Looking Unto Jesus

LOOKING

UNTO JESUS,

AS CARRYING ON

THE GREAT WORK OF MAN'S SALVATION;

OR

A VIEW

OF THE

EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

By ISAAC AMBROSE.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the world." *Isaiah* xlv. 22.

ABRIDGED BY

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LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY SHERWOOD, NEELY AND JONES, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND SOLD BY
T. INKERSLEY, BRADFORD; ROBINSON, SON, AND HOLDSWORTH, LEEDS;
AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1815.

T. Inkersley, Printer, Bradford.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A religious Public has long admired the spirituality of Ambrose's "Looking unto Jesus," and at the same time complained of its tediousness. Under these circumstances it is hoped, that the present edition will meet with a favourable reception. The Editor has lopped off various redundances, and has also omitted several essays, which, though useful in themselves, are evidently foreign to the professed object of the Author.

The Editor takes this opportunity of stating that he does not wish to be considered as necessarily objecting to the SENTIMENTS *contained in those parts of Ambrose, which he has deemed it desirable to omit.*

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

The Division and Opening of the Words.—The Duty of Looking off all other Things.—Directions how to Look off all other Things.

THE DIVISION AND OPENING OF THE WORDS.

THE most excellent subject to discourse or write of, is JESUS CHRIST. Augustin, after having commended Cicero's works for their eloquence, passed this sentence upon them, "They are not sweet, because the name of Jesus is not in them." And St. Paul determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. This he made the breadth, and length, and depth and height of his knowledge: "yea doubtless (saith he) and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

In the knowledge of Christ, there is an excellency above all other knowledge. There is nothing so pleasing and comfortable, so animating and enlivening! Christ is the sum and centre of all revealed truths: we can preach nothing as the object of our faith, which doth not some way or other, either meet in Christ, or refer to him. Christ is the whole of man's happiness:—the sun to en-

lighten him, the physician to heal him, the wall of fire to defend him, the friend to comfort him, the pearl to enrich him, the ark to shelter him, and the rock to sustain him under the heaviest pressures. He is the ladder between earth and heaven, the mediator between God and man, a mystery which the angels desire to look into.

As Christ is more excellent than all the world, so this sight transcends all other sights. LOOKING UNTO JESUS is the epitome of a Christian's happiness, the quintessence of evangelical duties. The expression in the original is very emphatical. It signifies a withdrawing the eye from every other object to fix it upon one alone, even on JESUS,—a name that denotes his mercy, as that of CHRIST denotes his office. Various indeed are the impressive names which are given to him in the Scriptures. He is called Christ, as he is the anointed of God; Lord, as he hath dominion over all the world; Mediator, as he is the reconciler of God and man; the Son of God, as he was eternally begotten before all worlds; Immanuel, as he was incarnate, and so God with us; and Jesus, which signifies Saviour, because he saves his people from their sins.

My design is to look at Jesus more especially, as carrying on the great work of our salvation from first to last.

THE DUTY OF LOOKING OFF ALL OTHER THINGS.

The Apostle (Heb. xii. 1.) tells us of "a cloud of witnesses," which no doubt in their season we are to look unto. But when this second object comes in sight, he willeth us to turn our eyes from them, and to fix them upon Jesus Christ. So also there is a time when James may say, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example;"—but when Jesus comes forth that said, "I have given you an example;"—an example above all other examples,—then "be silent, all flesh, before the Lord." Let all saints and seraphim cover their faces with their wings, that we may look on Jesus, and let all other sights go.

It is especially our duty to look off all that is in the

world, compriy the Apostle unsed bder three heads,—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;"—pleasures, profits, and honours.

1. We must look off the world in respect of its sinful pleasures.—We cannot fixedly look on pleasures and Jesus at once. Job tells us, that "they that take up the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ, and spend their days in mirth," are the same that say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

2. We must look off the world in respect of its sinful profits.—A look on this, keeps off our looking unto Jesus. "Whosoever loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Just so much as the world prevails in us, so much is God's love abated both in us, and towards us. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, (saith James) know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." When we have enough in God and Christ, and yet desire to make up our happiness in the creature, this is plain spiritual adultery.

3. We must look off the world in respect of its sinful honours.—What is the desire to be well thought of and spoken of, but as if a man should run up and down after a feather flying in the air! It is a question whether he ever get it; and if he do, it is but a feather. Such is honour: it is hard to obtain it, and if obtained, it is but the breath of a few men's mouths, and, which is worst of all, it hinders our sight of Jesus Christ. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Worldly honour keeps many back from Christ, and therefore, "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

If it be more particularly enquired,—Why we must look off these things?—we reply,

1. Because we cannot otherwise fixedly look upon Christ.—The eye cannot look upwards and downwards at once. We cannot seriously mind heaven and earth together. "No man can serve two masters;" especially

such as jar, and have contrary employments, as Christ and Mammon have.

2. Because all other things, in comparison of Christ, are not worthy a look.—They are temporary and fading, but Christ is an enduring substance, "the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever." All other things are thorns and vexation of spirit; but Christ is full of joy and comfort, an object "altogether lovely." O who would make it his business to fill his coffers with pebbles, when he might have pearls or gold. Must you look off worldly riches,—See before you the riches of the graces of Christ! Must you look off sinful pleasures,—See before you at Christ's "right hand pleasures for evermore!" Must you look off your own righteousness,—See before you the righteousness of Christ Jesus.

3. Because all other things can never satisfy us.—The soul is *too high* to be exercised in the things of the earth. It is fit to converse not only with angels, but with the eternal God himself. Hence it wearies itself with looking on divers objects, and yet desires new ones; but once admit it to behold the glorious sight of Christ, and then it rests fully satisfied.

DIRECTIONS HOW TO LOOK OFF ALL OTHER THINGS.

1. Study every day more and more the vanity of the creature.—Men usually look on worldly things through some false glass, or at a distance, which makes them so admire them; but if they could see them truly in themselves, how uncomely would they appear! Or if they could see them as compared to Christ, how vain would they be! Honours and greatness would appear as bubbles;—pleasures and delights as shadows!

2. Have as little to do with the world as possible.—Things of this world have a glutinous quality; if you let the heart lie any while amongst them, it will cleave unto them, and if it once cleave to them, nothing but repentance or hell-fire can part them.

3. Be better acquainted with Jesus Christ.—Be more in communion with him; get more taste of Christ and heaven, and earth will relish the worse for them. If

Christ be in view, all the world then is but dung and dross, and loss in comparison. The glory of Christ will darken all other things.

4. Meditate continually on heavenly things.—When a Christian has but a glimpse of eternity, and then looks down on the world again, how does he contemn worldly things! "How doth he say of laughter, thou art mad, and of mirth, what is this thou dost?" If the devil had set upon Peter on the mount, when he saw Christ in his transfiguration, and Moses and Elias talking with him, would he so easily have been drawn to deny his Lord? So if the devil should set upon a believing soul, and persuade his heart to the profits, or pleasures, or honours of the world, when he is taken up in the mount with Christ, what would such a soul say?—"Get thee behind me, Satan; wouldst thou persuade me from hence with trifling toys?"

5. Pray earnestly to God for his assistance.—"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity," was David's prayer. Either God must do it, or you will be wearied in the multitude of your endeavours; but if the Lord draw off the eye, it will be drawn indeed. If the heart bend downwards, go to God to erect it, and to incline it heavenwards; if it be after covetousness, cry to God, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness."

CHAPTER II.

An Explanation of the Act and Object.—Motives for looking unto Jesus, from our Wants in Case of neglecting the Duty—from our Riches in Case of being lively in the Duty.—Additional Motives.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE ACT AND OBJECT.

THE excellency of mental sight is far above ocular sight. We only see a part of the creation by the eye of the body, but the mind reaches every thing that is in it: yea, the mind reacheth to him that made it. God is invisible, and yet this eye sees God. It is said of Moses, that "he saw him that is invisible." It is the sight of the mind that looks into the worth of any thing presented. A beast looks on gold as well as a man, but the sight and knowledge of the worth of it, is by the internal light of the mind. Now we know that the worth of a thing is the very cream of it, and this the eye of the mind conveys, and not the eye of the body. It is said of Joseph, that "he saw his brethren, and knew them, but they knew not him." This was the reason why Joseph was so exceedingly affected at the sight of them, though they were before him as common strangers; whereas, although they saw him as a prince, they were taken no more with the sight of him than of any other man; beause they knew him not.

An experimental looking unto Jesus is that my text aims at: It is not a swimming knowledge of Christ, but a hearty feeling of his inward workings; not heady notions of Christ, but hearty motions towards him, which are implied in this inward looking.

Jesus is the *object* you must look at.—As of all objects he has the pre-eminence in perfection, so should he have the pre-eminence in our meditation. It is he that will

make us most happy when we possess him, and we cannot but be joyful to look upon him, especially when looking is a degree of possessing. His name JESUS includes both his office and nature; for "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." And he is a perfect and an absolute Saviour;—"he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." I will not deny that the work of salvation is common to all the three persons of the Trinity. The Father saveth, the Son saveth, and the Holy Ghost saveth; yet we must distinguish them in the manner of saving. The Father saveth by the Son;—the Son saveth by paying the ransom of our salvation;—the Holy Ghost saveth by a particular application of that ransom unto men. Now, whereas the Son pays the price of our redemption, and not the Father nor the Holy Ghost, therefore, in this special respect, *he* is called our Saviour, our Jesus.

What a variety of excellence is comprised in Jesus! A holy soul cannot tire itself in viewing him. He is all and in all:—all belonging to being, and all belonging to well-being. What variety is in him! Variety of time, He is Alpha and Omega;—variety of beauty, He is white and ruddy;—variety of quality, He is a lion and a lamb, a servant and a son;—variety of excellency, He is a man and God.—Who shall declare his generation? All of the Evangelists exhibit unto us the Saviour, but every one of them in his particular method. Mark describes not at all his genealogy, but begins his history at his baptism. Matthew searcheth out his original from Abraham. Luke follows it backwards as far as Adam. John passeth farther upwards, even to the eternal generation of this word that "was made flesh." So they lead us to Jesus: in the one, we see him only among the men of his own time; in the second, he is seen in the tent of Abraham; in the third, he is much higher, namely, in Adam; and finally, having traversed all ages, through so many generations, we come to contemplate him in the beginning, in the bosom of the Father, in that eternity in which he was with God before all worlds.

Jesus is the *object*, and *looking* unto him is the act; but with such a look, as includes knowing, considering, desiring, hoping, believing, loving, joying, calling on, and conforming to him. It is such a look, as works in us a warm affection, raised resolution, and a holy conversation. Briefly, it is an inward, experimental looking unto Jesus.

This was the Lord's charge to the Gentiles of old; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth—and I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." And according to this command was their practice. "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord," saith David; and again, "they looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." And according to this command is the practice of gospel-believers. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Instead of the vail of Mosaical figures, God hath now given to his church the clear glass of the gospel, and hence all believers do by contemplative faith behold Christ, together with the glorious light of his Divine attributes; and by means thereof, they are made like unto him in the glory of holiness, and in newness of life.

MOTIVES FOR LOOKING UNTO JESUS FROM OUR WANTS IN CASE OF NEGLECTING THE DUTY.

To quicken us to this duty, I shall propose some important considerations:—weigh them with an impartial judgment. Who knows, but through the assistance of Christ, they may prove effectual with your hearts, and make you resolve upon this excellent duty of looking unto Jesus.

Consider our wants, in case of our neglect.—If Christ be not in view, there is nothing but wants. A Christless soul—a poor creature without any beam or ray of this Sun of Righteousness,—is in the most pitiable condition imaginable. Where Christ is not, there is no spiritual wisdom, no inclination to the ways and works of sanctification.

1. Such an one is without contentment.—The soul in this case finds nothing but emptiness and vanity in the greatest abundance. Let a man have what the world can give; yet, if he have not Christ, he is nothing worth. Christ is the marrow and fatness, the fulness and sweetness of all our possessions: separate Christ from them, and they are bitter, and do not please us; empty, and do not fill us.

2. Such an one is without any spiritual beauty.—From the sole of his foot, to the crown of his head, there is nothing in him, but loathsome and incurable maladies. Hence the greatest sinner is the foulest monster. Bodily beauty without Christ is but as green grass upon a rotten grave. Did man see his uncomeliness and deformity without Jesus Christ, he would style himself, as the prophet styled Pashur, MAGOR MISSABIB—Fear round about, every way a terror to himself.

3. Such an one is without peace.—There can be no joy and peace in the Holy Ghost without Jesus Christ. Joram asking Jehu, "Is it peace?" was answered, "What hast thou to do with peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?" A Christless man asking the same question, can look for no other but Jehu's answer, "What hast thou to do, O carnal man, with peace, so long as thy lusts are so strong within thee, and thy estrangements from the prince of peace so great?" The soul that is without Christ, is an enemy to the God of peace, a stranger to the covenant of peace, incapable of the word of peace, and an alien to the way of peace.

4. Such an one is without life.—"He that hath not the Son, hath not life." Christ lives not in that soul; it is a dead soul, "dead in trespasses and sins." As the dead see nothing of all that sweet and glorious light which the sun casts forth upon them; so the dead in sin have no comfortable apprehension of Christ, though he shine in the gospel more gloriously than the sun at noon. And as "the dead know not any thing;" so the dead in sin know nothing of the wisdom of Christ guiding them, of the holiness of Christ sanctifying them, of the fulness of Christ satisfying them, of the death of

Christ mortifying their lusts, or of the resurrection of Christ quickening their souls.

Let us even suppose that a person has once known Christ, but *now*, alas! does not look at him. Such a case I confess may be. But, O! the sin and sadness of those souls! O the wants attending such characters.

1. They do not now taste the goodness of Christ.—Christ is no other unto them, but as an eclipsed star, with whose light they are not at all affected. He is not sweet to them in his ordinances: they find not in them that delight and refreshment, which they usually minister. Barzillai could not taste what he did eat, or what he did drink, nor could hear any more the voice of singing-men, or of singing-women; so they cannot taste the things of God, nor hear the spiritual melody, which Christ makes to the souls of them that look unto him.

2. They have now no love to Christ.—They delight not themselves in him, as the rich man in his treasure, and the bride in the bridegroom; and no wonder, for how should they, who turn their eyes from Christ, love him, though to others he appear the chief among ten thousand.

3. They have now no sense of Christ's love.—Whilst the soul neglects Christ, it cannot possibly discern his love. Christ appears not in his banqueting-house; he enables not the soul to pray with confidence; he makes it not joyful in the house of prayer. And hence it is that such souls move so slowly in God's service: they are like Pharaoh's chariots, without wheels. They perceive not the love of Christ, either in the clear revelation of his secrets, or in the free communication of his graces, or in the sanctifying and sweetening of their trials, or in sealing up the pardon of their sins. O the want! O the misery of this want!

4. They have now no experience of the power of Christ.—Christ's power consists in humbling men's hearts, in sanctifying their souls, in making them able to endure afflictions, and in causing them to grow in all heavenly graces: and this power they partake of, who rightly and experimentally look up to Christ. But

if this duty be neglected, there is no such thing; hence we call this the especial duty, for all other duties, means and ordinances, if Christ be not in them, are nothing worth. It is only from Christ that virtue is communicated in spiritual ordinances. There were many people in a throng about Christ, but the infirm woman, that touched him, alone felt efficacy come from him. We see many attend the ordinances, but few only find the inward power of Christ applied unto their souls. They that neglect this great mystery of looking unto Jesus, are no better than strangers to the power of Christ.

5. They have not now a due sense either of their own wants, or of the excellency of Christ.—In this glass we see that man is blind, and no sun but Christ can enlighten him;—that man is naked, and no garment but Christ's can clothe him;—that man is poor, and no treasure but Christ's can enrich him;—that man is in debt, and none but Christ can make satisfaction for him;—that man is empty, and none but Christ can fill him;—that man is distressed, perplexed, tormented, and none but Christ can quiet him. All this, and much more than this appears in this glass of Jesus. The soul that looks here cannot but comprehend an end of all other perfection; yea, the further it looks on the creature, the deeper and deeper vanities it discerns. But, alas! there is no observation, no sense, no feeling, either of men's wants, or of the world's vanity, or of any suitable good in Christ to them, that are not in this divine and spiritual contemplation.

MOTIVES FOR LOOKING UNTO JESUS FROM OUR RICHES, IN CASE WE ARE LIVELY IN THIS DUTY.

O the privileges of such as are lively in this duty. We may reckon up here those very things which the others wanted.

1. Christ gives contentment unto them.—As the pearl satisfied the merchant in the parable, so Christ satisfieth the souls of his people. They that rightly look unto Jesus, may say, as Jacob did, "I have enough."

2. Christ gives glory unto them.—He is both the

author and object of their glory; he is the glory of their justification, as the garment is the glory of him that wears it;—he is the glory of their redemption, as the ransomer is the glory of the captive:—he is their all in all, "to whom they give all honour, and glory, and power, and praise."

3. Christ gives peace unto them.—"God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." They that hear Christ in the word, or that look unto Christ by the eye of faith, have this peace, for Christ is the revealer and worker of peace in all the children of peace.

4. Christ gives life unto them.—"He that hath the Son hath life." He that hath Christ in his heart hath the life of grace, and the earnest of the life of glory.

5. Christ gives a taste of his goodness unto them.—They cannot look unto him, but he makes them joyful with the feeling of himself and Spirit; and hence it is that many times they break out into "psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord." There is a goodness of illumination, regeneration, sanctification, consolation, and spiritual freedom flowing from Christ to the souls of his saints, which to carnal men is a sealed well, whose waters they never tasted.

6. Christ gives a sincere and inward love of himself unto their hearts.—No sooner is their eye of faith looking unto Jesus, but presently their heart is all on fire. Such a suitableness is between Christ and their souls, as is between the hearts of lovers: their love to Christ is like the love of Jonathan to David, a wonderful love, and passing the love of women. They love him as the bridegroom to whom their souls are married, as the choicest pearl by whom they are enriched, as the sun of consolation, by whose beams their souls are comforted, as the fountain by whom their hearts are refreshed, and their desires every way satisfied.

7. Christ gives the sense of his own love to them.—They cannot look on Christ but they see him loving their souls; they see him binding up their broken hearts; they behold him, like Jacob, serving in the heat and cold for Rachel; serving in manifold afflictions, from his cradle to his cross, to make a spouse unto himself.

8. Christ gives the experience of his power to them.—They look on Christ, feel his power in their souls destroying the works of Satan, healing all their spiritual maladies, sustaining them in all afflictions, and filling their souls with heavenly might.

9. Christ gives the sense of their wants, and of his suitable goodness unto them.—In looking unto Jesus, they see themselves miserable, and all other things miserable comforters: they also perceive that Christ excels in beauty the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. He appears to them fairer than all the flowers of the field, than all the precious stones of the earth, than all the lights in the firmament, and than all the saints and angels in heaven. Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his God, whose hope is in the Lord his God!

10. We may lastly add Christ gives all things unto them.—"All things are yours (saith the apostle) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." All the ministers of Christ from the highest to the lowest, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas;" they are men that watch over you for your salvation. "The world" is yours; indeed the world stands but for your sakes; if your number were but once completed, quickly would the world be set on fire. "Life" is yours. It is a preparing you for a better life, even for eternity. "Death" is yours; for you shall die just then when it is best for you. Death shall serve but as a servant to your advantage. "Things present, and things to come" are yours. Godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come. I will add, the Lord himself is yours. Take God, and look on him in his greatness and in his power,—even this great God, the Lord of heaven and earth is yours; he is yours, and all that he hath is yours, and all that he doth is yours. Here is an inventory of a Christian's riches. If Christ be yours, the Father is yours, the Son is yours, the Spirit is yours, and all the promises are yours, for in Christ they are all made, and for him they shall be performed. Let then the proud man boast in his honour, the mighty man in his valour, and the rich man in his wealth, but let the Christian pro-

nounce *himself* happy, only happy, fully happy, in enjoying Christ,—in "looking unto Jesus."

ADDITIONAL MOTIVES FOR LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

1. Looking unto Jesus will maintain your communion with him.—This communion with Jesus is heaven beforehand! Hereby we enjoy his person, and all the saving fruits and privileges of his death: hereby we are carried up into the mount with Christ, that we may see him (as it were) transfigured. Oh it is a happy thing to have Christ dwell in our hearts, and for us to lodge in his bosom! Oh it is a happy thing to maintain a reciprocal communication of affairs between Christ and our souls! as thus: He bare our sins, and we take his healing! He took upon him our unrighteousness, and we clothe ourselves with his righteousness! He embraced our curse and condemnation, and we embrace his blessing, justification, and salvation!

2. Looking unto Jesus will preserve the vigour of all your graces.—How many alas complain of deadness and dulness in prayer, because of their inattention to this duty. For want of this recourse to Jesus Christ, your souls are as candles that are not lighted, and your duties are as sacrifices which have no fire. Fetch one coal daily from this altar; and see if your offerings will not burn: keep close to this fire; and see if your affections will not warm. Surely, if there be any comfort of hope, if any flames of love, if any life of faith, if any vigour of dispositions, if any motions towards God, if any meltings of a softened heart, they flow from hence.

3. Looking unto Jesus, will increase your outward joy in him.—A frequent access to Christ, in the way of meditation, cannot but warm the soul in spiritual comforts. When the sun in the spring draws near our part of the earth, how do all things congratulate its approach! The earth looks green, the plants revive, the birds sing sweetly, and the face of all things smiles upon us. Christians, if you would but draw near, and look on the Sun of Righteousness, what a spring of joy would be within you! How would your graces be fresh and green! How would you forget your winter sorrows! How early would you rise to sing the praise of our dear Redeemer.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

From the Creation unto his first coming.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Of Christ promised by degrees. The Covenant of promise as manifested to Adam—to Abraham—to Moses—to David—to Israel about the time of the Captivity.

OF CHRIST PROMISED BY DEGREES.

NO sooner was the world made and the things therein, than man was created. At first he stood in no need of a Saviour, for he was made in holiness, the image of God. But alas! this his state was but of short standing: it was the received opinion in former ages, that our first parents fell the very same day they were created. But though we cannot determine the time, we know assuredly that Adam by his sin deprived himself and all his posterity of the image of God; and that all mankind, being in his loins, were partakers with him in the guilt of his sins. Hence it is the daily cry, not only of Adam, Abraham, David and Paul, but of every saint,—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But, believing souls, stay your complaints, here is gospel-news.

No sooner had Adam fallen than God graciously hinted at a Saviour, and proclaimed to him, though in obscure terms, the covenant of grace. This covenant was frequently afterwards revealed to different individuals in a clearer or more obscure manner, in proportion as the coming of Christ was nearer or more remote. It is my present intention to refer to these different declarations of the covenant, and to shew how Christ was promised at different periods.

OF THE COVENANT OF PROMISE, AS MANIFESTED TO ADAM.

The covenant of grace is a compact made betwixt God and man, respecting reconciliation, and life eternal by Christ. This covenant was, immediately after the fall, expressed in these words,—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This promise contains in it good news of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, and of man's freedom by the death of Christ. In order fully to ascertain its meaning, we shall explain the different terms in it.

1. By *the serpent* is meant Satan united to a serpent. As men are said to be possessed of Satan, so was the serpent possessed of the devil. Satan could not provoke our first parents to sin by any inward temptation, as now he doth by the help of our corruption; nor could he enter into their bodies, or minds, because of the holiness and glory that was in them; and therefore he presumed to take a beast of the earth, and by disposing of his tongue he speaks within him.

Such was God's love to man, that he condemns both the author and instrument of that evil. The serpent is punished according to the letter of the text, and Satan in its spiritual meaning.

2. *The woman* wheresoever mentioned in this text, is Eve: she it was whom the tempter had seduced, and in just judgment for her familiarity with the tempter, God meets with her, saying to the serpent, "I will put enmity betwixt thee and the woman."

3. The *seed of the serpent* is taken collectively, for

the Devil and his angels, (as Christ calls them) and for all the sons of the devil, unconverted men, whose father and prince is the devil. Christ told the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." And John tells us, "he that committeth sin is of the devil.—In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." And thus both devils and reprobates are reckoned as the seed of the serpent.

4. The *seed of the woman* is that posterity of the woman which do not degenerate into the seed of the serpent. Hence "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," saith the apostle. "And I will put enmity (saith God) between thee and the woman," and also "between thy seed and her seed." And who can deny but these enmities have been ever since between Satan's seed and the saints?

5. The word which is translated "IT or HE shall bruise thy head" refers to one person of that same seed, even Jesus the Son of the living God. Here is the first hint of Jesus that ever was read or heard of in the world. This was the first gospel that ever was published after the creation. O blessed news! fit for God's mouth to speak first to the world now fallen! Come let us set a star upon it, write it in letters of gold, or rather write it on the very tables of our hearts. As David alone of all the host of Israel goes forth to fight with Goliath, and overcomes him; so Christ alone of all the seed of the woman was to fight with the serpent, to overcome him, and to bruise his head. I will not deny, but by way of participation this promise may pertain to the whole body of Christ: "through him that loved us we are more than conquerors." In this sense many of the ancient and modern divines do extend this seed to the whole body of Christ; but primarily, and properly, it belongs to none but the Lord Jesus Christ. He only is the seed by whom the promise is accomplished, though the faithful also are the seed to whom and for whom the promise was made.

6. By *the serpent's head*, is meant the power, rage, and kingdom of Satan. It is observed, that in the head of a

serpent, lie its strength and life; so by a phrase of speech fitted to the condition of this serpent that was Satan's instrument, God tells the devil of the danger of his head, of his power and kingdom. This power and kingdom of Satan consist more especially in sin and death. Hence sin and death are usually called the works and wages of Satan. By the "bruising" of his head, is meant the overthrowing of Satan's power. "He shall bruise thy head." Christ shall destroy sin, and death, and "him that hath the power of death that is the devil." The devil, and sin, and death, and hell are overthrown; not only the devil in his person, but the works of the devil, which by the fall he had planted in our natures, as pride, vain glory, ignorance, lust; not only Satan's works, but the fruits and effects of his works, as death and hell; so that all the faithful may sing with Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

7. The *heel* of the seed of the woman is the humanity of Christ: the "bruising" of his heel, refers to the miseries, mockings, woundings, death and burial of Christ, all which he endured in his humanity; or it extends further, to all the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions of the faithful, by the devil and his agents, all which are but as a bruise in the heel, which cannot endanger the spiritual life of their souls.

8. The *enmity* here referred to, principally relates to that which should subsist between Christ and Satan; "he shall bruise thy head," Christ shall break thy power. He fights not so much with the seed, as with the serpent: if Satan be overthrown, his seed cannot stand. "Thou shalt bruise his heel;" thou shalt afflict him and his; thou shalt cast out of thy mouth a flood of persecutions; thou shalt "make war with him, and all them which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

I have held you a while in the explication of this first promise, because of the sweetness that is contained in it. It is full of gospel-truths. Strike but the flint, and there will fly out these glorious sparkles. 1. That a Saviour

was promised from the beginning of the world. 2. That this Saviour should free all his saints from sin, death and hell; the head, and power of the devil. 3. That to this end this Saviour should be a Mediator; for God would not grant an immediate pardon, but the promised seed must first intervene. 4. That this Mediator should be of the seed of the woman,—that is, a man; and yet stronger than the devil, endued with a divine power, and so he is God. 5. That this Man-God should according to his priestly office be a sacrifice for sin;—the serpent shall bruise his heel, he should suffer and die for the people; and yet according to his kingly office he should overcome Satan;—for he shall bruise his head, overthrow his kingdom, and make us more than conquerors. 6. That this promise of Christ, and of our justification is free: God of mere mercy brings forth this promise. There could be after the fall no merit in man; and even now he promiseth remission of sins, and life eternal in, for, and through the Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt but in belief of this promise, the patriarchs and fathers of old obtained life, glory and immortality. "By faith the elders obtained a good report: by faith Abel obtained witness that he was righteous: by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: by faith Noah became heir of the righteousness of Christ." And how should it revive us in these last times, to hear, that the first thing that ever God did after the world was fallen, was this act of mercy, to make a promise of Christ, and to reconcile lost man to himself through the same Jesus Christ!

OF THE COVENANT OF PROMISE, AS MANIFESTED TO ABRAHAM.

The second breaking forth of this gracious covenant, was to Abraham; and now it shines in a more glorious light than it did before. At first it was expressed in dark terms, but in this second manifestation, we have it laid down in plainer:—"I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after

thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." For the right understanding of this, we shall examine several particulars.—

1. What is a covenant?—It is a contract of mutual peace and good will, obliging parties on both hands to the performance of mutual offices. Thus was the covenant between God and Abraham: there was a mutual stipulation in it, on God's part to perform his promises of temporal, spiritual, and eternal grace; and on Abraham's part to receive this grace by faith, and to perform due obedience to God. Hence we say the covenant is a mutual compact between God and man, whereby God promiseth all good things, especially eternal happiness unto man; and man doth promise to walk before God in all acceptable, free, and willing obedience, expecting all good from God, and happiness in God, according to his promise, for the praise and glory of his grace. In this description many things are considered. As, 1. That the author of this covenant is God; not as our Creator, but as our merciful God and Father in Christ Jesus. 2. That the cause of this covenant is not any dignity, or merit in man, but the mere mercy and love of God. 3. That the foundation of this covenant is Jesus Christ, in and through whom we are reconciled unto God; for since God and man were separated by sin, no covenant can pass between them, no reconciliation can be expected, nor pardon obtained, but in and through a Mediator. 4. That the party covenanted with, is sinful man; the fall of our first parents was the occasion of this covenant, and God was pleased to permit the fall, that he might manifest the riches of his mercy in man's recovery. 5. That the form of this covenant stands on God's part in gracious and free promises of forgiveness, holiness and happiness; and on man's part in a restipulation of such duties as will stand with the free grace and mercy of God in Christ. 6. That the stipulation on man's part required, is repentance for sin, belief in the promises, and a yielding of fear, reverence, worship and obedience to God according to his word.

2. What is the establishing of this covenant?—The Lord had before made a covenant with Abraham, and now he doth not abolish the former, and make another, but rather confirms, and establishes the former. It may be there was some doubting in Abraham: but now God would assure him infallibly of his will, so he adds the seal of circumcision. But what is circumcision to the covenant? Much every way. Circumcision was not without shedding of blood, because the covenant was not yet established in the blood of the Messiah. Surely there was much in this; however the rite of itself was nothing, yet as it led the faithful patriarchs to the blood of Christ, assured the purging away of sin by his blood, and signed the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit of Christ, so it found acceptance with God.

3. Between whom is the covenant to be established?—"Between Me and thee (saith God) and thy seed after thee." The two heads of this covenant are God and Abraham; on God's part are the whole Trinity of persons; on Abraham's part are all the spiritual seed of Abraham, under which term all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are comprehended; for heaven is no freer to a Jew, than to a Gentile. "But if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

4. For what time is the established covenant to endure?—It is not for a few days, or months, or years, but for ever and ever. It is an everlasting covenant; and indeed the word established implies this; "I will establish my covenant." I will have it stand and continue for ever. This covenant is everlasting in respect of the promise made to Christ for us, before the foundation of the world. It is not an infant of days, but bears the same date with the divine being himself. The writs, evidences and charters of our salvation were concluded, and passed the sign and seal of the blessed Trinity from eternity. All the blessings of the covenant are also everlasting: forgiveness of sins are everlasting; being once forgiven, they are "never remembered any more." Peace and joy is everlasting: "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from

you." Salvation is everlasting: "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." Death may put an end to other covenants, but this covenant between God and us stands fast for ever; though Abraham be dead, yet God is Abraham's God still, and by virtue of this covenant Abraham shall be raised up at the last day.

5. What are the privileges of the covenant?—I answer, The covenant is full of blessings: it is a well of salvation, a fountain of good things, a treasury of unsearchable riches, which can never be emptied. Hence it is that our narrow capacities can never apprehend the infinite grace that this covenant contains; yet as we may see things darkly as in a map, so let us endeavour, as we are able, to view them in some map, that by the little we see, we may be raised up to the consideration of things not seen, which shall be revealed in due time.

The privileges of the covenant are folded up in the promises of it: every promise contains a privilege, but the time of unfolding every promise is not yet come. Then only shall the promises of all sorts be unfolded, when the heavens "as a vesture shall be folded up." I shall for the present confine myself to those promises and privileges of the covenant, which were manifested to Abraham. And they were,

1. Things temporal. Thus we read God promiseth Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and unto thy seed will I give this land." "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." All temporal blessings come from God, and by virtue of this covenant. O that none of us had any wealth, but such as comes by virtue of a promise, and of the covenant of grace!

Touching these blessings, or privileges, I only add that God gave more of the temporal, less of the spiritual to

the natural seed in the first ages, but in the latter ages, more of the spiritual privileges, and less of the temporal; yea, and thus it is at this day, for the most part, among the Christian seed of the Gentiles; "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."

2. Things spiritual. Thus we read, "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward; I am God all-sufficient, or omnipotent, the almighty God; and I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." O what precious promises are these! I am thy *shield*, to keep thee from all evil: such a shield as no creature can pierce through; such a shield as shall cover thee over; nay, such a shield as shall cover thee about. I am thy exceeding great reward: I am the almighty God: I will be a God unto thee. This is the very soul of the covenant, and of all the promises of God. All I am is thine; myself, my goods, my glory; whatsoever is in me, all that I have, and all my attributes are thine. My power, my wisdom, my counsel, my goodness, my riches, whatsoever is mine in the whole world, I will give it thee for thy portion. Christians! was not this an exceeding great reward? Who can understand the height, and depth, and length and breadth of this reward? Surely, "happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

6. What is the condition of this covenant?—I answer, The condition of the covenant of grace is faith, and only faith: to this purpose it is said of Abraham, "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." This text is often alleged by the apostles. It is such a belief as is opposed to fainting: as it is said of Jacob, when he heard the report of his sons, that Joseph was alive, his heart fainted, because he believed not; but when he believed, his heart revived; and David said of himself, "I had fainted, unless I had believed." So that it is a lively motion of the heart, assenting unto, and trusting on God, and in the word of God. This was the very condition of the

covenant, which God required of Abraham. "Abraham, dost thou believe that such a Messiah shall be sent into the world! Art thou able to believe?" "Yes, I believe, Lord," said Abraham. "Well" (said God) "I will put thee to the trial: I will give thee a son, though thou art as a dead man, and Sarah as a dead woman: art thou able to believe? Again, thou seest the land of Canaan, thou hast not one foot in it, yet I will give thee this land, for thy possession: art thou able to believe this?" Thus that act of faith, whereby Abraham believed that he should have a son, and that his children should possess the land of Canaan, was a shadow, a pledge of that main act of faith, whereby he believed the promised seed, in whom himself and all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But let this be remembered, that Abraham did not only believe the temporal promises, but every promise; as "I will be thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward:" now, who is our shield but Christ, and who is our reward but Christ? Especially he believed the promise of the seed: and who is the head of the seed but Christ? Yea, he believed in that promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed: and who was that but Christ? "Your father Abraham (saith Christ) rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." How could he see it? "Thou art not yet fifty years old, (said the Jews) and hast thou seen Abraham?" Yes, even then he saw it, when he believed in Christ. He could see it no other way but by an eye of faith; and therefore no question he believed in Christ, and that was counted to him for righteousness.

But (may some say) if faith alone be the condition of the covenant, then what need is there of any obedience, or works of holiness? "A good tree, (saith Christ) is known by its fruit;" and so is right and sound faith: let a man believe in truth, and he cannot but love; and if he love, he cannot but be full of good works. Abraham was justified by faith. But was not this faith accompanied with works? When God bid him offer his son, did he not do it? And was not that an exceeding great work? Surely "his faith wrought with his works, and by faith was works made perfect."

7. Who is the head, upon whom this covenant is established?—I answer, Christ. "All the promises of God in him are yea, and amen, unto the glory of God by us." This was darkly held forth in the first manifestation of the covenant to Adam; but in this second, it is fully expressed, and often repeated; thus, Gen. xii. 3. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And Gen. xviii. 18. "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham." And Gen. xxii. 18. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." By comparing these texts, we have a clear understanding thereof; in thee, in Abraham shall all the families and nations of the earth be blessed; but lest Abraham himself thould be thought author of this universal blessing, an explanation is added. "In thee, that is in thy seed; and this seed, saith the apostle is CHRIST."

OF THE COVENANT OF PROMISE, AS MANIFESTED TO MOSES.

THE next breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to Moses. The avenging justice of God had now seized on mankind for many generations, so that it was high time for God in the midst of wrath to remember mercy, and to break out into a clearer expression of the promise, or covenant of grace. To this purpose the Lord calls up Moses to Mount Sinai, and there, of his infinite love and mercy, he renews his covenant with him and the children of Israel. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Exod. xx. 2.

For the right understanding of this, we shall examine several particulars.

1. Was the law delivered in a covenant-way?—It is evident that it was, because it hath the name and the real properties of a covenant. It has *the name of a covenant* in these texts. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write these words; for after the tenor of these words, I have made a covenant with thee, and with

Israel. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.—And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." The law hath also the real properties of a covenant, which are the mutual consent and stipulation on both sides. You may see a full relation of this in Exod. xxiv. 3—8. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, and all the people answered with one voice, All the words which the Lord hath said we will do: and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning,—and he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words." Here you may observe these properties of a covenant. God on his part expresseth his consent and willingness to be their God: and the people on their part give their full consent to be his servants.

2. In what sense is the law a covenant of grace?—I answer, The law may be considered thus in several senses. Sometimes it signifies any heavenly doctrine, whether it be promise or precept; and in this sense the apostle tells us, "of the law of works, and of the law of faith." Sometimes it signifies any part of the Old Testament, in which sense Jesus answered the Jews, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" Sometimes it signifies the whole œconomy, and peculiar dispensation of God's worship unto the Jews, in which sense it is said to continue until John. Sometimes it is taken for some acts of the law only, "Against such there is no law." Sometimes it is taken only for the ceremonial law, "The law having a shadow of good things to come." Sometimes it is taken for that part of the moral law, which is merely preceptive, without any promise at all. Sometimes it is taken for the whole moral law, with the preface and promises added unto

it; and in this last sense we take it, when we say it is a covenant of grace.

3. How does it appear, that the law in this sense is a covenant of grace?—It appears, 1. By that contract between God and Israel, before the promulgation of the law. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Whereunto the prophet Jeremiah hath reference, saying, "Obey my voice, and do them according to all which I command you: so shall you be my people, and I will be your God." Both these scriptures speak of the moral law, or ten commandments, containing the preface and promises; and how shall that law be any other but a covenant of grace, which runs in this tenor, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; my peculiar treasure; a kingdom of priests, an holy nation; if ye will hear and obey my commandments?" Surely these privileges could never have been obtained by a covenant of works! These are privileges vouchsafed of mere grace in Jesus Christ; and therefore Peter applies this very promise to the people of God under the gospel. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 2. It appears by that contract between God and Israel in the promulgation of the law: then it was that God proclaimed himself to be the God of Israel, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This is a preface to the whole law, prefixed as a reason to persuade obedience to every commandment. But all acknowledge, that it is a free covenant, which promiseth pardon of sin, and requireth faith in the Messiah. When God saith to Israel, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," doth he not propound himself as their King, Judge, Saviour, and Redeemer; yea and spiritual Redeemer from their bondage of sin and Satan, whereof that temporal deliverance from Egypt was a type?

4. Why should God in the law, deal with us in a covenant-way, rather than in a mere absolute supreme way?—I answer, *In respect of God*; it was his

pleasure in giving the law not only to manifest his wisdom, power, and sovereignty, but his faithfulness, truth, love, and the glory of his grace. If he had given the precepts without any promise, he might have discovered his supreme power, but his love and faithfulness could not have been known. "Because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

In respect of us; God would rather deal with us in a covenant-way, than in a mere absolute supreme way, upon these grounds,—1. That he might bind us the faster to himself. A covenant binds on both parts. The Lord doth not bind himself to us, and leave us free; no, "I will bring you (saith God) into the bond of the covenant." You may say, a command binds as well as a covenant; it is true, but a covenant doth as it were twist the cords of the law, and double the precept upon the soul. When it is only a precept, then God alone commands it, but when I have made a promise to it, then I command it and bind it upon myself.

2. That our obedience might be more willing and free. An absolute law might seem to extort obedience, but a covenant makes it appear more free and willing. This is the nature of the covenant of grace. First, God promiseth mercy to be our exceeding great reward; and then we promise obedience, to be his free and willing people; and thus we become God's, not only by a property founded on his sovereign power and love; but by a property growing out of our own voluntary consent. We are not only his people, but his willing people.

3. That our consolations might be stronger. This indeed was the prime end why God delivered his law in way of a covenant, that he might endear himself to us, and so draw us to him with cords of love. Had God pleased, he might have required all obedience from us,

and when we had done all, he might have reduced us into nothing; but his love is such, that he will not only command, but he will covenant, that he might further express and communicate his love. How should this encourage us to go to God in all distresses! O what thankful loving thoughts should we have of God, that would thus infinitely condescend to covenant with us!

5. *What are the good things promised in this expression of the covenant?*—Not to reckon up the temporal promises, the great mercies of God are expressed in these terms, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This is the great promise of the covenant; it is as great as God himself. That we may better see it, and know it, I shall take it in pieces: the gold is so pure, that it is pity the least filing should be lost. Here God describes himself by these notes. 1. By his only eternal and perfect essence, "I am the Lord."—2. By the plurality of persons in that one essence, "I am the Lord God, Jehovah Elohim."—3. By the propriety his people have in Jehovah Elohim, "I am the Lord thy God."—4. By the fruit of that propriety in reference to Israel, "Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

1. "I am Jehovah." This name denotes both his being, and his performance of his promise. Thus he was not known to the patriarchs: they only were sustained by faith in God's almighty power, without receiving the thing promised; but when the Israelites came to receive the promise, and to have full knowledge and experience of his power and goodness, then they knew the efficacy of the name Jehovah.

2. "I am Jehovah *Elohim*." This denotes the plurality of persons. God, in delivering the law, not only shews his being, but the manner of his being; or the trinity of persons in the unity of essence. The word signifies mighty; or if we express it plurally, it signifies the Almighties, or almighty powers: hence the scriptures apply the general name, God, to the persons

severally: the Father is God, Heb.i. 1, 2. The Son is God, Acts xx. 28. And the Holy Ghost is God, Acts v. 3, 4.

3. "I am the Lord thy God." Herein is the propriety, and indeed here is the mercy, that God speaks thus to every faithful soul,—"I am thy God." By this appropriation, God gives us a right in him, yea, a possession of him. A *right* in him, as the woman may say of him to whom she is married, This man is my husband, so may every faithful soul say of the Lord, He is my God. A *possession* of him: God doth not only shew himself unto us, but he doth communicate himself unto us in his holiness, mercy, truth, grace and goodness; hence it is said, "We have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Surely this is the highest happiness of the saints, that God is their God! If we could say, This house is mine, this town, this kingdom, this world is mine, what is all this? But when a Christian comes at length, and says, This God that made all the world is mine, this is enough; indeed this is the greatest promise that ever was made, or ever can be made to any creature. God herein gives himself to be wholly ours. In his essence and glorious attributes he communicates himself to us for good; and God personally considered, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they all enter into covenant with us. The Father promiseth to be a Father to us; hence, saith the Lord, "Israel is my son, my first born." The Son speaks to us in this language, "Thou art mine," I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; and therefore thou art mine." This is Christ's covenant with us: he brings us back to his Father, from whose presence we were banished, and sets us before his face for ever: he promiseth to restore us to the adoption and inheritance of sons. What the Father hath purposed, and the Son hath purchased for us, the Holy Ghost effects in us: he applies the blood of Christ for remission of sins; he writes the law in our hearts; he comforts us in our sadness; he supports us in our faintings, and guides us in our wanderings. Thus Elohim, God personally considered, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are in covenant with us.

6. What is the condition of this covenant on our part?—The condition of this covenant, is faith in Jesus, which is implied in the promise, "I will be thy God, or, I am the Lord thy God;" and commanded in the precept built upon it, "Thou shalt have me to be thy God, or, Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But where is faith in Jesus Christ mentioned either in promise or precept? I answer, if it be not expressed, it is very plainly intended. God is not the God of Israel, but in and through the Mediator; neither can Israel take God to be their God, but by faith in the Messiah. But to go no further, what is the meaning of this first commandment in the affirmative part, but to "have one God in Christ to be our God by faith?" It is true, there is no mention made of Christ, or faith; but that is nothing. There is no mention of love, and yet our Saviour discovers it there. When the lawyer tempted Christ, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" you know Christ's answer, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first, and great commandment." Now, as our Saviour discovers love there, so in like manner, are faith and Christ there the necessary consequents.

But you may object, What say we to obedience? Is not that rather the condition of this covenant in the law? The law is considered either more strictly, as it is only a rule of righteousness, holding forth life upon no other terms but perfect obedience; or more largely, as that whole doctrine delivered on mount Sinai, with the preface and promises adjoined: in the former sense it is a covenant of works; but in the latter sense it is a covenant of grace.—And yet I dare not say, That as the law is a covenant of grace, it doth exclude obedience. In some sort obedience as well as faith may be said to be a condition of the covenant of grace. I shall give you my thoughts in this distinction. Obedience to all God's commandments is either considered as a cause of life, or as a qualification. In the former sense it cannot be a condition of the covenant of grace, but in the latter it may. If by condition we understand whatsoever

is required on our part, as precedent, concomitant or subsequent to the covenant of grace, repentance, faith and obedience are all conditions; but if by condition we understand whatsoever is required on our part, as the *cause* of the good promised, though only instrumental; then, faith is the only condition. Faith and obedience are opposed in the matter of justification and salvation, not that they cannot stand together; (for they are inseparably united) but because they cannot meet together, as the cause of our justification and salvation. Now, when we speak of the condition of the covenant of grace, we intend such a condition as is among the number of true causes. Indeed in the covenant of works, obedience is required as the cause of life; but in the covenant of grace, though obedience must accompany faith, yet not obedience but only faith is the cause of life contained in the covenant.

7. Who was the Mediator of this covenant?—Moses was a typical, but Christ the spiritual Mediator; and herein was Moses privileged above all before him; he was the mediator of the Old Testament, Christ reserving himself to be the Mediator of a better covenant. There is however a great difference between Moses and Christ. Moses only received the law, and delivered it unto the people; but Christ our true Moses fulfilled it. Moses broke the tables, to shew how we in our nature had broken the law; but Christ our true Moses repairs it. Moses had the law only writ in tables of stone; but Christ writes it in the tables of our hearts. Moses was mere man; but Christ is God as well as man. Moses was only a servant in God's house; but Christ is a son; yea, Christ is Lord of his own house the church: Moses' mediation was to shew what was the true manner of worshipping God; but he did not give power to follow it; he could not reconcile men to God; and therefore it appeared, that there was need of another reconciler,—the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. What do we find of Christ, and of his death in this manifestation of the covenant? I answer, In *delivering* the law we find something of Christ.

2. In the law itself, as it is a covenant of grace, we find something of him.—In the preface he proclaims himself to be our God; and in the first commandment we are bound to take this God to be our God; and in the second he gives us a double motive to obey: "For I the Lord thy God, am a jealous God; I shew mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." And in the fifth commandment he gives a promise of long life in Canaan, which is either to be looked at as a type of heaven, or literally, for a prosperous condition here on earth. Now, all these promises are made in Christ. God is not our God but in and through Jesus Christ. God will not shew mercy unto thousands, nor unto one of all the thousands of his saints, but as they are in Jesus Christ. God will not give us long life here, or eternal life hereafter, but in, for, and through the Lord Jesus Christ. What if Moses writ not down the word Christ; yet certainly Moses wrote of Christ: his words imply Christ, as Christ himself told the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for Moses wrote of me." Surely Christ was, if not the only subject, yet the only scope of all the writings of Moses; and therefore in the law itself, you see we find something of Christ.

3. In the *exposition* of the law, as Moses gives it here and there, we find something of Christ.—Yea, if we observe it, Moses brought something more to the expression of Christ, and the covenant of grace, than ever was before. In the first promise it was revealed, that Christ should be the seed of the woman. In the second manifestation of the promise it was revealed, that Christ should be the seed of Abraham; but in Moses' writings, we learn more expressly, that Christ should be incarnate, and have his conversation amongst men. The promise runs thus, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God, and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them; I am the Lord their God." Again, Moses writing of Christ "The Lord thy God (saith he) will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of

thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken." Was not this a plain expression? Peter, in his sermon to the Jews, preached Jesus Christ, and tells them that this "Jesus Christ was preached unto them before;" even in Moses' time; and for proof he cites this very text, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you."

4. In the *confirmation* of the law, we find something of Christ.—It was confirmed by seals and sacrifices. What were all these but a type of Christ? In the former expression of the covenant we found the seal of circumcision, but now it pleased God to add unto the former another seal for the confirmation of their faith, namely, the passover. And was not this a type of Christ, the immaculate Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world? Again in this manifestation, Moses brought in the priesthood, as a settled ordinance to offer sacrifices for the people. And was not this a type of Christ, our true and unchangeable high priest? No question the death and resurrection of Christ, the priesthood and kingdom of Christ, were prefigured by the sacrifices, brazen serpent, the priesthood of Aaron, and the kingdom of Israel. And I cannot but think, that the godly spiritual Jews understood this very well; and that these did not rest in sacrifices or sacraments, but that by faith they did really enjoy Christ in each of them.

5. In the *intention* of God's, giving the law we find something of Christ.—The very end of God in holding forth the law was, that upon the sense of our impossibility to keep it, and of our danger to break it, we should desire earnestly, and seek out diligently for Jesus Christ. To this purpose, saith the apostle, "The law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith;" a school-master, you know, doth not only correct, but also teach: so the law doth not only condemn, if the work be not done, but it shews that power and help must be had, from the Lord Jesus Christ. If this be so, how much to blame are they that, under pretence of free grace and Christ, cry down the law!

Rather let us cry it up, and this is the way to set up free grace and Christ. Surely he that discovers his defects by the perfect rule of the law, and whose soul is humbled because of these defects, must prize Christ, desire Christ, advance Christ in his thoughts, above all men in the world.

OF THE COVENANT OF PROMISE, AS MANIFESTED TO DAVID.

The next breaking forth of this gracious covenant was to David; and in this manifestation appears yet more of Christ. The expression of it is chiefly in these words, "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." For the right understanding of this we shall examine the following particulars:

1. Who is the author of this covenant?—David says, He, God the rock of Israel, the everlasting rock; "the rock of their salvation." The psalmist frequently uses such figures as these, to shew that God is the mighty, and immutable foundation and defence of all the faithful.

2. To whom is the covenant made?—David saith, "He hath made with *me* an everlasting covenant," either with Christ the antitype, or else with David himself, the type of Christ. Some are wholly for a covenant between God and Christ; and they deny any such thing as a covenant between God and man; but are not the testimonies express? "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." "And I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Take heed of such doctrines as tend unto licentiousness! The covenant God makes with us binds us faster to God; and if there be no covenant between God and us, it opens a gap to the looseness of our spirits; for how should we be charged with unfaithfulnes unto God, if we have not at all entered into a covenant with him?

3. How is the covenant said to be ordered?—The word "ordered" sets out to us a marshalling of things

together, in opposition to disorder and confusion. As we see in the army, every one is set in rank and file, so is every thing in this covenant, ranked, disposed, ordered, that it stands at best advantage to receive and repel the enemy.

4. Wherein is the covenant sure?—I answer it is sure in the performance and accomplishment of it. Hence the promises of the covenant are called "the sure mercies of David," not because they are sure unto David alone, but because they are sure unto all the seed of David that are in covenant with God, as David was. The promises of God's covenant are not "yea and nay," various and uncertain, but they are "yea and amen," sure to be fulfilled. Hence the stability of God's covenant is compared to the firmness and unmoveableness of the mighty mountains; nay, "mountains may depart, and the hills be removed" by a miracle, but "my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Sooner shall the rocks be removed, the fire cease to burn, the sun be turned into darkness, and the very heavens be confounded with the earth, than the promise of God shall fail.

5. Christ is more clearly manifested in this breaking forth of the covenant than in any of the former.—For here we see, 1. That he was God and man in one person; David's son, and yet David's Lord. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." 2. That he suffered for us: and in his sufferings how many particulars are discovered? As, first, his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Secondly, The Jews' taunts, "He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him if he delight in him." Thirdly, the very manner of his death, "They pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me: they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." 3. That he rose again for us; "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption." 4. That he ascended up into heaven; "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast

led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men." 5. That he must be King over us, and over his enemies: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." 6. That he must be a priest, as well as a king; and a sacrifice, as well as a priest. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not have, but mine ear hast thou bored; burnt-offering, and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then, said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O God." See how clearly Christ is revealed in this expression of the covenant! It was never thus before.

OF THE COVENANT OF PROMISE, AS MANIFESTED TO ISRAEL ABOUT THE TIME OF THE CAPTIVITY.

By reason of the captivity of Babylon Israel was almost destroyed; and therefore then it was high time, that the Lord should appear like a sun after a stormy rain, and give them some clearer light of Christ. He doth so, especially in these words; "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord,) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith

the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." In this expression of the covenant we shall examine these particulars:—

1. Why is it called a new covenant?—It is called new in contradiction to the covenant of promise before Christ came. The very same words here are repeated in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth, and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." The new covenant is usually understood in the latter sense: it is new because diverse from that which God made with their fathers before Christ; it hath a new worship, new adoration, a new form of the church, new witnesses, new tables, new ordinances; and these never to be disannulled, never to wax old, as the apostle speaks.

2. Wherein doth this covenant excel the former, which God made with their fathers?—1. It excels in the benefits and graces of the Spirit.—We find that under this covenant they were more plentifully bestowed upon the church than formerly. "I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them, and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up; and I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.—And I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more."

2. It excels in the discovery of the Mediator, in and through whom the covenant was made.—In the former expressions we discovered much; yet in none of them was so plainly revealed the time of his coming, the place of his birth, his name the passages of his nativity, his humiliation and kingdom, as we find them in this.

Concerning the time of his coming.—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

Concerning the place of his birth.—"But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Concerning his name.—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Concerning the passages of his nativity.—That he should be born of a virgin. That at his birth all the infants round about Bethlehem should be slain. That John the Baptist should be his forerunner, to prepare his way. That he should flee into Egypt, and be recalled thence again. I might add many particulars of this kind.

Concerning his humiliation.—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth.—He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.—It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.—Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the

transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." One would think this were rather a history than a prophecy of Christ's sufferings.

Concerning his kingdom.—"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

He is a King, and therefore able. He is thy King, and therefore willing. Wonderful love, that he would come; but more wonderful was the manner of his coming: he that before made man a soul after the image of God, then made himself a body after the image of man. And thus we see how this covenant excels the former in each of these respects.

3. How doth God put the law into our inward parts?—God puts the law into our inward parts, by enlivening a man with the graces of God's Spirit suitable to his commandment. There is the law of God without us, as we see it, or read it in scripture, but when it is put within us, then God hath wrought an inward disposition in our minds, that answers to the law without us. For example, this is the law without, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." To answer which there is a promise, "I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Now when this promise is fulfilled, then is the law put in our inward parts.

4. What is it to have the law written in our hearts?—This writing contains the former, and is something more. It is said to be written, that there might be something within answerable to the law without. Oh! what a mercy is this, that the same God, who wrote the law with his own finger in tables of stone, should also write the same law with the finger of his Spirit in the tables of our hearts! As you see in the wax the same impression that was on the seal; so in the hearts of the faithful, the Spirit stamps an inward disposition, answering to every particular of the law. It is said to be

written, that it might be rooted and riveted in the heart, as, when letters are engraven in marble. If God write, it can never be obliterated. If Pilate could say, "What I have written, I have written," how much more may God? Hence are all those promises of performance: "My covenant shall stand fast with him." "The root of the righteous shall not be moved." I deny not but men of great gifts may fall away, but surely the poorest Christian that hath but the smallest measure of grace, shall never fall away. If the law be written in our hearts, it still remains there. Sooner will the sun discard its own beams, than Christ desert the least measure of true grace, which is a beam from the Sun of Righteousness.

5. How are we taught of God, so as not to need any other kind of teaching comparatively?—God teacheth inwardly.—"In the hidden part thou hast made me know wisdom," saith David. And again, "I thank the Lord, that gave me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season." The reins are the most inward parts of the body, and the night season, the most retired, and private time: both express the intimacy of Divine teaching. "God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts." Man's light may shine into the head; but God's light doth shine into the heart. God teacheth clearly.—If ever the word come home to a heart, it comes with a convincing clearness. So the apostle, "Our gospel came unto you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." God teacheth sweetly and comfortably.—"Thou hast taught me," saith David, and then it follows, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Luther said, "He would not live in Paradise, if he must live without the word." Christ in ordinances doth as Mary, open a box of ointments, which diffuseth a spiritual savour in church-assemblies, and this only the spiritual Christian feels. These are the teachings of God, and in reference to this, "We shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord."

6. What is the universality of this knowledge?—"They shall all know me from the least of them, to the

greatest of them, saith the Lord." The meaning is, that although God hath several forms in his school; fathers for experience, young men for strength, and babes for the truth and being of grace; yet that all who are in the covenant of grace, shall be so taught of God, that they shall every one know him inwardly, clearly, sweetly, and savingly.

7. How is God said to "forgive iniquity, and never more to remember sin?"—God is said to "forgive iniquity," when the guilt of sin is taken away, and "never more to remember sin," in that the sinner after pardon is never more looked on as a sinner. Here is our comfort, that when God hath pardoned sin, he takes away the guilt as to condemnation; he now looks upon him not as a sinner, but as a just man; and so in this sense he will forgive, and never more remember his sin.

I have now shewn that a thread of the gospel and of the covenant of grace, runs through the whole of the Old Testament. I have also set before you the object we are to look unto, namely, Jesus, as held forth in a way of promise or covenant, in that dark time from the creation till his first coming in the flesh. Our next business is to direct you how to look to him in this respect.

CHAPTER II.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation from the Creation until his first coming.—Of considering—desiring—hoping—believing—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in this respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION FROM THE CREATION UNTIL HIS FIRST COMING.

CHRIST made the world for us, and he made us more especially for his own glory; but presently after we were made, we sinned and marred the image wherein God made us. This was the saddest act that ever was; it was the undoing of man, and (without God's mercy) the damning of all souls both of men and women to all eternity. But blessed be God for Jesus Christ! At the very instant when all would have been damned, Christ intervened; a covenant of grace was made with man, and Christ is the foundation, in and through whom we must be reconciled unto God. Come, O my soul, and study this covenant of grace in reference to thyself. Had not this been, where hadst thou been? Nay, where had all the world been at this day? Surely it concerns thee to take notice of this great transaction. Come, study the several breakings out of the covenant of grace: it is worth thy pains, it is "a mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints." Here lies the first and most firm foundation of a Christian's comfort; if thou canst but study this, and assure thyself of thy part in it, thou art blessed for ever. O how incomparably sweet and satisfying is it to a self-studying Christian, to

know the faithful engagements of the Almighty God, through the Son of his love, in a covenant of grace.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

It is not enough to know this subject, but we must seriously meditate upon, and consider it.

1. Consider Jesus in the first promise made to Adam; "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."—When all men were under the guilt of sin, and in the power of Satan, and when thou, my soul, wert in as bad a case as any other, then to hear of a Saviour and Redeemer, sure this was welcome news! Come draw the case nearer to thyself, thou wast in Adam's loins; suppose thou hadst been in Adam's stead, and had found that after having been one day the monarch of the world thou wert become the slave of Satan, and condemned to be tormented with the devil and his angels. O what would then have been thy feelings, if thou hadst heard that a deliverance would be wrought out for thee by the promised seed? In this promise, O my soul, is folded and wrapped up thy hope, thy heaven, thy salvation; and therefore consider it; view it over and over: it is a field that contains a precious treasure: there is in it a Saviour, a Redeemer, a deliverer from sin, death and hell.

2. Consider Jesus in the promise made to Abraham; "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." —In respect of this covenant Abraham is called "the father of the faithful," and they which are of the faith, are called the children of Abraham. And, O my soul, if thou art in covenant with God, surely thou dost by faith draw it through Abraham, to whom this promise was made; for "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Consider what a mercy is this, that God should enter into a covenant with thee in Abraham. God makes a promise of Christ, and inclusively a covenant of grace, in his comforting Adam, but he makes a covenant expressly under

the name of covenant with Abraham and his seed. O muse, and be amazed that the great and glorious God of heaven and earth should be willing to enter into a covenant! Think of it seriously: he is in heaven, and thou art on earth: he is the Creator, and thou art his creature: "Ah, what art thou, or what is thy father's house, that thou shouldest be raised up hitherto?" When Jehoshaphat and Ahab were in covenant, Jehoshaphat said, "I am, as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." So it is between God and us; if once he give us the covenant, then his strength is our strength, his power is our power, his attributes are our attributes, we have interest in all. Thus runs the tenor of his covenant, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." This is the general promise: consider that it is God in Christ that is held forth to us in this phrase, I will be a God to thee. Here is the greatest promise that ever was made: Christ, God, is more than grace, pardon, holiness, heaven; as the fountain of life is of more excellency than the streams.

3. Consider Jesus in the promise made to Moses and the Israelites; "I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—Here is an overflowing blessing, which none can rightly value; it is no less than the great and mighty, and infinite God; if we had a promise of a hundred worlds, or of ten heavens, this is more than all. Consider the greatness of this promise, "I am the Lord thy God!" No question but Moses had many other rich promises from God, but he could not be satisfied without God himself; "If thy presence be not with us, bring us not hence." And no wonder, for without God all things are nothing; but in the want of all other things, God himself is instead of all: it is God's alone prerogative to be an universal good. The things of this world can but help in this or that particular thing: as bread against hunger, drink against thirst, clothes against cold and nakedness, riches against poverty, physic against sickness; but God is an all-sufficient good; he is all in all. Are we guilty of sin? there is mercy in God to pardon us. Are we beset by corruptions? There is power

in God to subdue them. Are we disquieted in conscience? There is that Spirit in God that can fill us with joy unspeakable and glorious. God may be enjoyed in any condition, in the meanest as well as the greatest, in the poorest as well as the richest: God will go into a wilderness, into a prison with his people, and there he will make up all their deficiences.

4. Consider Jesus in the promise made to David; "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."—Christ hath prepared a kingdom which shall never fade, a spiritual and a heavenly kingdom that shall never cease; and as he hath prepared it, so, if thou believest, he hath entered into a covenant with thy soul, to bestow it on thee: it is an everlasting covenant, and he will give thee everlasting life.

5. Consider Jesus in that new covenant or promise, which God made with Israel and Judah; "I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—O my soul, if thou art in covenant with God, there is a certain spiritual power, or principle of grace, which Christ by his Spirit hath put into thy heart, enabling thee in some measure to move thyself towards God. Consider this inward principle, it is an excellent subject worthy of thy consideration!

"I will be their God." This is the great promise of the new covenant; it is as great as God is: though the heavens and the heaven of heavens be not able to contain him, yet this promise contains him; "I will be their God."

"They shall be my people." God looks upon all other things with indifference in comparison of his people. "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." The saints are those that God hath set his heart upon: they are children of God, the spouse of the Lamb: they are nearer God in some respects than

the angels themselves, for the angels are not in a mystical union so united to Christ, as God's people are. Oh, the happiness of saints! "I will be their God, and they shall be my people!"

"They shall teach no more every many his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Consider this! Oh, poor soul, thou complainest many a time of thy weakness, thou knowest little or nothing: why, see here a glorious promise; if thou art but in covenant with God, thou shalt "be taught of God." He will open unto thee all his treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Not that private instruction, or public ministry must be excluded: these are appointed, and are subordinate to the Spirit's teaching. Consider if thou art thus taught of God!

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." O my soul, if thou hast a right to this promise, thou art delivered from eternal death, and art entitled to an eternal kingdom. Know thy blessedness aright! consider how infinitely thou art indebted to God and Christ, and mercy, and free grace! This promise sounds forth nothing but grace and blessing: —grace from God, and blessing on us: it is grace, because nothing but grace and mercy can forgive; it is grace, because God, if he will, hath power in his hand to revenge. O then let thy inmost thoughts and deep affections be exercised on this subject. If God and Jesus, and all thy good be included here, why should not thy whole soul be intent on this? Why shouldest thou spend it on the creature? Why shouldest thou be so subject to carnal griefs and fears? Surely all these are fitter to be fixed on God in Christ, on Jesus in a covenant of grace.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

It is not enough to know and consider Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in a covenant-way before his coming in the flesh, but we must also desire an interest in that covenant. No sooner has the soul by the Spirit been enabled to know and consider

the covenant, than the affections begin to stir, and the soul begins to long after an interest in it. Its language then is, O that I might obtain a share in these blessings! I would fain be in covenant with God, for "this is all my salvation and all my desire."

1. Come, then, O my soul, and desire an interest in the covenant.—Say in thyself, Is the Lord willing to receive me to his grace? Was that his proclamation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: incline your ear and come unto me;—And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And are these the promises offered in the covenant? "I will put my law into your inward parts, and I will write it in your hearts, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Oh, the blessed condition of those that are in covenant with God! "Blessed art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord!" But, ah! what can I say? No sin is like unto my sin; no misery is like unto my misery! I am an alien to God, I am separated from his people, I am out of the covenant. Like the poor Prodigal, I die for hunger, while those that are in my Father's house have bread enough: Oh that I were in their condition! Never did David long more for the waters of the well of Bethlehem, than my soul now touched with the sense of sin, doth desire to be at peace with God, and in covenant with him.

2. Desire thy improvement of the covenant.—It may be God hath given thee an interest in it, but, alas! thy hold is so weak, that thou scarce knowest the meaning of it. The Lord may answer, but yet he speaks darkly as he spake to the woman, "Go thy way, and sin no more." It was a middle kind of expression, neither assuring her that her sin was pardoned, nor yet putting her her out of hope that it might be pardoned; so it may be God hath given thee some little ease, but he hath not spoken full peace: go on then and desire more confirmation. Say in thine heart, O Lord, thou hast begun to shew grace unto thy servant; but, oh, manifest to me all thy goodness. Thou hast given me a drop, and I feel it so sweet, that now I thirst, and long to enjoy the fountain. Thou hast given me a taste, but my appetite

is not hereby diminished, but enlarged; and good reason, for what are these drops and tastes, but only "the first fruits and earnests of the Spirit?" Oh then, what are those harvests of joy? What are those treasures of wisdom, and free grace hid in God? I have indeed beheld "a feast of fat things," but, what a famine is yet in my soul! Lord I have longed for thy salvation. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

3. Desire after continuance of thy covenant-state.—Many a one cannot deny but that the Lord hath shewed mercy to him, but he fears that he shall not hold out: he feels within such a power of corruption, such strong temptations, that now he doubts, what will be the issue. Come now, and desire perseverance: Come with these pantings and breathings after God: put forth thy desires in these and the like expressions, "O Lord," thou hast said, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." Thou hast said, "The saints shall be kept by the power of God." And if these be thy sayings, then, Lord, I desire the accomplishment! O fulfil what thou hast said. My desires are like thyself, infinite, everlasting desires.

4. Desire Jesus, the all in all, in the covenant of grace.—The most proper object of desire to fallen man is Jesus Christ. Hence it is, that a poor sinner, under the sense of sin, cries out with that vehemency of desire, "Christ, and none but Christ: give me Christ, or I am lost for ever." But what is Christ to a covenant of grace? He is the great business, he is the all in all. He is the Messenger of the covenant; the Witness of the covenant; the Surety of the covenant; the Mediator of the covenant; and the Testator of the covenant.

O what fuel is here to set our desires on flame! Come, soul, and bend thy desires towards Christ, as the sunflower towards the sun, the iron to the load-stone, and the load-stone to the pole-star. Yea, the nearer thou drawest towards Christ, the more do thou desire him. If David could say, "My soul breaks for the longings that it hath to thy judgments at all times," how mayest thou say, "My soul breaks for the longings that it hath to thy mercies, and my Jesus at all times!" I gasp for grace, as the thirsty land for drops of rain; I thirst, I

faint, I long for a draught of the "fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." My thirst is insatiable; my desire after Jesus in reference to the covenant, is "greedy as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Hope is a confidence that a desired good will come. If the grounds be weak, then hope is doubtful, or presumptuous; but if the grounds be right, then hope is right, and we may cast anchor, and build upon it.

If thou art in covenant with God, then hath God wrought in thee that condition of the covenant, a true and lively faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." This is so sure a way of trial, that the apostle himself directs us thereunto; "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." But how shall I examine, for there are many pretenders to faith in these days? Why, thus, True faith uniteth to Christ, overcometh the world, worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and is founded upon the sense and pain of a lost condition. I know, Satan argues, "Thou art not worthy of Christ, and therefore what hast thou to do with Christ? but faith concludes otherwise, I am not worthy of Christ; I am out of measure sinful; I tremble at it, and therefore I ought and must come to Christ;" for what is faith, but the act of a sinner humbled, weary, poor, and self-condemned? Hast thou this faith in Jesus? O then hope in him! Draw on thy hope yet more and more: be not content only with a hope of expectation, but bring it on to a hope of assurance: thou canst not fail if thou hangest thy hope on Jesus.

OF BELIEVING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

In order to assist you to believe in Jesus,

1. Consider the gracious nature of God.—That which undoes broken hearts and trembling souls is misconceiving of God. We have many times low thoughts of God's goodness, but large thoughts of his power and wrath;

now to rectify these misapprehensions, consider his name, and therein his nature: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin."

2. Consider the gracious nature of Jesus Christ.—Our thoughts of God are necessarily more strange than of Christ, because of our infinite distance from the Godhead; but in Christ, God is come down into our nature, and so infinite goodness is incarnate. Art thou afraid, O my soul, at his name Jah, and Jehovah! remember his name is Emmanuel: the lion is here disrobed of his garment of terror. See thy God disrobed of his terrible Majesty: see thy God is a Man, and thy Judge is a Brother. O that name Jesus! it sounds healing for every wound, settlement for every distraction, comfort for every sorrow. But here is the misery, souls in distress had rather be poring on hell than heaven.

3. Consider those tender offers of Christ, which are made in the gospel.—What is the sum of all the gospel, but this?—"Take Christ, and life in Christ, that thou mayest be saved:" God is the first suitor; he first prays the soul to take Christ. Hark at the door! Who is it that calls now, even now? "Open unto me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." What are these the entreaties of Jesus? And, O my soul, wilt thou not believe? Wilt thou not accept of this gracious offer of Christ? O consider who is this that proclaimeth, inviteth, beseecheth! If a poor man should offer thee mountains of gold, thou mightest doubt of performance, because he is not of that power; if a covetous rich man should offer thee thousands of silver, thou mightest doubt of performance, because it is contrary to his nature; but Christ is neither poor, nor covetous: He is able, and he is gracious, and his nature is to be faithful in performance. His covenant is sealed with his blood, and confirmed by his oath, that all shall have pardon that will believe.

4. Consider the command on thee to believe.—"This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Surely this command

should infinitely out-weigh all other countermands of flesh and blood, of Satan, nature, reason, sense, and all the world. Why, this command is thy very ground and warrant, against which the gates of hell can never prevail. When Abraham had a command to kill his only son, with his own hand, though it was a matter of as great grief as possibly could pierce his heart, yet he would readily submit to it; how much more shouldst thou obey, when God commands no more but that thou shouldst "believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." There is no evil in this command: No, it comprehends in it all good imaginable. Have Christ, and thou hast with him the excellency and variety of all blessings both of heaven and earth. Have Christ, and thou hast with him a discharge of all those endless torments of hell. Have Christ, and thou hast with him the glorious Deity itself to be enjoyed through him to all eternity.

5. Consider the messages of Christ, which he daily sends by the hands of his ministers.—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." What a wonder is here! Would not an earthly prince disdain to send unto his rebellious slaves for reconcilement? It is otherwise with Christ. He is glad to sue to us first, and to send his ambassadors day after day, beseeching us to be reconciled unto him. Incomprehensible depth of unspeakable mercy and encouragement to come to Christ! Wilt thou take Christ to thy bridegroom, and forsake all others; this is the message which God hath bid me to deliver to thee. Shall God be thy God, and Christ thy Christ? Wilt thou have the person of Christ, and all those privileges flowing from the blood of Christ? Surely thou art willing. Take him as thy Saviour and Lord, and forsake all others for him. This is true faith, the condition of the covenant. Believe in Jesus, and the covenant is established, and all doubts removed.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

In order to assist thy love, I will set before thee the love of God, and then thou canst not but love.

1. Consider the time of his love.—He loved thee before the world was made; hast thou not heard, and wilt thou ever forget it? Was not his love from all eternity astonishing? He loved thee in the very beginning of the world. Was not the promise expressed to Adam, intended for thee? As thou sinnedst in his loins, so didst thou not in his loins receive the promise, "It shall bruise thy head?" And not long after, when God established his covenant with Abraham and his seed, wast not thou one of that seed of Abraham? "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." He loves thee now more especially, not only with a love of benevolence, as before, but with a love of complacency: not only hath he struck covenant with Christ, with Adam, with Abraham in thy behalf; but particularly and personally with thyself. And O what a love is this! If God loved thee before thou hadst a being; yea, before the world, or any creature in it had a being; how much more now! O the heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of this immeasurable love! O, my soul, I cannot express the love of God in Christ to thee: I but draw the picture of the sun with a coal, when I endeavour to express God's love in Christ.

2. The effects of his love.—God so loves thee, as that he hath entered into a covenant with thee. O what a love is this! Tell me, O my soul, is there not an infinite disparity between God and thee? He is God above, and thou art a worm below: "He is the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy," and thou art less than the least of all the mercies of God. O wonder at such a condescension! Had we the tongues of men and angels, we could never express it. God so loves thee, as that in the covenant he gives thee all his promises; indeed what is the covenant but a heap of promises! As a cluster of stars makes a constellation, so a mass of promises concurreth in the covenant of grace. Christians, stand amazed! What love is this to the children of men! Oh that we should live to have our ears filled with this sound from heaven, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee, I am the Lord

thy God, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Set before thee all the passages of God's love in Christ: are not these strong attractives to gain thy love? Shall not all this love of God in Christ to thee constrain thy love? God in Christ is the very element of love; and whither should thy love be carried but to the ocean of love.

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Such is the excellency of spiritual joy, that it is reserved for heaven: God will not permit it to be pure and perfect here below; and yet such as it is, it is a blessed duty; it is the light of our souls. O, my soul, exercise this joy. Is there not cause? Come, see and own thy blessedness: take notice of the great things the Lord hath done for thee. He hath made a covenant with thee of temporal mercies. Thy bread is by covenant; thy sleep is by covenant; thy safety from sword is by covenant; the very tilling of thy land is by a covenant of grace. Ezek. xxxvi. 34. He hath made a covenant with thee of spiritual mercies. God is become thy God: he is all things to thee: he hath forgiven thy sins; he hath given thee his Spirit, to lead thee, to sanctify thee, to uphold thee in that state wherein thou standest; and at last he will bring thee to a full enjoyment of himself in glory. O lift up thy head, strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees; serve the Lord with gladness and joyfulness of spirit, considering the day of thy salvation draweth nigh. Write it in letters of gold, that THY GOD IS IN COVENANT WITH THEE, TO LOVE THEE, TO BLESS THEE, AND TO SAVE THEE. I know these objects rejoice not every heart: a man out of covenant, if he look on God he is a consuming fire; if on the law, it is a sentence of condemnation; if on the earth, it brings forth thorns by reason of sins; if on heaven, the gate is shut. But, O my soul, this is not thy case: a man in covenant with God looks on all these things with another eye. If he look on God, he saith, This is my Father; if on Christ, This is my elder brother; if on angels, These are my keepers; if on heaven, This is my house. Come, poor soul, is it not thus with thee?

Art thou in covenant with God? Or art thou not? If yet thou doubtest, review thy grounds of hope, and leave not there, till thou come up to some measure of assurance; but if thou art persuaded of thy interest, O then rejoice therein. If there be in thee any rejoicing faculty, now awake and stir it up: it is the Lord thy God, whom thou art to rejoice in: it is he whom the glorious spirits joy in: it is he who is the top of heaven's joy, their exceeding joy: and it is he who is thy God as well as their God. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, and let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

We must call on Jesus, or on God the Father, in and through Jesus, in reference to this gracious covenant. Now, this calling on God contains prayer and praise.

1. We must pray, we must use arguments of faith challenging God, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; Why? for thou art the Lord my God." This covenant is the ground on which all prayers must be founded: The covenant we know contains all the promises, and what is prayer but promises turned into petitions? Thus prayed the prophet Jeremiah; "Do not abhor us for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us.—Why? Art not thou the Lord our God?" And thus prayed the prophet Isaiah; "Be not wroth very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever, behold we beseech thee;" and why so? "We are all thy people." Is thy soul troubled for want of strength to do this or that duty? Go to God and Christ, and say, "Lord, thou knowest I have no strength of myself, I am a barren wilderness, but thou hast entered into a covenant with me, that thou wilt put thy law into my inward parts, thou wilt cause me to keep thy judgments and do them." Here is the way; in every strait, flee to God and Christ, saying, "Thou art our Father, and we are thy people, O break not thy covenant with us."

2. We must praise.—If we would have the blessing let us seek it with a purpose to have grace exalted; thus

Moses sought pardon, that God's mercy might appear; and Christ prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," and presently there came a voice out of the cloud, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." If we have the blessing already, then let us ascribe the glory unto him that hath made good his promise unto us. We should make the praise of his grace to ring through the world, that heaven and earth might take notice of it, and wonder at the grace that hath been shewed unto us. "I will mention the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies; and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses." See how the prophet mentions the kindnesses, the lovingkindnesses, the multitude of his lovingkindnesses: the goodness, and the great goodness of God: he would have God and grace to have all the glory. O my soul, hath God entered thee into a covenant of grace? Why then, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

We must conform to Jesus, in reference to this covenant of grace.—"We are changed by beholding, into the same image." If we look unto Jesus in this respect, this look will have such an influence upon us, that we shall conform to Jesus. But wherein consists this conformity? I answer, in these several particulars.

1. God in Christ offers a covenant of grace to us; so we, through Christ, should embrace this gracious offer.—God is first with us; he is the first mover, he begins with us before we begin with him, "I will bring them (saith God) into the bond of the covenant." Now, in this let us conform: doth he offer? Let us embrace the offer! Doth he lead the way? Let us follow him step by step in that very way: let not us prescribe unto God, let not us presume to appoint the conditions of the covenant; but, take God and Christ upon his own terms: submit to that way of the covenant, and to those con-

ditions of peace which the Lord prescribeth. O my soul hast thou come thus by little and little to touch the top of Christ's golden sceptre? Why, then is thy hand given to God, then art thou entered into a covenant of peace. Christ's offering, and thy receiving the covenant of grace, bear a sweet agreement, a harmonious conformity.

2. God in Christ keeps covenant with us; so we through Christ should be careful to keep covenant with God.—The Lord never will, never hath broken the covenants on his part; but, alas, we on our parts have broken the first covenant of works; take heed we break not the second, for then there remains no place for any more covenants with us. Sundry acts of faith are required to this keeping of the covenant. As in the things to be believed, faith looks on the promise; so in things to be practised, faith looks upon the command. Faith will present no strange fire before the Lord: it knows, that God will accept of nothing but what is according to his own will. As faith takes direction from the rule, so in keeping of the covenant it directs us to the right end, that is, to the glory of God: we are of him, and live in him, and by faith we must live to him, and for him: Faith shields the soul against all hinderances that it meets with. Sometimes we are tempted on the right hand by the baits and allurements of the world;" All these will I give thee, saith the world, if thou wilt be mine;" but then faith overcomes the world, by setting before us better things than these. Sometimes we are tempted on the left hand with crosses and sufferings for the name of Christ, but then faith helps us to overcome, by setting before us the end of our faith and patience. Faith furnisheth the soul with strength and ability to keep the covenant, by directing it to Christ, in whom all fulness of grace and strength is treasured up for his people.

O my soul, art thou acquainted with these acts of faith, enabling thee in some good measure to keep covenant with God? Then is there a sweet conformity between thee and Jesus.

3. God in Christ hath highly honoured us, as his people; so we through Christ should honour him highly,

as our God.—We are all willing to be in covenant with God, that we may sit upon thrones, and possess a kingdom; but we must think especially of setting up the Lord upon his throne. "Ascribe greatness to our God," saith Moses. Make it a name, and a praise unto him. Who shall honour him if his people will not? The world knows him not. "God is not in all their thoughts." And shall God have no honour? O yes! the Lord himself answers, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.

But how should we honour God? I answer,—

1. We must set him up as chief and highest in our esteem.—Thus Moses, "Who is like unto thee amongst the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Thus David, "Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears." And thus should we rise up in our thoughts and apprehensions of God, until we come to a holy extacy and admiration of God.

2. We must count it our blessedness and highest dignity to be a people in covenant with God.—If when we are counted as things of naught, we can quiet ourselves in this, that "God is our God;" if when we are persecuted, imprisoned, distressed, we can say, with Jacob, "I have enough, because the Lord hath mercy on me, and hath taken me into covenant with him;" surely then we do bear witness of God before heaven and earth, that he is better to us than corn, or wine, or oil, or whatsoever this world affords.

3. We must lie under the authority of every word of God, and conform ourselves to the example of God.—We must labour to become followers of God, and imitate his virtues. It is a part of that honour which children owe to their parents, to obey their commands, and to imitate their godly example. We cannot honour God more, than when we are "humbled at his feet to receive his word," than when we renounce the manners of the world, to become his "followers as dear children." O think of this! for when we conform indeed, then are we "holy as he is holy, and pure as he is pure;" and then

how does this tend to the honour and glory of our God!

Thus far we have looked on Jesus as our Jesus, in that dark time before his coming in the flesh; our next work is to look on Jesus, carrying on the great work of man's salvation in his first coming or incarnation.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS BIRTH.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Tidings of Christ.—The Conception of Christ.—The Duplicity of Natures in Christ.—The Birth of Christ.—Some Consequents of Christ's Birth.

OF THE TIDINGS OF CHRIST.

WE shall extend this period from a little before the birth of Christ to the time of the baptism of John; and shall notice several particulars. The first circumstance which we shall refer to in this period, is the tidings of Christ, as recorded in Luke i. 26, &c. "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God," &c. I shall a little insist on some of these words.

The messenger was an angel. Man was too mean to carry the news of the conception of God. Never any business was conceived in heaven, that did so much concern the earth, as the conception of the God of heaven in a womb of earth; no less therefore than an angel was worthy to bear these tidings; and never angel received a greater honour.

This angel salutes the virgin; "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, The Lord is with thee, blessed art thou

among women." Many men and women have been and are the spiritual temples of God; but never was any his material temple except Mary, and therefore "blessed art thou amongst women." And yet she was not so blessed in bearing Christ, as in believing in Christ: her bearing indeed was more miraculous, but her believing was more beneficial to her soul!

The virgin is troubled at this salute. She might well be troubled; for if it had been but a man that had come in so suddenly, when she expected none; or so secretly, when she had no other company; or so strangely, the doors being shut; she had cause to be troubled: how much more, when the shining glory of the angel so heightened the astonishment! The angel however comforts her; "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God."

Here is the foundation of her comfort and our happiness; "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus." Never was mortal creature thus honoured, that her womb should yield that flesh, which was personally united to the Godhead; that she should bear him that upholds the world. There is one wonder in the conception, another in the fruit; both are marvellous, but the latter is more mysterious, and fuller of admiration. The fruit of the womb, is Jesus, a Saviour. Here was a Son, and such a Son as the world never had before, and here was the ground of Mary's joy. O come, let us dwell a little here. This name Jesus is better to us than all the titles of God: there is goodness and greatness in the name Jehovah, but we merited so little good, and deserved so much evil, that in it alone there had been small comfort for us, but in the name Jesus there is comfort, and with the name Jesus there is comfort in the name of God. In old times God was known by his names of power and majesty; but his name of mercy was reserved till now, when God did purpose to pour out the whole treasure of his mercy, by the mediation of his Son. And, as this name is exalted above all names, so are we to exalt his mercy above all his works. It is an useful name! In all distresses, miseries, perplexities, we beseech God by

the name of Jesus to make good his own name, not to bear it for nothing, but, as he is our Saviour, to save us; and this is our comfort, that God will never so remember our sins, as to forget his own blessed name, and especially this name Jesus.

The reason of his name was given by the angel to Joseph; "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But why from their sins? We seem rather willing to be saved from poverty, ignominy, prison, death, hell. Sin is a thing that troubles but few. Alas! sin is the very worst of evils: there is no poverty but sin; there is no shame but sin; there is no prison, but that prison is a paradise without sin; there is no death that hath any sting in it but sin. Take out the sting, and you may put the serpent in your bosom: nay, I will say more, there would be no hell but for sin: sin first kindled the fire of hell, sin adds fuel to it; take away sin, and that tormenting flame goes out. What abundance of benefits are here, in one word—"He shall save his people from their sins!" There is no evil incident to man, but it ceaseth to be evil when sin is gone. If Jesus takes away sin he doth bless our very blessings, and sanctify our afflictions: he fetcheth peace out of trouble, riches out of poverty, honour out of contempt, liberty out of bondage. This is that Jesus, the Son of God's love, the Author of our salvation, "in whom alone God is well pleased," and whom the angel published before he was conceived.

OF THE CONCEPTION OF CHRIST.

The conception of Christ was the conclusion of the angel's message. No sooner had the virgin said, "Be it to me according to thy word," but according to that word it was. Immediately the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, and formed our Saviour in her womb. Now was it that the sun arose, that darkness vanished, that wrath gave place to favour and salvation. Now was it that free grace came down from heaven, thousands of angels waiting on her, and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men."

In this conception of Christ are so many wonders, that ere we begin to speak them, we may stand amazed; "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." The agent of Christ's conception is the Holy Ghost. This agrees with that speech of the angel to Joseph, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." This conception of Christ was by the energetical command and ordination of the Holy Ghost, whereby that part of the virgin's blood or seed whereof the body of Christ was to be framed, were so cleansed and sanctified, that in it there should be neither spot nor stain of original pollution.

The effect was the framing of Christ's manhood. The matter of his body was the very flesh and blood of the virgin; "He was made of a woman," saith the apostle, of the flesh, and blood, and substance of the woman, "And he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh." The soul of Christ was not derived from the soul of the virgin, as a part thereof; but it was made as the souls of other men, of nothing, by the power of God; and so infused into the body by the hand of God. O the condescension of our Jesus! O that ever he would be conceived in the womb of a virgin! O that he would run through the contumelies of our sordid nature, that he would not refuse that which we ourselves are in some sort ashamed of! The lower he came for us, the dearer and dearer let him be unto us: consider, in all these transactions, Christ was carrying on the great work of our salvation, otherwise he had never been conceived, never had assumed to his person human nature, never had been man.

OF THE DUPLICITY OF NATURES IN CHRIST.

The duplicity of natures in Christ appears in that he was truly God, and truly man. "To us a child is born," saith the prophet; there is a nature human; and "he shall be called the mighty God;" there is a nature divine. "God sent his Son," saith the apostle, therefore truly God; and his Son, "made of a woman;" therefore truly man.

That Christ is true God, both Scripture, and reasons drawn from Scripture evince.

1. The Scriptures call him God. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." And "unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever." And "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God." And "take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." "And hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." "And we know that the Son of God is come. This is the true God, and eternal life." And "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

2. Unanswerable reasons drawn from Scriptures prove him God: thus it appears, 1. From those incommunicable properties of the Deity, which are ascribed unto him: He is eternal as God, Rev. i. 17. He is infinite as God, Matt. xxviii. 20. He is omniscient as God, Matt. ix. 4. He is omnipotent as God, "He that cometh from above, is above all." "He is able to subdue all things unto himself." "He hath the keys of hell and death."

From those acts ascribed to him, which are only agreeable to the divine nature; as to be the Author of our election, John xiii. 18. To know the secrets of our hearts, Matt. ix. 4. To hear the prayers of his people, John xiv. 14. To judge the quick and dead, John v. 22. And thus he creates as God, John i. 4. He commands as God, Matt. viii. 26. He forgives as God, Matt. ix. 6. He sanctifies as God, John i. 12. He glorifies as God, John x. 28.

From all those acknowledgments given to him by the saints, which are only proper unto God; and thus he is believed on as God, John iii. 18. He is loved as God, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. He is obeyed as God, Matt. xvii. 5. He is prayed to as God, Acts vii. 59. He is praised as God, Rev. v. 13. He is adored as God, Heb. i. 6. Phil. ii. 10. Surely all these are strong demonstrations, that Jesus Christ is God.

But why was it requisite that our Saviour should be

God? I answer, 1. Because none can save souls, nor satisfy for sin but God alone: "There is none," (saith the psalmist,) "that can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.—But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." 2. Because the satisfaction which is made for sin, must be infinitely meritorious. An infinite wrath cannot be appeased, but by an infinite merit; and hence our Saviour must needs be God, to the end that his obedience and sufferings might be of infinite worth. 3. Because the burden of God's wrath cannot be endured by a finite creature: Christ therefore must be God, that he might abide the burden, and sustain the manhood by his divine power. 4. Because the enemies of our salvation were too strong for us: how could any creature overcome Satan, death, hell, and damnation? This required the power of God: there is none but God that could destroy "him that had the power of death, that is the devil."

As Christ is God, so he is true man. He was born as man, and bred as man, and fed as man, and slept as man, and wept as man, and sorrowed as man, and suffered as man, and died as man; and therefore he is man.

But more particularly. Christ had a human body. "Wherefore when he came into the world, he said, sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Christ had an human reasonable soul. "My soul is heavy unto death," said Christ. And, again, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit."

Christ had all the properties that belong either to the soul or body of a man: nay more, Christ had all the infirmities of our nature, sin only excepted; as cold, and heat, and hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and pain, and the like.

But why was it requisite, that our Saviour should be man? I answer, 1. Because our Saviour must suffer, and die for our sins, which the Godhead could not do. 2. Because our Saviour must perform obedience to the law, which was not agreeable to the lawgiver; the Godhead certainly is free from all manner of subjection. 3. Because our Saviour must satisfy the justice of God in

the same nature wherein it was offended. 4. Because "by this means we might have free access to the throne of grace, and might find help in our necessities, having such an high priest, as was in all things tempted like unto us, and was acquainted with our infirmities in his own person."

A real distinction in these two natures is also evident. In regard of essence, the Godhead cannot be the manhood, nor can the manhood be the Godhead. In regard of properties, the Godhead is most wise, just, omnipotent, yea, wisdom, justice, omnipotency itself, and so is not the manhood, neither can it be. They have distinct wills, "Not my will, but thy will be done, O Father," plainly shewing the difference between the will of a creature and the will of a Creator. The very actions in the work of redemption are inseparable, and yet distinguishable: "I lay down my life and take it up again." To lay it down was the action of man, not of God; and to take it up was the action of God, not of man. It is easy to observe this real distinction of his two natures, from first to last. He was born of his mother, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, as being a man; but the star shines over him, and the wise men adore him as being a God. He was baptized in Jordan, as being a man; but the Holy Ghost from heaven descended upon him as being a God. He is tempted of Satan, as being a man; but he overcame Satan, and dispossessed devils, as being a God. He travelled, and was hungry, and weary, as being a man; but he refreshed the weary, and fed the hungry, as being a God. He slept in the ship, and his disciples awoke him, as being a man; but he rebuked the winds, and stilled the raging of the tumultuous seas, as being a God. He was poor and needy and had not a house to put his head in, as being a man; but he was, and is rich and mighty, and cannot be contained in the heaven of heavens, as being a God. He was sorrowful and prayed as being a man; but he comforts the sorrowful, and heareth the prayers of his saints, as being a God. He was crucified as being a man; but he caused the sun to hide his face for shame when he was crucified, as being a God. He cried out on the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, Lamasabachthani," as being a man; but he

could say to the thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," as being a God. He died, was buried, and lay in the grave, as being a man; but he overcame death, destroyed the devil, and raised up himself to life again, as being a God. After his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples, ate with them, and talked with them, as being a man; but he provided meat, and vanished out of their sight, as being a God. He ascended into heaven, and the heavens now contain him, as he is man; but he sustains the heavens, and rides on the same, as being a God. Thus, we see two real distinct natures in Christ. The flesh is said to be deified, and the Deity is said to be incarnate; not by the conversion of either into the nature of the other, but by assuming and adjoining the human nature to the divine, and yet still the human nature and the divine are distinct.

From the union of these two natures believers derive the inestimable privilege of being themselves personally united to Christ. Of this union four things may be observed.

1. It is a real union.—It is not a mere notional union, that consists only in the understanding; it is not an imaginary thing, that hath no other being but in the brain; no, it is a true, substantial union. In natural unions, I confess, there may be more evidence, but there cannot be more truth.

2. It is a very near union.—You will say, how near? If an angel were to speak to you, he cannot fully satisfy you in this, only as far as our understanding can reach it, and the creatures can serve to illustrate these things. Take it thus, whatsoever by way of comparison can be alleged concerning the combination of any one thing with another, that, and much more may be said of our union with Jesus Christ. See how near the father and the child are, how near the husband and the wife are; see what union is between the branches and the vine, the members and the head: nay, see what the soul is to the body; such is Christ, and so near is Christ, and nearer to the person of every true believer. "I live, yet not I, said Paul, but Christ liveth in me." As the soul is to the body of a natural man, so is Jesus Christ to my soul and body.

3. It is a compleat union.—If thou art united to Christ, thou hast all Christ; thou art one with him in his nature, in his name; thou hast the same image, grace and spirit in thee as he hath; the same precious promises, the same access to God by prayer, as he: Thou hast the same love of the Father, all that he did or suffered, thou hast a share in it: thou hast his life and death; all is thine. So on thy part, he hath thee wholly, thy nature, thy sins, the punishment of thy sin, thy wrath, thy curse, thy shame; yea, thy wit, and wealth, and strength, all that thou art or hast, or canst do possibly for him. "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

4. It is an inseparable union, it can never be broken.—"I will make, saith God, an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." This is a glorious promise; hence Paul triumphantly challenges all enemies on earth, or hell, to do their worst to break this knot; "Who shall separate me from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation, distress, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword?" Come, all that can come, and see if that blessed union between me and Christ shall ever be broken, by all that you can do.

OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The birth of Christ now follows. A thing so wonderful, that it was given for a sign unto believers seven hundred and forty years before it was accomplished: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son." A wonder indeed, and great beyond all comparison. Before he was born, the prophets prophesy, the patriarchs typify, the types foretel, God promiseth, and the Son of God performeth. When he was born, angels ran errands, Gabriel brings tidings, the glory of heaven shines, a star displays, and the wise men are the heralds that proclaim his birth. But come a little nearer, "Let us go to Bethlehem," as the shepherds said, "and see this thing which is come to pass." If we step but one step

into his lodging, heaven's wonder is before our eyes. Now look upon Jesus! Look on him as in fulness of time, he carried on the great work of our salvation. Here you may read the meaning of Adam's covenant, Abraham's promise, Moses' revelation, David's succession: these were but veils, but now we draw aside the curtain. Come take a view of the truth itself. What a strange birth is this! Look on the babe, there is no cradle to rock him, no nurse to lull him, no linens to swaddle him, scarce a little food to nourish him. Look on the mother, there is no midwife's help, no downy pillows, scarce a little straw where she is brought to-bed. Look on Joseph, the reputed father; he rather begs than gives a blessing: poor carpenter, that makes them a chamber of an ox-stall, and carves him a cratch to be his cradle.

O admire the humility, patience, and infinite condescension of Jesus. That the Creator should become a creature, though an angel, it were a great gulf, which no created understanding could measure; that he should reject angels, and take the seed of Abraham; that he should be made lower than the angels, who is God over all; that he would be conceived, who is the uncreated wisdom; in the dark prison of the womb, who is the light of the world; that he would be born, who beareth all things; the Lord of all, of a lowly hand-maid; in fulness of time, who is eternity; in a time of public taxation, who is the Lord of lords; and that not at Rome, the lady of nations, nor at Jerusalem, the glory of the East; but at Bethlehem, the least of the thousands of Judah; not in a palace prepared, nor in his mother's house, but in an inn; not in the best room, nor in any room of the house, but in a stable of beasts; not attended there with a royal guard, but with Joseph and Mary; not stately enthroned, but laid in a manger; nor, lastly, his birth proclaimed by the kings at arms, but by poor shepherds. That the Word should be an infant not able to speak a word; that life should be mortal; that power should be subject to a poor carpenter; that the Lord of the covenant should be circumcised; that the God of the temple should be presented in the

temple; that wisdom should be instructed; that the feeder of all things should be fed; that all these are preludes, and but beginnings in his sufferings. O wonderful condescension! O admirable patience! O rare humility!

OF SOME CONSEQUENTS OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.

1. When he was but eight days old, he was circumcised, and named Jesus.—In this early humiliation, he plainly discovers the riches of his grace: now he sheds his blood in drops, and thereby gives an earnest of those rivers, which he after poured out for the cleansing of our nature, and extinguishing the wrath of God; and for a farther discovery of his grace, at this time his name is given him, which was JESUS. This is the name which we should engrave in our hearts, rest our faith on, and place our help in, and love with the overflowings of charity, and joy, and adoration: above all things we had need of a Jesus, a Saviour for our souls, and from our sins, and from the everlasting destruction which sin will otherwise bring upon our souls. Hence this name Jesus, and this sign circumcision are joined together; for by the effusion of his blood, he was to be our Jesus, our Saviour: "Without shedding of blood is no remission," no salvation. "Circumcision was the seal;" and now was it, that our Jesus was under God's great seal to take his office. "Him hath God the Father sealed." It is his office and his very profession to save. In which respect he is called "the Saviour of the world."

2. When he was forty days old, "He was brought to Jerusalem, and presented to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord."—O wonder! there was no impurity in the Son of God, and yet he is first circumcised, and then brought and offered to the Lord. He that came to be sin for us, would in our persons be legally unclean, that by satisfying the law he might take away our uncleanness. He that was above the law, would come under the law, that he might free us, from the law. We are all born sinners, but O the unspeakable mercies

of our Jesus, that provides a remedy as early as our sin. First, He is conceived, and then he is born, to sanctify our conceptions and our births; and after his birth he is first circumcised, and then he is presented to the Lord, that by two holy acts, that which was naturally unholy might be hallowed unto God. Christ hath not left our very infancy without redress, but by himself thus offered, he cleanseth us presently from our filthiness. Now is Christ brought in his mother's arms to his own house, the temple; and as man, he is presented to himself as God. O how glorious did that temple seem, now the owner was within the walls of it! Now was the hour and guest come, in regard whereof the second temple should surpass the first. You will say, What is this to me, or to my soul? O yes, Jerusalem is now every where: there is no church-assembly, no Christian-heart which is not a temple of the living God; and there is no temple of God wherein Christ is not presented to his Father. Thus we have the benefit of Christ's fulfilling the law of righteousness; "God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

3. When he was yet under one year old, as some, or about two, as others, he fled into Egypt.—As there was no room for him in Bethlehem, so now there is no room for him in all Judea. No sooner he came to his own, but he must fly from them: what a wonder is this! Could not Christ have quit himself from Herod a thousand ways? What could an arm of flesh have done against the God of spirits; but hereby he taught us to bear the yoke even in our youth. Thus would he suffer, that he might sanctify to us our early afflictions: he flies into Egypt, the slaughter-house of God's people, the sink of the world, the furnace of Israel's ancient afflictions. What a change is here! Israel, the first-born of God flies out of Egypt, into Judea; and Christ the first-born of all creatures flies out of Judea into Egypt. Now is Egypt become the sanctuary, and Judea, the inquisition-house of the Son of God. Surely he that is every where the same, knows how to make all

places alike to his. He knows how to preserve Daniel in the lions' den; the three children in a fiery furnace; Jonah in a whale's belly; and Christ in the midst of Egypt.

4. When he was now five years old, say some, or but two years and a quarter old, say others, an angel appears again in a dream to Joseph, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and return again into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life."—Herod, that took away the lives of all the infants in, or about Bethlehem, is now himself dead, and gone to his own place. O the wonderful dispensation of Christ in concealing of himself from men! All this while he carried himself as an infant, and suppressed the manifestation and exercise of that Godhead, whereto the infant-nature was conjoined. Oh how should we magnify him, or humble ourselves for him, who himself became thus humble for our sakes.

5. When he was twelve years old, "He with his parents went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast."—This pious act of his younger years intends to lead our first years into timely devotion; but I shall not insist on that; I would rather observe him "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." He, who, as God, gave them all the wisdom they had, doth now as the Son of man hearken to the wisdom he had given them; and when he had heard, then he asks, and after that no doubt he answers. His very questions were instructions; for I cannot think, that he meant so much to learn, as to teach those doctors of Israel. Surely these Rabbins had never heard the voice of such a tutor: they could not but see the very wisdom of God in this child, and therefore, saith the text, "They all wondered at his understanding and answers." Their eyes saw nothing but a child, but their ears heard the wonderful things of God's law. But why did ye not, O ye Jewish teachers, remember now the star, and the sages, and the angels, and the shepherds? Why did ye not now bethink yourselves of Herod, and of his inquiry, and of your answer, that "in Bethlehem of Judea Christ should be born?" You cited the prophets,

and why did you not mind that prophecy now, that "unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?" Fruitless is the wonder that endeth not in faith. No light is sufficient, where the eyes are held through unbelief and prejudice.

6. After this, from twelve to the thirtieth year of his age, we read nothing of the acts of Christ, but that "he went down with his parents into Nazareth, and was subject to them."—As he went up to Jerusalem to worship God, so now he goes down to Nazareth, to attend his particular calling. This is the meaning of those words, "and he was subject to them." Christ's subjection to his parents extends to the profession and exercise of his life. Certainly Christ was not all that time, from twelve to thirty years, idle: as he was educated by his parents, so of his reputed father he learned to be a carpenter: this I take it is plain in these words, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" O the poverty, the humility of Jesus! It appears at this time especially in his labouring, working, hewing of wood, or the like. Here is a sharp reproof to all those that spend their time in idleness, or without a particular calling. What! are they wiser than Christ? Our Jesus would not by any means thus spend his time. But concerning this time of his youth because in scripture there is so deep a silence: I shall therefore pass it by.

CHAPTER II.

Of knowing Jesus, as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Birth. Of considering—desiring—hoping—believing—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in this Respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS, AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS BIRTH.

WHAT looking comprehends, you have heard before: and that we may have an inward experimental look on him whom our souls pant after, let us practise all these particulars.

Let us know Jesus, carrying on the great work of our salvation in his incarnation. There is not one passage in his first appearing, but it is of mighty concernment unto us. Is it possible, that the great God of heaven and earth should so infinitely condescend, but on some great design? And what design could there be, but only his glory and the creature's good? O my soul! if thou hast any interest in Christ, all this concerns thee. The Lord Jesus in all these very transactions had an eye to thee; he was incarnate for thee; he was conceived, and born for thee. Look not on the bare history of things, for that is unprofitable; the main duty is eying the end, the meaning of Christ, and especially as it relates to thee. What comfort were it to a poor prisoner, if he should hear, that the king of his mere grace, visited all the prisoners in this and that dungeon, and that he made a gaol-delivery, and set all free; but he never came near the place where he lies bound in irons? Or, suppose he gives a visit to that very man, and offers him grace and freedom, if he will but accept of it; and because of his waywardness, persuades, entreats, commands him to come out, and take his liberty, and yet he will

not regard or apply it to himself; what benefit shall he receive? This is thy case, if thou art not in Christ: if thou hast not embraced and closed in with the offer, what is Christ's incarnation unto thee? Come, learn, not merely as a scholar, to gain some notional knowledge; but as a Christian, as one that feels virtue coming out of Christ in each of these respects. Study close this great transaction in reference to thyself. There is no part of it, but it is of special use. How many waste their spirits in studying arts and sciences, things in comparison of no value; whereas Paul "determined not to know any thing but Jesus Christ!" To know him in every point, whether in birth, or life, or death, is saving knowledge. O stand not upon cost, whether pains or study, tears or prayers, peace or wealth, goods or name, life or liberty; sell all for this pearl. Christ is of that worth, that thou canst never over-buy him, though thou gavest thyself and all the world for him. The knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of every thing that is necessary either for this world, or for the world to come.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

It is not enough to know these great mysteries, but we must meditate upon, and consider them. Consideration fastens Christ more strongly to the soul, and as it were rivets the soul to Jesus Christ, and fastens him in the heart. Thus, O my soul, consider Christ, and what he did for thee when he was incarnate, and that thou mayest not confound thyself in thy meditations, consider a part of these particulars.

1. Consider Jesus in his forerunner, and the blessed tidings of his coming in the flesh.—Now the long-looked-for time drew near, a glorious angel is sent from heaven, and he comes with an olive-branch of peace. First, he presents himself to Zachary, and then to Mary; to her imparts the message, on which God sent him into this world; "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus." Till now human nature was less than that of angels, but by

the incarnation of the word, it was to be exalted above the cherubim. What blessed tidings were in this message! The decree of old must now be accomplished, and an angel proclaim it upon earth. Hear, O ye sons of Adam, this concerns you as much as the virgin: were we not all undone in the loins of our first father? Was not this our condition, that, after a little life upon earth, we should have been thrown into eternal torments, where had been nothing, but weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth? And now that God and Christ should bid an angel tell the news, "Ye shall not die: Lo, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and he shall be your Jesus: he shall save you from this hell, and death, and sin: he shall save you to the utmost; his name is Jesus, and he shall not bear his name for naught, believe in him, and you shall live with him in glory." O blessed news! Men may talk what they will of this and that news, but there is no news so welcome to one ready to perish, as that of a Saviour. Tell a man in sickness of one that will make him well; tell a man in captivity of one that will set him free; tell a man in prison condemned to die, of one that will save his life; and every one of these will say, this is the best news that ever was heard. O then if it be good tidings to hear of a Saviour, where is only a matter of loss of life, or of this earth; how much more, when it comes to the loss of heaven, to the danger of hell, when our souls are at stake, and like to be damned for evermore? O my soul, ponder on these words, as if an angel seeing thee stand on the brink of hell, should speak to thee, even to thy soul.

2. Consider Jesus in his conception.—It was David's complaint, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." O my soul, this was thy case, and hadst thou died in that condition, the word is express, that, "nothing defiled nor unclean shall enter into the city of glory." But here is the remedy, thy sinful conception is sanctified by Christ's holy conception: the holiness of thy Jesus serves as a cover to hide thy original pollutions from the eyes of God.

3. Consider the duplicity of natures in Jesus Christ.—

"The word was made flesh." Certainly great is this mystery, that the Son of God is made of a woman; that a creature gives being to the Creator: O my soul, consider, that all this was for us, and our salvation: he was man, that he might die for us; and he was God, that his death might be sufficient to save us. Had he been man alone, he might have suffered, but he could never have satisfied for sin; and had he been God alone, he could not have satisfied the justice of God in the same nature wherein it was offended; neither could he have died for sin, and the decree was out, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." O my soul, consider this in relation to thyself. He is God-man, that he might suffer and satisfy for thy sins; he is God-man that he might be able, and fit to finish the work of thy salvation. As God, he is able, and as man, he is fit to discharge the office of Mediator; as God he is able to bear the punishment of sin; and as man he fit is to suffer for sin. Muse on this, it is a matter worthy of thy serious consideration.

4. Consider the birth of Christ, who was born in a stable, for the saving of the children of men.—Come, receive Christ into thy soul, or if Christ be formed in thee, (I speak of the spiritual birth) O keep him in thy heart! Let him fill thy soul with his divine graces. O that thou couldst say it feelingly, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." O that this were the issue of thy meditation on Christ's birth! even whilst thou art going with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and there findest thy Saviour lying in a manger, that thou wouldst bring him thence, and make thy heart to be his cradle! Either draw virtue from him within, or thy meditation will be fruitless.

5. Consider those few consequents after Christ's birth.—Every action of Christ is our instruction: Observe Christ's presentation in the temple. This was the law of those that first opened the womb. Now Christ was the first-born of Mary, and indeed "the first born of all creatures;" and he was consecrated unto God, that by him we might be consecrated and accepted, when we were offered unto the Lord. Again, observe Christ's

flight into Egypt. Though infancy is usually most quiet, yet here life and toil began together; and see how speedily this comes after dedication unto God. We are no sooner born again, than we are persecuted. Again, observe Christ disputing with the doctors in the temple. See how early his divine graces put forth themselves. "In him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." His wisdom in his very infancy is admired, nor is it without our profit; "for of God he is made wisdom unto us." Again, observe how he spent the remainder of his youth. In all his examples he meant our instructions: "He went down with his parents, and was subject to them;" he was not idly bred, but served his generation in the poor way of a carpenter. Christ is inured betimes to the hardship of life, and to the strict observation of the law both of God and nature.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

If they that lived before Christ desired his coming, surely his incarnation should be the desire of all Christians. There is virtue in every passage of Christ, in his conception, birth and the circumstances that followed his birth, though millions alas! feel no interest in them: if we then wish to be benefited by them, we must set our desires aright, and all the rest will follow. And is there not good reason for these desires? View over all those excellencies of Christ's incarnation, and above all, see the fruit of them. He was conceived that our conceptions might be sanctified: he was the Son of man, that he might suffer for us, and the Son of God, that he might satisfy divine justice: he was God and man in one person, that we might be one with him. He was conceived and born, that we might conceive the grace of Christ in our hearts, and bring it forth in our lives! Are not these desirable things? Never tell me of thy present enjoyments, for never was Christ so enjoyed in this life, but thou hast cause to desire yet more of him. Spiritual desires after Christ, do neither load nor cloy the heart, but rather open, and enlarge it for more and more. Who was better acquainted with God than Moses? And yet,

who was more importunate to know him better? "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." And who was more acquainted with Christ than Paul? And yet who was more importunate to be with him nearer? "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Closer union and communion with Christ are most desirable things; and are not these the fruits of his incarnation and personal union? More love and reconciliation between God and us, are desirable things; and are not these the fruits of Christ's birth? A higher degree of holiness and likeness to God and Christ are desirable things: and are not these the fruits of his circumcision, and presentation to the Lord? O then how is it that there is scarce any room in thy soul for Christ? Will not the desires of the partriarchs witness against thee? How cried they after Christ's coming in the flesh. "Bow the heavens, O Lord, and come down." "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open and bring forth salvation." Is it possible that their desires should be more vehement after Christ than ours? They lived on the dark side of the cloud, but we on the bright side; the vail was upon their hearts, which vail is done away in Christ; they saw Christ afar off, and their sight was very dim and dark; "But we all, with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of the Lord." Come then, draw nearer and nearer, till thou comest to union and enjoyment. Cry after Christ, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Let us hope in Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation at his first coming. Only here remember, I speak not of every hope, but only of such a hope, as is grounded on some certainty and knowledge. This is the main question, whether Christ's incarnation belongs unto me? The prophet tells us, that "unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given." But how may I hope that this child is born to me, and that this son is given to me? The surest way to know our interest in the birth

of Christ, is to know Christ born in us, or formed in us, as the apostle speaks. The new birth is the effect of Christ's birth, and a sure sign that Christ is born to us. Say then, O my soul, art thou born anew? Is there in thee a new nature, a new principle? Is the image of God and of Christ in thy soul? then was Christ incarnate for thee. Thou mayest try it by these following rules.

1. Where this new birth is, there are new desires, new comforts, new pleasures.—Sometimes with the prodigal thou wast content with husks; yet now nothing will satisfy thee but thy Father's mansion, and thy Father's feast; sometimes thou mindest only earthly things, but now the favour of God, the light of his countenance, society with him, and enjoying of him, are thy chief desires.

2. Where this new birth is, there is a new nature, Peter calls it, "The divine nature." A lively resemblance of this change in the faculties of the soul, we may discern in those natural faculties, which we have in common with beasts, as, to live, to move, to desire, to feel. The beasts having no higher principle than sense, use them sensually; but a man enjoying the same faculties under the command of a reasonable soul, useth them rationally: so is it in a regenerate man, his understanding, will, and affections, when they had no other command but reason, he only used them rationally, but now being under the guiding of the Spirit of Christ, they work spiritually, and he useth them spiritually. Is there life within! then art thou born again, yea, even unto thee a child is born. This is one evidence.

Again, our sonship is an effect of Christ's sonship, and a sure sign, that "unto us a son is given." Say then, O my soul, art thou a son of God, dost thou resemble God (according to thy capacity) being holy, even as he is holy? Thou mayest try it by these following rules.

1. The sons of God, fear God. "If I be a father, where is my honour? (saith God) If I be a master, where is my fear?" I know there is a servile fear unworthy a son of God; but there is a filial fear, and that is an excellent check to all our wantonness. Agreeable to this

is the apostle's advice, "If ye call on the Father, pass your sojourning here with fear."

2. The sons of God love God, and obey him out of a principle of love. Suppose there were no heaven or glory to bestow upon a regenerate person, yet would he obey God out of a principle of love: He is led by the Spirit, and therefore he obeys; now the spirit that leads him is a spirit of love; and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God."

3. The sons of God imitate God in his love and goodness to all men. Kindness to bad men is the highest degree of grace, and as it were the perfection of all. O my soul, canst thou imitate God in this? Canst thou forgive thy enemies, do well to them that do evil to thee? O this is a sure sign of grace and sonship! It is storied of some heathens, who beating a Christian almost to death, asked him, "What great matter Christ did ever for him?" "Even this (said the Christian) that I can forgive you, though you use me thus cruelly." O my soul, look on this, consult this ground of hope; if this law be written in thy heart, write it down amongst thy evidences, that thou art God's son, yea, that even unto thee a son is given.

Away, away, all despairs, and dejections, and despondencies of spirit! If these be my grounds of hope, it is time to hold up head, and heart, and hands, and with all cheerfulness and confidence, and to say with the spouse, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

I know many doubts are often in Christians, "What, is it likely that Christ should be incarnate for me?" Ah! my soul, put thy propriety in Christ's incarnation out of dispute, that thou mayest be able to say, "As God was manifest in the flesh, and I may not doubt it; so God is manifest in me, and I dare not deny it."

To help the soul in this, I shall first propose the hinderances of faith. 2. The helps of faith in this respect. 3. The manner how to act our faith. 4. The encourage-

ments to bring on the soul to believe its part in this blessed incarnation of Jesus Christ.

There are but three things that can hinder faith,

1. The exceeding unworthiness of the soul.—And to this purpose are those complaints, "What! Christ incarnate for me! I am less than the least of all God's mercies, and fitter for hell and devils, than for union and communion with God and Christ, I dare not, I cannot believe.

2. The infinite exactness of divine justice.—A soul deeply considering this, startles and cries, What will become of my soul? One of the least sins that I stand guilty of deserves death, and the wages of sin is death. O then how should I believe? What thoughts can I entertain of God's mercy and love to me; God's law condemns me, my own conscience accuseth me, and justice will have its due.

3. The want of a suitable Mediator, to stand between the sinner and God.—If on my part there be unworthiness, and on God's part severe justice; and withal no mediator, which I may go unto, before I deal with the infinite glory of God himself, how should I but despair, and cry out? "O wretched man that I am! O that I had never been; I cannot believe; there is no room for faith in this case!" These are the hinderances.

2. The helps of faith in this sad condition are these.

1. A consideration that God is pleased to overlook the unworthiness of his creatures.—This we see plain in the very act of his incarnation; himself disdains not to be as his poor creatures, to wear their own flesh, to take upon him human nature, and in all things to become like unto man, sin only excepted.

2. A consideration that God satisfies justice, by setting up Christ, who is justice itself.—Now was is that "mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other;" now was it that free grace and merit, that fulness and nothingness were made one. Now was it that truth ran to mercy, and embraced her, and righteousness to peace, and kissed her; in Christ they meet, yea, in him was the infinite exactness of God's justice satisfied.

3. A consideration that God hath set up Christ as a mediator.—But for the accomplishment of this design Christ had never been incarnate: we had sinned, and by sin deserved everlasting damnation, but to save us, and to satisfy himself, God takes our nature, and joins it to his Son, and calls that Christ a Saviour. This is the gospel notion of Christ: for what is Christ, but God in our nature, transacting our peace? In Christ is that fulness, and righteousness, and love, to receive the first acts of our faith. These are the helps of faith, in reference to our unworthiness, God's justice, and the want of a Mediator between God and us.

3. The manner how to act our faith on Christ incarnate is this.

1. Faith must directly go to Christ.—We indeed find in the Bible some particular promises of this and that grace; but the promises are not given without Christ. No, first Christ, and then all other things. "Incline your ears, and come unto me." Come unto Christ, and then "I will make an everlasting covenant; (which contains all the promises) even the sure mercies of David." As in marriage, the woman first consents to have the man, and then all the benefits that follow; so the soul by faith, first pitcheth upon Christ himself, and then on the privileges that flow from Christ.

2. Faith must lie at the feet of Christ.—Some go to Christ, and look on him with loose and transient glances, and have but common apprehensions of him. Oh! but we should come to Christ with solemn serious spirits: we should look on him piercingly, till we see him as God is in him, and thus and thus qualified from heaven. We should labour to apprehend what is the riches of this glorious mystery of Christ's incarnation, and study this mystery above all other studies. Nothing is so pleasant, and nothing is more deep. That one person should be God and man; that blessedness should be made a curse; that the invisible God should be made visible to sense; that God should make our nature, which had sinned against him, to be the great ordinance of reconciling us unto himself; that this God-man should be our Saviour, Redeemer, Father, Friend; Oh what mysteries are these! No wonder if

when Christ was born, the apostle cries, "We saw his glory, as of the only begotten Son of God."

3. Faith must look principally to the end of Christ, as God coming in the flesh.—Now what was the design of Christ in this? The apostle answers, "God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh." God the Father sent into the world his only begotten Son, to abolish, in the first place, original sin. Mark these two words, "He condemned sin in the flesh," the first word condemned, is by a metonomy put for that which follows condemnation, namely for the abolishing of sin; as condemned persons used to be cut off, and to be taken out of the world, that they may be no more; so Christ hath condemned or abolished this sin. For the second word, "in the flesh," is meant that human nature which Christ assumed. He abolished sin altogether in his own nature; and that flesh of his, being perfectly holy, and the holiness of it being imputed unto us, it takes away our guilt in respect of the impureness of our nature also. Christ had not the least spot of original sin; and if we are Christ's, then is this sin in some measure taken out of our hearts. But howsoever the filth of this sin may remain in part, yet the guilt is removed: in this respect the purity of Christ's human nature is no less reckoned to us for the curing of our defiled nature, than the sufferings of Christ are reckoned to us, for the remission of our actual sins. O my soul, look to this end of Christ, as God in the flesh. If thou consider him as made flesh and blood, think withal, that his meaning was to condemn sin in our flesh. There flows from the holiness of Christ's nature, such a power, as countermands the power of our original sin, and acquits and discharges from the condemnation of the same sin. Not only the death and life, but also the conception and birth of Christ have their influence in our justification.

4. The encouragements to believe on Christ incarnate we may draw,

1. From the excellency of this object.—The incarnation of Christ is the foundation of all other actings of God for us: it is the very hinge, on which all turn; it is

the cabinet wherein all the designs of God do lie. Oh what a sweet object of faith is this! I know there are some other things in Christ which are most proper for some acts of faith, as Christ dying is most proper for the pardon of actual sin, and Christ rising from the dead for the evidencing of our justification; but the strongest and purest acts of faith are those which take in Christ as such a person, laid out in all his glory. Christ's incarnation is more general than Christ's passion, or Christ's resurrection, and, as some would have it, includes all. Christ's incarnation holds forth in some sort Christ in his fulness, and so it is the full and complete subject of our faith. Come, poor soul, thy eyes are running to and fro, to find comfort and happiness on earth. O cast thy eyes back, and see heaven and earth in one object! Look fixedly on Christ incarnate; there is more in this than all the variety of this world, or of that world to come. Here is an object of faith, and love, and joy, and delight; a compendium of all glories.

2. From the suitableness of this object.—Christ incarnate is most suitable for our faith to act upon. We are indeed to believe on God, but we cannot come to God but through a Mediator, and hence faith must directly go to Christ, as God in our flesh. O the infinite condescension of God in Christ! God takes up our nature, and joins it to himself as one person, and lays that before our faith; so that here is God, and God suited to the particular state and condition of the sinner. Now with what boldness may our souls draw nigh to God? Why art thou strange, poor soul? Why standest thou afar off, as if it were death to draw nigh? Of whom art thou afraid? Is God come down amongst men, and canst thou not see him, lest thou die and perish? Oh, look once more, and be not discouraged. See, God is not come down in fire, in the armour of justice and everlasting burning. No, he is clothed with the garments of flesh, he desires to converse with thee after thine own form. He is come down to beseech thee, to see with thine own eyes thy eternal happiness. It is the cry of some poor souls, "O that I might have my heart united to God!" Why, he is come down on this very purpose, and hath united our nature unto him-

self. Oh, that ever there should be a heart of unbelief, after these sensible demonstrations of divine glory and love. Tell me, what wouldest thou have God do more? Can he manifest himself in a more suitable way to thy condition? Is there any thing below flesh wherein the great God can humble himself for thy good? It is sad to see believers shy in their approaches to God, or doubtful of their acceptance with him, when God himself stoops first, and is so in love with our acquaintance, that he will be of the same nature that we are. O let not such a rock of strength be slighted, but every day entertain sweet and precious thoughts of Christ being incarnate. Inure thy heart to believing on this Jesus, as he carries on the great work of our salvation at his incarnation.

3. From the offers of this blessed object to our souls.—As Christ is come in our nature to satisfy; so he comes in the gospel freely and fully to offer the terms of love: therein are set out the most rich and alluring expressions that possibly can be; therein is set out that this incarnation of Christ, was God's own acting, out of his own love, and grace; therein is set out the birth, and life, and death of Christ, and this he could not do but he must be incarnate. God takes our flesh, and useth that as an organ or instrument whereby to act; he was flesh to suffer, as he was spirit to satisfy for our sins. Methinks I might challenge unbelief, to appear before this consideration. What is not God incarnate enough to satisfy thy conscience? Hear the voice of Christ inviting, "Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden with sin," and O let these rich and glorious openings of the heart of Christ overcome thy heart. See this miracle of mercy! God is come down in flesh; he is come as a price; he himself will pay himself, according to all the demands of his justice; and all this done, he offers and tenders himself unto thy soul. Oh! my soul, why shouldst thou fear to cast thyself upon thy God? Believe, Oh believe thy part in Christ incarnate.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

O my soul, canst thou possibly light on any object more attractive than the incarnation of Jesus Christ?

If love be the load-stone of love, what an attractive is this before thee? Methinks the very sight of Christ incarnate is enough to transport thee with the apprehension of his infinite goodness. See how he draws out the soul to union, vision and participation of his glory! O yield up thyself unto him; give him thyself, and conform all thy affections and actions to his will. Love him, not with a divided, but with all thy heart.

To excite this love, I shall propose the object, which will be argument enough. Love causeth love: now as God's first love to man was in making man like himself; so his second great love was in making himself like to man. It is usually said, that it is a greater love of God to save a soul, than to make a world; and I think it was a greater love of God to take our nature than simply to save our souls. For a king to dispense with the law, and by his own prerogative to save a murderer from the gallows, is not such an act of love and mercy, as to take the murderer's clothes, and to wear them as his richest livery. God in taking our nature hath done this, and more than this: he would not save by his mere prerogative; but he takes our clothes, our flesh, and in that flesh he personates us, and in that flesh he will die for us, that we might not die, but live through him for evermore. Surely this was love, that God will be no more God, as it were simply; but he will take up another nature, rather than the brightness of his glory should undo our souls.

It will not be amiss here to look back a little on the love of God, from that eternity before all worlds unto this present.

1. God had an eternal design to discover his infinite love to some besides himself.—O the wonder of this; for though God was one, and in that respect alone, yet God was not solitary. In that eternity within his own essence, there were three divine persons, and between them there was a blessed communication of love. And yet, such was the love of God, that it would not contain itself within that infinite ocean of himself; but it would needs have rivers and channels into which it might run and overflow.

2. God, in prosecution of his design, creates a world of creatures; some rational, and only capable of love, others irrational, and serviceable to that one creature, which he makes the top of the whole creation.—Then it was that he set up one man Adam, as a common person to represent the rest; and bestowed upon him abundance of glorious qualifications. If we should view the excellency of this creature, either in the outward or the inner man, who would not wonder? His body had its excellency, which made the Psalmist say, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth." It is a speech borrowed from arras-work: the body of man is a piece of curious tapestry, consisting of skin, bones, muscles, sinews and the like. What a goodly thing the body of man was before the fall, may be guessed by the excellent gifts found in the bodies of some men since the fall. If all these were but joined in one, as certainly they were in Adam; what a rare body would such an one be! But what was this body in comparison of that soul? The soul was especially made after the image of God: the soul was tempered in the same mortar with the heavenly spirits: the soul was a beam of God's glory, an emanation of God himself.

3. Within a while, this man, the object of God's love, fell away from God, and the whole world, fell together with him. Yet God's love would not thus leave the object: out of this dark cloud he lets fall some glimpses of another discovery: these glimpses were sweet; but, alas! they were so dark, that very few could spell them, or make any comfortable application of them; but by degrees God hints it out more, he points it out by types and shadows, and yet so dark, that in four thousand years, men were but guessing, and hoping through promises for a manifestation of God's love. This is the meaning of the apostle, who tells us of "the mystery that was hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." I speak of the generality of men, for in respect of some individuals as Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and the partriarchs, you have heard the Lord made his love clear to them in a covenant way.

4. At last, in the fulness of time, God takes the flesh of those poor sinners, which he had so loved, and joins it to himself, and he calls it Christ, a Saviour.—Now was it that God descended, and lay in the womb of a virgin; now it was that he joined our flesh so nigh to himself, as that there is a communication of properties between them both; that being attributed to God, which is proper to flesh, as to be born, to suffer; and that being attributed to flesh, which is proper to God, as to create, to redeem. Who can but wonder that flesh should infinitely provoke God, and yet God in the same flesh should be infinitely pleased? Surely God never manifested himself in such a strain of love as this before. If any thing will beget our love to God, surely Christ incarnate will do it. Come then, O my soul, I cannot but call on thee to love thy Jesus; and to provoke thy love, fix thy eye on this lovely object. Draw yet a little nearer, consider what love is in this design. God is in thy own nature, to take upon him all the miseries of thy nature; and art thou yet cold in thy love to Jesus Christ? Canst thou love him but a little who hath loved thee so much? O thou sweet Jesus, that clothest thyself with the clouds as with a garment, and now clothest thyself with the nature of a man; O that thou wouldst inflame my spirit with a love of thee, that nothing but thyself might be dear unto me, because it so pleased thee to vilify thyself, thine own self for my sake.

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

If it be so, that by our desire, and hope, and faith, and love, we have indeed reached the object which our souls pant after, how then should we joy and delight therein! O rejoice in the Lord, and again, I say, rejoice. Is there not cause? What is the meaning of the gospel of Christ, but good tidings? And wherein lie the good tidings according to its eminency, but in the glorious incarnation of the Son of God? The birth of Christ is the comfort of comforts, and the sweetest balm. O my soul! how canst thou but rejoice if thou wilt consider these particulars;

1. God himself is come down into the world.—Because it was impossible for thee to come to him, he is come to thee. This consideration made the prophet cry out, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee." He is called a King, and therefore he is able, and he is thy King, and therefore he is willing: but in that thy King cometh unto thee, here is the marvellous love and mercy of God in Christ. Kings do not usually come to wait upon their subjects, it is well if poor subjects may be admitted into their presence to wait on them. But see the great King of heaven and earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords stooping, and bowing the heavens to come down to thee. Surely this is good tidings of great joy.

2. God is come down in the flesh.—He hath laid aside, as it were, his own glory, whilst he converseth with thee. When God manifested himself on Mount Sinai, he came down in thunder and lightning, but now God is come down in the flesh, and hath made his appearance as one of us, and there is not in this respect the least distance between him and us. Surely this is fuel for joy to feed upon.

3. God in the flesh is the first opening of his eternal purpose to do us good.—The seed of the woman was the first word of comfort that ever was heard in the world after man was fallen; and from this we may raise a world of comfort, for if God begins so gloriously, how will he end? If God be so full of love as to come down in flesh now in this world, Oh, what matter of hope is laid up before us, of what God will be to us in that world to come? O my soul, weigh this subject, and make an application of it to thyself, and then tell me, if thou hast not matter enough to raise up thy heart, and to "fill it with joy unspeakable and full of glory." When the wise men saw but the "star of Christ, they rejoiced with an exceeding great joy." How much more when they saw Christ himself? "Your father Abraham (said Christ to the Jews) rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." He saw it indeed, but afar off with the eyes of faith: they before Christ had the promise.

but we see the performance; how then should we rejoice? How glad shouldst thou be, O my soul, at the sight and the effect of Christ's incarnation? "Awake, awake, O my soul, awake, awake, utter a song!" Tell over these passages, that God is come down into the world, that God is come down in the flesh, that God is come down in flesh in order to thy reconciliation; that God is come down in the likeness of man, that he may bring thee up into the likeness of God, and that all these are but the first openings of the grace, and goodness, and glory of God in Christ to thy soul.

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Calling on Jesus contains prayer, and praise. 1. We must pray, that all these transactions of Jesus at his first coming may be ours; and is not there encouragement for our prayers? Christ's incarnation opens a door of rich entrance into the presence of God: we may call it, a blessed portal into heaven. This is that "new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh." With what boldness may we now enter into the holiest, and draw near unto the throne of grace! God in his humanity animates our souls to come unto him, and to seek of him whatsoever is needful for us. Go then to Christ, O my soul, or to God the Father, in and through Jesus; and desire that the benefit of his conception, birth, and wonderful union of the two natures of Christ may be all thine.

2. We must praise.—This was the special duty practised by all saints and angels at Christ's birth. "My soul doth magnify the Lord," said Mary. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel (saith Zachary) for he hath visited and redeemed his people." "Glory to God in the highest," said the heavenly host: only one angel brought the news, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" but immediately after there was a multitude of the heavenly host to sing praises. O my soul, do thou endeavour to keep consort with those many angels. "O sing praises, sing praises unto God, sing praises."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

The sight of Christ will make us like Christ; for as a looking-glass cannot be exposed to the sun, but it will shine like the same; so God receives none to contemplate his face, but he transforms them into his own likeness; and Christ hath none that dive into these depths of his glorious incarnation, but they carry along with them sweet impressions of a transforming nature. Come, then, let us once more look on Jesus in his incarnation, that we may conform to him in that respect. But wherein lies this conformity? I answer, in these and the like particulars.

1. Christ was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost, so must Christ be formed in us in a spiritual sense by the same Spirit. "He hath begotten us by the word," saith the apostle James. God hath appointed no other means to convey supernatural life but this. Where no preaching is, there is a worse judgment than that of Egypt, where there was one dead in every family. By the word and Spirit the seeds of all grace are sown in the heart, and the heart closing with it, Christ is formed therein.

2. Christ was sanctified in the virgin's womb, so must we be sanctified in ourselves.—"Be ye holy, as I am holy:" souls regenerate must be sanctified, "Every man, (saith the apostle) that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as *He* is pure." Christ could not have been a Saviour for us, unless first he had been sanctified; neither can we be members unto him, unless we be purged from our sins, and sanctified by his Spirit. To this purpose is that of the apostle, "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God." In the Old Testament, they killed beasts, presenting them unto the Lord; but now we are to mortify the flesh, with the affections and lusts: all our inordinate passions, and evil affections are to be crucified; and all that is ours must be given up unto God. Christ was sanctified from the womb, and sanctified in the womb, for our imitation: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, (saith he) that they also might be sanctified."

3. Christ the Son of man is by nature the Son of God; so we poor sons of men must by grace become the sons of God.—"For this very end, God sent his own Son made of a woman, that we might receive the adoption of sons—Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." This intimates, that what relation Christ hath unto the Father by nature, we should have the same by grace: by nature, "He is the only begotten Son of the Father; and as many as received him, (saith John) to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

4. Christ the Son of God was yet the Son of man; there was in him a duplicity of natures really distinguished; and in this respect, the greatest majesty, and the greatest humility that ever was, are found in Christ; so we though sons of God, must remember ourselves to be but sons of men.—Our privileges are not so high but our poor conditions, frailties, infirmities, sins may make us low. Who was higher than the Son of God? And who was lower than the son of man? As he is God, he is in the bosom of his Father; as he is man, he is in the womb of his mother; as he is God, his throne is in heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity; as he is man, he is circumscribed in a manger. Shall the Son of God be thus humbled for us, and shall not we be humbled for ourselves? I say, for ourselves that deserve to be cast down amongst the lowest worms, and damned spirits? What are we in our best condition here upon earth? Had we the best natures, purest conversations, happiest endowments that accompany the saints, pride overthrows all; it thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of Babel, proud Haman out of the court, proud Saul out of his kingdom, proud Lucifer out of heaven. Poor man! how ill it becomes thee to be proud, when God himself is become thus humble!

5. Christ did and suffered many things in his childhood, so should we learn to "bear God's yoke in our youth."—It is good to imitate Christ even betimes, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." O ye parents, imitate Joseph and Mary, in their care

and nurture of the holy child Jesus; and O ye children, imitate Jesus the blessedest pattern that ever was, that as you grow in stature, you also may "grow in favour with God and man." Observe him in the temple, when he was but twelve years old, in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions; children, whilst little, should with their parents wait on God in the midst of our assemblies. Moses told Pharaoh, they must have their young ones with them to the solemn worship. And when Joshua read the law of God to the children of Israel, they had their little ones with them in that solemn assembly. Observe Christ also in Nazareth, where, during his minority, he was ever subject to his parents; so, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Not only the law of God, but the gospel of Christ makes mention of this, "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." I know the subjection of Christ extends to his particular calling, and this also is for your imitation. Religion and grace wherever they prevail, make men profitable, and, in this respect the poorest servant and drudge may have more comfort in his estate, than the greatest gentleman that hath nothing to do but to eat, and drink, and play.

Thus far we have looked on Jesus as our Jesus in his incarnation, or his first coming in the flesh. Our next work is to look on Jesus carrying on the great work of man's salvation, during his life, from John's baptism, until his suffering and dying on the cross.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS LIFE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

Of the first Year of Christ's Ministry.—The Preaching of John the Baptist.—The Baptism of Jesus.—The Fasting and Temptations of Christ.—The first Manifestations of Christ.

OF THE FIRST YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

WE now proceed to treat of the principal transactions, which were successively carried on during our Lord's ministerial office. And as John the Baptist's preaching was introductory to it, we shall begin with his ministry, which commenced six months before that of Christ's.

OF THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Now it was that the gospel began to dawn, and John, like the morning star, springing from the windows of the East, foretels the approach of the Sun of Righteousness. Now it was that he laid the first rough stone of the building in mortification and self-denial. I read not that ever John wrought a miracle, but good works convince more than miracles themselves. John's sermons were to those of Jesus, as a preface to a discourse: his usual note

was, "Repentance, the ax to the root, the fan to the floor, the chaff to the fire." As his raiment was rough, so was his tongue; and thus must the way be made for Christ in obstinate hearts. Plausibility, or pleasing of the flesh is no fit preface to regeneration. If the heart of man had continued upright, Christ might have been entertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruptions, ere we can have room for grace. Never will Christ come into that soul, where the herald of repentance hath not been before him.

Shall we hear that sermon which John preached in his own words? "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." These are the words when he first began to preach the gospel of Christ; and indeed we find Christ himself doth preach the same doctrine in the same words; "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Oh how seasonable is this sermon to us! Christians, hath not the kingdom of heaven approached unto us? Take the kingdom of heaven for the kingdom of glory, are we not near to the door of glory, to the confines of eternity? "What is our life, but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away?" We know not but ere the sun have run one round, our souls may be in that world of souls, and so either in heaven or hell. Or take the kingdom of heaven for the church of Christ, and what expectation have we now of the flourishing state of Christ's church here upon earth? "Then shall the children of Israel and Judah be gathered together,—for great shall be the day of Jezreel." A time is at hand, that Israel and Judah shall be called together, that the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in; and what is this, but the great day of Christ? What manner of persons then ought we to be? How spiritual? How heavenly minded? "Arise, arise, shake off thy dust, for thy light is coming, and the glory of the Lord is rising upon thee." But I must not dwell on this: my design is to consider the transactions of Jesus in reference to our souls' health; and John's sermons were only a preparative to the manifestation of Jesus.

OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

He that formerly was circumcised would now be baptised; he was circumcised to sanctify his church that was, and he was baptised to sanctify his church that should be: we find him in both testaments opening a way into heaven. This was the first appearing of Christ in reference to his ministerial office: he that lay hid in the counsel of God from all eternity, and he that lay hid in the womb of his mother for the space of forty weeks, and he that lay hid in Nazareth for the space of thirty years; now at last begins to shew himself to the world. "He comes from Galilee to Jordan, to John to be baptised of him." Now was the full time come, that Jesus took leave of his mother, and his trade, to begin his Father's work, in order to the redemption of the world. For the clearer understanding of Christ's baptism, we shall examine several particulars.

1. What reason had Christ to be baptised?—We find John himself wondering at this, "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" Many reasons are given for Christ's baptism; 1. That he might bear witness to the preaching and baptism of John, and might reciprocally receive a testimony from John. 2. That by his own baptism, he might sanctify the water of baptism to his own church. 3. That he might "fulfil *all* righteousness;" not only the moral, but the ceremonial and typical. Some think that the ceremony, to which our Saviour alluded in these words, was the washing of the priests in water, when they entered into their office. And surely this was the main reason of Christ's being baptised, that by this baptism he might be installed into his ministerial office.

2. How did John know him to be the Christ?—It is very probable he had never seen his face before; they had in their infancy been driven to several places, and they were designed to several employments; besides the Baptist speaks expressly, "I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, on whomsoever thou shalt see the spirit descending,

and abiding on him, the same is he that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." Now this descent of the Holy Ghost was not till after baptism; how then did he know him to be Christ? It is not unlikely, but John knew Christ at his first arrival by revelation. Thus Samuel knew Saul, and thus John might know Christ. The knowledge he had after baptism, was a further confirmation of that same knowledge that he had before baptism, and that not so much for his own sake, as for the people's: "I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God."

3. Wherein was the glory or excellency of Christ's baptism?—The ancients give many encomiums to it, and in some respects prefer it to the birth of Christ: Thus Augustin, "Many great miracles were at Christ's birth, but they were far greater at his baptism; the Holy Ghost overshadowed him in the womb, but he brightly shone on him in the river; then was the Father silent, not a word from him; but now a loud voice is heard from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" then was the mother under suspicion, because she was found with child without a father, but now is the mother greatly honoured, in that the holy child is fathered by God himself." Then was Christ hid to the world, and this made John the Baptist say, "There stands one amongst you whom ye know not:" he was before his baptism, as a sun in a cloud, or a pearl in a shell, or a gold mine in a field, but now he appears in public, and to manifest his glory, the heavens open, and from the heavens the Holy Ghost descends, and alights upon his sacred head, and God the Father gives a voice from heaven, declaring his divinity to the world. If the Jews require a sign, here is not one, but many signs at once, which as beams to discover a sun, so they discover this Sun of Righteousness to be risen amongst them: and herein was the glory of Christ's baptism.

4. Why was it that the Holy Ghost descended on Jesus?—1. That John the Baptist might be satisfied; for this token was given John, when he first began to preach, "That upon whom he should see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." 2. That Christ himself

might be anointed, or installed into his function. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings unto the meek." As Aaron and his sons were anointed with material oil, when they entered into their offices, so Christ was by the Spirit (as it were) anointed, that so he might receive his consecration, and institution for the office, that he was to enter on,—the preaching and ministry of the gospel. 3. That at the beginning of the gospel, a clear and sensible demonstration of the whole Trinity might be made. The Holy Ghost in scripture hath a special regard to express this mystery upon singular occasions. It is the very first thing that is taught in all the Bible; "In the beginning God created,"—there is the Father; and "God said,"—there is the Word, or the Son; "and the Spirit of God moved,"—there is the Holy Ghost. And the very first word of the Bible, that speaks of man, holds out the Trinity as creating him; "And God said, Let us make man in our own image." He saith, Let *us*, to shew the Trinity of persons; and he saith, In our *image*, not in our images, to shew the unity of essence. How fit then was it, that at the baptism of Christ, the three persons should be revealed; especially since he ordained baptism to be administered in all their names? The Father speaks from heaven, the Son comes out of the water, and the Holy Ghost appears in the likeness of a dove. Thus every person of the Trinity gives some sensible evidence of his presence.

We may here observe that the baptism we use, and the baptism of John, are in nature and substance the very same. John baptised in Christ that should die, and rise again; but we baptise in the name of Christ, that was dead, and risen again. We may also observe the folly of those who reject the baptism of water, upon the pretence of the baptism only with fire! Christ (we see) hath joined them together, and let no man put them asunder. Christ himself was baptised with fire, and yet Christ himself was baptised with water.

OF THE FASTING AND TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST.

No sooner is Christ come out of the water of baptism, but he enters into the fire of temptation. No sooner is the Holy Spirit descended upon his head, but he is led by the same Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness. No sooner doth God say, "This is my Son," but Satan puts it to the question, "If thou be the Son of God." All these are but Christ's preparatives to his prophetical office. In the former section, Christ was prepared by a solemn consecration, and now he is to be further prepared by Satan's temptations. Several particulars are worthy of our notice; I begin with the place where the temptation was—"the wilderness."

This wilderness was not the same wherein John the Baptist lived, for that was inhabited, but this wilderness was void of men, and full of "wild beasts." As Adam in his innocency lived with wild beasts, and they hurt him not; so Christ the second Adam lives here in the wilderness with wild beasts, and has no hurt at all. He is Adam-like in his safety and security; but above Adam in resisting temptation. Probably during his forty days abode there, Christ was continually exercised in prayer and fasting; he knew he had a great work of redemption to promote; and therefore his conversation for this interval must be preparatory to it. In this respect, I know not but the wilderness might be an advantage to Christ's design. Heaven usually is more open, and God more familiar in his visits in such places.

2. The cause of Christ's going into the wilderness, was the Spirit's leading.—"Then was Jesus led of the Spirit into the wilderness." Christ was led by the good Spirit, to be tempted by the evil spirit. O wonder! that the same Spirit which was one with the Father and the Son, now leads him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Christ would not go into the combat uncalled, unwarranted; how then should we, poor weaklings, presume upon any abilities of our own? If we are to pray not to be led into temptation, much more are we to pray not to run into temptation; and yet for the comfort of

God's people, if by divine permission, we are engaged in a course of life that is full of temptations, let us look upon it as an issue of divine providence, in which we must glorify God.

3. The end of the Spirit's leading Christ into the wilderness, was either immediate or remote.—1. The immediate end was to be tempted of the devil; the remote end was his own glory and our good. 1. His own glory appeared in this. Had not Satan tempted Christ, how should Christ have overcome Satan? Herein was the power of Christ exceedingly manifested; and also his faith, patience, humility and zeal. 2. As it was for his glory, so also for our good. Now we see what manner of adversary we have, how he fights, how he is resisted, and how overcome; now we see the dearer we are to God, the more obnoxious we are to temptation; now we see that the best saints may be tempted to the worst of evils, since Christ himself is solicited to infidelity, covetousness, and idolatry; now we see, "that we have not a high Priest, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but such an one as was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; and therefore we may go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

4. The time and occasion of the devil's onset.—It was "at the end of forty days' fast, and when he was an hungered." Moses fasted forty days at the delivery of the law; and Elias fasted forty days at the restitution of the law; and to fulfil the time of both these types, Christ thinks it fit to fast forty days at the accomplishment of the law and the promulgation of the gospel. In fasting so long, Christ manifests his Almighty power; and in fasting no longer, Christ manifests the truth of his manhood and of his weakness. And now our Saviour is an hungered. This gives occasion to Satan to set upon him with his fierce temptations. He hath temptations of all sorts; the vanities of the world for the intemperate, and the kingdoms of the world for the ambitious. He considers the temper and constitution of the person he is to tempt, and he observes all our exterior accidents, occasions and opportunities; but of this hereafter.

5. The temptations themselves are three.—The first was this, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What a horrible entrance is this! "If thou be the Son of God." No question Satan had heard the glad tidings of the angel, he saw the star, and the journey, and the offering of the sages; he could not but take notice of the gratulations of Zachary, Simeon, Anna; and of late he saw the heavens open, and heard the voice that came down from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And yet now that he saw Christ fainting with hunger, as not comprehending how infirmities could consist with a Godhead, he put it to the question, "If thou be the Son of God." Here is a point, in which lies all our happiness. How miserable were we, if Christ were not indeed the Son of God! If Christ had not been the Son of God, how should he have ransomed the world? How should he have done, or how should he have suffered that which was satisfactory to his Father's wrath? If Christ be not the Son of God, we are lost, we are undone, we are damned for ever. Farewell glory, farewell happiness, farewell heaven. If Christ be not the Son of God, we must never come there. Well, Satan, thou beginnest thy assault like a devil indeed, "If thou be the Son of God;" but what then? "Command that these stones be made bread." He knew Jesus was hungry, and therefore he invites him to eat bread only of his own providing, that so he might refresh his humanity, and prove his divinity. There is nothing more ordinary with our spiritual enemy, than by occasion of want to move us to unwarrantable courses: "If thou art poor, then steal; if thou canst not rise by honest means, then use indirect ones." I know Christ might as lawfully have turned stones into bread, as water into wine; but to do this in a distrust of his Father's providence, to work a miracle of Satan's choice and bidding, could not be agreeable with the Son of God. And hence Jesus refuses to be relieved; he would rather refuse to manifest the divinity of his person, than do any act, which had in it the intimation of a different spirit. O Christians! it is a sinful care, to take evil courses to provide for our necessities. It may

be thou hast found a way to thrive, which thou couldst not before. O take heed, was it not of the devil's prompting to change stones into bread, sadness into sensual comforts? If so, Satan has prevailed.

But what was Christ's answer? "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—1. "It is written," he easily could have confounded Satan by the power of his Godhead; but he rather chose to vanquish him by the sword of his Spirit. Surely this was for our instruction. By this means he teacheth us how to resist and to overcome. Nothing in heaven or earth can beat the forces of hell, if the word of God cannot. O then how should we pray with David; "Teach me, O Lord the way of thy statutes." 2. "Man shall not live by bread," &c. Whilst we are in God's work, God hath made a promise of the supply of all provisions necessary for us. Jesus was now in his Father's work, therefore he was sure to be provided for, according to God's word. Christians, are we in God's service? God will certainly give us bread; and till he does, we can live by the breath of his mouth, by the light of his countenance, by the refreshment of his promises, by "every word that proceedeth out of his mouth.

The second temptation is not so sensual; the devil sees that was too low for Christ, and therefore he comes again with a temptation something more spiritual; "He sets him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee." He that was content to be led from Jordan into the wilderness, yields to be led from the wilderness to Jerusalem. The wilderness was fit for a temptation arising from want, and Jerusalem, for a temptation arising from vain glory. Jerusalem was the glory of the world, the temple was the glory of Jerusalem, the pinnacle was the highest part of the temple; and there is Christ content to be set for the opportunity of temptation. "Cast thyself down," saith Satan. But why did not Satan cast him down? He carried him up thither, and was it not more easy to throw him down thence? O no, the devil may persuade us to a fall, but he cannot precipitate us without

our own act: his malice is infinite, but his power is limited; he cannot do us any harm but by persuading us to do it ourselves; and therefore saith he to Christ, "Cast *thyself* down."

To this Christ answers, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Though it is true, that God must be trusted in, yet he must not be tempted; if means be allowed, we must not throw them away upon a pretence of God's protection.

The third temptation is yet more horrid. Satan takes him up to the top of an "exceeding high mountain, and shews him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, saying, All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." In this temptation the devil united all his power of stratagem, and drew into one centre all the kingdoms and glories of the world, and represented them to the eyes of Jesus. He thought ambition more likely to ruin him, because he knew it was that which prevailed upon himself, and therefore, he said, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The Lamb of God that heard all the former temptations with patience, could by no means endure this. He commands him away, and tells him, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Now was the devil put to flight, and in his stead, "the angels came and ministered unto Jesus," such things as his necessities required.

O Christian, what shall we say to this? If Christ was thus tempted by Satan, what may we look for? Sometimes it cheers my heart to think thatChrist was tempted, because thereby he knows how to succour those that are tempted; and sometimes it affrights my soul to think that Satan durst be so bold with Jesus Christ. Oh! what may he do with me? How easily may he prevail against my soul? When he came to tempt Christ, he found nothing in him to join with him in the temptation; but in my heart is a world of corruptions, and unless the Lord prevent, I am quickly gone.

OF THE FIRST MANIFESTATIONS OF CHRIST.

Now it was time that "the Sun of Righteousness should arise," and shine in the view of the world. To manifest Christ were many witnesses. 1. *From heaven*, the Father is witness; "the Father, saith he, that sent me beareth witness of me:" the Son is witness, for saith Christ, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go;" and the Holy Ghost is witness; for that purpose he descended like a dove, and lighted upon him. 2. *On earth*, John the Baptist is witness, for saith Christ, "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth,—He came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through Christ might believe." No sooner was John confirmed by a sign from heaven, that Jesus was the Christ, but he manifests it to the Jews; yea, he points him out with his finger, "behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."

And yet we find more witnesses: "The works (saith Christ) that I do, in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." These works or miracles of Christ were many, but because we are speaking of his first manifestation, I shall instance only his first work, which was at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The power of miracles had ceased since their return out of the captivity; the last miracle that was done by man till this very time, was Daniel's tying up the mouths of the lions, and now Christ begins. He that made the first marriage in paradise, bestows his first miracle upon a marriage feast. O happy feast where Christ is a guest! I believe this was no rich or sumptuous bridal. This poor bridegroom wants drink for his guests; and as soon as the holy virgin hath notice of it, she complains to her son. Whether we want water, or wine, necessaries or comforts, whither should we go but to Christ? "But Jesus answered her, Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." This shews that the work he was to do, must not be done to satisfy her importunity, but to pro-

secute the great work of divine designation. In works spiritual and religious, all outward relation ceaseth. We must not deny love and duty to relations; but in the things of God natural endearments must pass into spiritual, and, like stars in the presence of the sun, must not appear. Paul could say, "Henceforth we know no man after the flesh, yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

At the command of Jesus the water pots were filled with water, and the water by his divine power is turned into wine, where the different dispensation of God and the world is highly observable: "Every man sets forth good wine at first, and then the worst;" but Christ not only turns water into wine, but into such wine, that the last draught is most pleasant. These were the first manifestations of Jesus. You see he had several witnesses to set him forth; some from heaven, and some on earth; the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost witness from heaven; the Baptist, disciples, and his works witness on earth; and all bring in this testimony of Jesus, that he is "the Messiah, which is, being interpreted the Christ."

CHAPTER II.

Of the second year of Christ's Ministry.—His Sermons this year.—His prophetical Office.—His Miracles.

OF THE SECOND YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

Now was it that the office of the Baptist was expired, and Christ beginning his prophetical office, appears like the sun in his succession of the morning star. By this time he saw it convenient to choose more disciples: with this family he goes up and down Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of diseases. It is not my purpose to enlarge on all the sermons, miracles, and conferences of Christ with men: in this year therefore I shall limit myself to the consideration of Christ with regard to his preaching and miracles; both these relate to his prophetical office.

OF CHRIST'S SERMONS THIS YEAR.

1. His preaching this year was frequent, and amongst other sermons, now it was that he delivered the first sermon, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

2. Now was it that he delivered that spiritual and mystical sermon of regeneration, at which Nicodemus wonders. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" But Jesus takes off the wonder, in telling him, this was not a work of flesh and blood, but of the Spirit of God, "for the Spirit bloweth where it listeth;" and is as the wind certain and notorious in the effects, but secret in the principle and manner of production. Then Christ proceeds in his sermon, telling him yet of higher things, as of his descent from heaven, of

his passion and ascension, and of the mercy of redemption, which he came to fulfill for all that believe; of the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and glories of eternity.

3. Now was it that the throng of auditors forcing Christ to leave the shore, he makes Peter's ship his pulpit. Never were there any such nets cast out of that fishing boat before: while he was upon land, he healed the sick bodies by his touch, and now he was upon sea, he cured sick souls by his doctrine. He that made both sea and land, caused both to conspire to his designs of good to the souls and bodies of men.

4. Now it was that he preached that blessed sermon on "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." No question but he preached both to poor and rich; but the power and fruit of his preaching, were only received by the poor in Spirit. In the following particulars, his office is set out still in a higher tenor, "To heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind;" or as it is in Isaiah, "The opening of the prison to them that are bound."

5. Now it was that he delivered the admirable "sermon upon the mount," It is a breviary of all those precepts which are truly Christian; it contains in it all the moral precepts given by Moses, and opens a more severe exposition than the Scribes and Pharisees had given; it holds forth the doctrines of meekness, poverty of spirit, desire of holy things, mercy, purity, peace, patience, and suffering of injuries. He teacheth us how to pray, how to fast, how to give alms, how to contemn the world, and how to seek the kingdom of God, and its appendent righteousness.

OF CHRIST'S PROPHETICAL OFFICE.

The titles of Christ, in respect of his prophetical office, were these: Sometimes he is called doctor, or master; "Be ye not called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ." Sometimes he is called a lawgiver; "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to de-

stroy." Sometimes he is called a Counsellor; "And his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor." Sometimes he is called the apostle of our profession; "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle, and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Sometimes he is called the angel of the covenant; "Even the angel of the covenant whom ye delight in." Sometimes he is called the Mediator of the new covenant; "For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament," saith the apostle. Now, a Mediator is such a one as goes between two parties at variance, imparting the mind of the one to the other, so as to breed a right understanding, and thereby to work a compliance between both. And thus Christ is a Mediator between God and his people.

1. As a prophet, Christ delivers to the people his Father's will, both in his own person, and by his servants the ministers:—in his own person, when he was upon earth as a "minister of the circumcision," and by his servants the ministers, from the beginning of their mission to the end of the world.

2. As a prophet, he opens and expounds the gospel.—The gracious purpose of God towards lost mankind, was a secret locked up in the breast of the Father; and so it had been even to this day, had not Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, revealed it unto us.

3. As a prophet, he gives us to understand, and to believe the gospel.—"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." He that at first opens scriptures, at last opens hearts. He enlightens every believer, not only with a common natural light, but with a special supernatural light, of saving, spiritual, and effectual knowledge. There is no prophet can do this save only Jesus Christ; he only is able to cause our hearts to believe and to understand the matter, which he doth teach and reveal. Other prophets may plant and water, but he, and only he can "give the increase."

The exellencies of Christ above all other prophets, are in these respects.—

1. Other prophets were but types of this great prophet. Even Moses himself was but a figure of him,

"A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." These words plainly shew, that Moses was at the best but a shadow of Christ: now, as substances far excel shadows, so Christ far excels all the prophets.

2. Other prophets spake only to the ears of men, but Christ speaks to the heart.—"He hath the keys of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, that shutteth and no man openeth." He only is able to open the eyes of the mind by the secret, kindly and powerfully working of his own Spirit.

3. Other prophets had their commission and authority from Him.—"The words of the wise are as goads and nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies, which are given from one shepherd," and Christ is that one shepherd from whom these words are given, and from whom these masters have their authority.

OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

The miracles of Christ which this year were many, were a verification of his doctrine.

1. Now was it that at Cana, where he wrought the first miracle, he does a second: "a certain nobleman came to Jesus, and besought him to come down to his house, and to heal his son, who was at the point of death." This noble ruler seeks after Christ in his necessity: happy was it for him that his son was sick, for else he had not been so well acquainted with his Saviour. The first answer Christ gives this nobleman, is a word of reproof; "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:" Incredulity was the common disease of the Jews. The doctrine of Christ, and all the divine words tha the spake, must be made up with miracles, or they will not believe. What is it that condemns the world but unbelief? O what a sin is this! Christ's next answer is a word of comfort; "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Oh the meekness, and mercy of Jesus Christ! When we would have looked that he should have punished this suitor for not believing, he condescends to him that he may believe: With one word doth Christ heal two patients,

the son and father; the son's fever, and the father's unbelief. We cannot but observe here the steps of faith; he that believed somewhat ere he came, and more when he went, grew to more and more faith in the way; and when he came home, he enlarged his faith to all the skirts of his family. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him," and he went his way; and in the way one meets him and tells him, "Thy son liveth;" which recovery he understands to be at the same time that Christ had spoken those healing words, "and himself believed and his whole house."

2. Now was it that "a centurion came unto Christ, beseeching him, and saying, My servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." Many suitors came to Christ, one for a son, another for a daughter, a third for himself; but I see none come for his servant, but this centurion; and if we observe Christ's answer to his suit, we see how well pleased Christ is with his request: Jesus saith unto him, "I will come and heal him." It may be this poor sick servant had more grace, or he had more need, and therefore Christ will go down to visit him. Nay, says the centurion, I am not worthy, Lord, that thou shouldest come under my roof; alas, Lord! I am a Gentile, an alien, a man of blood; but thou art holy, thou art omnipotent; and therefore, "only say the word, and my servant shall be whole." Mark this, O my soul, it is but a word of Christ, and my sins shall be remitted, my soul healed, and soul and body glorified for ever. The centurion knew this by the command he had over his own servants; "I say to this man, Go, and he goes, and to another man, come, and he comes, and to a third, do this, and he doeth it." Oh, that I were such a servant to my heavenly Master! each of his commands says, Do this, and I do it not: each of his prohibitions says, Do it not, and I do it." O that I could serve my Christ as these soldiers did their Master! Jesus marvels at the centurion's faith. We never find Christ wondering at gold, or silver, or costly and curious works; but when he sees the acts of faith, he so approves of them, that he is ravished with wonder. And he that both wrought this faith, and wondered at it, doth now

reward it. "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it unto thee, and his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

3. Now it was, that "Jesus goes into the city of Nain." The fruitful clouds are not ordained to fall all in one field; Nain must partake of the bounty of Christ, as well as Cana, or Capernaum. He no sooner enters the gate, but he meets a funeral; a poor widow, with her weeping friends, is following her only son to the grave; Jesus observing her sad condition, pities, comforts, and at last relieves her. In his former miracles he was sued to; but now Christ offers a cure, to give us a lesson, that whilst we have to do with the Father of mercies, our miseries and afflictions are the most powerful suitors. Christ observes the widow's sadness, and presently speaks comfortably unto her, "Weep not;—young man, I say unto thee, arise." See how the Lord of life speaks with command: the same voice speaks to him that shall one day speak to us, and raise us out of the dust of the earth: the same power that can raise one man, can raise a thousand, a million, a world.

I have now given you several instances of the miracles of Christ in the second year of his ministry; the grand object of which was to prove his mission from God, to demonstrate his power unto men, to confirm his gospel, to endear his precepts, to work in us faith, to help us heaven-ward. And may we not here remark, that Jesus Christ, in carrying on our soul's salvation is adding miracle to miracle. So contrary is our perverse nature to all possibilities of salvation, that if salvation had not marched to us all the way in a miracle, we should have perished in the ruins of a sad eternity. Indeed every man living in the state of grace is a perpetual miracle. His reason is turned into faith, his body into a temple, his earth into heaven, his water into wine, his aversions from Christ into intimate union with Christ.

CHAPTER III.

Of the third year of Christ's ministry. Christ's ordination of his Apostles. His reception of sinners. His easy yoke and light burden.

OF THE THIRD YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

HITHERTO all was quiet; neither the Jews, nor the Samaritans, did as yet malign the doctrine or person of Jesus Christ; but he preached with much peace on all hands till the beginning of this year. I shall not yet speak of his sufferings; neither shall I speak much of his doings: but only of such things as refer principally to the main business of our souls' salvation.

OF CHRIST'S ORDINATION OF HIS APOSTLES.

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." In this election of the apostles several particulars are worthy of our notice.

1. The time when they were chosen, was "after he had continued all night in prayer to God."—This shews the singular care that Christ had in this great employment. To set men apart to witness his name, and to publish to the world the gospel of Christ he would not do without much prayer.

2. The company out of whom they are chosen.—"He called unto him his disciples, and out of them he chose twelve. Christ's ministers should first be disciples. O how unfit are they to take upon them the ministry of Christ, that were never yet the disciples of Christ! first the grace of God within us, and then must that grace of God be discovered by us.

3. The end to which they were chosen, was to apostleship.—That they might be Christ's legates to the sons of men, that they might be sent up and down the world to persuade men to salvation.

OF CHRIST'S RECEPTION OF SINNERS.

Christ's reception of sinners appears, both in his doctrine and practice.

1. In his doctrine, Christ lays it down expressly; "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is no more, but come and welcome. The gospel shuts none out of heaven, but those that by unbelief lock the door against their own souls.

Again, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The very marrow of the gospel is contained in these words. On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, the Jews were wont with great solemnity to draw water out of the fountain of Siloam, and to bring it to the altar, singing out of Isaiah, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Now Christ takes them at this custom, and recals them from earthly to heavenly waters. All the time of Christ's ministry, we see him tiring himself in going about from place to place, upon no other errand than this, to cry at the markets, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters! If any sinners love life, if any will go to heaven, let them come to me, and I will shew them the way to my Father's bosom, and endear them to my Father's heart."

2. Christ's reception of sinners appears yet more in his practice.—How welcome were all sorts of sinners unto him! This he manifests. 1. Parabolically. 2. Really.

1. Parabolically, especially in the parable of the lost son. "When the prodigal was yet afar off, his father saw him: and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." In these words observe, 1. His father sees him before he sees his father; no sooner a sinner thinks of heaven, but the Lord takes notice of him. 2. The Lord sees him while he was yet a

great way off. Sinners may be far off from God in their own apprehensions, and yet the Lord even then draws near to them. 3. His father had compassion on him; the Lord's bowels yearn within him at the sight of his returning prodigals. 4. "His father ran:" there is much in this. If a sinner will but creep towards Christ, mercy will run to meet him. God's mercy is over his works, and over all our sins. 5. He fell on his neck, and kissed him. What? those lips that had so often kissed base and abominable harlots! The scope of the parable is this, that Christ is willing and glad to receive sinners. "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel!"

2. Christ manifests this willingness in his practice really.—Amongst many instances, I shall insist only on one, a notable instance of this year. One of the Pharisees named Simon, invited Christ to eat with him, which a certain woman that was a sinner heard of. She accordingly entered the house, "stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head; and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment." O what a change! She that was before so proud and vile, comes in remorse, and regret for her sins, and humbly stands at Jesus' feet. Our Lord's conduct implied that repenting sinners should be welcome to him; and this welcome he published first to Simon, "Her sins which are many are forgiven;" and then to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

Is Christ most willing to receive sinners? O then who would not come to him? Methinks, now all sinners of all sorts should say, Though I have been a drunkard, a swearer, an unclean person, yet now I hear Christ is willing to receive sinners, and therefore I will go to Jesus Christ. This is my exhortation, Come unto Christ; behold, here in the name of the Lord, I stand, and make invitation to poor sinners; Oh, will not ye come? How will you answer it at the great day, when it shall be said, The Lord Jesus made an offer of mercy to you, and you would not accept of it. Oh,

come to Christ, and believe on Christ: as Christ is willing to receive you, so be you willing to give up your souls to him.

OF CHRIST'S EASY YOKE, AND LIGHT BURDEN.

Many fears and jealousies are in the hearts of men, of the difficulty and severity of Christ's institutions; and therefore, to remove that objection, he tells them plainly, there is no such thing, but rather the contrary, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Christ Jesus came to break off from our necks those two great yokes; the one of sin, by which we were kept in fetters and prisons: the other of Moses' law by which we were kept in pupilage and minority: and now Christ having taken off these two, he hath put on a third; he quits us of our burden, but not of our duty; he hath changed the yoke of sin, and the yoke of the law strictly taken, into the sweetness of his fatherly regimen whose very precepts carry part of their reward in hand, and assurance of glory afterwards.

The reasons of the easiness, and pleasantness of the Christian religion, and the practice of it, I shall reduce into two heads.

1. The Christian religion is most rational.—If we should look into the best laws that the wisest men in the world ever agreed upon, we shall find that Christ adopted the quintessence of them all into this one law. The highest pitch of reason is but as a spark, a taper, which is involved and swallowed up in the body of this great light, that is made up by the Sun of Righteousness. Some observe, that Christ's discipline is the breviary of all the wisdom of the best men, and a transcript of his Father's wisdom.

2. The Christian religion is also composed of peace.—"Her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Christ framed all his laws in compliance of this design of peace; peace within, and peace at home, and peace abroad. "Great peace have they that love thy law;" by the aid of Christ and his grace, their passions are subdued, and they pass on their life sweetly

and calmly, without any perturbations much troubling their spirits: they have that "peace which passeth all understanding." Whosoever obeys the laws of Jesus Christ, seeks with sweetness to remedy all differences; he throws water upon a spark; he lives sweetly with his wife, affectionately with his children, discreetly with his servants; and they all look upon him as their guardian, friend, and patron. If men would but live according to the Christian religion, one of those great plagues that vexeth the world (I mean the plague of war) would be no more. And if all men that are called Christians, were indeed charitable, peaceable, just, loving, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, what sweet peace should we have! How would this world be an image of heaven, and of that society of saints and angels above in glory!

CHAPTER. IV.

OF THE FOURTH YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

THIS was the last year of Christ's ministry, in which were thousands of passages. The evangelist John relates more of Christ this year than in all the former, and if I studied not brevity, we might dwell more on his actings for us this year, than hitherto we have done from the beginning of his ministry. Now it was that he was transfigured, now it was that he instituted that sacrament called "the Lord's supper," now it was that after supper, he made his farewell sermon, rarely mixt of sadness and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds; now it was that after sermon he blessed his disciples and prayed for them; and then having sung a hymn, he went out into the mount of Olives, where, in a garden he began his sufferings. But I do not intend to enlarge here, and shall therefore now direct you in the mystery of looking unto Jesus in respect of his life.

CHAPTER. V.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his life. Of considering—desiring—hoping—believing—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in this respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS, AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS LIFE.

IN the gospels of the four evangelists we have an account of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ—a most important subject for the believers' study. Some have taken such pains in the study of these things, that they have written large volumes; men have been writing and preaching many hundred years of the life of Christ, and they are writing and preaching still. O my soul, if thou dost not write, yet study what is written. Come with fixed thoughts, to this blessed subject, which will make thee wise unto salvation. Paul accounted "all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." If thou didst truly understand the excellency of this knowledge, thou couldst not but account all things loss in comparison of this one necessary thing.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

There is a virtue goes along with a serious meditation, a changing transforming virtue; therefore look farther, O my soul, have strong apprehensions of all those several passages of the life of Christ.

1. Consider the preaching of John Baptist. We talk of strictness, but shew me among all the ministers or saints of this age, such a pattern of sanctity and singular austerity. He had an excellent zeal, and a vehement spirit in preaching; and the best commentary upon all his sermons was his own life; he was clothed in camel's

hair, his meat was locusts and wild honey. He contemned the world, resisted temptations, despised honours, and was a rare example of self-denial and mortification; and by this means he made an excellent preparation for the Lord's coming. O my soul, sit a while under this preacher. See what effect doth it work on thy heart and life? Dost thou feel in thee a spirit of mortification? Dost thou, with the Baptist, die to the world? Dost thou abstain from pleasures and sensual complacencies, that the flesh being subdued to the spirit, both may join in the service of God? Consider, the preaching of this forerunner of Christ, till thou feelest it to have some warmth in thy heart, and influence on thy life in order to holiness, self-denial and mortification.

2. Consider the baptism of Christ.—Surely every soul that lives the life of grace, "is born of water and the spirit." Had not Christ been baptised, what virtue had there been in our baptism? Christ's obedience in fulfilling the law, is imputed to all that believe unto righteousness, as if themselves had fulfilled, so the virtue of his baptism is derived unto us; therefore if thou art in Christ, thou art baptised into his baptism; thou partakest of the fruit and efficacy of his death, and life, and baptism, and all.

3. Consider the fasting and temptation of Christ in the wilderness.—Now we see what manner of adversary we have, how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. In one assault, Satan moves Christ to doubt of his Father's providence, in another, to presume on his Father's protection; and when neither diffidence nor presumption can fasten upon Christ, he shall be tried with honour: and thus he deals with us, if he cannot drive us down to despair, he labours to lift us up to presumption; and if neither of these prevail, then he brings out pleasures, profits, and honours. O my soul, whilst thou art in this warfare, temptations, like waves break one in the neck of another: if the devil was so busy with Christ, how shouldst thou hope to be free? But Christ is with thee in the temptation: he hath sent his Spirit into thy heart to make intercession for thee there; and he himself is in heaven, making intercession and

praying for thee there; yea, his own experience of temptations hath so wrought in his heart, that his love and mercy is most of all at work when thou art tempted most.

4. Consider Christ's first manifestations by his several witnesses.—We have heard of his witnesses from heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and of his witnesses on earth, the Baptist, his disciples, and the works that he did in his Father's name; and even to this day is Christ manifested to us, yea, if we are Christ's, even to this day is Christ manifested within us. O my soul, consider this above all! It is this manifestation *within* that concerns thee most. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

5. Consider the preaching of Christ.—O the admirable sermons of this great prophet! Read and peruse those he hath left on record, yea, ruminate and meditate on them in order to piety and a holy life. How sweet was the first sermon of Christ, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?" and how spiritual was that, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God?" "Meditate on these things, and give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all."

6. Consider the miracles of Christ.—Here is a world of matter to run over. He turned water into wine; he healed the nobleman's son even at the point of death; he cured the lepers by his touch; he made the lame man to walk; he made inveterate diseases to disappear at his speaking, even as darkness at the brightness of the sun; he fed thousands of people with two small fishes and five loaves: he cast out devils, and commanded them whithersoever he pleased. O my soul consider these miracles, and believe that doctrine which was ratified with arguments from above! How shouldst thou but assent to all those mysterious truths which were so strongly confirmed by an almighty hand.

7. Consider Christ's ordination of his apostles.—"He chose twelve, whom he named apostles:" and what was the office of these apostles, but "to go and teach all nations?" The gospel was first preached in Jewry, but afterwards the sound of it came unto us. O the good-

ness of God in Christ! Of what near concernment, O my soul, is this to thee! What art thou but a sinner of the Gentiles? Understand that term: when the apostle would express the greatest sinners that the world had, he calls them "sinners of the Gentiles." Why? The Gentiles knew not God, the Gentiles were unacquainted with Christ, the Gentiles walked in nothing but sin. O then what a love is this, that God should ever have thought of good will towards thee! Surely this is one of the great mysteries of godliness,—"God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles."

8. Consider Christ's reception of sinners.—He sent forth his apostles to call them in, and if they would but come, how ready was he to receive them! This was Christ's errand from heaven. Ah, my soul! why shouldst thou despair because of sin? Look on Christ as spreading out his arms to receive thee; look on the gracious nature that is in Christ; look on the office of Christ: it is an office of saving, and shewing mercy, that Christ hath undertaken; it is an office to receive sinners, yea, to "seek, and to save that which was lost."

9. Consider the easiness of his yoke, and the lightness of his burden.—O my soul, if thou canst but taste, thou wouldst find a world of sweetness in Christ's ways. There is sweetness in the word; "How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!" There is sweetness in prayer. Hast thou not known the time that thou hast tasted of the joys of heaven in prayer? There is sweetness in meditation: some call this very duty, the saints' pastime, which recreates the tired spirits. Oh, if men did but know what sweetness were in the ways of God, they could not but embrace them, and esteem one day's society with Jesus Christ, better than all the gold in the world.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. The meanest things of Christ are desirable things.—The very filings of gold, the dust of precious stones are of real value. Hence we read, that one poor woman

sought no more but to wash Christ's feet, and to kiss them; another breathes out these desires, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole." John the Baptist thinks it an honour to "unloose the lachets of his shoes." David, to be "a door-keeper in the house of God." Yea, he puts a happiness on the sparrow, and the swallow, that build their nests besides the Lord's altar.

2. The more considerable actions of Christ are especially desirable.—1. To his friends, he was sweet and indulgent. Where there was any beginning of grace he did encourage it; so was the prophecy, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoaking flax shall he not quench." 2. To his enemies, he was kind and merciful. He was never more familiar with any at first acquaintance, than with the woman of Samaria that was an adulteress: and Mary that had been a sinner, how sweetly did he appear to her at the first view! How ready was he to receive sinners! How gracious to sinners after pardon! See it in Peter, he never upbraided him, only he looks upon him, and afterwards says, "Lovest thou me?" Well may we exclaim, "In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, the desire of our soul is to thy name, and the remembrance of thee."

3. The ever blessed and holy person of Christ is desirable above all.—If there be any thing worthy a wish, it is eminently in the Lord Jesus Christ; there is no honour, no felicity, like that which Christ hath; some are sons, Christ is an only son; some are kings, but Christ is King of kings; some are beautiful, Christ is the fairest of all the children of men; the brightest cherub is forced to skreen his face from the dazzling and shining brightness of the glory of Christ.

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

If thy hope, O my soul, be right and good, it will manifest itself by operations of saving grace.

1. If Christ's life be mine, then am I freed from the law of sin.—This was the apostle's evidence, Rom. viii. 2.

"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin." Christ's life is called "the spirit of life," because of its perfection: and this Spirit of life hath such a power in it, here termed a law, that it works out in believers a freedom, from the law, or power in sin. Look to this! doth the power and dominion of Christ's life throw out of thy heart and life, that power and dominion of sin? Here is one ground of hope.

2. If Christ's life be mine, then shall I walk even as he walked.—Such is the efficacy of Christ's life, that it will work suitableness, and make our life in some sort like his life. The apostle observes, that our communion with Christ works on our very conversation; "He that abideth in him, walketh even as he walked." The life of Jesus is not described to be like a picture, only for beauty and entertainment of the eye, but like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, is full of instruction. Christ is the image of his Father, and we are the images of Christ. Come then, O my soul, look unto Jesus, and look into thyself; yea, look and look, till thou art more transformed into his likeness: Look into his conversation at home and abroad, and then reflecting on thyself, look there, and tell me, canst thou find in thyself, the same disposition and conversation? Then, here is another ground of hope; O rejoice in it, and bless God for it.

Away, away, with all doubts and perplexing fears! Would ever Christ have come with his power against the power of sin, if he had not meant to rescue thee? Would Christ ever have set thee a copy, and have held thy hand and thy heart, to have writ legibly after him, if he had not meant thee "for a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven?" Surely, "it is good, that I both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God." I cannot hope in vain, if these be the grounds of my hope.

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Many souls stand aloof, not daring to make a particular application of Christ, and his life to themselves; but herein is the property of faith, it brings all home, and makes use of whatsoever Christ is or does for itself.

1. Faith directly goes to Christ.—Many poor souls humbled for sin, run immediately to the promise of pardon, and rest on it, not seeking for, or closing with Christ in the promise: this is a common error, but we should observe, that the first promise that was given, was not a bare word, simply promising pardon, peace, or any other benefit, but it was a promise of Christ's person, as 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 blessedness and forgiveness, but of "that seed," that is "Christ," in whom that blessedness was conveyed;—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." So that Abraham's faith first closed with Christ in the promise, and therefore he is said to see Christ's day, and to rejoice. O remember this in the first place, faith must go unto Christ, as compassed with all his promises, privileges, benefits.

2. Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh, made under the law.—We are debtors to God, and there is "a hand-writing against us, and contrary to us." Here is a bond of the law which we have forfeited: now, what would Christ avail, if he had not come under the law, if he had not been our surety, and undertook for us? Our faith therefore must go to Christ, as made under the law, not only taking our nature upon him, but our debt also; our nature as men; and our debt as sinful men. "He hath made himself sin for us who knew no sin;" He both satisfied the curse, and fulfilled the commandments.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

What a lovely object is the life of Christ! Who can read it, who can think over his worthiness, in his person, relations and actions, and not love him with a singular love?

1. When he saw thee altogether unclean, he goes down into the waters of baptism, that he might prepare a way for the cleansing of thy polluted soul.

2. When he saw the devil ready to swallow thee up, he himself enters into the list, and overcomes him, that thou

mightest overcome, and triumph with Christ in his glory.

3. When he saw thee in danger of death, through thy unbelief, he condescends so far to thy weakness, as to manifest himself by several witnesses.

4. When he saw thee a sinner of the Gentiles, he sent his apostles and messengers abroad, and bade them preach the gospel to thee.

5. When he saw thee in suspense, and heard thee complaining, "It is a hard passage, a high ascent up to heaven. What shall become of my poor soul?" He told thee, that "all his ways were ways of pleasantness, and all his paths peace;" that thou shouldst find by experience, that "his yoke was easy, and his burden light." See, O my soul, here is the sum of all the particulars thou hast heard; Christ loves thee, and Christ is lovely: his heart is set upon thee, who is a thousand times fairer than all the children of men. Doth not this consideration, like a mighty loadstone, draw thy heart unto him? O Christ, I am ashamed that I love thee so little. Draw me by thy Spirit, that I may love thee. "Many sins are forgiven me," O that I may love thee much!

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Let us joy in Jesus, as carrying on the great work of our salvation for us during his life. But what is there in Christ's life, or in all the passages of his life to stir up joy? I answer, All his life, and all the passages of his life, if rightly applied, are excellent matter for the stirring up of thy affection: indeed the main of the work is in the application of Christ's life.

1. Let us contemplate the life of Christ.—The reason we miss of our joys, is because we are so little in contemplation of Christ. He pities us in our sorrows, but he delights in us when we delight in him. Certainly he would have us to delight in him; and to that purpose he way-lays our thoughts, that wherever we look, we may still think on him. O my soul, cast thine eyes which way thou wilt, and thou shalt hardly look on any thing, but Christ hath taken the name of that very thing upon himself. Is it day? and dost thou behold the sun?

He is called "the Sun of Righteousness." Or is it night? And dost thou behold the stars? He is called a star. "There shall come a star out of Jacob." Or, is it morning? And dost thou behold the morning-star? He is called "the bright morning-star." Or is it noon? And dost thou behold clear light all the world over in thy hemisphere? He is called "the light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Or to come a little nearer, if thou lookest on the earth, and takest a view of the creatures about thee, seest thou the sheep? "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:" Or, seest thou a lamb? "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." Seest thou a shepherd watching over his flock? "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." Or seest thou a fountain, rivers, waters? "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Or seest thou a tree good for food or pleasant to the eye? He is called the tree of life. And as "the apple-tree among the trees of the wood so is my beloved among the sons." Seest thou a rose or a lily? "I am the Rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." Or to come a little nearer yet, art thou within doors? "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture." Art thou adorning thyself, and takest a view of thy garments? He is called a garment. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Art thou eating meat, and takest a view of what is on thy table? He is called "the bread of life, the living bread which came down from heaven." Thus Christ way-lays our thoughts, that wherever we look, we should ever think of him.

2. Let us upon good grounds hope our interest in the life of Christ.—Hope and joy go together: if I have but assured hope that Christ's life is mine, I cannot but rejoice therein. Look to this, O my soul; peruse again and again thy grounds of hope; do not slightly run them over; thou canst not be too sure of Christ. Thou readest in the gospel this and that passage of thy Jesus, canst thou lay thine hand on every line, and say, This

passage is mine, this sermon was preached, and this miracle was wrought for me, that I might believe, and that in believing I might have life through his name? O then, how shouldst thou but rejoice!

3. Let us come up to more and more enjoyment of Christ.—In it are contained these things: 1. A propriety in Christ; for as a sick man doth not feel the joy of a sound man's health, so neither doth a stranger to Christ feel the joy of a believer in Christ. 2. A possession of Christ: this exceedingly enlargeth our joy. O how sweet was Christ to the spouse, when she could say, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Many are taken up with the joy and comfort of outward possessions, but Christ is better than all. In Christ is comprised every scattered comfort here below. "Christ is mine, (saith the soul) and all mine." O the usefulness of Christ to all believing souls! The scriptures are full of this, as appears by all his titles. He is "our life, our light, our bread, our water, our milk, our wine. He is our father, our brother, our friend, our husband, our king, our priest, our prophet. He is our justification, our sanctification, our wisdom, our redemption, our all in all." Alas! I look on myself, and see I am nothing, I have nothing without Jesus Christ. Here is a temptation, I cannot resist it; here is a corruption, I cannot overcome it; here is a persecution, I cannot down with it. Well, but Christ is mine, I have interest in Christ, and I have possession of Christ, and I find enough in Christ to supply all my wants. Those that lived with him, "all rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by him." And doth not thine heart leap within thee? O my soul, I cannot but check thee for thy deadness. It is said, that when "Christ was at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen." What! a multitude of disciples rejoicing in Christ's acts? And art thou not one amongst the multitude? If thou art a disciple, rejoice thou: surely it concerns thee as much as them, and therefore rejoice; lift up thy voice in harmony with the rest; "rejoice, and again rejoice."

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

We read, that looking up to Jesus, goes for prayer in God's book. "My prayer will I direct to thee (saith David) and will look up." Thus "Stephen looked up to heaven;" and let us look up to Jesus by calling on him: now this calling on him contains prayer, and praise.

1. We must pray, that all these transactions of Jesus during his life, or during his ministry upon earth, may be ours.—We hope it is so, and we believe it to be so; but for all that we must pray that it may be so. There is no contradiction between hope and faith, and prayer; "Lord, I believe, yet help my unbelief; be it to me according to my faith, how weak soever."

2. We must praise God for all those passages in Christ's life.—Thus did the multitude; "they praised God with a loud voice, saying, blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." What, my soul, hath Christ done all this for thee? Was he made under the law, to redeem thy soul, and adopt thee for his son to the inheritance of heaven? Came he down from heaven, and travelled so many miles on earth, to woo and win thy heart? Spent he so many sermons, and so many miracles to work thee into faith? O how shouldst thou bless, and magnify his name! How shouldst thou break out into that blessed hymn, "To him that loved us, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

We must look as one looks to his pattern; as mariners at sea keep an eye on that ship that bears the light; so, in the race that is set before us, we must have our eye on Jesus, our blessed pattern. This must be our constant enquiry, "Is this the course that Jesus steered?" I shall examine these three queries: 1. Wherein we must conform? 2. Why we must conform? 3. How we must conform to this life of Jesus.

For the first, I answer, We must not, cannot conform to Christ, in the works proper to his Godhead; as in working miracles. Nor need we conform to Christ in his voluntary poverty and ceremonial performances. But we must conform to Christ's life.

1. In respect of his judgment, will and affections.—"Let this mind be in you (saith the apostle) which was also in Christ."

2. In respect of his virtues, graces, and holiness.—All graces were in Christ. "And of his fulness have we all received, grace for grace."

3. In respect of his words.—The very officers of the priests could say, "Never man spake like this man." "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." The apostle, speaking thus of Christ, tells us, that "herein Christ left us an example, that we should follow his steps."

4. In respect of his carriage, conversation, close-walking with God.—The apostle sets forth Christ as a high priest, who "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." And in like manner, saith Peter, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the virtues of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" the word signifies properly to preach; so clearly should we express the virtues of Christ, as if our lives were so many sermons of the life of Christ.

For the second, Why we must conform? I answer, 1. Because Christ hath done and suffered very much to that end.—If it had not been for thy imitation, I cannot think that Christ would have lived on earth so many years to have done so many gracious meritorious works.

2. Because Christ is the best examplar of holiness that ever the world had.—Christ is "the head of the body, the beginning, the first-born from the dead; in all things he hath the pre-eminence." And the rule is general, that, that which is first, and best in any kind, is the rule and measure of all the rest. Why, such is Christ; O then let him be the guide of our life, and of our manners.

3. Because Christ doth not only give us an example,

but he doth assist us by its easiness.—Some observe, that Christ's piety (which we must imitate) was even, constant, unblameable, complying with civil society, without any instances of actions greater than the imitation of men. We are not commanded to imitate a life, whose story tells us of ecstasies in prayer, of abstractions of senses, no; but a life of justice, piety, and devotion. And it is very remarkable, that besides the easiness of this imitation, there is a virtue in the life of Christ. It may be, we think our way to heaven is troublesome, obscure, and full of objection; well, saith Christ, "But mark my footsteps; come on and tread where I have stood, and you shall find the virtue of my example will make all smooth, and easy; you shall find the comforts of my company, you shall feel the virtue and influence of a perpetual guide.

4. Because Christ in his word hath commanded us to follow his steps.—"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." "And as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." We must be holy as Christ is holy, yet still we must look at the holiness of Christ, as the sun, and root, and fountain; and that our holiness is but as a beam of that sun, but as a branch of that root, but as a stream of that fountain.

For the third, How must we conform to this life? I answer; 1. Let us be humbled for our little conformity to this copy.—What an excellent pattern is here before us, and how far, how infinitely do we come short of this blessed pattern! Alas! if Christ will not own me, unless he sees his image written upon me, what will become of my poor soul? Christ was meek, and humble, and lowly in spirit; Christ was holy and heavenly; and now when I come to examine my own heart according to this original, I find I am naturally as opposite to Christ, as hell to heaven. O my soul, whose image is this? Is it the image of Christ or of Satan? If the worst scholar in the school should write thus untowardly after his copy, would he not be ashamed? O wo is me! what a

vast disproportion is between Christ's life and mine. Thus, O my soul shouldst thou humble thyself; from each prayer, each meditation, each self-examination, shouldst thou fetch fresh occasions and matter of humiliation.

2. Let us quicken our sluggish souls to conform to Christ.—I read but of two ends of Christ's coming into the world in relation to us,—to redeem his people, and to purify his people. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The one is the work of his merit, which goeth upward, to the satisfaction of his Father; the other is the work of his grace, which goeth downwards to the sanctification of his church: in the one he bestoweth his righteousness on us by imputation, on the other he fashioneth his image in us by renovation. And what, O my soul, wouldst thou destroy the end of Christ's coming in the flesh? God forbid! Let us provoke our souls to this conformity; let us excite our faint, drooping, languishing affections and desires to this duty of conformity; let us come up higher towards it, or if possible, completely to it, that the same mind, and mouth, and life, may be in us that was in Jesus Christ, that we may be found to walk after Christ, that we may tread in the very prints of the feet of Christ, that we may aspire continually towards him, and grow up to him, even "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

3. Let us regulate ourselves by the life of Christ.—Whatever action we go about, let us ask, would Christ have done this, or at least, would Christ have allowed this? It is true, some things are expedient and lawful with us, which were not suitable to the person of Christ. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled;" but it did not befit him. Writing of books is commendable with men, but it would have been derogatory to the person and office of Christ; for it is his prerogative to be in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, to be present to all his members, to teach by power, and not by ministry, to write his law in the hearts of his people, and to make them his epistle. Contrition, mortification, and repentance for sin, are acts and duties necessary to

our state and condition as sinners; but these were unsuitable to Christ who was without sin. Now, as in these and some other things we must only respect the permission of Christ; so in other things we must reflect upon the example of Christ; as, 1. In sinful acts abhorred by Christ. 2. In moral duties that were done by Christ.

1. In sinful acts abhorred by Christ, as when I am tempted to sin, then am I to reason thus with myself; Would my blessed Saviour if he were upon earth, do thus and thus? Would he have spent such a life upon earth as I do? When I am moved by my own corruption, or by Satan, to drunkenness, gluttony, sinful and desperate society, to swearing, cursing, revenge, or the like; then am I to ask, Is this the life that Christ led? Or, if he were to live again, would he live after this manner? When I fall into passion, peevishness, rash words, or if it be but idle words, then am I to consider, Would Christ speak thus? Would this be his language?

2. In case of moral obedience, concerning which we have both his pattern and precept,—I look upon Christ as my rule, and I question thus, Did Christ frequently pray both with his disciples, and alone? and shall I never in my family, or in my closet think upon God? Did Christ shew mercy to his very enemies? and shall I be cruel to his very members? O my soul, look on all thy sins, and in all thy duties to thy original; and measure them by the holiness of Christ. Whether in avoiding sin, or in doing duty, think, What would my blessed Saviour do in this case? or, what did he in the like case when he was upon earth? If we had these thoughts every day, if Christ were continually before our eyes, it would be a blessed means of living in comfort and spiritual conformity to the commands of God.

4. Let us look fixedly on Jesus Christ, until we feel ourselves conforming to him.—To accomplish this,

1. Let us set apart some time on purpose.—If together with our closet-prayer we would fall on this duty of looking unto Jesus by lively faith, how blessed a season might this be!

2. Let us remove hinderances.—Satan labours to hinder

the soul from beholding Christ with the dust of the world. Let us take heed of fixing our eyes on this world's vanity! Our own corruptions are also great hinderances to this view of Christ; away with all carnal passions, sinful desires; unless the soul be spiritual, it can never behold spiritual things.

3. Let us fix our eyes only on this blessed object.—A moving eye sees nothing clearly. When the angels are said to look into these things, the word signifies, that they look into them narrowly, as they who stooping down, do look into a thing; so our eye of faith should be set upon Christ in a steady manner, as if we forgot all the things behind, and had no other business in the world but this.

4. Let us look on Christ with a craving eye, with a humble expectation to receive a supply of grace from him.—"Lord, thou art not only anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows, but for thy fellows; I am earthly-minded, but thou art heavenly; I am full of lusts, but the image of God is perfect in thee; thou art the fountain of all grace, a head of influence, as well as of eminence; thou art not only above me, but thou hast all grace for me; and therefore, give me some portion of thy meekness, lowliness, heavenly-mindedness, and of all other the graces of thy Spirit."

5. If, notwithstanding all this, we feel not for the present this conformity in us, let us act over the same particulars again and again.—The gifts of grace are communicated by degrees, that we might be taken off from living upon a received stock of grace, and that we might still be running to the spring. We have a continual need of Christ's letting out himself and grace into our hearts, and therefore we must wait at the well-head Christ; we must look on Christ, as appointed on purpose by his Father to be the beginner and finisher of our holiness; and we must believe that he will never leave that work imperfect whereunto he is ordained of the Father.

I have now done with this subject; only before I finish, one word more. I deny not other helps, but amongst them all, if I would make choice which to fix

upon, that I may become more and more holy, I would set before me this glass,—CHRIST'S HOLY LIFE. We were at first created after his image in holiness, and this image we lost through our sin, and to this image we should endeavour to be restored by imitation: and how should this be done, but by looking on Christ as our pattern? In this respect I charge thee, O my soul, that thou make conscience of this practical, evangelical duty. Be much in the exercise of it; not only in the day, but when night comes, and thou liest down on thy bed, let thy pillow be as Christ's bosom, in which John the beloved disciple was said to lean. And when day returns again, have this in mind; ever look unto Jesus as thy holy examplar. Yea, if it were possible, going and standing, sitting and lying, eating and drinking, speaking and holding thy peace, by thyself, or in company, cast an eye upon Jesus; for by this means thou canst not choose but love him more, and joy in him more, and trust in him more, and become more and more familiar with him, and draw more and more grace and virtue and sweetness from him.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS DEATH.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Brook over which Christ passed.—The Garden into which he entered.—The Prayer he made there.—The Agonies he suffered there.—Of Judas's Treason, and Christ's Apprehension.—Of Christ's Examination and Condemnation.

OF THE BROOK OVER WHICH CHRIST PASSED.

THE first event of that night, was Christ's going over the brook Cedron to Gethsemane. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples." Thus was fulfilled the prophecy, "He shall drink of the brook in the way." As waters signify afflictions, so Christ drinking of those waters signifies "Christ's suffering afflictions."

In the way he hath a serious conference with his disciples. "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out towards the mount of Olives; and then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Christ now begins the story of his passion; "The shepherd shall be

smitten;" and he proves it from God's decree, and from the prophecy, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." God the Father is here brought in, as drawing and whetting his sword, and calling upon it, to do execution against Jesus Christ. Christ's sufferings were long since resolved on in the councils of heaven; and now "the only begotten Son, which lay in the bosom of his Father," reveals them to the disciples.

The disciples on this discovery are amazed; and Peter, who seems boldest, exclaims, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." O rash presumption! Peter prefers himself before the rest, as if all the other disciples had been weak, and he only strong. Peter contradicts Christ's great discovery of his Father's design; "What, though Zechariah hath said it, and God hath decreed it, yet, on my part, I will never do it. Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee." Peter should have said, "By God's assistance, I will not be offended, by the Lord's help, I will not deny thee;" but instead of that he exclaims "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise said all his disciples."

When David fled from Absalom out of Jerusalem, it is said, "that all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Cedron, towards the way of the wilderness." So now Christ, as another David, with his disciples, goes out of Jerusalem. What weeping was in the way I cannot tell; but probably sadness was in the hearts both of him and his disciples, whose conference was of fleeing, suffering, dying the most grievous death: all the difference that I find between the type and antitype in this passage is, in that David fled from the face of Absalom; but Christ goes out of Jerusalem, not to flee from Judas, or the Jews, but rather to commit himself into their hands.

Ah, my brethren, let us remember, we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, and our way lies over the brook Cedron; we cannot expect to enter with Christ into glory, but "we must first drink of the brook in the way," we must endure many afflictions. You will say,

"This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" There is too much of Peter's humour amongst us. Too many wish us to strew the way to heaven with flowers; and are offended when we preach the cross and the strictness of a holy life. Well, but if this be the way that Christ hath led us, while others abide at ease in Zion, let us follow him in the valley, and over the brook Cedron.

OF THE GARDEN INTO WHICH CHRIST ENTERED.

Matthew relates it thus, "Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane," that is "a valley of fatness:" seated at the foot of the mount of Olives. Accordingly John relates it thus, "Jesus went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden." Gardens are solitary places, fit for meditation and prayer; to this end we find Christ sometimes in a mountain, and sometimes in a garden. Gardens are places fit for repose and rest; when Christ was weary with preaching, working of miracles, and doing acts of grace in Jerusalem, then he retires into this garden. A garden was the place wherein we fell, and therefore Christ made choice of a garden to begin there the great work of our redemption. Christ goes especially into this garden, that his enemies might the more easily find him out; the evangelist tells us, that Judas, "which betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." Sure then he went not thither to hide himself, but rather to expose himself; and like a noble champion, to appear first in the field, and to expect his enemies. Thus it appears that Christ's death was voluntary. "He poured forth his soul unto death," (saith the prophet). "He gave himself for our sins," (saith the apostle.) Nay, himself tells us, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again."

OF THE PRAYER THAT CHRIST MADE THERE.

Jesus entering the garden, left his disciples at the entrance of it, calling with him Peter, James and John:

they only saw his transfiguration, the earnest of his future glory; and therefore his pleasure was, that they only should see of how great glory he would disrobe himself for our sakes. And now he betakes himself to his great antidote, which himself prescribed to all the world. He prays to his heavenly Father: he kneels down; and not only so, but falls flat upon the ground. He prays, with an intention great as his sorrow; and yet with a submission so ready, as if the cup had been the most indifferent thing in the world. The form of his prayer runs thus, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

1. Observe the matter of his prayer.—"Let this cup pass from me, though I must taste it, yet, O that I may not be too long or tediously annoyed by it!" That which leads us into this interpretation, is that of the apostle; "Christ in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and he was heard in that which he feared." How was he heard? Not in the removal of the cup, for he drank it up all; but, in respect of the tedious annoyance, for though it made him sweat drops of blood, though it made him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though it laid him dead in his grave, yet presently, he revived, and awakened as a giant refreshed with wine; and so it passed from him, as he prayed, in a very short time; and by that short death, he purchased to his people everlasting life.

2. The limitation of his prayer.—"If it be possible, if it be thy will;" "If it be possible," signifies the earnestness of the prayer; and "if it be thy will," the submission of Christ unto his Father. How many things needful to prayer do we find concentered in it. Here is humility of spirit, importunity of desire, a lawful matter, and a resignation to the will of God. Some think this is the most fervent prayer that ever Christ made upon earth; and I think it was the greatest submission to the will of God that ever was found upon the earth, for whether the cup might pass or not pass, he leaves it to his Father; "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

But what was there in the cup, that made Christ pray thus earnestly that it might pass from him? I answer,

1. The great pain that he must endure.—All the buffetings, whippings, bleedings, crucifying; all the torments from first to last throughout all his body now came into his mind, and all these were put into the cup, of which he must drink.

2. The great shame that he must undergo.—"A good name is better than precious ointment, and loving favour better than silver and gold," so is shame a greater punishment to the mind than any torture can be to the flesh. Now came into his thoughts, his apprehending, binding, judging, scorning, reviling, condemning.

3. The neglect of men, notwithstanding both his pain and shame.—This I conceive was a more bitter ingredient than either of the former. Naturally men desire, if they cannot be delivered, yet to be pitied, but when a poor wretch is under many sufferings and great shame, and finds none so much as to regard; it is a heavy case, and hence was Christ's complaint, "Have ye no regard, O all ye that pass by? Consider and behold, if ever there was sorrow like unto my sorrow, which was done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Christ is willing to redeem us with his own precious blood, but he saw many to pass by without any regard, yea, ready to trample his precious blood under their feet, and to "account the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing." This was another spear in the heart of Christ, a bitter ingredient in this cup.

4. The guilt of sin which he was now to undergo.—"Upon him was laid the iniquity of us all." All the sins of all believers in the world, from the first creation to the last judgment, were laid on him. O what a weight was this! Surely one sin is like a talent of lead; O then, what were so many thousands of millions? The very earth itself groans under the weight of sin until this day. David cried out, that "his iniquities were a burden too heavy for him to bear." Then no wonder, if Christ bearing all the sins of Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, cry out, "My soul is heavy," for sin was heavy on his soul. Christ his ownself bare our sins in his own body

on the tree."—How bare our sins, but by his sufferings? —"And he hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."—How laid on him, but by imputation?—"And he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin."—How made sin for us? Surely there was in Christ no guilt; no, but he was made sin by imputation: he was our surety, and so our sins were laid on him in order to punishment. Little do we know or consider, what is the weight and guilt of sin. And this was another ingredient in Christ's cup.

5. The power and malice of Satan.—The devil had a full leave; not as it was with Job, "Do what thou wilt, but save his life;" no, he had a commission without any such limitation. The whole power of darkness was let loose to afflict him as far as possibly he could; and this our Saviour intimates, when he saith, "The prince of this world cometh." Now was it that the word must be accomplished, "Thou shalt bruise his heel." If we look on the devil in respect of his evil nature, he is compared to a roaring lion; not only is he a lion, but a roaring lion, his disposition to do mischief is always wound up to the height; and if we look on the devil in respect of his power, there is no part of our souls or bodies that he cannot reach: the apostle, describing his power, gives him names above the highest comparisons, as "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness above." O then, what a combat must this be, when all the power and all the malice of all the devils in hell should (by the permission of God) arm themselves against the Son of God! Surely this was a bitter ingredient in Christ's cup.

6. The wrath of God himself.—This (above all) was the most bitter dreg: it lay in the bottom, and Christ must drink it also. "The Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." God afflicts some in mercy, but Christ in his anger, yea in the very fierceness of his anger. Now Christ saw himself bearing the sins of all believers, and standing before the judgment-seat of God. "Now is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world shall be cast out." As if he had said, Now I see God sitting in judgment upon the world; and as a right re-

presentative of it, here I stand before his tribunal, ready to undergo all the punishments due to it for sin; I know it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. I know God is a consuming fire. But for this end came I into the world; O my Father, I will drink this cup. Lo here an open breast, come prepare the armory of thy wrath, and herein shoot all the arrows of revenge. And yet, O my Father, let me not be swallowed up by thy wrath; there is in me flesh and blood in respect of my humanity; "and my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, I am afraid of thy judgments. If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

OF THE AGONIES THAT CHRIST SUFFERED THERE.

Christ's passion in the garden was declared by his sorrow, and by his sweat.

1. By his sorrow.—The evangelists diversely relate it. "He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy," saith Matthew. "He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy," saith Mark. "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly," saith Luke. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour," saith John. All avow this sorrow to be great, and so it is confessed by Christ himself. "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Ah Christians, who can speak out this sorrow? "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Christ's soul is sorrowful; or if that be too flat, his soul is exceeding sorrowful; or if that language be too low, his soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; such and so great, as that which is used to be at the very point of death; and such as were able to bring death itself, had not Christ been reserved to a greater and an heavier punishment. Many a sorrowful soul hath been in the world, but the like sorrow to this, was never since the creation. Surely the bodily torments of the cross were inferior to this agony of his soul. It was a sorrow unspeakable!

2. By his sweat.—Luke only refers to it, "His sweat was

as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." His sweat was a wonderful sweat, not a sweat of water, but of red gore blood. It came not from him in small dews, but in great drops of blood; and hence it is concluded as preternatural. These great drops of blood did not only drop out; but they were great drops of blood falling down to the ground: great drops, and those so plenteous, that they went through his apparel, streaming to the ground. Now was it that his garments were dyed with crimson. That of the prophet, though spoken in another sense, may be applied to this; "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" O happy garden, watered with such tears of blood! How much better are these rivers "than Abana, and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, yea, than all the waters of Israel, yea, than all those rivers that water the garden of Eden!"

Learn here, O my soul, the weight and burden of sin. We sin, and our eyes will scarce drop a tear; but his eyes, and ears, and head, and hands, and feet, all run rivers of tears of blood for us, even for our sins. Let others in meditating on Christ's sufferings cry out against the Jews: in this bloody sweat of Christ, I see another use. Here is no Jew, no Judas, no Herod, no Pilate, no Scribe, no Pharisee, here are no tormentors to whip him, no soldiers to crown his head with thorns; here are neither nails, nor spear to fetch his blood out of his body. How comes it then to pass? Is there any natural cause? The night is cold, which naturally draws blood inwards; in the open air he lies grovelling on the ground, and there "he sweats and bleeds." "O my heart, who hath done this deed?" "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing, shall surely die." So said David, when Nathan replied upon him, "Thou art the man." O my heart, my sinful, deceitful, abominable heart, thou art the murderer; thy sin sat upon the heart of Christ as a mountain of lead, when none was near; then all the sins of believers, and amongst them thy sins, fell upon the soul of Christ, as so many murderers, and squeezed blood, and made him cry out, "My soul is heavy, heavy unto death." Go thy ways now and weep with Peter,

and say with David, "I have sinned against the Lord." Yea, "mourn over him, as one that mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first born."

OF JUDAS'S TREASON, AND CHRIST'S APPREHENSION.

1. By this time the traitor Judas had arrived at Gethsemane, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.—Augustine speaks of many offices of love, that Christ had done to Judas. He had called him to be an apostle, made him his friend, caused him to eat of his bread, and sit at his table; yea, if his tradition be true, "Jesus had delivered Judas often from death, and for his sake healed his father of a palsy, and cured his mother of a leprosy." Of this we are sure, that he kissed him, and washed his feet, and made him his treasurer; and now that Judas should betray Christ! How doth this add to the sufferings of Christ. "Behold a multitude," and Judas in the front. The evangelist gives the reason of this, that he might have the better opportunity to kiss him: "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him." He begins war with a kiss, and breaks the peace of his Lord by a symbol of kindness.

It were well for the world, especially for the children of God, that Judas were alone in this transgression; that there was no more perfidious, treacherous person in it besides him. But O how full is the world of such miscreants! There was never yet an Abel, but he had a Cain to murder him; never yet a Moses, but he had a Jannes and Jambres to resist him; never yet a Joseph, but he had unkind brothers to envy him; never yet a Samson, but he had a Delilah to betray him; never yet a David, but he had a Ahitophel to hurt him; never yet a Paul, but there was an Alexander to do him much evil; nay, it is well if in every assembly we meet not with a Judas. Alas, how many professors have we amongst us, that salute Christ, both by hearing the word and receiving the seals, and yet in their lives and conversations, deny him?

2. "Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and

took him."—Yet before they took him, he himself begins the enquiry, and tells them, that he was "Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought." This was but a meek and gentle word, yet had it greater strength in it than the eastern wind, or the voice of thunder; for God was in that still small voice, and it struck them down to the ground. O the power of Christ! and yet he suffers them to rise again, and they still persist in their enquiry after him. He offers himself to be sacrificed, only he sets them their bounds; and therefore he secures his apostles to be witnesses of his sufferings. In this work of redemption, no man must have an active share besides himself: he alone was to tread the wine press; "If therefore ye seek me (saith Christ) let these go their way." And now they have his leave, with what malicious and spiteful minds, do they assault our Saviour! They compass him round; and then they lay their wicked and violent hands upon him. How strikingly is their rage described by the Psalmist, "Many bulls have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round; they gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion."

O, my soul, thy sins were the band, the captain, and the officers that beset him; the bulls that compassed him; the roaring lions that gaped upon him. Why shouldst thou rise up against the Jews, when thou findest the traitor in thyself? O that thou wouldst turn the edge of thy detestation upon thyself, and "lothe thyself in thy own sight, for all the evils that thou hast committed!"

"Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him."—Binding argues baseness. Fools and slaves were accustomed to be bound, and so were thieves; but is our Saviour numbered amongst any of these? O yes, "In that same hour said Jesus to the multitude, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?" O wonderful condescension! He that was eminently just, is reputed a thief; he that was equal with God, is become a servant; he that was stronger than Samson, is bound with cords, as a poor lamb for the slaughter; and thus began our liberty from slavery and death!

Come, Christians, let us lay our hands upon our hearts, and cry, "O, my pride! my coveteousness! my malice! my unbelief! my unthankfulness! These were the rabble, that dragged Jesus by the hair of his head; these were they that shewed him in triumph to Annas; nay, these were the Judas, Jews, Annas, and all: O that ever I should lodge within me such sins, such betrayers, such murderers of Jesus Christ."

OF CHRIST'S EXAMINATION AND CONDEMNATION.

Now it was, that they led him from Annas to Caiaphas; and presently a council of high priests, scribes, and elders all conspire to judge him, who is the judge of quick and dead. Several things are here worthy of our notice.

1. The captious examination of the high priest.—"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine." Christ knew the frailty of his followers, and might have said, "One, you see, hath betrayed me, and another will anon forswear me, he stays but for the crowing of the cock, and then you shall hear him curse and swear that he never knew me: and for all the rest, a panic fear hath seized upon their hearts, and they are fled, and have left me alone to tread the wine press." Yet he would not accuse them; and therefore to the question concerning his disciples, he answered nothing. To the enquiry respecting his doctrine our Saviour answers, (O how wisely) "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold they know what I said." Ask these mine enemies, these who have apprehended and bound me, and brought me hither. They know what I said, let them speak, if they can, wherein I have transgressed the law.

2. The stroke given Christ.—"One of the officers who stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?" That face which the angels look upon with wonder, was now

smitten by a base varlet, in the presence of a judge; and yet not one amongst them all reproved the fact, or spake a word for Christ. The blow was said to be given by Malchus, an Idumean slave, whose ear was cut off by Peter, and cured by Christ; and thus he requites him for his miracle. This blow was foretold by Jeremiah, "He giveth his cheeks to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach." Let the heavens be afraid, and let the earth tremble at Christ's patience, and this servant's impudence. If a subject should but lift up his hand against the son of an earthly sovereign, would he not be accounted worthy of punishment; how much more in this case, when the hand is lifted up against the King of kings, and Lord of lords, whom not only men, but the cherubim and seraphim, and all the celestial powers above, adore and worship! Come, look upon this lovely picture of patience. Christ was struck on the face, but he was never moved in his heart. Notwithstanding the abuse, he shewed all mildness and gentleness towards his enemies. O what art thou that canst not brook a word, that canst not bear the smallest offence. Come, learn of Christ: if ever we mean to have an interest in his sufferings, let us conform to him in meekness and patience.

3. The accusation of the witnesses.—He is falsely charged with the things that he never knew. They sought false witnesses, for true witnesses they could have none. "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council sought false witnesses against Jesus, to put him to death." They were resolved that he should not live; and now palliating their design, they seek out for witnesses. "Though many false witnesses came in to testify against him, yet they found none," because "their witness agreed not together." At last after many attempts came two false witnesses, and said, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." They accuse him for a figurative speech, which they could not understand, and which if he had effected according to the letter, it had been so far from a fault, that it would have been an argument of his power.

These were the accusations of the false witnesses, to all

which Jesus answered nothing; he despised their accusations, as not worth an answer. But, another accusation is brought in; Caiaphas had a reserve, which he knew should do the business in that assembly. "I adjure thee," said he, "by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." The holy Jesus being adjured by so sacred a name, would not now refuse an answer, but confessed himself to be "the Christ the Son of the living God:" And this the high priest was pleased (as the design was laid) to call blasphemy; and in token thereof, he rends his clothes, prophetically signifying, that the priesthood should be rent from himself.

4. The sentence of these judges.—Caiaphas prejudging all the Sanhedrim, in declaring Jesus to have spoken blasphemy, and the fact to be notorious, then asked their votes; "What think ye?" and they answered and said, "He is guilty of death." They durst not deny what Caiaphas had said; they knew his faction was very potent, his malice great, and his heart set upon the business; and therefore they all say, as he would have them, "He is guilty of death."

5. Peter's denial.—Whilst these things were thus acting concerning Christ, a damsel comes to Peter, and tells him, "Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee." And then another maid tells the bye-standers, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And after a while, they that stood by spake themselves, "Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee." As if he had said, Thy very idiom declares thee to be a Galilean. Peter thus surprised, shamefully denies his Lord. And, 1. He doth it with a kind of subterfuge, "I know not what thou sayest." He seems to elude the accusation with this evasion, I know not thy meaning. At the next turn, he goes on to a licentious boldness, denying Christ with an oath. And, lastly, he aggravates his sin so far, as to deny his Lord with "cursing and swearing." Here is a lie, an oath, and a curse. O Peter, is the man so vile that thou wilt not own him! Hadst thou not before confessed him to be Christ, the Son of the living God? And dost thou not know him to be man, as well as God? Is not this the God-man, that called thee and thy brother

Andrew at the sea of Galilee, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Is not this he whom thou sawest in mount Tabor, shining more gloriously than the sun? Is not this he whom thou sawest walking on the water, and to whom thou saidst, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water?" Surely here is a sad example of sinful weakness; and a blessed example of repentance. No sooner the cock crew, and Christ gave a look on Peter, but he goes out and weeps bitterly. O the mercy of Christ! he looked back on him that had forgot himself; and sends him out to weep bitterly, that so he might restore him mercifully to his favour.

Let us learn hence, to think modestly of ourselves: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." If Peter could first dissemble, and then lie, and then forswear, and then blaspheme, O let us "be not high-minded but fear."—And in case we fall indeed, as Peter did, yet let us not despair as Judas, but still, upon our repentance, trust in God. Clement, an ancient writer, of whom Paul makes mention, declares that "As often as he heard a cock crow, he could not but weep, and bewail his denial." As we are often sinning, so let us often repent; it concerns us to be frequent in this duty of bewailing sin, and turning to God.

6. The abuses which the base attendants offered to Christ.—The evangelists tell us, "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" And "Many other things blasphemously spake they against him." What those many other things were, it is not discovered. Some ancient writers say, that Christ in that night suffered so many, and such hideous things, "that the whole knowledge of them is reserved for the day of judgment." This, however, is declared; "They spit in his face," an action expressive of the deepest reproach. "They buffet him:" *before* they struck with their open palms, but *now* with their closed fists, to render the blow more painful. "They cover his face," either that they might smite him more boldly and without shame, or that they

might aggravate their cruelty with scorn. They then "smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" O impiety without example! Surely if his patience had been less than infinite, these injuries would have overpowered it!

And now the dismal night is done, what remains, but that we follow Christ, and observe him in his sufferings the next day. The Psalmist tells us, "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Only Christ can find this joy neither morning nor evening; for after a dismal night, he meets with as dark a day.

CHAPTER II.

Of Christ's indictment, and Judas's fearful end. Christ and Barabbas compared. Christ stripped, scourged, cloathed in purple, and crowned with thorns. Christ brought forth and sentenced. Christ's crucifying. What followed his crucifixion.

OF CHRIST'S INDICTMENT, AND JUDAS'S FEARFUL END.

ABOUT six in the morning, Jesus was brought unto Pilate's house. "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and it was early.—When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took council against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas which had betrayed him hanged himself." O the readiness of our nature to evil! when the Israelites would sacrifice to the golden calf, "they rose up early in the morning." If God leave us to ourselves, we are as ready to practise mischief, as the fire is to burn. Several things are worthy of our notice.

1. His accusers were "the chief priests and elders of the people."—The very same that before had judged him guilty of death, are now his accusers before the temporal judge. But why must our Saviour be twice judged? I answer that his innocence might be more conspicuous, and because the Romans had restrained the Jews from the execution of their laws.

2. The place of the accusation was at the door of the house.—"They would not go into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover." What superstition and gross hypocrisy! They are curious of a ceremony, but careless about shedding innocent blood; they are precise about small matters,

but the weightier matters of the law, as mercy, judgment, fidelity, and the love of God are disregarded.

3. The matter of which they accuse him.—That he seduced the people, forbad to pay tribute to Cæsar, and said he was a king. How great, but withal, how false were these their accusations! Pilate was nothing moved with any of the accusations except the third; and therefore letting the rest pass, he asked him, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" To whom Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." By which Pilate knew well that Christ was no enemy unto Cæsar. Christ's kingdom is spiritual, his government is in the hearts of men; and what is this to Cæsar?

4. Judas's repentance.—"Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself." There is a repentance that comes too late; Esau wept bitterly, when the blessing was gone, and in hell men shall repent to all eternity; and such a repentance was this of Judas. About midnight he had received his money in the house of Annas, and now betimes in the morning, he repents his bargain, and throws his money back again. The end of this tragedy was, that Judas died a miserable death. "He went and hanged himself." And "he fell headlong, and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Who would suffer for millions of gold, that which Judas suffered, and yet suffers in hell for thirty pieces of silver? The Lord keep our souls from betraying Christ, and from despairing in God's mercy through Christ! Amen, Amen.

OF CHRIST AND BARABBAS COMPARED.

About seven in the morning Jesus was sent to Herod, who after having mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe sent him back to Pilate, who proposed to the Jews, whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas loosed unto them. "Ye have a custom (said he) that I should release unto you one at the passover, will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, not this man, but

Barabbas: Now Barabbas was a robber, and He knew, that for envy they had delivered him," and he saw that Herod had sent him back again uncondemned, and therefore he proposes this question, to rescue him from their malice. Several things here deserve our notice.

1. The character of Barabbas.—He was a notable prisoner. "One that had made insurrection, and who had committed murder in the insurrection," and was also "a robber." One that was the greatest malefactor of his time; and must he be saved, and Christ condemned?

2. The difference between him and Christ.—Barabbas was a thief, and by violence took away the bread of the needy; Christ was a feeder and supplier of their wants. Barabbas was a murderer, and had slain the living: Christ was the Saviour, restoring life unto the dead. Barabbas was a raiser of sedition; Christ by precept and example enforced submission to the ruling powers. Here is a competition! The author of sedition, with the Prince of Peace; a murderous mutineer, with a merciful Mediator; the son of Belial, with the Son of God!

3. For whom the Jews gave their votes.—"Not this man, but Barabbas." "Let us have him crucified who raised the dead, and him released who destroyed the living: let the Saviour of the world be condemned to death, and the slayer of men be released from prison, and have his pardon." But there is something more observable in this vote; the Jews had a custom not to name what they held accursed; and hence they did not say "Not Jesus but Barabbas;" but "Not *this man*, not *this fellow*, but Barabbas;" as if they meant first to murder his name, and then his person.

4. The question debated between Pilate and the Jews. —"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" There is more pity in a Gentile Pilate, than in all the Jews; as if he had said, I know not what to do with him. How can I condemn him to death, who is of innocent life. "And they all said unto him, let him be crucified." This was the first time that they spake openly their design: it had long lurked within them, and now breaks out with unanimous consent. O wonderful! can no other death satisfy their malice, but the cross? The cross was a gradual and slow death, it spun out pain

into a long thread, and therefore they make choice of it, as they made choice of Jesus. Let him die, rather than Barabbas, and let him die the death of the cross, rather than any speedy death. Sometimes the Jews themselves could say, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." No wonder if Pilate object against these malicious ones, "What evil hath he done?" But they instead of proving some evil against him, "cried out the more, Crucify him, Crucify him." O inconstant favour of men! their anthems of hosanna not long since joyfully uttered, are now turned into jarring notes, "Let him be crucified." And now is Pilate threatened into another opinion, they require his judgment, and the voices of them, and of "the chief priests prevailed," so it follows, "and when he saw he could prevail nothing, but rather a tumult was made, he released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus to be scourged."

Give me leave to look amongst ourselves. Are there not some amongst us, that prefer Barabbas before Jesus? O yes! not to mention such as swear as the devil bids them and as Christ forbids, or such as prophane Sabbaths and drink to excess, those that listen to that old mutinous murderer in his seditious temptations; those that reject the blessed motions of God's own Spirit, in his tenders and offers of grace; those that embrace the world with its pleasures and profits, and make them their portion; all these, choose Barabbas, and reject Jesus Christ.

Give me leave to look on the love and mercy of God in Christ. Our Jesus was not only content to take our nature upon him, but to be compared with the greatest malefactor of those times, and by public sentence to be pronounced more worthy of death than Barabbas. O the love of Christ! He died that we might live. It was the voice of God as well as men, "Release Barabbas, every believing Barabbas, and crucify Jesus."

Another hour is gone, let us make a stand for a while; and the next time we meet, we shall see farther sufferings.

OF CHRIST STRIPPED, SCOURGED, CLOTHED IN PURPLE, AND CROWNED WITH THORNS.

About nine, (which the Jews call the third hour of he

day) was Christ stripped, scourged, clothed with purple, and crowned with thorns: in this hour his sufferings accumulated; I must divide them into parts, and speak of them severally by themselves.

1. When Pilate saw how the Jews were set upon his death, he consented.—"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers, and they stripped him." He that adorns the heaven with stars, and the earth with flowers, is now himself stripped naked. O the mercy of Christ to us! he found us stripped, and wounded, and that we might be covered, he quietly suffered himself to be divested of his own robes. He took on him the state of sinning Adam, and became naked, that we might first be clothed with righteousness, and then with immortality.

2. Pilate gave him to be scourged.—Some think he did this, that the Jews might rest satisfied, and so desist from taking away his life. This is very probable, because, that after the scourging, he brings him out to the Jews, proclaiming, "I find no fault in him;" and before his scourging, he says expressly, "He hath done nothing worthy of death, I will therefore chastise him, and release him." Now did they tear Christ's flesh, till the pillar to which he was tied and the pavement were purpled with a shower of blood. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Was ever love like unto this love? It was a divine love, emphatically, THE LOVE OF JESUS.

3. They put on him a scarlet robe.—It was a loose short garment, at first used only by kings or emperors; and the colour of it was suitable to Christ's condition: for he was now purple all over. His body and his garment were both of a deep dyed sanguine colour. What is his scarlet garment, but the emblem of his wounded body? As he spake of the woman, "She anointed him aforehand unto his burial," so Pilate, in the mystery, clothes him aforehand unto his bloody death.

4. They "platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon

his head."—A goodly crown for the King of Kings! We read of many sorts of crowns, but never till this, of a crown of thorns. A *crown* it was to mock him, and a *crown of thorns* to torment him. In this we may read both his pain and shame. 1. For his pain, "They took a reed, and smote him on the head," to fasten the crown of thorns upon him surer, and to imprint it deeper, till, as some think, it pierced his very skull. For his shame, As Jotham put out his parable in scorn of Abimelech, so the soldiers in scorn, put on Christ's head this bramble crown. They protest against Christ as a feigned king, as if he were no fitter to be king of the Jews, than the bramble was to be king of all the trees in the forest.

How many lessons might we draw from hence! Our sins caused the earth to bring forth thorns and briars; and our Saviour must wear them, both to take away our sin, and the curse of it. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, we were full of sin, and Christ accordingly must shed his blood from head to foot. "The whole head is sick," saith the prophet of us; and the whole head of Christ is bruised with thorns to cure our sickness. O what a shame is it, for any of us to crown our heads with rose-buds, to spend our time in vanity and sin, when Christ our Lord had such a crown of thorns on his sacred head! "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord: it is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord." If our Lord and Master was crowned with thorns, surely the members of Christ should not be effeminate, or given up to pleasures.

Now, the hour sounds again, and calls us to go forth, and to behold King Jesus, with the crown wherewith he was crowned, in the day of his espousals. And this we shall do the next hour.

OF CHRIST BROUGHT FORTH AND SENTENCED.

About ten, Christ was brought forth and sentenced. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man." He thought the very sight of Christ would

have moved them to compassion; they had lashed him almost unto death; they had clothed him with purple, crowned him with thorns; and now they bring him out and expose him to public view; Pilate crying unto them, "Behold the man." Behold, I say not your king to provoke you against him, nor yet the Son of God, which you say he makes himself to be; behold the man, a worm, and no man. Behold how he stands disfigured with wounds, weltering in his blood; and let this be sufficient to satisfy your rage. If it be for malice that you are so violent against him, behold how miserable he is; if for fear, behold how contemptible he is: as for any fault, I find no fault in him. Some doctors affirm, That whilst Pilate cried out, Behold the man; his servants lifted up the purple robe, that so all might see his bloody, and macerated body: he supposed his words could not so move their hearts as Christ's wounds. "When the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him." O ye Jews, children of Israel, seed of Abraham, is not this he concerning whom your fathers cried, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence?" How is it that you should despise him present, whom they desired absent? How is it that your cry and theirs should be so contrary?

We find Pilate and the Jews yet debating the business; Pilate is loth to pronounce the sentence, and the Jews provoke him to it with a threefold argument.

1. "They had a law, and by their law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."—The text tells us, that Pilate hearing this argument, was the more afraid. Pilate (saith Cyril) was a heathen idolater; and so worshipping many gods, he could not tell but that Christ might be one of them; and therefore in condemning Christ, he might justly provoke all the gods, to be revenged of him. "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him."

2. The Jews threaten Pilate; "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend."—A forcible reason, as the case then stood. It was no small matter to be accused of high treason against Cæsar; and therefore

Pilate seems to bend: whom the fear of Christ's divinity had restrained, him the fear of Cæsar's frown provoked to go on. And yet, before he gave sentence, "He takes water and washes his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it."

3. The Jews engage themselves for him.—"His blood be upon us and our children." Act thou as judge, let him be condemned to die; and if thou fear any thing, we will undergo for thee; let the vengeance of his blood be on us, and on our children for ever.

When Pilate heard that, he sat down in the judgment-seat. And here Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required, and then he delivered Jesus to their will.

From this sight of Christ, we may learn remorse. Not any of us who have crucified Christ by our sins, but we are called on at this time, to behold the man. Suppose we saw him with our bodily eyes; suppose we had the same view of Christ as the Jews had; suppose we saw him in the very midst of us wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and the reed held in his right hand; suppose we heard the voice of Pilate speaking to us, as he did to the Jews, "Behold the man;" suppose we saw the purple robe lifted up, and his body torn; and that some voice from heaven should come to us, saying, "This same is he whom ye have buffeted, scourged, crowned, crucified by your sins." Were not this enough to prick us in our hearts, and to make us cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We look at the instruments, and cry, "Fy on Pilate, fy on the soldiers, fy on the Jews;" but we look not on our sins, saying, fy on them. Could we but realise our sins as the cause of these sufferings of Christ, methinks our hearts should break. Consider, yesterday so many lies were told, and so many oaths were sworn; little did we think that all this while we had been stripping Christ naked, scourging Christ with rods, clothing Christ with a scarlet robe, platting a crown of thorns, and putting it on his head, sceptring him with a reed, and saluting him in scorn, "Hail, king of the Jews." Men, brethren, and fathers, be not deceived, Christ is mocked, scorned, and abused by you when you sin: your sins dealt with Christ, and in God's acceptation

your sins thus deal with Christ, even to this very day. Never say it was long since Christ was crucified, and he is now in heaven, for by your sins, you crucify again the Lord of glory, and put him again to open shame. O look on him whom you have pierced! Pilate thought that if the Jews would but behold the man, their hearts would have mollified; and shall not I think as well of you? It is a blessed means to make sin bittter, and to breed in our hearts remorse for sin, if we will but hearken to this voice of Pilate, "Behold the man!"

OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFYING.

About eleven, they prepare with all speed for the execution.

1. The evangelist tells us, "They took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him."—Origen observes, "they took off his robes, but they took not off his crown of thorns." What served their interest, they pursued still, but nothing of mitigation or mercy to the afflicted Son of man. It is supposed that even this could not be done without great pain; after his sore whipping his blood congealed, and by that means stuck to his scarlet mantle; so that in pulling off the robe, and putting on his own raiment, there could not but be a renewing of his wounds.

2. "They led him away, bearing his cross."—Thus they make good their double cry, "Crucify him, crucify him;" first crucify him with it as a burden, and then crucify him with it as a cross. O the cruelty of these men! they had scarce left him so much blood or strength as to carry himself; and must he now bear his heavy cross? Yes, till he faint and sink, so long he must bear it; and longer too, did they not fear that he should die with less shame and smart than they intended him; to prevent this, "they constrained one Simon a Cyrenian to bear his cross after him." The cross was a Roman death, and so one of their abominations; hence they themselves would not touch this tree of infamy, lest they should have been defiled; but to crucify the Lord of glory, they make no scruple at all.

3. He comforted the women who followed weeping after him as he went along.—" And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him: but Jesus turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." In the midst of his misery he forgets not mercy; in the midst of all their tortures and scorn, he can hear his friends weeping behind him, and neglect all his own sufferings to comfort them,—"Weep not for me." He hath more compassion on the women that followed him weeping, than of his own mangled self, fainting and bleeding unto death; he feels more the tears that drop from their eyes, than all the blood that flows from his own veins. Before, he would not vouchsafe a word to Pilate that threatened him, nor to Herod that entreated him; and yet unasked, how graciously doth he turn about his bleeding face to these weeping women, affording them looks and words too, of compassion and consolation; " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves." But what is the meaning of this? May we not weep for the death of Christ? Do we not find in scripture, that all the people wept at the death of Moses? That all the church wept at the death of Stephen? That the women lamented the death of Dorcas? And did not Christ himself weep for Lazarus, and for Jerusalem? Nay, is he not here weeping showers of blood all along the way? And may not we drop a tear for all those purple streams of his? I answer, the words are not absolute, but comparative. Christ doth not simply forbid us to weep for our friends, but rather to turn our worldly grief into godly sorrow for sin. Christ pointed the women to the true cause of all their sorrow, which was their sins; and thus we have cause to weep indeed. Our sins were the cause of the sufferings of Christ; and in that respect, O that our heads were fountains, and our eyes rivers of tears! O that the Lord would strike these rocky hearts of ours, with the rod of true remorse, that water might gush out! O that we could mourn over Jesus, whom we have pierced, and "be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born!"

4. No sooner was he come to the place of execution, but "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall."—It was a custom amongst the Jews and Romans, to give wine to the condemned; "Give strong wine unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart." But in that they gave him vinegar mingled with gall; it was an argument of their cruelty and envy.

5. "They crucified him."—They fastened him on the cross; and then lift him up. Now come the barbarous executioners, and begin to unloose his hands; but not to liberty, but to worse bonds of nails. Then stript they off his gore-glewed clothes, and with them, not a little of his mangled flesh, as if it were not enough to crucify him as a thief, unless they flea him as a beast; then stretched they him as another Isaac on his own burden the cross, and drive their tenters through his hands and feet, whereon his whole body must hang. Having thus nailed him to the cross, they lift it up, and fix it in the ground. Now was David's prophecy fulfilled, "I may tell all my bones," and again, "all my bones are out of joint." How should my tears blot out what I write, when it is no other than he that is thus used, who hath blotted out that hand-writing of ordinances that was against me.

But the hour goes on, and this is the great business of the world's redemption, of which I would speak a little more. By this time we may imagine Christ nailed to the cross, and his cross fixed in the ground, which, with its fall into the place of its station, gave infinite torture, by so violent a concussion of the body of our Lord. In this crucifying of Christ, I shall notice the shame and pain.

1. The shame.—It was a cursed death, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." It was chiefly inflicted upon slaves, that either falsely accused, or treacherously conspired against their master's life; but on whomsoever it was inflicted, this death, in all ages among the Jews, hath been branded with a special kind of ignominy; and so the apostle signifies, when he saith, "he abased himself to the death, even the death of the cross."

2. The pain.—It was a painful death. His legs and hands were violently racked, and pulled out to the

places fitted for his fastening, and then pierced through with nails. By this means he wanted the use both of his hands and feet, and so he was forced to hang immoveable upon the cross, as being unable to turn any way for his ease. The longer he lived the more he endured, for by the weight of his body, his wounds were opened and enlarged, his nerves and veins were rent and torn asunder, and his blood gushed out more and more. He died gradually and not at once; the cross kept him a great while upon the rack. It was full three hours before his death; and it would have been longer, if he had not freely and willingly given up the ghost.

I may add, the pains of his soul while he hanged on the cross; for there also Christ had his agonies and conflicts; these were the pains, or pangs of death, which Peter speaketh of. The word signifies the pains of a woman in travail. The prophet calls it "the travail of his soul;" and the Psalmist calls it the pains of hell; "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me." The sorrows or cords of death compassed his body, and the pains of hell gat hold upon his soul; and these were they that extorted from him that passionate expostulation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He conplains of that which was more grievous to him, than ten thousand deaths, "My God, my God, why hast thou withdrawn thy wonted presence, and left my soul, as it were, in the pains of hell!"

O the curse and bitterness that our sins have brought on Jesus Christ! When I think on these bleeding veins, bruised shoulders, scourged side, furrowed back, harrowed temples, pierced hands and feet, and then consider that my sins were the cause of all; methinks I should need no more arguments for self-abhorring! Christians, would not your hearts rise against him that should kill your father, mother, brother, wife, or husband? O then, how should your hearts and souls rise against sin! Your sin it was, that murdered Christ, that killed him, who is instead of all relations, who ought to be a thousand times dearer to you, than father, mother, husband, child. One thought of this should, methinks, be enough

to make you say, as Job did, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." O what is that cross on the back of Christ?—My sins. What is that crown on the head of Christ?—My sins. What is that nail in the right-hand, and that other in the left-hand of Christ?—My sins. O what is that spear in the side of Christ?—My sins. What are those nails and wounds in the feet of Christ?—My sins. With a spiritual eye I see no other engine tormenting Christ; no other Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas condemning Christ; no other soldiers, officers, Jews or Gentiles, doing execution on Christ but only my sins!

OF WHAT FOLLOWED CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION.

1. About twelve, when the sun is usually brightest, it began to darken.—This darkness was so great, that it spread over all the land of Jewry; some think over all the world; so we translate it in Luke, "and there was a darkness over all the earth;" and many Gentiles, observed the same as a great miracle. Dionysius the Areopagite said at first sight of it, "Either the world is ending, or the God of nature is suffering." Of this prophesied Amos. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." This supernatural darkness continued for the space of three hours.

2. About three, (which the Jews call the ninth hour) the sun beginning to receive his light, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lamasabachthani, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then, that the scripture might be fulfilled, he said, "I thirst." And "when he had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. And at last, crying with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." His words were ever gracious, but never more gracious than at this time. We cannot find in all the books of men, in all the records of time, either such sufferings, or such sayings, as were these last sayings and suffering of Jesus Christ.

3. About four in the afternoon, "one of the soldiers

with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." This was the fountain of both sacraments, the fountain of all our happiness, "The fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Out of the side of Christ, being now dead, there issues water and blood, signifying that he is both our justification and sanctification.

4. About five (which the Jews call the eleventh, and the last hour) Christ was taken down, and buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.

CHAPTER III.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his death. Of considering—desiring—hoping—believing—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in that respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS, AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS DEATH.

THIS is the high point which Paul was ever studying, and preaching on. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Christ crucified is the rarest knowledge in the world. The person of Christ is a matter of high speculation, but Christ farther considered, as clothed with his garments of blood, is that knowledge, which especially Paul pursues. O my soul, couldst thou have dived into the secrets of nature? Couldst thou have "excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, and all the wisdom of Solomon, who spake of beasts, of fowls, of fishes, of trees from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," yet, without the saving knowledge of Christ crucified, all this had been nothing. Come then, and spend thy time for the future more fruitfully, in reading, learning, and knowing this one necessary thing. Study Christ crucified in every part; but be sure thy study and knowledge, be rather practical than speculative. Do not merely learn the history of Christ's death, but the efficacy, virtue and merit of it. Know what thou knowest in reference to thyself, as if Jesus had been all the while carrying on the business of thy soul's salvation; as if thou hadst stood by, and Christ had spoke to thee, as to the women, "Weep not for me, but for thyself; thy sins caused my sufferings, and my sufferings were for the abolition of thy sins."

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Every part of Christ's life is well worthy of our consideration, but more especially the time of his sufferings. "Consider him (saith the apostle) that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself."—"Consider him, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame."

1. Consider him passing over the brook Cedron.—He cannot enter the door, but first he must wade through cold waters. Consider him entering into the garden of Gethsemane. In a garden Adam sinned, and in a garden Christ must suffer. No sooner was he entered, but he began to be agonized: all his powers and passions within him were in conflict. Consider, O my soul, how suddenly he is struck into a strange fear. Never was man so afraid of the torments of hell, as Christ, standing in our room, is of his Father's wrath. Nor was he only afraid, but he began to be sore amazed. This signifies an universal cessation of all the faculties of the soul from their several functions. We usually call it a consternation. O what an agony was this! What a struggling passion of mixed grief! "O my Father, since thou hast bent thy bow, here is an open breast, fix herein all thy shafts; better I suffer for a while, than that all believers should be damned for ever. Thy will is mine, lo, I will bear the burden of sin; shoot here thy arrows." What man or angel can conceive the agony, the fear, the sorrow, the amazement of that heart, that without any outward violence, bled through the flesh and skin, not some faint dew, but solid drops of blood! Now is he crucified without a cross; fear and sorrow are the nails, our sins the thorns, his Father's wrath the spear, and all these together, cause a bleeding shower to rain throughout all his pores.

2. Consider his apprehension.—Judas is now at hand with a troop following him. See how without all shame, he sets himself in the van, and coming to his Lord, gives him a most traitorous kiss. "What, Judas! betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Hast thou sold the

Lord of life to such cruel merchants, as covet greedily his blood and life? At what price hast thou set him? At thirty pence. What a vile price for the Lord of glory! God was sold for thirty pieces of silver, but man could not be bought without the dearest heart-blood of the Son of God. Now they lay hold on his holy hands, and bind them with knotty cords. Now they bring him back again over Cedron, and carry him to the house of Annas in triumph. O my soul, consider these passages, till thou feel some motions in thy affections. Hadst not thou sinned, the Sun of Righteousness had never been eclipsed.

3. Consider the hurrying of Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas.—A council is called, and Caiaphas, the high priest, adjures our Lord to tell him; "if he was Christ the Son of God." No sooner he affirms it, but he is doomed guilty of blasphemy. Now, again they disgorge upon him all their malice and revenge; each one buffets him. They spit upon that divine face, they hoodwink his eyes, and strike him on the cheek, scoffing, and saying, "Who is it that smote thee?" I am astonished how this patience overcomes not my anger; this abasing assuageth not my pride, these violent buffets beat not down my presumption!

4. Consider the hurrying of Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate.—Now he is accused of sedition and usurpation. He gives kingdoms that are eternal, but he will take away none that are temporal. Christ came not into the world to be Cæsar's, or Pilate's, or Herod's successor; but if they had believed, to have been their Saviour. O that I could contemn the world as Christ did, and above all seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. I feel unless I be willing with Christ to be despised and forsaken of all, I can have no inward peace, nor be wholly united to him.

5. Consider the hurrying of Jesus from Pilate to Herod.—There is he "questioned of many things," and then "mocked and arrayed in a gorgeous robe." See how he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation, that he might fill thee with goodness, and make thee wise unto salvation.

6. Consider the hurrying of Jesus from Herod back again to Pilate.—New accusations are forged; and when Pilate sees that nothing will do, but Christ must die, he delivers him to be stripped, scourged, clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, and sceptred with a reed. Who can number the stripes wherewith they tear his body, one wound eating into another. "There is no health in his bones by reason of my sins!" O joy of angels, and glory of saints, who hath thus disfigured thee? Certainly they were not thy sins but mine. Love caused thee to take upon thee this heavy burthen, and mercy moved thee to take upon thee all my miseries.

7. Consider that sad spectacle of Jesus wearing the crown of thorns.—Suppose thyself in the case of Jesus; what, if in so sensible a part as thy head is, men should fasten a number of thorns, yea, and those so sharp, that they should pierce into thy skull; why, thou canst hardly abide the prick of a pin, much less the piercing of so many thorns; but thy Jesus was crowned with thorns, and sceptred with a reed, and that reed was taken out of his hands to beat the crown of thorns into his head. He was then whipped with cords, and rods, and being in this plight, thou art called on to "Behold the man:" It is my sins, O Lord, that have so troubled thee; my sins were the thorns that pricked thee, the lashes that whipped thee, the purple that clothed thee: it is I Lord that am thy tormentor, and the very cause of these thy pains.

8. Consider Pilate's sentence, that "Jesus should be crucified as the Jews required."—Follow him from Gabbatha to Golgotha. See how they lay the heavy cross upon his shoulders, that were so rent and torn with whips. Accompany him to mount Calvary, and there see him lifted up on that engine of torture, the bloody cross. See his arms and legs racked with violent pulls, his hands and feet bored with nails, his whole body torn with stripes, and gored with blood. And now, O my soul, run with all thy might into his arms, held out at their full length to receive thee. Oh weigh the matter! Because sin entered by the senses, therefore his head, in which the senses flourish, is crowned with searching

thorns; because the hands and feet are more especially the instruments of sin, therefore his hands and feet are nailed to the cross for satisfaction. O marvellous! Surely here is matter for a serious meditation!

9. Consider the darkness that spread over all the earth.—Now is the sun ashamed to shew his brightness: the heavens are in mourning robes; and the lamp of heaven is immantled with a miraculous eclipse. Christ in the garden tasted the bitter cup of God's fierce wrath, but now he drunk the dregs of it. But what is the meaning of this cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was not a total, but a partial dereliction. This forsaking was not in respect of the being, but of the feeling of God's favour. In his agony there was now and then, some little flash of light to cheer him, but now all the sense of God's love was gone. Christ now took the place of sinners, and God the Father shut him out, as it were, amongst the sinners. After this he speaks but a few words more, and gives up the ghost. He dies that we might live; he is dissolved, that we might be united to his Father.

10. Consider the piercing of his side.—O fountain of everlasting waters! Methinks I see the blood running out of his side, more freshly than those streams which ran out of the garden of Eden, and watered the whole world. Consider the taking of his body down and the burying of it. Here is excellent matter for our meditation! Let Joseph and Nicodemus bear his corpse; let the blessed virgin go after it sighing, and weeping; let Mary Magdalen follow after him with a box of precious ointment; or, (that in this meditation I may be more spiritual) let the usurer come first with Judas's bag, and distribute to the poor as he goes along; let the drunkard follow with the spunge filled with gall and vinegar, and check his wanton thirst; let the young gallant come like his master with the crown of thorns upon his head; let the wanton bear the rods and whips, wherewith Christ was scourged, and fright his own flesh; let the ambitious be clad in the purple robe; the angry person in the seamless coat. Let every sinner draw something from the passion of Christ, to the mortifying of his sin: yea,

let all turn mourners and bow their heads for the name of Christ!

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Jesus Christ to a sinner, is the chief object of desire; but Jesus Christ, as crucified, is the chief part of that object. How many desirable things are centered in the death of Christ.

1. There is in it a full satisfaction for sin.—Many an humble soul is apt enough to complain: "O if I had not been so great a sinner, there might have been hope." This is to undervalue Christ's redemption; this is to think there is more in sin to damn, than in Christ's sufferings to save; whereas all thy sins to Christ, are but as a little cloud to the glorious sun; yea, all the sins of all the men in the world, are to Christ's merits, but as a drop to the ocean. There is in Christ's blood an infinite treasure, able to sanctify thee and all the world; there is in Christ's death a ransom, sufficient to redeem all the sinners that ever were, or ever shall be. The price is of that nature, that it is not diminished, though it be extended to never so many: as the sun hath fulness of light to enlighten all the world, and if the blind do not see by it, it is not any scarcity of light in the sun, but by reason of his own indisposition; so, if all men are not acquitted by Christ's death, it is not because that was insufficient, bur because they, by their unbelief, reject this remedy.

2. There is in it reconciliation and peace with God.—"In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." When we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son. This certainly should support the drooping soul. It may be thou criest, "My sins have made a breach between God and my soul; I have warred against heaven, and now God wars against me; and if the Lord be angry, yea, but a little, what will become of my poor soul?" But come and look on Christ's death,

as the means of reconciliation, and thou canst not but say, "O this death is desirable!"

3. There is in it a blessed virtue to open heaven, and make a passage thither for our souls.—It is the blood of Christ that rends the vail, and makes a way into the holy of holies, that is, into the kingdom of heaven. Without this blood there is no access to God. It is only by the blood of Christ that heaven is open to our prayers, and that heaven is open to our persons. This blood is the key that unlocks heaven, and lets in the souls of his redeemed ones.

When I call to mind that Christ's death is my ransom, that Christ's stripes are my cures, that Christ's blood is my fountain; how should I pray in this sense, "His blood be upon us, and on our children?" How should I cry out with the woman of Samaria, "O give me this water, that I thirst no more." But alas, I only *say* it. O that I could *feel* it! When my spirit is in right frame, I feel some desires after Christ's blood; but how short are these desires, how unworthy of the things desired? Come, Lord, kindle in me burning desires, and then give me the desirable object.

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

By this hope, I intend only that which the apostle calls "full assurance of hope." It is not every hope that is a well-grounded hope; and that we may discern that the grounds of our hope in Christ's death are not false, I shall lay down these signs.

1. If Christ's death be mine, then is that great end of his death accomplished in me, viz. "By the sacrifice of himself, he hath put away sin," even my sin.—And, "in him I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Come then and try by this sign; canst thou assure thyself that thy sins are forgiven thee? There is no question then but thou art redeemed by his blood, thou hast part in his sufferings. Indeed this very character may seem obscure. Assurance of pardon is the "hidden manna, the white stone, which no man knoweth, saving he that receives it, and feels it;" and yet, if thou diligently observe the Spirit's actings, even this

may be known. Remission of sin, and repentance for sin, are twins of a birth: these two God in scripture hath joined together; "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins." And "Christ is a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." In this way David assured himself; "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, Selah." It is no more than to ask thine own soul, Hast thou seriously and sincerely repented thee of sin? Hast thou turned from all sin unto God with constancy and delight? Surely this is peculiar to the child of God by virtue of Christ's death.

2. If Christ's death be mine, then am I made conformable to Christ in his death.—The same that was done to Christ in a natural way, is done in the believer in a spiritual way; as Christ died for sin, so the believer dies to sin. "In that he died, he died unto sin,—likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Observe here the analogy, and resemblance between Christ and us; both die unto sin, Christ by way of expiation for the sins of others; we by way of mortification and crucifying our own sins. I look upon this sign as the very touchstone of a Christian. And therefore, O my soul, if thou feel a real and increasing mortification of sin within thee, thou art surely a growing Christian; thou hast fellowship with Christ in his sufferings; thy ground is solid, firm and stable; thy hope hath a rock foundation, and thou mayest build upon it, that Christ's death and sufferings are thine, even thine. —"He loved *thee*, and gave himself for *thee*."

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Whilst many look upon believing in Christ as an easy duty, the humble soul cries out, "Is it possible that Christ should die for me? What a hard thing is it, considering my enmity against Christ, to believe that Christ died for me, that he gave himself even to the death of the cross for my soul!" Trembling soul, throw not away thyself in a way of unbelief! It may be thou

wouldst not die for an irreconcileable enemy; but are not the mercies of God above all the mercies of men? O believe! and that I may persuade effectually, I shall lay down some encouragements of faith.

1. One design of Christ's death, was to redeem us from the slavery of death and hell.—We were carnal, sold under sin; whereupon the law seized on us, locked us up as it were in a dungeon; yea, the sentence passed, and we but waited for execution: now to free us from this dismal state, Christ himself is made under the law, that he might redeem us. But with what must we be redeemed? Surely with no easy price! "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." His precious blood was the price he paid when "he gave his life a ransom for many."

2. Another design of Christ's death was to mortify our members which are upon the earth.—Not only would he remit sin, but he would destroy it: he would not have it "reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof." "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness." Christ by his death had not only a design to deliver us from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Paul was a mortified man, dead to the world, and dead to sin. But how came he so? This he attributes to the cross of Christ, to the death of Christ. The death of Jesus was the cause of this death in Paul, "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God!" There is in the death of Christ, a value, and a virtue; the former is available to our justification, the latter to our sanctification. Now sanctification hath two parts, mortification, and vivification; Christ's death or passive obedience is more properly conducible to the one; his life or active obedience to the other.

O my soul, look to this; herein lies the pith and marrow of the death of Christ; and if now thou wilt

but exercise thy faith in this respect, how mightest thou draw the virtue and efficacy of his death into thy soul? If these encouragements are not sufficient,

1. Consider the all-sufficiency in the death of Christ. —It is sufficient for the redemption of every man in the world, and effectual for all that have been, are, or shall be called into the state of grace, whether Jews or Gentiles, bound or free. Oh! what encouragement is this for thee to believe thy part in the death of Christ?

2. Consider the worth of this glorious object, Christ crucified.—There is an infinity of worth in the death of Christ, and this ariseth, 1. From the dignity of his person, he was God-man. The death of angels and men, if put together, could not have amounted to the excellency of Christ's death. Stand amazed, O believer, thou hast gained by thy loss, thou hast lost the righteousness of a creature, but the righteousness of an infinite Creator is now made thine: hence it is many times called the "righteousness of God," because Christ is God, and because it is such a righteousness as God is satisfied with: he looks for no better, yea, there can be no better. 2. This worth is not only in respect of the dignity of the person, but also in respect of the price offered. It was the blood of Christ, one drop whereof is of more worth than thousands of gold and silver! it was this "blood that purchased the whole church of God," which a thousand worlds of wealth could never have done. Sweet soul, turn thine eyes hither; surely this death of Christ is more satisfactory to God, than all thy sins possibly can be displeasing to God. Come then, and close with Christ upon this encouragement.

3. Consider the suitableness of this blessed object, the death of Christ.—There is in it a suitableness to our sinful condition, whatsoever the sin is. Hast thou had thy hands imbrued in the blood of saints? See now how Christ, for thy sake, was esteemed of the Jews a murderer, and worse than a murderer. Barabbas is released, and Jesus murdered. Is thy sin the sin of Manasseh, of whom it is said, that "he used enchantments, and witchcrafts, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards?" See now how Jesus Christ, for thy sake, was esteemed of the Jews as an impostor, an enchanter:

they commonly reported of him that he had a devil, and that "he cast out devils, through Beelzebub prince of devils." Art thou a blasphemer? Hast thou joined with those in these sad times, who have opened their mouths against the God of heaven, enough to make a Christian rend his heart, and weep in blood? See now how Jesus for thy sake was judged of Caiaphas, and all the Sanhedrim, for a blasphemer of God, and that in the highest kind of blasphemy, as making himself equal with God. Surely all this he endured, that every blasphemer may find mercy, if he will but come in, and believe in Jesus. Away, away unbelief, distrust, despair! You see now the brazen serpent lifted up, you see what a blessed object is before you; O believe! O look up unto Jesus! O believe in him thus carrying on the work of thy salvation in his death.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

"Greater love than this hath no man, that a man should give his life for his friends;"—"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Here is an argument of love indeed! How should we but love him, who hath thus loved us? In prosecution of this, I shall first shew Christ's love to us, and then exercise our love to him again.

1. His love to us.—With what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold the Lord Jesus, who, from everlasting was clothed with glory and majesty, now wrapped in rags, cradled in a manger, exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, persecution? But to let them pass; into what ecstasies may I be cast, to see the Judge of all the world accused, judged, condemned? To see the Lord of life dying upon the tree of shame and curse? To see the eternal Son of God struggling with his Father's wrath? To see him, who had said, "I and my Father are one," sweating drops of blood in his agony, and crying out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" O whither hath his love to mankind

carried him? Had he only sent his angels from his chamber of presence to minister to us, it had been a great deal of mercy; or, if it must be so, had Christ come down from heaven himself, only to visit us, or had he only wept over us, saying, "O that you had known, even you, in this your day, the things belonging to your peace!" This would have been such a mercy as that all the world would have wondered at it: but that Christ himself should lay down his life for his people, yea part with the sense and sweetness of God's love, which is a thousand times better than life: What raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of this infinite mercy! Be thou swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love; and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world. Look upon him! He hangs on the cross naked, torn, and bloody, between heaven and earth, as if he were cast out of heaven, and also rejected by earth. He has a crown indeed, but such a one as few men will touch; none will take from him. His hair is clotted with blood, his face clouded with black and blue: he is all over pitifully rent; outwardly, inwardly, body and soul.—I will think the rest. Had I the tongues of men and angels, I could not express it. O! love more high than heaven! the brightest seraphim that burn in love, are but as sparkles to that mighty flame of love in the heart of Jesus.

If this be Christ's love to us, what is that love we owe to Christ? O for a heart answerable to these mercies! O God, raise up our souls to thee; and if our spirits be too weak to know thee, make our affections ardent and sincere to love thee. The whole gospel is no other thing than a motive to draw man to God by the force of God's love to man. In this sense the holy Scriptures may be called, the book of true love, seeing therein God unfolds his love to us, and binds our love to him; but of all the motives we may draw from Christ, and of all the arguments we may find in the gospel of Christ, there is none to this, the death of Christ, the blood of Jesus. Read these words, "HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US." Or, if you cannot read, observe the hiero-

glyphics; every stripe is a letter, every nail is a capital letter, every bruise is a black letter; his bleeding wounds are as so many rubrics; Is not this a great love? Are not all mercies wrapt up in this blood of Christ? It may be thou hast riches, honours, friends, but thank the blood of Christ for all thou hast. It may be thou hast grace, but for this thank the blood of Jesus. Thou wast a rebellious soul, thou hadst a hard and polluted heart, but Christ's blood was the fountain opened, and it took away all sin and all uncleanness. Christ is in all, and Christ above all, and wilt thou not love him? O that all our words were words of love, and all our labours labours of love, and all our thoughts thoughts of love, that we might speak of love, and muse of love, and love this Christ who first loved us, with all our heart, and soul, and might!

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

O the waters of comfort that flow from the sufferings and obedience of Christ! Christ was amazed, that we might be cheered; Christ was imprisoned, that we might be delivered; Christ was accused, that we might be acquitted; Christ was condemned, that we might be redeemed; Christ suffered his Father's wrath, that the victory might be ours, and that we might see him face to face in glory. Is not here matter of joy? It may be sin, and justice, and conscience, and death, and hell, may appear as enemies, but is there not enough in the blood of Christ to chase them away?

Come then, and comfort yourselves in this death of Christ. Do you believe? Why then do you sit drooping? "What manner of communications are these that you have, as ye walk and are sad?" Away despair, disquietness of spirit! Christ is dead, that you might live. In this respect, every thing speaks comfort; God and men, heaven and earth, angels and devils. The very justice of God is now your friend, and bids you go away comforted, for it is satisfied to the full. Heaven itself waits on you, and keeps the doors open that your souls may enter. O my soul, I see thou art poring on sin, on

thy crimson sins, but I would have thee dwell on that crimson blood of Christ; the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel; it cries for mercy, pardon, and salvation. Methinks this should make my heart leap for joy. It is this spiritual wine that makes merry the heart of man, and it is the voice of Christ to all his guests, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. We must pray, that all these transactions of Christ in his sufferings and death may be ours.—If we direct our prayers immediately to Jesus Christ, let us tell him what pains he hath suffered for our sakes; and let us complain against ourselves, "O what shall we do, who by our sins have so tormented our dearest Lord? What contrition can be great enough, what tears sufficiently expressive, what hatred and detestation commensurate to those sad and heavy sufferings of our Jesus?" And then let us pray, that he would pity us, and forgive us those sins wherewith we crucified him, that he would bestow on us the virtue of his sufferings, that his wounds might heal us, his death might quicken us, and his blood might cleanse us from all our sin.

2. We must praise the Lord for all these sufferings of Christ.—Hath he indeed suffered all these punishments for us? O then what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits? What shall we do for him, who hath done and suffered all these things? But especially, if we believe our part in all the virtues, benefits, victories, purchases, and privileges of his precious death, then what manifold cause of thankfulness and praise is here! Be enlarged, O my soul, sound forth the praises of thy Christ; tune thy heart aright, and keep concert with all the angels of heaven, and all his saints on earth in singing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Objects have an attractive power, that do assimilate unto them, and no question but there is a power in faith to be like to Christ, by looking on him.

In this particular, I shall examine, 1. Wherein we must conform! 2. What are the means of this conformity.

For the first, I answer, We must conform to Christ in his graces, sufferings, death.

1. In the graces that most eminently shined in his bitter passion.—His life indeed was a gracious life; he was full of grace; but his graces shined most brightly at his death. I shall instance some of them.

His humility was profound.—What, that the most high God, should vouchsafe to be contemned, and less esteemed than Barabbas a murderer; that Christ should be crucified between two thieves, as if he had been the ringleader of all malefactors; O what humility was this!

His patience was wonderful.—The apostle Peter sets Christ as a blessed example before our eyes; "If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God, for even hereunto were we called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.—Who, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." O the patience of Christ!

His love was fervent.—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This love is an exemplar of all love. "Be ye followers of God (saith the apostle) as dear children; and walk in love as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savour." In the temple there were two altars, the brazen and the golden; the brazen altar was for bloody sacrifices, the golden altar was for the offering of incense; now the former was a type of Christ's offering upon the cross, the latter of Christ's in-

tercession for us in glory; in regard of both, the apostle tells, that Christ gave himself both for an "offering and sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God." O! what love was this!

His obedience was constant. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—"He sought not his own will, but the will of him that sent him." There was a command, that the Father laid on Christ from all eternity, "O my son, my only begotten Son, thou must go down, and leave heaven, and empty thyself, and die even the death of the cross, and go and bring the fallen sons of Adam out of hell." All which the Lord Jesus did in time; he was obedient to death, even to the death of the cross. Now, in all these graces we must conform to Christ. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." "And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us." It is as if Christ had said, Mark the steps where I have trod, and follow me in humility, in patience, in love, in mercy, in obedience unto death.

2. We must conform to Christ in his sufferings, if he calls us to them. This was the apostle's prayer, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." But wherein is the conformity between our sufferings and the sufferings of Christ? I answer, our sufferings have no conformity with Christ in these two things; 1. Not in the office of Christ's sufferings, for his were meritorious and satisfactory, ours only ministerial and for edification. 2. Not in the weight and measure of Christ's sufferings, for his were such as would have pressed any other creature as low as hell.

Our sufferings must have conformity with Christ. 1. In the cause of them; Christ's sufferings were instrumentally from Satan and wicked men; we must look to suffer by the enemies of Christ, if we have any share in Christ. 2. In the manner of undergoing them, we must suffer with a proportion of that humility and patience, and love, and meekness, and obedience, which Christ shewed in his very sufferings. 3. In respect of the issue of them; we must look upon Christ's issue, and expect it to be ours. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,

and so enter into glory?" And "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

O my soul, study this conformity, and comfort thyself in this condition of sufferings. Must we not drink of our Saviour's cup? Never wonder that thou art hated or persecuted of men; I tell thee, if Christ himself was now amongst us, in that very condition that sometimes he was, and should convince men of their wickedness, as searchingly as sometimes he did, I verily think he would be the most hated man in the world.

3. We must conform to Christ in his death, carrying in us a resemblance and representation of his death. But what death is this? I answer in a word, "a death unto sin (so the apostle) in that he died, he died unto sin;—likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." There is a likeness between Christ's death and our death in this respect, "We are planted together in the likeness of his death." True mortification carries a resemblance of the death of Christ. As for instance,

Christ's death was a voluntary death. "I lay down my life, that I may take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Not all men on earth, nor all devils in hell could have enforced Christ's death, if he had not pleased: his death was a spontaneous act, so is our mortification. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Many may leave their sins against their wills, but this is not true mortification, it bears not in it the likeness of Christ's death, for he died willingly.

Christ's death was a violent death. He died not naturally, but violently; "He was put to death in the flesh." "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter." So is our mortification; it is voluntary in respect of us, but violent in respect of sin. When a man lays violent hands on his sins; when he cuts them off, being yet in their strength; when he pulls up those weeds before they wither in themselves, this is true mortification.

2. What are the means of this conformity as on our part? I answer.

1. Go to the cross of Jesus Christ.—It is not all our re-

solutions, promises, vows, endeavours without this, that will effect our conformity to Christ in his sufferings and death; no, this conformity is a fruit of the death of Christ; and therefore, whosoever would have this work wrought in him, let him first have recourse to Christ's cross.

2. Look up to him that hangs upon it.—Contemplate the death of Jesus Christ; consider seriously his bitter, shameful, painful sufferings. Consider who he was. What he suffered. Why he suffered. For whom he suffered. With what mind he suffered. Every one of these will make some discoveries either of his graces, or of his gracious actings in our behalf; and who can tell how far this very look may work on us to transform us into the very image of Jesus Christ?

3. Let us humbly bewail our defect, and inconformity either to the graces, sufferings, or death of Christ. As thus, "Lo here the profound humility, wonderful patience, fervent love, constant obedience of Jesus Christ! These are the particulars to which I should conform. But, alas! what a wide distance is there between me and them! Christ in his sufferings shined with graces, like so many stars in a bright winter's night; but how dim are the graces in my soul! Christ in his sufferings died; he hung on the cross till he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. "He died unto sin once." But alas! how do I live in that for which he died? To this day my sin hath not given up the ghost. My sin is not yet crucified. O how unanswerable am I to Christ in all these respects!"

4. Let us rouse up our souls to this conformity.—Let us set before them exciting arguments. The greatest glory that a Christian can attain to in this world, is to have a resemblance to Jesus Christ. The more like we are to Christ, the better he is pleased with us. Again, a likeness to Christ in his death, will cause a likeness to Christ in his glory. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

5. Let us pray to God, that he will make us conformable to Jesus Christ.—Is it grace we want? Let us beg of him,

that of that fulness that is in Christ, we may, in our measure, receive grace for grace. Is it patience, or joy in sufferings that we want? Let us beg of him, that as he hath promised, he will send us the Comforter, that so we may follow Christ cheerfully from his cross to his crown, from earth to heaven. Is it mortification our souls pant after? Why then let us pray for this mortification.

And yet, when all is done, let us not think that sin will die in us altogether, for that is a higher perfection than this life will bear; only in the use of the means, and through God's blessing we may expect thus far, that sin shall not reign, it shall not wear a crown, it shall not sit in the throne, it shall hold no parliaments, it shall give no laws within us; we shall not serve it, but we shall die to the dominion of it by virtue of this death of Jesus Christ. And this grant he who died for us. Amen, Amen.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS RESURRECTION.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

Of the time and reasons of Christ's resurrection. Of the manner of his resurrection. Of the arguments of his resurrection. Of his appearing to Mary Magdalene. Of his appearing to his ten disciples.

OF THE TIME AND REASONS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

THE sun that went down in a ruddy cloud is risen again with glorious beams. Christ's resurrection took place on the third day after his crucifixion.

This was the time he had appointed, and this was the time marked out for him in the kalender of the prophets. From the various reasons which might be adduced for his resurrection we will select the following.

1. That he might powerfully convince or confound his adversaries.—Notwithstanding their care, their watch, their seal; at the very time he had told them before, he broke open the gates of death, and made the gates of brass to flee asunder.

2. That he might confirm the faith of all his followers. —"If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain," saith the apostle. Christ's resurrection confirms our faith, as to

his person and to his office; for his person, this speaks him to be "the eternal Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead;" and for his office, this speaks him to be the promised Messiah, the King and Saviour of his church.

3. That it might clearly appear, that he had fully satisfied the justice of God for sin.—God laid the forfeiture of the bond on Christ; he arrested him, brought him to the gaol the grave, and there he was till the debt was paid to the utmost farthing; and then, that it might clearly appear that the bond was cancelled, the prisoner discharged, God's justice satisfied, he rose again from the dead.

4. That he might conquer sin, death, and the devil.—Hence the apostle cries, victory upon the occasion of Christ's resurrection, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now was the day that he spoiled principalities and powers, that he trod on the serpent's head, and took from him his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils. Now was the day that Jonas came safe out of the belly of the whale, that the tabernacle of David that was fallen was raised again, that the Sun of Righteousness covered with a cloud, appeared and shone with greater lustre than before, that Samson took the gates of the city, and carried them away!

5. That he might "become the first-fruits of them that slept."—Christ is called the first-fruits in a double respect. 1. In respect of the day whereon he rose. Paul was an excellent critic, the very feast carried him to the word; as the day of his passion was the day of the Passover, and the apostle thence could say "Christ is our passover;" so the day of Christ's rising, was the day of the first-fruits; and the apostle thence could say, "Christ is our first-fruits." Concerning this feast of the first-fruits; we read, Lev. xxii. 10, 11. It was their harvest of their basest grain barley, but the full harvest of their best grain of wheat, was not till Pentecost. Now, upon this day, the morrow after the Sabbath, the beginning of their first harvest, when the sheaf of their first-fruits was brought unto the priest, and waved before the Lord, Christ arose from the dead, and in this respect, Paul calls him the "first-fruits of them that slept."

He rose first as on this day, for the full harvest is not till the general resurrection. 2. He is called the first-fruits, in respect of them whom he thereby sanctified; for as a handful of the first-fruits sanctified the whole field of corn that was growing, so Jesus Christ, the first-fruits of the dead, sanctifies all those who are lying in the grave to rise again by his power, even when they are in the dust of death.

6. That being formerly abased as a servant, and crucified as a sinner, he might thus be declared to be the Son of God, and exalted to be a Prince and Saviour.—"He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Of all the reasons of Christ's resurrection we must look upon this as the main; for as God hath made all things for his own glory; so "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father;" or to the glory of himself, and of his Father.

OF THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

1. Christ rose again as a public character.—He stood in our stead, and therefore when he rose from death, we and all the church of Christ, rose together in him. Adam, we know, was reckoned before his fall, as a public character, not standing singly for himself, but as representing all mankind to come of him; so Jesus Christ is reckoned to us, before his death, and in his death, and after his death, as a public person, not living, dying, or rising again, singly for himself, but as representing all the believers in the world. As among all the sheaves in the field, there was one sheaf in the name of all the rest waved before the Lord; so when all were dead, Christ as the first-fruits, rose again from the dead, and by this act of his resurrection, all his people are risen in him.

2. Christ rose again by his own power.—This he meant when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Here is a plain argument of the divine nature of Christ, for none ever did, ever could do that but God himself. It is true that the Father raised

him, and yet this contradicts not that he raised up himself, "Whatsoever the Father doth, I do," saith Christ. Christ's resurrection is the indivisible work of the blessed Trinity; it is a work common to all the three persons: there is but one power of the Father, and of the Son; so that of both it is truly verified, the Father raised him, and the Son raised himself.

3. Christ rose again with an earthquake.—"And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven." The earth shook at his death, and now it trembles again at his resurrection; plainly speaking, that it could neither endure his suffering, nor hinder his rising.

4. Christ rose again, angels ministering to him.—"An angel came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Christ's power was not included in the grave, but extended to heaven, and to the hosts therein. However the chief priests and pharisees conspired together to close him in the earth, yet the angels of heaven are ready to wait on him as their sovereign Lord. "An angel descended to roll away the stone," not that Christ was unable to do it himself, but this would manifest his power, by declaring his power over the mighty angels. He needed but to say unto his angel, "Do this, and he doth it."

5. Christ rose again accompanied with others.—"And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." It may be the graves were opened when Christ was laid in his grave; but the saints came not out of their graves till Christ was raised. It is a question what became of those bodies which now arose? Some think they died again; but it is more probable, that seeing they rose to manifest the quickening virtue of Christ's resurrection, they were also glorified with Christ; and as they rose with Christ, so they ascended up into heaven with him.

6. Christ rose again with a true, incorruptible, spiritual, and glorious body.—

He had a true body, consisting of flesh, and bone; so

he told his disciples, when they supposed him a spirit; "Handle me, and see, (said he) for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." I know his body after his resurrection was comparatively a spiritual body; yet for all that, he never laid aside the essential properties of a true body.

He had an incorruptible body. The apostle is express, "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him." Consonant hereunto is that of Christ, " I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen."

He had a spiritual body. It needed not meat and drink, as it did before. It is true, that the disciples "gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them;" but this he did only to confirm their faith. He ate out of power, and not out of necessity; not as standing in need of food, but to shew the truth of his being risen again.

He had a glorious body. This appeared in his transfiguration, " when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light;" but especially after his resurrection and ascension, when " his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." It is true, that from his resurrection until his ascension, his body appeared not thus glorious to them that saw it; but whether this glory was delayed during his forty days' abode upon the earth, or whether he so far condescended, for his disciples' sake, as to keep in his glory, that it might not dazzle them, it is hard to determine. I am apt to think, that in some sort he might draw in the beams of his glory, and yet that he was not entered into that fulness of glory, as after his ascension; and so some expound these words of Christ to Mary, " Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father;" Fix not thy thoughts so much upon my present condition, for I have not yet attained the highest pitch of my exaltation, nor shall I, until " I ascend unto my Father."

OF THE ARGUMENTS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

Christ after his passion, " shewed himself alive by

many infallible proofs," and never was matter carried on with more scruple and slowness of belief, than was this truth of Christ's resurrection. Mary Magdalene saw it first, and reported it, "but they believed her not." The two disciples that went to Emmaus, saw it also and reported it, "but they believed them not." Divers women together saw him, and came and told the disciples, "but their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." They all saw him, and even seeing him "yet they believed not for joy, but wondered." When the wonder was over, and the rest told it but to one that happened to be absent, you know how peremptory he was, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." In after times, the whole world stopt their ears at this report of the resurrection of Christ. It was with the Grecians at Athens a very scorn: "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." It was with Festus a plain frenzy: Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad." The resurrection of Christ is even to this day as much opposed by Jews and Atheists, as any one article of our creed. And surely we had need to look to it, for "if Christ be not risen (as the apostle argues) then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Of all the precious truths in the book of God, we had need to be well skilled in the defending the resurrection of Christ. I mean not to enter into controversies, only I shall declare those clear demonstrations, that substantially prove Christ to have risen again; viz. the several apparitions that Christ made to others after his resurrection.

He appeared unto Mary Magdalene apart. As a woman was the first instrument of death, so was a woman the first messenger of life. He appeared unto all the Marys together as they returned homewards from the sepulchre. Never any truly sought for Christ, but they were sure to find him. He "appeared to Simon Peter alone," he was the first among men who went into the sepulchre, and he first saw him that was raised thence. He appeared to the two disciples journeying towards

Emmaus; the name of the one was Cleophas, and probable it is the other was Luke, who out of his modesty concealed his own name. He appeared unto the ten apostles when the doors were shut. He appeared to all the disciples, "and Thomas was with them;" and then he shewed them his wounds, to strengthen the weak faith of his wavering servants. He appeared to "Peter, and John, and James, and Nathaniel, and Didymus, and two other disciples," when they were fishing at the sea of Tiberias: there he proved the verity of his Deity by that miracle of the fishes; and the verity of his humanity by eating meat with them. He appeared unto more than five hundred brethren at once; of this we read not in the evangelists, but the apostle Paul records it. He appeared unto James, the brother of the Lord; called James the just, in regard of his upright and innocent life. He appeared to the eleven disciples on mount Tabor in Galilee. And this Matthew intimates when Jesus bade the women "tell his brethren that he was risen, and that they should go into Galilee, and there they should see him; and accordingly in that mountain where Jesus had appointed them, they saw him and worshipped him." He appeared to all his apostles and disciples upon mount Olivet by Jerusalem, when in the presence of them all he ascended up into heaven. He appeared unto Paul travelling unto Damascus. It is my intention to speak of the most considerable of these apparitions.

OF CHRIST'S APPEARING TO MARY MAGDALENE.

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre." She departed from home before day, but by the time she came to the sepulchre the sun was about to rise: thither come, she finds the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus gone; upon this she runs to Peter and John, and tells them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Then Peter and John ran to see, and not finding the body in the sepulchre, they presently returned. By this

time, Mary Magdalene was come back, resolving to see the issue. Several things are here worthy of our notice.

1. The time when he appeared.—It was the first day of the week, the next day to their Sabbath; and it was "very early in the morning." The apparition was early, but Mary's seeking of Christ was so early, that "it was yet dark." She sought him early whom she loved entirely. They that will not seek Christ until they have given over seeking other things, may justly fear to miss Christ.

2. The place where he appeared.—It was in the garden where Christ was buried; Christ makes choice of a garden, both for his grave, and resurrection, and first apparition.

3. The person to whom he appeared.—It was Mary Magdalene; she that sometimes lived a sinful life, now is first up to seek her Saviour. Let never any despair of mercy, that hears of the conversion of Mary Magdalene. Her love to Christ appears at this time; "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.

Mary stood at the sepulchre. She stood by the grave of Christ; it signifies her great love to Jesus Christ. She chooseth Christ's tomb for her best home, and his dead corpse for her chief comfort; having lost the light of the Sun of Righteousness, she desired to dwell in darkness, in the shadow of death. Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping. This was love indeed; see how every word is a degree of love. At first she mourned for the departing of his soul out of his body, and now she laments the taking of his body out of the grave. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. That Christ is not in the tomb, her own eyes have seen, the disciples' hands have felt; the empty winding sheet doth plainly avouch; and yet for all this she will be stooping down, and looking in. She would rather condemn her own eyes of error; she would rather suspect all testimonies for untrue, than not to look after him whom she had lost. Love thinks it hath never looked enough.

4. The manner how he appeared.—She seeth "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the

other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain." They say unto her, Mary, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. Here was the cause of Mary's tears; she knows not whither to go to find any comfort; her Lord is gone, his life is gone, his soul is gone, his body is gone; yea gone, and carried, she knows not whither.

After this, Christ himself appears, but first as unknown, and then as known. 1. As unknown, "She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" A shower of tears comes between her and him, and she cannot see him; or "her eyes were holden that she should not know him," or it may be, he appeared in some other shape, such as resembled the gardener, whom she took him for. "She supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Her words to Christ are not much unlike the answer she gave the angels, only she seems to speak more harshly to Christ; to them, she complains of others, "*they* have taken away my Lord;" but to Christ, she speaks as if she would charge him with the fact. But pardon love; as it fears where it needs not, so it suspects very often where it hath o cause. When love is at a loss, he, or any that comes but in our way, hath done it, hath taken him away.

Something she spoke now to Christ which she had not mentioned to the angels. She said not unto them, "tell me where he is, and I will take him away." There is no essay too hard for love. She exempts no place, she esteems no person, she speaks without fear, she promises without condition, she makes no exception, as if nothing were impossible that love suggesteth.

Through all this speech she enquires for Jesus, but never names him. This is love's own dialect. Who knows not *him?* All the world is bound to take notice of *him;* and therefore, Sir, gardener, whosoever thou art, "If thou hast borne *him* hence, O tell me where thou hast laid him."

2. Christ appears as known: "Jesus saith unto her, Mary, she turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." She that hitherto had sought without finding, and wept without comfort, and called without answer, even to her Christ now appears, and addresses her by name. "Mary!" it was but a word: but, O what quickening and reviving was in the word! The voice of Christ is powerful: if the Spirit of Christ come along with the word, it will rouse hearts, raise spirits, work wonders. As she was ravished with his voice, so impatient of delay she takes his talk out of his mouth, and to his first and only word, she answered but one other, "Rabboni," which is to say, Master. A wonder that in this verse but two words should pass between them; but some give this reason, "that a sudden joy rousing all her passions, she could neither proceed in her own, nor give him leave to go forward in his speech."

Jesus saith unto her, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father, and to my God, and your God." Mary is not satisfied to see her Lord, nor to hear her Lord, but she must touch him and embrace his feet; but on a sudden he checks her forwardness, "Touch me not." As if he had said, "O Mary, fix not thy thoughts so much upon my present condition, in as much as this is not the highest pitch of my exaltation." "But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." Tell them that our relations and interests are all one: the same Father that is mine is theirs; and the same God that is mine is theirs also. This was the command of Christ; instead of touching him, she must go with a message to his apostles, and this was more beneficial both to her and them.

OF CHRIST'S APPEARING TO HIS TEN DISCIPLES.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disci-

ples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you, and when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his feet."

1. It was the same day at evening.—Both at morn, noon, and evening, Christ shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs. Early in the morning he appeared to Mary, and presently after to the three Marys, who touched his feet, and worshipped him. About noon he appeared to Simon Peter; in the afternoon he travelled with two of his disciples almost eight miles, to the castle of Emmaus; and, in the evening of the same day, he returned invisible from Emmaus to Jerusalem. At all times of the day, Christ is prepared, and preparing grace for his people.

2. The place is laid down in this passage, "where the disciples were assembled."—The evangelist Luke says expressly, it was in Jerusalem, but in what house it is unknown: only some conjecture that it was in the house of some disciple, wherein was an upper room. This upper room, according to the manner of their buildings at that time, was the most large and capacious of any other, and the most retired and free from disturbance. Christ came in when the doors were shut, either causing the doors to give place, the disciples not knowing how; or else altering the very substance of the doors, that his body might pass through them. He that thickened the waters to carry his body, might also attenuate the doors to make way for his body.

3. The persons to whom he appeared were his disciples.—They that were shut up, not daring to step out of doors for fear of the Jews. It is Christ's usual course to appear to them who are full of fears, and griefs, and most in danger. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee."

4. The manner how he appeared.—"He stood in the midst." O! what comfort is here to see Jesus Christ stand in the midst. Now may the disciples behold him as their blessed Peace-maker, their Mediator, as one that hath slain the enmity, not only that enmity between men

and men, Jews and Gentiles, but also between God and men. This he did by his death, and now he declares it at his resurrection. "Having slain the enmity by his cross, he came and preached peace." "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you." A seasonable salutation; for now were the disciples in fear and trouble: they had no peace with God or man, or with their own consciences; and therefore more welcome news could not have come. O the sweet of peace! This little word is a breviary of all that is good: what can they have more than peace with God, and peace with men, and peace within? Sure there is much in it, because Christ is so much upon it; at his birth the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace;" at his baptism the form of a dove lighted upon him, and, what meant this? But peace. In his life the fort of integrity was his court, and what was here but peace? Near his death he gives peace as a legacy to his church, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you," at his resurrection his first salutation to his apostles is a wish of peace, "Peace be unto you."

"He shewed unto them his hands and his side."—I look upon this as a true and real manifestation of his resurrection. Christ's body yet remaining on earth was not entered into that fulness of glory; and therefore he might then retain some scars, or blemishes, to manifest the truth of his resurrection unto his disciples.

O the wonderful condescension of Christ! What helps doth he continually afford to beget in us faith? If we are ignorant, he instructs us; if we sin, he corrects us; if we stand, he holds us up; if we fall down, he lifts us up again; if we go, he leads us; if we come to him, he is ready to receive us. There is not a passage of Christ between him and his, but it is a proof of love, and a mean either of begetting, or of increasing faith.

CHAPTER II.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his Resurrection. Of considering—desiring—hoping in—believing in—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in that Respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS RESURRECTION.

THIS is worth the knowing; "for if Christ be not risen, we are yet in our sins, and our faith is in vain, and our hope is in vain." O! my soul, study this point, and remember that saving knowledge is ever joined with a particular application; if Christ be my head, then he could not rise, but I rose with him and in him; and thus, O my soul, look on Christ, and thus search into every particular of Christ's resurrection. Oh what delightful studies are these! Hadst thou been with them to whom Christ appeared, would not thy heart have leaped with joy? Come, study it close, for the benefit of these apparitions extend to thee.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Consider the time when Christ rose again.—As Christ had his three days, and no more, so must thou. The first day was called the day of preparation; the second was the Sabbath day; and the third was the resurrection day; so thy first day is a day of preparation, a day of passion, wherein thou must strive and struggle against sin and Satan, till thou give up the ghost. Thy second day is a day of rest, wherein thy body must lie in the grave, and thy flesh rest in hope until the trumpet sound, and bid thee arise, and come to judgment; and thy third day is a day of resurrection unto glory.

2. Consider the reasons why Christ arose.—Was it not to confound the Jews? They could not endure to hear of Christ's resurrection, and therefore, when Peter and the other apostles preached that point, "They were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them." Again, was is not to confirm the faith of Christ's followers? Till he was risen, their faith was but a weak faith, but after he had shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs, they could then cry out, "My Lord, and my God." Again, was it not to evidence that he had fully satisfied all our debts? "The apostle tells us, That Christ was our surety;" at his death he was arrested, and cast into prison, whence he could not come till all was paid; and therefore to hear that Christ is risen, is a clear evidence, that God is satisfied. Again, was it not to conquer sin, death, and the devil? Now he took from death his sting, and from hell his standard; now he seized upon the hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to his cross; now he spoiled principalities and powers, and came out of the grave as a mighty conqueror. Again, was it not to become the first-fruits of them that sleep? Christ was the first that rose again to die no more; and by virtue of his resurrection we must rise again. Lastly, was it not that he might be declared to be the Son of God? This is the main reason of all the rest. O then give him the glory, and praise of his resurrection. Let "every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

3. Consider the manner of Christ's resurrection.—He rose as a public person; in which respect his resurrection concerns us no less than himself. His resurrection was in the name of us all, and had in it a virtue to work the resurrection of us all. He rose by his own power; and so did none but Jesus Christ. O my soul, he was able to raise himself, much more is he able to raise thee up; only believe and live for ever. An angel ministered to him at his resurrection.—"An angel came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Angels were the first ministers of the gospel, the first preachers of Christ's resurrection: they preached more of Christ than all the prophets did; they first told the women

that "Christ was risen," and they did the first service to Christ at his resurrection, "in rolling the stone from the door's mouth." O my soul, that thou wert like these blessed angels! How is it that they are so forward in God's service, and thou so backward? One day thou expectest to be equal with the angels, and art thou now so far behind them? Many of the bodies of the saints arose out of their graves at his resurrection. Look upon them as the fruit of Christ's resurrection, and as an earnest of thy own. Christ rose again with a true, incorruptible, spiritual, and glorious body. O this is a blessed subject to think upon; "We look for a Saviour (saith the apostle) the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." O consider it, till thou feel the influence, and come to the assurance of this blessed change.

4. Consider Christ's appearing to Mary Magdalene.—O the grief before he appeared, and the joys when he appeared! Before, she apprehended that some one had taken away her Lord. After he appeared she was filled with joy. At first indeed he is unknown, but within a while he utters a voice that opens both her ears and eyes. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary!" It was the sweetest sound that ever she heard; hereby the cloud is scattered, and the Sun of Righteousness appears; this one word lightens her eyes, dries up her tears, and cheers her heart. O meditate on this. If Christ be absent, all is night; but if Christ appear, he turns all again into a lightsome day.

5. Consider Christ's appearing to the ten disciples.—"When the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, then came Jesus and stood in the midst, saying to them, Peace be unto you." Before his appearing sorrow and fear had possessed all their spirits; sometimes they walked abroad and were sad; and sometimes they kept within, and shut the doors upon them as being exceedingly afraid. In this condition Jesus Christ, who knows best the times and seasons of grace and comfort, comes and stands in the midst of their assembly and thus salutes them, Peace be unto you. No sooner is he risen, but he wisheth peace to all his apostles; no sooner meets he with

them, but the very opening of his lips was with these words. However it is with us, peace or war; where Christ is King there is peace, and nothing but peace. Come, examine, art thou, O my soul, a member of this body, a subject of this kingdom? Hath the influence of Christ's peace, wrought and declared at his resurrection, any force on thee? Hast thou peace with God, and peace within, and peace without? Doth the Spirit assure thee, that Christ the Prince of peace, hath made peace and reconciliation between God and thee? "O! how beautiful upon the mountain would the feet of him be, that should publish peace, that should bring these good tidings, that thou art a citizen of that Jerusalem, where God is King, and Christ the Prince of peace! Where all the buildings are compact together, as a city that is at unity within itself!

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

What is there in Christ's resurrection, that should move our souls to desire it?

I answer, 1. Something in itself. 2. Something as in reference unto us.

1. There is something in itself.—Had we but a view of the glory, dignity, excellency of Christ as raised from the dead, it would put us on this heavenly motion. The object of desire is good, but the more excellent and glorious any good is, the more eager should our desires be: now Christ raised from the dead is an excellent object; the resurrection of Christ is the glorifying of Christ; yea, his glorifying took its beginning at his blessed resurrection; now it was that "God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name."

2. There is something in reference unto us. As, 1. "He rose again for our justification."—I grant, that Christ's death, and not his resurrection is the meritorious cause of our justification; but on the other side, Christ's resurrection and not his death is for the applying of our justification. As the stamp adds no virtue, nor real value to a piece of gold, but only makes it current, so the resurrection of Christ was no part of the price or satisfaction which Christ made to God, yet it is

that which applies all his merit, and makes it of force unto his members. "If Christ be not risen again, ye are yet in your sins, and your faith is vain." Remission of sin, (which is a part of our justification) though purchased by Christ's death, yet could not be applied to us, or be made ours, without Christ's resurrection; and in this respect, Oh! how desirable it is!

2. He rose again for our sanctification.—"He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together with Christ." If you would know how you that were blind in heart, uncircumcised in spirit, utterly unacquainted with the life of God, are now light in the Lord, affecting heavenly things, walking in righteousness; it comes from this blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are "quickened with Christ:" it is Christ's resurrection that raised our souls. "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the end of Christ's resurrection, that we should be new creatures, of new lives, new principles, new conversations.

3. He rose again for our resurrection to eternal life.—Christ is both the pattern and pledge of the resurrection of our bodies; "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." There is a virtue flowing from Christ to his saints, by which they shall be raised up at the latter day; not but that all the wicked shall be raised again by the power of Christ, as he is a judge; for "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and they shall come forth,"—yet with this difference,—"They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

4. He rose again for the assurance of our justification, sanctification, and salvation.—This is the reason why the apostle useth these words to prove the resurrection of Christ, "I will give you the sure mercies of David;" none of God's mercies had been sure to us, if Christ had not risen again from the dead. But now all is made sure; his work of redemption being fully finished, the mercy which thereupon depended, was now made certain, (and as the apostle speaks) "sure unto all the seed."

Methinks a thought of this object in respect of itself, and in respect of us, should put our souls into a longing frame! Is it not a desirable thing to see the King in his beauty? If Christ incarnate was the desire of all nations, how much more is Christ in his glory? O my soul, that thy portion may be with theirs who have right and title to this blessed resurrection of Jesus Christ. O that thou wert on the wing in thy desires after Christ! O that feelingly thou knewest him, and the power of his resurrection! that thou wert resolved to give no sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, until thou could say, "Christ's resurrection is mine!"

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

We may examine the firmness of our hope in Christ's resurrection by these signs.

1. If Christ's resurrection be mine, then is Christ's death mine.—The fruits of Christ's death and resurrection cannot be severed: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Mortification and vivification are twins of one and the same Spirit, Depart from evil, and do good.—"Cease to do evil, learn to do well." As there cannot be a resurrection before a man die; so there cannot be a resurrection to a new life, but there must be a separation of the soul from the body of sin. Come search, try, examine, Hast thou any share in Christ's passion? Knowest thou the fellowship of his sufferings? Art thou made conformable to his death, that as he died for sin, so thou diest to sin?

2. If Christ's resurrection be mine, then is Christ's Spirit mine.—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, then he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, (and I may add your immortal souls) by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Christ's Spirit (if Christ's resurrection be ours) will have the same operation and effect in our souls, that it had in his body; as it raised

up the one, so it will raise up the other; as it quickened the one, so it will quicken the other.

3. If Christ's resurrection be mine, then am I planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection; then am I made conformable to Christ in his resurrection.—Now if we would know wherein that resemblance is, the apostle tells us, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Our mortification is a resemblance of Christ's death, and our vivification is a resemblance of Christ's resurrection.

O my soul, try the growth of thy vivification, by these signs. Art thou led on to the exercise of new graces, adding grace to grace? Dost thou find new degrees of the self-same grace? Is thy love more hot? Thy faith more firm? All thy boughs more laden with the fruits of righteousness? Are thy duties more spiritual? Are thy ends more raised to aim at God, to sanctify him, and to debase thyself? Art thou more rooted in Christ? In all thy duties and graces hast thou learned habitually to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me?" Come, search, try; it may be, little winds have formerly shaken thee; but thy root is struck lower and lower into Christ; and now thou art not so soon shaken with every wind; surely thy hope is well grounded; thou hast a part in Christ's resurrection.

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

O my soul, look to the main design of Christ in his rising again, and set thy faith on work to draw it down into thy soul. But here is the question, how should I manage my faith to draw down the virtue of Christ's resurrection for my vivification? I answer.

1. Go to the well-head, look into the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—This one act contains in it these particulars; 1. That I must go out of myself to something else; that is, that check that lies upon the work of grace, to keep out pride, that faith sees the whole good of the soul in a principle extraneous, even the springs of Jesus. 2. That I must attribute all that I am to Jesus Christ, and to the effectual working of his grace. "By the grace of God,

I am what I am;" and "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." The life of grace springs only from the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and therefore, as I must deny myself, so I must attribute all to him from whom it comes. 3. I must lie at his feet with an humble dependance upon him, and him alone for the supplies of grace: this was the apostle's practice, "O that I may be found in him! O that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection! O that by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead!" Christ is the fountain of life, but faith is the means of life; the power and original of life is entirely reserved to Jesus Christ, but faith is the bond on our part, whereby we are tied unto Christ, and live in Christ; and thus saith Christ himself; "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live."

Pray therefore for an increase of faith; complain to Christ that thou canst not believe as thou wouldst, and act thy faith vigorously on Christ's resurrection for a further degree of quickening. Christ is an everflowing fountain, and he would have believers to partake abundantly of what is in him. He cannot abide that any should content themselves with a present stock of grace. He is not as a stream that fails, or as a channel that runs dry. No, Christ is the fountain of life. I know there are other means of Christ's appointment, but if thou wilt live at the spring, drink in there, yea drink abundantly, according to the overflowing of this fountain.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

As the angel said to the woman, "Remember how he spake, when he was yet in Galilee," so say I to thee, remember how he spake while he was yet on earth; surely "his lips like lilies dropped sweet smelling myrrh."

1. In his appearing to Mary.—Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Were not those kind words? How often hath thy heart sighed out complaints, "O where is he whom my soul loveth? I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you

find my beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love." And then was not Christ seen in the mount? Was not thy extremity his opportunity? Did he not bespeak thy comforts with these words, "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? What wouldst thou have that I can give thee? And what dost thou want that I cannot give thee? If any thing in heaven or earth will make thee happy, it is all thine own? Wouldst thou have pardon? Thou shalt have it; I freely forgive thee all the debt. Wouldst thou have myself? Behold I am thine, thy friend, thy Lord, thy husband, thy head, thy God." Were not these thy Lord's reviving words? Were not these healing, quickening passages of Christ's love?

2. In his appearing to the ten.—"Jesus stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Lo, here more words of love; in midst of their trouble Christ stands in the midst, speaking peace to their souls. And hath not Christ done the like to thee? Hast thou not many and many a time been in troubles, that thou knewest not which way to turn thee? And even then, hath not Christ come to thy spirit with an olive branch of peace, saying to thy restless soul, "Peace and be still?" And more than so, hath he not filled thee with joy and peace in believing?

I might thus go on to consider other passages in other apparitions, but are not these enough to draw thy love? O what love was this! That Christ, after his resurrection, should converse with men forty days! Worthy he was after so many sorrows, sufferings, reproaches; after so cruel, ignominious, and bitter a death, immediately to have gone in triumph to glory; and for the confirmation of his disciples' faith, he might have commanded the angels to have preached his resurrection. But he himself would stay in person, he himself would make it out by many infallible proofs that he was risen again; he himself would, by his own example, teach us a lesson of love, of meekness, of patience, in waiting after sufferings for the reward.

Methinks a few of these passages should set all our hearts on a flame of love! O if the love of Christ were in us, it would make us wholly to despise this world;

nay, it would be so strong and ardent, that we should not be able freely to think on any thing else but Jesus Christ; we should not then fear contempt, or the reproaches of men; we should not then fear death, or the grave, or hell, or devils, but we should sing in triumph, "O death! Where is thy sting? O grave! Where is thy victory?—Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

A Christian estate should be a joyful and comfortable estate: none have such cause of joy as the children of Zion: And why so? A thousand reasons might be rendered; but here is one, "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." A commemoration of Christ's resurrection hath ever been a means of rejoicing in God.

What possibly can be the condition of thy soul wherein thou mayest not draw sweet from Christ's resurrection?

Is thy conscience in trouble for sin? "The answer of a good conscience towards God, is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Art thou afraid of condemnation? "He was delivered for our offences, and he was raised again for our justification." Dost thou question thy regeneration? "He hath begotton us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Art thou distressed, persecuted and troubled on every side? The apostle tells thee wherein consists thy confidence; "We always bear about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might also be made manifest in our body. For we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Art thou afraid of death, hell, and the power of the grave? Remember that Christ is risen from the dead, and by his resurrection death is swallowed up in victory; so that now thou mayest sing, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Now thanks be to God

which hath given us victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Away, away all doubtful thoughts! Consider what joys were of old at the foresight of Christ's resurrection; but especially what joy was all the world over, when he rose again from the dead. Then came the angels from heaven, and appeared in white. "Then the disciples were exceeding glad, when they saw the Lord." All the primitive saints were affected with this news, and because of it, with the very day on which Christ rose. Certainly, the Lord's day was in high esteem with the ancient church, and the principal motive was because of Christ's resurrection from the dead. O spend more of this day in spiritual rejoicing, especially in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, (yea, and of the whole work of redemption) or else you will not answer the institution of the Lord.

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Let us pray that Christ's resurrection may be ours, and that we may be more and more assured of it.—Let us say with the apostle, "O that I may know him and the power of his resurrection." O that the Spirit of holiness, which quickened Christ from the dead, would by the same glorious power, beget holiness, and faith, and love, and all other graces in my soul! O that Christ would by his resurrection, apply his active and passive obedience to me! O that he would be to me the Lord of the living, and Prince of life; that he would overcome in me the death of sin, and that he would regenerate, quicken, and fashion me by the power of godliness to become like himself.

Let us praise God for Christ's resurrection, and for all the privileges flowing from it.—Christ is risen, and by his resurrection he hath justified, sanctified, quickened, saved our souls; and therefore "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Surely God requires a thousand hallelujahs! Here is fuel enough; the Lord kindle a fire in every one of our hearts to burn out all our lusts, and to enflame all our hearts with a love to

Jesus Christ. "Now blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

In this particular I shall examine, 1. Wherein we must conform? and 2. What are the means of this conformity on our parts?

For the first, Wherein we must conform? I answer in a word, in our vivification. Christ's resurrection was to newness of life; it was a new life, a life different from that which he lived before, and so is our vivification a new life.

1. It is a life of a new principle.—Before vivification, our principle was the flesh; but now we have a new principle, a Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of God.

2. It is a life of a new income.—I mean of a saving income, as of grace, power and light. Before vivification there was no such income: a man before his conversion might hear, and pray, and do all duties; but alas! he feels no virtue, no communion with Christ. After vivification, thou wilt in the use of ordinances frequently feel the saving incomes of God. In prayer, thou wilt feel the Spirit carrying up thy soul above itself; in hearing the word, thou wilt see the windows of heaven set open, and all manner of spiritual comforts showered down upon thee; in meditation of the promises, thou wilt find quickenings, encouragings, filling thy heart with gladness, and thy mouth with praises.

3. It is a life of another kind.—Before vivification we were dead in sin, whilst alive, but after vivification we live a spiritual life, a heavenly life, an immortal life. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." The body indeed is subject to corporal death, through the remainder of sin; but the Spirit is life, here, and shall be life hereafter, even for ever. And herein is our vivification answerable to Christ's resurrection, "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the

Father, raised up to a new life, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

For the second question, What are the means of this conformity or vivification which we must use on our parts? I shall answer herein both to the state and growth of our vivification.

1. Wait and attend upon God in the ministry of the word; this is a mean whereby Christ ordinarily effecteth this vivification.—By this means it is that dead souls are quickened: the ministry of the word is the trumpet of Jesus Christ, when that sounds, who knows but he may quicken the dead? Hearken therefore to this word of God.

2. Act faith upon the Lord Jesus as to justification.—As is the clearness and fixedness of our souls in bottoming ourselves on Christ for righteousness; so will be our quickness, and successful progress in the work of holiness.

3. Trace every ordinance, and every duty for the appearings of the Son of God.—Be much in prayer, hearing, reading, and fellowship with the saints; be much in secret conversings with God, in meditation, enquiries and searchings; and (which is a precious work) be much in diligent watching of, and listening to the workings, and intimations of the Spirit of God; be much in observing the methods, and interpreting the meanings and language of God in all his secret dispensations with the soul. Certainly there will be abundance of the life of God conveyed to him that walks in these paths. O for a spirit of prayer, meditation; for a spirit swallowed up in communion with God! "Thou meetest him that worketh righteousness, and those that remember thee in thy ways."

4. Look much at Christ raised, Christ glorified.—Christ's resurrection was the beginning of his glory, and therein is comprehended both the glory that draws desires towards Christ, and the grace and power that establisheth faith in its dependance. Could we but keep our hearts in a more constant view, and believing meditation of the glory of Christ, our faces would certainly bring some beams of divinity with them from the mount.

The very beholding of Christ hath a mighty virtue to leave the impressions of glory upon our spirits.

5. Walk as we have Christ Jesus for an example.—This example of Christ, yields much to our vivification. Who can deny but that acting with the pattern ever in one's eye is very advantageous? Come then, and if we would live the life of God, let us live as Christ lived after his resurrection.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS ASCENSION, SESSION, AND MISSION OF HIS SPIRIT.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

Of Christ's ascension. Of Christ's session at God's right hand. Of the time and persons to whom the Holy Ghost was sent. Of the manner how the Holy Ghost was sent. Of the measure of the Holy Ghost now given, and the reasons why he was sent.

OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

THE ascension of Christ contains in it a great part of the salvation of our souls. In prosecution of this, I shall refer to several particulars.

1. That he ascended.—The prophets foresaw it; "I saw in the night-visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." The evangelists relate it; "He was received up into heaven. He was carried up into heaven." The eleven witness it: "For while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." The holy angels speak it; "For while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by

them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The apostles in their epistles confirm it; "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,—he that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens." "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him."

2. How he ascended.—He ascended, blessing his apostles. "While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. It is some comfort to Christ's ministers, that though the world hate them, Christ doth bless them; yea, he parted with them in a way of blessing; as Jacob leaving the world, blessed his sons, so Christ leaving the world, blessed his apostles and all the faithful ministers of Christ, unto the end of the world.

He ascended visibly in the view of the apostles.—"While they beheld, he was taken up." He was not suddenly snatched from them, as Elijah was; nor secretly and privily taken away as Enoch was; but in the presence of his apostles and disciples he ascended up into heaven.

He ascended principally by the mighty power of his Godhead.—Thus never any ascended up into heaven but Jesus Christ; for though Enoch and Elijah were assumed into heaven, yet not by their own power, nor by themselves; it was God's power by which they ascended, and it was by the help and ministry of angels.

He ascended in a cloud.—"While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Hereby he shews that he is Lord of all the creatures; he had already trampled upon the earth, walked upon the sea, vanquished hell or the grave, and now the clouds received him, and the heavens are opened to make way for this King of glory to enter in.

He ascended in triumph.—"When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." He led them captive,

who had captivated us. Death was led captive without a sting; hell was led captive as one that had lost her victory; the serpent's head being bruised, was led before him in triumph, as was Goliah's head by David returning from the victory; and this was the first act of his triumph.

3. Whither he ascended.—The gospel tells us into heaven: only Paul saith, that "he ascended far above all heavens." But the meaning is, he went above all these visible heavens, into those heavenly mansions where the angels and the spirits of the just have their abode.

4. Why he ascended.—The reasons are, on Christ's part, that through his passion he might pass to glory. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" On our part,

1. That in our stead he might triumph over sin, death and hell.—In his resurrection he conquered, but in his ascension he led sin, death and the devil in triumph at his chariot wheels.

2. That he might lead us the way, and open to us the doors of glory.

3. That he might assure us that he had now fulfilled all those offices which he was to perform here on earth for our redemption.

4. That he might thoroughly convince believers of their perfect righteousness.—"The Spirit when he comes (saith Christ) shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me, of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." If Christ had not fulfilled all righteousness there had been no going to heaven for him, nor remaining there; but his ascension to heaven proclaims openly, that he hath completely finished the work he had to do for us here; that God was well pleased with Jesus Christ, and with what he had done and suffered for us; that we have virtually our share in heaven with him. When Jesus entered into heaven, he seemed thus to challenge Justice, "Make room here for me and mine, Who should hinder? Hath the law any thing to say to these poor souls for whom I died? If any in heaven can make objection, here

I am to answer in their behalf." Methinks, I imagine a silence in heaven, (as John speaks) at this speech, only mercy smiles, justice gives in the acquittance, and God sets Christ down at his right hand. That he hath a new design to be acted in heaven for us; he is taken up into glory that he may act gloriously the second part of our righteousness, I mean that he might apply it, and send down his Spirit to convince us of it. Three great things Christ acts for us now in glory; He is in place of an advocate for us, "He liveth to intercede for us." He is the great provider for us; he is laying in a stock of glory for us against we come there; "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." He sends down his Spirit to convince us that Christ's righteousness is ours. Indeed the means of procuring this, was the life and death of Christ, but the means of applying this righteousness, are those following acts of Christ's resurrection, ascension, session, intercession. By his death, he obtained righteousness for us, but by his ascension, he applies righteousness to us.

OF CHRIST'S SESSION AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND.

2. For the session of Christ at God's right hand, I shall examine. 1. What is God's right hand? 2. What it is to sit there? 3. According to what nature doth Christ sit there? 4. Why is it that he sits at the right hand of God?

1. What is this right hand of God?—I answer, The right hand of God, is the majesty, dignity, dominion, power, and glory of God. "The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly,—Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power, thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

2. What it is to sit at the right hand of God?—I answer, it is not any corporal session at God's right hand, but the word is metaphorical, and borrowed from the custom of kings, who place those they honour, and to whom they commit the power of government at their right

hand. This sitting at God's right hand implies His glorious exaltation, and the actual administration of his kingdom.

Christ is exalted.—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." This session is the supreme dignity and glory given by the Father unto Christ after this ascension; this session is the peerless exaltation of the Mediator in his kingdom of glory. There was a time, when the office which Christ undertook for us made him a man of sorrow, but when he had finished that dispensation, then he was filled with glory; there was a time when the flowings of Christ's glory from that personal union was stayed and hindered, by special dispensation, for the working of our salvation; but when that miraculous stay was once removed, and the work of our redemption fully finished, then he was exalted beyond the capacity or comprehension of all the angels of heaven.

Christ reigns, or actually administers his glorious kingdom, and this is the principal part of Christ's sitting at God's right hand.—Some describe this session at God's right hand to be all one with his reigning in equal power and glory with the Father; but the Son hath always so reigned, and the Holy Ghost hath always so reigned, who yet is not said in scripture to sit at the right hand of the Father; I believe therefore, there is something in this session or reign of Christ, which doth difference it from that reigning power and glory of the Father, and of the Son as only God, and of the Holy Ghost; and if we would know what this is, I would call it an actual administration of his kingdom, or an immediate executing of his power and glory over every creature as mediator.

3. According to what nature is Christ said to sit at the right hand of God?—I answer, according to both natures; He sits at God's right hand as God; hereby his divinity was declared, and his kingdom is such, that none that is a mere creature can possibly execute. He sits at God's right hand as man too; hereby his humanity was exalted, and a power is given to Christ as man: "he hath given him power to execute judgment, in as much as he is the Son of man."

4. Why doth Christ sit at the right hand of God?—I answer, on Christ's part, that he might receive power and dominion over all the creatures; "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

On our part many reasons may be given. To this purpose he sits at God's right hand, that having now fulness of grace and glory in himself, he might be ready to communicate the same to his church, who are the members of his body; that he might give them grace here, and glory hereafter, when he shall deliver up his kingdom to his Father, and be all in all.

That he might be the object of divine adoration.—Then especially it was said and accomplished, "Let all the angels of God worship him; and let all men honour the Son, as they honour the Father."

3. That he might intercede for his saints.—"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum, we have such an high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not men. He is set on the right hand of God as an high-priest, or minister to intercede for us.

4. That true believers may assuredly hope by virtue of Christ's session, to sit themselves in the kingdom of glory.—Christ sitting in heaven is a very figure of us. Christ's person is the great model and first draught of all, that shall be done to his body, the saints; therefore he is said to be the captain of our salvation that leads us on; he is said to be our forerunner into glory. He breaks the clouds first, and appears first before God, he sits down first, and is glorified first, and then we follow.

5. That he might defend the church against her enemies, and at last destroy all the enemies of the church.

6. That he might send down the Holy Ghost.—To this purpose Christ told his disciples whilst he was yet on the earth, that he must ascend into heaven, and reign there. "It is expedient for you, that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him to you." Christ is now in heaven, and sits at God's right hand, that he may send us

his Spirit, by whose working we seek after heaven, and heavenly things, where now Christ sits.

OF THE TIME AND PERSONS TO WHOM THE HOLY GHOST WAS SENT.

It was an use among the ancients in days of great joy and solemnity, to send presents unto men; thus Christ, in the day of his majesty and inauguration, in that great and solemn triumph, "When he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Out of these words, I shall observe these particulars: the time when; the persons to whom; the manner how; the measure what; and the reasons why, the Holy Ghost was sent.

1. For the time when the holy Ghost was sent, it is said, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," this was a feast of the Jews so called because it was ever kept on the fiftieth day, after the second of the passover.—Fifty days were the appointed time of the Jews' harvest; their harvest being bounded as it were with two remarkable days, the one being the beginning, the other the end thereof. The beginning was the second of the passover; the end was the fiftieth day after, called the Pentecost. Upon the former they offered "a sheaf of the first-fruits of their harvest;" upon the Pentecost they offered "two wave-loaves." The sheaf being offered, all the after-fruits throughout the land were sanctified; and the two loaves being offered, it was a sign of the harvest ended; and now we find, that as there were fifty days between the second of the passover and the Pentecost, so there were fifty days between Christ's resurrection, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost.

2. For the persons to whom the Holy Ghost was sent,

it is said, "to all that were with one accord in one place."—Who they were it is not here exprest, yet from the former chapter we may conjecture, they were "the twelve apostles, together with Joseph called Barsabas, and the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren." These all continued with one accord in one place, for so was Christ's command, "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, Ye have heard of me." This was the great promise of the Old Testament, that Christ should partake of our human nature, and it was the great promise of the New Testament, that we should partake of his divine nature: he was clothed with our flesh according to the former, and we are invested with his Spirit according to the latter promise. For this promise the apostles and others, had long waited, and for the accomplishment they were now fitted and disposed.

OF THE MANNER HOW THE HOLY GHOST WAS SENT.

1. He came suddenly.—Which either shews the majesty of the miracle, or the truth of it; there could be no imposture in it, when the motion of it was sudden; or the purpose of the miracle, which was to awake and affect them to whom it came; usually sudden things startle us, and make us look up. We may learn to receive those holy motions of the Spirit, which sometimes come suddenly, and we know not how; I am persuaded the man breathes not amongst us Christians, that sometimes feels not the movings and breathings of the Spirit of God. O that men would take the wind while it blows; and the water while the angel moves it; as not knowing when it will, or whether ever it will blow again.

2. He came from heaven.—The place seems here to commend the gift; as from earth, earthly things arise; so from heaven, heavenly, spiritual, and eternal things.

3. He came down from heaven like a wind.—Of all bodily things, the wind comes nearest to the nature of a spirit; it is quick and active as the Spirit is. But more

especially the Holy Ghost is compared to a wind in respect of its irresistible workings; as nothing can resist the wind, so nothing can resist the Spirit of God. Again, the Holy Ghost is compared to wind, in respect of its free actings, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and so the Spirit bloweth where it listeth; who can give any reason why the Spirit breathes so sweetly on Jacob, and not on Esau; on Peter, and not on Judas?

4. He came like "a rushing mighty wind."—As the wind is sometimes of that strength, that it rends in sunder mountains and rocks, so are the operations of the Holy Spirit; it takes down all before it; it made a conquest of the world, beginning at Jerusalem, and spreading itself over all the earth.

5. He filled all the house where they were sitting.—All the men and women (an hundred and twenty) in this room were visited from on high, for the Holy Ghost came upon them, and dwelt in them. It filled all the house where *they were sitting*; to signify, that all the other houses in Jerusalem felt none of this mighty rushing wind. Have we not sometimes the experience of this in our congregations? One sound is heard, one breath doth blow, and it may be, one here, and another there, shall feel the Spirit, shall be affected with it sensibly; but twenty on this side them, and forty on that side them sit all becalmed, and go their way no more moved than when they came into God's presence. O that this Spirit of the Lord would come daily and constantly into our congregations! O that it would fill every soul in the assembly with the breath of heaven! "Come, holy Spirit; awake O north-wind, and come thou south-wind, and blow upon our gardens, that the spices thereof may flow out."

6. He came down in the form of tongues.—The apostles were not only inspired, for their own benefit, but they had gifts bestowed on them to impart the benefit to more than themselves. But why did the Holy Ghost appear like tongues? I answer,

The tongue is the sole instrument of knowledge, which conveys the same from man to man; though the soul be

the fountain from whence all wisdom springs, yet the tongue is the channel whereby this wisdom is communicated. In like manner the Holy Ghost is the sole teacher of all truth; though Christ be the wisdom of God, yet the Holy Ghost is the teacher of this wisdom to men; and hence it is that the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of tongues. They were "cloven tongues," to signify, that the apostles should speak in divers languages; if there must be a calling of the Gentiles they must needs have the tongues of the Gentiles wherewith to call them. They were fiery tongues, to signify, that there should be an efficacy, or fervour in their speaking; the world was so overwhelmed with ignorance and error, that the apostles' lips had need to be touched with a coal from the altar. O that we of the ministry had these fiery tongues! May we not fear that the Spirit is gone, whilst the people are dead, and we are no more lively in our ministry?

OF THE MEASURE OF THE HOLY GHOST NOW GIVEN, AND THE REASONS WHY HE WAS SENT.

That this was the time of the coming of the HolyGhost, is very plain; but that the Holy Ghost was not given before this time, we cannot say, certainly the prophets spake by him, and the apostles had him, not only when they were first called, but more fully when "he breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost." So that if ye study the reconciliation of these things, I know not any way better than to put it on the measure, or degrees of the Spirit's mission.—Before this they were gently breathed on, and refreshed with a small gale; but now they were all blown upon with a mighty wind. At first, he was sent only in drops and dew, but now he was poured out in showers in abundance. "The Holy Ghost (saith Paul) was shed on us abundantly."

For the reasons why the Holy Ghost was sent, they are several:

1. That all the prophecies, concerning this mission might be accomplished.—Isaiah speaks of a time when "the Spirit should be poured upon us from on high, and

the wilderness should be a fruitful field." And Zachary prophesies, "In that day I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication." And Joel prophesies yet more expressly, "It shall come to pass, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." But of all the prophecies concerning the mission of the Holy Ghost, our Saviour gives the clearest and the most particular; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." It was of necessity that all these prophecies, and promises must be accomplished, and therefore was the Holy Ghost sent amongst us.

2. That the holy apostles might be furnished with gifts and graces suitable to their conditions, stations, places.—To this purpose, no sooner was the Spirit sent, but "they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They were filled with the Holy Ghost, not that they were before empty, but now they were more full of the Spirit than ever they were before, and "they spoke with other tongues;" other than ever they had learned. The wisdom and mercy of God is very observable herein, that the same means of divers tongues which was the destroying of Babel, should be the means conferred on the apostles to work the building of Sion.

3. That he might fill the hearts of all the saints, and make them temples and receptacles for the Holy Ghost. —"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own!" It is said, that after the

mighty rushing wind and cloven fiery tongues, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues." The Holy Ghost begins inward, and works outward; it first alters the mind, before it changes the speech. And thus for the daily ministrations, such must be appointed as were "full of the Holy Ghost." And Stephen is said to be "full of the Holy Ghost;" and Barnabas is called, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER II.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great Work of our Salvation in his ascension, session, and mission of the Spirit. Of considering—desiring—hoping in—believing in—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in that respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION, IN HIS ASCENSION, SESSION, AND MISSION OF THE SPIRIT.

HERE is an object of admiration indeed, the very angels at the sight of it, stood admiring and adoring! Come then, O my soul, and take a view of that which they admire. It concerns thee in particular; and therefore study close this argument, and know it for thyself. Study the ascension of Christ, how, and whether, and why he ascended. Study the session of Christ at God's right hand. Study the mission of the Holy Ghost; not a circumstance in it, but deserves thy study. What volumes have been written of physics, metaphysics, mathematics? And are not these subjects of more worth, and value, and benefit, than all those? There is not a line or expression of Christ in the Scripture, but it is matter enough for a whole age to comment on; thou needest not leave old principles for new discoveries, for in these very particulars thou mightest find successive sweetness unto all eternity.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Consider Christ's ascension into heaven.—Methinks souls should put themselves into the condition of the disciples, "when they looked stedfastly towards heaven as Christ went up." Gaze, O my soul, on this wonderful object. Thou needest not fear any check from

God or angels, so that thy contemplation be spiritual. No sooner had Christ finished his work of redemption here on earth, but on mount Olivet, he assembles with his disciples, where having given them commands, he begins to mount; and being a little lifted up into the air, presently a cloud receives him. Herein is a clear demonstration of his Godhead; clouds are usually in Scriptures put for the house, or temple of God himself. Christ in his ascension to heaven enters into a cloud; this was his chariot, led by thousands and ten thousands of his angels. But stay not thy contemplation in the cloud. He ascends yet higher, through the air, and through that heaven of fixed stars, nor stops till he comes to the gates of the imperial heaven. In all this triumphant march, some tell us of a heavenly harmony made by those quiristers of heaven, the blessed angels; and that this is the meaning of the Psalmist, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." In this meditation pass not over thy duty, "Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our King, sing praises." Thou hast cause, O my soul, to praise him, especially if thou considerest that Christ ascended not for himself, but for thee. It is God in our nature that is gone up to heaven. Thy interest is in this very ascension of Jesus Christ, and therefore dost thou consider thy head as soaring up? O let every member praise his name! And yet stay not by the way, but consider Christ being now arrived at heavens' doors, those heavenly spirits that accompanied him, began to say, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift up yourselves, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." To whom some of the angels that were within, not ignorant of his person, but admiring his majesty and glory, said again, "Who is the King of glory?" and then they answered, "The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle;" and thereupon those "twelve gates of the holy city, of the new Jerusalem," opened of their own accord, and Jesus Christ with all his ministering spirits entered in. O my soul, how should this heighten thy joy, and enlarge thy comforts. Every sight of Christ is glorious, and in every

sight thou shouldst wait on the Lord Jesus Christ for some glorious manifestations of himself.

2. Consider Christ's session at God's right hand.—No sooner was Christ entered into heaven, but he was brought before his heavenly Father, and a dominion given him above all creatures, yea above the hierarchy of all the angels. O the glory of Christ at his first entrance into glory! Immediately all the angels fell down and worshipped him; immediately his Father welcomed him with the highest grace that ever was yet shewn. "Come, (said he) Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies, thy footstool." O my soul, meditate on this session of Christ at God's right hand, and draw down some virtue, and sweetness into thyself. What? Was Christ exalted? Had he a name given him above every name? Walk then as becomes those that have so glorious a head. Defile not that nature which in thy Christ was so highly honoured!

3. Consider the mission of the Holy Ghost.—No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and gives gifts, yea the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost. O my soul, consider this princely gift of Christ. Such a gift was never before; but when God gave his Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son," and Christ so loved the world that he gave his Spirit. But, consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; "unto us a Son is given," saith the prophet, and "unto us the Holy Ghost is given," saith the apostle. And yet above all, consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself; was it not to make thee a temple of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while and admire the condescending, unspeakable love of Christ in this! If thou hast Christ, thou hast all things, and if thou hast the Spirit of Christ, thou hast Christ himself, not notionally, but really and essentially.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

What is the virtue of Christ's ascension, but that we might ascend? And what the virtue of Christ's session, but that we might sit down with him on his throne?

And what the virtue of the mission of his Spirit, but that we might partake of the Holy Ghost! Oh let these be the objects of our desires!

1. Let us see Christ ascending, and so desire to ascend with him.—When Christ ascended it was not merely for himself, but also in our stead. As the high priest ascending into the holy of holies, carried all the names of the twelve tribes on his breast; so Jesus Christ ascending into heaven, carried the names of all believers on his breast, thereby shewing they were likewise to come after him. How then should we long after him, and cry as Elisha after Elijah, when he saw him ascending, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" A desire after Christ and his ascension is the way to heaven; if thou wilt ascend after Christ, set thy desires upon Christ; if thou wilt arrive at true glory, breath after Christ ascending up into his glory.

2. Let us see Christ sitting down at the right hand of God, and so desire to sit with him.—When Christ sat down it was not in his own right simply, as it is his inheritance, but with relation to his members: "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." He sat down as a common person, thereby shewing that we were to sit down with him. "Him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." O my soul, desire after this, for this is worthy of thy desire: this is a great thing, a high exaltation. It consists in the image of God, and communion with God. Whatever thou givest or deniest, Lord, give me this, and I have enough for ever.

3. Let us see Christ's mission of his Holy Spirit, and desire a share in that gift.—We cannot expect to sit with Christ, but we must have the Spirit of Christ. Consider, O my soul, all things here below are either temporal or spiritual; and of things spiritual, this is the sum, "the indwelling of the Spirit." O Lord give me thy Spirit, and thou canst not but with him give me all things.

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

This was the apostle's prayer, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing: that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Could we abound in hope that Christ's ascension, session, and mission of the Spirit did belong to us, we should never be ashamed. O, then let us look to our hope, and be sure that it be of the right stamp, which in reference to each of these passages we may examine thus.

1. If Christ's ascension be mine, then am I ascended with Christ.—We may ascend into heaven by faith, and love, though for the present we are on earth; "If ye be risen with Christ, seek these things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." If Christ our head be ascended, then we that are his members, must follow after him in our affections. Christ tells us, "Where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also." If Christ our treasure be ascended into heaven, our affections, our hearts will follow after him; and if our hearts be in heaven, we ourselves, both souls and bodies shall at last ascend.

2. If Christ's session be mine, then am I set down with Christ in heavenly places.—I mean not bodily, but by faith, which faith makes it as sure to my soul, as if I had a foot already in heaven. The apostle saith of Christ, "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour," and so we may be sure the thing is as good as done, for if he be above, all must come under. In like manner we see not ourselves in present possession, but we see Christ crowned, and ourselves sitting with him virtually; and therefore at last we shall see ourselves actually crowned, and sitting together with Christ in heavenly places.

3. If Christ's Spirit be mine, and sent to me, then have I both the person, and train of the Spirit of Christ.—It is the having the Spirit, and the working of the Spirit in me, that is my evidence of the Spirit's mission; I look upon this as the greatest question, and the weightiest case of conscience that can be proposed,—Whether the Spirit

of Christ doth reside in us? "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God (saith the apostle) and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And again, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" In this he seems to put it out of question, that true Christians know, that the Spirit of God dwells in them; if we know not this, we cannot know that we have any part in Christ, because the Holy Spirit is the principal bond of our union; if we know not this, we cannot know that we are justified, for we have nothing to do with Christ's righteousness by which we are justified, until by our spiritual union, Christ is made ours. If we know not this, we cannot know we are the adopted children of God, for it is the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, Father." If we know not this, we cannot know that we are sanctified, for it is the Spirit which is the beginner and perfecter of our sanctification. If we know not this, we cannot know that our prayers are heard, for it is "the Spirit that helps our infirmities, and that makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." If we know not this, we cannot know whether we are in error or truth, for it is the Spirit who enlightens us, and leadeth us into all truth. If we know not this, we cannot know our own comforts, for he is the only true comforter. Come then, and let us search whether we have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us.

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Faith should eye Christ as far as he goes; if he be ascended, so should faith; if he go into glory, and sit down there, and act there for his people, so should faith: it is not enough to have only a faith of justification, but of glorification. O come then let us see Christ in heaven, and we can have no less than a glorious faith! We are still in the lower form; many of us take in no more of Christ than what was done on the cross; we seldom follow Christ into heaven, to see what he is doing there for us. O my soul, mount up and be on the wing, and eye the meaning of Christ in all his doings. Now the ends of Christ's accension, session, and mission of his Spirit were several; I shall instance only these few.

1. Christ ascended that we might ascend.—Look whatever God acted on Christ's person, that he did as in our behalf, and he means to act the same on us. Was Christ crucified? so are we. Is Christ risen again? So are we risen together with him. Is Christ gone up into glory? so are we: heaven is now opened and possessed by Jesus Christ for us, and at last we shall ascend even as he ascended. How should faith pry into this? As we must go through all ordinances and creatures till we come to Christ, so through all conditions of Christ until we come to glory.

2. Christ sat down that we might sit with him in heavenly places. In this height of glory, Christ is the pattern of what we shall be. O how should faith stand and gaze on Jesus Christ in this respect? What, is he on God's right-hand? and is he there preparing a mansion for my soul? Admire, O my soul, this aim of Christ. The meaning of his exalting himself was to exalt thee, and the meaning of his exalting thee on this manner, is to manifest to all the world what the Son of God is able to do, in raising so poor a creature to so rich a glory.

3. Christ sent down the Holy Ghost, that he might help us to cry "Abba, Father," and make us to come boldly to the throne of grace.—It is the Spirit that takes us by the hand, and leads us to the Father, when others stand at a distance, and cannot come near. Though others are kept out by officers and guards, yet the adopted child, who hath received the Spirit of adoption, can say, "Make way there, and let me come to my Father; guards are appointed to keep out strangers, but not sons."

4. Christ sent down the Holy Ghost also that he might guide us into all truth.—I mean into all necessary, saving truths. In this respect we have need of the Spirit in these days. He it is that dictates to us which is the true religion: he it is that transcribes upon our hearts, that which was before only written in our books: he it is that not only reveals truth from without, but imprints it also on the soul, as a man doth a seal by impressing it on the wax. As the written word is the testimony without us, so are these impressions of the

Spirit the testimony within us, by which we may know every necessary truth as it is in Jesus. Men may take from us our Bibles, our teachers, our friends; or imprison us where we cannot enjoy them; but they cannot take from us the Spirit of Christ. This witness within, is a permanent, settled, and standing witness; O! what an excellent help is here, that a poor Christian hath beyond all the furniture of the most learned men that want this testimony of the Spirit of Christ? Surely this advantage will exceedingly furnish us against all temptations to any error, that is plainly contrary to the essentials of religion.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Two things I shall instance, which may be as the load-stones of our love to Christ: the first is his glory, and the second his bounty.

1. His glory.—No sooner was he ascended, and set down at God's right hand, but John had a sight of him, and O what a glorious sight! "He was clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters; and he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun that shineth in his strength." When John saw him thus, he swoons at his feet, but Christ for all his glory holds his head, saying, "Fear not, I am the first, and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell, and of death." A glorious Christ, is good for dying sinners! Would sinners but draw near, and see this King in the chariot of love, he would certainly draw their souls unto him. Nay, were all the damned in hell brought up with their fiery chains to the door of heaven, and permitted to behold the throne, and the Lamb, and the glorified spirits clothed in white, with crowns of gold on their heads, and palms in their

hands, singing the eternal praises of their King: how would they be sweetened in their pain, and ravished with the fulness of those joys and pleasures that are in Christ's face for evermore! O who can think of the glory that is in this delightful one, and not be swallowed up in love? Who can think of Christ's sitting at God's right hand, and sparkling in his glory, and not love him with the whole heart, soul and might!

2. His bounty.—No sooner was he ascended, and set down at God's right hand, but he gives gifts unto men, and sends down the Holy Ghost. O my soul, how shouldst thou but love Christ, the great emperor of heaven and earth! It was he that gave thee his Spirit; it was he that "took of the Spirit which is upon him, and put it upon thee." And doth not the dignity of Christ enhance the value of the gift? As all gifts are signs of love, so the love of a great personage, and the gifts issuing from such a love, ought more to be accounted than any gifts of any meaner person whatsoever. Again what greater gift had Christ in store, than to give his own Spirit? The Spirit proceedeth from him, and is the same essence with himself. The Spirit is the third person of the true and only God-head, proceeding from the Father, and the Son, and co-eternal, co-equal, and consubstantial with the Father, and the Son. O the bonds of love that are upon man towards Christ in this respect! Come, my soul, and take a view of the glory and bounty of Jesus Christ! If thy heart be not iron, how shouldst thou choose but love. If either beauty or bounty, if either majesty, or magnificence can draw thy affection, Christ will have it, for in him is all.

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

How should it heighten my joys, and enlarge my comforts, when I consider that Christ is ascended into glory!—By this it is evident, that Christ is accepted of the Father for me, or otherwise, he should never have been received into heaven. I need not doubt of my acceptance at the throne of grace, when Jesus Christ is accepted for me, and that I stand in such a relation of Jesus Christ.

How should it heighten my joys and enlarge my comforts, when I consider that Christ is set down at God's right hand!—Now he hath the keys of heaven delivered into his hands. Now, he is in a capacity of acting all his love to me in the most glorious way. He is highly advanced, and thereby he hath the advantage to advance me, and to glorify me. O what joy may enter into this poor, dark, disconsolate soul of mine, whilst I but think over these glorious passages of Christ in glory.

How should it heighten my joys, when I consider that Christ hath sent down his Holy Spirit into my heart!—O what comfort is this, to know that the Spirit of Christ is my inmate; that my soul is the temple of the Spirit of God; that Christ is in me of a truth, and that not only by the infusion of his grace, but by the indwelling of his Spirit! O my soul, lay aside thy sad complaints, and forget this earth and earthly troubles. Look up to Jesus Christ, and rejoice in him who hath done all this for thy salvation. Either the Spirit of God is not thy Comforter, or thou canst not but receive comfort in these passages.

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Let us pray that we may have our part in these transactions; or let us pray for more and more assurance thereof unto our souls; for though we do believe, yet we may not be without our doubts, and in case of doubts, what better means than prayer?

2. Praise God for these great transactions of his Son.—Are they not mercies like mountains lying one upon another, and reaching up to the very heavens? Did not love break out at first in a direct line, and as it went along, hath it not wound up itself, in such a variety of unthought of discoveries, as amazeth men and angels? "Now bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

OF CONFORMING UNTO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

A serious beholding of Jesus in his ascension, session,

and mission of his Spirit, is enough to change us into the same image from glory to glory. It was the saying of an experienced saint, "View a glorified Christ, see him as in that relation and condition, and you will soon have the sparkles of the same glory in your hearts." Christ is now exalted, he is now in glory at the right hand of God; O let all our actings be glorious! let all our walkings, joys, breathings, be as in glory. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." For this purpose,

1. Let us watch opportunities for heavenly exercises.—God now by his ministers calls, "Come ye to the waters; come, buy wine and milk without money; come to me, and your souls shall live. Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." Whilst ministers call, and we live under the droppings of the word, these are opportunities for heaven. O then, he that never prayed, let him now pray; and he that never heard, let him now hear. The Lord is now come near to us; Christ Jesus is calling, and mercy is entreating, and love is beseeching, and wisdom is crying after us.

2. Take heed of resting in the formality of duties.—Many souls that have enlightenings of conscience, dare not but take opportunities for heavenly duties; but then comes in the temptations of the devil, and corruptions of their own hearts, and they say, now duty is done, our task is over, and what needs more? Alas, it is not what have we done, but where have we been. Have our souls been in heaven, with God and with Christ? Have we had any communion with the Father, and with the Son in our duties? O take heed of formality: it will exceedingly hinder our conversation in heaven. Ask in duty, what affections have been acted? How much are we got nearer heaven thereby? And by this means we shall come to a heavenly conversation.

3. Let us look up unto Jesus, as hanging on the cross, and as sitting on the throne.—This is the apostle's rule, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured

the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." These two are the objects of a Christian's look, who studies an heavenly conversation,—Christ's cross, and Christ's session; by the cross he is the author, and by the throne he is the finisher of our faith: in the first, is set down his love to us; in the second, is set down our hope of him. Come then, and settle your thoughts and look on this blessed object. A sight of Christ's cross, but especially of Christ's throne, is a blessed mean to wean us from the world, and to elevate our affections to things above.

4. Let us wait for the appearing of Jesus Christ.—"Our conversation is in heaven, (saith the apostle,) from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Where his expectations are, there a man's conversation will be; if we expect ere long that the Lord Jesus will appear in glory, and that we shall see him, not with other, but with these same eyes, the very waiting for these things, will help our conversation to be heaven-ward. Certainly the day is coming, when Jesus Christ shall come with his angels in his glory, and then shall the bodies of the saints, shine gloriously before the face of God and Jesus Christ. O the wonder of this day! The glory of Christ shall then darken the glory of the sun, but my body shall not be darkened, but rather shall shine like the glorious body of Jesus Christ. O let me wait for this; let me look for it every day! God hath but a little work for me here on earth, and when that is done, this shall be my condition.

5. Let us observe the drawings and movings of the Spirit, and follow his dictates.—To this purpose Christ ascended, and sat down at God's right hand, and sent down the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Ghost being come down, he might do his office in bringing on our souls towards salvation; and if ever our souls get above this earth, and get acquainted with this living in heaven, it is the Spirit of God that must be as the chariot of Elijah, yea, the very living principle by which we must move and ascend. O then take heed of quenching its motions, or resisting its workings! Take heed of grieving our guide, or knocking off the chariot wheels of this Holy

Spirit. We little think how much the life of grace, and the happiness of our souls depend upon our ready and cordial obedience to the Spirit of God: when he forbids us, and we will go on, when he tells us which is the way, and we will not regard; no wonder if we are strangers to a heavenly conversation. If we will not follow the Spirit, while it would draw us to Christ, how should it lead us to heaven, or bring our hearts into the presence of God? O let us learn this lesson, and let not only the motions of our bodies, but also the very thoughts of our hearts be at the Spirit's beck. If we cherish these motions, and hearken to the Spirit, what a help should we find it to heavenly conversation?

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS INTERCESSION.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

What the intercession of Christ is. To whom and for whom Christ's intercession is made. Wherein the intercession of Christ consists. How powerful Christ's intercession is with God.

WHAT THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST IS.

WE have spoken of Christ's entrance into heaven, and of his immediate actings after his entrance there; that transaction which yet remains and will remain until his coming again, is his intercession for his saints. In these actings of Christ in heaven, (if we will follow him) we must go from glory to glory. No sooner come we out of one room of glory, but presently we step into another, as glorious as that before. In prosecution of this, as in the former, I shall first lay down the object, and secondly, direct you how to look upon it. The object is Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his intercession: in ordering of which I shall examine several particulars:

What is the intercession of Christ?—Christ's intercession is his gracious will, fervently and immoveably desiring, that for the perpetual virtue of his sacrifice, all his members might both or their persons and

duties, be accepted of the Father. I call the intercession of Christ his own gracious will; for we must not imagine, that Christ in his intercession prostrates himself upon his knees before his Father's throne, uttering some submissive form of words; that is not beseeming the majesty of him that sits at God's right hand. When he was yet on earth, the substance of his requests for his saints ran thus, "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." And much more now he is in heaven is this the form of his intercessions. The foundation of Christ's intercession is, the sacrifice or death of Christ; and hence we make two parts of Christ's oblation; the one expiatory, when he suffered upon the cross; the other presentatory, when he doth appear in heaven before God for us: the one was finished on earth, when Christ suffered without the gate; the other is performed in heaven, now Christ is within the city: the one was a sacrifice indeed, the other is not so much a sacrifice as the commemoration of a sacrifice: the first was an act of humiliation, and this latter is an act of glory: the first was for the obtaining of redemption, and this latter is for the application of redemption. The matter interceded for, is, "that all the saints, and their services, might find acceptance with God." By Christ's intercession his satisfaction is applied to our persons, and the defect of our duties is covered and removed; and both we and our works are approved and accepted of God the Father.

Christ intercedes according to both natures. According to his humanity, partly by appearing before his Father in heaven, and partly by his desiring our salvation. "Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." According to his deity, partly by applying the merit of his death, and partly by willing the salvation of his saints; and as the effect thereof, by making request in the hearts of the saints with sighs unspeakable; "Elect, through sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This sprinkling is the applying of the blood of Jesus, and that is an act of intercession. Again, "Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me be with me

where I am;" he desires as a man, but he wills as God, and as the effect of this he gives the Spirit; "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." But what are the intercessions of the Spirit to the intercessions of Christ? I answer, much every way; the Spirit's intercessions are as the effect, and Christ's intercessions are as the cause; the Spirit's intercessions are as the echo, and Christ's intercessions are as the first voice; the Spirit intercedes for men, in and by themselves, but Christ intercedes in his own person.

TO WHOM AND FOR WHOM CHRIST'S INTERCESSION IS MADE.

Christ's intercession is directed immediately to God the Father; "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In the work of intercession are three persons, a party offended, a party offending, and the intercessor distinct from them both: the party offended is God the Father; the party offending is sinful man; and the intercessor is Jesus Christ. I deny not but Christ's intercession, is made to the whole Trinity, but yet immediately, and directly to the first person, and in him to the rest.

This intercession is made, in one sense for the world; so Christ upon the cross, prayed for the bloody Jews, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." But in a particular manner for every faithful man. As the high priest went into the sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, so Christ entered into the holiest of all, with the names of all believers upon his heart, and still he carries them upon his breast, and presents his will and desire unto his Father for them; nor doth he only intercede in general, but whatever thy name is, John, Peter, Thomas, Mary, Martha, if thou art a believer, Christ prays for thee. It is our common practice to desire the prayers of one another; but, O who would not have a share in the prayers of Jesus Christ? Why, certainly if thou believest in Christ, Christ prays for thee.

WHEREIN THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST CONSISTS.

1. Christ's intercession consists, in the presenting of his person for us.—He himself went up to heaven, and presented himself. The apostle calls this, "an appearing for us; Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." But how appears he for us? I answer, 1. In a public manner; whatsoever he did in this kind he did it openly and publicly. He appears for us in the presence of God the Father; he appears for us in the presence of his saints and angels: heaven's eyes are all upon him in his appearing for us. 2. He appears for us as a Mediator: he stands in the middle between God and us; hence it is that he is God-man, that he might be a Mediator between God and man. 3. He appears for us as a sponsor and a pledge: surely it is a comfort to a man to have a friend at court that may own him, and appear for him; but if this friend be both a mediator to request for him, and a surety to engage for him; what a comfort is this! And thus Christ appeared in every respect.

2. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of his wounds, death and blood, as a public satisfaction for the debt of sin; and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.—We read in the law, "that when the high priest went within the vail, he took the blood of the bullock, and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat he sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times." Surely these were "patterns of things to be done in the heavens." Christ that was slain without the gate, carried his own blood into the heaven of heavens; "for by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." And thither come, he sprinkles it (as it were) upon the mercy-seat,—he applies it, and obtains mercy by it. By the blood of Christ, God's mercy and justice are reconciled in themselves, and reconciled unto us. Christ's blood was shed upon the earth, but Christ's blood is sprinkled, now he is in

heaven. This is that "blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." Mark that:—Christ's blood hath a tongue; it speaks, it cries, it prays, it intercedes; yea, the Lord's ears are so filled with it, that it drowns all other sounds, and rings continually in his ears. I will not say that the very blood which Christ shed on the cross is now in heaven, nor that it speaks in heaven, these sayings are merely metaphorical; yet this I maintain as real and proper, that the power, merit, and virtue of Christ's blood are presented by our Saviour to his Father, both as a public satisfaction for our sins, and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.

3. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of his will, his request for us, grounded upon the virtue of his glorious merits.—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." This was a piece of Christ's prayer whilst yet he was on earth, and it is a summary of Christ's intercession which now he makes for us in his glory.

4. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of our persons in his own person to his Father, so that now God cannot look upon the Son, but he must behold the saints in him.—This was shadowed out by that act of the high priest, who went into the holy of holies, with "the names of all the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders, and upon his breast." And this the apostle speaks yet more plainly, "By him we have an access unto the Father, and in him we have boldness and access with confidence." The word access, signifies properly—an introduction to God; alluding to the custom in princes' courts, where none may come into the presence chamber, unless they be brought in by some favourite or courtier there; thus, none may have access into the presence of God, unless they be brought in by this favourite of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose very office it is to bring men unto God. He takes us by the hand and leads us to the Father.

5. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of our duties unto God.—"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," but Christ draws out the evil of duty, and

failings in duty, before he will present them unto God: and he observes what good there is in any of our duties or performances, and with that he mingles his own prayers and intercessions, and presents all as one work interwoven or mingled together unto God the Father.

6. Christ's intercession consists in the presenting of our plea or answer in heaven, to all those accusations that are brought against us.—And this I take to be the meaning of the challenge, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? 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." Christ intercedes, and who shall condemn? Christ takes off all accusations, and who shall charge? If sin, or Satan, shall dare to accuse, our Jesus is ready at God's right hand to answer all. And in this respect he is truly called our advocate; "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have an advocate that pleads for us, that answers for us; that in a way of equity, (grounding all upon his own merits) calls for the pardon of our sins, and for the salvation of our souls.

HOW POWERFUL CHRIST'S INTERCESSION IS WITH GOD.

How powerful Christ's intercession is with God will appear, if we consider,

1. That Christ is our great high-priest to God.—"We have such an high-priest, who is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high." Now it was the way of God to lend his ear in special manner to the high-priests; and therefore the people usually ran to them, when they would enquire of God. Now such an high-priest as this, (though with far more eminency) is Christ to God. He stands in the middle, or indeed next to God, as he is in these gospel-times our great high-priest; and therefore he must needs prevail with God in every petition he puts up for us.

2. That Christ was called to this office by God.—"Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but he was called of God as Aaron was." It was God

the Father, that designed him to it, and that furnished him for it, and that invested him in it. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Now to what purpose should God call him to this office, but especially to intercede for them to whom God was willing to communicate salvation? Surely the Father is engaged to hear his Son, in that he is an high-priest to God, and called to his office by God.

3. That Christ is God's Son, and that is more than God's high-priest.—He is his beloved Son, his Son that never gave him the least offence; surely then, when he intercedes for man, he is most like to speed. If a child do but cry, "My Father, my Father," he may prevail very much, especially with a Father that is tender-hearted; Jesus Christ is the precious Son of God the Father; and God the Father, is a dear and kind-hearted Father. How then should the intercessions of Christ but be most powerful with God? All the relations of son and father in the world, are but a shadow of this relation between God and Christ: it is so near, that though they are two, yet Christ speaks of them, as if they were but one; "I and my Father are one." If then the Father should deny him any thing, he should deny himself, or cease to be one with his Son, which can never be.

4. That Christ is God himself.—How powerful in this respect must his intercessions be unto the Father! It is true, that Christ is another person, but one and the same God with the Father. Christ is the very self of God, both God sending, and God sent. Christ is the fellow of God; "Awake, O sword against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." Nay, Christ is God, and not another God, but one God; "God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." Can we imagine now that God himself should be denied any boon of God himself? We have brought it now so near, that if God be God, and God be omnipotent, that he can do, and have whatsoever he pleases; then Christ being one God with his Father, he must needs prevail.

CHAPTER II.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation in his intercession. Of considering—desiring—hoping in—believing in—loving—joying in—calling on—and conforming to Jesus in that respect.

OF KNOWING JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS INTERCESSION.

CHRIST is now interceding for us at the right hand of God: ever since his ascension into heaven he hath been doing this work; it is a work already of above sixteen hundred years; and summer, and winter, night and day, Christ hath been still praying, still interceding. Christ's love hath no vacation, no cessation at all. Yea, even now whilst you read this, Christ is acting as an advocate for you. Is not this worth the knowledge? O my soul, leave off thy vain studies of natural things! If they do not conduce some way or other to the right understanding of this, they are not worth the while. O the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Study his intercession in all the former particulars; only remember this, that in Christ's intercession are many secrets which we must never know on this side heaven. O take heed of entering into this labyrinth without the clue of the word; above all, desire the guidance of the Spirit to enlighten thy darkness, and whatever thou knowest, "know it still for thyself."

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Consider the nature of Christ's intercession.—What is it but the gracious will of Christ fervently desiring that for the virtue of his death and sacrifice, thy person and performances might be accepted of God? As Christ on earth gave himself to death, even to the death

of the cross, for the abolition of sin, so now in heaven he prays the Father, "by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion," that thy sins may be pardoned, thy service accepted, and thy soul saved. This is the will of Christ, even thy justification, sanctification, and salvation; and accordingly he presents his will, "Father, I will that all those privileges flowing from my death, may be conferred on such a person; such a soul is now considering my intercession, and my will is, that his very meditation may find acceptance with God."

2. Consider the person that intercedes for thee.—It is Christ in both natures: it is thy mediator, one between God and man. In this respect thou mayest consider him as one indifferent, and equally inclining to either party. Christ partook of both natures, Godhead, and manhood, that so he might be fit to stand in the gap between his Father and us.

3. Consider the person to whom Christ intercedes.—Is it not to his Father? Thou art sure to speed well, O my soul, for God is the Father of thy intercessor. If I had a suit to some majesty, and the prince would mediate, I might hope to speed: Christ is God's prince, and in respect of us, "the first begotten of many brethren."

4. Consider the persons for whom Christ intercedes.—It is for all believers, and in particular for thee. O that ever the world, or flesh, or devil, should steal this meditation out of my heart! O that ever I should forget that Christ is gone to heaven, that he is entered into the holy of holies, and that he carries my name into the presence of God the Father! I speak the same to thee, that readest; if thou art a believer, there is no doubt but Christ is speaking a good word to his Father in thy behalf. He can no more forget thee in his intercessions, than a mother can forget her sucking child. Look up to Jesus, yea, look, and never leave looking, till thou spiest thy own name written on his heart.

5. Consider wherein Christ's intercession consists.—Is it not in the presenting of his person, blood and prayers? Is it not in the presenting of our persons and performances, or answers to the accusations of Satan? Men little think how busy our Mediator and advocate, is

now in heaven for us. Men little think that Christ is appearing, and his blood is crying, and his prayers are ascending, and his robe of righteousness is covering us and the iniquity of our holy things. O my soul, look up, consider Jesus thy Saviour in these respects! Christ, and Christ's blood, and Christ's prayers, are all at work! Christ plays the advocate, and pleads thy cause, and perfumes thy duties with his incense, and takes thy person to God his Father.

6. Consider the power of Christ's intercessions with his Father.—Is he not to this purpose a priest to God, and called thereto by God? Is he not the Son of God, yea, God himself? Is not the Father's heart as much towards us and our salvation as Christ's own heart? As sure then as Christ is gone into heaven with thy name engraven on his heart, so sure shalt thou follow him, and be with him where he is.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

I cannot but wonder what a dulness seizeth on my heart, and on all the hearts of the sons of men, that we have no more longing after Christ, whose heart is ever panting and longing after us. Surely we do not set ourselves to find out experimentally the sweetness that is in Christ; if there were not another object to think upon, but only this one of Christ's intercession.

1. In Christ's intercession, lies the present transaction of our soul's salvation.—Such passages as hitherto we have spoken of are done and past; (though the virtue and influence of them will continue for ever,) but Christ's session and mission of his Spirit, and his blessed intercession, both were, and now are the very present employment of Jesus Christ. Now he prays, now he presents his person, merits and intercession. This is the present transaction of Jesus Christ, and therefore most desirable. Methinks I long to know what Christ is now doing in heaven for my soul. And is it not this,—is not all his time spent either in reading pardons for his redeemed ones, or in presenting petitions for them, and pleading for them?

2. In this present transaction lies the application of all Christ's former actings.—Christ's incarnation, conception, birth, life and death, which more especially we look upon as the meritorious causes of our salvarion, had been nothing to us, if they had not been applied by Christ. Christ purchased salvation by those acts, but he possesseth us of our salvation by this consummate act of his intercession. But if Christ's intercession be the applying cause, if it bring home to my soul all the former transactions of Christ, saying, "All these are thine, even thine;" how desirable must this intercession be!

3. In this application lies that fellowship which we have with the Father and the Son.—"I pray for these, that as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Understand this soberly, we cannot think that there should be that oneness in equality between God and us, as between God and Christ; no, but there is oneness in similitude, even in this life. By virtue of Christ's intercession we have oneness with God and Christ, not only in comforts, but also in graces. Some are apt to think, that all communion with God and Christ, consists only in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, whereas Christians may as really have communion with God in secret conveyances of grace, in inward supports, in the hidden drawings of the soul God-ward, as in the more open and comfortable manifestations of God unto the soul. And is not this a most desirable thing?

4. In this communion lies the fruition of Christ in glory.—Grace brings to glory; if communion here, we shall have communion hereafter; and this also is a part of Christ's prayer and intercession; "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." We think them happy on earth that have many stately palaces; O Christians, how happy will you be, when you come to be heirs of many mansions in heaven? But why speak I of mansions, now I am naming Christ? It is the saying of an eminent divine, "I should refuse heaven, if Christ were not there; take Christ

away from heaven, and it is but a heartless dwelling." And therefore, after Christ had spoken of many mansions, and of a place that he would prepare for his saints; he adds farther, to increase their joy, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

O my soul, if this be the business of Christ's intercession, how is it that thou art not sick unto death with the vehement thirst after thy portion in Christ's intercession? If there be such a thing as desire in this heart of mine, O that now it would vent itself with mighty longings after this blessed object!

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

O my soul, hope in Jesus, but rest not till thou canst give a reason of thy hope, till thou canst prove that they are the hopes which grace and not nature hath wrought; that they are grounded upon scripture promises and sound evidences; that they purify the heart; that the more thou hopest the less thou sinnest; that they depend on sure and infallible causes, as on the truth, power and mercy of God; on the merits, mediation, and intercession of Jesus Christ. Is this last amongst the rest, the spring of thy hope? Canst thou follow the stream, till it brings thee to this fountain, that now thou canst say, "O this intercession is mine!" Come, search, and try, it is worth the pains.

1. If Christ's intercession be mine, then is the Spirit's intercession mine.—In this case, we need not ascend up into heaven to learn the truth; rather let us descend into our own hearts, and look whether Christ hath given us his Spirit, which makes us cry unto God, "with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed." Let us search whether we feel the Spirit of Christ crying in us, Abba, Father. Certainly these two are as the cause and the effect. Christ's intercession in heaven, and his Spirit's intercession on earth are as twins of a birth; or rather Christ's intercession in heaven breeds another intercession in the hearts of his saints. O my soul, canst thou by the help of the Spirit go to the Father in the name of

Christ? As Christ is gone before into the holy of holies to intercede, so canst thou with boldness follow after, "and enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?" Canst thou say, God hath given me his Spirit, and his Spirit hath shewed me Christ as my Mediator at the right hand of God; and now, under the wing of such a Mediator, I can, by the Spirit's assistance, go with boldness to speak any thing in the ears of God? Surely this is the fruit, the effect of Christ's intercession, and therefore thou mayest comfortably conclude, Christ's intercession is thine.

2. If I feel a holy disposition to pray and intercede for others, especially for the distresses of the church of God, then is Christ's intercession mine.—We should (as near as we may) in every thing conform to Christ; and this conformity is an evidence of our interest in Christ. O my soul, go down into the inmost closet of thy heart, look what disposition there is in it towards the members of Christ; and thou mayest conclude there is in Christ's heart the very same disposition towards thee. Can I think that thy narrow, straitened bowels are larger than those wide, compassionate and tender bowels of Jesus Christ? As a drop of water is in comparison of the ocean, so is my heart to Christ's, and my love to Christ's. Come then, and try by this sign.

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Faith in going to Christ as interceding for us, is principally to look to the end and design of Christ in his intercession: now the ends of Christ, as in reference to us, are these,—

1. That we might have fellowship with the Father and the Son.—"I pray for these, that as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, they also may be one in us."

2. That we might have the gift of the Holy Ghost.—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."

3. That we might have protection against all evil.—"I pray that thou wouldst keep them from the evil."

4. That we might have free access to the throne of grace.—So the apostle, "Seeing we have a great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, and come boldly to the throne of grace."

5. That we might have the inward intercession of the Spirit, which is as it were, the echo of Christ's intercession in our hearts.—"The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." It is the same Spirit's groans in us, which more distinctly and fully in Christ prayeth for us.

6. That we might have the sanctification of our services; of this the Levitical priests were a type.—"They bear the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel, that they might be accepted. And he is the angel of the covenant, who hath a golden censer to offer up the prayers of the saints."

7. That we might have the pardon of all sin.—It is by virtue of Christ's intercession, that a believer sinning of infirmity hath a pardon of course, for Christ is his advocate to plead his cause; or if he sin of presumption, and the Lord give repentance, he hath a pardon at the hands of God the Father, by virtue of this intercession.

8. That we might have the salvation of our souls in the day of Jesus.—"Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they might behold my glory." To see the Lord Jesus Christ glorified, must be a glorious thing. What is it but to behold the lustre of his divinity through his humanity? In this respect our very eyes shall see God, as much as is possible for any creature to see him. O the ravishing sight of saints! Christ is so lovely, that the saints cannot leave, but they must and will "follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes." There shall be no moment to all eternity, wherein Christ shall be out of sight to so many thousand thousands of saints. Is not this a blessed end of Christ's intercession?

Let our faith then act dependently upon the intercession of Christ for these very ends. Let us rely upon Christ; let us cast ourselves upon the very intercession of

Jesus Christ, saying, "O my Christ, there is enough in thee, and in this glorious intercession of thine: and therefore there will I abide for ever."

Faith must ever and anon be wrestling with God, that virtue may go out of Christ's intercession into our hearts. I have heard, Lord, that there is an office erected in heaven, that Christ as high-priest should be ever praying and interceding for his people. O that I may feel the efficacy of Christ's intercession! Am I now in prayer? O that I could feel in this prayer the spiritual fire, which usually falls down from Christ's intercession into the heart! O that my pardon may be sealed, my grace confirmed, my soul saved in the day of Jesus!

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Two things especially will excite our love. Christ's love to us, and our propriety in Christ.

1. He had an eternal love to man.—Since God was God (O boundless duration!) the Lord Jesus, in a manner was longing for the dawning of the day of creation.

2. In the beginning of time he loved man above all creatures.—After he had made them all, he then spake as he never did before, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." And though man unmade himself by sin, Christ's love was not broken off, but held forth in a promise till the day of performance; "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

3. In the fulness of time his love was manifested.—The seed then blossomed, and the birth came out in an high expression of love; the love of Christ was born, and saw the light. "After that (saith the apostle) the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared." I shall not need to instance it in succeeding passages; so far as we have gone, we have clearly seen Christ's life was a perfect mirror of his love; as there is no beam in the sun, in which there is no light; so there was no act in the life of Christ, but to a spiritual eye it shines with the light of love.

4. At this time there is a coal of burning love in the breast of Christ.—This fire was indeed from everlasting, but the flames are as hot this day as ever. Now it is that Christ loves, and lives; and wherefore lives? Only to love us, and to intercede for us. Christ makes our salvation his constant calling; "Yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." O the love of Christ towards our poor souls! if I might but stay, and take some turns in this large field of love, how many thousands of particulars might I draw out of Scripture, expressing Christ's love to us in this respect.

Another motive of our love to Christ, is our propriety in Christ.—"Ye are not your own," said the apostle of *us;* and "He is not his own," may we say of *Christ.* "My beloved is mine, and I am his," saith the spouse. Not as if Christ should leave off to be his own, when he becometh ours; but he so demeans himself, in respect of his love, as if he were not his own. He assumes such offices of engagements, as if he were all for us, and nothing for himself; thus he is called "a Saviour, a Redeemer, a King, a Priest, a Prophet, a Friend, a Guide, a Head, a Husband, a Leader, Ransomer, and Intercessor."

O my soul, come hither and put thy candle to this mighty flame. If thou hadst as many hearts in one as there are men and angels in heaven and earth, all these would be too little for Jesus Christ. O then for a soul filled with all the fulness of God! O for a soul stretched out to its widest capacity and circumference for the entertainment of God! O my soul, that thou wert but "able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge!"

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

If at Christ's birth was so much joy, because a Saviour was proclaimed, is not our joy to be heightened when salvation is effected? If the first act of Christ's mediation was so joyous, shall not the last act of his mediation be much more joyous?—But I hear many

objections which keep back joy; they are as bars at the doors of many heavy hearts, that joy cannot enter in: I shall instance some.

I am much opposed; (says one) "dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me;" they persecute, reproach, revile. And what then? What matters opposition of men, so long as Christ doth intercede for thee in heaven! And tell me, hast thou no experience of this truth? Doth not relief strangely come in now and then? Write upon the forehead of such favours, "I have a merciful and compassionate Mediator in heaven."

I am much tempted, (says another) that I cannot pray. Alas, my prayers are without spirit and life. Be humbled for it, and yet know this, that when thou canst not pray, Christ prays for thee, and he prays that thou mayest pray. And tell me, hast thou no experience of this truth? Hath not thy spirit sometimes been enlarged in prayer? Hast thou not sometimes in prayer been lifted up above thyself and above the world? Conclude then, "My Intercessor above hath sent me this gift; it is not I but Christ's intercession, that by secret operation hath given me the Spirit to help my infirmity: these are the intercessions of the Spirit of Christ, and they are the very echo of the intercessions of Christ in his own person."

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Let us pray or sue our interest in this intercession. —It is a question among the schools, Whether we may conveniently pray to Jesus to pray to his Father in our behalf? But thus far is granted, that we may pray to Christ to make us partakers of his intercessions, and to mingle our prayers with his prayers, that they may find acceptance with God his Father. Intercession is the office of the whole person of Christ, and of the two natures of Christ; but he performs this office one way according to his divine nature, and another way according to his human nature. It is thus agreed on all hands, that we may call on Jesus, or on God the Father in and through

Jesus, that Christ's intercessions may be ours, and that he would make it out to us in a way of assurance every day more and more.

2. Let us praise God and Christ for every transaction in heaven for us.—Is Christ praying for us? O let us be on the exercise of praising him! Is Christ interceding for us? Let us give him the glory of his intercession. Heaven is full of his praises; why should not the earth ring with the sound thereof? "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name!"

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

In every action of Christ there is something imitable for us. In the present work, I shall instance these few particulars.

1. Christ appears in heaven for us, let us appear on earth for him.—Is there not equity as well as conformity in this duty? O my soul, consider what Christ is doing, consider wherein the intercession of Christ consists. He appears in heaven before saints, and angels, and before God his Father in thy behalf; and art thou afraid to appear before worms, dust and ashes in his cause, or for his truth? Shall Jesus Christ own thee in heaven, and wilt thou not own Jesus Christ here in this world? O what a mighty engagement is here to own his cause in these backsliding times?

2. Christ spends all his time for us and our salvation, let us spend all our time for him, and in his service.—The apostle tells us, that "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is not for a day, or a month, or a year, but he lives for ever upon this account; during all the time from his ascension until the end of the world. Surely people do not think what Christ is doing in heaven for them. If you would seriously consider, that Christ without any intermission, is ever, ever interceding; how should this engage you in his service!

3. He prays for us unto his Father, and let us pray for ourselves, and for all sorts of men, to Jesus Christ.—"Learn of me," (saith Christ) and as far as he is imitable let us follow him. Doth Christ pray? Let us pray.

Doth he pray for us and others? Let us pray for ourselves, and then let us pray one for another.

4. Christ by his intercessions, "saves us to the uttermost," and let us therefore serve him to the uttermost.—Surely all we can do is too little to answer so great a love as this. O Christians, why should it be esteemed a needless thing to be rigorously and exactly circumspect? Christ paid our debt to the uttermost farthing, drank every drop of our bitter cup, and now presents all unto his Father, by way of intercession, and saves us "thoroughly, to the uttermost;" why should we not labour to perform his service, and to fulfil every one of his commandments thoroughly and to the uttermost also? Certainly there is a duty which concerns us, to be "zealous of good works;" "to walk circumspectly;" to be "fervent in spirit." O that ever men should be afraid of taking God's part too much, or fighting too valiantly under the colours of Christ; of being too busy about the salvation of their own souls, and of being singular in the duties of religion!

LOOKING UNTO JESUS,

IN HIS SECOND COMING.

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

Of Christ's preparing for judgment. Of Christ's coming to judgment. Of Christ's summoning the elect to judgment. Of Christ and the saints meeting at the judgment-day. Of Christ's sentencing his saints. Of Christ and the saints judging the rest of this world. Of Christ and the saints going up into heaven, and the end of this world. Of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to God, the Father. Of Christ's subjection to the Father, that God may be all in all. Of Christ's being all in all to his redeemed to all eternity.

OF CHRIST'S PREPARING FOR JUDGMENT.

AND is not yet all done? O the unwearied patience, love and mercy of Christ in carrying on this mighty work! He began it before the beginning of the world; since then he hath been labouring in it about six thousand years; and now the time of restoring being come, he will perfect what he hath begun. When once the number of all his elect shall be completed, and the work of his intercession shall be at an end, then immediately will follow these particulars.

1. "A great voice comes out of the temple of heaven, saying, it is done."—It comes out of the temple of heaven, that we may understand it to be the voice of Christ.

And if this speech be directed unto God, it is as if Christ had bespoke his Father thus; "And now, O my Father, I have done; that office of the priesthood, which we erected, is now at an end. I have sat at thy right hand interceding for my saints ever since my ascension; and now their number is completed, I am resolved to unpin the fabric of the world, and to take it down; it stands but for their sakes, and therefore now let the seventh angel blow his trumpet, that the mystery of God may be finished." "I swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer."

2. No sooner is this said, but the "seventh angel sounds."—This seventh angel (saith Pereus) is the archangel that proclaims Christ's coming with a great and mighty shout. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." But before he descend, and I believe upon the very discovery of his coming down, there will be a shout in heaven; for so it follows, "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven." This is the long-looked for day; the day of perfecting the number of the saints; the day of joining the souls and bodies of the saints together; the day of convening all the families both of saints and angels under one roof; the day of bringing up the bride unto the Lamb, and of completing the marriage-solemnity. And therefore no wonder, at this news great voices were made in heaven. Now they shout and sing a new song, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

3. After this shout, "the four and twenty elders which sit before God on their seats, fall upon their faces, and worship God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." By these four and twenty elders, we understand all God's saints of the Old and New Testament, comprehended under the twelve patriarchs, and twelve apostles. They rise off their seats, and fall on their faces; first they praise, and then they pray. They praise God for taking to himself his own power; Christ

connived (as it were) till now at the power of his enemies. Antichrist, and not Christ, seemed to rule, and sit in the temple of God, but now Christ is resolved to rule himself, and to make all his enemies his footstool. They pray Christ to go on to judgment. This time was not for mortals to know, but now it was revealed to these celestial spirits by Christ; and therefore they beg, Go on Lord Jesus; reward now thy servants, prophets, and saints, and destroy them which destroy the earth.

4. God the Father is well pleased with Christ's purpose of judging the world.—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." These words were spoken to Christ at his ascension into heaven; and now God speaks them again to Christ: for "as yet (saith the apostle) we see not all things put under him." And God's purpose was that Christ should rule, until he had put all things in subjection under his feet. The kingly rule that Christ hath from his ascension is upon his Father's throne, but the kingdom that Christ shall have at the day of judgment, and ever after, is the joint reign of him with the Father; he shall have a throne himself, and the saints shall sit with him in his own throne. And now, saith the Father, "Sit thou at my right hand, Sit on my throne by me; go on to judge the nations; I will not judge them but only in thee, and by thee; Lo! I have committed all judgment unto the Son. Go then, put on thy robes, appear in thy glory; empty heaven of all the glorious spirits that are therein, and let them wait on thee to thy judgment-seat. Pass thy doom on all flesh; and send reprobates to hell, and bring up hither all thy saints, that they may live with thee, and behold thy glory for ever and ever." I cannot but wonder at this joy in heaven, and that we have so little of this on earth. We say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" but if our prayers were fervent, what longings would be in our hearts after Christ's coming! How should we rejoice at the very thoughts thereof! "The Spirit and the Bride say come," and Christ himself saith, "Surely, I come quickly;" O let us say, AMEN to it; "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

OF CHRIST COMING TO JUDGMENT.

No sooner Christ is prepared, and all in readiness, but he descends from his imperial throne, to the judgment-seat. In this passage I shall observe these particulars.

1. He descends with his train.—He comes with his royal attendants out of heaven. "Behold the Lord comes with mighty angels. Behold the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Daniel tells us of a thousand thousand that this day minister unto Christ, "a thousand thousand ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Or if heaven have more, I believe heaven will empty itself of all the saints, and all the angels; not one spirit, whether saint or angel, shall stay behind, when Christ descends; "The son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." O what a glorious day will this be? If one sun make the morning sky so glorious, what a glorious morning will that be, when so many thousands of suns shall shine over all our heads, the glorious body of Christ surpassing them all in splendour!

2. In his descent he shakes the heavens.—"The powers of the heavens shall be shaken." "At his nod the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished." In this shaking the evangelist adds, that "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall." The very coming of Christ shall bring with him such a light, that the splendour of the sun and moon shall be obscured.

3. As he passes through the elementary world, a fire doth usher him.—"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." "Behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind. And the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire." In which respect, Daniel saw "his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and

came forth from before him." And, at last, this fire shall have that effect, that the very "elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." O Christians, what cause have we to make the apostle's use of this event! "Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

4. He descends lower and lower till he is enwrapt with clouds.—"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." When he went up into heaven, it is said, "a cloud received him out of their sight," and the angels then said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven." Here is the first sight of Christ to men on the earth, when once he is come down into the clouds; then shall they lift up their eyes, and have a full view of Jesus Christ. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

OF CHRIST'S SUMMONING THE ELECT TO JUDGMENT.

No sooner is Christ in the clouds, his throne of judicature, but he summons his elect to judgment. Several particulars are here worthy of notice.

1. "He sends his angels with a great sound of a trumpet."—So loud shall the sound be, that it will pierce into the ears of the dead in the graves. It will shake the world, rend the rocks, dissolve the bonds of death and burst the gates of hell.

2. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God."—As at the creation he said, "Let there be light,

and there was light," so at the dissolution of the world, he will say, "Let the dead arise, let the sea give up the dead that are therein, and death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them;" and it will be so. "Marvel not at this (saith Christ) for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear my voice, and they shall come forth!"

3. No sooner is the shout made but the saints arise.—It is true that the saints that are alive need no resurrection, but upon them will this trumpet have its effect. Something like death shall seize upon them, and they shall be changed. They were sown in corruption, they are raised in incorruption; they were sown in dishonour, they are raised in glory; they were sown in weakness, they are raised in power.

4. No sooner are the souls and bodies of the saints re-united, but they are caught up by the holy angels into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. O what a scene is here! Is it possible that such a meditation should pass without some saving impression on my soul. If my ears shall hear that sound, and if my eyes shall see these sights, is it not time for me to lay these things to heart, that I may be found faithful and well-doing! As sure as I have this book in my hand, I must be one of those that shall hear the sound of the trumpet, and away I must from the mouth of my grave, wherever I shall be buried, to the cloud where Christ doth sit. O my God, set this home on my soul. Where is my lamp? And where is my oil? Are all ready? And am I ready and prepared to meet the Lord in the air? Christians, if we have any life in us, let us act and realize this to the life. This would keep us close to Christ, and to the banner of Christ: who would not march under this banner, and adhere to him, that but reads over these summons of souls at the last dreadful day?

OF CHRIST AND THE SAINTS MEETING AT THE JUDGMENT-DAY.

No sooner are the saints lifted up, and set before the Judge, but these things follow.

1. They admire the infinite glory and excellency that is in Christ.—" When he shall come, he shall be glorified in his saints, and he shall be admired in all them that believe." All that believe shall break out into admiration of Jesus Christ; they shall at the first sight observe such an excellency in him, as they shall be infinitely taken with. Here we speak of Christ, and in speaking we admire; but how will they admire, when they shall not only speak or hear, but see and behold him, who is the "express image of God, and the brightness of his Father's glory?"

2. They adore and magnify the grace and glory of Jesus Christ.—As it is said of the twenty-four elders, that "they fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him, that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," so all the saints, now advanced to stand before the throne, fall down before Christ, and worship him that liveth for ever, shouting and singing about Jesus Christ, and setting out his glory, grace, and goodness. "After this I beheld, (saith John) and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; and all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever," Amen. Saints and angels will both give glory to Jesus Christ that day. Every elect man will then acknowledge, here is Christ that shed his blood for me; here is the Saviour that laid down his life for me; here is the person that mediated, and interceded, and made peace for me; here is the Redeemer that delivered, and redeemed me from the wrath to come: and then they begin those hallelujahs, that never never shall have an end, "HAL-

LELUJAH; AND AGAIN, HALLELUJAH: AND, AMEN, HALLELUJAH, FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY."

3. Christ sets them on his right hand.—"Upon thy right hand, doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir." When he himself ascended up into heaven, then said the Father to him, "Son, sit thou down at my right hand;" and no sooner the saints are ascended up to Christ, but he says the same to them. Christ entertains them, as God the Father entertained him; he at the right hand of God, and they at the right hand of Christ. The Lord now puts upon his saints heaven's glory; he adorns them with all his ornaments for the marriage-day, and indeed here is the beginning of the solemnity of the marriage of the Lamb; not but that the contract was before, but the solemnity was reserved for this day, and all the glory of this day is for nothing else but to set out the solemnity of the marriage.

O Lord, if it seem good to thee, let me have tribulation here, let me here spend my days in sorrow, and my breath in sighings, so that I may but there be placed at thy right hand. For then will joy come, and sorrow will vanish; sorrow is but for a night, this night of life, but joy will come in this morning of the resurrection, and it never shall be night again.

OF CHRIST'S SENTENCING HIS SAINTS.

No sooner are they set on his right hand, but he prepares for sentence.

1. The books are opened.—"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life." This is spoken after the manner of men, in whose public judgments are produced all the writings of the process, informations, depositions of witnesses, to shew that all actions, even the most secret ones, shall then be rehearsed and made manifest. By these books are probably meant the books of the Old and New Testament, wherein all things either to be done or omitted, are prescribed by God: and the books of our consciences, which now are shut up and concealed from men, but then shall

be made manifest to all the world. To these books another is added, which is proper to the saints, called "the book of life." This book contains in it the names of all that are saved from first to last. O what is the joy of the saints when they see this book opened, and their names engraven there in letters of glory!

2. All the actions, graces, duties, and (it may be) sins of saints shall be produced, and laid open.—The Holy Ghost tells us, that "the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." Then it will be known who served the Lord in spirit and truth, and who did not; then men and angels shall know, such a day this poor saint performed such a spiritual service; every prayer in public or private, every tear shed for sin, every spiritual meditation, or self-examination; every ejaculation, or looking up unto Jesus, shall be recounted.

Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Every word here is full of life and joy; "*Come.*" This is the King's invitation of his saints to his court: he had summoned them before to his presence, and now they are about him, they must come nearer yet, they must go with him into his presence-chamber. "*Come ye blessed of my Father.*" Christ blessed them when he went up to heaven, and whilst yet on earth he pronounced them blessed many a time, but now he calls them "the blessed of his Father;" it is the Father's will as well as Christ's that they should be blessed. "*Inherit the kingdom.*" Christ had told them before, "It is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom;" but then they were only as children under age, but now they are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" and therefore they must have the inheritance in possession. This is the solemn coronation of the saints; it is the anointing, the setting of the crown upon their heads. "*Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*" God's first work was to make heaven for himself and his saints to dwell in. But why for them? Were not the angels the first creatures that possessed it? Yes; but the angels are not properly the heirs of God and Christ, as the saints are; the angels

are but ministering spirits, and the servants of the bridegroom; but the saints are the bride herself, and co-heirs with Christ. "*Prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" This was the great design of God and Christ from all eternity. It is not a business of yesterday; no, the eternal thoughts of God have been upon it.

O what thoughts are in saints when this sentence is declared! What joy do they experience! Methinks if it were possible that tears could be in a glorified state, the saints could not see Christ reach out a crown to set it on their heads, but they would weep, and hold away their heads, but Christ will have it so. "This honour have all the saints; praise ye the Lord."

OF CHRIST AND THE SAINTS JUDGING THE REST OF THE WORLD.

No sooner shall the saints be acquitted, anointed, and crowned, but they must be enthroned, and sit with Jesus Christ to judge the world.

1. As Christ is on a throne, so must the elect be set on thrones.—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." Thrones are for kings and judges; and in that Christ hath now lifted up his saints to this condition, he will have them sit with him as so many judges and kings; or if it be more honour to have thrones by themselves, than to sit with Christ in his throne, John in his vision saw many thrones, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."

2. They on the left hand shall then be called to receive their doom.—Now shall their hearts fail them for fear: now shall they seek death, but shall not find it; now shall they cry to rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." But all in vain; the command is out, angels and devils will force them to the bar, for the Lord hath spoken it, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither." O who can conceive the terrible thoughts

of these men's hearts! Now the world cannot help them; their old companions cannot help them; the saints neither can, nor will; only the Lord Jesus Christ can, but O there is the soul-killing misery, he will not.

3. A strict account shall then be required and given of their sins, temporal gifts, and spiritual blessings.—Of their sins. Come (will Christ say) now confess your sins before all the world. Time was that you concealed your sins, but now every sin shall be laid open before God, angels and men. And now is the black book of their consciences opened, wherein appear all their sins, original and actual, of omission and commission. O the number of evil thoughts, words and deeds that now are laid open! All the projects of the heart, though never acted, must now be discovered. Nay, yet more, such sins as by the sinners themselves were never taken notice of, shall this day come out. O what a day will this be, when not a sin committed by any reprobate from the beginning of the world, but now it shall be rehearsed.

As an account of all sins, so an account of all temporal gifts which God hath imparted to reprobates, must now be given. Some have the gifts of the world, as riches, honours, places of authority; others have the gifts of the body, as health, strength, beauty, life; others have the gifts of the mind, as understanding, wisdom, learning; now of all these gifts must they give an account. Come you that are rich, (saith Christ) "render an account of your stewardship;" how have you spent your riches? The like will he say to others according to the talents bestowed on them. "You excelled in strength, health of body, and length of days; and now tell me, and publish it to all the world, how were these improved." I believe many a sad answer will be given to Christ of these things.

Not only of gifts temporal, but of all blessings spiritual, though but tendered and offered, must all give an account. O the sad accounts that many a soul will make of these things! Methinks I hear some wicked wretch confessing Christ, "True, Lord, I lived at such a time when the sun of the gospel shone bright in my face, and in such a place where all was Goshen: I lived

under such a minister, who set before me life and death; many and many a powerful and searching sermon have I heard, any one passage whereof (if I had not wickedly and wilfully forsaken my own mercy) might have been unto me the beginning of the new birth and everlasting bliss. O how fresh is the reproof, admonition, exhortation of such and such a preacher now in my mind? How earnestly did he entreat me? With what love and compassion did he beseech me? But alas! I stifled all my convictions. And not only ministers, but the Spirit of Christ sometimes spake to my heart. I remember at such a time, Christ himself (as it were) bowed the heavens, and came down to entreat me for my soul's health. O the strivings of the Spirit of Christ, as if he had been loath to have taken a denial! O Christ, I remember thy words when thou criedst to me, Open sinner, open thy heart to thy Saviour, and I will come in, and sup with thee, and thou with me. But, alas, I resisted Christ and his Spirit; O thou Judge and Saviour, I tired out thy patience, I gave thee a repulse, I trampled thy precious blood under my feet, and now I am expecting no other but to eat the fruit of my own way.

4. Christ and his saints proceed to sentence.—First, Christ the chief Judge shall pronounce it, "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Every word breathes out nothing but vengeance and woe. Give me leave a little to enlarge upon these words. No sooner Christ begins the sentence, "Depart from me," but methinks I imagine the reprobates to reply, "How! depart from thee? O Christ, thou art the greatest good, and therefore to be deprived of thee is the greatest evil. We were made by thee, and for thee, O let us never be divided from thee!" "Away, away, (saith Christ) ye have no part in me, or in my merits." But they may reply again, "If we must depart from thee, at least, give us thy blessing before we go; thou hast great stores of blessings, and we hope thou hast one yet in store for us, we crave but a small thing, but a blessing. O it is a little one." "No; depart from me ye cursed, in place of a blessing take the full curse of your father; you have been most prodigal

and disobedient children, you have followed him who had my first curse, and now share ye curses with him. Cursed be you in your souls, and in your bodies, and in your thoughts, and in your words, and in the heinousness of your sins, and in the grievousness of your punishment." "But, If we must depart from thee, and depart accursed, yet appoint us some convenient place to go into. Create a fruitful piece of ground, and let a goodly sun daily shine upon it. O if we must go from thee, the source and fountain of heavenly sweetness, afford us some plenty of earthly pleasures, which may in some sort recompence our loss." "No; depart from me ye cursed into fire: though fire naturally burns not spirits, yet I will elevate this fire above its nature; you have sinned against nature, and I will punish you above nature." "Fire! Alas, that ever we were born! Who is able to rest in fire? But if we must into fire, let the sentence stand but a very short time: quench the fire quickly." "No, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, it was kindled by my breath, and it hath this property, among other strange qualities, that it is an unquenchable fire: as long as I am God it shall endure; and when I cease to be happy, then shall ye cease to be miserable." "O woe is us! What, to live in a fire perpetually, without all hope of end? Yet, allot us then some comforters, whose gentle words may sweeten our torments, or somewhat dull the keen edge of our extremity." "No, no, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: they shall be your comforters, they that will triumph in your miseries, they that are your daily desperate enemies: they that will tell you by what deceits and by-ways they led you from me, and that will give you every hour new names of scorn and horrible reproach." O my brethren, I tremble at the very mentioning of this sentence! and O what will they do on whom it must pass! I beseech you before we pass from it, ask your souls this one question, Can you dwell with everlasting fire? If you can, go on in sin, but if you cannot, stop here, and repent of sin.

The saints shall judge the very self-same judgment: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

That they, as well as Christ, shall judge the world, is without controversy. "And judgment was given to the saints of the Most High," "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." "Know ye not that we shall judge the angels?" Not only shall we judge the world, but the god of the world; the principalities and powers that lead captive wicked men at their pleasure; even they must be judged by those whom they formerly foiled: so then there is no question but they shall judge. But how the saints shall judge together with Christ, is a very deep question. For my part I am apt to think, that it shall not be directly known, ere it be seen and done.

OF CHRIST AND THE SAINTS GOING UP INTO HEAVEN, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

No sooner are the reprobates gone to their place, but Christ ariseth from his judgment-seat, and with all the glorious company of heaven, marches towards the heaven of heavens. O what a comely march is this! what songs of triumph are sung! Christ leads the way, the cherubim and seraphim attend; angels, archangels, principalities, powers, patriarchs, prophets, priests, evangelists, martyrs, and confessors follow the Judge and the King of glory; singing with melody, as never ear heard; shining with majesty, as never eye hath seen; rejoicing without measure, as never heart conceived. O goodly troop of captains! each doth bear a palm of victory in his hand, each doth wear a crown of glory on his head. The church militant is now triumphant: with a final overthrow have they conquered devils, death, and hell; and now must they enjoy God, life, and heaven.

No sooner are Christ and his company in heaven, but this world is set on fire. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up."

Christians, why are we so busy about this world? Look about you; not one of these visible objects shall that day remain, or have a being: those houses wherein

we dwell, these temples wherein we meet, this country and the seas that surround it, shall be all on fire, and consume to nothing. Let others then boast of their inheritances, but Lord give me an inheritance above all these visibles: heaven shall remain, when earth shall vanish. Here we have no abiding city, but, O let us seek one to come, even that one that shall abide for ever and ever. Amen.

OF CHRIST DELIVERING UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD, THE FATHER.

No sooner is Christ in heaven, but he presents the elect unto his Father: of this the apostle speaks, "You hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight." And now having discharged all the offices imposed on him, he leaves his function by delivering up his regal commissions to the Father.

Christ is said to deliver up the kingdom in three respects.

1. Because he ceaseth to execute that authority, which nevertheless he hath. As a judge that goeth from the bench is a judge still, although he giveth no judgment, but employeth his time in other matters; so Christ is said to resign his place, not that his authority is subject to diminution, but in that he makes no shew, for when his enemies are all put under, there is no need that any more blows should proceed from his kingly power.

2. Because the manner of his kingdom, after the judgment-day shall be wholly changed. There is no need in heaven of good laws to keep men from wickedness; the orders of this life are changed into a new kind of government, and in that respect he is said to give over the kingdom.

3. He presents himself unto his Father, not only his offices, but Christ himself is presented and subjected unto God. Christ is considered either as God, or as man, and Mediator between God and man. Christ as God, hath us subject to him, and is subject to none; but Christ, as man and Mediator, is subject to his Father, together with us. In the same way as Christ delivers up

the kingdom to the Father, is Christ also to be subject to his Father; but Christ delivers up his kingdom as man, and as Mediator between God and man: in these respects Christ must reign no more; at that day his Mediatorship shall cease; and by consequence, in respect of his Mediatorship, or in respect of his humanity, he shall that day be subject to his Father. Now it is God reigns over us, but only by Christ as Mediator. God's immediate reign we discern not so clearly for the present, but when the end shall come, and Christ shall resign his office of Mediatorship, then shall the glory of Christ's divinity appear more eminently, not only above all creatures, but above the brightness of Christ's humanity itself: and in this respect Christ then shall be subject, if not by a new subjection, yet so as never was before.

O my soul, what will be thy feelings, when Christ shall present himself unto the Father with thee and all saints saying, "O my Father, here we are all before thy glorious Godhead. Welcome me, and welcome mine: we all expect as high an entertainment, as heaven or the God of heaven can afford!"

OF CHRIST'S SUBJECTION TO THE FATHER, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.

Here we enjoy God by means, as in the use of the word, and sacraments; but when that kingdom, (where these administrations are made use of) shall be delivered up, then shall God himself be all in all, without means, without defect, without end.

1. Saints in glory enjoy God immediately.—Here we enjoy God by means; either he communicates himself unto us through his creatures, or through his ordinances; and hence it is that we know him but in part, we see him but in a glass darkly; but when he shall be our all in all, we shall see him face to face; we shall then "see God as he is," clearly and immediately.

2. Saints in glory enjoy God fully.—"Now I know in part (saith the apostle) but then shall I know, even as I am known." Our enjoyment of God is here but in its infancy, there it will be in its full age; here it is in drops, there it will be in the ocean; here we see God's

back parts, and we can see no more; but there we shall see his face.

3. Saints in glory enjoy God solely.—Not as if there were nothing else in heaven but God, but that God in heaven shall be "all in all," or instead of all. It is God in heaven that makes heaven to be heaven. The saints' blessedness and God's own blessedness, doth consist in the enjoyment of God himself. We shall not properly enjoy any thing else but God. And, indeed what can we imagine to be in heaven, which is not eminently in God himself? If it be greatness, power, glory, victory, majesty, all these are his; if it be joy, love, peace, beauty, or any thing desirable, all these are in him. It is he only that fills the whole capacity of the soul; it is he that so fills it that it can hold no more; it is he only that is the object of love, and therefore he only is properly enjoyed, he only is possessed with a full content, as portion enough, and as reward enough for the soul for ever.

But shall not the saints have to do with something else in heaven? Yes, I believe there shall be in heaven a communion of the blessed spirits of God, an association of the saints and angels of God; yet this shall not take away the sole enjoyment of God, that he should not be their "all in all;" for they shall not mind themselves, or their own good, as created things, but altogether God; they shall not love them, or one another as for themselves, but only for God; here we love God for himself, and it is a gracious love; but there we shall love ourselves for God, and it is a glorious love.

OF CHRIST'S BEING ALL IN ALL TO HIS REDEEMED TO ALL ETERNITY.

Some may object, If God be all in all, what becomes of Christ? Is not this derogatory to him? I answer, No, for,—

1. It is not the Father personally and only, but the Deity essentially and wholly, that is our all in all.—When we say God is all in all, we do not exclude the Son, and Holy Ghost; for the whole Godhead is "all in

all" to all the saints, as well as the first person of the Trinity.

2. It is not derogatory to Christ, but rather it doth exceedingly advance Christ in the thoughts of all his saints.—While it was necessary Christ veiled his Deity, and when his work of mediation is fully finished, Christ then shall reveal his Deity to his saints more than ever before. In this respect might I say, If any person in the Trinity receives more honour than other, Christ should have most; "Every creature which is in heaven, heard I saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Not only unto God, but particularly "to the Lamb for ever and ever."

Now then as I have spoken of God, so that I may speak of Christ, and conclude all with Christ, I assert this doctrine, "That the glory of Christ, which the saints shall behold in Christ to all eternity, is their all in all." In the discussion of which I shall open three particulars.

1. What is the glory of Christ?—I answer, the glory of Christ is either human or divine. There is a human glory, which in time was more especially conferred upon his manhood. There is an essential or divine glory, which before time, and after time, even from everlasting to everlasting, issueth from the Godhead. I shall speak of both these, that we may rather take a view of Christ in those glories, (as we are able) wherein he will appear to his saints as their "all in all" to all eternity.

His human glory regards his soul or body: for his soul, Christ was from the first instant of his conception full of glory, because even then he received grace not by measure. It is true, that by the special dispensation of God, the fulness of glory was withheld from Christ in the time of his passion, but Christ was no sooner exalted, and set on the right hand of God, but immediately the interception of glory was altogether removed. Then it was that his soul was filled *with all* joy, which could possibly flow from the sight of an object so infinitely pleasing, as is the essence, majesty, and glory of God. And then it was, that his body was replenished

with as much glory as was proportionable unto the greatest capacity of any creature. Surely Christ's manhood is exalted unto a higher degree of glory, than the most glorious saint or angel ever was or shall be. Principalities, powers, mights, and dominions, fall short of his glory.

His essential divine glory is that glory which Christ hath as God: this he never laid aside; but as the sun in a gloomy day may not send forth his beams, so Christ the Sun of Righteousness, in the time of his abode upon earth, (except a little glimpse only in his transfiguration) did not send forth his glorious beams; but hereafter the body or humanity of Christ shall not hinder the breaking forth of all his divine glory. But of the nature of this divine glory we must be content to be ignorant till we enter into the confines of eternity.

2. How shall the saints behold this glory?—I answer, as Christ hath a twofold glory, so there is a twofold manner of beholding it;—ocular and mental.

1. There is an ocular vision, a sight of Christ with our very eyes; "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him." With these eyes we shall one day behold the human glory of Christ: I doubt not we shall behold the beauty of heaven, the shining bodies of the saints, but above all, our very eyes shall delightfully contemplate Christ's glorious body; and indeed this shall drown all the other sights.

2. There is a mental vision, a sight of Christ by the eyes of our understandings; and surely this exceeds the former. The eye of the body is only on the body of Christ, but the eye of the soul is on the body and soul, on the humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ. This is the very top of heaven, when saints shall be enlightened with a clear and glorious sight of Christ as God: divines usually call it, "Beatifical vision."

3. Wherein is the comprehensiveness of this expression, that "the beholding of Christ is our all in all?"—

1. It comprehends the immediate seeing and looking upon all that majesty and glory which Jesus Christ hath.

2. It comprehends the enjoyment of Christ in his glory.—Surely the saints shall not be mere idle spectators

of the glory of Christ, but they shall enjoy him, and be taken into fellowship with him. It was said of Moses, that he did see the land of Canaan, but he was not admitted into it; it is otherwise with the saints, they shall see heaven, and they shall enter into heaven. "Come thou faithful servant, and enter into thy Master's joy," not only behold it, but enter into it. They must behold Christ, and take possession of Christ, and enjoy him as their own. In this respect is Christ our all in all. He is all in himself, and if we enjoy him, he is "all in all" unto us.

OF KNOWING JESUS AS CARRYING ON THE GREAT WORK OF OUR SALVATION IN HIS SECOND COMING.

Many excellent things are in this transaction. Is it not of high concernment, that he that now sits at God's right hand interceding for us, should thence come again to judge the world, and after judgment take up his saints with him into glory? Cast thyself down at the feet of Christ, and cry out, O the depth of glory, and majesty, and goodness, and grace in thee! O the riches of love, that thou shouldst let out thyself in these several admirable dispensations! Come, be exact in this study; gather up all the crumbs and filings of this gold; the least beams of the glory of Christ (especially as it shines and glitters at his second coming) have so much light, and love, and splendour in them, as that they will be very sweet to look upon them Every piece or part of this knowledge will be of special use and worth; yea, the low and imperfect knowledge of this mystery is of infinitely more value than the high and perfect knowledge of ten thousand things besides.

OF CONSIDERING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Consider Christ preparing for judgment.—Realize it, as if thou saw or heard the same. No sooner the time determined which God hath appointed, but Christ commands, "Make ready ye angels to wait upon me, and ye glorious souls that now are with me; it is the Father's

pleasure, and it is my pleasure to go down into the nether world, and pass my doom upon all flesh." O what a shout may I imagine in heaven at this news! If those that live on earth are commanded by Christ, "to lift up their heads because their redemption draweth nigh;" how much more shall they joy in heaven, who have "waited for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies!"

2. Consider Christ's coming to judgment.—All now in readiness, the Son of God comes forth with all his glorious attendants. O what a goodly sight is here! In this meditation I may see with John, "the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Down come Christ and the angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect; and as they come along, see how they shake the heavens; see what a flood of fire goes before them; see how they pass into the cloud, where Christ erects a throne for himself to sit on. Here is enough to dazzle my eyes, and to take up my thoughts; O my soul think upon it!

3. Consider Christ's sentencing his saints for eternal glory.—The books are opened, and in the presence of all the world, Christ pronounces that sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Come my saints, come with me to glory; come from labour to rest; from the jaws of death, to the joys of eternal life. Come now and possess with me the inheritance of heaven, where you shall be for love, sons; for birth-right, heirs; for dignity, kings; for holiness, priests. Come, you may boldly enter in, for my Father hath prepared and kept it for you, ever since the first foundation of the world.

4. Consider Christ and the saints judging the rest of the world.—No sooner are the saints sentenced, but Christ turns to the wicked, and bids them "go into everlasting fire;" in which sentence the saints shall join with Christ himself. When the saints appear, it is not only by a summons, but with commission; not only to be judged, but to judge; not only shall they stand at

Christ's right hand, but they shall sit down on the throne of the Son of God, to judge the wicked angels and the world.

5. Consider Christ and his saints going up into heaven.—No sooner hath he done his work with the world, and sent them away, but he shall go with all his troops following him into heaven. And as they go along, heaven opens unto them, and they enter in. What welcomes they have there is past my telling. O my soul, think over these things, and be so enlarged in thy thoughts, that before they go, thou mayest feel the sweet, and taste of this goodness of the Lord.

6. Consider all the several transactions that will follow in heaven.—Then will Christ present all his elect to God his Father. Then will he give in all his commissions which he hath received from his Father. "Then will the Son himself be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all." I cannot stay to enlarge on these; only remember, though God be all in all, that excludes not Christ, for he also is all in all to all his saints, even to all eternity. O then what infinite satisfaction mayest thou expect in the beholding of Christ in heaven! The lustre of his glory will be diffused unto all, so that some shall enjoy the glory of the sun, others of the moon, and others of the stars. O my soul, if thou art but a star there, yet if thou art filled with that light that comes from the Sun of Righteousness, it is enough. O consider this looking unto Jesus: As it is thy duty on earth, so it is thy privilege and highest happiness in heaven for ever and ever.

OF DESIRING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Whilst many shrink at the thoughts of death and judgment, it is the privilege of believers to regard the day of Christ as a desirable season.

1. It is "a day of the manifestation of the sons of God."—Then shall it be known who are true saints, and who are reprobates: here we live in confusion, and in our most refined churches (if we have none scandalous) yet we may have many hypocrites, and we cannot dis-

cern them; but in that day it shall be known who are the Lord's, and who are not. The hypocrite shall then be unmantled, and the sons of God shall shine and glitter as the snn, that all may run and read, "These are God's elect, these are the sons and daughters of the Almighty."

2. It is "the day of adoption, and of the redemption of our bodies."—I deny not that the saints are adopted and redeemed before this day; but this adoption, and redemption is not consummated, before Christ come again to judgment; then shall Christ say, "These are my sons whom I have redeemed, and as I have set them free, so now shall they live and reign with me for ever and ever."

3. It is "the day of Christ's coming."—He was here not long since, travelling upon the earth, and about our business; which done, he went away to heaven upon a special errand for his saints; and there now he is to intercede for them, and prepare them mansions for eternity. And no sooner shall he have dispatched his business, but he will come to earth again to give a report of his transactions there. O! why are his chariots so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

4. It is "the day of Christ's glory."—What glorious descriptions have we in scripture of Christ's coming to judgment! "The Son of man shall come from heaven with power and great glory;" and the work is no sooner done, but he shall return again into heaven with power and great glory. Not to mention the essential glory of Christ, O! the glory of Christ as Mediator; all the glory that Ahasuerus could put upon his favourites was nothing to this spiritual and heavenly glory, which the Father will put upon the Son; it is a glory above all the glories that ever were, or ever shall be; it is an eternal glory; and the tongues of all the saints shall be employed to all eternity to celebrate it. This will be their everlasting song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever, and ever, Amen."

OF HOPING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

A scriptural hope is a sure anchor to the soul, but the hope of the hypocrite shall perish. Now, to clear this point, that our hopes are of the right stamp, and not counterfeit hopes, I shall lay down some signs, whereby we may know that Christ's coming is for us, and for our good, and for the grace that is to be given us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. If we are born again, then will his glorious coming be to glorify us.—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible." Come then, you that hope for glory, try yourselves. Is there a change in your hearts, words, and lives? Is there a mighty work of grace upon your spirits? Are you experienced in the great mystery of regeneration? Here is your evidence that your hopes are sound, and that you shall sit upon thrones to judge the world.

2. If we long for his coming, then will he come to satisfy our longings.—"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they shall be satisfied." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." This "looking for Christ," is in scripture a frequent description of a true believer in Christ. Real Christians are ever "looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." Here are two signs in one verse, "Looking for, and hastening unto:" true believers are not only in a posture looking for the coming of Jesus Christ; but also, as it were going forth to meet Jesus Christ with burning lamps. Now Christians, lay this character to heart. Do you long for this glorious and second coming of Christ? Content not yourselves with a hope of possibility or probability, but reach out to the full assurance of hope. The hope of possibility is but a weak hope; the hope of probability is but a fluctuating hope; but the hope of certainty is a settled hope. Such a hope sweetens all the thoughts of

God and Christ, of death and judgment, of heaven, yea, and of hell too, whilst we hope that we are saved from it.

OF BELIEVING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Believing in Christ is more than hoping in Christ: faith eyes things as present, but hope eyes things as future; and hence the apostle describes faith to be "the substance of things hoped for." O if we could but see things now, as they shall appear at that last general day of judgment, how mightily would they work upon our souls! I verily think the want of this work of faith is the cause almost of all the evil in the world; and the acting of faith on this subject, would produce fruits, even to admiration. If we could but see that glory of God in Christ, and these glorious treasures of mercies that shall then be communicated; if we could but see those dreadful evils that are now threatened, and shall then be fulfilled; this would draw the hardest heart under heaven. Come let us act faith this day; as if this day were the last day; a thousand years are but as one day to faith: it takes present possession of the glorious things of the kingdom of God even now.

1. Faith must principally look to the purpose of Christ in his second coming to judgment.—Now the ends are, in respect of the wicked, that they may be destroyed, for "he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." He shall come with flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. This is the day when the wicked shall suddenly start out of sleep, and meet with ghastly amazedness at the mouth of their sepulchres; above them stands the Judge condemning, beneath, hell gaping, on the right hand, justice threatening, on all sides, the world burning; to go forward is intolerable, and to go backward is impossible, to turn aside is unavailable; which way then? heaven's gates are shut, hell's mouth is open, where they must end their endless misery. O the shrieks that will then be heard, when millions of men and women, at

the same instant, shall fearfully cry out, and when their cries shall mingle with the thunders of groaning heavens, and with the crack of the dissolving world, when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes. "Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you."

2. In respect of the godly, that they may be saved, that they may see and enjoy Christ to all eternity.—This is a main end of Christ's coming, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me."

3. In respect of Christ himself, that he may be glorified in his justice and in his mercy.

1. His justice will be glorified, especially in punishing the wicked: here on earth little justice is done on most offenders, though some public crimes are sometimes punished, yet the actions of closets and chambers, the designs and thoughts of men, escape the hand of justice; and therefore God hath so ordained it, that there shall be a day of doom, wherein all that are let alone by men, shall be questioned by God. Then all thoughts shall be examined, and secret actions viewed, and the infinite number of those sins which escaped here, shall be blazoned there. O how will God glorify his justice at that day! Surely his justice shall shine, and be eminently glorious in every passage.

2. His mercy will be glorified in rewarding the saints. —And this is the supreme end of his coming to judgment, "He shall come (saith the apostle) to be glorified in his saints." Not but that the angels shall glorify the riches of his grace, as well as saints; but because the angels never sinned, "(They have now kept their robes of innocency, their cloth of gold above five thousand years, without one spark of dirt, or change of colour;") therefore the glory of his grace is more especially fastened on saints, that sometimes were sinners. And hence their song to all eternity will be, "GLORY TO THE LAMB, AND GLORY TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE FOR EVERMORE."

Thus for directions: one word of application, or a few motives to work faith in you in this respect.

1. Christ in his word and by his ministers invites you to believe.—These are his letters from heaven, "Come all to the marriage supper of the Lamb; oh, every one that thirsts come in." Heaven's gate is open to all that knock. There is Rahab the harlot, and Manasseh the murderer, and Mary that had so many devils. Ah poor soul, why dost thou make exceptions, where God makes none? Why shouldst thou exclude thyself out of these golden gates, when God doth not?

2. Christ by his spirit, moves, excites and provokes you to believe.—"It is the Spirit that convinceth the world of sin, especially of that great sin of unbelief; and then of righteousness," which Christ procureth by going to his Father. It is the Spirit that enlightens and directs you, as occasion is, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." It is the Spirit that rouseth and awakeneth you by effectual motion, "Arise my love, my fair one, and come away." If now then you feel your spirits docile, say with him in the gospel, I believe, Lord help my unbelief. I believe when Jesus comes again, he will receive me to himself, and that I shall be for ever with the Lord. Amen, Amen.

OF LOVING JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

In order to excite our love to Christ let us meditate on his love to us.

1. Christ will come.—Is not this love? As his departure was a rich testimony of his love, "It is expedient for you that I go away,"—so in his returning, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." O how can we think of Christ's returning, and not meditate on the greatness of his love? Might he not send his angels; but he must come himself? We are filthy Lazars, from the crown of our heads, to the soles of our feet we are full of sores; and yet the King of heaven puts on his best attire, and comes in person with all his retinue of glory, to fetch us from our graves to his own court of heaven.

2. Christ will sentence his saints for eternal life.—

Here is love indeed! Every word of the sentence is full of love. It contains the reward of his saints, a reward beyond their work, and beyond the promise, and beyond their thoughts, and beyond their understanding. It is a participation of the joys of God, and of the inheritance of the judge himself. "Come, enter into your Master's joy, inherit the kingdom." Never was more love expressed in words than Christ expresseth in this sentence, "Come ye blessed," &c.

3. Christ will take up all his saints with him into glory, where he will present them to his Father, and then be their all in all to all eternity.—This is the height of Christ's love; this is the immediate love that comes out from the precious heart of Jesus Christ. I want words to express this love of Jesus: a sea of love is nothing, it hath a bottom; a heaven of love is nothing, it hath a brim; but infinite, eternal, everlasting love hath no bottom, no brim, no bounds;—and do we not yet love him? Do we not yet feel the fire of love break forth? If not, it is time to turn our preaching into prayer,—"O thou who art the element or sun of love, come with thy power; let out one beam, one ray, one gleam of love upon my soul. Shine hot upon my heart, remember thy promise, to circumcise my heart, that I may love the Lord my God, with all my heart, and with all my soul."

OF JOYING IN JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

Christ delights to have his people look upon him with delight. All that Christ doth to his saints tends to this end: if he cast down, it is but to raise them up; if he humble, it is but to exalt; if he kill, it is but to make alive; in every disposition still he hath a tender care to preserve their joy. If you find it a hard thing to joy in Jesus in reference to his second coming, think of these motives.

1. Christ's coming is the Christian's encouragement.—"You shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory; and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The signs of his com-

ing are the hopes of your approaching glory; and what should you do then but prepare for it with exceeding joy? Many evils now surround you; Satan hath his snares, and the world its baits, and your own hearts are apt to betray you into your enemies' hands; but when Christ comes, you shall have full deliverance, and perfect redemption; and therefore look up, and lift up your heads.

2. Christ will lead us into glory.—As the bridegroom after nuptials leads his bride to his own home, that there they may dwell together, so Christ our royal Bridegroom will lead us into the palace of his glory. And is not this joy of our Lord enough to cause our joy? O what welcomes shall we have into this city? There shall we see Christ; there shall we be set as a seal on Christ's arm, and as a seal upon his heart; there shall we be filled with his love, enlightened with his light, encircled in his arms, following his steps, praising his name, and admiring his glory. There shall we joy indeed; "for in thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

OF CALLING ON JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

1. Let us pray for the coming of Christ.—This was the constant prayer of the church, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. The Spirit and the bride say, come." Well knows the bride that the day of Christ's coming is her wedding-day, the day of presenting her unto his Father; and therefore, no wonder if she pray for the hastening of it. "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or a young hart."

2. Let us praise him for his coming.—Our engagements to Christ, even for this transaction, are so great, that we can never extol his name; at that day the books shall be opened, and why not the book of our engagements to Jesus Christ? I can surely tell you it is written full; the page and margin, both within and without, are written full. O then let our hearts be full of praises! let us join with those blessed elders that fell down before the Lamb, and sung, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

OF CONFORMING TO JESUS IN THAT RESPECT.

When the apostle would persuade Christians to patience under the cross, he lays down first the cloud of witnesses, all the martyrs of the church of Christ; and secondly, Jesus Christ himself, as of more virtue and power than all the rest. There are several particulars in which we should conform.

1. Christ will prepare for judgment; let us prepare for his judging us.—If Christ come and find us unprepared, what will become of us? The very thought of Christ's sudden coming to judgment, might well put us into a waiting posture, that we might be still in readiness. It cannot be long, and alas, what is a little time when it is gone. Is it not high time then to prepare our lamps, to trim our souls, to watch, and fast, and pray, and meditate, and remember, that for all our deeds, good or evil, God will bring us to judgment?

2. Christ at his coming, will summon all his saints to arise, and to come to him in the clouds; let us then summon our souls to arise to Christ in the heavens.—What Christ will do really at that day, let us do spiritually on this day. We had need to be continually stirring up the gifts and graces that are in us. It is the Lord's pleasure that we should daily come to him: he would have us on the wing of prayer, and on the wing of meditation, and on the wing of faith: he would have us to be still mounting up in divine contemplation to his Majesty.

3. Christ will at last judge all our souls, aud judge all the wicked to eternal flames; O let us judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord. Let us search out our sins, and confess them before the Lord. Let us cry mightily to God in Christ for the remission of them.

4. Christ at his coming will be glorified in his saints; O let him now be glorified in us.—Let us now conform to the image of his glory; let us look on Christ till we are like Christ, not only in grace, but in glory; and this glory, as it comes from him, so let it redound to him. Let us so behold the glory of the Lord, in the glass of the gospel, as that we may be "changed into the same

image from glory to glory," from a lesser measure, to a higher measure of glory.

Now all is done, shall I speak a word for Christ, or rather for ourselves in relation to Christ. If I had but one word more to speak in the world, it should be this; "LET ALL OUR SPIRITS BE TAKEN UP WITH CHRIST." Surely Christ is enough to fill all our thoughts, desires, hopes, loves, joys, or whatever is within us, or without us. Christ alone comprehends all the circumference of all our happiness. O the worth of Christ! Compare we other things with Christ, and they will bear no weight at all. Cast into the balance with him angels; they are wise, but he is wisdom: cast into the balance with him men; they are liars, lighter than vanity, but Christ is "the Amen, the faithful witness:" cast into the scales kings, and all their glory; why, he is King of kings; cast in two worlds, and add to the weight millions of heavens of heavens, and Christ outweighs all. Shall I yet come nearer home? What is heaven but to be with Christ? What is life eternal but to believe in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ? Where may we find peace with God, and reconciliation with God, but only in Christ? As Christ is all in all, so let him, O my soul, be the full and complete subject of thy desire, and hope, and faith, and love, and joy; let him be in thy thoughts the first in the morning, and the last at night. Remember how he came out of his Father's bosom for thee, wept for thee, bled for thee, poured out his life for thee, is now risen for thee, gone to heaven for thee, sits at God's right hand, and rules all the world for thee, makes intercession for thee, and at the end of the world will come again for thee, and receive thee to himself, to live with him for ever and ever. Surely if thus I believe and live, my life is comfortable, and my death will be sweet. If there be any heaven upon earth, I shall find it in the practice and exercise of this gospel duty, in "LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

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