which men walk by, or the intentions they have in their ways. If reason then, when it is so utterly unskilful in the premises, will yet be exercising and trying its faculty in reasoning from them, no wonder if the conclusions thence deduced be so wide and wild.

But more particularly: carnal reason is the most desperate enemy to faith of all other principles in man. For until faith be wrought, it is the supreme principle; but then faith deposeth it, and afterwards does often contradict it, yea, excludes it, as unskilful in its matters, from being of its council. And so deep is this enmity against faith, that look what is the most especial business of faith, (which is to alter our state before GOD, put us into a state of justification, and to assure us of it,) therein it shows a more peculiar enmity against faith, by opposing it in that work more than in any other. This enmity shows itself both before and after faith is wrought. Before faith is wrought, carnal reason shows its opposition, by using the utmost of its strength to persuade a man of the goodness of his state; thereby, to prevent the entrance of faith, and his seeking after it at all. And therefore in the first working of faith, the Holy Ghost brings faith in by force of open arms, as a conqueror, "casting down all those strong holds and reasonings;" (as the word is, 2 Cor. 10: 4,) which carnal reason had been enlarging and fortifying, and so eretheth faith a throne upon the ruins of them all. In like manner, after faith is wrought, all that carnal reason which is left unsubdued, does with a greater enmity oppose faith still; only it diverts the war now, mustering up new forces, to persuade a man, by all the objections it can raise, of the badness of his state now, as before the goodness of it. And because next to justifying us, the office of faith is to settle in our hearts peace with GOD, and a persuasion of our being in his favor, as Rom. 5: 1, therefore does carnal
reason bend the utmost of its power to persuade upon all occasions, by all the most specious arguments it can suggest, that God is not at peace with us. And if in any condition carnal reason has the advantage of faith; it is now, when it is in the "valley of the shadow of death;" when it is under so great an eclipse, and is left to fight it out alone, no wonder if carnal reason frame and suggest the strongest objections to the soul, whilst it is in this distemper. Add unto all this, that as there is such strength of corrupt reason, which is thus opposite to faith; so there are many other principles of corrupt affections, which join, and take part with carnal reason in its opposition: such are jealousy, suspiciousness, and in-credulity. These edge and sharpen the wit of carnal reason, to argue and wrangle against the work of faith; and all such objections as reason finds out against it, are pleasing to these corrupt principles, for they are thereby nourished and strengthened.

Lastly, as there are these corrupt principles of carnal reason, and suspiciousness in us, to raise and foment doubts and fears; so there may be guilt within us, of our false dealings towards God. As we are dark and weak creatures, so guilty creatures also. And this guilt, like the waves of the sea, or the swellings of Jordan, begins, upon these terrible storms from GOD, to rise and swell and overflow in our consciences. There is much guilt and falseness of heart, which in those distempers, (when our conscience boils within us,) does like the scum, come up and float aloft. Thus in David, as his sin, so his falseness of heart " was ever before him;" and with an eye to this he spoke, Psalm xxxi. " Blessed is that man in whose spirit is no guile, and to whom the Lord imputeth no sin." Thus he spake when God had charged upon him the guilt of his sin, and discovered to him the guile of his spirit, ver. 4, 5. And this guile does oftentimes appear, that our conscience can hardly discern anything else to be in us. It lies uppermost, and covers our graces from our view; and like as the chaff, when the wheat is tossed in the fall, comes up to the top; so in these commotions and winnowings of spirit, do our corruptions float in our consciences, whilst the graces that are in us he covered under them out of sight; and the dark side of our hearts (as of the cloud,) is turned towards us, and the light side from us. And indeed there are in the best of us; humors enough, which if they be stirred in our consciences. There is much guile and falseness of heart, which in those distempers, (when our conscience boils within us,) does like the cloud, come up and float aloft. Thus in David, as his sin, so his falseness of heart " was ever before him;" and with an eye to this he spoke, Psalm xxi. " Blessed is that man in whose spirit is no guile, and to whom the Lord imputeth no sin." Thus he spake when God had charged upon him the guilt of his sin, and discovered to him the guile of his spirit, ver. 4, 5. And this guile does oftentimes appear, that our conscience can hardly discern anything else to be in us. It lies uppermost, and covers our graces from our view; and like as the chaff, when the wheat is tossed in the fall, comes up to the top; so in these commotions and winnowings of spirit, do our corruptions float in our consciences, whilst the graces that are in us he covered under them out of sight; and the dark side of our hearts (as of the cloud,) is turned towards us, and the light side from us. And indeed there are in the best of us; humors enough, which if they be stirred in our consciences, may alone cast us into these burning fits of trouble and distress; so that whilst God's Spirit shall withhold from us the light of our own graces, and our own consciences represent to us the corruptions that are in our best performances, our hearts may conclude our selves hypocrites; as Mr. Bradford, and others of the saints have done.

Concerning SATAN's working herein, we will more distinctly treat by way of explication of it: 1. More gene rall; 2. More particularly. In general: First, SATAN has a peculiar desire to vex the saints with this sort of temptations, that God is not their God: so that all his other temptations unto sin are but as the laying the train for this great plot of blowing up all. The reasons of this are: 1. Above all graces in us, he is the greatest enemy to faith; therefore the apostle was jealous of SATAN, in nothing more than in this, lest he had been tempting with, and perverting the faith of the Thessalonians: " I sent to know of your faith," says he, " lest by some means the tempter has tempted you." Faith in God is the greatest enemy unto SATAN; it quencheth all his darts. As therefore faith is that work of God and the master-piece of SATAN. He is envious especially at the joy of our faith. And as comfort is the proper work of the Spirit; so is discomfort and distress the proper work of this evil spirit. 2. Again, as SATAN is most opposite to the Holy Spirit; so he delights to blaspheme the Spirit's work in our hearts, by persuading us that all is counterfeit. 3. It is called " Exsous, the envious one; and the main mark of his envy is, That God should be our GOD, who has cast off him; and therefore he will endeavor to raise jealousies that he is not our God.

Secondly, as SATAN has such a desire, so God may give us up into SATAN's hand for awhile. His last com mission over Job seems to extend thus far; for his life only was excepted: " He is in thy hand, only save his life," Job 2: 6. And therefore, after that leave is given, we
hear Job (although never brought to question his state, yet) crying out of terrors, and of the sins of his youth; for SATAN then, as he smote his body with boils, so he buffeted his spirit. Now, though SATAN has abilities to inflict this at all times; yet he must further have leave and commission from God before he dares to do it. Thus we find God suffered SATAN to provoke David to sin; and therefore that pro
tocation to number the people, as it is imputed to SATAN and his malice,

1 Chron. 21: 1, so also to God and his anger, in giving leave to SATAN, 2 Sam. xxiv, 1. And as an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul's mind, 1 Sam. 16: 14, so a messenger of SATAN was sent to buffet Paul's spirit, 2 Cor. 12: j. But herein God does not say help SATAN with any further power, than what, as an angel, he furnished him with at his creation; nor with any assistance to enable him the more to assault us, but with permissive power only.

This power is either given at SATAN's request, (so that phrase, Luke 22: 31, " SATAN has requested to winnow you;" as that also, Job 2: 3, "You move me against him," Both imply: and, as it may seem, by singling out and calling forth some one for his combat; as he did him more especially, to whom therefore CHRIST addressed that premonition; and the word â€™E2-r-r-a, ro implies as much. So also Job was singled out for this duel, both by God and SATAN.) Or else this is done through the ordinance of excommunication and censures of the church duly administered; the proper inward effect, that accompanies that ordinance, (which casts men out of the church,) being inward affliction and distress of conscience by SATAN, which of all afflictions is the greatest punishment. This we may see in the excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian; whose excommunication is therefore expressed, to be a delivering him up unto SATAN in the name of the Lord JESUS, 1 Cor. 5: 5: that is, he was to be cast out by a commission from CHRIST, which going forth in his name, when they published it on earth be signed it in heaven. Upon which rightly administered does ensue, first, that as the church does cut them off from communion with them; so God cuts them off from communion with himself, and withdraws the light of his countenance; and not only so, but delivereth them up to SATAN; that being the consequence of it: (which, there-fore, because it implies the former, is put to express the whole proceeding,) which delivery of him unto SATAN, was not giving him a commission to carry him on to more sin: (though that often be indeed the effect of it, as in Alexander, 1 Tim. 1: 19, 20,) but it was to terrify and afflict his conscience, and to stir up in him the guilt of his sin with terrors for it Thus, when that Corinthian was excommunicated, SATAN dealt accordingly with him; for in the next epistle, 2 Cor. 2: 7, we find him well nigh swallowed up of sorrow; which was SATAN's doing; for, ver. 11, "We are not ignorant," says the apostle, "of his devices." And thus SATAN continued to handle him, even now when he began to truly humbled, ver. 7, when though the feared God and obeyed him, yet he walked in darkness till the church received him. Or else, when this ordinance is not administered, then God him self (who works without an ordinance sometimes the same effects as with it,) does excommunicate men's spirits from his presence, and gives them up to SATAN to buffet them.

SATAN having thus obtained leave, I need not largely show how able he is to work darkness in us. His natural power to work up on our spirits, as he is an angel, is exceeding great. All which power, how great soever in him at his first creation, is now become the "power of darkness;" and so called, because most powerful that way; namely, to work darkness in us: and though he can " transform himself into an angel of light," by deluding enthusiasts with false joys; yet therein he does but act a part, it is but forced; but to show himself an "angel of darkness," by terrifying weak consciences, this is natural now to him. His power lies most in this. Therefore his title further is, the "ruler of darkness;" and also he is called, " that strong man; strong," as " to keep peace," Luke 11: 21, in those he deceives with a false peace; so to make war and commotions in us when he is cast out. We are bidden therefore to stand upon our guard, and to look that "we have on the whole armour of GOD, that we may be able to stand against his wiles," Eph. 6: 11.

But though SATAN has never so much power, yet the advantage of this his power to work those disqui etudes in us, is by reason of that sinful darkness which is in us. We may say, that as, unless he had "power from above," from God; so, unless he had furtherance from beneath, even from those principles of guilt and darkness in us, he could not disquiet us. " SATAN cometh, (says CHRIST,)" but has nothing in me." A commission he had, and therefore came; but he had nothing of his image, or of the guilt of any of his works, to work upon in CHRIST, and therefore could effect nothing at all upon his spirit. That therefore which gives him matter to work thus upon us, is something within us; there being, even in the best, something which belongs to his jurisdiction, which makes their spirits fit subjects for his temptations. Eph. 6: 12, the evil spirits are called the "rulers of the darkness of this world;" and, Coloss. 1: 12, 13, their power is called the "power of darkness;" so that darkness is SATAN's territories, dominion, and jurisdiction: for it is his work, and his image, without which he could have no power at all with us. But by reason of this remaining darkness, he has a double advantage over us.

1. An advantage of more near intimate and immediate access to our spirits to close with them, to suggest unto them, and to work upon them; and to tempt, not only as one man tempts another, by the outward senses, but by the inward also. And though it is true, that, as he is an angel, he has naturally by creation, ability thus to do; yet, as he is now a devil, and an unclean spirit, were we but perfectly holy, as in innocency, he should be debarred all such near communication to us. To this purpose it may be observed, that in his temptation of Adam in innocency, he was not permitted in his first assault, till man had sinned, to come within him to work upon his fancy and affections indiscriminably, but only mediatly and externally, by an audible voice in the body of a serpent. Nor should he have near and inward access to our spirits but for that darkness in us, by reason of which he thus comes within us; and as darkness mingleth with darkness, so he with our spirits. So that as the light of grace in us begun, does fit us for God's drawing nigh to us; so this darkness remaining exposeth us to SATAN's drawing nigh, so near, as to mingle with our spirits, and as it were to become one spirit with us. 2. As thereby he has this
advantage of access to get within us: so this darkness in us is also as fit fuel and as tinder to his fiery temptations, that presently enkindleth and inflameth; so that he can both increase and augment all those effects of the principles of darkness mentioned; and so add blackness to that darkness in us. And darkness being his dominion, therefore so much darkness as is in us, so great a party he has in us to work upon. Hence therefore all the effects that he worketh in unregenerate men, who are nothing but darkness, he may work in regenerate men according to the proportion of the remainder of darkness in them.

CHAP. 7

How SATAN works upon our Reason.

SEING therefore the exercise of SATAN's power lies in that darkness which is in us, let us more particularly see how able he is to work upon those several principles of carnal reason, guilt of conscience, jealousies and fears.

First, for carnal reason: he chiefly worketh on this in that sort of temptations the strength whereof lies in false reasonings; wherein, if any thing, he has the advantage. 1. His abilities to forge and invent false reasonings and arguments to overthrow our faith, are (as they must needs be conceived to be) exceeding great. For this knowledge he is called *, as well as SATAN; and for his malice and for his subtlety in out-reaching us, a serpent. When he was young, he outwitted our first parents; “he beguiled Eve through his subtlety,” says the apostle, 2 Cor. 11: 3, then when their reason was not depraved; but now he is grown, that “old serpent,” Rev. 20: 3, and “we are become children, apt to be tossed to and fro,” Eph. 4: 14, he has had time enough to improve his knowledge. He is a student of five thou-sand years standing, that has lost no time; but as he is said to “accuse day and night,” Rev. 12: 10, so he is able to study both day and night; and he has made it his chief, if not whole study, to enable himself to tempt and plead against us. And by this his long experience and observation he has his NonNcaz'a, 2 Cor. 2: 11, his set and composed machinations, his ME & Etas, Eph. 6: 11, his methods of temptations, which are studied and artificially moulded and ordered; even such systems and methods of them as tutors and professors of arts and sciences have, and which they read over and over again to their auditors: the apostle calls them darts, ver. 16; and he has a whole shop and armory of them ready made and forged; which, for the acuteness and subtil sophistry that is in them, are called “depths of SATAN,” Rev. 2: 24. Which depths are most to be found in this; for he is more especially versed in this great question, Whether a man be a child of GOD, or not, more than in any other. All other controversies he has had to deal in, in particular ages, as occasionally they were started; but this has been the standing controversy of all ages, since God has had any children on earth; with every one of whom, more or less, he has at one time or another had solemn disputes about it. So that he knows all the advantages, windings, and turnings in this debate; all the objections and answers in it. And as other controversies, the longer they are on foot, and the further they have been carried, the more they are enlarged, and grow more subtle; so must this needs also, especially in this latter age of the world. The difficulties which a man meets with in making out a right judgment of his state, are greater than in any controversy the world ever knew, and afford stranger knots, and require as acute distinctions to dissolve them. And indeed, such they are, that did not the Holy Ghost sometimes cut, sometimes untie them for believers, by witnessing with our spirits that we are the sons of GOD, bare reason alone could never determine the matter. Now SATAN, through long experience and observation, has all these at his fingers' ends; he has still observed and laid up what answers has relieved the spirits of believers, in such and such a doubt cast in by him; and then studies a further reply against the next time; or for the next believer he shall have to do with.

2. As he has thus thoroughly studied this controversy, and knows all the windings and false reasonings in it so withal, by his daily studying and considering men, he knows how best to suit those reasonings, both to persons and seasons. It is the sole business of those evil spirits to study men. For this end they go up and down the earth. He knows all the ranks and classes of men in the state of grace; and according to their ranks, with what sort of temptations to encounter them. For men's temptations are various and manifold, 1 Pet. 2: 6, even as the gifts and operations of the Spirit are, 1 Cor. 12: 4, 5. Now he, having beaten out this controversy with all sorts, knows how to lay the dispute, how to order, marshal, and apply objections, and wield his blows with much success and advantage. That as physicians, having observed the several workings of medicines of all sorts, upon several ages and constitutions, and what effects they have had, prescribe several medicines, according to the several conditions of their patients, though sick of the same disease. Thus SATAN by observation, finding the hearts of some men answering to some others, “as face to face in water,” and withal remembering what reasonings have always taken most with such a sort of Chris-
tians whose corruptions and whose graces were much like unto those in this or that man he has now to deal with; accordingly he makes use of these reasonings again.

The tempers of men's spirits we know are divers, and so are capable of diversity of suggestions. And again, the operations of grace, as of sin, are various in those several tempers. And God's dealings with, and workings upon his children, are as various as either: some he humbleth much, some are led on with comfort; some he works on with a sudden and marvelous light, as if the sun should rise on the sudden at midnight; and on others insensibly, and by degrees, as when the dawning steals upon the day; and this variety aforesaid rise and occasion for several temptations. So that what kind of work any other Christian has had, is apt to be made an exception walking in DA11KNII's.

to another that wants it. I was never thus humbled, says one; nor I thus comforted, says another. I had a sudden, violent work indeed, which came in like a spring tide, but now the tide is fallen, and my first love abated, says a third. I had some workings and enlightenings, says another, and I was deceived then, and I may be so now also. And so he has that vast task set him to compare a counterfeit work with a true. Thus every several way of working lies open to several exceptions: and as every earthly calling has its several temptations, so the several ways and manners of effecting this heavenly calling have their currents of several temptations all which SATAN knows, and hath often traced; and accordingly knows how to fit them to men, and to prosecute them the most advantageous way.

So, in like manner, he takes the compass of every man's knowledge, notions, and apprehensions; according to which we are also capable of several temptations. Many reasonings and objections, which, like small hail-shot, could not make any dint upon men of parts and knowledge, both because they, by reason of their know-ledge, soar high out of the gun-shot of them, and have also on the "whole armour of GOD," abounding in all faith and knowledge; yet may be fittest to level at such as are ignorant, and fly low; and have but some few broken pieces of that armour to defend some parts with. But, on the contrary, those others of his great shot, which he dischargeth on men of knowledge, they would clean fly over the others' heads, and not come near such smaller vessels. Thus the ignorance of the meaning of the Scriptures, and of the ways of grace chalked forth therein, how does SATAN use, to the disquiet of many poor and good souls, by putting false glosses upon them. How many weak souls stick in shallows, and are some-times a long while terrified with gross mistakes and, like small birds, are held long under with limed straws of frivolous objections, which great ones fly away with. That great apostle being a man of knowledge, was not easily taken with such chaff: "We are not ignorant of his devices," says he, and therefore SATAN takes another course with him, comes with downright blows, and falls a buffetting him. Thus does SATAN take measure of the bore (as I may so speak) of every man's understanding, and fits them with objections proportionable of several sizes. And as the apostle in his sermons, prepared milk for babes, but strong meat for strong men; so does SATAN suit objections to men's notions and apprehensions, still framing them according to their reading.

3. He is able indiscernibly to communicate all his false reasonings (though never so spiritual,) which he Both forge and invent, and that in such a manner as to deceive us by them, and make them take with us. First, he is able not only to put into the heart solicitations unto sensual and worldly objects; such as into Judas's heart to betray his Master for money, John 13: 2; and to tempt married couples severed, to incontinency, 1 Cor. 7: 5. But also the most subtle and abstracted reasonings concerning things spiritual, which are utterly remote from sense. And in this respect they are termed "spiritual wickednesses," because they deal in such wickednesses as much as in those that are sensual. And that he is able to suggest such spiritual thoughts and reasonings, appeareth many ways; as by his injecting blasphemous thoughts against GOD, such as do sometimes transcend the wit and capacity of the receiver of them; this is manifest likewise by Saul's prophesying even from the immediate dictating of "an evil spirit," and from all those damnable heresies which have been broached in all ages, and of after-times, apostasy is ascribed to "spirits of error," and to the working of SATAN. Now, by the same reason, there is no reasoning about states, though never so spiritual, but he can suggest it, as well as he did those depths of heresies to the broachers of them. So that SATAN can not only make those false reasonings, which our own hearts forge, more specious and probable, and suggest further confirmations of them, which are enough to add unto this darkness; but he is also able to put in never, which himself invents, of what kind soever they be.

Secondly, he is able to insinuate them in such a manner as to take with us, and deceive us; yea, and often to set them on with a deep impression; so commission was not simply given to that "lying spirit," who persuaded Ahab by a he in the mouths of his false prophets, to suggest a lie, but so to suggest it that it should prevail. And as he is thus able (when God shall give leave,) to delude wicked men's understandings with false reasonings in matters of false doctrine, by reason of that "total darkness" that is in them; so he is able (if God give leave, as sometimes he doth,) to bring strong delusions upon the minds of God's children also, through false reasonings about their own states, by reason of that darkness which in part remains in them. Only this is to be added, that SATAN cannot force assent to any falsehood upon the understanding of any man: for how then should they "all have been damned for believing that lie" 2 Thess. 2: 11, 12, which should not have been, unless it were their own sin. Neither yet does he so immediately, produce an act of assent in us as God doth, when he worketh faith in us; for then God's power and assistance in working good, should be no more than SATAN's working evil. And yet the Scripture goes far, when it says of those that believed not the gospel, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, 2 Cor. 4: 4, which notes a super-added working of blindness unto their own natural blindness: as also when it says, that the "prince of the air", "that is," works effectually, Eph. 2, and of the Corinthians, whilst unregenerate, that they were "carried and led away after dumb
idols," 1 Cor. 12: 2; all which phrases seem to argue not only a further power of working upon men's judgment, than when one man does endeavor to persuade another; (because he suggesteth indiscernibly, and with more frequency and importunity, and holdeth the mind mote to the object, and presenteth an army of confirmations at once; and is able so to marshal them as, the mind can scarce resist; and puts all these upon the spirit with a violent and imperious affirmation;) but further also they would seem to imply some kind of physical working; though not immedeately on the spring of the clock, yet upon the wheels and weights of it; I mean the passions in the body, and the images in the fancy; though not upon the understanding immediately. All which, what influence they have to sway the judgment and pervert it, experience spews.

4. He is further able to follow and continue his reasonings, as occasion may be, and hold out arguments with us, and out-reason us, by putting his new replies to our answers; and so to maintain the dispute, and to come up with fresh supplies. Which in this respect is called wrestling, Eph. 6: 12, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers," it being (as the bodily wrestling) transacted by reiterated assaults and attempts to get the victory; he, as it were, going about to strike up our heels, as wrestlers do, that is, to take from under us those reasonings which supported us; which kind of spiritual wrestlings how often have we experience of in spiritual agonies. In the hour of temptation believers find conflicts and disputes, rationally carried along, and pertinent objections brought in against those answers, which they meditate of: in which case therefore divines bid men not to dispute with that cunning sophister.

CHAP. 8

How SATAN works upon our Conscience.

Thus we see how able SATAN is to assist carnal reason in us against ourselves. We will now further consider what power he may exercise upon that other principle in us, our conscience, in accusing us, and laying particulars to our charge; in which consists the greatest of his strength, even in an army of accusations of us to ourselves; which in this warfare he musters up against us. If this subtle leader cannot deceive the judge, (as I may say) with false rules and mistakes in the law itself; then he endeavors it by misrepresenting the case of the party, and puts in a false bill of accusation, so ordered and coloured, as to procure a judgment against him; laying before the eyes of men's consciences their by ends, deadness and hardness of heart, and falsenness in such and such turnings of their lives; excepting against what is good in them, aggravating what is evil, and all to enforce from thence a false conclusion.

By the way we may take notice of a difference between the Holy Ghost's dealing with a believer, when at any time he comes with the Word, and searcheth and tries his heart, and discovers corruptions to him, convincing and reproving him, and that sometimes with some sharpness, for his by-ends and hypocrisies, and between these other siftings and winnowings of SATAN. The difference is, that the Holy Ghost dealeth sweetly herein, as a father that convinceth his child of his misdemeanors; but without putting in any such sting as this in the conclusion, that therefore we are hypocrites; but in these of SATAN, that is the issue he mainly drives all to, and it is made the burden of all those his accusations, and is as the scope that runs through the whole of his charge. Now in respect to this his misrepresenting our state, and false aggravations of our sins unto us, he is called, as the tempter, which is in a general relation, to all sorts of temptations; so the accuser, Rev. 12: 10, or pleader against us: and as the accuser of us to GOD, in God's court; so in the court of our own consciences. And as he tempts us unto sin; so also for sin, and by sin; that is, the guilt of it, to draw us to despair. He that accused Job unto GOD, would sure accuse Job unto himself much more.

And though it may be truly affirmed, that neither SATAN nor our own consciences, can ever aggravate unto us too much the intrinsical sinfullness, the heinousness and vileness of our sins in their proper colors and true aggravations; yet SATAN may, in the representation of our sins, put such false apprehensions and such aggravations upon them, as may make us apprehend too much about them; as when it is suggested, that they are utterly unpardonable. - He may likewise use them as inductions to prove a false conclusion. And also although our sins can never be enough represented, if it be in order to drive a man to God's free grace, and unto CHRIST; yet to present them singly, and to hold the mind so to them, as to cause us to forget our own mercies, and in such a manner, as thereby God's mercies are concealed from us; this is satan's practice, and is the deep of this deep bondage. And in this respect that name Kasz?see., the accuser, is given to this evil spirit in a direct opposition to that special name and office of the Holy Ghost, " the Comforter or pleader for us. Because as the Holy Ghost maketh intercession in our own hearts unto God for us, and, upon true repentance, helpeth us to make apologies for ourselves,
as the Word is, 2 Cor. 7: 11,) and comforteth us by discovering our graces given us of GOD, and by pleading our evidences, and witnessing with our spirits that we are the sons of God; so, on the contrary, SATAN is an accuser, by laying to our charge the guilt of sins, by impleading our evidences, misrepresenting our state, thereby to swallow us up with sorrow. And further, because in these accusations his scope is to misrepresent our state to us, therefore he is called AaCoVS-, as slanderer, as one that falsely eluimmiateh and slandereth all our graces, all God's dealings towards us, all our dealings towards him: which false charges of his, I take most properly to be those darts, mentioned Eph. 6: 11, which are there said more especially to oppose our faith., And therefore faith is there said to quench them. These kinds of SATAN's temptations and accusations against us are, even as darts and arrows that wound, pierce, and run through the passions and affections, and strike the soul through and through with fears. And besides the sharpness of the darts themselves, they are said to be fiery, as making double way for themselves. For a piece of iron, though blunt, yet if fired red-hot, runs through without resistance.

And as SATAN can stir up that guilt that is in us, so he can also work upon that iniquity of which that is in the conscience. For as he has a power to work upon the rest of the faculties, so also upon the conscience; misleading it in its verdict of our states, as cunning pleaders do a sillyjury. The wards of conscience are of themselves loose and naturally misplaced, but he with his false keys perverts them much more: it naturally gives an uncertain sound; but he by his false alarms and panic fears, cast in, does much more confound the testimony of it. And how easy is it to trouble a soul disquieted already, and to work upon jealousies which are raised. We see how far a cunning man can insinuate with jealous natures, to increase suspicions and surmises. When an humor is stirred, how easily is it wrought on And thus often when the Spirit has already read us a sharp lecture, and examined our consciences, then SATAN strikes in, and descants upon it all, to deeper terrors and distress.

CHAP. 9 How SATAN works upon the Passions.

We have seen how able SATAN is to work upon our reason and conscience. It remains that we show how he can work upon the passions. Now it is in respect of his working on these, that the darts before mentioned, are principally called fiery; namely, for that anguish and inflammation they cause through distempering the affections. Those fears which our own hearts engendered, were but as smoke; these darts cause this to flame and blaze. The allusion is to the poisoned darts, which the Scythians of old, and other nations now use in war; the venemous heat of which, like a fire in their flesh, killed those that were wounded by them. Job also alludes to those when he says, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinks up my spirit." And what were those arrows he speaks of, but terrors. So it follows, "The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." So that as SATAN inflames other members with a superadded vehemency and violence; (as the tongue, which is said to be set on fire from hell: that is, from SATAN, who is called hell, as in that speech, the gates of hell; as the good angels, the noblest creatures, are called heavens, Heb. 7: 26,) As, I say, he does thus inflame other members, so in like manner he does put fire into those darts he wounds the conscience with; and thereby causes such pangs, that hell-fire, as it were, begins to flame in a man's conscience.

1. When the Holy Ghost has once lashed the conscience, and made it tender, SATAN then, may fret it more and more, and be still rubbing upon the sore, by casting in horrid suggestions and false fears.

2. By renewing the experimental remembrance of those lashes, which the soul has had from the Spirit, he can amaze the soul with fears of an infinitely sorer vengeance yet to come; and flash representations of hell-fire in their consciences, from those real glimpses they have already felt, in such a manner, as to bewilder the soul in vast and unthought-of horrors.

3. He can then bring home all the threatenings that are thundered forth in the Word against hypocrites, and discharge them all with much violence and noise upon a poor doubting soul. He can and do show his prisoners those terrible chains and racks, and other instruments of death, as the Psalmist calls them, which God has prepared against sinners, and has stored up in that great armoury of his Word, 2 Cor. 10: 6. With the rattling of which chains SATAN can make a noise in the conscience of a poor-sinner to affright him. Which he is the more enabled to do out of experience of such terrors in himself; "being bound up in chains everlasting, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. And as a son of consolation, is enabled "to comfort others the more by the comfort wherewith he has been comforted of God;" so this "prince of darkness" is the more powerful to terrify weak consciences, by the terrors which he has felt from the Lord.
4. He can immediately, by his own power, stir the passions of fear and grief, and excite them beyond nature. As the winds can raise the billows in the sea; so can he a tumult in the affections, and put all the soul into a violent perturbation. He is the prince of the airy part of the little world in man, as well as of the elementary region in the great world; and so can raise unnatural storms and vapours that shall darken reason; and cause such thunders and lightnings as shall hurl all into a black confusion; such as if hell and the soul would presently come together. And though it is true that he cannot turn the stream of our affections back, (for God only can do this,) yet he can drive them faster, and cause them to swell above their natural channels; that as a man possessest has the strength of ten men in him, as the man mentioned Luke 8: 29, so shall the affections have that are blown up by him. And as he can raise up other passions in us, so also fears and terrors, jealousies and distrusts. Thus he handled Saul, when God left him; "an evil spirit troubled him;" or as most read it) "terrified him," 1 Sam. 16: 15. And in the raising up these affections, he works more than pitorally; that than by barely propounding such objects as shall move them; even physically, by stirring up such humors in the body as those passions do act and stir in. He can also disturb the organs of the understanding; as in him, Luke 8: 35, who through SATAN's working, is intimated "not to have been in his right mind." And when he has dins disordered all in a man, he comes with his suggestions, and

speaks nothing but wrath and terrors, the heinousness of a man's sins, the fearfulness of God's wrath, unto that conscience that is troubled. And then (look, as when a man's choler is up every small thing provokes him; so now, when fear and melancholy are excited, every suggestion, every surmise does strike the soul through and through. And thus, through the means of these mists, which eviron and darken this sun, he works upon the conscience. For when once those affections cloud the mind, then multitudes of troublesome thoughts arise, and suitable to that passion prevail with a man's spirit; as appears by that speech of CHRIST, Luke 24: 38, "Why are ye troubled, (or afraid,) and why do thoughts arise in your hearts" Passions which, like heavy weights hung upon a clock, not only make the wheels, the thoughts, to move faster, but also pervert them, and wrest them the wrong way; so that, to a heart thus distempered, all things are presented amiss; even as to a blood-shot eye all things seem red.

CHAP. 10

Seven Advantages SATAN has over us, in all those afore-mentioned Dealings.

For a general conclusion to this discourse about SATAN's working on us, I will but mention some of those great advantages he has in all these his false reasonings to set them on, and to fasten his false conclusions thence deduced; which I therefore bring in here, as being common to all those particulars which have been related.

1. It is no small advantage that he can familiarly suggest them again and again to us. The frequency of any thought that haunts us has secretly the force of an argument to persuade us. A cunning flatterer, that is continually suggesting, may at last work out a near and a dear friend. As the judge yielded to the widow's importunity, Luke 18: 5, so is the mind apt to yield to a suggestion that importunately presents itself; yea, though it be to pass a false sentence against a man's self.

2. He can also represent a multitude of considerations at once, all tending to confirm the same persuasion. He will oftentimes bring a cloud of witnesses and instances to prove us hypocrites; so that, look which way we will, we see nothing else. As he represented to CHRIST, "all the glory of the world in the twinkling of an eye," so he can set forth a man's sins in such a manner that a man shall have a general prospect of them, and see nothing else, look which way he will. And what force this must have to prevail with the mind to assent, experience shows. As when a man doubting of a truth, reads an opposite party, presenting all that can be said for the other side alone, it often staggers him, till he reads and considers what is said to the contrary. Yea, though a man is settled in the truth, yet sometimes an army of arguments on the other side come in upon him so ranked and ordered, as for the present shall stagger him; so it must needs be in this great controversy about a man's state, when SATAN shall muster and marshal up an army of objections at once.
3. He is able to hold the attention of the mind so to them as to keep off all that which should any way afford comfort. He can turn down that column in the leaves of our heart, wherein any thing that may comfort us is written, and hold our eyes fixed to read nothing but that other, wherein our sills are written. He can multiply suggestions so fast, and come in with such a tempest, that (as Job complains, Job 9:18,) he will not suffer a man to take breath; and therefore the apostle calls them the buffetings of SATAN, 2 Con 12: 7, because like unto buffettings, they come in thick and threefold upon a man's spirit, so that it cannot take breath. He rains down temptations so metimes, not by drops, (as in ordinary rains,) but by spouts, as mariners call them, when a cloud falls by Wholesale, and often sinks a ship.

4. He adds weight to his lying accusations and false reasonings, by an imperious and obstreperous affirmation that so it is. He suggests not reasons only that are fitted to persuade, but sets them on with words of affirmation suggested. And so, like as in reasoning, a weak spirit is often borne down by a stronger, not by force of argument so much as by strength and violence of spirit; for many, when the iron is blunt, and their arguments want edge, put to the more strength, as Solomon speaks, Eccles. 10:10, and so prevail; and so does SATAN; he being a spirit of greater strength than ours. Cunning pleaders may so argue the case, with such violence and confidence, that, as Socrates said, when his accusers had done, if he had not been very innocent, he should have suspected himself guilty. How much more when the accusation shall fall upon persons that are so guilty as we all are; and the thing also impleaded be that which we are already suspicious of.

5. In that he backeth his false conclusions thence deduced with terrors, this becomes an argument to sense. A conceit that comes in with joy, we are apt to conclude is true; and so, in like manner, what comes in with terror. Such impressions are, as it were, a seal to what is suggested. And as the Holy Ghost sealeth his instructions, Job xxxiii. 16, with impressions of joy, so does SATAN his temptations with impressions of fear and disquietude. If a man has a dream with any strong impression, he is apt to think there is something in it. That which made Nebuchadnezzar think there must needs be something in his dream, when yet he had forgot what it was, “was, that it made him afraid, and his thoughts troubled him.”

6. Another advantage is, that he works all these impressions undiscerned, so that we know not but that they are our own thoughts; yea, sometimes think that they are from the Holy Ghost. This is an exceeding great advantage, as great as it would he for an enemy to have rotten the opposites’ own colors. This causes us readily to yield and open the gates to him. And though when the temptation is over, we perceive his delusion, yet still, because we cannot discern his suggestions from our own thoughts, when upon us, therefore he can come again and again with the same temptation, to-day, to-morrow, and the next day, and we perceive it not. Thus Ahab's prophets knew not that SATAN was a lying spirit in them; for says one of them to Micaiah, “When went the Spirit of God from me to you” Those “strong delusions,” 2 Thess. 2:10, could not have prevailed upon their minds to have “believed a lie,” had it been discerned by them that SATAN had suggested them.

7. Last of all, a man can no way avoid his suggestions; neither can any take SATAN off from a man but God. He must rebuke him, none else can. A poor soul fights with SATAN in darkness, like unto a man that is assaulted by one that carries a dark lanthorn, who can see the assaulted, and how to buffet him, and follows him where-ever he goes; whereas the poor man cannot see him, nor who it is that strikes him, nor be aware how to ward off the blow. Therefore the apostle, when buffeted by SATAN, knew not what to do, but only to have recourse to God by prayer; for he could no more avoid or run away from those suggestions than from himself: nor could all the saints on earth any other way have freed him, till God should cause him to depart.
CHAP. 11

The Cases wherein God leaves us unto this Darkness.

First, three Cases extraordinary.

HAVING despatched the causes of this darkness, I now proceed to the cases wherein, and the ends for which God leaves us to such a condition. The cases are either extraordinary, or ordinary. I shall speak first of the extraordinary cases, which are three. First, what if God will use his prerogative, in this his dealing with his children This he may do, and (as it is thought) in Job's case he did; who is thought by some to be set up as a type among the gentiles of CHRIST at his crucifying.

Although the Lord had cause enough against him, yet no cause is pleaded, but it is resolved into an extraordinary dealing, wherein God took a liberty to glorify himself, by singling out one of the valiantest champions, and setting him hand to hand to wrestle with the powers of darkness. None more just than Job before; none ever lived a stricter life; no man kept more in awe, and that by fearing such a desertion before-hand; which, though he "greatly feared," yet it "came upon him." And God himself, when he came to plead with Job about it, and to show him a reason of his dealing thus with him, only tells him how great a God he was, and therefore might do as he pleased, and uses no other arguments at all with him. God indeed never wants a cause, nor does deal thus where sin is not; yet, as is said of the young man, that he was blind, not "for his own sin, nor his parents," (yet not without it,) "but for the glory of God." It was an act of God's prerogative; so was it here. God has higher ends of glorifying himself in the patience, and the conquest of such a champion as Job was. And God might as well take liberty to deal thus with Job, because he could make him amends, as after-wards he did, in restoring double to him. And indeed it was but the concealing his love for awhile, to show it the more; as God even then did, in making him more than conqueror.

A second case extraordinary is, when he intends to make a man a wise, able, and strong Christian; wise in this, which is the greatest wisdom in the world, to coin-fort others. This may seem to be the reason of this his dealing with Heenan. Heman was brought up in this school of temptation "from a youth," Psal. lxxxvii. 15. Yet in the end, when God raised him up again, this -eman (who lived about David and Solomon's time,) is reckoned one of the four that were next to Solomon for wisdom, 1 Kings 4:31. So the great apostle was a man that was exposed to the same combats. He "was buffeted by SATAN," filled with "inward terrors," as well as "those without." What was this for Not so much for any personal cause, as to make him able to comfort others, 2 Cor. 1: 4, 5. For that comfort which answers a temptation in one man's heart, will answer the same in another's. When temptations have the same wards, that key which unlocct one man's bolts, will answer to an-other's. This art of speaking peace, and words of comfort "in season," is the greatest wisdom in the world; and is seldom learnt but in Heman's school. Temptation was one of Luther's masters. Of all abilities of the ministry, CHRIST instanceth in this, Isai. 1. 4, and calls the tongue of him that is able to speak seasonably to weary souls, "the tongue of the learned;" and therefore Job, ch. xcviii. 23, to raise up one "whose soul draws nigh to the grave," is said to be the work of "one of a thousand:" which is easilygranted, if you cons ider the danger of such a distress. In Scripture, it is called the "breaking of the bones," Psal. li. 8. It is also called the "wounding of the spirit:" so Solomon, "A wounded spirit who can bear Prov. 18: 14. As the power of sin wounds, so the guilt also; and the one as incurably as the other. And it being the spirit of a man which is wounded, that which must heal it must be something dropct into the heart that may come at the spirit. And there are to be peculiar plasters to heal these wounds, because these wounds are often differing. Some objections there are, that often the most learned men never met with in books; and SATAN has devised methods, Eph. 6: of tempting souls, which he uses again and again. And a man shall hardlyknow these depths, and

fathom them, unless he has been in those depths himself; and then he shall see such wonders of God in those deeps, which none else ever saw; and thereby gain such wisdom as to be able to encourage others by his example to trust in GOD, and call upon him.

The third case extraordinary is, when a man has had, or is to have from God an abundance of revelations and comforts. First, in case he has abundance of revelations from God. As, after that glorious testimony given to CHRIST at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, then was JESUS led away to be tempted." In like manner does God often deal with the members of CHRIST. This was the great apostle's case, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, through abundance of revelations, a messenger of SATAN was sent to buffet me," 2 Cor. 12: 7.
God had taken him into heaven, and spoken wonderful things to him; and when he comes down again, SATAN must take him to task. He had been in heaven, and heard the language of angels, and now he must hear by devils the language of hell. This buffetting, I take it, was by SATANical injections. Secondly, before God dispenses great revelations and comforts, as before great distresses, he fills the hearts of his children with joy unspeakable; so sometimes before great revelations and comforts, God withdraws himself. The greatest spring tide of comfort comes in upon the lowest ebb of distress. Distress enlargeth the heart, and makes it thirst the more, whereby it is made more capable of consolation. For that rule holds usually true, that as sufferings abound, so comforts abound also.

CHAP 12

The ordinary Cases wherein God does leave us in Darkness.

WE come now to the more ordinary cases. Before I name particulars, I will premise this general rule: God goes not constantly by the same rule in the dispensation of them. So that no man can say, that in such and such cases, God will desert men. For some men he leaves for a while in darkness, immediately after their conversion. On the contrary, towards others, he never shines in more comforts than at their first conversion. Again, some he deserts upon a gross sin committed; to others he never reveals himself more than after a gross sin repented; whereby to show the freeness of his grace. So, likewise, some that have less grace, he fills their sails at death, and they have an abundant entrance, with full sail, into the "kingdom of CHRIST." whereas others that have walked more strictly with GOD, have not so glorious an end. This rule premised, the ordinary cases follow. 1: In case of carnal confidence; thus Psal. 30: David had been in great distress of mind, as appears by what is said, "Though heaviness be over-night, yet joy cometh in the morning." In this sun-shine David grew confident, thinking it would always be so with him; and so trusted in that comfort he had; as if he could never have been troubled again. "Now I shall never be removed," says he. This was carnal confidence; and GOD, to confound it, hid himself again. Now carnal confidence is either, first, when we trust to false signs of grace. This we are apt to do, to take things as infallible signs which are not. Now GOD, to discover which are false, and which are not, leaves a man; and then he will find all his false signs to leave him, and to be like reeds, that break when any stress is laid on them, and so run into his hand. Or, secondly, when we put too much confidence up on signs, though true, and trust too much to our comforts and graces. When we let all the weight of our support hang on these, God in this case, often leaves us. Or, thirdly, when we think graces and comforts are so rooted in our-selves, that we neglect, God and CHRIST for the upholding, increase, and exercise of them; then God withdraws the light of these, that we may have recourse to the spring. As too much confidence in the power of inherent grace caused CHRIST to leave Peter to the power of sin, so the like confidence causes God to leave us to the guilt of, and terrors that come by, sin.

2. The second case is for neglecting such precious opportunities of comforts and refreshings as God has vouchsafed; as for the neglect of holy duties, wherein God offered to draw nigh to us, as the sacraments, prayer, meditation, and hearing the word. So Cant. 5: 4, 5, 6, 7, CHRIST stood at the door and knocked; that is, moved the heart of the church to perform the duties in which he uses to come into the heart and visit it. He offered to assist her, and began to prepare her heart, but she made excuses. Upon this, CHRIST went away; only he left behind him an impression of himself in her heart, enough to stir her up to seek him, in the sense of the want of him.

3. In case of not exercising the graces which a man has; not stirring them up, when Christians are as it were between sleeping and waking; (which was the church's condition, Cant. 5: 2;) then also CHRIST deserts. To perform duties with the inward man in a drowsy frame, half awake, as it were, and half asleep; "to pray as if we prayed not; to do the work of the Lord negligently;" this provoketh God to absent himself. And indeed there is no reason that a man should have present comfort, when he neglects the use of present grace. Isai. lxv. 7, God complains, that there was " none that stirred up himself;" and for this, "God was wroth." Whereas, ver. 5, " God meets him that worketh righteousness," and rejoiceth in him that rejoiceth to work righteousness. God meets such, and rejoiceth with, and draws nigh unto them; but others, that stir not up themselves, God stirs them up by terrors. "He that walks according to this rule, peace be on him," Gal. 6: 16; not else. Though comfort is not always the present fruit of righteousness, yet it is never without it.

4. In case of some gross sin committed against light unhumbled for, or proving scandalous, or of old sin long forgotten. I will give instances of each particular. First, for some gross sin committed against light. An instance for this is David, whom we find frequently complaining thus, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust, and is even at death's door. His soul melted, and Was dissolved;" all the powers of it failed at the sense of God's wrath, even as wax melts before the fire. Ordinarily, we find in Scripture no such eminent desertion, but we find the cause of it not far off, if we read on. " Remove from me (says David,) the way of lying." He points to the sore of his he art, wherein his
grief lay, 1 Sam. 21:2. David roundly tells two or three lies together, when he fled from Saul, and came to Abimelech; who fearing to harbour him, asked why he was alone. He answered, "That the king had commanded him a business;" there is one lie: and that the king had commanded him "secrecy in it," there is another: and because "my servants" should not know it, "I have sent them away" to several places; there is a third: and again, ver. 8. "I have not brought my sword, because the king's business required haste;" there is a fourth lie. David went on here in a course of lying; they were all made, and deliberate lies; which being gross sins, sins against light, and having been some while continued in him, by which therefore he calls a "way of lying," lay heavy on him long after. Therefore he entreats God to take the load of it off: "Remove from me the way of lying." It was the load thereof which lay so heavy on him as to press his soul "to the dust of death." So for the second particular: In case a man be not thoroughly humbled for sin, and it be not confessed: or, if when we committed it, we had shifts to keep us from thinking it to be sin; or to be heinous; or were doubtful whether it were a sin or not, and so were loath to acknowledge it to be a sin; as it is likely David did in the case of his murder of Uriah, (it was but the chance of war, says he, that cut him off;) God in this case brings him to the rack, Psal. xxxxi. (it is thought that psalm, as well as the 51st was made upon that occasion.) These sins being known, and become scandalous, David was to confess publicly. But he was loath to come to this. God in this case, lays his hand so sorely on him, that his "natural moisture was dried up," (for in men troubled in conscience, their trouble of mind casts their bodies often into as great heats as men that are in burning fevers,) and this was without intermission, "day and night," and thus he lay "roaring," like a malefactor on the rack; he cried out for mercy to God, yet because not with a broken heart; God therefore accounted it but as "roaring;" that is, the voice of a beast, rather than of a man. And why was David put to the rack thus? He would not confess, and humble himself for his sin; "I was silent; and yet roared," ver. 3. A broken-hearted confession might have saved all this torment. But when in the end he said, "I will confess my sin," ver. 5, and resolved once to lay open all that sin of murder and adultery in the circumstances of them, then God pardoned him. And yet after that, as appears in the 51st psalm, God did not yet "restore the joy of his salvation" (for there he prays for it in the sense of the leant of until he had publicly confessed this also, and thoroughly humbled himself. So, when the incestuous person had committed that sin, I- Con 5:1, 9, for which, as then he was not humbled. St. Paul bids them "deliver such a one to SATAN," to the tormentor to terrify him, and afflict his spirit. And thus, when that Corinthian was excommunicated, and given up to him, did SATAN deal with him.

Yea, and thirdly, this God does not only presently after the sins are committed, but sometimes a long while after yea, after that God has pardoned them also in our consciences, as well as in heaven. Thus, though Job questionless, had humbled himself for the "sins of his youth," and had assurance of the pardon of them, yet God "rote bitter things against him' many years after, and made him possess them," as himself speaks. In like manner may the guilt of those sins revive, which long before had been pardoned. After the commission of some new act, or forgetfulness of the old, God may let them loose upon us afresh.

The reason why gross sins, especially if committed with light, when not confessed thoroughly, after many years, cast us in to such desertion, is, because therein we rebel against God's Spirit; and that Spirit does deal with us as we with him. If you grieve Him, he grieves you; if you rebel against Him, he fights against you as an enemy. When men go about to extinguish the light of direction, which God had set up in their hearts, God puts out the light of comfort, and so leaves them to darkness. But especially then, when our hearts are so full of guile that we plead they are not sins, or extenuate them. If a man keeps a sin concealed, and will not be convinced of it, nor bring it forth by confession, God in that case, brings him to the rack. And if it be that any of our old sins revive, and cause these terrors, it is because we began to look on them as past and gone, and thought we needed not to humble ourselves any more for them; -making account they are so buried as that they will never rise again; whereas the remembrance of them should keep us low, and humble us all our days. We are apt to think that time wears out the guilt of sins; but to God they are as fresh as if they had been committed yesterday, and therefore nothing wears them out but repentance. Great sins forgiven must not be forgotten.

5. In case of a stubborn spirit under outward afflictions, when we will not stoop to God. This may be part of the case mentio ned Isai. lxvi. 16, where GOD, alleging the reason why he contended with a poor soul, gives an account of it, ver. 17. You see where the quarrel began: "for the iniquity of his covetousness I was wrath;" that is, for some inordinate affection. He mentioneth not a gross act of sin, so much as some lust harbored; for which God began to be angry, and to show the effects of that his anger in smiting him: haply with some outward cross first: "I was wrath, and smote him:" and when that did no good, God began to be more angry, and tuck hide himself. "I hid my face;" and this he speaks of inward affliction, which he also called, ver. 16, "con-tending with the soul," and so far leaving it as that the "spirit was ready to fail." And he further intimates the cause of all this, "he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." When outward strokes will not take us off, God deserts our spirits, and wounds them. When the heart remains stubborn under other strokes, he has no way left in his ordinary course, but to lay strokes on his spirit, and wound that. And this yoke is like to break and tame him, if any will; for this he cannot bear. Outward afflictions man's natural spirit and stubbornness may bear; "the spirit of man will sustain its infirmities," but in this, "the spirit fails in them," ver. 16. Other afflictions are but as taking some stars of comfort out of the firmament, when others are still left to shine to them; but when God's countenance is hid, the sun itself is darkened, and so a general darkness befalls them. -And therefore then the heart is driven to GOD, and broke off from all things else, and then God delights to comfort a man again. "I will restore comfort to him," ver. 18.

6. In case of deserting God's truth, and not professing it, and appearing for it when he calls us to do it. In thin case he left many of the martyrs; many of whom, especially till Queen Mary's days, and some then, deserted the truth for a while, and God deserted the m. And there is equity in this dealing of God with us: that, as when we are ashamed of CHRIST, the punishment fitted to it is, that CHRIST will be ashamed of us: so, when we will not witness for GOD, there is no reason his Spirit should witness to us.
7. In case of unthankfulness for the light of God's countenance, and freedom from those terrors which others are in, (which is a sin Christians are apt to run into;) for, as Hos. 2: 9, in case of their being unthankful for outward mercies, God took those mercies away, and restored them not again till they esteemed them better; so does God deal likewise in spiritual assurance, light, and comfort.

CHAP. 13

The End for which God leaveth his Children unto this Darkness.

Now let us come to those ends which God may have in this dealing with one that fears and obeys him. And one may be, to let us see whence spiritual comforts and refreshings come; that God alone dispenseth them how and when he pleaseth; that we may know that it is the "Lord that formed the light, and creates darkness, evil and peace;" and that as "affliction riseth not out of the dust;" so neither does comfort out of our hearts. God will let us see that our hearts are nothing but darkness; and that to cause any spiritual comfort, is as much as it was to create light at first; therefore he says, "I create the fruit of the lips, peace," which can no way more fully be manifested than by sometimes withdrawing that light. Why does he sometimes assist us in prayer, and fill the sails; and sometimes leave our hearts empty is it not that we may learn that lesson, Rom. 8: 26, " that it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities;" and that we of ourselves "know not what, nor how to ask" This lesson we are slow in learning; nor are we easily brought to acknowledge our dependence on God. In like manner, for the same end, does he sometimes hide, and sometimes reveal himself, to show that he is the immediate fountain of happiness, "the God of all comfort," 2 Cor. 1: 4, that so we might know whom to thank, whom to depend on, whom to go to for comfort: it being as difficult a thing for us to go out of ourselves, and from the creatures, for comfort to God alone, as to go out of ourselves to CHRIST alone for righteousness. Hereby also we see, that though we have

never so many outward comforts, yet the comforts of our spirits depend on God alone. For if He in the midst of them, withdraw himself, they all prove but miserable comforters.

Another end God has in deserting us, is to make trial of our graces, and a discovery of them. God's end in leading his people through the "great wilderness, where no water was," was " to prove them;" and the same end has God in suffering his people to go through this barrenness and darkness. This is conceived to have been his end in deserting Job; to chew what strong patience was in him. There are many gracious dispositions which have not opportunity to discover themselves but in a time of desertion. Some of those which are the highest acts of grace, would never appear but in such a time.

It were needless to go over all particular graces: I will only instance in that glorious grace of faith, which in this trial does more than all graces else. In all the varieties of conditions we pass through, it is of importance to us; in deserts it does wonders; standing like Sampson, encountering and conquering alone, when there is none to help. This is certain, there is no grace GOD tries more than this grace of faith. "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold which perished), being tried in the fire, might be found to glory, praise, and honor;" that is, both to the honor of GOD, who is believed in, and also of faith itself, which is the most glorious grace a Christian has; which God loves to try, that the glory of it may appear. Now of all temptations, none try faith more than this of darkness and of terrors. Other temptations strike but obliquely at it; but these strike at that which. is the immediate aim and object of it; namely, that God is a believer's God. These speak the direct contrary to what faith endeavors to apprehend, and that directly, and not by consequence only. Again, other temptations are easily answered, whilst the assurance of God's favor remains unshaken. That answers them all, and shakes them off as Paul the viper off his hand. But when that shall begin to be questioned, (as in this case it is,) who is able to stand

Again, in these conflicts of faith with desertions, consisteth the height of our Christian warfare. This is the highest pitched battle upon which all is either won or lost; for in these a man encounters with God himself, apprehended as an enemy. God called out Job to try him by fighting a single combat with SATAN, and he became (as I may so say,) too hard for SATAN alone; then God joined against him also. Now, then, in that he bore this shock, and yet stood, this argued the strength of faith. It is said of Jacob, " that by strength he had power with God." It argued strength indeed. And this is done by faith, by the power whereof (God's power rather supporting it,) a man relies on God w.1elr all his dealings would argue he had forsaken a man; that though God put on never so angry a countenance, yet faith can read love
in his angry looks, and trust God beyond what he sees; it being the "evidence of things not seen." Then faith goes wholly out of itself, as seeing nothing in itself but barely a capacity of mercy, and "plenteous redemption," which it knows to be in God. Thus faith is a miracle of miracles; for it is founded, as the earth, upon mere nothing in itself, and yet bears the weight and stress of sins, of the devil, yea, of God himself. This is the faith which we must live by, when all comforts fail, and which "is to honor and glory at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST."

And as desertion makes for the trial and discovery of graces, so it is a means sanctified to increase them. It is a means to bring more assurance and establishment. 1 Pet. 5: 10, "The God of all grace, after you have suffered awhile, establish and strengthen you." I do know they could not be settled till they had suffered in this, or some other kind. The tree roots itself the more it is shaken: "comforts abound the more sufferings abound." That light is clearest and strongest that arises out of darkness, because God creates it. Those thin gs which men doubt of, most God gives the greatest evidence of in the end. It also trains you up to fear God more, and to obey him more. Fearing GOD, and obeying him, most eminently and sensibly appear in that state, Heb. 5: 8. CHRIST himself "learned obedience by what he suffered." The yoke tames the wildness in beasts, and makes them serviceable; and so do these the stubbornness of a man's spirit. Again, it serves to set believers' hearts on work to pray more and more earnestly. The apostle's buffetings made him pray thrice. So CHRIST, "being in an agony, prayed more earnestly;" and being in fears, he did lift up "strong cries." So Heman, by reason of his terrors, was a man much in prayers: Psal. lxxxviii. I, "I have cried day and night before thee." Lastly, it causeth them to prize the light of God's countenance the more, when they again obtain it; and to endeavor, by close walking with God as "children of light," to keep it.

CHAP. XIV. The Use of what path been said.

IF those that fear God and obey him are exposed to such a condition as has been described, then "who is among you that feareth not the Lord, nor obeys the voice of his servants" You that live in known sins, and in omission of known duties, which God's servants, your ministers, tell you, you ought to perform; that pray not with your families; who make not conscience of your speeches and dealings; where shall you appear if the righteous be thus scarcely saved; if such darkness befal them that are "children of light," what is reserved for you that "love darkness more than light" And if this befalls them for not stirring up the grace which they have, what shall come to you that are void of it And not only so, but despise it If this befalls them for not humbling themselves for old sins, though long since committed; what will befal you for going on to add new to the old with greediness, to them, for neglecting the opportunities of drawing nigh to God; what to you for neglecting the offer of grace, and trampling under foot the blood of CHRIST All you that think there is no hell; or if there be, that it is not so dark as it is usually painted, look upon Heman ready to run distracted through terrors, and to give up the ghost every moment, Psal. lxxxviii. Look upon David lying on the wheel, and the Spirit of God "breaking his bones," when otherwise he had all outward things at will.

My brethren, God's people may find pains beyond those of the stone, gout, and tooth-ach. The falling of God's wrath on the conscience is more than the dropping a little scalding rheum on a tooth; and yet these are but a taste of that cup which you that obey not, must drink off to the bottom, even to eternity, Psal. lxxv. 8: "There is a cup in the hand of the Lord, and it is full of mixture;" that is, all the bitter ingredients in the world are in it. And here indeed "God pours out the same;" that is, in this life some few sprinklings of it fall from the top of the cup, which good men taste, as experience plainly shows: "but" the bottom, "the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall drink and wring them out:" the vials of it, which will never be emptied, shall be poured forth upon them, even to the utmost drop. If holy men may be thus shut up in darkness, what darkness is reserved for you even as Jude says, ver. 13, "blackness of darkness;" darkness where is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Blackness of darkness," because there is not one beam of comfort that shines in to all eternity. For this is not for a moment, or a few years, but for ever. You "that live many days in pleasure here, and rejoice in them all, remember the days of darkness, for they are many," says Solomon, Eccl. 11: 8. "Many," indeed "Days?" an eternal night, that shall know no end.

II. Who is among you that fears the Lord, and is trans fated out of the state of darkness, and yet never was in this darkness You that have been free from those terrors of conscience, which yet souls that fear God and have obeyed him more than you, have suffered; and like wise you, who, though you enjoy not much ravishing joy, yet "being justified by faith have (a solid) peace with God," and so walk in freedom of spirit, in the use of God's ordinances, and the performance of holy duties; let me out of this doctrine give all of you this great instruction: to take notice that such kind of troubles there are that befal God's people beyond what you have experience of. Many there are that think not so. Job's friends did not, and therefore censured him. And this is a necessary instruction.

1. Because this very knowledge of it does prepare men for such a condition, if it should befal them: and there fore to prepare them for afflictions whom he wrote to, the apostle bids them "not think it strange concerning the fiery trial," 1 Pet. 4: 12. For if they be strange to any, then, if they befal them at any time, they are the more grievous. If some strange disease befal a man, which he never heard of before, it
amazeth a man, and makes him desperate. But if he has heard that such and such have had it, and have recovered; this helps to assuage the bitterness of it.

2. Take notice of it, that you may be kept more in dependence upon GOD, and that you may fear him more. Men that know not any afflictions, beyond what they see with their eyes; nothing beyond loss of friends and credit, often fear God less; and when they come to part with any of these for GOD, are less willing than those that have been more severely tried. But when they shall know that God’s wrath is beyond Pharaoh’s wrath, as Moses knew it, who yet in the vast apprehensions of the greatness of it, cries out, Psalm xc. " Who has known the power of thy wrath” Then they will obey God and fear him, more than they would all the kings of the earth; as Moses did, " not fearing the wrath of Pharaoh,” Heb. 11: 27. When men enjoy a confluence of all worldly comforts, and think their mountain strong, well built with wife and children about them, with riches, health, and honors, they think they are then more out of danger of God’s wrath than other men; and are apt to say, " Soul, you have goods laid up for many years;” but know that GOD, without taking either thy goods, or thy soul away, can in this life put thy spirit into such a condition, that you wouldst give all the world for a moment’s ease; where all other comforts shall be to thee but as the white of an egg, as Job says. As he has joys the world gives not, so he has afflictions time world inflict. Therefore fear him more than the loss of all; obey him rather than keep all: for God can meet with thee in the midst of all. So he met with David, though a king, and then all his wives and kingdom could not comfort him, till God " healed the bones that he had broken."

3. Learn not to censurate others when they are in this condition. You walk in the light, and you see another in the dungeon; yet he may be dearer to God than thou. It was Job’s friends’ fault, who, having not had experience of such a condition in themselves, concluded he was an hypocrite. If you thus judge, then (as Asaph says,) "you condemn the generation of the just."

4. " Pass your sojourning here in fear; for even our God is a consuming fire." Keep the heart in awe with the knowledge of such a state. This kept Job in awe and made him so strict all his days. Read the thirty-first chapter throughout, and you shall see what a righteous man he was, and then see the reason of all, ver. 23, "Destruction from the Lord was a terror to me,” and to the same purpose also, chap. 3: 25, he says that " he had always feared that which now had befallen him."

5. Lastly, be thankful that God spares thee. Haply thy body is weak; and if he should fall on thee as on others, it would destroy thee. But consider that you hadst a stone in thy heart as well as any other; God has cured it by gentle draughts, and so dissolved it, and carried it away; when he has cut others, and put them to much pain in taking it out. Oh! be thankful! You that are healthful and have strong bodies, are you not thankful when you see others sick of the stone, toothach, or go out, whereof you are free And ought you not to be much more so for the healthiness of your spirits, when others roar all day as on the rack Oh! be thankful that is not so with you!

III. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and hath been in darkness," but now walk in the light again You who have been in the dungeon, and have been set free again, learn your duty also. 1: Thank our Lord Jesus CHRIST, and love him the more; for you have tasted what he did for you; you know how bitter the cup was which he drank, and therefore must needs love him more. You also have more experience of God’s power and faithfulness, and what a miracle God has wrought in raising you up again; " He has shown you wonders among the dead,” as Heman speaks: be thankful.

2. Learn to pity others in that condition. Who can do it better than you that have had experience of the like If you hear of any soul in distress, it is expected of you to pray for him more than of another. CHRIST learnt to pity us in all our infirmities the more, by bearing our infirmities himself. To that end God raised you up that you might be able to comfort others with the comforts you have received; and might pray for them. Therefore Isaiah lvi. 17, when any poor soul is smitten, GOD, as is there said, is moved to restore him again for his mourners’ sakes, as well as his own.

3. Declare what God has done for you. You have been in hell; warn others from coming there. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men." If the rich man had come from hell, what stories would he have told his brethren Tell you the like. You have seen the “wonders of God in the deeps;” now you are ashore, tell men of the rocks, and shelves, and storms they are like to meet with in such and such courses. David says, when his bones were healed again, " then he would teach sinners God’s ways.”
4. Take heed of what may prove the fuel of such a condition. The devil may come and cast you into your old fits if he find the same materials to work upon, into your uncleanness, lying, or unjust dealing, as before. You know what brought David to his broken bones. Likewise take heed of performing duties formally, or coldly, and of resting in them, which are but as a hollow tooth, as Solomon speaks, that is broken; these may cause the tooth-ach again. Take heed of sinning against light. If the devil found no such things in you, he would not trouble you. So also get small doubts answered; let them not he neglected; they may come in together one day and make an army; though several, and apart, as they now rise in your consciences, you can despise and neglect them.

IV. Who is among you walking in darkness that yet fears to offend God as much as hell, and endeavors and desires to obey him in all things, as much as to go to heaven? Such when they find God withdraw, call God's love in question; especially if they were in the sun-shine before, but now "sit in the valley of the shadow of death." God is gone, light is gone: God answers them neither by vision, nor by prophets; neither in praying nor in hearing; and therefore they think he has forsaken them, cast them off, yea, will never be merciful. But whoever you are, poor souls! you err, "not knowing the Scriptures," and the manner of your GOD, to think that he has cast you off; when he is but returned to his place, that you may seek him more earnestly. So it is that you are always in the extremes: if he shines on you, then you think, "your mountain shall never be removed:" if he hides his face, then, "he will never be merciful." And yet I blame you not for being troubled; for when he "hides his face, the creatures all are troubled," Psalm civ. 29. God would have you lay it to heart when he is angry. It were a sign you had no grace that you made not him your portion, if you could bear his absence and not mourn. But though you should lay it to heart, so as to mourn under it; yet you should not be discouraged. We are not the same to-day that we were yesterday; but CHRIST is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. To say that he has cast you off because he has hid his face, is injurious to him: "In a little wrath have I hid my face; but with everlasting kindness will I remember thee." I have but hid my face, not cast thee out of mind; and though in anger, yet but a little anger; and not long neither, but for a moment; and all that while I am not unmindful of thee, I remember thee; and this with kindness everlasting.

But you will say, "If this desertion were but for a moment, it were something; but mine has been for many years." This life is but a moment, and God has eternity to show his love in; time enough to make amends for a few frowns; sufficiency to do it, everlasting kindness. Remember what is said in another case: though he bears long, yet he comes speedily; that is, though long in our eyes, yet speedily in his, who has all time before him.

CHAP. XV.

Directions for those who are deeply troubled.

For their sakes who are deeply troubled, I will prescribe some directions how they are to behave themselves in such a condition, so as to come more comfortably and more speedily out of it. For it is in these long and great sicknesses of the soul, as in those of the body, men are kept the longer in them, for want of right directions and prescriptions.

1. Take heed of rash, desperate, impatient speeches, or wishes. Such you will be forced to recal again with sorrow. Many a poor soul, after they have had strong hopes that heaven is theirs; yet when the sorrows of hell compass them, are apt to say, they shall be cut off by God's hand, swallowed up of SATAN, and everlastingly destroyed. This they say in their haste too often. So David, when in doubt about that promise made him, Psalm lxxvii. says, "God will never be merciful." What a desperate speech was this that what a man sees not at present he should conclude would never be. But he acknowledgeth his error in it: "it was my infirmity," ver. 10, thus to speak. So Job, though for awhile, at the beginning of the storm, he was calm and quiet in his spirit, and therefore, chap. 1: ver. 22, it is said, that "in all this," that is, so long, "he had not charged God foolishly;" yet when the drops of God's wrath began to soak into his soul, he curseth the day of his birth; and wisheth God would cut him off; for which speeches God in the end steps out, taking him up for them; chap. xxxviii. 2. "Who is this (says he,) that talketh thus:" Oh! take heed ye, whose souls are in distress, of such wishes or speeches as these! Oh! that God would cut me off! that I were in hell, and knew the worst! Take heed, I say. When a man is sick and raves, whereas otherwise those about him would use him gently, they are forced to hold and bind him; impatiens eegrotus crudeleni medicunz facit, an impatient patient makes a physician cruel. God would deal more gently with thee, but for such impatiencies. Say not that your graces are no graces, or that he will never be merciful. You abuse him when you do so; therefore take heed of it.
II. Yet make diligent search. Let an inquisition be set up in thy heart, and make an inquiry into two things. First, what might be the true cause which provokes God thus to leave thee, and hide himself from thee: and, secondly, what is the main reason which causes thee to fear, and thus to call all into question. These are two distinct things. For though God has just cause to leave us to this trouble; yet often the thing that troubles us is a mere mistake. It is therefore necessary to inquire into both.

First, examine what is the true cause that provokes God thus to leave thee. So Lam. 3: 40, "Let us search and try our ways." This was spoken by the church in desertion, as appears by the former part of the chapter. And to help yourselves in this, go over the cases which have been propounded. Have you not been confident in false signs or rested too much on true, to the neglect of CHRIST, and God's free grace? Didst you not neglect to stir up thy own graces? Go over all those cases before-mentioned. Some one or other of them will be found to be the cause. This is necessary; for till the cause be known, the heart submits not; neither will the trouble cease, till that which provokes God to lay it on be confessed and forsaken. And if it be a particular sin that God aims at, then usually God uses the horror for, and the guilt of, that very sin to afflict thee; so that then it is easily found out. David easily knew what it was for which God broke his bones. For his very sin was it that was the iron mace, the instrument of God's executing it upon him: "My sin (says he,) is ever before me;" it was ever in his eye. Indeed, in outward afflictions it is more difficult to find out the cause why God afflicts, (unless sometimes you may, through God's wise-disposing hand, find and read the sin in the punishment; they so resemble one another, that a man may say, This cross lay in the womb of such a sin, they are so like.) But in those inward distresses, that sin which moveth God to afflict, God often uses to terrify a person; to cast a man into the distress and to keep him in it; it is both the cause and executioner also. But in case you can not find out the cause, as Job, it seems, did not; and Elihu did suppose he might; follow his counsel till God show thee the cause; say unto GOD, "That which I see not teach you me, and I will not offend any more;" and if you findest it, say also, "I have borne chastisement for such a sin, I will never offend any more." Till then God will not let thee go.

The second thing to be searched into is, What is the chief reason which makes thee call in question whether God be thy God? This is usually some false reasoning or misapprehension; some mere mistake, some device and sophistry of SATAN. Therefore take thy soul aside, and seriously examine it, why it is thus troubled what reason, what ground you have to think that God is not -thy God? And then examine it whether it be a true ground. As the apostle bids us, "give a reason of our faith;" so ask you of thy soul, the reason of thy doubting. Heman thought, and said, that God had cast him off: what persuaded him to think so? Because God had hidden his face. It does not follow, Heman; a father may hide his face from his son, and yet not cast him off. So David also reasoneth, Psalm lxxii. 2, 3, "I have sought GOD," prayed, and used the means, "and yet I am troubled," and yet God reveals not himself: and what does he conclude from this ver. 7, "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" He thought, If God had loved me, he would presently have heard me. This was false reasoning. A father may sometimes seem so strict, that he may throw away his child's petition, and yet be his father still.

It was infinite to reckon up all the false reasonings that souls in distress have fallen into; some being annoyed with blasphemous thoughts, though they are their greatest affliction, yet have thought they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, misapplying Matt. 12: 31, that "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be for-given," whereas that place is meant only of those who openly and maliciously said CHRIST had a devil, and wrought his miracles by the power of the devil. So some, because they have sinned after being enlightened and tasting the good word of GOD, think they shall never be renewed, by reason of that place, Heb. 6: 4; whereas the apostle speaks of a wilful and total falling away, both from the power and form of religion. So because some hear there is a time, after which God offers grace no more, their time is also past; but without ground. For though it be true, God does so with many that hear the gospel; yet the word gives us no certain rules to judge he has done so with any of us. It is good to fear lest you should provoke him to it, but you have no sign to fear he has done so with thee. And indeed herein lies the main and first business to be done in raising up a troubled soul, namely, to find out the ground of their doubting, and to examine the truth of it and confute it. If a man be falsely imprisoned, or cast in a suit at law, what does he to remedy it? He seeks to find out the error in the writ: so do you search out the ground of thy trouble: go to some spiritual lawyer skilled in soul-work; keep not the devil's counsel. We have opposed nothing more than making your doubts known.

III. The third direction I give to such is, that they hear and consider what makes for their comfort, as well as what makes against them. Such as are in distress through SATAN's temptations, have their hearts so deeply possessed with the misery of their states, that as the people of GOD, Exod. 6: 9, "Through the anguish of their hearts they listen not" to the good message brought them; nor believe that so good news can be true of them. Many are so strongly prepossessed, and so out of hopes, that they reject all that is spoken to their comfort; so that they will not so much as cast a thought upon any thing that may be an occasion of comfort to them. This was David's infirmity; "My soul refused to be comforted," says he. He spilt all the cordials that were brought him. He was not only void of comfort, but refused it. What bring me promises (will such an one say,) you may as well carry them to one in hell. This sullen, desperate obstinacy is a thing you ought to take heed of; for hereby you take SATAN's part, and against those you ought to love so dearly, even your own souls. But, as they said, "Let Baal plead for himself;" so let SATAN plead his own cause; do not you. Hereby also you forsake your own mercies; you give up your own right, and are so befooled as to plead against your own title, your own interest in the best things you can have interest in. You give up your portion bequeathed you in your Father's will, which you ought to maintain, and you trust to lying vanities, the sooth-sayings and fortune-tellers, as I may call them, of SATAN and your own hearts.
IV. The fourth direction is, to call to remembrance what formerly has been between God and you. The remembrance of former things does often uphold, when present sense fails. This David practiced, in the like case when his soul had refused comfort; yet, in the end, he began not only to be willing to listen to what he might seek for him, but set himself on work to recall to mind, _to consider the daye of old._ Psalm lxxviii. 

"I considered (says he,) the songs in the night," that is, that joyful communion he had enjoyed with GOD, and _I communed with mine own heart, and made diligent search," to see if no grace formerly had been there, and if a grace at present were there; he searched into what might comfort him, as well as into the causes that might provoke God thus to deal with him. In this way remember God's gracious dealings with you; God remembers them to have mercy on you; and why should not you remember them to comfort yourself. Therefore, Heb. 6: 9, 10, _"We hope (says he,) better things of you, for God is not unrighteous to forget your labor of love," namely, to reward you; and therefore he calls upon them in like manner, Heb. 10: 31, _"to call to remembrance the former days" to comfort them; how they held out when their hearts were tried to the bottom: when shipwreck was made of the ir goods; good names, and all for CHRIST; yet they made not shipwreck of a good conscience. And if you dost thus call to remembrance things of old; and yet can find no comfort at first from them; yet have recourse to them again and again; for though they comfort not at one time, they may at another; that it may be seen that God comforts by them, and not they alone of themselves.

V. If former signs remembered bring thee no comfort, then renew thy faith and repentance: set thy heart to believe and repent afresh as if you hadst never yet begun. Cease to reason about thy former faith and repentance, and set upon believing and repenting anew. Say, suppose my faith and repentance have not been true hitherto; I will now endeavor after such as is true. Lord, I cast my soul on all thy mercies afresh; I desire now an heart perfect with thee; to part with every sin, to submit to every duty, to set up God and CHRIST as my aim in all. This of all directions I commend to you, as a special means to dissolve these temptations. Take it, practice it; it is a tried one; and it is that which at last the church comes to, Lam. 3: 40, _"Come, let us try our ways, and turn to the Lord;" that is the last way and course she takes. When nothing but hypocrisy and unbelief appear to thee, to be in thy heart, do you groan after the contrary sincerity, and let SATAN say his worst. And this direction I the rather prescribe, because, in time of temptation about assurance, it is the usual course of some to spend all their thoughts upon what formerly they have had; laying out all their time and cost in new trials about their former title, and when they have been cast again and again, yet still do nothing but read over old evidences again and again.

But know, that though this is not to be neglected; yet you are not so to look back to your former faith and repentance as to forget to practice new. This is the best tray, the shortest cut, and requires as little pains: thou mayst as little change get a new lease, as prove the old one good; yea, you may cut the knot sooner by new faith, than unite it by reasonings and disputings.

And the truth is, in the end you must come to this, for God's great end in deserting is, to put you upon renewing your faith. and repentance. Therefore begin to do it; And whereas you thinkest, that by this you may prejudice thy former title; it is not my meaning that you should utterly give up thy old faith and repentance as counterfeit; my advice is to forbear pleading it for a time, and rather to renew it; and then the comfort of thy old repentance will come in. _If any man," says CHRIST, _"will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it is of God._" As the best way to know the truth is not to spend all the time in disputing about it, but to practice it, which puts an end to controversies in men's hearts; so the best way to acquire the comfort of former grace, is to add the practice of believing and repenting anew. This baffles the devil, and gets advantage of him. This puts him upon a new reply, an

VI. And if in this case he urges, (as usually he doth,) that all will be in vain for time to come, as well as it has been for time past; then sixthly, stand not now disputing it; but be peremptory and resolute in thy faith and turning to GOD, let the issue be what it will. Faith is never nonplussed. Job vows he " will trust him, though he should kill him," Job xxxi. 15. So do You, whether he will damn or save thee, do what he will with thee, cease not to cast thyself upon him for mercy. Go you on to use the means diligently and constantly; and be so much the more diligent. Fear and hate sin still, pray day and night, as Heman did when he thought him self cut off, Psalm lxxviii. ver. 1, _"I have cried day and night, though I be as one you remember no more." Suppose you findest no delight in the ordinances, yet use the m; though you art desperately sick, yet eat still; take all that is brought thee; some strength comes of it. Say, let me be damned or saved. I resolve to go on. And there is good reason for it. For if you should leave off to serve the Lord, then you art sure to be damned; but by this other way you may in the end prevail. _"Who knows but God may be merciful!" So Esther, _"If I perish, I perish," And so the lepers; see how they reasoned in a desperate case, 2 Kings 7: 3, 4. _"If we go into the city we are sure to die, for the famine is there; if we sit still, we die also. Come (let us fall into the hands of the Assyrians, if they save us alive, so; if they kill us, we shall but die."

And reason thou: _if I cease humbling myself, praying, attending on the means, I shall certainly perish, I will therefore rather go on to do all these as I can; and if God saves me, a sinner, so; if not, I can but be damned.

VII. Let the child of light that walks in darkness "trust in the name of the Lord." Being thus resolved to turn to GOD, and to go on to fear and obey him, you may confidently stay upon the name of GOD, when you have nothing else to rest upon. To one who re-solves to fear God and obey him, the name of God is an all-sufficient prop and stay to rest on, when he sees nothing in himself, nor any promise in the word belonging unto him. The name of God alone is here opposed to all other means of support. So that when the soul shall loo k into itself with one eye, and glance over all the word of God with another; and yet shall see not any one grace in the one, nor promise in the other.
which it may rest upon, yet then looking upon GOD, and considering what a God he is, and what he says of himself, the sole consideration of what he knows to be in God may support him. This it is to stay upon his name.

By the name of God two things are meant. First, those glorious attributes, especially of grace and mercy, whereby God has made himself known to us, Ex. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7, &c. The Lord has proclaimed his name; “The Lord GOD, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, for-giving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and will by no means clear the guilty.”

Secondly, JESUS CHRIST, as he is set forth to be righteousness to the sons of men, Jer. 23: 6, “This is the name wherewith he shall be called,” or made known to us, “The Lord our Righteousness.” that’s, JESUS CHRIST, who is GOD, has righteousness in himself for us, which may be made ours. So that when a poor soul in distress is not able to say, I see an evidence in myself, whereby I can say, God is my GOD, or CHRIST is mine; yet, because I see free grace enough in GOD, and righteousness in CHRIST, which I (being a sinful man, and not -a devil,) am therefore capable of, and may come to have an interest in, though I know nothing in myself whereby I can challenge any present interest. And because grace and mercy is his -name, and our righteousness his Son's name; therefore I cast myself upon both, for pardon and favor, and thereupon my soul leans, stays, and abides. So that these two apprehensions meeting in the heart, help to make up this resting upon his name; namely, first, that there is such grace in God; and that JESUS CHRIST is appointed to be our righteousness: and, secondly, that I am capable of an interest in both these; and that though there be nothing in me, which may challenge an interest in them, yet there is nothing that excludes me; whereupon I cast myself upon GOD for both, and there I rest.

The name of God; that is, God's attributes, and CHRIST's righteousness sufficiently and adequately answer all wants and doubts; all objections and distresses we can have, or can be in; whatsoever our want or temptations be, he has a name to make supply. For example; consider every letter in his name, mentioned Ex. xxxiv. 5, 6, and it answers to some temptation. Art you in misery and great distress He is merciful; “the Lord., merciful;” the Lord, therefore able to help thee; merciful, therefore willing. Yea, but you will say, “I am unworthy, I, have nothing in me to move him to it.” Therefore he is gracious; now grace is to show mercy freely. “Yea, but I have sinned a gainst him long, for many years; if I had come in when I was young, mercy might have been shown me.” To this he says, I am long-suffering. If Yea, but my sins every way abound in number, and it is impossible to reckon them up; and they abound in heinousness; I have committed the same sins again and again.” His name also answers this objection; he is abundant in goodness; he abo unds more in grace than you in sinning; and though you have been false again and again to him, and broken all covenants, yet he is abundant in truth; better than his word; for he cannot to our capacities express all that mercy that is in him. “Yea, but I have committed great sins, aggravated with many and great circumstances; against love, against knowledge, and willfully.” He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; sins of all sorts. “Yea, but there is mercy thus in him only for a few, and may not be of the number.” Yes, there is mercy for thou-sands; and he keeps it; treasures of it he by him, and are kept, if men would come in And take them. Object what you can, his name will answer thee. Needest you comfort as well as pardon He is both Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; that is his name, 2 Cora 1: 3. Needest you peace of conscience He is the God of peace. “Yea, but I have an heart empty of grace, and full of corruptions.” He is God of all grace to heal thee, as well as of peace to pardon thee. Needest you wisdom and direction He is the Father of lights. Is thy heart inconstant and full of double-mindedness He is unchangeable also. Thus all objections that can be made maybe answered out of his name.

The like may be fully showed in his Son's name; in whom God has made himself strong to show mercy and bestow all good things. Whose name is adequate to God. God's name; of as large extent in worth and merit, as God's heart is in his purposes of chewing and bestow merces Whose name has an all-sufficiencyn it to supply all our wants and desires, and satisfy all scruples Consider his name in Isaiah 9: 6, compared with 1 Cor. 1: 30. Would we have peace of conscience, and the guilt of sins removed He is the Prince of peace, and is made righteousness to us. Are we in depths of distress Are there terrors within, and terrors without, out of which we see no redemption He is the mighty GOD, able to save to the utmost, being made redemption to us. Want we grace and his image to be renewed in us He is the everlasting Father; a Father, to beget his likeness in us, and everlasting, to maintain it, for ever, when it is begun; and he is made sancification to us. Want we wisdom to guide us He is the Counsellor; and is made wisdom to us. All we want he has; even as all he has we want. And further, although we not only want all these, but very much of all these, his name is also Wonderful. For such he is in all these; able to do beyond all our expectations, even to astonishment.

If the soul desires more particular satisfaction in point of justification, which consists in the pardon of sins, and acceptance with God; that other name of his, “The Lord our Righteousness,” will answer all objections and doubts. For if that righteousness of his satisfied GOD, who is “greater than our hearts,” it may satisfy our hearts much more. The righteousness of his life and death is not only avburpov, a n adequate sufficient ransom, but there is plenteous redemption in it; yea, to superfluity, as the apostle’s phrase implies; vireesAsQvre, 1 Tim. 1: 14, that is, overfull, more than would serve the turn, and that to pardon his sins, who was “the chief of sinners.” He elsewhere enlengthens the all powers of sin, hell, and darkness to appear in this dispute, and undertakes to answer them all out of this one position, f CHRIST has died,” Rom. 8: 39, which is in effect the pray unto GOD, and stay themselves upon it; unto them GOD cannot deny it, for it is theirs. So that the nameâ€™ of the Son of God also is all-sufficient to answer all objections.

The mere name of GOD is support enough for faith; because it is for his name sake, and his Son's name sake, that he does all he doth; and for nothing in us, but merely for what is in himself; so Tsai. xlviii. 9, “For my name sake will I be fer my anger.” So also Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 32, “For my name sake, and not for your sake:” and Isai. xliii. 25, “I am he that blotteth out thy transgression for my own sake, and will not
remember thy sins." For this "he blotteth out transgression," and pardonne. And if it be for his name sake he does all he doth, and fulfillment all promises made to us: then when you see nothing in thyself to which any promise is made, nothing which may appear to be any argument or motive that he will pardon thee, then trust you in his name; that because he is GOD, and has mercy in him, therefore he will do it.

This then may direct poor souls in distress, what to venture all upon; upon what ground to hazard labors, endeavors, and all, even upon his name; when they see nothing in themselves to which any promise be-elong. Your own hearts may fail, but GOD's name and his Son's name rested on, will never fail you. Lean on these, not by halves, but trust perfectly (as the apostle says) on that mercy you hear is in GOD, upon that grace revealed. Throw and cast your whole souls, your whole weight upon it. He only "has perfect peace, whose mind is staid on GOD." Have not half thy soul upon that "rock which is higher than You," but get all upon it, and when all shall fail, renew thy faith on his name. Thereon rest, there die. To this purpose may that of Solomon serve, Prov. 18: 10, "His name (says he) is a strong tower; the righteous flee to it, and are safe." Now what end is there, and use of a tower in a city When all the out-works are taken, the walls scaled, all same with this, â€™ The Lord our righteousness: who therefore (says he) shall condemn

What can be alleged either in the heinousness of sin in the general, or in any of thy sins in particular, unto which an answer may not be fetched from the righteous-of CHRIST's death and life is it that sin is an offence against the great GOD is not his righteousness the righteousness of Jehovah "Jehovah our Righteousness," who is the mighty God Is the glory of this great GOD, and all his excellencies debased by us in sinning And will not the emptying of his glory, whose name is the "brightness of his Father's glory," satisfy and make amends Are our sins the transgression of the holy and righteous law in every part of it What Did not Jehovah, who made and gave that law, to make him-selves our righteousness, make himself under the law Gal. 4: 4; and, to make up a full righteousness, fulfill every part of it Rom. 8: 3, 4. Is it thy continuance in sin, and the number and repetition of thy sins that amazeth thee "Allfulness dwells in him," who is our righteousness, and has dwelt in him longer than sin in thee; and the righteousness of our Messiah is everlasting righteousness; the merit of which an eternity of sinning could not expend, or make void. And is all this righteousness laid up for himself only, or for any other sort of creatures, so that you might never come to have an interest in it No: the top of our comfort is, that our righteousness is on e letter of his name; and that our names are put into his. For us it is, and ours it is ordained to be: as much ours, to save us trusting upon it, as his own to comfort. You profit much i

company, from the sacraments, from prayer, by objecting their unprofitableness unto them, and that all is in vain, and that t

woman who had the bloody issue, spent all upon physicians, in the use of means for her recovery. That trouble of mind does on

ordinance God has appointed for thy comfort and recovery; as in a

wait quietly.

"Blessed are all they that wait for the Lord, And as he now waiteth to be the more gracious to thee, so he did heretofore, a long while wait f

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And again, though you should forget all you hear, and should seem to reap no benefit by it, yet hear; for some secret strength is gotten by it. And as for increasing your condemnation, know that utterly to neglect the means is greater condemnation. Therefore read, pray, meditate,

hear, confer, receive the sacraments, forbear not these your appointed meals. Indeed when the body is sick ye use to forbear your appointed food: but when the soul is sick there is more need of it than ever. All these are but meat and medicine, food, physic, cordials, and all. Use reading the Word; the Scriptures were written for our consolation; therefore read them much. Attend on preaching, for God creates the fruit of the lips peace. Receive the sacrament often; those days are sealing days: go you and confess thy sins, write over thy pardon, put in all you know by thyself, bring it to CHRIST to set his seal to it. Only take this caution, that you trust not to the use of the means, but unto God in the means. To think, Oh! I shall have comfort by such a man, or at such a time, in such an ordinance; this often dasheth all. So believe in God as if you used no means, and yet as diligently use the means, as if your confidence were to he in them.

IX. Above all things pray, and get others to pray for you; for God often restores comfort unto such, at the request of mourners for them, Is. lvii. Is. But yet especially be earnest in pouring forth your complaint yourself; for though the speaking of friends may somewhat further your suit, yet it must be wrought out between God and you in private; and his good-will must be obtained by wooing him in secret. This counsel the apostle gives you, << Is any afflicted let him pray.>> And be-cause of all afflictions else, this needeth prayer the most; therefore David pens the 102d psalm on purpose; not for his own use only, but for the use of all others in the like distress; as appears by this title of it: " A prayer for the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord."

When at any time therefore, thy sins and God's wrath meet in thy conscience, then pour forth thy soul, lay open and confess thy sin. When thy case is as Job's was, Job 10: 15, 16, 17, that you art full of confusion, so full that you thinkest thy heart could hold no more; and yet it increaseth, and he flieth thee fuller yet; then do you pour out thy complaints to him, as he pours confusion into thee; and when he hunts thee, as there complains, like a fierce lion, fall you down and humble thyself like a poor and silly lamb. If you dies till, die at his feet, mourning, bleeding out thy soul in tears. And when he hunts thee up and down, and pursues thee with blow after blow, follow you hard after him wherever he goes, with complaint after complaint. And when yet he leaves thee not, but again and again returns, (as some read it) after some intermission, and shows himself terrible to thee daily after day, night after night; yet do you look in the like manner again and again towards his holy temple, as Jonah did: and when he begins to bring in new sins, new indictments against thee, (as it is Job 10: 17,) thou. renewest thy witnesses: and when you thoughtest he had done with thee, he enters into new quarrels and reckonings long since past and forgotten, (as it is in the same verse) changes and war against thee, vicissitudes and armies of disquietments; and when one army is overcome, a new one appears in the field; then fall you down, and say as Job at last doth; I have sinned, I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee What shall I do unto thee (not destroyer) of men. These and these abominations I have done, and I cannot now undo them; and what shall I do to obtain thy favor As! you can do nothing that can satisfy him. Only confess thy sin, accept thy punishment. Complain you not; put thy mouth in the dust Lam. 3: 29, 30. Be still; say not a word; but only such whereby you utterest thy complaints, and dost acknowledge thine own desert of ten thousand times and more. Sayas in Micah 7: 9, " I will bear thine indignation, for thou art overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord."

If it be said unto thee; "Yea, but you art most unworthy," answer, But he professeth to love freely. If the greatness of thy sins be objected against thee; plead you again, that plenteous redemption is with him; and say, If God has not enough to pardon me, I am content to go without. If it be objected that you art ungodly, say, That you believest on him that justifieth the ungodly. If God puts thee off, (as CHRIST a while did the woman of Canaan) and says he has no need of thee; say, that you have need of him, and can no longer live without him; for, in his favor is thy life, and, that without it you art undone. If he seems to rebuke thee, and ask; How darest you press thus to him who is the High and Lofty One A sinful man to him, whose name is holy say, You have heard himself say; "Thus said that High and Lofty One, whose name is holy; that he dwells with him that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the heart of the humble," Is. lvii. 15.

If still he does pursue thee, and his wrath he heavy on thee, ask him, what is it he aims at Is it to have the victory, " and overcome when he judges"Freely tell him, I am willing to give it thee, to yield to thee, to stand out with thee in nothing; but am content to submit to thy
commanding will in all things, and to thy condemning will also, if you so please; and that it will be just if you condemn me: I will justify thee, whilst you art condemning me; and at the latter day, you shall need no other judge against me than myself. Only beseech him to consider what honor it will be to him to pursue thy stubble, and to break a poor dried leaf, that crumleth under his fingers; to break a reed that is broken already. Say, you art not a fit match for him, and he has said, "He will not contend for ever," Isa. Mi. 16, especiallly when he sees any to lay down their weapons, as you art content to do.

Or ask him, Lord, is it that you aimest to have glory out of my eternal condemnation It is true, you may; you may have glory out of my death and destruction, who never yet hadst it out of my life. But I desire thee to consider this before you thrustest thy sword into me, that you have already sheathed it in thy Son's bowels. You may show as much power in overcoming thy wrath, as in venting it: yea, and have greater glory. Plead, I shall never be able to satisfy thee, though you should throw me down to-hell: you may cast me into prison, but I can never pay the debt: and what profit will there be in my blood? Therefore, if satisfaction to thy justice be thy end; you may better accept that which thy Son has made, and so you shall be sure to be no loser by me. Thereby you will not only receive the glory of thy justice, but show the riches of thy grace and mercy also, and so double the revenue of thy glory in me.

Or, is it (Lord) that that you aimest to have glory out of my eternal condemnation from me than heretofore you halt had Plead Lord, this is the way to disable me for service; for while I suffer thy terrors, I am as one among the dead, listless not to thy business only, but to all things else; distracted with terrors, so that the powers of my soul are scattered, and cannot attend upon their duty; and besides this distraction in my spirit, it consumes my strength also, dries up my bones and moisture. Say, "When you rebuke me, for man, you break his beauty to consume a way as a moth. Oh! therefore spare me, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.” And withal put him in mind, that if he should go on thus to deal with thee, as you should not able to do him much service, so neither to do any long, for that will cut short thy days. Say to him, “How long wilt you hide thyself? For ever Shall thy wrath burn like fire Remember how short my time is.” I have but a little time here allotted me, though none of it should be shortened. And for that little time I have to live, the more joy I have, the more service I shall be able to do thee, ("for the joy of the Lord is our strength.” Neh. 8: 10,) and more acceptably also, for "you love a cheerful giver.” Intreat him to restore thee to the joy of his salvation, so shall you be able to do him more service in a week, than in a year now, (long trouble of mind being as long sicknesses, which make all performances weak.)

And if it be objected against thee, that if you should be trusted with such assurance, you wouldst turn it into wantonness; reply, that if he pleases, he can prevent that, by preparing thy heart for these cordials, so that they shall work kindly on thee; by writing thy requests for thee, and God to hear him for thee. "CHRIST is an advocate with the Father,” nor was ever cast in any suit he pleaded. See what himself says, Jer. xxx. 18, 19, 20, "Ephraim is my son, my pleasant son," and yet he began to "speak against him," as sharp words as ever he has done against thee; as if he meant never to have mercy on him: upon which Ephraim falls a moaning himself, (as I have taught thee to do) and acknowledges it was justly done, having "been a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Ephraim began to be ashamed, notable to look up, and seeks after repentance; and that from him, without whose help he was not able to turn to him: "Turn you me, and I shall be turned;” and to challenge him and his love: "You are the Lord, my God. Well! says GOD, though it be long since "I spake against him," and I have suffered him long to be plunged in misery, yet I remember him still;"his tears, his sighs, were never out of my mind; and though he thinks I had forgotten him, yet I remember him, and "my bowels are troubled for him," as much and more than he is for himself; and I can forbear no longer; "I will surely have mercy on him.”

And if through all these discouragements, thy condition prove worse and worse, so that you can not pray, but art struck dumb when you comest into his presence, make signs; groan, sigh, sob, chatter as Hezekiah did, bemoan thyself for thine unworthiness; and desire CHRIST to speak thy requests for thee, and God to hear him for thee. "CHRIST is an advocate with the Father,” nor was ever cast in any suit he pleaded. See what himself says, Jer. xxx. 18, 19, 20, "Ephraim is my son, my pleasant son," and yet he began to "speak against him," as sharp words as ever he has done against thee; as if he meant never to have mercy on him: upon which Ephraim falls a moaning himself, (as I have taught thee to do) and acknowledges it was justly done, having "been a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Ephraim began to be ashamed, notable to look up, and seeks after repentance; and that from him, without whose help he was not able to turn to him: "Turn you me, and I shall be turned;” and to challenge him and his love: "You are the Lord, my God. Well! says GOD, though it be long since "I spake against him," and I have suffered him long to be plunged in misery, yet I remember him still;"his tears, his sighs, were never out of my mind; and though he thinks I had forgotten him, yet I remember him, and "my bowels are troubled for him," as much and more than he is for himself; and I can forbear no longer; "I will surely have mercy on him.”

X. Lastly, having done all this, rest not in ease, but healing; not in ease of conscience, but in healing of conscience. You that are troubled in mind, think not your states to be good, simply because you cease to be troubled; but only then when the issue of your trouble is healing to your spirits, by some sound ground of comfort; and when guidance in God’s ways, and more close and steady walking with and waiting upon God is the issue of it. For God may slack the cords and take you off the rack when yet he has not pardoned you. A traitor who was cast into the dungeon, and had many irons on him, may be let out of the dungeon, and have his irons taken off, and have the liberty of the tower, and yet not have his pardon; nay, usually before execution they use to take the irons off. Thus it is with many. I thank GOD, says one, I have had much trouble of mind, such and such sins terrified me, and I could not sleep for them; but now I am well, and they do not trouble me. Yea, but is this all? You have cause to fear that thy irons are but taken off against execution. It is with men in point of justification, as of sanctification. A man that has had a strong lust stirring in him, if he has gone a year or two, and finds it not to stir, he therefore thinks he is utterly freed from it, which yet may be but a restraint of it, not killing of it; so it is often in this trouble of mind, which arises from the guilt of sin. Because a man finds not those doubts and terrors in his heart as he has done heretofore, there fore he
presently thinks all is well; when it may be merely a truce, not a peace; a laying down of arms only for a while, to make greater preparation against the soul afterwards; a little enlargement in prison, not a pardon.

That you may further conceive the meaning of this; in different men there is a wide difference, both in the main cause of the trouble, and also in the issue and removal of it. One man's trouble is for the present smart he feels in sin, and out of fears that he shall endure these tortures for ever. Another man's trouble (though it has often all in it, yet the chiefest of his trouble is a further thing) it is not only the smart of sin, but also the filth, the foulness, the offence of it done to GOD, that wounds him; neither is it only the want of pardon, which troubleth him, but the want of God's favor, the want of seeing his face. His desire is to live in his sight, and to have God to be his God.

Now such as the wound is, such also is the remedy. Therefore, the one being but troubled with the smart of sin, take that load off, and he as pleasant as ever, it being present ease that he seeks; or at the utmost, but pardon of sin, that he may be free from the fears of undergoing that for ever, the earnest whereof he feels in his conscience now. And hence the remedies such men often have recourse to, are unsuitable; they are but like rattles to still children with. They run to merry company, or to music, as Cain to "building cities;" and so put off the terrors of their conscience. Or they run to a formal performance of duties; even as poor souls under Popery, when they were stung by the friars' sermons, they set them penances and good deeds to be done, which stilled them awhile, and for them they thought they should have pardon: so men run now to holy duties with the same opinion they did then, as bribes for a pardon, "What shall I give, (says he in Micah) for the sin of my soul" But the wound of the other being deeper, not the sting of sin only, but the poison of it; not the smart, but the offence done to God; not the fear of his wrath, but the want of his favor; therefore accordingly ease from those terrors pacify not him; no, not simply peace with God. He says not only, "Oh! miserable man that I am; who shall deliver me from this death only" but "who shall deliver me from this body of death" If news were brought him that God would pardon him, and call him to a reckoning for any sin, and no more were spoken to his conscience, he would still be troubled, till he had assurance of his good-will also. If it were said, God will indeed pardon thee, but he will never love thee as he did, you must not come into his sight; this would grieve the soul more than the other would content it, and he would be everlastingly troubled. Ease, pardon, knocking off his bolts, content him not till he enjoys communion with GOD, till he sees his face in his ordinances. If the want of the sense of communion with GOD, and absence from him disquiets a man, then the heart rests not till it has found its well beloved.

CHAP. 16

Some Observations from the Whole.

Upon the whole I observe, that though "it may befall one" that fears GOD to walk in darkness, "yet but to few." He says, "who is among you" He singled out such out of a crouch. There are those that walk in the light of GOD's countenance to their death, end never knew what terror of conscience meant. But when he speaks of those that "fear God and walk in darkness," such an one is "one of a thousand," of such an one he says, "who is among you" Pew have experience of such a condition. Job had friends, who certainly were good men, (for Job was to pray for them, and God said he would hear Job for them;) and they, as is likely, knew many good men besides Job; yet when this befell Job, it was so strange to them, that they thought him an hypocrite, as never having themselves felt, or heard of the like in others. When CHRIST was to go into his agony, he would not have many of his apostles so much as witnesses of it, much less to feel the like; he takes but two or three.

1. The first reason of this is, because though all God's people are fighting men, and men of valor, yet he has but a few champions; therefore calls but a few out to fight single combats with SATAN; though he exercised them all in lighter skirmishes, yet not to fight such bloody battles. "Seest you not my servant Job, there is none like him" Him GOD will venture into the field, but others he will not.

2. As he has few champions fit for such an encounter, so he has variety of temptations to exercise his withal; he has poverty and ill report, and cruel mockings, loss of goods, crosses in friends; and some have enough to do to Struggle under one of these; and seldom all four fall one; our spirits are so weak, that they would faint, and not be able to sustain themselves; and GOD never suffers any to be " tempted
above what they are able," 1 Cor. a. 13. Some men's bodies are weak, and if God should "rebuke them long for sin," they would be brought to nothing; and he "remembers they are flesh, and stirs not up all his wrath." Some men God has present use of in their callings, which if they were distracted, with terrors, they were unfit for.

3. God usually inflicts thus but in case of extremity, when he meets with a very froward heart. Lesser afflictions work with the most of our through his blessing; mercies work, disgrace works, poverty works; and as "he does not willingly afflict," so not unnecessarily. He puts not men into the dungeon for every fault; and therefore there are few long exercised this way. Think not therefore you Vast not true faith because you were never terrified as some have been. As some have true faith and sound peace, who yet have not "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" so some have sound humiliation, who never knew terrors of conscience. You see may often preach such things, as concern but a few in a congregation. There are but a few walk long in darkness, yet to such CHRIST does preach; yea, and for such dots God gives gifts, the tongue of the learned. Therefore, as we must not defraud one poor soul of its portion, because none else partake of it; so the rest are not to think much, but stay till their portion come; and if any one poor soul has had his state discovered, all the rest are to be thankful.

I observe, secondly, that those few who walk in darkness, and yet fear and obey him, "God and CHRIST has an especial eye unto, and care of. You see he singles them out, as it were, from all the rest." Who is among you\textsuperscript{5} :: Isa. Lxiv. 2. \textsuperscript{6} All these fixings have my hands made, but to this man will I look that is poor and broke and trembled' at my word;' that is, bought all thin gs and persons else in the world be my creatures, and so to have a care of them all yet to him all look, that is in such a state, as if there were none else in the church. It is the office of CHRIST so to do. "The Spirit is upon him on purpose to open the prison to them that are bound," shut up in this dungeon; "to appo nt unto them that morn, beauty for ashes;" the oil of joy for mourning; garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." \textsuperscript{7} He is the Shepherd, and will take care of all his sheep. But of whom especially? The lambs that are weak; "he will gather them with his arms, and gently lead the ewes with young," those that are traveling and bringing forth, as those under terrors are. He will not over-drive them. He is that "good Shepherd," that will, as he has promised, Ezek. xxiv. 16, "Seek out that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which was sick." He names all casualties that befell them, because e he helps in all miseries; yea, and after they have been bewildered "in a cloudy and dark day, he will find them out and deliver them." And if his office would not move him to it, his love would; for he is a "merciful and pitiful High-Priest," Heb. 4: 15; and was "in all points tempted as we are," and especially, in agony of spirit, therein he drank deepest of any, and therefore is fitted to pity us therein; and the more any is troubled, the more CHRIST is touched. In all our afflictions he is afflicted. Since I spoke agains him (says he) I remember him still, there mind more upon "Isa. Lxvi. 2, "All these fixings have my hands that are in darkness, think that of all men else, God regards not them. Sion said, "God has forgotten me," Isa. xlix. 15. So David, "God has forgotten to be merciful." Because they find their hearts hard to GOD, they think that his is so to them. Because they can find no love in their hearts to GOD, they think he bears none to them. But CHRIST you see especially inquires for such, and overlooks all others. You afflicted soul, whoever you art, God has "graven thee on the palms of his hands," Isa. xlv. 16. Every sigh of thine goes to his bowels, "I will dwell with him," says GOD, that is broken, to revive his spirit. "He is very nigh to such a one. And are God's eyes upon us any more when we are in trouble of spirit, than on any other? Then let our eyes be upon him." We cannot tell what to do, but our eyes are towards thee. Let our eyes be towards him for help, as of those that looked on the brazen serpent. Let our eyes be towards him for service, "as the eyes of hand-maidens are on their mistress." Look not to men, nor to credit, but on God in all we do, as if there were none else in the world, to approve ourselves unto.

I observe, lastly, in that which he speaks of those his children that are in darkness, he chooseth rather to de-scribe them by fear and obedience, than by any other grace; that when the children of God are under terrors, the most eminent grace that does appear in them, is fear-fulness to offend GOD, and willingness to obey him: other graces may be stirred, but these are most eminent, and therefore he mentioneth these for their comfort. Several occasions draw out several graces. When the sunshine of God's favor melts the heart, then love and obedience thence proceeding, are most eminent, and also godly sorrow. So Mary wept much, and loved much," for much was forgiven her." On the contrary, when the sense of God's love is withdrawn; and fears and terrors shed abroad in the heart, then fear and obedience show themselves. Therefore "he that is poor and contrite, and trembleth at the Word," are joined, Isa. lxvi. 2. Even he that trembleth at every command and threatening, and is fearful to transgress. When the soul is possessed most with displeasure for sin, and apprehensions of wrath, then it feareth most, and then fear works accordingly against that which may displease. Hence the apostle says, "Seeing our God is a consuming fire," Heb. 12: 2O, "let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
SHOWING, BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION, THAT CHRIST IS THE EXAMPLE AND OBJECT OF JUSTIFYING FAITH. ROM. 8: 34.

Who is he that condemned? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for us.

THESE words are a triumphing challenge, uttered by the apostle in the name of all the elect; for so he begins, ver. 33, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect It is God that justifies." And then follow these words, "Who shall condemn? (namely, God's elect,)" It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for us. This challenge we find first published by JESUS CHRIST himself, our only champion, Isa. 1. (a chapter made of and for CHRIST,) ver. 8, "He is near that justifies me, who will contend with me?" They were CHRIST's words there, and spoken of God's justifying him; and the se are every believer's words here, intended of God's justifying them. CHRIST is brought in there uttering them, as standing at the high-priest's tribunal, where they spat upon him, and bu'ett'd him, Isa. 1. 6, Matt. 26: 67. When he was condemned by Pilate, then he exercised this faith on God his Father, "He is near that justifies me." And as in that his condemnation he stood in our stead; so in this, his hope of his justification he speaks in our stead also, and as representing us in both. And upon this the apostle here pronounces, in like words, of all the elect, "It is God that justifies, who shall accuse?CHRIST was condemned, yea, "has died, who therefore shall condemn" Lo! here the communion we have with CHRIST in his death and condemnation, yea, in his very faith; if he trusted in GOD, so may we, and shall as certain ly be delivered. Faith and the supports of it, or rather CHRIST, (as by his death, resurrection, sitting at God's right hand, and intercession, he is the foundation of faith, and the cause of our justification,) is the main subject of these words: all which therefore is the intended subject of this discourse.

We have here four things made matter of triumph to believers, to assure them they shall not be condemned; in that, 1. CHRIST died. 2. Rose again. 3. Is at God's right hand. 4. Intercedes. So that (for the general) I am to do two things. First, direct your faith to CHRIST, as to its right object: and Secondly, encourage your faith, from these several actions of CHRIST for us, and show how they all contain matter of triumph in point of justification.

Directions to CHRIST as the Object of Faith. How CHRIST is the Object of justifying Faith.
BUT ere I come to encourage your faith from the four particulars above mentioned, let me first direct your faith to its proper object, CHRIST. This I shall do briefly, and only so far as it may be an introduction to the encouragements which may be deduced from the said particulars, by considering, 1. That CHRIST is the object of our faith, in joint commission with God the Father. 2. In opposition to our own humiliation, or graces, or duties. And, 3. In distinction from the promises.

First, CHRIST is the object of faith, in joint commission with God the Father. So here, “It is God that justifies,” and “CHRIST that died.” They are both of them set forth as the foundation of a believer’s confidence. So elsewhere, faith is called “a believing on him” (namely, GOD.) “that justifies the ungodly,” Rom. 4: 5; and “a believing on CHRIST.” Acts 16: Wherefore faith is to have an eye unto both, for both contribute unto the justification of a sinner. It is CHRIST that paid the price, by which we are justified; and it is God that accepts of it, and imputes it unto us: therefore justification is ascribed unto both. And this we have, Rom. 3: 24, where it is attributed unto them both together: “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST:” where we see, that God’s free grace, and CHRIST’s righteousness, both concur to our justification.

CHRIST paid as full a price as if there were no grace shewn in justifying of us; and yet that it should be accepted for us, is as free grace, and as great, as if CHRIST had paid never a farthing. Now as both these meet to justify us, so faith in justification is to look at both these. So it follows in the next verse: “Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.” And though it be true, that God justifying is the ultimate object of our faith, (for “CHRIST leads us by the hand,” as the word is, Eph. ii. 18, “unto God:”) yet under the New Testament, CHRIST is the more immediate object of faith; for God dwelling in our nature is made more familiar to our faith than the person of the Father, who is merely God. Under the Old Testament, when CHRIST was not come in the flesh, their faith had a more usual recourse unto God, who had promised the Messiah, of whom they then had not so distinct thoughts; but now under the New Testament, because CHRIST is come, and is set forth by GOD, to transact all our business between God and us, the more usual and immediate address of our faith is to be made unto CHRIST; who, as he is distinctly set forth in the New Testament, so he is distinctly apprehended by the faith of believers. “Ye believe in GOD, (says CHRIST to his disciples,) believe also in inc:” make me the object of your trust for salvation, as well as the Father. And therefore when faith and repentance come more narrowly to be distinguished by their more immediate objects, it is “repentance towards GOD,” but “faith towards our Lord JESUS CHRIST,” Acts 20: 21. God and CHRIST are the objects of both; but CHRIST is more immediately the object of faith, and God of repentance. So that we believe in God through believing in CHRIST first, and turn to CHRIST by turning to God first. And this is there spoken, when they are made the sum of Christian doctrine. And there-fore the faith of some being much enlarged to the mercies of God and his free grace, and but in way of sup-position unto CHRIST, (taking for granted that all mercies are communicated in and through CHRIST, yet so as their thoughts work not so much upon CHRIST;) although this may be true faith, in that God and his free grace is the joint object of faith, together with CHRIST and his righteousness; yet it is not such a faith as becomes the times of the gospel; it is of an Old Testament strain. Our faith now should, in the more immediate exercises of it, be pitched upon CHRIST, that through him (first apprehended) “our faith might be in tied,” as the ultimate object of it.

Secondly, CHRIST is the object of faith, in opposition to our own humiliation, or graces, or duties. 1. We are not to trust in humiliation, as many do, who quiet their consciences from this, that they have been troubled. That promise, “Come to me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest,” hath been mistaken; for many have misunderstood it, as if CHRIST had spoken peace simply unto that condition, without any more ado; and so have applied it unto themselves, as giving them an interest in CHRIST; whereas it is only an invitation of such to come unto CHRIST, in whom their rest is to be found. If therefore men will rest in being “weary and heavy-laden,” and not come to CHRIST, they sit down in sorrow. This is to make John (who only prepared the way for CHRIST) to be the Messiah; indeed, that is, to think the work of John’s ministry, (which was to prepare men for CHRIST) to be their attaining CHRIST himself. If you are weary, you may have rest indeed; but you must come to CHRIST first. For, as if CHRIST had died only, and not as we, we had been still in our sins; so though we die by sin, as slain by it, yet if we “attain not to the resurrection of faith,” we still remain in our sins. 2. We are not to rest in graces or duties; they cannot satisfy our own consciences, much less God’s justice. If righteousness could have come by these, then “CHRIST had died in vain.” What a dishonor were it to CHRIST, that they should share the glory of his righteousness Were any of your duties crucified for you Graces and duties are the daughters of faith, the offspring of CHRIST; and they may in time of need nourish their mother, but not at first beget her.

Thirdly, CHRIST’s person, and not barely the promises of forgiveness, is the object of faith. There are many poor souls humbled for sin, and taken off from their own bottom, who, like Noah’s dove, fly over all the Word of GOD, to spy out what they may set their foot upon; and eyeing therein many free and gracious promises, holding forth forgiveness of sins, they close with them, and rest on them alone, not seeking for, or closing with CHRIST in those promises. This is a common error, and is as if Noah’s dove should have rested up on the outside of the ark, and not have come to Noah within: where though she might rest for a while, yet could she not ride out all storms, but must have perished in the end. But we may observe, that the first promise that was given, was not a bare word simply promising forgiveness, or other benefits; but it was a promise of CHRIST overcoming SATAN, and purchasing those benefits: “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” So when the promise was renewed to Abraham, it was not a bare promise of blesedness and forgiveness, but of that seed, in which the blessedness was conveyed. So that Abraham’s faith first closed with CHRIST in the promise, and therefore he is said to see CHRIST’s day; and so also the succeeding fathers did, more or less, in their types and sacraments, as appears by 1 Cor. 10: 1-2: and if they, then much more are we thus to look at CHRIST, now really incarnate. Hence our sacraments (which are the seals added to the word of faith) do primarily exhibit CHRIST unto a believer; and so (in him) all other promises are ratified and confirmed by them. Now there is the same reason of them, that there is of the promises of the Gospel, (for they preach the gospel to the eye, as the promise Both to the ear) and therefore, as in them the soul is first to look at CHRIST, and embrace him as tendered in them, and then at the promises tendered with him, and not to take the sacraments as bare seals of pardon; so in receiving a promise, (which is the word of faith) we are first to seek out for CHRIST in it, as being the foundation of it, and so to take hold of the promise in him. The promise is but the casket, CHRIST is the jewel in it; the promise but the field, and CHRIST the pearl hid in it: the promises are the means by which you believe, not the things on which you are to rest. And so, although you are to look at forgiveness, as held forth in the promise, yet you are to believe on CHRIST, in that promise, to obtain this forgiveness.
CHRIST is the grand promise, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. 2 Cor. 1: 20: So that, as it were folly for any man to think that he hath an interest in the lands of an heiress, because he has got the writings of her estate in his hands; whereas the interest in the lands goes with her person, and with the relation of marriage to her; otherwise, without a title to herself, all the writings will be fetched out of his hands again; so it is with all the promises; they hang upon CHRIST, and without him there is no interest to be had in them. To rest on the bare promise, or to look to the benefit promised without eyeing CHRIST, is not an evangelical, but a Jewish faith, even such as the formalists among the Jews did, who, without the Messiah, closed with promises, and rested in types, without looking unto CHRIST the end of them. This is to go to God without a Mediator, and to make the promises of the gospel to be as the law, nehushtan, (as Hezekiah said of the brazen serpent) a piece of brass, vain and ineffectual. Like the waters of Bethesda, they heal not, they cleanse not, till this Angel of the covenant come down to your faith in them. Therefore at a sacrament, or when you meet with any promise, get CHRIST first by faith, and then you may have what you will of him.

There are three sorts of promises, and in the applying of all these, it is CHRIST that your faith is to meet with. 1. There are absolute promises, made to no conditions; as when CHRIST is said to come to save sinners. Now in such it is plain, that CHRIST is the naked object of them. So that if you apply not him, you apply nothing; for the only thing held forth in them is CHRIST. 2. There are inviting promises; as that before mentioned, "Come to me ye that are weary." The promise is not to weariness, but to coming to CHRIST: they are a bidden to come to him, if they will have rest. 3. There are assuring promises; as those made to such and such qualifications of sanctification. But still, what is it that is promised in them the heart should only eye? It is CHRIST in whom the soul rests, and not in its grace; so that the sight of a man's grace is but a door to let faith in at, to converse with CHRIST, whom the soul loves. Even as at the sacrament, the elements of bread and wine, are but outward signs to bring CHRIST and the heart together, and then faith lets the outward elements go, treats with CHRIST, unto whom these let the soul in. So grace is a sign in-ward, and whilst men make use of it as a sign to let them unto CHRIST, their confidence being pitched upon him, and not upon their grace, there is no danger in" making use of signs. And I see not, but that God might as well appoint his own work of the new creation within, to be as a sign and help to communion, with CHRIST by faith, as he did those outward works of his first creation. Neither is it more derogatory to free grace, or to CHRIST's honor, for God to make such effects signs of our union with him, than it was to make outward signs of his presence.

Sect 2
CHRIST THE OBJECT AND SUPPORT OF FAITH FOR
JUSTIFICATION, IN HIS DEATH. ROM. 8:34 Who shall condemn CHRIST has died.

Chap. 1

How not CHRIST's Person simply, hat CHRIST as dying,
is the object of Faith as justifying.

I come now to all these four particulars, in order to show both how CHRIST in each is the object of faith as justifying, and what support the faith of a believer may fetch from each of them, in point of justification.

First, CHRIST as dying, is the object of justifying faith, "Who shall condemn CHRIST has died." For the ex-planation of which I will, 1. Give a direction or two; and 2. show how an encouragement, or matter of triumph, may be fetched from hence.

1. The first direction is this, that in seeking justification in the promises, as CHRIST is to be principially in the eye of your faith, so it must be CHRIST as crucified, CHRIST as dying. This direction I give to prevent a mistake, which souls that are about to believe often run into. For when they hear that the person of CHRIST is the main object of faith, they conceive, that when one conies first to believe, he should look only upon the personal excellencies of grace and glory which are in JESUS CHRIST, and so have his heart allured unto CHRIST by them only, and close with him under those apprehensions. But although it be true, that there is that disposition in every believer, which if it were to view CHRIST in his mere personal excellencies, would close with CHRIST for them alone, as seeing such a beauty in them; yet the first view which an humbled soul always takes of him is of his being a Savior, made sin, and a curse, and obeying to the death for; sinners. He takes up CHRIST, in his first sight of him, under the "likeness of sinful flesh," and in that representation it is that he is made a fit object for a sinner's faith to rest upon for salvation. It is CHRIST that is thus excellent in his Person, yet farther considered, as clothed with his garments of blood, and the qualifications of a Mediator and Reconciler; it is this that makes him so desirable to sinners, and a fit object for their faith (which looks out for justification,) to seize upon, though they take in the consideration of all his other excellencies, to allure their hearts to him. Yea, I say farther, that consider faith as justifying; that is, in that act of it which justifies a sinner; and so CHRIST taken only or mainly ill his personal excellencies, cannot be called the object of it. But the consideration that maketh CHRIST the object of faith as justifying, must necessarily be that in CHRIST which does justify a sinner; which is, his obedience unto death.

It is true, that there is nothing in CHRIST with which some answerable act of faith in us does not close; and from the differing considerations under which faith looks at CHRIST, those several acts of faith have various denominations: As faith that is carried forth to CHRIST and his personal excellencies, maybe called uniting faith; faith that goes forth to CHRIST for strength to subdue sin, maybe called sanctifying faith; and faith as it goes forth to CHRIST for justification, maybe called justifying faith. For faith in that act looks at what in CHRIST does justify a sinner; and therefore CHRIST, considered as dying, does in this respect become the most pleasing to a soul that is humbled, for this makes CHRIST suitable to him as he is a sinner. And therefore thus to represent CHRIST under the law, was the main scope of all the sacrifices and types therein: " All things being purged with blood, and with -out blood there being no remission," Hub. 9: 22.
Thus did the apostles also in their sermons. So Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, seemed, by the matter of his sermon, to have “known nothing but CHRIST, and him as crucified,” 1 Cor. 2: 2; as CHRIST above all, so CHRIST as crucified above all in CHRIST; as a uniting to their -condition best whom he endeavored to draw on to faith on him. Thus in his Epistle to the Galatians, he calls his preaching among them, the preaching of faith, chap. 3: 2. And what was the main scope of it, but the “picturing out (as the word is,) of CHRIST crucified before their eyes P” ver. 1. So he preached him, and so they received him, and so they “began in the Spirit,” ver. 3. And thus also does the seals of the promises (the sacraments,) present CHRIST to a believer’s eye; as they hold forth CHRIST, so CHRIST as crucified, their scope being to "show forth his death till he come,” 1 Cor. 11: 26. The bread signifying "CHRIST’s body broken,” in the sufferings of it, and the cup signifying the sufferings of his soul, and the pouring of it forth unto death. And hence likewise, as faith itself is called “faith in CHRIST,” so it is called “faith in his blood,” Rom. 3: 24, 25, because CHRIST, as shedding his blood for the remission of sins, is the object of it. And as God hath set forth CHRIST in the promise, under that picture of him does faith at first- close with him. His Person gives us a title to all the promises, and his blood shows the tenure they hold on; a purchase, and a full price, (‘AvriXu -rov, an adequate price,) 1 Tim. 2: 6. And as “sin is the strength of the law,” and of the threaten--ings thereof; so CHRIST’s satisfaction is the strength of all the promises in the gospel. In a word, an humbled soul is to have recourse to that CHRIST who is glorified, yet to him as once crucified. He is to go to CHRIST now glorified, as the Person from whom he is to receive forgive Hess; but withal, to him as crucified, as through whom considered in that condition) he into receive all.

CHAP. 2

What Faith, in Justification,

is especially to look at in CHRIST’s Death.

A SECOND direction for faith towards CHRIST as dying, is, faith is principally to look unto the end of God and CHRIST in his sufferings, and not simply at the story of his death and sufferings. It is the mind and intent of CHRIST in suffering, which faith chiefly eyeth, and which draweth the heart on to rest on CHRIST crucified. When a believer sees that CHRIST’s aim in suffering was, that sinners might have forgiveness, and that CHRIST’s heart was as full in it to procure it, as the sinner’s heart can be to desire it; this draws his heart to rest upon him. And without this, the contemplation of the story of his sufferings will be altogether unprofitable. And yet, the chief use which many make of CHRIST’s sufferings is, to set out to them selves the grievousness of them, thereby to move their hearts to compassion to him, and indignation against the mews for crucifying him, with an admiring of his love herein; and if they can but get their hearts thus affected, they account this to be grace; when it is no more than what the like tragical story of any noble person will work in ingenuous spirits. And therefore, as these stirrings are but fruits of the flesh, so human inventions, as lively representations of CHRIST’s passion unto the sight or fancy, exceedingly prove men to such meditations and affections, but they work a bare historical faith only, an historical remembrance, and an historical love, (as I may so call them.) And no other than such does the reading of the story of it in the word, work in many; but saving faith is mostly taken up with the main scope and drift of all CHRIST’s sufferings. For it is that which answers its own purpose, which is, to obtain forgiveness of sins in CHRIST crucified.

As God looks principally at the meaning of the Spirit in prayer, Rom. 8: so does faith look principally to the meaning of CHRIST in his sufferings. And therefore you may observe; that the drift of all the apostle’s epistles is, to show the intent of CHRIST’s sufferings; how he was therein set forth to be a “propitation for sin; to bear our sins upon the tree; and to make our peace. He was made sin, (i. e. an offering for sin,) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” or be justified through him. Thus did that evangelical prophet Isaiah set forth the intent of CHRIST’s sufferings for justification, Isai. iii. And thus, to show the use and purpose of his sufferings, was the scope of all the apostle’s sermons, holding forth the intent of CHRIST’s passion to be the justification and salvation of sinners. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST came into the world to save sinners,” 1 Tim. 1: 15. Let our faith therefore look mainl on the cross, wherein CHRIST died as born flesh and blood, think we withal that his meaning was to "condemn sin in our flesh,” Rom. 8: 4. Behold we him in his life-time, as "the lamb of God bearing and taking away the sins of the world;" and when upon the cross, letour faith behold the iniquities of us all met in him: “Surely he has borne our sorrows, bearing our sins in his body

on the tree.”

CHAP. 3

What Support CHRIST's Death affords to Faith for Justification.

HAVING thus directed your faith to the right object, CHRIST, and CHRIST as dying, let us see what matter of support faith may fetch from CHRIST’s death for justification. And surely that which has long ago satisfied God him self for the sins of many thous and souls, may well satisfy the heart of any sinner, in respect of the guilt of any sins that can arise. We see the apostle here, after that large discourse of justification by CHRIST’s righteousness, in the former part of this epistle, having showed how every way it abounds, ch. v. n now cloth, as it were, sit down like a man over-convinced; as, ver. 3L, "What then shall we say to these things" He speaks as one satisfied, and even astonished with abundance of evidence; having nothing to say, but only to admire God and CHRIST in this work; and therefore presently
challengeth all corners. Let conscience and carnal reason, sin, hell and devils, bring in all their strength, "Who is he that shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect Who shall condemn" Paul dares to answer them all, and carry it with these few words, " It is God that justifies, it is CHRIST that died." CHRIST's redemption is not merely a price or ransom equivalent, or making due satisfaction, according to the just demerit of sin; but it is "plenteous redemption;" there is an abundance of " the gift of rightousness," Rom. 5: 17, and " unsearchable riches of CHRIST," Ephes. 3: 8. Yea, 1 Tim. 1: 14, "the grace of our Lord," *, we translate it, "was abundant," but the word reaches that farther, "was over-full, redundant, more than enough."

I shall not insist so largely on this first head of CHRIST's dying, as upon those three following: only I would observe how CHRIST's satisfaction may be set against the guilt of a poor sinner's offences. What is there that can aggravate sin in the general, or any man's particular sins, that may not be answered out of this, " CHRIST has died So that whatever evil, according to spiritual reason, a man's conscience may suggest to be in sin, a man's faith may show a more transcendent goodness to have been in CHRIST's death, and so oppose the one to the other. Is sin the transgression of the law CHRIST dying, the Law-maker was subjected to the law, and will not that make amends Is sin the debasement of God's glory, manifested in his word and works CHRIST's dying was the debasement of this brightness of his glory, who was God personally manifested in the flesh. The one of them is but as the darkening the lustre of the sun upon a wall, but the other is as the obscuring of the sun itself. Sin's highest evil lies in offending GOD, but CHRIST's righteousness is the "righteousness of God himself."

Therefore, get your hearts and consciences distinctly and particularly satisfied in the all-sufficiency, which is in the satisfaction that CHRIST path made. As it is a defect in humiliation, that men content themselves with a general apprehension that they are sinners, and so never become truly humbled, so is it a defect in their faith, that they content themselves with a superficial and general conceit, that CHRIST died for sinners; their hearts not being particularly satisfied about the transcendent all-sufficiency of his death. And thence it is that in time of temptation, when their abounding sinfulness comes distinctly to be discovered, they are amazed, as not seeing that in CHRIST which might answer to all that sinfulness. But as God saw that in CHRIST's death which satisfied him, so you should endeavor to see that worth in it which may satisfy GOD, and then your faith will sit down satisfied also. If a man were to dispute for his life some difficult controversy, wherein are many great and strong objections, he would be sure to study all that might be said on the other part, and to get such a clear and convincing light as might make the truth of his position apparent through those clouds of objections. Now you will all be called one day to dispute for yourselves, (sooner or later,) and therefore such skill you should endeavor to get in CHRIST's righteousness, how in its all-sufficiency and perfection it answers to all your sinfulness; that your hearts may be able to oppose it against all that may be said of any particular about your sins; that in all the conflicts of your spirits, you may see that in it which could clear your whole account with GOD.

SECT. 3
FAITH SUPPORTED BY CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

ROM. 8: 31.

Yea rather, that is risen again.

CHAP. 1

CHRIST's Resurrection supporteth Faith two ways: the necessity of CHRIST's Resurrection for the procuring our Justification.

THE next thing to be looked at in CHRIST, as he is the object of justifying faith, is his resurrection: which serveth to a double use and end in the matter of justification. First, as an evidence to our faith, that God is fully satisfied by CHRIST's death; which his resurrection may give us full assurance of: secondly, it has an influence in our justification itself; yea, and as great an influence as his death had.

1. By way of evidence, although CHRIST's obedience in his life and death affords the whole matter of our justification, and makes up the sum of that price paid for us, so that faith may see a fullness of worth therein, to discharge the debt: yet faith has a comfortable evidence of this from CHRIST's resurrection. This may fully satisfy our faith, that God himself is satisfied, and that he reckons the debt as paid. So that our faith may boldly come to GOD, and call for the bond in, as having Christ's resurrection to spew for it, that the debt is discharged.

2. But this is not all: CHRIST's resurrection has also a real influence in justification. For although the matter of it be wholly the obedience and death of CHRIST; yet the act of pronouncing us righteous by that his obedience both depend upon his resurrection. " If CH RIST be not risen again, ye are yet in your sins, and your faith is in vain:" that is, although you could suppose faith to be wrought in you upon the merit of CHRIST's dying, yet it would be in vain, if CHRIST were not risen again: for your title to justification itself would be void: "Ye were yet in your sins." This is said, because his resurrection was it whereby sins (though satisfied for in his death,) were taken off: which I take to be the meaning also of the apostle, Rom. 4: 25, "He was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification." When the apostle says, " he was delivered for our sins," he means he laid down that which was the price for them, a satisfaction for them; and in that sense, "he died for our sins:" that is, his death stands instead of our death, and so satisfies for sin. But yet still God's justifying us, and his discharge given us from our sins, depends upon his resurrection: "he rose again for our justification." Justification here imports the act of imputation, and reckoning us just, which he had spoken of before, ver. 22, 23, 24. In a word, to the full discharge of a debt, and free ing the debtor, two
things are requisite: 1. The payment of the debt. 2. The cancelling of the bond, or receiving an acquittance for the freeing of the debtor. Now the payment was wrought by CHRIST's death, and the acquittance was at, and by his resurrection.

CHAP. 2
How CHRIST sustained a double Relation; First, of a Surety for us:

Secondly, of a common Person in our stead.

THE better to explain both these, you must consider, that CHRIST stood in a double relation unto God: 1. Of a surety, bound to pay the debt for us, and to save our souls: and, 2. Of a common person, or as an attorney-at-law in our stead. And both these show how the resurrection of CHRIST may support our faith, both by way of evidence, that the debt is paid, and by way of influence that we are thereby acquitted. His being risen, who is our surety, clears the first, and his rising as a common person illustrates the other.

To explain these two relations: 1: A surety is one that undertakes, and is bound to do a thing for another; as, to pay a debt for him, or to bring him safe to such a place; so that when he has discharged what he under-took, then the party for whom he undertook is discharged also. 2. A common person is one who represents, personates, and acts the part of another, by the allowance of the law. So that what he does in the name of the other, that other whom he personates, is by the law reckoned to do. And in like manner, what is done to him, is reckoned as done to the other. Thus, by our law, an attorney appears for another, and money received by him is reckoned as received by him to whom it was due. Thus the giving possession of an estate, and possession taken of land, if done by, and to a man, who is his lawful attorney, stands as good in law unto a man, as if in his own pers on it had been done. So ambassadors for princes represent their masters. What is done to them is reckoned as done to the prince; and what they do according to their commission, is all one as if the prince had done it himself. In like manner the marriages of princes are solemnized by proxy. A common person representing his lord is married to a princess in her father's court; and the marriage is as good as if both princes themselves had performed the rites of it.

To be a common person then is more than simply to be a surety for another; it is a farther thing. And therefore these two relations are to be distinctively considered. Thus an attorney is a different thing from a surety. A surety undertakes to pay a debt for another; but a common person serves to perform any common act, which is to stand as the others act, and as valid, as if he had done it. So that the benefit which is the consequent of such an act shall accrue to him whom he personated. Adam was not a surety for all mankind, he undertook not for them, in the sense before mentioned; but he was a common person representing all mankind; so that what he should do, was to be accounted as if they had done it. Now the better to express and make sure our justification in and by CHRIST, God did ordain CHRIST both to be a surety for us, and also a common person. As CHRIST took all other relations for us; as, of an Husband, Head, Father, Brother, King, Priest, Captain, that so the fullness of his love might be set forth to us, in that which is defective in any one of these relations is supplied and expressed by the other: even thus did God ordain CHRIST to take both these relations, of a surety and common person, in all he did for us; thereby to make our justification by him the more full and legal; and justify (as I may so speak,) our justification itself, or his justifying of us, by all sorts of legal considerations whatever; that whatever the one of these relations might not make good, the other might supply; what fell short in the one, the other might make up; and so we might be most sure never to be condemned.

CHAP. 3
The Evidence of Justification which CHRIST's Resurrection affords to Faith, explained.

I HAVE two things to handle in this chapter: First, how CHRIST was made a Surety for us: Secondly, what the consideration hereof will contribute to that evidence, which faith has from CHRIST's resurrection.

For the first, CHRIST was appointed by GOD, (and him—self also undertook,) to be our Surety. This you have, Heb. 7: 22, " He was made Surety of a better testament," or covenant; namely, of the new. Of this covenant CHRIST is the Eyyu,, the Surety, the Promiser, the Undertaker. It was the manner both of the Jews and Romans to make covenants by striking of hands: and in testaments the heir and executor shook hands, or the executor gave his hand to fulfill it. And the word,"*, is used, not only in promising to pay a debt for another, but also in becoming a pledge for another, to undergo death, or a capital punishment in another's room. And in that famous st ory of friends, namely, Enephenus and Eucritus, Eucritus did [*] willingly become a surety for Euephenus, when condemned to die by Dionysius, the tyrant. This very word is used by Polyenus, the historian of that fact. Now such a Surety every way did CHRIST become unto God for us, both to pay the debt, by undergoing death in our stead, and so to satisfy God; and as the heir to execute his will and testament. He became a Surety of the whole covenant, and every condition in it. He undertook to God to pay our debts for us, and to work in us all that God required should be done by us. And thus to be a Surety, is much more than simply to be an Intercessor or Mediator. God did, as it were, say to CHRIST, What they owe me, I require it all at thy hands. And CHRIST undertook it under the penalty that lay upon us to have undergone. Yea, CHRIST became such a Surety in this for us as is not to be found among men. On earth, sureties are wont to enter into one and the same bond with the creditors, so that the creditor may seize on which of the two he will, whether on the debtor, or on the surety, and so (as usually,) on the debtor first, for him we call the principal; but, in this covenant, God would have CHRIST’s single bond.
Therefore he laid all upon CHRIST, protesting, that he would not deal with us, nor so much as expect any payment from us. This is not the manner of other creditors; they use to charge the debt on both the surety and the debtor: but in this covenant CHRIST's single bond is entered; so that God will have nothing to say to us till CHRIST fails him. He has engaged himself first to require satisfaction at CHRIST's hands, who is our Surety.

Now then, 2. To make use of this notion, for the clearing the point in hand. It might afford us matter of unspeakable comfort, only to hear of CHRIST's having been arrested by God for our debt, and cast into prison, and his bond sued, and an execution or judgment served on him, as the phrases are, Isa. lii. S. For thereby we should have seen how God had begun with our Surety, and that it lay on him to discharge the debt, who was so able to do it. And after this no news could be more welcome to sinners than to have a certain and infallible evidence given, that their Surety had well come off, and had quitted all to satisfaction. Now to evidence this seventh his resurrection; CHRIST is risen: nothing so sure: therefore certainly the debt is discharged, and he has paid it to the full. For God having once arrested CHRIST, and cast him into prison, he could not come forth till he had paid the very utmost farthing. Other debtors may possibly break their prisons; but CHRIST could not have broke through this, for the wrath of the all-powerful God was this prison, from which there was no escaping, no bail. Nothing would be taken to let him go out, but full satisfaction. And therefore to hear that "CHRIST is risen," is come out of prison, is an evidence that God is satisfied. Hence the apostle proclaims a mighty victory obtained by CHRIST's resurrection over death, the grave, and the strength of sin, and cries out, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord!" You may now rest secure, CHRIST is risen, who therefore shall condemn

CHAP. 4

The Influence CHRIST's Resurrection has upon Justification

The influence CHRIST's resurrection has upon our justification depends on two things: the first, in that CHRIST acted the part of a common person, representing us in what he did, and more particularly in his resurrection. The second, in that from this consideration arises not only an evidence to our faith, but a real influence upon our justification.

To prove the first, that instance of Adam serves most fitly. Adam was reckoned as a common person, not standing singly for himself, but representing all mankind: so that what he did was reckoned to his posterity whom he represented: and what was threatened or done to him for what he did, is threatened against his posterity also. Now this man was herein a lively type of CHRIST, as you have it, Rom. 5: 14, "Who was the type of him who was to come." Unto which purpose, the titles the apostle gives CHRIST and Adam, 1 Cor. 15: 47, are exceeding observable; be calls Adam the first man, and CHRIST our Lord, the second man; and both for that very purpose which we have in hand. For, first, he speaks of them as if there had never been before any more men in the world, nor were ever to be any, except these two: and why but because they were both common persons, that had the rest included in them. Adam had all the sons of men born into this world included in himself, who are therefore called earthly men, ver. 48, in a conformity to him the earthly man, ver. 47; and CHRIST, the second man, had all believers, who are called heavenly men, included in him. You see how he sums up the number of all men in two, and reckons but two men in all; these two, in God's account, standing for the rest. And farther observe, that because Adam was a common person the shadow and the type of CHRIST, who was to come after him; therefore he is called the first man, (of these two,) and CHRIST, the second man, as typified by him.

Now if you ask, wherein CHRIST was a common person, representing us, and standing in our stead I answer, in all those conditions wherein he was, in what he did, or befall him, whilst there on earth especially; for he had no other end to come into this world, but to sustain our persons, and to act our parts, and to have what was to have been done to us acted upon him. Thus, first, in their several conditions, they both were common persons: that is, what condition the one or the other was in is to be put upon those whom they represented. So the apostle argues from it, ver. 48, "As is the earthly man, (namely, the first man Adam,) such are the earthly:" namely, earthly men as well as he; because he who is a common person representing them was in his condition but an earthly man. And appositely it follows, "As is the heavenly Man, (namely, the second Man, CHRIST,) such are the heavenly," who pertain to him, because he also is a common person, ordained to personate them.

And as in this place the apostle argues CHRIST to be a common person, as to his condition, by an argument taken from his type Adam; so, secondly, Rom. 5: he argues CHRIST to have been a common person, in his actions which he did on earth; and this also from the similitude of Adam, whom, ver. 14, he makes to have been CHRIST's type. And he speaks of Adam there as a common person, both in respect of what he did, namely, his sin; and also in respect of what befell him for his sin, namely, death and condemnation. And because he was in all these not to be considered as a single man, but as one that was all men, by way of representation; hence, both what he did, they are said to do in him; and what condemnation or death was deserved by his sin, fell upon them all.

1. For what he did: he sinned; and, ver. 12, "All are said to have sinned;" namely, in his sin; yea, and according to those words in the Greek, iv w, you may render that sentence, (and the original bears it, as it is in the margin,.) "In whom all have sinned," namely, in Adam, as in a public person. Their act was included in his, because their persons were included in his. And, 2. For what befell him for sin, that befell them also. Hence, ver. 12, death is, said to pass upon all men; namely, for this, that Adam's sin was considered as theirs, as it there follows. It is said to pass, even as a sentence of death passes upon a condemned malefactor. And, ver. 18, judgment is said to come by that one man's offence, upon all men to condemn nation. Now, in Gen 2: 17, the threatening was. spoken only to Adam.

In the day you eatest thereof you shall surely dye." And, Gen. 3: 19, that sentence seems to pass upon him alone, "Unto dust you shall return." Yet it threatening Adam God threatened them all; and in sentencing Adam to death, he sentenced us also. The curse reached us too:
death passed upon all men then, and therefore death reigns over all, because Adam was in all this a common person representing us; and so all this concerns us, as truly as it did him.

Just so the matter stands in the point of our justification, between CHRIST and believers; for Adam was herein his type. CHRIST was appointed of God as a common person, both in what he did, and in what was done to him: so what he did for us is imputed to us, as if we had done it; and what was done to him, tending to our justification, is reckoned as done to us. Thus when CHRIST died, he died as a common person; when CHRIST arose, he rose as a common person. And by virtue of that communion which we had with him in all those actions of his it is, that now, when we are born again, we do all rise both from the guilt of sin, and from the power of it; even as by virtue of the like communion we had with Adam, we come to be made sinful, when we are first born.

Thus CHRIST in his death was considered as a common person, and God reckoned us dying then, and would have us reckon so also. So Rom. 6: 10, the apostle speaking of CHRIST, says, " In that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, the liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord." And this consideration the apostle suggests, both as the greatest encouragement against resting in imperfect mortification begun, (that yet we may comfort ourselves by faith, as reckoning ourselves wholly dead in CHRIST's death, and so may assure ourselves we shall one day be perfectly dead to sin by virtue of it) and withal, as the strongest motive unto mortification, to attain the highest degree of it: which therefore he carries along in his discourse throughout that whole chapter. " And how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein He that is dead is free from sin;" and how then shall we do the least service to it "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that it might he destroyed." And this communion with CHRIST as a common person, representing them in his death, he there instructs them to be represented and sealed up to them by their baptism: so ver. 3, 4.

Now as this place holds forth CHRIST as a common person in his death representing us; so other places hold forth the like of his resurrection. In 1 Cor. 15: 20, the apostle argues, that believers must and shall arise, because "now CHRIST is risen from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that sleep." The force of this argument is founded upon this consideration, that CHRIST was a common person representing all the rest; and this strongly presented in that expression of his being the first-fruits, in allusion to the rite in the Levitical law. All the sheaves in a field being unholy of themselves, there was one sheaf in the room of all the rest, (which was called the first-fruit,) which was lifted up, and waved before the Lord; and so all the sheaves abroad in the field, by that act done to this one sheaf, were consecrated unto GOD, Lev. 23: 10. " If the first-fruits be holy," says the apostle, " the lump is holy also," Rom. 11: 16. Thus when we were all dead, CHRIST, as the first-fruits, riseth, and this in our stead; and so we all rise with him. It follows, " For as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive." His argument lies thus: Adam was the first-fruits of them that died; CHRIST of them that rise. Hence therefore we are elsewhere said (though in respect to another life,) to be risen with CHRIST, Eph. 2: 5, 6, and (which is yet more,) to sit together with him in heaven: because he, as a common person representing us, sits there in our name and stead.

CHAP. 5

How CHRIST's representing us as a common Person in his Resurrection, has an influence upon our Justification.

The relation of CHRIST to us, as a common person, representing us in his resurrection, has a real influence upon our justification; which I shall make clear by showing two things: 1. That CHRIST himself was justified at his resurrection. And, 2. That he was justified then as a common person, representing us therein.

For the first: As CHRIST sustained our persons in his satisfying for sin by his death; so in his resurrection he was justified and acquitted from our sins, as having in his death satisfied for them. Indeed, when should this ac-quittance from our sins be given to CHRIST, but when he had paid the last farthing of the debt Which was then done, when he began to rise; for his lying in the grave was a part of his humiliation, and so of his satisfaction. Now when he began to rise, then ended his humiliation; and that was the first moment of his exaltation. His ac-quittance therefore bears date from thence, even from that very hour. Hence we read, as that CHRIST was condemned, so that he was justified. Thus, 1 Tim. 3: 16, God is said to he " manifist in the flesh, justified in the Spirit;" that is, whereas God was manifest in flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, so he was justified in the Spirit from all those sins, and received up to glory. And not to go far, the very words of my text, (" It is God that justifies,") are taken out of Isa. 1. 8, 9, where they are spoken by CHRIST of himself. When he gave " his back to the smiters," and was put to death as a condemned man, he comforts himself with this, " He is near that justifies me, who shall condemn" And when was that done, but at his resurrection He was justified by GOD, and declared justified by that resurrection, (as he had been declared condemned by his death,) hence, to be justified is put for his resurrection; for that was a declaration to all the world, that he was justified from all the sins laid to his charge.

In the second place, I am to show that this his justification, at his resurrection, was done to him as the first-fruits, and as a common person bearing our persons, and so in our names: from whence will follow, that all believers have been justified in CHRIST their head, at, or from the time of his resurrection. Now this is proved thus: By the very same reason, that he is said to be the " first-fruits of those that sleep," as representing the rest in his resurrection, upon the same ground he is to be looked at also in this his justification pronounced upon him at his resurrection, even as the first-fruits of them that are justified. And in the same sense, and by the same reason that we are said to be risen with CHRIST, in his resurrection, we must also be said to be justified with him in this his justification, at his resurrection. And indeed, as there is the same reason for the one that there is for the other, (he being a public person in both) so the rule will hold in all other things which God ever does to us, or for us) which are common with CHRIST, and were done to him; that CHRIST was the first-fruits of them all,
and they may be said to have been done in us, or to us, in him, and with him. Yea, whatever God meant to do for us, and in us, whatever benefit he meant to bestow upon us, he did that thing first to CHRIST, and (some way) bestowed the like on him as a common person, that so it might be done to us in our persons in due time, having first been done to him representing our persons; and that by this course taken it might, (when done to us) be effected by virtue of what was first done to him. Thus God meaning to sanctify us, he sanctifies CHRIST first, in him, as a common person, sanctifying us all: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through thy truth," John 17:19. He sanctifies the human nature of CHRIST first, as a common person representing us, so that we may be sure to be sanctified afterwards in our own persons, by means of his sanctification. In like manner for our sakes he was justified in the Spirit; because we were to be justified, and so to be justified first in him, and with him as a common person. Now this rule holds in all blessings else bestowed; for Paul pronounceth of them all, that God "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS," Ephes. 1:3.

In this his being justified, CHRIST must much rather be considered as a common person representing us, than Adam was, in his condemnation. For CHRIST in his own person, as he had no sin, so he had no need of any justification from sin, nor should ever have been condemned; and therefore this must be only in respect unto our sins imputed to him: and so herein he was more purely to be considered as a common person for us, than ever Adam was in his being condemned. For Adam, besides his standing as a common person for us, was condemned in his own person; but CHRIST, in being justified from sin, could only be considered as standing for others. Thus Rom. 5:18, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." He parallels both, only with this difference between Adam's being a common person for us, and CHRIST's being a common person for us, that the condemnation came upon all by a necessary, natural covenant, (for by such a covenant was Adam appointed a common person for us) but CHRIST's being appointed as a common person for us, was by a free gift of grace; and therefore by a free gift it is that the imputation of that which he did, or was done to him, is reckoned ours. As then in Adam all died, when he sinned; so in CHRIST were all just, when he was just. For as in his death CHRIST was a public person for us; so in his resurrection, and in all that was then done to him. And as when he died, the "just was put to death for the unjust;" so when he arose and was justified, the just, that needed no justification, was justified for the unjust.

And hereupon is grounded this triumph of faith here from CHRIST's resurrection, "Who shall condemn It is CHRIST that is risen:" that is, that was justified at his resurrection. For this act was a solemn discharge from all sin and condemnation; it was a legal acquittance given to CHRIST for all our sins, and so to us also, considered as in him. His death was but the satisfaction and payment; but this is the act of absolution.

Yet, lest there be a mistake, let me add this, That it is necessary we be justified in our own persons by faith, (notwithstanding this former act thus legally passed) whereby we lay hold upon what God did thus before for us in CHRIST; for according to the revealed rules of his word, (which he professed to proceed by at the latter day;) there is a curse and a sentence of condemnation pronounced against us, under which we stand till he shall take it off, by giving us faith; unto which he has made the promise of justifying us in our own persons.

**SECT. 4**

FAITH SUPPORTED BY CHRIST'S ASCENSION, AND SITTING AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND.

**ROM. 8:3-1.**

Who is he that condemneth It is CHRIST, (who is even at the right hand of God.)

**CHAP. 1**

How CHRIST's ascension words a farther Degree of Triumph.

I COME next to the third great pillar of faith, CHRIST's being "at God's right hand; and to chew how the consideration hereof may strengthen faith seeking justification. "Who is he that condemneth CHRIST is even at God's right hand;" in the opening of which, I shall show how justification itself depends upon this, and the evidence thereof to us; both which the apostle had here in his eye, and from both which we may derive comfort and assurance.

These two points (CHRIST's sitting at God's right hand, and his interceding for us) are brought in by the apostle, as those which have a redundant force for the justification of believers; that although the two former abundantly served to secure it, yet these two added to the former, do make the triumph of faith more complete, and us "more than conquerors." Nor both this place alone make mention of CHRIST's sitting at God's right hand in its influence upon our justification, and the assurance of faith about it; but you have it to the same end, alleged by that other great apostle, 1 Pet. 3: from ver. 18 to the 22d; and the scope of the two apostles in both places is the same. Here the
resurrection of CHRIST and his sitting at God's right hand are brought in as the ground of this bold challenge and triumph of faith: and there is mentioned the "answer or plea of a good conscience," in a believer justified, which it puts into the court, and opposeth against all guilt; the apostle alleging the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST as one ground of it, ("the answer of a good conscience, by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.") And then further to strengthen this plea of a good con-science, the apostle puts his ascension and sitting at God's right hand into the bill; so it follows, "Who is gone to heaven, and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him;" all which the apostle here expresseth in one word, that CHRIST is even at God's right hand.

The soul has sufficient answer against condemnation, in CHRIST's death and resurrection, though it should stop there; yea, therin can faith triumph, though it went no further. For it can show a full satisfaction given in his death, and that accepted by God for us; and CHRIST acquitted, and we in him. But let it go on, to consider JESUS sitting at God's right hand, and making intercession for us, and then faith will triumph over all accusers, and be more than conqueror; then it comes to "much more shall we be saved by his life," Rom. 5: 10. The meaning is, that if his death had power to pay all our debts, then much more has his life this power; so that his death is but the ground of our faith herein, and the lowest step of this ladder; but these other, are the full triumph of faith. And our spirits should rise, as the apostle here riseth: faith upon these wings may not only fly above all accusation, but even clean out of their sight, and so far above all such thoughts and fears, as that it may reach to a security, that sills are forgotten, and "shall be remembered no more."

What joy was there in the disciples, when they "saw CHRIST risen" John 20: Therefore in the primitive times, it was used as a voice of joy; and to this day the Grecian Christians so entertain each other, at that time of the year, with these words: "The Lord is risen," your Surety is out of prison; but fear not. (As CHRIST said in another case, so say I) what will you say, if you see your Surety ascended up to heaven, and that as "far above angels' and principalities as the heavens are above the earth." Will you not in your faith and hope pro portionably ascend, and have thoughts as far exceeding your ordinary thoughts, as the heavens are above the earth Therefore first view him, as ascending into heaven, ere ever he comes to be at God's right hand, and see what matter of triumph that will afford you; for that you must first suppose, and it is necessarily included, though not expressed here. But that place fore-quoted out of Peter (1 Pet. 3:) gives us both these particulars: 1. His ascension; "who is gone into-heaven;" and 2. His power and authority there; "who is at the right hand, and has all power and authority subject to him." And therefore both may here come into faith's triumph; and that as being included in this one expression.

CHAP. 2

What Evidence for our Justification CHRIST's ascension into Leaven affords, to the consideration of his being a Surety for us.

FIRST consider what was CHRIST's last act, when he was to take his rise, to fly tp heaven, he "blessed his dis-iples," and thereby left a blessing upon earth with them, for all believers, to the end of the world. CHRIST being now to go to execute the eternal office of his priesthood in heaven, as Melchisedek blessed Abraham, and in him all the faithful as in his loins; so did he begin this new part of his priesthood, with blessing the apostles, and in them all believers to the end of the world. This was the last thing that CH RIST did on earth; yea this he did whilst ascending, to show that the curse was gone, and that sin was gone. As if he had said, O my brethren, I have been dead, and in dying made a curse for you; now that curse I have fully removed, and now I can be bold to bless you, and pronounce all your sins forgiven. And as in Abraham, blessed by Melchisedec, all the faithful were blessed; so in the apostles, all believers to come are blessed. As when God blessed Adam and Eve, at the first creation, and in them, blessed all that were to come of them; so CHRIST in blessing them, blessed us, and all that shall believe through their word, to the end of the world. And that they were thus to be considered as common persons, receiving this blessing for us all, appeareth by CHRIST's words then uttered, "I am with you to the end of the world." This is, with you, and all your successors, both ministers and other believers, Matt. 28: 20. And CHRIST herein did, as God did be fore him. When God had done his work of creation, "he looked upon all he had done, and saw that it was good," and he blessed it. Thus did JESUS CHRIST; now "that he had by one offering perfected for ever all believers," he comfortably vieweth and pronounceth them blessed; and so goes to heaven, to keep and enjoy the Sabbath of all there.

Now, secondly, let us see him ascending; and see what comfort that will also afford our faith; towards the per-suasion of justification. The apostles stood gazing on him; and so do you gaze on him by faith, and view him as he is passing into heaven," leading sip, bell, death, and the devil in triumph" at his chariot wheels. And therefore let your faith triumph in a further evidence of justification. "When he ascended up on high, he led captive all our spiritual enemies, that would have captivated us. Now leading of captives is always after a perfect victory. And therefore, whereas at his death he had conquered them, now at his rising scattered them, now at his ascension he leads them captive.

Two triumphing acts were here mentioned: 1. Leading the captives bound to his chariot wheels, as the manner of the Roman triumph was. Now thus did CHRIST deal with our sins, and all other enemies. 2. The giving gifts to men. It was the custom at their triumphs to cast new coins among the multitude; so does CHRIST throw the greatest gifts for the good of men that ever were given. Therefore, "Who shall condemn?" Sins and devils are not only dead, but triumphed over. Compare with this that other place, Colos. 2: 15, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in himself." So I read it, and the Greek bears it, and so it
is in the margin. It is a manifest allusion unto the manner of triumphs among the Romans, even unto two of the most notable parts thereof; the first, spoiling the enemy upon the place: and this was done by CHRIST on the cross, having spoiled them first. He speaks it of the devils, our enemies and accusers. Now CHRIST took away all their power, and spoiled them of all ensigns, weapons and colors, which he did on the place where the battle was fought, namely, on the cross; and having paid the debt, left the bond cancelled ere he stirred off the cross. Having thus spoiled these enemies on the cross, he further makes a public triumphal show of them in his own person, which is a second act; as the manner of the Roman emperors was, in their great triumphs, to ride through the city in the greatest state, and have all the spoils carried before them, and the kings and nobles whom they had taken; and this did CHRIST at his ascension, plainly manifesting, by this open show of them, that he had spoiled and fully subdued them. Did CHRIST, who was your surety; thus triumph Then let your faith triumph likewise; for this was not only done by your surety, but in your stead. The apostle calls for this at our hands here, saying, " We are more than conquerors."

Then, thirdly, see him " entering into heaven." When he comes first to court, after this great undertaking, how does God look on him Is God satisfied with what he has done When a general comes home, there uses to be great observing how the king takes his service. CHRIST as a surety undertook for sinners fully to conquer all our enemies. He was to be perfect through sufferings, and those sufferings to be such "as to perfect us also," Heb. 10: Now behold your Surety is like a conqueror entered heaven. Let that convince you that he has satisfied the debt, and performed his commission.

**CHAP. 3**

What Evidence CHRIST's sitting at God's right Hand,

having been our Surety, words to our Faith for Justification.

As soon as CHRIST was carried into heaven, look, as all " the angels fell down and worshipped him;" so his Father welcomed him, with the highest grace that ever yet was shown. The words which he then spoke, we have recorded, Ps. cx. " Sit you at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." And now, what say you Are ye persuaded yet, that God is satisfied for your sins What superabundant evidence must CHRIST's sitting at God's right hand, give to a doubting heart It argues, first, that CHRIST has perfectly done his work; and that there is no more left for him to do by way of satisfaction. This the word sitting implies. Secondly, it argues that God is as fully satisfied. This his " sitting at God's right hand" implies.

For the first: the phrase of sitting betokens rest, when work is fulfilled. CHRIST was not to return till he had accomplished his work, Heb. 10: The apostle comparing the excellency of CHRIST's sacrifice with those of the priests of the old law, says, that " Those priests stood daily offering of sacrifices, which can never take sins away." Their standing implied, that they could never make satisfaction so as to say, We have finished it. But CHRIST, says he, ver. 12, after he had offered up one sacrifice, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. Mark how he opposeth their standing, to his sitting down. He sat as one who had done his work.

Secondly, his being at God's right hand, as strongly argues that God is satisfied. For if God had not been infinitely well pleased with him, he would never have advanced him so high. And therefore, Heb. 10: 10, 11, 12, this is alleged as an evidence that CHRIST had for ever taken sins away, (which those priests of the law could not do, who therefore often offered the same sacrifice, as ver. 11.) Th at this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; as thereby showing most manifestly, that he had once offered up such a satisfactory sacrifice as had pleased God for ever; and therefore took up his place at God's right hand as an evidence of it.

**CHAP. 4**

What Influence CHRIST's Ascension has on a Believer's Justification,

upon the consideration of CHRIST's being a common Person for us.

WE have thus seen what evidence both CHRIST's ascension, and sitting at God's right hand, afford us for this, that CHRIST being considered as our surety, has undoubtedly subdued our enemies and sins, and satisfied God. Let us now consider further, what influence both his ascending and sitting at God's right hand as an head, and common person for us, have in them towards the working and accomplishment of the salvation of believers. And from the consideration of this, our faith may he yet further strengthened.

1. And first for his ascending; consider, that the great end of this was to prepare and provide a place for us. As Joseph was secretly sent before by God's intendment to prepare a place in Egypt for his brethren; so more openly does CHRIST ascend to heaven, professedly declaring that to be his business; " I go to prepare a place for you," and it is my Father's house, where I can provide for you and make you
welcome. Thus the Captain of our salvation ("being made perfect through sufferings, and through death to be crowned with glory and honor," Heb. 2: 10,) is brought in, saying to God, ver. 13. "Behold I and the children which God has given me;" I am their Captain, and they must follow me; "Where I am they must be:" Lo! I am here, and am not to come alone, but to " bring to glory all the children which you least given me."

2. He entered into heaven in our names, and is to be considered in that act as a common person, (as well as in his death and resurrection) and so representing us, and also taking possession in our right, as a guardian takes possession for heirs under age. Heb. 6: 20, "The forerunner is for us entered into heaven;" the fore-runner for us, that is, our fore-runner. Under the law, the high-priest entered into the holy of holies, with all the names of the tribes on his breast; even so does CHRIST with ours, as a common person in our names; there by showing that we are to come after him: and this is more than simply to prepare a place; it is to take possession of a place, and give us a right thereto. So that you may see yourselves as good as in heaven already; for CHRIST is entered as a common person for you.

Justification has two parts; first, acquittance from sin, and freedom from condemnation; as here, " Who shall condemn" And secondly, justification to life, as it is called, Rom. 5: 18, that is, which gives a title to eternal life. Now the dying and rising of CHRIST as a common person for us, procures the first, sets us perfectly in that state of freedom from condemnation; but his entering into heaven, as a common person, sets us far above that state of non-condemnation; it placeth us in heaven with him. You would thirds yourselves the enough, if you were ascended into heaven. As Heman said, that he was free among the dead; that is, he reckoned himself, in his despair, free of the company in hell, as well as if he had been there; thinking his name had been enrolled there among them, and his place taken up; so you may reckon yourselves (as the word is, Rom. 6, free of the company of heaven, and your places taken up there; so that when you come to die, you shall go to heaven as to your own place, by as true a title, though not of your own, as Judas went to hell, which is called his own place by the apostle.

CHAP. 5

What Influence CHRIST's sitting at God's right hand has upon our Justification, upon the consideration of his being a common Person.

The consideration of CHRIST's sitting at God's right hand may, in respect of the influence, that it must have upon our salvation, yet add more security unto our faith; if we consider the power and authority of the place itself, or the relation he sustains in sitting there. These add strength each to other, both to consider how great a prerogative it is to sit at God's right hand, and that CHRIST possesseth it all as our head, as a common person representing us.

To consider the prerogatives of the place itself. There is imported in it, 1. Sovereignty of power; so CHRIST himself expound eth it, "Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power." And so, Ephes. 1: 20, 22, this is made the privilege of God's setting him at his right hand, ver. 20, that " he has put all things under his feet," ver. 22. A phrase importing the highest sovereignty and power, not used of any creature, angels, or men. None of them have other things under their feet, in so low a subjection as to be their vassals, especially not all things; and therefore by that very phrase, the putting all things under his feet, the apostle argues, that the man, of whom David in the 8th Psalm had spoken, was no other but CHRIST; not Adam, nor the angels; for to neither of these has God subjected all things; and to CHRIST only, who sits in the highest throne of majesty; and has a world of enemies made his foot-stool, even all his enemies, (so Psal. cx.) which is the highest triumph in the world. Now to what end has God committed this power to him, but that him-self may he his own executer, and perform all the legacies which he made to those whom he died for: That this was God's very end of investing CHRIST with this sovereign power, is declared by CHRIST himself, John 17: 2, " You have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him;" and accordingly at his ascension, to comfort his disciples in the fruit of their ministry, Matt. 28: 18, he says, " All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." What holy confidence may this breed in us He is at God's right hand, and we are in his hands, John 10: 28. And all his enemies are under his feet, who then can pull us out Rev. 1: 18, (says CHRIST) " I have the keys of hell and death." The key is still in the scripture phrase the ensign of power and authority. Now CHRIST has both the keys of death, the gate of this world, and of hell, the broad gate of that eternal prison; so that none of his can be fetched out of this world by death, but CHRIST must first open the door; much less can any go to hell without his warrant. Yea, he has the keys of the kingdom of heaven also, to open to whom he will.

By his resurrection, we may rest assured, that he has the keys of death and hell, (for he unlocked the doors, and came out from thence) and by his ascension and sitting at God's right hand, that he has the keys of heaven, whose door he has unlocked, and now set open.

What need we then fear hell, when CHRIST our Redeemer has the keys of it

2. To sit on God's right hand, imports all judgment to be committed to him; for sitting was a posture of judges, a phrase used to signify their authority. So Prov. 20: 8, " A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth the wicked with his eyes," and so does CHRIST his and our enemies. See what CHRIST says, John 5: 21, 22.

The Son of Man raiseth up whom he will; for the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son." Now if he who loved us so, and died for us, be the Judge himself, then " who shall condemn"
In the last place, add, that CHRIST sits there as an head, as a common person, for us. First, as an head: so, Eph. 1: when the apostle had set forth his power, of being advanced unto God's right hand, " far above all principalities and powers, and above every name that is named, not only in this world, but that which is to come," and how God " has put all things under his feet," he adds, and " has given him to be head over all things " to the church. Observe, he is said to sit there over all things, not in his own personal right simply, but as a head to the church. He sits not simply as a son, but as an head; and the sits not as an head without a body, and therefore must have his members up to him; wherefore in the next verse it is added, " which is his body, ye, his fullness;" so that CHRIST is not complete without all his members. He took our flesh, and carried it into heaven, and left us his Spirit on earth, as an earnest that we should follow him.

Nay farther, he is not only said to sit as our head, but we are also said " to sit together with him;" not that CHRIST's being at God's right hand (if taken for that sublimity of power) is communicable to us; that is CHRIST's prerogative only: yet so as that his sitting in heaven is understood to be in our right, and as a common person, and so is to assure us of our sitting there with him in our proportion. So, Rev. 3: 21, it is expressly rendered, " Him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also am set down with my Father on his throne." There is a proportion observed, though with an inequality: we sit upon CHRIST's throne, but he only on his Father's throne; that is, CHRIST only sits at God's right hand, but we on CHRIST's right hand.

SECT. 5

THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH FROM CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

ROM. 8: 3-4. Who also maketh intercession,

CHAP. 1

Intercession one part of CHRIST's Priesthood, and the most excellent part of it.

WE have seen CHRIST " sitting at God's right hand" as a judge and king, having all authority of saving or condemning in his own hands; and having all power in heaven and earth, to give eternal life to them that believe. Let us now come to his intercession, and the influence which it has upon our justification.

If you could suppose there were any thing which none of the three former acts could do for us, yet his intercession could do it to the utmost. If money would purchase our salvation, his death has done it, which he laid down as a price and an equivalent ransom. If power and authority would effect it, his sitting at God's right hand invested with all power in heaven and earth, shall be put forth to the utmost. If favor and entreaties, added to all these, be needful, he will use this also, and for ever nice intercession. So that if love, money, or power, any of them, or all of them) will save us, we shall be sure to be saved, " saved to the utmost," all manner of ways, by all manner of means, saved over and over.

For the clearing of this last general head, the intercession of CHRIST, I shall 1. show how unto all those other acts of CHRIST for us, this of intercession also is to be added, for the effecting our salvation, and the securing our hearts therein. And, The security that faith may assume from this intercession of CHRIST: " Who shall condemn P It is CHRIST that maketh intercession for us." Towards the explanation of the first, two things are to be done. First, To show how necessary and excellent a part of CHRIST's priesthood his intercession is in heaven is. And secondly, To show the peculiar influence that his intercession has upon our salvation. I will proceed in the first by degrees.

First, intercession is one part of CHRIST's priesthood. He is not entered into heaven simply, as a Fore-runner, to take up places for you, but as a Priest also: " made a priest, after the order of Melchizedek." Yea, his sitting at God's right hand is not only as a King armed with power and authority to save us, but he sits there as a Priest too. Thus, Heb. 8: 1, " We have such an high-priest, who is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

In the Levitical priesthood the high-priest's office had two parts; 1. Oblation, or offering the sacrifice with prayer and intercession unto God. The one was done without, the other within the holy of holies. This you may see in many places; especiallyLe-tit. 16: where you have the law about the high-priest's entering into the holy of holies. He was not to come into the holy place within the vail, till first he had offered a sacrifice for himself and the people. Then, when he had killed it, he was to enter with the blood of it into the holy of holies, and sprinkle the mercy-seat therein with it, and to " o with incense, and cause a cloud to arise over the mercy-seat, And this you have also, Heb. 13: 11. It is said, that " the blood of those beasts that were burnt without the camp, was brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest;" and in Lev. 16: you find the atonement made as well by the blood, when brought into the holy place, tier. 16, as by the killing of the beast, vex. 11. Roth these were acts of the high-priesthood for atonement.

In answer to this type, there are two parts of CHRIST's priesthood: 1. The offering himself a sacrifice to death, which answers to the killing of the sacrifice without the holy of holies: for answerably he was crucified without the city, flub. 13: 12. 2. I-le carried this his blood into the holy of holies, namely, the heavens, 1R-b. 9: 12, where he appears, ver. 24, and there also prays in the force of that blood. And the type of those prayers hit,3 the cloud of incense made by the high-priest; so it is expressly interpreted, Rev. 8: 3. The angel, CHRIST, is said to have had " much incense, to offer with the prayers of all the saints," which incense is his own prayers in heaven, which he continually puts up when the saints pray on earth, and so perfumes all their prayers, and procures all blessings for them. Now both these parts of his
priesthood the apostle John mentions in his first Epistle, chap. 2: 2, whets, as he calls JESUS CHRIST a propitiation for our sins, (that is, an oblation, or sacrifice offered up for us;) so likewise he calls him an advocate: both going to make up this his office. And indeed, this latter, of intercession, and bringing his blood into the holy of holies, is but the same action continued. That blood which he offered with tears and strong cries on the cross, (where he likewise interceded,) the same blood he continues virtually to offer up with prayers in the heavens, and makes atonement by both; only with this difference: on earth, though he interceded, yet he more eminently offered up himself; in heaven he more eminently intercedes, and does but present that offering.

Secondly, intercession was so necessary a part of CHRIST's priesthood, that without it he had not been a complete priest. If the high-priest, his type, had only offered sacrifice without the holy of holies, he had not been a perfect high-priest. For to enter into the holy of holies, and to act the part of a high-priest there, was the proper, peculiar work of the high-priest. This shows, that CHRIST would not have been a high-priest, if he had not gone to perform his office in heaven, as well as upon earth. Yea, if CHRIST had not gone to heaven, and were not now become a priest there, then the Levitical priesthood would still be in force. For so long as CHRIST was on earth, though risen, the types of the law held in force, and were not to give way, until all the truth signified by their ministry was fully accomplished; and so, not until CHRIST was gone into heaven as a priest, and there he began to do all that which the high-priest had done in the holy of holies.

Thirdly, the intercession of CHRIST is the height of his priesthood. And this is held forth to us in the types of both these two orders of priesthood that were before his, and figures of him; both that of Aaron and Melchizedek. This was typified in the Levitical priesthood. The highest service of that office was the going into the holy of holies, and making an atonement there. Yea, this was the height of the high-priest's honor, that he did this alone, which did constitute the difference between him and other priests. For they killed and uttered the sacrifices without as well as he; every ordinary priest did that; but none but the high-priest was to approach the holy of holies with blood, and this but once a year. This was that high prerogative of the high-priestly; and answerably the height of our high-priest's office (although he alone also could offer a satisfactory sacrifice) lies in this, that he entered into the heavens by his blood, and is set down on the Majesty on high, and in the virtue of his sacrifice there does intercede.

The excellency of this part of his priesthood was like-wise typified by Melchizedek's priesthood, which the apostle argueth to have been much more excellent than that of Aaron; inasmuch as Levi, Aaron's father, paid tithes to this Melchizedek in Abraham's loins. Now Melchizedek was his type, not so much in respect of his offering of sacrifice on earth, as in respect of that work which he for ever performs in heaven; therefore that same clause, for ever, still comes in, in the mention of Melchizedek's priesthood; because in respect of that his continual intercession in heaven, Melchizedek was properly CHRIST's type.

Yea, to conclude this, all his priesthood Would have been ineffectual, if he had not acted the part of a priest in heaven, by intercession there. For by his death he did but begin the execution of his office; in heaven he ends it. And if he had not fulfilled his office in both, the work of our salvation had not been perfected. Not but that his death was a perfect oblation; (it was perfect for an oblation, to which as such nothing can be added.) But still there remained another action of another kind that was to be added to this of oblation, and that is, intercession or praying for us in heaven. Otherwise our salvation were not perfected. For if this priesthood be imperfect, our salvation then must needs be so. The presenting of his sacrifice in heaven, was the consummation of his priesthood, and the performance of that part there, the perfection of it.

CHAP. 2

The Influence that Intercession has upon our Justification.

I COME now to show the influence that intercession has upon our justification; and the reasons why God ordained this work of intercession in heaven to be joined with his death. The reasons either respect 1: God him -self, who will have us saved so as himself maybe most glorified. Or, 2: his and our salvation; God ordering all the links of this golden chain of the causes of our salvation, as should make our salvation most sure. Or 3: CHRIST himself, whose glory, as the author and finisher of our salvation, of our faith and justification, is to be continued throughout.

The first sort of reasons respect God himself. God having two attributes eminently to glorify, his justice and his free grace, it was meet that there should be two eminent actions of CHRIST's priesthood, wherein he should apply himself to each. And accordingly in his death he satisfies the demands of justice, by laying down a sufficient price; and in his intercession he treats free grace; and thus both come to be alike acknowledged. Lev. 4: "Let us be encouraged to "come boldly to the throne of grace," because we "have an high priest entered into the heavens." Observe how it is called, a throne of grace, which our high-priest now in heaven officiates at. It is so called, because his priesthood there has to do with free grace chiefly. It is a throne of grace, and so to be sued unto; therefore he treaties with God by way of intercession. Of this throne of grace in heaven, the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was the type. And as the high-priest was, to enter into the holy of holies by blood, so with incense also, (that is, prayer,) to show, that heaven is not opened by mere justice, or bringing only a price in hand for it; but by grace also, and that must be entreated. Yea, and justice itself. There was enough in CHRIST's death to satisfy it; yet, having been wronged, it stood thus far upon it (as those to whom a debt is due, use to do,) namely:, to have the money brought home to God's dwelling-house, and laid down there. God will not only be satisfied, and have a sufficient ransom paid, as at CHRIST's death, but CHRIST must come and bring it into heaven. Justice will be paid it upon the mercy-seat. For so in the type the blood was to be carried into the holy of holies, and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. And therefore his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, were but as the breaking through all enemies, and subduing them, to the end to bring this price or satisfaction to the mercy-seat.
The second sort of reasons why God ordained CHRIST's intercession to be joined to his death, are taken from what is the best way to effect our salvation, and secure our hearts therein. First in general: God would have salvation made sure, and us saved all manner of ways. 1. By ransom and price, (as captives are redeemed) which was done by his death, which of itself was enough. 2. By power anti rescue; so in his resurrection, and ascension, and sitting at God's right hand, which also was sufficient. Then 1: Again my intercession, a way of favor and en-treaty; and this likewise would have been enough, but God would e all ways concur in it; whereof notwithstanding not one could fail; a threefold cord, whereof each twine were enough, but altogether must of necessity hold.

Secondly, the whole application of his redemption has a special dependence upon his intercession. This all divines attribute unto it, whilst they put this difference between the influence of his death, and that of his intercession on our salvation; calling his death the means of obtaining it for us; but his intercession, the means of applying all unto us. CHRIST purchasest salvation by the one, but pos sess'd us of it by the other. One leading instance to slew that his intercession was to be the applying cause of salvation, was given by CHRIST whilst he was on earth, thereby manifesting what was to be done by him in heaven. When he was on the cross, offering that great sacrifice for sin, he joined prayer; for the justification of those who crucified him, " Father forgive them, for they know not what they do;" so fulfilling that word, Isa. H. 12, " Me bare the sins of many, and made inter-cession for the transgressors." And the efficacy of that prayer was the cause of the conversion of those three thousand, Acts Ai. whom the apostle had expressly charged with the crucifying of Christ; "wh om ye," says he, " by wicked hands have taken, and slain." These were the first fruits of his intercession, whose prayers still reap the harvest, which in all ages is to grow rap unto God on earth!

Thirdly, and more particularly, as the whole application in general, so our justification, in the whole progress of it, depends upon CHRIST's intercession. 1. Our first justification (which is given us at our first conversion) depends upon CHRIST's intercession. Ther efore, in the forementioned prayer on the cross, the thing he prayer] for was forgiveness: " Father forgive them." Our being justified by faith, and receiving the atonement, depends upon CHRIST's intercession; and it was typified by Moses sprinkling the people with blood; which thing JESUS CHRIST, as a mediator and priest, does now from heaven: for bleb. 12: 14, it is said, " You are come so JESUS, the Mediator of the new covenant, and," (as it is neat sub-joined,) " to the blood of sprinkling." He shed his blood on the cross on earth, but he sprinkleth it now as a priest from heaven. Yet let me add that though this our first justification is to be ascribed to his intercession, yet more eminently intercession is ordained for the accomplishing our salvation, and this other more rarely in the Scripture attributed thereunto. 2. The continuation of our justification depends upon CHRIST's living ever to intercede. We owe our standing in grace every moment, to his sitting in heaven, and interceding every moment. There is no fresh act of justification goes forth, but there is a fresh act of intercession. And as thou God created the world once for all, yet every moment he is said to create, every new act of providence icing a new creation; so likewise, to justify continually, through his continuing free grace to justify us at first; and this CHRIST does by continuing his intercession. CHRIST continues a priest for ever, and so we continue to be justified for ever. 3. There is hereby a fall security given us of justification to be continued for ever. The danger either must he in old sins coming into remembrance; or else from sins newly committed. Now, first, God hereby takes order, that no old sins shall come lip into remembrance; and to that end it was that he placed CHRIST as his remembrancer for us. As God ordained the rainbow in the heavens, that when he looked on it he might re-member his covenant, never to destroy the world again by water; so he has set CHRIST as the rainbow about his throne. Secondly, As by reason of intercession, God re-members not old sins, so likewise he forgives new. What CHRIST did on earth, does more especial procure reconciliation for sins which we do in the state of nature; but sins which we commit after conversion (though pardoned also by his death) yet the pardon of them is more especially attributed to his life and intercession. So St. John: " If any man," (that is, if any believer,) sin, we have an advocate with the Father:" so that intercession principally serves for sins committed after grace received. Not but that sins after conversion are taken away by CHRIST's death, and sins before it by his intercession also; for CHRIST interceded for those who crucified him, and by that intercession, those three thousand were converted; yet more eminently the work of reconciliation for sins before conversion, is attributed to his death; and for sins after conversion, to his intercession.

A third sort of reasons why God ordained this work of intercession to accomplish our salvation by, respect CHRIST himself; "That all might honor the Son even as they do the Father." For his glory, after all that he had done for us here below, God ordained this work of intercession in heaven. Therefore, when he had done all that was to be done on earth, as appertaining unto the merit of our salvation, he appoints this full and perpetual work in heaven, for the applying and possessing us of salvation, and that as a priest, by praying and interceding in the merit of that one oblation of himself. God would not have him continue to be a priest in title only, or in respect only of past service; but to have a perpetual spring of honor by new work, and employment in that office, that so his honor might be for ever; consecrated or perfected for evermore. For the same reason it became him that the whole work of our salvation, and every part of it, should be so ordered, that he should have as great a hand in every part of it, even to the laying the top stone, as he had in laying the first foundation. And this is expressed, Heb. 12: 2. " Looking to JESUS the author and finisher of our faith." We are to look at his dying, as that which is the beginning of our faith; and at his sitting at God's right hand, as an Intercessor, for the finishing it; and so of our final salvation; that thus he might be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; to whom be glory for ever.

CHAP. 3

The great Security the consideration of CHRIST's Intercession affords to Faith, for our Justification.

I come next to slim what strong grounds of security our faith may raise from CHRIST's intercession for us, in the point of justification: " Who shall condemn? It is CHRIST that intercedes: and herein, 1. What assurance, by way of evidence, this does afford. 2. What powerful influence this must be of.

First, that CHRIST intercedes, is a strong evidence to our faith: 1: From the very intent of the work of intercession, and what it is ordained by God to effect. The immediate end of CHRIST's intercession, is the actual salvation of believers. The end of his death is purchasing a right unto salvation; but of intercession, the very saving us actually. To this purpose, observe how the Scripture speaks concerning
CHRIST's death, Heb. 9: 12, " He entered into heaven, having obtained redemption:" that is, by way of right, by procuring a full title to it. But of his intercession it says, Heb. 7: 12, that by it CHRIST is able " to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him;" that is, actually to save, and put them in possession of happiness. That is the end and scope of intercession. Now what security doth this afford for to be saved (in the highest sense) is more than to be justified. It is the actual possessing us of heaven. To obtain the demerits of our sins was the perfection of his death; but to save our souls is the end and perfection of his intercession. Our sins are the object of the One, and our souls of the other. To that end his intercession added to his death, that we might not have a right to heaven in vain, of which we might be dispossessed. Now, therefore, upon this ground, if CHRIST should fail of any believer's salvation, this work of his would fall short of its perfection. That place in plae 7: says, not only that CHRIST v4 ill do his utmost to save, but that he will " save to the uttermost." So then our comfort is, if CHRIST approve himself to be a perfect priest, we who come to God by him must be perfectly saved.

Besides, the scope of this work itself, which CHRIST, " as a perfect priest, has undertaken; there is, 2. A farther consideration, namely, the end of JESUS CHRIST himself, 5: ho lives in heaven, on purpose to intercede for us, that argues himself engaged by a stronger obligation, he interceding as a surety. He was not only a surety on earth in dying, but he is a surety in heaven by interceding. This you may find to be the scope of Heb. 7: 22, although it holds true of all parts of his office, yet the mention there of his being a surety, does in a more special manner refer to his intercession, as appears both by the words before and after. In the words before, ver. 21, the apostle sp eaks of his priesthood for ever, and subjoins, ver. 22, " by so much was JESUS made a surety of a better testament; and then, after he discoursed of his intercession, and his continuing a priest for ever in that work; so, ver. 23, 24, 25, " Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost, seeing he ever lives to make intercession." Yea, he is therefore engaged to save to the utmost, because even in interceding he is a surety.

He was a surety on earth, and is a surety in heaven; only with this difference: on earth he was a surety to pay a price so sufficient as should satisfy God's justice; (which having paid, he was discharged of that obligation, and his bond for that was cancelled;) but still he remains a surety, bound in another obligation as great, even for the bringing to salvation those believers for whom he died; for their persons remained still unsaved, though the debt was then paid; and till they are saved, he is not quit of this sureanship and engagement.

CHAP. 4

The Prevalency of CHRIST's Intercession demonstrated, from the Greatness of CHRIST, and his Favor with God.

WE have heard what support to our faith (by way of evidence) this must afford, that CHRIST intercedes. Let us consider now, wh at further assurance will arise to our faith, from the influence which CHRIST's intercession must needs have, to effect and carry on our salvation. The work of intercession being effectually to procure our salvation, the influence it has must needs he in that prevalency, which this intercession of CHRIST has with GOD, to obtain any thing at his hands., Now to raise our apprehensions, how prevalent this intercession must be, let us consider both the person interceding, namely, CHRIST; and the person with whom CHRIST intercedes, which is God; the one the Son, the other the Father; and so the greatness of CHRIST with GOD, and the graciousness of God to CHRIST; together with the unity of affection in them both. So that CHRIST will be sure to ask nothing which his Father will deny; and his Father will not deny a ny thing which he shall ask.

Now first for the greatness of CHRIST, the intercessor; that is, his greatness with God the Father. This is often urged in this epistle to the Hebrews, to persuade confident in us. It was the greatness of his person, which puts such an influence into his death, that it was a price more than enough to satisfy justice. And the greatness of his person must needs have as much influence to make intercession prevalent. In a matter of intercession, the character and dignity of the person that intercedes prevails more than any other consideration whatever. We see what great friends procure with but a word speaking, even that which neither money nor any thing else could have obtained. Now CHRIST must needs be great with God in many respects.

First, in respect of the nearness of his alliance to him. He is the natural Son of GOD, God of God; and therefore certain to prevail with him. Intercession is a carrying on our salvation in a way of grace and favor, as his death was by way of satisfaction: and answerably it may he observed in the Scripture, that as the all-sufficiency of the satisfaction of his death, is still put upon his being GOD, and so upon the greatness of his person considered in respect of his nature or essence; so the prevalence of his intercession is founded upon the nearness of his relation unto GOD, his alliance to him, and the being his Son. Thus, when redemption is spoken of, the sufficiency of the price is eminently put upon his Godhead; the blood of God. And answerably, when the apostle speaks of the prevailing of his intercession in heaven, he puts it upon his Sonship. JESUS the Son; he mentions the nearness of the relation of his person to GOD, as being that which draws with it that great respect, favor, and grace, he being by this great with GOD, as great in himself. How effectual must the intercession of such a Son be, who is so great a Son of so great a Father, equal with him, and the express image of his person. Never any soul died for the world, and in such a transcendent manner a son, as the relation of sonship among men is but a shadow of it! CHRIST is one with the Father, as himself often speaks; and therefore if his Father should deny him any thing, he should then cease to be one with him; he must then deny himself, which God can never do. He is in this respect the Beloved, as on whom (originally and primarily) all the beams of God's love do fall. Solomon, the type of CHRIST, was "the Beloved of GOD," 2 Sam. 12: 24. And to show how beloved he was, GOD, when he first came into his kingdom, bid him " ask what he should give him," 1 Kings 3: 5. Now the like God says to CHRIST when come first to his kingdom also, Psal. 2: 8, "Ask of me, and I will give thee;" namely, when " he had set him as King on his holy hill," ver. 6. And of him he says, " This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear him." God bids us therefore hear him; and that speech was but the echo of his own heart, in that he himself is so well-pleased with him, that he will hear him in every thing. How prevalent then must CHRIST's intercession be, though there were nothing else to be considered.
And he intercedes not only as a Son, (and in that respect a priest for ever) but also as a Son who has been obedient to his father, and has done for his sake the greatest service, and that the most willingly that ever was done. Though he was a Son, yet he was to be obedient also, and thereby to become in a further respect a perfect high-priest; even in respect of service done, and obedience performed. And through his obedience, “he be-came the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, called of God an high-priest for ever.” That there-fore which makes him more sure to prevail, is his obedience and service done; and this also were enough to carry any thing. Accordingly, you find CHRIST himself urging this his obedience, as the foundation of requests for us. So in that last prayer, John 17: (which is as it were a pattern of his intercession for us in heaven) he says, “I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work you gayest me,” ver. 4. And whereas two things may be distinctly considered, in that his obedience. 1. The worth of it, as a price in the valuation of justice. 2. The desert of favor and grace with GOD, which such an obedience might in a way of kindness expect to find at his hands: you may for your comfort consider, that besides what the worth of it, as a price, might exact of justice itself between two strangers, he has moreover deserved thus much grace and favor with his Father, and in that his obedience was done for his sake. That therefore his Fath er should hear him in all the requests that ever he should make; yea so transcendent was the obedience which he did to his Father, in giving himself to death at his request, that he can never out-ask the merit of this his service. And (which may yet further encourage us) he has nothing left for himself; for he has need of no-thing. So that all his favor remains entire, to he laid forth for sinners, and employed for them. And all he can ask for them is less, yea far less, than the service which he has done to GOD comes to: our lives, and pardon, and salvation, these are not enough: they are too small a requital. So that besides his natural grace, and interest which he has with his Father, as he is his Son, this his acquired favor by his obedience must needs make him prevail, seeing it can never be requited to the full.

CHAP. 5

The Prevalency of CHRIST's Intercession demonstrated from the Righteousness of the Cause he pleads.

BESIDES grace and favor, CHRIST can also plead justice, and is able so to carry the point for us. So you have it, 1 John 2: 2, ” We have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous.” An advocate has place only in a cause of justice, and this CHRIST's advocateship is executed by pleading his own satisfaction. So it follows, ” who is a propitiation for our sins,” and can plead his own righteousness so far, that justice itself shall be fain to save the worst of sinners. He can turn justice itself for them so, that justice shall be as forward to save them, as any other attribute. So that if GOD be said to be righteous in forgiving us our sins, if we do but confess them, much more when ” JESUS CHRIST the righteous” shall intercede for them.

My purpose is not to insist upon the demonstration of that all-sufficientfulness that is in CHRIST's satisfaction, such as may in justice procure our pardon and salvation; but on two things, which are proper to this head of intercession. 1. That there is, even in respect to GOD's justice, a powerful voice of intercession attributed unto CHRIST's blood; and how prevalent that must needs be in the ears of the righteous GOD. And, 2. Especially when CHRIST himself shall join with that cry of his blood, himself appearing and interceding in the strength of it.

For the first, the apostle (Heb. 12: 24,) does ascribe a voice, an appeal, an intercession unto the blood of CHRIST in heaven. ” The blood of sprinkling (says he) speaks better things than the blood of Abel.” He makes CHRIST's blood an advocate to speak for us, though CHRIST himself was silent. Many other things are said to cry in Scripture, but blood has the loudest cry of all, in the ears of the Lord of Hosts, the Judge of all the world. Neither has any cry the ear of GOD's justice more than that of blood.” The voice of thy brother's blood (says God to Cain) cries unto me from the ground,” Gen. 4: 10. Now in that speech of the apostle, is the allusion made unto the blood of Abel, and the cry thereof. And he illustrates the cry of CHRIST's blood for us, by the cry of that blood of Abel against Cain in; it ” speaks better things than the blood of Abel.” CHRIST's blood calls for greater good things to be bestowed on us, for whom it was shed, than Abel's blood did for evil things against Cain, by whom it was shed. For look how loud the blood of one innocent cry for justice against another that murdered him; so loud will the blood of one righteous (who by the appointment of a supreme Judge, has been condemned for another) cry for his release. And the more righteous he was, who laid down his life for another, the louder still is that cry, for it is made in the strength of all that worth which was in him whose blood was shed. Now, to set forth the power of this cry of CHRIST's blood, let us compare it with that cry of Abel's blood in these two things, where in it will be found infinitely to exceed it in force and loudness.

First, even the blood of the wickedest man on earth, if wickedly shed, does cry against him who murdered him. Had Abel murder ed Cain, Cain's blood would have called upon GOD's justice against Abel. But Abel's blood, (there is an emphasis in that) Abel's, who was a saint, his blood cries according to the worth that was in him. Now ” Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,” and the blood of one of them cries louder than the blood of all mankind besides. From this I argue, if the blood of a saint cries so, what must the blood of the King of Saints if the blood of one member of CHRIST's body, what will then the blood of the head, of far more worth than that whole body How does it fill heaven and earth with outcries, until the promised intent of its shedding be accomplished And look how the blood of Abel cried for the condemnation of Cain, so does CHRIST's blood for our pardon; and so much the louder, by how much his blood was of more worth than Abel's was.

But, 2. CHRIST's blood has a further advantage over Abel's blood; for that cried but from earth, where it lay shed, and that but for an answerable earthly punishment on Cain, as he was a man upon the earth; but CHRIST's blood is carried up to heaven. And this is intimated in this place also; for all the particulars, (of which this is one) whereto he says the saints are come, they are all in heaven; neither names he any other than such. And then adds, ” And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks,” as a thing both speaking in heaven, and be-
sprinkled, wherewith heaven is all besprinkled, as the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was, because sinners are to come thither. This blood therefore cries from heaven;

it is next unto GOD, who sits Judge there; it cries in his very ears; whereas the cry of blood from the ground is further off; and so, though the cry thereof may come up to heaven, yet the blood itself comes not up thither, as CHRIST's already is. Abel's blood cried for vengeance to come down from heaven; but CHRIST's blood cries us up into heaven; like to that voice, " Come up hither: Where I am, let them be," for whom this blood was shed. It is true, the voice and intercession of his blood apart considered, is but metaphorical, (I grant,) and yet real; such a voice as those groans are that are attributed to the whole creation, Rom. 8: 22. Bat intercession, as an act of CHRIST himself, joined with this voice of his blood, is most properly and truly such.

Therefore, in the second place, add to this CHRIST's own intercession, that CHRIST by his own prayers, seconds this cry of his blood; that not only the blood of CHRIST does cry, but that CHRIST himself, being alive, does join with it. And how forcible and prevalent must all this be supposed to be The blood of a man slain does cry, though the man remain dead; even as of Abel it is said, (though to another purpose,) " that being dead, he yet speaketh," Heb. 11: but CHRIST liveth and appeared. He follows the suit, pursues the cry of his blood himself. His being alive puts a life into his death, adds an infinite acceptance to it with GOD, and moves him the more to hear the cry of his blood, and to regard it.

To illustrate this by the former comparison: If as Abel's blood cries, so also Abel's soul lives to cry; how doubly forcible must this be! And thus indeed you have it, Rev. 6: 9, where it is said, that " the souls of them which were slain for the testimony which they held, cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holiest and true, dust you not avenge our blood Yea, to do all that God himself ever means to do, or all that God desires to do. And certainly, if his Father has been so gracious to him as to bestow so high and absolute a sovereignty on him, his purpose was never to deny CHRIST any request; else he would never thus have advanced the human nature. God having placed CHRIST on his throne, bids him ask even to the whole of his kingdom; for God has made him a King, sitting on his throne with him; not to share halves, but to have all power in heaven and earth: "He has committed all judgment to the Son," to save and condemn whomsoever he will; and so far as the kingdom of God is extended, he may do any thing. So, John 5: 21, "As the Father raiseth up the dead, so the Son quickeneth whom he will; for as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself," ver. 26. So that CHRIST's will is as free, and himself as absolute a Monarch and King as God himself is.

Now, then, if He who is King, and does of himself command all that is done, as absolutely as God himself doth; if He, over and above, to honor his Father, will ask all that himself has power to do, what will not be clone He asks, who can command the thing to be done: and yet, as he must ask ere the thing be done; so if he ask, it must needs be granted. If he who has so much power, will join the force of entreaty with a Father that so loves him; if He, who is "the Word of his Father," that commands, creates, and upholds all, will speak a word for us, and ask all that he means to do; how forcibly will such words be Therefore, observe CHRIST's manner of praying, John 17: " Father, I will that they, whom you have given me, be where T am." He prays like a King, who is in joint commission with God. If God puts that honor upon our prayers, that we are said " to have power with God as Jacob," Hos. 12: 3, that if God be never so angry, yet by " ta king hold of his strength," we,-hold his hands, as Isai. 27: 5. That GOD cries out to Moses, like a man whose hands are held, "Let me alone," Exod. xxii. 10; yea, that he accounts it as a "command;" (so he styles it, Isai. xiv. 11, "command ye me;" so unable is he to go against it;) then how much more dothes JESUS CHRIST's intercession bind God's hands, and command all in heaven and earth

Now, that you may see a reason of this, know that this Father and this Son, though two persons, have yet but one will, and one power: " My Father and I are one," says CHRIST. So, if God deny him, he must deny himself, which the apostle tells us he cannot do. 2 Tim. 2: 13. And so in the same sense that God is said " not to have power to deny himself," in the same sense it may be said, he has not power to deny CHRIST what he asks. Therefore God might well make him an absolute King, and entrust him with all power; and CHRIST might well oblige himself, notwithstanding this power to ask all that he means to do; for they have but one will and one power; so that our salvation is made sure by this on all hands. "I come," says CHRIST, "not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me; and his will is, that I shall lose none of all those whom he has given me," John 6: 38, 39. And therefore, " who shall condemn It is CHRIST that intercedes," As "who shall resist God's will?" So, who shall resist CHRIST's intercession God himself cannot, no more than he can gainsay, or deny himself.
CHAP. 7

The Prevalency of CHRIST's Intercession demonstrated from the Graciousness of the Person with whom he intercedes, considered first as he is the Father of CHRIST himself.

WE have seen the greatness of the Person interceding, and many considerations from thence, which may persuade us of his prevailing efficacy for us. Let us now consider the graciousness of the Person with whom he intercedes, which the Scripture does distinctly set before us, to the end that in this great matter our joy may every way be full. Thus, in 1 John 2: 1, when, for the comfort of believers, the apostle reminds them of CHRIST's intercession, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous; (mentioning therein the power and prevalency of such an Advocate, through his own righteousness;) and the more fully to assure us of his success, he adds, "an Advocate with the Father." He suggests the gracious disposition of him upon whose will our case ultimately depends, as affording a new comfort; even as great as does the righteousness and power of the Person interceding. He says not, "with God only," but "with the Father." And that his words might afford the more full matter of confidence, he says not only,"an Advocate with his Father," (though that would have given much assurance,) or with your Father, (though that might afford much boldness;) but with the Father, as intending to take in both; to ascertain us of the prevailing efficacy of CHRIST's intercession from both.

You have both these elsewhere more distinctly mentioned, John 20: 17, "I go to my Father, and your Father," says CHRIST. This was spoken after all his disciples had forsaken him, and Peter had denied him. When CHRIST himself would send them the greatest cordial, what was it Go tell them, (says he,) not so much that I have satisfied for sin, overcome death, or am risen; but that I ascend. For in that which CHRIST does for us being ascended, lies the height of our comfort. And whereas he might have said, (and it had been matter of unspeakable comfort,) I ascend to heaven, and so where I am, you shall be also; yet he chose rather to say, "I ascend to the Father," for that contained the foundation of their comfort; even that relation of God's, with which CHRIST was to deal after his ascending, for them. And because when, before his death, he had spoken of his going to his Father, their hearts had been troubled, John 14: 28; therefore he here distinctly adds, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." He had in effect spoken as much before, in the words fore-going, "Go, tell my brethren:" but that was only implicitly; therefore more plainly and explicitly he says it, for their further comfort, "I go to my Father and your Father." Thus he utters forth at once, the bottom, the depth of all comfort, the sum of all joy; than which the gospel knows no greater, can go no higher. So that if CHRIST should intend at this day to send good news from heaven to any of you, it would be but this, "I am here, an Advocate, interceding with my Father and your Father." All is spoken in that. Even He could not speak more comfort, who is the God of comfort. Now, therefore, let us apart consider these two relations, that CHRIST is ascended, and intercedes with his own Father, and with our Father.

First, CHRIST intercedes with his Father, who neither will nor can deny him anything. To confirm this, you have a double testimony, and of two of the greatest witnesses in heaven; both a testimony of CHRIST's own, whilst he was on earth; and God's own Word also declared, since CHRIST came to heaven. The first you have, John 11: whilst CHRIST was here on earth. When he came to raise Lazarus, he says, "Father, I thank thee, that you have heard me! (ver. 41;) and I know that you hearest me always," ver. 42. Thus he was never more comforted, who is the God of comfort. And because CHRIST was newly come to heaven, let us hear God himself speak. When he came first to heaven, God said to him, "Sit you on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." And before CHRIST opened his mouth by way of any request to GOD, (which was the office that he was now to execute,) GOD himself prevented him, and added, "You art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:" as if he had said, I know you wilt ask me now for all that you have died for; and this I promise, you shall ask nothing but it shall be granted. Then what will not CHRIST (so great a Son, even equal with his Father,) prevail for, with his Father and for his brethren? Be their case, for the time past, never so desperate, be there never so many threatenings gone out against them, never so many precedents and examples of men condemned before for the like sins, yet CHRIST will prevail against them all.

And now he is come to heaven, let us hear God himself speak. When he came first to heaven, God said to him, "Sit you on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." And before CHRIST opened his mouth by way of any request to GOD, (which was the office that he was now to execute,) GOD himself prevented him, and added, "You art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:" as if he had said, I know you wilt ask me now for all that you have died for; and this I promise, you shall ask nothing but it shall be granted. Then what will not CHRIST (so great a Son, even equal with his Father,) prevail for, with his Father and for his brethren? Be their case, for the time past, never so desperate, be there never so many threatenings gone out against them, never so many precedents and examples of men condemned before for the like sins, yet CHRIST will prevail against them all.

CHAP. 8

The Power of CHRIST's Intercession demonstrated, in that he intercedes with GOD, who is our Father.

IN the second place, CHRIST is an Advocate for us with our Father. You may perhaps think there is little in that; but CHRIST puts much upon it. John 16: 26, 27, "At that day, (says CHRIST,) you shall ask in my name, and I say not to you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loves you." At that day, the day he means, through this whole chapter, is that time when the Holy Ghost should be shed upon them. And his scope is, as in the highest manner to promise them that he would pray for them; so, further to tell them for their more abundant assurance, that, besides his prayers, God himself "so loved them," that indeed that alone were enough to obtain any thing at his hands, which they should but ask in his name; and the truth is, that God took us up as vast a love unto us of himself at first, as ever he has borne since. And all that CHRIST does for us is but the expression of that love which was originally in God's own heart. Thus we find, that
out of love, he gave CHRIST for us: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to die." Yea, CHRIST's death was but a means to commend or set forth that love of his unto us. CHRIST adds not one drop of love to God's heart: only draws it out, and makes it flow forth; his heart is as ready to give all to us, as CHRIST is to ask, and this out of his pure love to us.

Let us now look round, and take a full view of all those particulars that CHRIST has done and does for us, and the several joint influence which they have upon our salvation. 1. In that CHRIST died, it assures us of a perfect price paid for, and a right to eternal life thereby acquired. 2. In that he rose again as a common person, this assures us yet further, that there is a formal act of justification passed and enrolled in the court of heaven; and that in his being then justified, all believers were also justified in him. 3. CHRIST's ascension into heaven, is a further act of his taking possession of heaven for us. He then formally entering upon that our right in our stead: which is a further confirmation of our salvation. 4. Therefore he sits at God's right hand, which imports his being invested with all power in heaven and earth to give and apply "eternal life to us." 5. And last of all, there remains his intercession to complete our salvation. As CHRIST's death and resurrection were to procure our justification; so his sitting at God's right hand and intercession are to procure salvation; and by faith we may see it done, and behold our souls not only sitting in heaven in CHRIST, a common person sitting there in our right, as an evidence that we shall come thither; but also, through CHRIST's intercession begun, we may see ourselves actually possessed of heaven.

CHAP. 9

Some Encouragements for weak Believers, from CHRIST's Intercession.

Fort a conclusion, I will add a brief use and encouragement to him who is discouraged from coming to CHRIST. And I shall confine myself to those most comfortable words which the apostle has uttered concerning CHRIST's intercession: "Wherefore he is able to save to the utmost those that come to God by him; seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them."

Let not the want of assurance that God will save thee, or that CHRIST is thine, discourage thee, if you have but a heart to come to God by CHRIST to be saved, though you know not whether he will yet save thee, or not. Go out of thyself, and rest in nothing in thyself. Come unto God through CHRIST for salvation, though with trembling. Unto God: for he is the ultimate object of our faith, and the Person with whom we have to do in believing, and from whom we are to receive. Salvation, if ever we obtain it. Come unto God by CHRIST: which phrase is used in allusion to the worshippers of the Old Testament; who, when they had sinned, were directed to go to God by a priest, who made an atonement for them. Now CHRIST is the great and true High Priest, "by whom we have access to the Father," Ephes. 2: 18. The word is, a leading by the hand. Host you not know how to appear before GOD, or to come to him Conte first to CHRIST, and he will take thee by the hand and lead thee to his Father. Come unto God by CHRIST for salvation. Many a poor soul is apt to think that in coming to God by faith, it must not aim at itself, or its own salvation: Yes, it may, for that is here made the business which faith has with God in coming to him; and this is secretly couched in these words. For the apostle, speaking of the very aim of the heart in coming on purpose, mentions CHRIST's ability to save: "He is able to save." Come you therefore unto CHRIST, as to save thee through his death past, and by the merit of it, so for the present, and for the time to come, to take thy cause in hand, and to intercede for thee. It is a great relief unto a weak soul, that God has left CHRIST this work yet to do for us. So that the intercession of CHRIST may afford matter to a weak faith to throw itself upon CHRIST to perform it for us.

2. Nov, if such a soul ask, "But Nvill CHRIST, upon my coming to him for salvation, intercede for me, and under-take my cause?" I answer it out of those words, "He lives to intercede for them who come to God by him." He lives on purpose to perform this work; it is the end of his living, the business of his life. And as he received a commandment to die, and it was the end of his life on earth; so he has received a command to intercede for all that come to God by him. God has appointed him to this work by an oath: "He swears, and will not repent, thou shall be a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

3. If thy soul yet fear the difficulty of its own particular case, in respect of the greatness of thy sins, and the circumstances thereof, or any consideration whatsoever which to thy view does make thy salvation an hard suit to obtain: the apostle adds, "He is able to save to the utmost," (whatever thy cause be,) and this through his intercession. The same word, "to the utmost," is a good word, and well put in for our comfort. Consider it therefore, for it extends itself so far that you can not look beyond it. Let thy soul be set upon the highest mount that ever any creature was yet set upon; and which is enlarged to take in the most spacious prospect both of sin and misery; and all the difficulties of being saved that ever any poor humbled soul did cast within itself; yea, join to these all the objections and exceptions you can, lay all the bars in thy way that are imaginable; yet know that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee."

4. Again, consider but what it is that CHRIST, who has by his death done enough to save thee, does yet further for thee in heaven. If you thoughtest you hadst all the saints in heaven and earth jointly concurs in prayers to save thee; how wouldest thou be encouraged? One word out of CHRIST's mouth will do more than all in heaven and earth could do: And what is there then which we may not hope to obtain through his intercession for thee in heaven.

Only, whilst I am thus raising up your faith to him upon the work of his intercession for us, let me speak a word to you, to stir up your love to him, upon the consideration of his intercession. You see you have the whole life of CHRIST first and last, both here and in heaven laid out for you. He had not come to earth but for you: he had no other business here; "Unto us a Son is born." He had not died but for you: "For us
a Son was given." And when he rose, it was "for justification:" And now he is gone to heaven, he lives but to intercede for you. He makes your salvation his constant calling. Oh! therefore let us live wholly unto Him! For he has, and does live unto us. There was much of your time lost before you began to live to him. But there has been no moment of his time which he has not lived to, and improved for you. Nor are you able ever to live for him but only in this life, for here-after you shall live with him, and be glorified of him. I conclude: "The love of CHRIST should constrain us;" because we cannot but judge this to be the most equal, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again, and sits at God's right hand; yea, and there lives for ever to make intercession for us."
THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH.

IN THREE PARTS.

THE INTRODUCTION.

JOHN 13: 1

When JESUS knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them to the end.

HAVING, in the former treatise, set forth our Lord in all those solemn actions of his, his obedience unto death, his resurrection, ascension into heaven, his sitting at God's right hand, and intercession for us; I shall now annex this discourse, which lays open the Heart of CHRIST, as now he is in heaven, sitting at God's right hand, and interceding for us; how it is affected, and graciously disposed towards sinners on earth that come to him; how willing to receive them; how ready to entertain them; how tender to pity them in all their infirmities. The use whereof will be this: to encourage sinners to come more boldly unto the throne of grace, unto such a Savior and High-priest, when they shall know how tenderly his heart (though he is now in his glory) is inclined towards them; and so to remove that great stone of stumbling which we meet with, (and lieth unseen) in the thoughts of men, that CHRIST being now exalted to so high a distance of glory, as to sit at God's right hand, they cannot tell how to treat with him about their salvation so freely, as those poor sinners did, who were here on earth with him. Had our lot been, (think they) but to have conversed with him, (in the days of his flesh) as Mary and Peter, and his other disciples did here below, we could have been bold with him, and have had any thing at his hands; for they beheld him before them, a man like unto themselves, and full of meekness and gentleness, he being then himself sensible of all sorts of miseries; but now he is gone into a far country, and has put on glory and immortality. The drift of this discourse is therefore to ascertain poor souls, that his heart remains the same it was on earth; that he intercedes there with the same heart he did here below; and that he is as meek, as gentle, as easy to be entreated, and as tender in his bowels; so that they may deal with him as fairly about the great matter of their salvation, and upon as easy terms obtain it of him, as they might if they had been on earth with him: than which, nothing can be more for the comfort of those whose souls pursue after strong and entire communion with CHRIST.

Now the demonstrations that may help our faith in this, I reduce to two heads: the one shewing, that it is so; the other, the reasons and grounds whyt it must needs be so. The first are taken from several passages, in those several conditions of his, at his last farewell before his death, his resurrection, ascension, and now he is sitting at God's right hand. I shall lead you through all the same head s which I have gone over in the former treatise, (though to another purpose) and take such observations from his speeches and carriage, in all those states he wentthrough, as shall tend directly to persuade our hearts of the point in hand: namely, that now he is in leaven, his heart remains as graciously inclined to sinners that come to him, as ever on earth. And for a ground, or introduction to the first, I shall take the Scripture above setdown; for those other, another Scripture.

SECT. 1

Demonstrations of CHRIST's Love to Sinners now, from his last Farewell to his Disciples.
IT was long before CHRIST brake his mind to his disciples, that he was to go away to heaven from them; but when he begins to acquaint them with it, he at once leaves with them an abundance of his heart, and that not only how it stood towards them, at the present, but what it would be when he should be in his glory. Let us, to this end, but briefly peruse his last carriage, and his last supper, as it is recorded by the evangelist John; and we shall find this to be the drift of those long discourses, from the 13th to the 18th chapter.

The words which I have prefixed as the text, are the preface unto all that discourse, and show the argument and sum of all. The preface is this, “Before the feast of the passover, when JESUS knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, be loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, a€’Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from GOD, and went to GOD, he then washed his disciples’ feet.” Now this pre-face was prefixed by the evangelist, on purpose to set open a window into CHRIST’s heart, to show what it was. at his departure, and to give a light into all that follows.

1. He premiseth what was in CHRIST’s thoughts: he began deeply to consider, both that he was to depart out of this world, and that he should shortly be installed into that glory which was due unto him; so it follows, ver. 3, JESUS “knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,” (that is, that all power in heaven and earth was his) in the midst of these thoughts, went and washed his disciples’ feet.

What was CHRIST’s heart most upon, in the midst of all these elevated meditations Not upon his own glory so much, (though it is told us he considered that, thereby the more to set out his love unto us) but his heart ran out in love towards his own: “Having loved his own,” says the first verse, 7ss miss, a word denoting the greatest nearness, dearness, and intimateness founded upon propriety: all believers are CHRIST’s own, a piece of himself, his own members, his own flesh. And he considers, that though he was to go out of the world, yet they were to be in the world; and therefore it is added, “which were in the world;” that is, to remain in this world. He had others of his own who were in that world, unto which he was going, even the “spirits of just men made perfect;” but he takes more care for his own, who were to remain here in this world, a world wherein there is much evil, both of sin and misery. This is it, which draws out his bowels towards them, even when his heart was full of the thoughts of his own glory: “having loved his own, he loved them unto the end,” or for ever. So that the scope of this speech is to show how CHRIST’s heart and love would be towards them even for ever, when he should be gone unto his Father, as well as it was to show how it had been here on earth. And to testify what his love would be to them, when in heaven, the evangelist skews, that when he was in the midst of all those great thoughts of his approaching glory, he then took water and a towel, and washed his disciples’ feet. And what was CHRIST’s meaning in this, but that, whereas when he was in heaven, he could not make such outward visible demonstrations of his heart, by doing such mean services for them; therefore by doing this in the midst of such thoughts of his glory, he would show what he could be content, as it were, to do for them, when he should be in full possession of it.

This declaration of his mind, we have from his carriage, at this his last farewell. Let us next take a survey of the drift of that which he made at that his farewell discourse, and we shall find the main scope of it to be, further to assure his disciples of what his heart would be unto them. And as what he prayed for them, was for all believers, so also was that which he spoke unto them.

First, he lets them see what his heart would be unto them, when in heaven, by that business which he went thither to perform for them: “I go to send you a Comforter,” whilst you are in this world, and to “prepare a place for you.” John 14: 2, when you go out of this world. “I go to prepare a place for you,” then doubt not of my love when I am there: all the glory of the place shall never make me forget my business. When he was on earth, the for-got none of the business for which he came into the world; and now he is gone to heaven, he is entered as a forerunner to take up places there for us: and therefore, I Pet. 1: 4, salvation is said to “be reserved in heaven for us.”

And further to manifest his mindfulness of them, and of all believers, when he should be in his glory, he tells them, that when he has despatched that business for them, he meant to come again to them: so chap. 14: 3, “If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again.” Love descends better than ascends; and so does the love of CHRIST, who indeed is love itself; and therefore comes down to us himself: “And receive you unto myself,” says CHRIST, “that so where I am, you may be also.” And yet further, the more to express the longings of his heart after them all during that time, he tells them it shall not be long neither ere he does come again to them. So John 16: 16, “Again a
little while and ye shall see me; a little while and ye shall not see me;” which not seeing him, refers not to that small space of absence whilst dead in the grave; but to that after his ascending, when he should go away, not to be seen on earth again until the day of judgment.

Thirdly, what his heart would be towards them in his absence, he expresseth by the careful provision he would make for their comfort in his absence. John 14: 18, “I will not leave you as orphans:” (so the word is,) I will not leave you like fatherless and friendless children. My Father and I have only One, who lies in the bosom of us both, and proceeds from us both; the Holy Ghost, and in the mean time I will send him to you. Ver. 16, “I will pray the Father,” says he, “and he shall give you another Comforter.” And chap. 16: 7, he says, “I will send him to you.” And he shall be a better Comforter unto you than I am to be in this dispensation. “It is expedient that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come;” who by reason of his office, will comfort you better than I should do with my bodily presence. And this Spirit, as he is the earnest of heaven, so he is the greatest token and pledge of my love that ever was. And all the comfort he shall speak to you all that while, will be but the expression of my heart towards you. For as he comes not of himself, but “I must send him,” John 16: 7; so “he will speak nothing of himself,” but “whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,” ver. 13.

And ver. 14, “he shall receive of mine, and shall chew it unto you.” Him therefore I shall send on purpose to be in my room, and he shall tell you (if you listen to him, and not grieve him) nothing but my love. “He shall glorify me,” namely, to you, (for I am myself already glorified in heaven.) All his speech in your hearts will be to advance me, and my love unto you; and it will be his delight to do it. And he will continually be breaking your hearts, either with my love to you, or yours to me, or both. And whereas you have the Spirit now, “He now dwells with you:” and “at that day (ver. 20,) you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you:” he will tell you when I am in heaven, that there is as true conjunction between me and you, as is between my Father and me.

If this were not enough to assure them how his heart would be affected towards them, he assures them he will give them daily experience of it. “Hitherto you have asked nothing,” (that is, but little) “in my name, but now ask and you shall receive.” And if otherwise you will not believe, “believe me,” says he, “for the works’ sake,” John 14: 11. He speaks here of the works he would do for them, in answer to their prayers when he was gone; for it follows, ver. 12, “He that believeth on me shall do greater works than I, because I go to my Father.” So that it is manifest, he speaks of the works clone after his ascension. And how were they to procure them to be done By prayer: so it follows, ver. 13, “And whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do.” He speaks it of the time when he is gone. And again, ver. 14, “If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it; as if he had said, though you ask the Father in my name, yet all comes through my hands, and “I will do it.” Yet further to evidence his love, he not only bids them pray to him, and in his name up on all occasions, but assureth them, that he himself will pray for them. It is the chief work that he does in heaven: “he lives ever to intercede:” as he ever lives, so he lives to intercede ever, and never holds his peace till sinners are saved.

In the last place, read but the 17th chapter, and you shall see, that he presently goes apart to his Father, and speaks over all again to him, which he had said unto them. That chapter (you know) contains a prayer put up just before his suffering, and there he makes his will, and his last request, (for in such a style it runs, “Father, I will,” ver. 24,) which will he is gone to see executed in heaven. And this prayer is left us by CHRIST, as a summary of his intercession for us in heaven. He spoke as he meant it, he spoke as he meant to do in heaven, and as one that had done his work, and was now come to demand his wages: “I have finished my work which you gayest me to do,” (says he, ver. 4,) And whereas he speaks a word or two for himself in the first five verses, he speaks five times as many for them; for all the rest of the chapter is a prayer for them. He uses all kinds of arguments to move his Father for his children: “I have finished the work which you gayest me to do,” says he, and to save them is thy work, which remains to be done for me by thee; and “they are thine, and you gayest them me;” and I commend to thee but thine own. And says he, though you have given me a personal glory which I had before the world was; yet there is another glory which I regard almost as much; and that is, in their being saved: “I am glorified in them,” ver. 10, “and they are my joy,” ver. 13, and therefore, I must have them “with me wherever I am,” ver. 24. You have set thy heart upon them, and have loved them thyself, as you have loved me; “I will that they be where I am,” ver. 24, “that they may behold the glory which you have given me.” He speaks all this, as if he had been then in heaven, and in possession of all that glory.

SECT. 2

Demonstrations from Passages and Expressions after his Resurrection.
CHRIST'S resurrection was the first step unto his glory. When he laid down his body, he laid down all earthly weakness. "It was sown (as ours is) in weakness;" but with raising it again, he took on him the qualifications of an immortal and glorious body; "it was raised in power:" and therefore, what his heart upon his first rising shall appear to be towards us, will be a certain demonstration what it will continue to be in heaven.

To illustrate this the more, consider that if ever there were a trial taken, whether his love to sinners would continue or not, it was then at his resurrection; for all his disciples, (especially Peter,) had carried themselves the most unworthily towards him. Now when CHRIST came first out of the other world, clothed with that heart and body which he was to wear in heaven, what message sends he first to them? We would all think, that as they would not know him in his sufferings, so he would now be as strange to them in his glory: or at least his first words would be of their faithlessness and falsehood: no, his first word concerning them is, "Go tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God and your God." You read elsewhere, that it was great love and condescension in CHRIST so to entitle them; Heb. 2: 11, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren," and for him to call them so when he was entering into his glory, argues the more love. He carries it as Joseph did in the height of his advancement. When he first brake his mind to his brethren, he said, "I am Joseph, your brother:"

so CHRIST says here, tell them you have seen JESUS their brother; I own them as brethren still. But what was the message that he would have delivered unto them That I, says he, "ascend to my Father, and your Father." A more friendly speech by far than that of Joseph; (though that was full of bowels,) for Joseph, after he had told them he was their brother, adds, "whom you sold into Egypt:" he reminds them of their unkindness; but not so CHRIST, he reminds them not of what they had done against him. Yea further, you may observe, that he reminds them, not so much of what he had been doing for them. He says not, Tell them I have been dying for them; or that they little think what I have suffered for them: not a word of that neither. But still his heart is upon doing more; he looks not backward to what is past; but forgets his sufferings, as "a woman her travail, for joy that a man-child is born." Having now dispatched that great work on earth for them, he hastens to heaven, to do another. And, though he knew he had business yet to do upon earth that would hold him forty days longer; yet to show that his heart was longing to be at work for them in heaven, he speaks in the present tense, and tells them, "I ascend;" and he expresseth his joy, not only that he goes to his Father, but also that he goes to their Father, to be an Advocate for them. And is indeed JESUS our Brother alive and does he call us brethren and does he talk thus lovingly of us Whose heart would not this overcome.

But this was but a message sent his disciples before he met them. Let us next observe his carriage at his meeting them. When he came first amongst them, this was his salutation, "Peace be to you." It is all one with that speech of his used in parting, "My peace I leave with you." After this he breathes on them, and conveys the Holy Ghost in a further measure into them; so to give an evidence of what he would do more plentifully in heaven: and the mystery of that his breathing on them, was to show, that this was the utmost expression of his heart, to give them the Spirit, as well as that the Holy Ghost proceeds from him as well as from the Father. And to what end does he give them the Spirit Not for themselves alone; but that they, by the gifts and assistance of that Spirit, might "forgive men's sins" by converting them to him. "Whose sins soever ye remit, (namely, by your ministry,) they are remitted to them." His mind you see is still upon sinners, and his care for the conversion of their souls. And therefore his last words, as they are recorded by St. Luke, are, "Thus it behoved CHRIST to suffer and to rise, &c;" that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations," and adds, "beginning at Jerusalem," where he had been but a few days before crucified. Of all places, one would have thought he would have excepted that; but he bids them begin there: let them have the first benefit by my death that were the actors in it. Afterwards indeed, when he appears to the eleven, he upbraids them: but with what With their "unbelief and hardness of heart." No sin of theirs troubled him, but their unbelief. Which skews how his heart stands, in that he desires nothing more than to have men believe in him; and this now when glorified.

Another time he shows himself to his disciples, and particularly deals with Peter; but yet tells him not a word of his sins, nor if his forsaking of him, but only goes about to draw from him a testimony of his love to him -self: "Peter," says he, "loves you me" CHRIST loves to hear that. Full well do those words sound in his ears, when you tell him you love him, though he knows it already. And what was CHRIST's aim in drawing this acknowledgment from Peter that if he loved him he should "feed his lambs." This is the great testimony of love that he would have Peter show him, when he should be in heaven. And how great a testimony is this, how well CHRIST's heart was affected to the souls of men, that their salvation was his greatest care. And to what end does the evangelist record these things of him after his resurrection One of the evangelists informs us; "These things are written that ye might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST;" that you might come to him as the Savior of the world; and that, "believing, ye might have life through his name."
LET us next view CHRIST in his ascending. His carriage then also will further assure our hearts of his desire for the happiness of mankind. "He lifted up his hands and blessed them;" and that we might the more observe it, it is added, "and whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." This benediction CHRIST reserved to be his last act. And what was the meaning of it, but to bless them, as God blessed Adam and Eve, bidding them increase and multiply, and so blessing all mankind that were to come of them? Thus does CHRIST bless his disciples, bless all those that shall believe through their word unto the end of the world. This is interpreted by Peter, Acts 3: 26, when speaking to the Jews, he says, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son JESUS, sent him to bless you," and how in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

In the next place, let us consider what CHRIST did when he was come to heaven. How abundantly did he make good all that he had promised in his last discourse? For first, he instantly poured out his Spirit. He then received it, and visibly poured it out. And this Spirit is still in our preaching, and in your hearts in hearing, in praying, in reading, and in holy meditation, and persuades you of CHRIST’s love to this very day; and is in all these the pledge of the continuance of CHRIST’s love still in heaven unto sinners. All our sermons and your prayers are evidences to you, that CHRIST’s heart is still the same towards sinners; for the Spirit that assists in all these, comes in his name, and works all by commission from him. And do none of you feel your hearts moved in the preaching of these things, at this and other times? And who is it that moves you? It is the Spirit which speaks in CHRIST’s name, even as himself is said to speak from heaven, Heb. 12: 25. And when you pray, it is the Spirit that "makes intercession for you" in your own hearts, Rom. 8: 26, which intercession of his, is but the evidence and echo of CHRIST’s intercession in heaven. The Spirit prays in you, because CHRIST prays for you: he is an intercessor on earth, because CHRIST is an intercessor in heaven. He also follows us to the sacrament, and in that glass shows us CHRIST’s face smiling on us; and thus we go away rejoicing that we saw our Savior that day.

Again, all those works, in answer to the apostles’ prayers, are a demonstration of this. The apostles went on to preach forgiveness through CHRIST, and in his name; and what signs and wonders did accompany them, to confirm that their preaching and all were the fruit of CHRIST’s intercession in heaven. So that what he promised, as an evidence of his minding them in heaven, was abundantly fulfilled. They, upon his asking, did greater works than he: the apostle makes an argument of it, "How shall we escape," says he, "if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles?" Yea, let me add, that take all the New Testament, and all the promises in it, all was written since CHRIST’s being in heaven, by his Spirit, and that by commission from CHRIST; and therefore all that you find therein you may build on, as his very heart; and therein see, that what he once said on earth, he repealed not a word now he is in heaven.

Thirdly, some of the same apostles spoke with him since, even many years after his ascension. Thus John and Paul, (of which the last was in heaven with him,) and they both give out the same thing of him. St. Paul received the gospel from no man, but by the immediate revelation of JESUS CHRIST from heaven. He was converted by the immediate speech of CHRIST himself; and this long after his ascension. And in that one instance CHRIST abundantly spewed his purpose to continue to all sorts of sinners to the end of the world. Thus that great apostle tells us, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first JESUS CHRIST might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to all them that should hereafter believe on him." It is express (you see) to assure all sinners, unto the end of the world, of CHRIST’s heart towards them.

Then again, sixty years after his ascension, did the apostle John receive a revelation from him; and the revelation is said to be in a more immediate manner, "The revelation of JESUS CHRIST," and you read that CHRIST appeared to him, and said, "I am he that was dead, and am alive for evermore," Rev. 1: 18. Now let us but consider CHRIST’s last words in that his last book, (the last that CHRIST has spoken since he went to heaven, or that he is to utter till the day of judgment,) "I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches: I am the root and offspring of David; and the Spirit and the Bride say, come: and let him that heareth say, come: and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." CHRIST was now in heaven, and had before promised to come again, and fetch all his disciples to heaven. In the mean time, mark what an echoing and answering of hearts and desires there is between him from heaven, and believing sinners from below: earth calls upon heaven, as the prophet speaks. The bride from earth says unto CHRIST, Come to me; and the saints’ hearts below say, Come, unto him also. And CHRIST cries out as loud from heaven, Come, in answer unto this desire in them; so heaven and earth ring again of it. "Let him that is athirst come to me; and let him that will come, and take of the water of life freely:" this is CHRIST’s speech unto menon earth. They call him to come unto earth to judgment; and he calls sinners to come up to heaven unto him for mercy. They cannot desire his coming to them, so much as he desires theirs to him. All which shows how much his heart was engaged to invite sinners to him; that now, when he is to speak but on a sentence more, till we hear the sound to judgment, he should especially make choice of these words. Let them there -fore for ever stick with you, as being worthy to be your last thoughts when you come to die, and are going to him. He speaks indeed something after them; but that is but to set a seal unto these words, and to the rest of the Scriptures, and to ingeminate his willingness to come quickly. And all this tends to assure us, that this is his heart, and we shall find him of no other mind until his coming again.
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.

SECT. 1

Demonstrations of CHRIST's Love to Sinners, drawn from the Influence the whole Trinity has into the heart of the human nature of CHRIST in heaven.

THIS text, above any other, speaks the heart of CHRIST most, and sets out the frame and workings of it towards sinners; and that so sensibly, that it doth, as it were, -take our hands and lay them upon CHRIST's breast, and let us feel how his heart beats, and his bowels yearn towards us, even now he is in glory. To open them, so far as they serve to my present purpose. All that may any way discourage us, he calls by the name of infirmities, thereby meaning both, 1. The evil of afflictions of what sort soever. 2. The evil of sins.

1. That under infirmities he means persecutions and afflictions, is probable; not only in that the word is often used in that sense; but also because his scope is to comfort them against what would pull from them their profession, as that foregoing exhortation (" Let us hold fast our profession,") implies. Now the things which attempted to pull it from them, were chiefly persecutions and oppositions.

2. By infirmities are meant sins also; as appears from the remedy against them, which they are here encouraged to seek at the throne of grace, namely, grace and mercy: " Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy and obtain grace to help in time of need: grace to help against the power of sin, and mercy against the guilt and punishment of it. For a support against both these, he lets us understand how sensibly affected the heart of CHRIST is to sinners under all these their infirmities, now he is in he aven. This speech of his is as much as if he had said, though CHRIST is in heaven, yet he retains one tender part in his heart still unarmed, as it were, even to suffer with you, and to be touched if you be. The word is a deep one (sw.ora&ns -ay) he sufers with you; he is as tender in his
bowels to you... as ever he was. That he might be moved to pity you, he is willing to suffer, as it were, one place to be left naked, on which he may be wounded with your miseries, that so he might be your merciful high-priest.

There are two things which this text gives me occasion to take notice of: 1. That he is touched with a feeling, or sympathizing with us. 2. The way how this comes to pass; even through his having been tempted in all things like unto us.

SECT. 2

The first sort of intrinsical Demonstrations, drawn from the Influence all the three Persons have for ever in the Heart of the human Nature of CHRIST in Heaven.

AND, first, he is touched still with a feeling of our infirmities. That love which CHRIST, when on earth, expressed to be in his heart, and which made him die for sinners upon a command of his Father, does certainly continue in his heart still, now he is in heaven; and that as quick and as tender as ever it was on earth, even as when he was on the cross. It being a law written in the midst of his bowels by his Father, it becomes natural to him, and so indelible, and (as other moral laws of God written in the heart are) perpetual. And as in us, when we shall be in heaven, though faith shall fail, and hope vanish, yet love shall continue; so does this love in CHRIST's heart continue also, and suffers no decay; and is shown as much now, in receiving sinners and interceding for them, and being pitiful unto them, as then in dying for them. This being the great commandment that God layeth on him, to love, and die for, and to continue to love, and receive sinners that come to him, and raise them up at the latter day, certainly he continues to keep it most exactly; we may therefore be sure that he both does it, and will do it for ever.

And this his love is not a forced love, which he strives only to bear towards us, because his Father has commanded him; but it is his nature, his disposition; he should not be God's Son else, nor take after his heavenly Father; unto whom it is natural to show mercy, but not to punish. To punish is his strange work, but mercy pleases him; he " is the Father of mercy." Now CHRIST is his own Son, 11 S, Enos, (as by the way of distinction he is called) and his natural Son. If we, as the elect of God (who are but the adopted sons) arc exhorted to put on” bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearing;” then much more must these dispositions be found in CHRIST, the natural Son: and these not put on by him, but as natural to him as his sonship is. God is love, and CHRIST is love covered over with flesh, yea, our flesh. And besides, as God has fashioned the hearts of all men, and some of the sons of men unto more mercy and pity (naturally) than others, and then the Holy Spirit coming on them to sanctify their natural dispositions, uses to work according to their tempers; so it is certain that he tempered the heart of CHRIST, and made it of a softer mould than the tenderness of all men's hearts put together. When he was to assume a human nature, he is brought in, saying, " A body has you fitted me," Heb. 10: That is, a human nature fitted as in other things, so in the temper of it, for the Godhead to work in best. And as he took a human nature on purpose to be a merciful high-priest, so a human nature, and of special a temper as might be more merciful than all men or angels. His human nature was made without hands; that is, was not of the make that other men's hearts are; though for the matter the same, yet not for the frame of his Spirit. It was a heart bespoke on purpose' to be a vessel, or rather fountain of mercy; and therefore CHRISt:s heart had naturally in the temper of it, more pity than all men or angels have, as through which the mercies of the great God were to be dispensed unto us.

Observe, how CHRIST lays open his own disposition: Matt. 11: 2S, " Come to me, you that are weary and heavy-laden,â€”for I am meek and lowly of heart." We are apt to think, that he, being so holy, is therefore of a severe disposition against sinners, and not able to bear them; no, says he, I am meek; gentleness is my nature and temper; it is my nature to forgive. Yea, but (may we think) he being the Son of GOD, and heir of heaven, and especially being now filled with glory, and sitting at God's right hand, may despise us here bel ow; though not out of anger, yet out of that height of his greatness and so though we conceive him meek, and not prejudiced with injuries, yet he may be too high to regard the condition of poor creatures. No, says CHRIST, I am lowly also, willing to bestow my love upon the poorest and meanest. And all this is not an outward carriage only, but it is *, in the heart. It is his temper, his disposition, his nature to be gracious, which nature he can never lay aside. And that his greatness, when e came to enjoy it in heaven, would not a whitâ€™alter, is disposition,
appears by this, that he, at the same time when he uttered these words, took into consideration all his glory: "All things are delivered to me by my Father." And presently after, for all this, he says, "Come unto me, all you that are heavy-laden,--I am meek and lowly," ver. 28, 29. Look therefore what delightful thoughts you use to have of a dear friend, who is of an amiable nature; or of some eminently holy and meek saint, of whom you think, I could put my soul into such a man's hands; even such and infinitely more raised apprehensions should we have of that sweetness and candor that is in JESUS CHRIST, as being much more natural to him.

Farther: if the same Spirit that was upon CHRIST, and in him, when he was on earth, does still rest upon him, now he is in heaven, then these dispositions must still entirely remain in him. When he was on earth, the Holy Spirit rested upon him above measure, and fitted him with a meek spirit for the works of his mediation; and indeed for this did the Spirit come especially upon him. Therefore when he was first solemnly inaugurated into that office, the Holy Ghost descended upon him as a dove, to show those special gracious dispositions wherewith the Holy Ghost fitted CHRIST to be a mediator. A dove (you know) is the most innocent and most meek creature, having no fierceness in it, expressing nothing but love, and was therefore a fit emblem to express what a temper the Holy Ghost did then fill the heart of CHRIST with. And though he had the Spirit before, yet now he was anointed with him (in respect to the execution of his office) in a larger measure. Therefore St. Luke notes upon it, chap. 4: 1, " JESUS, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan." And Peter also spews, " how God having anointed him with the Holy Ghost," (namely, at baptism,) " he went about doing good." And that this was the principal thing signified by this descending of the Holy Ghost as a dove upon him, even first him self shows; for thus he explains it: " The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me with the Holy Ghost," (that is, at baptism.) "He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and re-coveting of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." And when he had read so much in the synagogue, expressing the compassionate disposition of his spirit unto sinners, then he close s the book, intimating, that these were the main effects of that his receiving the Spirit. " The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me with the Holy Ghost," that is, for this end has he given me his Spirit, because I was designed to this work, and by that Spirit also has he anointed, or qualified me with dispositions suitable to that work. So was he filled with the Spirit, to that end to raise up in him such sweet affections towards sinners.

And it is certain, that the same Spirit that was upon CHRIST below, does still abide upon him in heaven. It must never be said, the Spirit of the Lord is departed from him, who is the bestower of the Holy Ghost upon us. And if the Spirit once given to his members abides with them for ever, much more does this Spirit abide upon CHRIST the head, from whom we all receive him, and by virtue of which Spirit's dwelling in him, he continues to dwell in us. Therefore, Peter giving an account how it came to pass, that they were so filled with the Holy Ghost, says, That " CHRIST having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," had " shed him forth on them;" which receiving is not to be only understood of his bare receiving the promise of the Holy Ghost for us; but further that he had received him first as poured forth on himself, and so shed him forth on them. According to that rule, that whatever God does unto us by CHRIST, he first does it unto CHRIST. All promises are fulfilled unto him first, and so unto us in him; and this may be one reason why (as John 7: 39,) " the Spirit was not as yet given, because JESUS was not as yet glorified." But now he is in heaven, he is said " to have the seven Spirits of God." Rev. 1: 3, " Now those seven Spirits" are the Holy Ghost; for so it must needs be meant, and not of any creature, as appears by the 4th verse of that chapter, where " grace and peace are wished from the seven Spirits;" which are so called in respect of the various effects of the Holy Spirit both in CHRIST and us, though but one in person.

And herein you may help your faith by an experiment of the Holy Ghost dwelling in your own hearts, and there not only working in you meekness towards others, but pity towards yourselves; and to that end, stirring up in you unutterable groans before the throne of grace, for grace and mercy. Now, seeing that the same Spirit dwells in CHRIST's heart in heaven, that does in yours here, and always works in his heart for you, and then in yours by commission from him; rest assured, that that Spirit stirs up in him bowels of mercy infinitely larger towards you, than you can have unto yourselves.

SECT. 3

Other Proofs drawn from several Engagements now lying upon CHRIST in Heaven.
OTHER proofs of CHRIST's love may be drawn from many other engagements continuing and lying upon him, now he is in heaven; which must needs incline his heart towards us as much, yea, more than ever. As, 1. The continuation of all those near and intimate relations unto us, which no glory of his can make any alteration in. Fleshly relations indeed cease in that other world, because they were made only for this world; but these relations of CHRIST to us, were made in order to the world to come; and therefore are in their full vigor and strength therein.

To illustrate this by the indissoluble tie of those relations of this world, whereunto no difference of condition can give any discharge. We see in Joseph, when advanced, that as his relations continued, so his affections remained the same to his poor brethren, who had injured him, and also to his father. So, Gen. xlv. where he mentioneth his own dignities and advancement: “God has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house;” yet he forgetteth not, “I am Joseph your brother,” ver. 4. And his affections appeared also to be the same; for he wept over them, and could not refrain himself; “And the like he expresseth to his father, ver. 9. “Go to my father, and say, Thus says thy son Joseph, God has made me lord over all Egypt,” (and yet thy son Joseph still.) Much more does this hold good of husband and wife, for they are in a nearer relation yet. But beyond all these relations, the relation of head and members as it is most natural, so it obliges most. “No man yet ever hated his own flesh,” says the apostle, “but loves and cherisheth it.” And it is the law of nature, that “if one member be honored, all the members are to rejoice with it,” 1 Cor. 12: 26; “and if one member suffer, all the rest are to suffer with it.” Even so is CHRIST, as ver. 12. And these relations are those that move CHRIST to continue his love unto us.

CHRIST is both the founder, the subject, and the most perfect pattern to us, of the relations that are found on earth. 1. He is the founder of all relations, and affections that accompany them, both in nature and grace. As therefore the Psalmist argues, “Shall he not sec, who made the eye” So do I Shall not he who put these affections into parents, and brothers, have them much more in himself “Though our father Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; yet, O Lord, you art our Father, and our Redeemer,” Isa. lxi. 16. The prophet speaks it of CHRIST, as appears by ver. 1, 2; and he speaks of CHRIST as supposed in heaven; for he adds, “Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and thy glory.” There are but two things that should make him forget sinners; his holiness, as they are sinners, and his glory, as they are mean and low creatures. Now he here mentions both, to show, that no withstanding either as they are sinners he rejects them not, and as they are base and mean he despises them not. 2. He is the subject of all relations, which no creature is. If a man be a husband, yet not a father, or a brother; but CHRIST is all. No one relation being sufficient to express his love, wherewith he loves us. 3. He is the pattern of all these relations, and they all are but the copies of his. Thus in Ephes. 5: 25, CHRIST is made the pattern of the pattern and love of husbands: “Husbands,” says the apostle, “love your wives, as CHRIST loved his church.” Yea, ver. 31, 32, 33, the marriage of Adam, and the very words he then spoke of cleaving to a wife, are made but the shadows of CHRIST’s marriage to his church. Herein I speak, says he, “concerning CHRIST and the church: and this is a great mystery.” First, a mystery, that is, this marriage of Adam was ordained hiddenly, to signify CHRIST’s marriage with his church. And secondly, it is a great mystery, because the thing thereby signified is in itself so great, that this is but a shadow of it. And there-fore all those relations, and the affections of them, which you see and read to have been in men, are all ordained to be but shadows of what is in CHRIST; who alone is the truth and substance of all similitudes in nature, as well as the ceremonial types.

If therefore no advancement doth or ought to alter such relations in men, then not in CHRIST. “He is not as hamed to call us brethren,” Heb. 2: 11. And yet the apostle had just before said of him, ver. 9. “We see JESUS crowned with glory and honor.” Yea, and as when one member suffers, the rest are touched with sympathy, so it is with CHRIST. Paul persecuted the saints, the members; and “why persecutest you me” cries the Head in heaven. “We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.” And therefore though CHRIST be now in glory, yet let not that discourage you; for he has the heart of a husband towards you, being “ betrothed unto you for ever, in faithfulness, and in loving-kindness.”

This love of CHRIST unto us is yet further increased, by what he both did and suffered for us on earth; “Having loved his own,” so far as to die for them, he will certainly “love them unto the end.” We shall find in all sorts of relations, that the having done much for any does beget a further care and love towards them. And the like effect those eminent sufferings of CHRIST for us, have certainly produced in him. We may see this in parents: for besides that natural affection planted in mothers towards their children, the very pain, and travail they were at in bringing them forth, increases their affections towards them; and therefore the eminency of affection is attributed unto that of the mother towards her child, and put upon this, that it is “the son of her womb,” Isaiah xlix. 15. And as it is thus in paternal affection, so also in conjugal. The more lovers have suffered the one for the other, the more is their love increased; and the party for whom they suffered, is thereby rendered the more dear unto them. And as it is thus in these natural relations, so also in spiritual. We may see it in holy men; as in
Moses, who was a mediator for the Jews, as CHRIST is for us. Moses therein being but CHRIST's type and shadow, and therefore I the rather instance in him. He, under GOD, had been the deliverer of the people of Israel out of Egypt, with the hazard of his own life, and had led them in the wilderness, and given them that good law that was their wisdom in the sight of all the nations: and what he had done for them did so mightily engage his heart, that although God in his wrath against them, offered to make of him alone a greater and mightier nation than they were, yet Moses refused that offer, and still went on to intercede for them, and, among others, used this very argument to GOD, even the consideration of what he had already done for them, thereby to move God to continue his goodness unto them; yea, so set was Moses's heart upon them, that he not only refused that former offer which God made him, but he made an offer unto God of him-self, to sacrifice his portion in life for their good: " Rather," says he, " blot me out of the book of life."

We may observe the like zealous love in holy Paul, towards all those converts of his, whom in his epistles he wrote unto; toward whom, that which so much endeared his affections, was the pains, the care, and the sufferings he had had in bringing them unto CHRIST. Thus towards the Galatians, how solicitous was he how afraid to lose his labor on them P " I am afraid of you," says he, " lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain;" yea, he utters himself more deeply," My little children," says he, " I again travail in birth, till CHRIST be formed in you." What love then must needs be in that heart which has done, and suffered for us

Did Moses ever do that for the people, which CHRIST has done and suffered for you? He acknowledged, that he had not born the people in his womb; but CHRIST bare us all, and we were the travail of his soul. Was Paul crucified for you? But CHRIST was. Or if Paul had been crucified, would it have profited us No. If then Paul was content to be in travail again for the Galatians, when he feared their falling away; how does CHRIST's heart work towards sinners he having put in so infinite a stock of sufferings for us already. And he has so much love to us besides, that if otherwise we could not be saved, he could be content to suffer for us afresh. But he needed to do this but once; so perfect was his priesthood. Be assured, then, that his love was not worn out at his death, but increased by it. His love it was that causes[ him to] " lay down his life for his sheep; and greater love than this has no man." But now, having died, this must needs cause him from his soul to cleave the more unto them. When CHRIST was in the midst of his pains, one, for whom he was then suffering, said, " Lord, remember me, when you come into thy kingdom!" And could CHRIST mind him then (As you know he did, telling him," This day shall you be with me in Paradise;) then surely when CHRIST came to Paradise, he would do it much more; and remember him too by the surest token; namely, the pains which he was then enduring for him, he remembers both them and us still. If he would have us " remember his death till he comes," then certainly himself remembers it in heaven much more: no question but he remembers us, as he promised to do that penitent thief, now he is in his kingdom.

Thirdly, his office still requires of him all mercifulness and graciousness towards sinners; and therefore whilst he continue s invested with that office, as he for ever cloth, his heart must needs continue full of tenderness. Now that office is his priesthood; which this text mentions as the foundation of our encouragement to come " boldly to the throne of grace, for grace and mercy," seeing we have a great high-priest entered into the heavens." The office of high-priesthood is altogether an office of grace. As CHRIST's kingly office is an office of power and dominion, and his prophetical office is an office of knowledge and wisdom; so his priestly office is an office of grace and mercy. The high-priest's office did properly deal in nothing else. If there had not been a mercy-seat in the holy of holies, the high-priest had not been appointed to have gone into it. It was mercy, and reconciliation, and atonement for sinners, that the was to treat about at the mercy-seat. Now this was but a typical allusion unto this office of CHRIST in heaven. And therefore the apostle in this text, when he speakes of this our high-priest's being entered into heaven, makes mention of a throne of grace, in answer to that type both of the high-priest of old, and the mercy-seat in the holy of holies. And further to confirm this, the apostle goes on to open that very type, and apply it to CHRIST, unto this very purpose; and this in the very next words to my text, chap. 5: 1, 2, 3, in which he gives a full description of an high-priest, and all the properties that were to be in him, together with the principal end that that office was ordained for. Now the essential qualifications there specified, that were to be in a high-priest, are mercy and grace; and the ends for which he is there said to be ordained are works of mercy and grace. So that these words are a confirmation of what he had said before, and set out CHRIST the substance, in his grace and mercifulness, under Aaron and his sons the shadows: and all this for the comfort of believers.

Now, first, for the ends for which those high-priests were appointed, they speak nothing but grace and mercy unto sinners. It is said, he was one " ordained for men to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." There is both the end for whom, and the end for which he was ordained. 1. For whom: he was ordained for men, that is, for men's cause, and for their good. Had it not been for the salviation of men, God had never made CHRIST a priest. So that he is wholly to employ all his power for them, for whose cause he was ordained a priest. He is to," . . . all things that are to be done by us towards GOD, or for us with God; he is to pro-cure us all favor from GOD, and to do all that God would have done for our salvation. And that he might do this willingly for us: as every high-priest was taken from among men; so was CHRIST, that he might be a priest of our own nature, and be so more kind unto us than the nature of an angel could have been. 2. The end for which every high-priest was ordained, shows this: he was to " offer gifts and sacrifices for sins:" sacrifices for sins, to pacify GOD's wrath against sin, and gifts to procure.
His favor. You know the apostle, in the foregoing words, had mentioned grace and mercy, and encouraged us to come with boldness unto this High-priest for both; and to encourage us the more, he says, the high-priest by his office was to offer for both; gifts to procure all grace, and sacrifices to procure all mercy for us. Thus you see the ends which he is ordained for, are all matter of grace and mercy. 3. The qualification that was required in a high-priest, was, that he should he " one that could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." And this is set forth, ver. 2. He that was high-priest, was not chosen for his deep wisdom, but for the mercy and compassion that was in him. That is it, which is here made the special property in an high-priest, as such; and the essential qualification that was inwardly to constitute and fit him for that office; as God's appointment did outwardly.

Now, if this be so essential a property to a high-priest; then it is in CHRIST most eminently. And he could not have been God's high-priest, if he had not had such a heart for mercifulness; yea, and no longer could he have been a priest, than he continued to have a heart that can have compassion. The word which we translate, to have compassion, is exceeding emphatical; it is in the original, "*", and signifies, "* to have compassion according to every one's measure and proportion:" so that CHRIST is a high-priest, that "* can have compassion according to the measure of every one's distress;" and one that considers every circumstance in it, and will accordingly afford his pity and help. As the measure of any man's need and distress is from sin and misery, accordingly is he affected towards him. And as we have sins of several sizes, accordingly has he mercies; whether they be ignorances, or sins of daily incursion, or sins more gross and presumptuous. And therefore let neither of them discourage any from coming to CHRIST for grace and mercy.

So then, this goes further than the former, for it spews, that to exercise mercy, is the duty of his place; and if he will be faithful, he must be merciful. For faithfulness in any office imports an exact performance of something appointed by him, who designs one to that office; and that this is a true description of faithfulness, and also that this faithfulness so described is in CHRIST, we have at once implied, in that which immediately follows in the be-ginning of chap. 3: 3, "* Who was,"(says the apostle, going to speak of CHRIST) "* faithful to him that appointed him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house:" If this office does by God's appointment thus bind him to it, then certainly he will perform it most exactly. And our comfort may be, that his faithfulness lies in being merciful; therefore they are both here joined together.

To conclude this head: never fear that CHRIST's advancement in heaven should any whit alter his disposition for this very advancement engageth him the more. For although be be entered into the heavens; yet consider, as it is here added, that it is to be an high-priest there; and so long, fear not; for his place itself will call for mercy from him. And although in the heavens he be "advanced far above all principalities and powers," yet still his high-priesthood goes with him and accompanies him: for "* such an high-priest became us, as was higher than the heavens," Heb. 7: 26. And further, though he sits at God's right hand, and on his Father's throne, yet that throne is a throne of grace. And as the mercy-seat, in the type, was the highest thing in the holy of holies; so the throne of grace (which is an infinite encouragement unto us) is the highest seat in heaven. And as Solomon says, "* A king's throne is established by righteousness," "* it continues firm by it; so is CHRIST's throne by grace. Grace was both the firstfounder of his throne, and also is the establissher of it.

Fourthly, God has ordered it, for an everlasting obligation of CHRIST's heart unto us, that his giving grace, mercy, and comfort to us, is one great part of his glory, and of the revenue of his happiness in heaven, and of his inheritance there. To explain this, consider, that the human nature of CHRIST in heaven has a double capacity of glory and happiness: one in that near communion with his Father, and the other person, through his personal union with the Godhead. Which joy of his, CHRIST speaks of Psal. 16: 11, "* In thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." And this is a constant and settled fullness of pleasure such as admits not any addition or diminution, but is always one and the same, absolute and entire in itself; and of itself alone sufficient for the Son of GOD, and heir of all things to live upon, though he should have had no other comings in of joy and delight from any creature. And this is his natural inheritance.

But God has bestowed upon him another capacity of glory, and a revenue of pleasure to come in another way; and answerably another fullness; namely, from his church and spouse, which is his body. Thus, Ephes. 1: when the apostle had spoken the highest things of CHRIST's personal advancement in heaven, as of his "sitting down at God's right hand far above all principalities and powers," "he adds this, " And gave him to be a head to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all." So that, although he of himself personally be so full, (the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in him,) that he overflows to the filling all things; yet he is pleased to account his church and the salvation of it another fullness unto him, superadded unto the former. As Son of God he is complete, and that of himself; but as a head, he has another additional fullness of joy from the happiness of his members. And as pleasure is the companion, and the result of action; so this riseth unto him, from his exercising acts of grace, and from his continual doing good unto, and for those his members; or, (as the apostle expresseth it) from his filling them with all mercy, grace, comfort, and felicity; himself becoming yet more full by filling them: and this is his inheritance also, as that other was. So that CHRIST has a double inheritance; one personal, and due unto him as he is the Son of GOD, the first moment of his incarnation, ere he had wrought any one work towards our salvation: another acquired, and merited by his having performed that great service and obedience. And certainly, besides the glory of his person, there is the glory of his office, of mediationship and headship of his church: and though he be never so full of himself, yet he despises not this part of his revenue that comes in from below.
This superadded glory and happiness of CHRIST is enlarged, as his members come to have the purchase of his death more and more laid forth upon them. So that when their sins are pardoned, their hearts more sanctified, and their spirits comforted, then comes he to see the fruit of his labor, and is comforted thereby; for he is the more glorified by it: yea, he is more rejoiced in this than thems elves can be. And this must needs keep up in his heart his care and love unto his children here below, to water and refresh them every moment.

Take an estimate of CHRIST's heart herein, from those two holy apostles Paul and John. What (next to immediate communion with CHRIST) was the greatest joy they had in this world, but only the fruit of their ministry in the lives and hearts of such as they had begotten unto CHRIST See how Paul utters himself, 1 Thess. 2: 19, " What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing Ye are our glory and our joy," ver. 20. St. John says the like: " I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth," 3 Epist. 4. Now what were Paul and John but instruments by whom they believed and were begotten Neither of these were crucified for them; nor were these children of theirs, " the travail of their souls." How much more unto CHRIST, (whose interest in our welfare is so infinitely greater) must his members be his joy and his crown And to see them come in to him for grace and mercy, and to walk in the truth, rejoice him much more; for he thereby " sees the travail of his soul," and so " is satisfied." Certainly what Solomon says of parents, that " a wise son maketh a glad father," is much more true of CHRIST. Holiness, faithfulness, and comfortableness in our spirits, do make glad the heart of CHRIST, our everlasting Father. Himself has said it; I beseech you believe him, and carry your-selves accordingly. And if part of his joy arise from hence, that we do well, then doubt not of the continuance of his affections; for love unto himself will continue them towards us, and readiness to receive us when we come for grace and mercy.

There is a fifth engagement which his very having our nature, puts upon him for ever. One great end of that personal union of our nature was, that he might be a merciful high-priest. So that as his office lays it as a duty upon him, so his becoming man qualifies him for the performance of it. This we find both to have been a requisite in our high-priest, to qualify him the better for mercy; and also one of those great ends, which God had in that assumption of our nature. First, a requisite, on purpose to make him more merciful. So it is said, " Every high-priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men, that so he might be one that can have compassion;" namely, with a pity that is natural, such as a man bears to one of his own kind. For otherwise the angels would have made greater high-priests than one of our nature; but then they would not have pitied men, as men do their brethren, of the same kind and nature with them. And secondly, this was also God's end in ordaining CHRIST's assumption of our nature, which that other place holds forth; " Verily, he took not on himself the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;" that is, a human nature; and " it behooved him to be like us in all things, that he might be a merciful high-priest," to the end he might become, or be made merciful."

But was not the Son of God as merciful, may some say, without the taking of our nature, as afterwards I then had ass umed it Or is his mercy thereby made larger than of itself it should have been, had he not took the human nature on him I answer, yes, he was so merciful: but yet hereby is held forth an evident demonstration, (and the greatest that could have been given unto men) of the everlasting continuance of God's mercies unto men: by this that God is for everlastig become a man; and so we are thereby assured, that he will be merciful unto men, who are of his own nature, and that for ever. For as his union with our nature is for everlasting; so thereby is sealed up to us the continuation of these his mercies, to be for everlasting: so that he can, and will no more cease to be merciful unto men, than himself can now cease to be a man.

The greatest mercy was in God; and unto the greatness of these mercies nothing is, or could be added, by the human nature assumed; but rather CHRIST's manhood had all his largeness of mercy from the Deity so that had he not had the mercies of God to enlarge his heart towards us, he could never have held out to have for ever been merciful to us. But this human nature assumed, adds a new way of being merciful. It assimilates all these mercies, and makes them the mercies of a man. It makes them human mercies, and so gives a naturalness and kindness unto them to our capacities. So that God does now in as kindly and as natural a way pity us, who are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, as a man pities a man. Thereby to encourage us to come to him, and to be familiar with GOD, and treat with him for grace and mercy, as a man would do with a man; as knowing, that in that man CHRIST JESUS, whom we believe in, God dwelleth, and his mercies work in and through his heart in a human way.

What comfort may this afford unto our faith, that CHRIST must cease to be a man, if he continue not to be merciful: seeing the very end of his becoming a man, was, that he might be merciful unto us, and that in a way so familiar to our apprehensions, as our own hearts give the experience of the like, which otherwise, as GOD, he was not capable of. And add but this bold word to it, though a true one, that he may now as soon cease to be GOD, as to be man; the human nature, (after he had once assumed it) being raised up to all the natura lrights of the Son of God; whereof one (and that now made natural unto him) is to continue for ever united. And he may as soon cease to be either, as not to be ready to show mercy. So that not only the scope of CHRIST's office, but also the intention of his assuming our nature, does lay a further engagement upon him, and that more strong than any, or than all of the former,
THE HEART OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN, TOWARDS SINNERS ON EARTH. PART 3

HEB. 4: 15.

For we have not an High-Priest who cannot he touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities,

but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.

SECT. 1.

flow this is to be understood, that CHRIST's Heart is touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities.

HAVING thus given full demonstration of the tenderness of CHRIST's heart unto us now he is in heaven, I come to open these words; namely, the way and manner of CHRIST's being affected with pity unto us; both how it is to be understood by us, and how such affections come to be in his heart; whereas GOD, of himself, was so blessed and perfect, that his blessedness could not have been touched with the least feeling of our infirmities; neither was he in himself capable of any such affection of pity, or compassion; he is not a man that he should pity or repent. He can indeed do that for us in our distress, which a man that pities us uses to do; but the affections and bowels themselves he is not capable of. Hence, amongst other ends of assuming man's nature, this fell in before God as one, that God might thereby become loving and merciful unto men, as one man is to another; and so, what before was but improperly spoken, and by way of metaphor in the Old Testament, might now be attributed to him in reality; that God might be said to compassionate as a man, and to be " touched with a feeling of our infirmities." And thus, by this happy union of both natures, the language of the Old Testament, uttered only in a figure, becomes fulfilled in the truth of it, as in all other things the shadows of it were in CHRIST fulfilled. And this is the first step towards understanding what is here said of CHRIST.

Add this, that God so ordered it, that before CHRIST should clothe his human nature with that glory he has in heaven, he should first take it as clothed with all our infirmities, even the same that clave unto us. And, during that time, God prepared for him all sorts of afflictions, which we ourselves here meet with, and all that time he was acquainted with, and inured unto the like sorrows that we are. And God left
him to that infirmity and tenderness of spirit, to take in all distresses as deeply as any one of us, and to exercise the very same affections under all these distresses that we, at any time, find stirring in our hearts: and this God ordered, on purpose to frame his heart (when he should be in glory,) unto such affections as these, spoken of in the text. And this both this text suggests, as also that for e-mentioned place, Heb. 2: 13, " Forasmuch as we are as partakers of flesh and blood, (which phrase does ever note the frailties of man's nature,) he himself took part of the same, that he might be a merciful high-priest:" and then the apostle gives this reason of it, " for in that him-self has suffered, being tempted, he is able (having a heart fitted out of experience, to pity and) to succor them that are tempted." It was not the bare taking of human nature, (if glorious from the first,) that would thus fully have fitted him to be affectionately pitiful out of experience; but his taking our nature clothed with frailties, and living in this world as we: this has for ever fitted his heart by experience to be in our very hearts and bosoms; and not barely to know the distress, and, as a man, to be affected with human affection; but experimentally remember[ing] the like in himself; and this likewise the text suggests as the way whereby our distresses are let into his heart the more feelingly. " We have not an high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Now therefore, we may easily conceive, how our miseries are let into his heart, and come to stir up such kindly affections of compassion in him. As " all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him" as Son of Man, so all knowledge is given him of all things done in heaven and earth, and this as a son of man (e.): his knowledge and power being of equal extent. He is the sun as well in respect of knowledge, as in respect of power; and the high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Observe how fully the apostle speaks of CHRIST's having been tempted here below. First, for the matter, the several sorts of temptations: he says he was tempted, ἐν ὅλης ἀρχής, " in all points," or things of any kind, where-with we are exercised. Secondly, for the manner, either of power, or of knowledge. He is the sun as well in respect of knowledge, as of righteousness, and there is nothing hid from his light and beams, which pierce the darkest corners of the hearts of the sons of men: he knows the sores (as Solomon expresseth it,) and distresses of their hearts. As a looking-glass made in the form of a globe, and hung in the midst of a room, takes in all the things done or that are therein at once; so does the enlarged understanding of CHRIST's hum nature take in the affairs of this world; especially the miseries of his members; and this at once. He re-members his death still, and the suffering of it; and as he remembers it, to put his Father in mind thereof, so he remembers it also to affect his own heart with what we feel. And his memory presenting the impression of the like once afresh unto him, how it was once with him; hence he comes feelingly and experientially to know how it is now with us. As God said to the Israelites, " Ye know the hearts of strangers, seeing ye were strangers," and therefore does command them to pity strangers, and to use them well: so may it be said of CHRIST, that he does know the hearts of his children in misery, seeing himself was once in misery. He has not only such affections as are proper to human nature; but such affections are stirred up in him, from experience of the like by himself once tasted in a frail nature like unto ours. And thus much for the way of letting in all our miseries into CHRIST's heart now.

SECT. 2 What Manner of affliction this is.

Now concerning this affection in CHRIST, how far it extends, and how deep it may reach, I think no man in this life can fathom. " If the heart of a king be inscrutable," (as Solomon speaks,) the heart of the King of kings in glory is much more so. I will not take upon me to " intrude into things I have not seen," but shall endeavor to speak safely, and therefore warily, so far as the light of Scripture and right reason shall warrant my Way.

1. It is certain that this affection of sympathy in CHRIST is not in all things such a kind of affection as was in him in the days of his flesh. Which is clear by what the apostle speaks of him then, Heb. 5:.7, "Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, was heard in that which he feared." Where we see his state here below is called by way of distinction from what it is now, the days of his flesh. By flesh is not meant the substance of human nature, (for he retains that still;) but the
frail quality of subjection to mortality. It is spoken of man's nature, in respect to its being subject to wearing and decay, by outward casualties or inward passions. And, accordingly the apostle instanceth, as in death, so also in such frail passions and affections as did work suffering and a wearing and wasting of his spirits; such as passionate sorrow, joined with strong cries and tears, and fear. Now these days of his flesh being over and past, all such passionate overflowing of sorrow or fear are ceased therewith, and he is now no way capable of them, or subjected to them.

2. Yet, why may it not be affirmed that for substance the same kind of affection that wrought in his whole man, both body and soul, when he was here, works still in him now he is in heaven (If this position he allayed with due caution,) for, if for substance the same flesh and blood remain and have their use; then why not the same affections also And those not stirring only and merely in the soul, but working in the body also, unto which that soul is joined, and so remaining really human affections But these affections of pity and sympathy, though they move his bowels, and affect his heart as they did here; yet they do not afflict him in the least, or become a burden unto his spirit. As in this life he was troubled and grieved, (without sin;) so now he compassions without the least disquietment or perturbation, which yet necessarily accompanied his affections whilst he was here, because of the frailty in which his body and spirits were framed. His perfection destroys not his affections, but only corrects and amends the imperfection of them.

Again, all natural affections that have not in them something unbecoming that glory wherein CHRIST now is, both schoolmen and other divines acknowledge to be in him. "Those affections which are natural to man, and have no adhesion of sin or shame unto them, but are wholly governed by reason, and are exempt from such effects as may any way hurt either the soul or the body, may well stand with the state of souls in bliss." Now it becomes him to have such human affections as quicken and provoke him to our help; not such as a make him a man of sorrows again; but such as make him a man of succors unto us. Because his members are still under sin and misery, therefore it is no way uncomely nor unbecoming to his relation. If his state of glory had been wholly ordained for his own personal happiness, then indeed there had been no use of such affections. But his relation to us being one part of his glory, therefore they are most proper for him; yea, it were uncomely if he had them not. Neither are they a weakness in him, as so considered; but rather part of his strength (as the apostle calls them,) Duvau. And although such affections might in one respect be thought an imperfection; yet in another respect, (namely, his relation to us,) they are his perfection. As he is our head, it is his glory to be sensible of all our miseries; yea, it were his imperfection if he were not.

And let me add this for our comfort, that though all such affections as are any way a burden to his spirit, or noxious to his body, be not now compatible to him; and though that passionate frailty, which did help him here to pity, and relieve men in misery, be cut off; yet in those workings of affections which he has now, (which for substance are the same,) there is, (instead of that passionate frailty,) a greater capaciousness, vastness, and also quickness, to make up a compensation; and no less effectually to quicken him to relieve us, than those former affections did. For it is certain, that as his knowledge was enlarged upon his entering into glory; so his affections of love and pity are enlarged in solidity, strength, and reality. They are not less, but are only made more spiritual. And as Solomon's heart was as large in bounty and royalty as in knowledge; so CHRIST's affections of love are as large as his knowledge or his power. They are all of a like extent. So far as God's intention to show mercy does reach, (and who knows the end of those riches) So far does CHRIST's disposition to bestow it. Eph. 3: 19, "The love of CHRIST," God-man, "passes knowledge." It has not been diminished by his going to heaven. Though God in his nature be more merciful than CHRIST's human nature; yet the exercise of CHRIST's affections is as large as God's purposes of mercy. And all those large mercies are become human mercies; the mercies of a man unto men.

Lastly, if these affections of CHRIST's heart be not suffering affections; yet we may express this of them, that there is less fulness of joy in CHRIST's heart whilst he sees us in misery, than when we are presented to him free of them all. To clear this, I must, recall that distinction of a doublefulness of joy, which CHRIST is ordained to have: the one natural, due unto his person, as in himself considered: the other additional, and arising from the complete happiness of his church. So Eph. 1: 23, though, by reason of his personal fulness, he is said to fill all in all; yet in relation to his church, the perfection of this his body's beatitude, called his fulness, is imperfect. And therefore, until he has filled them withall happiness, and delivered them from all misery, himself remains under some kind of imperfection; and his affections also, in comparison of what his heart shall have when they receive this fulness.

I shall add some illustration by this similitude (though it hold not in all things:) the spirits of just men departed are said to be perfect. Heb. 12: yet, because they have bodies unto which they have a relation, they in this respect may be said to be im perfect, till these bodies be reunited and glorified with them. Thus in some analogy it stands between CHRIST personal, and CHRIST mystically considered. a thoug CHRIST in his own person be complete in happiness; yet in relation to his members he is imperfect, and so accordingly has affections suited unto this his relation: which is no derogation from him at all. The Scripture therefore attributes some affections to him, which have an imperfection joined with them. Thus expectation and desire, (which are but imperfect affections in comparison of that joy which is in the full fruition of what was expected or desired,) are attributed to him, as he is man, until the day of judgment. Thus, Heb 10: 12, 13, he is said to sit in heaven, "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." The destruction of which enemies will add to the manifestative glory of his kingdom. Now as that will add to the fulness of his greatness; so the complete salvation of his members will add to the completeness of his glory. And as the expectation of his enemies ruin maybe said to be an imperfect affection in comparison of the triumph that one day he
shall have over them; so his joy which he now has in his spouse is but imperfect, in comparison of that which shall fill his heart at the great day of marriage:

SECT. 3

How CHRIST's Heart can be feelingly touched with all our Infirmities; seeing he was tempted without Sin.

THERE remains one difficulty to be removed, which cannot but arise in every good heart. "You told us, (may they say,) that by infirmities, sins were meant; and that the apostle's scope was to encourage us against them also, (and they are indeed the greatest discomforts and discouragements of all other,) Now against them this which the apostle here speaks affordeth us but little comfort; seeing CHRIST knows not how experimentally to pity us therein, for he knew no sin: yea, the apostle himself does here except it,' He was tempted in all things, yet without sin.' It may comfort us indeed, that CHRIST does pity us in all other infirmities, because he himself was subject to the like; but he never knew what it was to be vexed with sin, (as I am,) and how shall I relieve myself against that, by what the apostle here speaks of him' I shall endeavor to give some satisfaction in this by these following considerations.

First, The apostle puts in indeed that he was tempted, yet without sin; and it was well for us that he was thus without sin; for otherwise he had not been a fit priest to have saved us: so Heb. 7: 25, "Such an High-Priest became us as was separate from sinners." Yet withal, consider, that he came as near in that point as might be," He was tempted in all things," though "without sin" on his part; yet tempted to all sin, so far as to be afflicted in those temptations, and to see the misery of those that are tempted. Even as in taking our nature in his birth, he came as near as could be, without being tainted with original sin, by taking the very same matter to have his body made of that all ours are made of; so in the point of actual sin also, he suffered himself to be tempted as far as might be, and yet to keep himself pure. And because he was tempted by SATAN unto sin, therefore it is added, "yet without sin:" it is as if he had said, sin never stained him, though he was outwardly tempted to it.

Then, Secondly, to fit him to pity us, he was vexed with the filth and power of sin in others whom he conversed with, more than any of us with sin in ourselves. His righteous soul was vexed with it, as Lot's with the impure conversation of the Sodomites. He "endured the contradictions of sinners" against himself, Heb. 12: 3; "the reproaches of them that reproached thee," that is, GOD, "fell upon me," Rom. 15: 3, that is, every sin went to his heart. So as in this there is but this difference between him and us, that we are vexed with sin in ourselves; but his heart with sin in others only; yet so as his vexation was the greater, by how much his soul was more righteous than ours.

Yea, and Thirdly, it may be said of CHRIST whilst he was here below, that in the same sense wherein he bore our sickness, (who yet was never personally tainted with any disease,) in the same sense he bore our sins; namely thus: CHRIST, when he came to one that was sick, afflicted himself with his sickness, as if it had been his own. Thus, at his raising of Lazarus, it is said that he groaned in spirit: and this seems to be the best interpretation that I have met with, of that difficult place in Matt. 8: 16, 17, where it is said, "He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." In like manner he might bare our sins, being affected therewith as if they had been his own.

And as for the guilt of sin, and the temptations from it, he knows more of that than any one of us. He tasted the bitterness of that more deeply than we can, and of the cup of his Father's wrath for it; and so is able experimentally to pity a heart wounded with it, and struggling under such temptations. He knows full well the heart of one forsaken by GOD, seeing himself felt it, when he cried out, "My God! my God! why has you forsaken me"
THAT which has been said may afford us the strongest encouragements against our sins of any other consideration whatsoever; and may give us the greatest assurance of their being removed from us: for, First, CHRIST himself suffers, as it were, under them, as his enemies, which therefore he will be sure to remove for his own quiet's sake. His heart would not be quiet, but that he knows they shall be removed. As God says in the prophet, so may CHRIST say much more, "My bowels are troubled for him, I remember him still," Jer. xxxi. 20.

Secondly, your very sins move him to pity more than to anger. Whilst therefore you look on them as your disease, and complain to CHRIST of them, and cry out, "O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me" CHRIST takes part with you: his anger is turned upon your sin, yea, his pity is increased the more towards you, even as the heart of a father is to a child that has some loath-some disease. The object of pity is one in misery whom we love; and the greater the misery is, the more is the pity. Now of all miseries, sin is the greatest, and whilst yourselves look at it as such, CHRIST will look upon it as such also in you. And he, loving your persons, and hating only the sin, his hatred shall all fall upon the sin, to free you of it by its destruction; but his bowels shall be the more drawn out to you.

2. Whatever trial, or temptation, or misery we are under, we may comfort ourselves with this, that CHRIST was once under the same; which may comfort us by considering, First, That we are thereby conformed to his example, for he was tempted in all. Secondly, We may look to that particular instance of CHRIST's sufferings as a meriting cause to procure succor for us under the same. And, Thirdly, His having once borne the like, assures us, that he experimentally knows the distress of such a condition, and so is yet further moved and quickened thereby to help us. 3. As the doctrine delivered is a comfort, so it is the greatest motive against sin, and persuasive unto obedience, to consider, that CHRIST's heart, if it be not afflicted with, (and how far it may suffer with us, we know not,) yet for certain has less joy in us, in proportion as we are less obedient. You know not by sinning what blows you give the heart of CHRIST. And take this as one incentive to obedience; if he retain the same heart towards you which he had on earth, endeavor you to have the same heart towards him on earth, which you hope to have in heaven.

4. In all miseries and distresses, you know where to have a Friend to help and pity you; one, whose nature, office, interest, relation, all, engage him to your succor. You will find men, even friends, to be often unreasonable, and their bowels in many cases shut up: well, say to them all, "If you will not pity me, I know one that will; one in heaven, whose 'heart is touched with the feeling of all my infirmities,' and I will go and bemoan myself to him. 'Come boldly, to lay open your complaints, and ' you shall find grace and mercy to help in time of need.' "

END OF VOLUME 6