Presented to the
Univ. of Michigan
by
Henry C. Granger
Class of '71

www.libtool.com.cn

GENERAL LIBRARY
OF
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

PRESENTED BY
Rev. Henry C. Granger
Class of 1871 Jan. 25 1901

Sept. 9 1790

Bishop Humphries his book

2 Vollom

BX
8915
.F58
1770

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

THE WHOLE

WORKS

www.libtool.com.cn

OF THE REVEREND

40352

MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL at *Dartmouth* in *Devon*.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the principal Matters contained in the Whole.

THE EIGHT EDITION.

VOL. II.

PAISLEY:

Printed by A. WEIR and A. M'LEAN.

And sold at the Shop of A. WEIR, near the Cross.

MDCCLXX.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

CONTENTS.

The FOUNTAIN of LIFE opened up.

Pag.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Wherein four weighty Ends of Christ's Humiliation are opened, and particularly applied.

Isa. liii. 2. "He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," 1

SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Resurrection of Christ, with its Influences upon the Saints Resurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the first Step of his Exaltation.

Matth. xxviii. 6. "He is not here; for he is risen, as he said: "come, see the place where the Lord lay," 22

SERMON XL.

Wherein the Ascension of Christ is opened, and variously improved, being the second Step of his Exaltation.

John xx. 17. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am "not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God," 38

SERMON XLI.

Wherein Christ's sitting at God's right-hand is explained and applied, being the third Step of his glorious Exaltation.

Heb. i. 3. "——When he had by himself purged our sins, sat "down on the right-hand of the majesty on high," 43

SERMON XLII.

Wherein Christ coming to Judgment, being the fourth and last Degree of his Exaltation, is opened and improved.

Acts x. 42. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, "and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be "the Judge of quick and dead," 59

The METHOD of GRACE in the Gospel-Redemption.

Pag.

The epistle Dedicatory, 95

——— to the Reader, 102

SERMON I.

Opening the general Nature of effectual Application.

1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 107

SERMON II.

Wherein the Believer's union with Christ is stated and opened, as a principal Part of Gospel-Application.

John xvii. 23. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be "made perfect in one," 127

SERMON III.

Opening the Nature and Use of the Gospel-ministry, as an external means of applying Christ.

2 Cor. v. 20. "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 to God," 144

SERMON IV.

Explaining the Work of the Spirit, as the internal, and most effectual Means of the Application of Christ.

John vi. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father "which hath sent me, draw him," 163

SERMON V.

Opening the Work of the Spirit more particularly, by which the Soul is enabled to apply Christ.

Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in "trespasses and sins," 182

SERMON VI.

Describing that Act on our Part, by which we do actually and effectually apply Christ to our own Souls.

John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he "power to become the sons of God; even to them that "believe on his name," 202

SERMON VII.

John i. 12. "But as many as received him," &c. 222

SERMON VIII.

Setting forth the Believer's fellowship with Christ, the next End of his Application to them.

Psalm xlv. 7. "——Therefore God thy God, hath anointed "thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," 234

www.libtool.com.cn

Pag.

SERMON IX.

Containing the first general Use of Exhortation, inviting all Men to apply Jesus Christ.

Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are "heavy laden, and I will give you rest," 259

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced, by one Motive drawn from the first Title of Christ.

Matth. ix. 12. "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that "are sick," 294

SERMON XI.

Containing the second Motive to enforce the general Exhortation, from a second Title of Christ.

Luke i. 72. "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, "and remember his holy covenant," 307

SERMON XII.

Containing a third Motive to enliven the general Exhortation, from a third Title of Christ.

Cant. v. Part of Verse 16. "—Yea, He is altogether lovely," 320

SERMON XIII.

Alluring the Hearts of men to come to Christ, by a fourth Motive contained in another Title of Christ.

Haggai ii. 7. "—And the desire of all nations shall come," 332

SERMON XIV.

Containing the fifth Motive to apply Christ, drawn from another excellent Title of Christ.

1 Cor. ii. 8. "Which none of the princes of this world have "known, for had they known him, they would not have "crucified the Lord of glory," 343

SERMON XV.

Opening the sixth Motive to come to Christ, contained in the sixth and last Title of Christ.

Luke ii. 25. "—Waiting for the [Consolation] of Israel," 351

SERMON XVI.

Enforcing the general Exhortation, by a seventh Motive drawn from the first Benefit purchased by Christ.

Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his "grace," 360

SERMON XVII.

Opening the eighth Motive to come to Christ, drawn from the sixth Benefit purchased by Christ for Believers.

Eph. i. 6. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein "he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," 369

Pag.

SERMON XVIII.

The Liberty of Believers, opened and ſtated.

John viii. 36. "If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye "ſhall be free indeed," 379

SERMON XIX.

The Saints coming Home to God, by Reconciliation, and Glorification, opened and applied.

1 Pet. iii. 18. "For Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt "for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God," 388

SERMON XX.

The great uſefulneſs of the Law or Word of God, in order to the Application of Chriſt.

Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once; but when "the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died," 397

SERMON XXI.

Rom. vii. 9. "For I was alive without the law once," &c. 405

SERMON XXII.

The Teachings of God opened, in their Nature and Neceſſity.

John vi. 45. "It is written in the Prophets, And they ſhall be "all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, "and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," 417

SERMON XXIII.

John vi. 45. "It is written in the Prophets," &c. 429

SERMON XXIV.

Of the Manner, and Importance of the Spirit's Indwelling.

1 John iii. 24. "—And hereby we know that he abideth in "us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 440

SERMON XXV.

Of the Nature and Neceſſity of the New Creature.

2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new "creature: old things are paſſed away; behold, all things "are become new," 458

SERMON XXVI.

2 Cor. v. 17. "Therefore if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new "creature," &c. 473

SERMON XXVII.

Of the Nature, Principle, and Neceſſity, of Mortification.

Gal. v. 24. "And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the "fleſh, with the affections and luſts," 483

www.libtool.com.cn

* *

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XXXVIII.

Wherein four weighty Ends of CHRIST's Humiliation are opened, and particularly applied.

ISA. liii. 2. *He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.*

WE are now arrived at the last particular which we designed to speak to in Christ's *state of humiliation*, namely, the *designs* and blessed *ends* for which he was so deeply abased. It is inconsistent with the prudence of a common agent, to be at vast expences of time, pains, and cost, and not to propound to himself a design worthy of all those expences. And it is much less imaginable, that Christ should so stupendously abase himself, by stooping from the bosom of his Father to the state of the dead, where our last discourse left him, if there had not been some excellent, and glorious thing in his eye, the attainment whereof, might give him a content and satisfaction, equivalent to all the sorrows, and abasements, he endured for it.

And so much is plainly held forth in this scripture, "He shall "see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." In which words three things fall under our consideration.

First, The travailing pangs of Christ. So the agonies of his soul, and torments of his body are fitly called, not only because of the sharpness and acuteness of them, being in that respect, like birth-pangs of a travailing woman, for so this * word signifies, but also because they fore-run, and make way for the birth, which abundantly recompences all those labours. I shall not here insist upon the pangs and agonies endured by Christ in the garden, or upon the cross, which the prophet stiles "the travail of his "soul," having, in the former sermons, opened it largely in its particulars, but pass to the

* עמל, πόνου, This word signifies both the birth and pain attending it. *Strigel.*

Second Thing considerable in these words; and that is the *assured fruits* and effects of this his travail; *he shall see the travail of his soul.* By seeing, understand the fruition, obtainment, or enjoyment of the end of his sufferings. He shall not shed his blood upon an hazard: his design shall not miscarry; but he shall certainly see the ends he aimed at accomplished.

www.libtool.com.cn

And *Thirdly*, This shall yield him great satisfaction: as a "woman forgets her sorrow, for joy that a man is born into "the world," John xvi. 21. he shall see it, and be *satisfied.* As God, when he had finished the work of creation, viewed that his work with pleasure and satisfaction; so doth our exalted Redeemer, with great contentment, behold the happy issues of his hard sufferings. It affords pleasure to a man to see great affairs, by orderly conduct, brought to happy issues. Much more doth it yield delight to Jesus Christ, to see the results of that most profound wisdom and love, wherein he carried on redemption-work. All runs into this doctrine.

Doct. *That all the blessed designs and ends for which the Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to the death of the cross, shall certainly be attained, to his full content and satisfaction.*

MY present business is not to prove, that Christ shall certainly obtain what he died for; nor to open the great satisfaction and pleasure which will arise to him out of those issues of his death, but to point at the principal ends of his death; making some brief improvements as we pass along.

First, Then let us enquire into the designs and ends of Christ's humiliation, at least the main and principal ones; and we shall find, that as the sprinkling of the typical blood in the Old Testament was done for four weighty ends or uses, answerably, the precious and invaluable blood of the Testator and surety of the New Testament is shed for four weighty ends also.

First, That blood was shed and applied to *deliver* from danger; Exod. xii. 13. "And the blood shall be to you for a "† token upon the houses where you are; and when I see "the blood, I will pass over you: and the plague shall not be "upon you, to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt."

† The Jews implicitly acknowledged by this ceremony, that they were to be liberated from eternal death by the blood of the Messiah. *Vatab.*

Secondly, That blood was shed to make an *atonement* betwixt God and the people; Lev. iv. 20. "And he shall do with the "bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering; so shall "he do with this; and the priest shall make an atonement for "them, and it shall be forgiven them."

Thirdly, That blood was shed to *purify* persons from their ceremonial pollutions, Lev. xiv. 6. 7. "He shall dip the cedar "wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, with the living bird, in the "blood of the bird that was killed over the running water, and "he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the "leprosy seven times*; and shall pronounce him clean, and "shall let the living bird loose in the open field."

Fourthly, That † blood was shed to *ratify* and confirm the testament or covenant of God with the people, Exod. xxiv. 8. "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." These were the four main ends for shedding, and sprinkling that typical blood. Suitably, there are four principal ends for shedding and applying Christ's blood. As that typical blood was shed to deliver from danger, so this was shed to deliver from wrath, *even the wrath to come*. That was shed to make an atonement, so was this. That was shed to purify persons from uncleanness, so was this. That was shed to confirm the Testament, so was this. As will appear in the following particulars more at large.

First, One principal design and end of shedding the blood of Christ was *to deliver his people from danger, the danger of that wrath which burns down to the lowest hell.* So you find, 1 Thess. i. 10. "Even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come." Here our misery is both *specified* and aggravated. Specified, in calling it *wrath*, a word of deep and dreadful signification. The damned best understand the importance of that word. And *aggravated*, in calling it *wrath to come*, or coming wrath. Wrath to come implies both the *futurity* and *perpetuity* of this wrath. It is wrath that shall certainly and inevitably come upon sinners. As sure as the night follows the day. As sure as the winter follows the summer, so shall wrath follow sin, and the pleasures thereof. Yea, it is not only certainly future, but when

* *Seven times*, Signifies perfect expiation; this number was consecrated to denote perfection. *Menoch.*

† The *shedding* and *sprinkling* of *blood* signifies that the covenant would be sure and stable, even with the hazard of life. *Rivet.*

it comes it will be abiding wrath, or wrath still coming. When millions of years and ages are past and gone, this will still be *wrath to come*. Ever coming as a river ever flowing.

Now, from this *wrath to come*, hath Jesus delivered his people by his death. For that was the price laid down for their redemption from the wrath of the great and terrible God, Rom. v. 9. "Much more then being justified by his blood, we shall "be saved from wrath through him." The blood of Jesus was the price that ransomed man from this wrath. And it was shed not only to deliver them from *wrath to come*, but to deliver them freely, fully, distinguishingly, and wonderfully from it.

First, Freely, by his own voluntary interposition and susception of the mediatorial office, moved thereunto by his own bowels of compassion; which yearned over his elect in their misery ‡. The saints were once a lost generation, that had sold themselves, and their inheritance also; and had not wherewithal to redeem either: but they had a near kinsman (even their elder brother by the mother's side) to whom the right of redemption did belong; who being a mighty man of wealth, the heir of all things, undertook to be their *Goell*; and out of his own proper substance to redeem both them and their inheritance. Them to be his own inheritance, Eph. i. 10. And heaven to be theirs, 1 Pet. i. 4. All this he did most freely, when none made supplication to him. No sighing of the prisoners came before him. He designed it for us before we had a being. And when the purposes of his grace were come to their parturient fulness, then did he freely lay out the infinite treasures of his blood to purchase our deliverance from wrath.

Secondly, Christ by death hath delivered his people *fully*. A full deliverance it is, both in respect of *time* and *degrees*. A full deliverance in respect of *time*. It was not a *reprieve*, but a *deliverance*. He thought it not worth the shedding of his blood to respite the execution for a while. Nay, in the procurement of their eternal deliverance from wrath, and in the purchase of their eternal inheritance, he hath but an even bargain, not a jot more than his blood was worth. Therefore is he become "the author of (eternal salvation) to them that obey him," Heb. v. 9. And as it is full in respect of *time*, so likewise in respect of *degrees*. He died not to procure a mitigation or abatement of the rigour or severity of the sentence, but to rescue his people fully from all degrees of wrath. So that there

‡ See Mr. Case's Mount Pisgah, p. 85.

is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. All the wrath of God to the last drop, was squeezed out into that bitter cup which Christ drank off, and wrung out the very dregs thereof.

Thirdly, This deliverance obtained for us by the death of Christ, is a *special* and distinguishing deliverance. Not common to all, but peculiar to some; and they by nature no better than those that are left under wrath. Yea, as to natural disposition, moral qualifications, and external endowments, oftentimes far inferior to them that perish. How often do we find a moral righteousness, an harmless innocency, a pretty ingenuity, a readiness to all offices of love; in them that are notwithstanding left under the dominion of other lusts, and under the damning sentence of the law; whilst, on the other side, proud, peevish, sensual, morose, and unpolished natures, are chosen to be the subjects of this salvation. "You see your calling, brethren," 1 Cor. i. 26.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, It is a *wonderful* salvation. It would weary the arm of an angel to write down all the wonders that are in this salvation. That ever such a design should be laid, such a project of grace contrived in the heart of God, who might have suffered the whole species to perish. That it should only concern man, and not the angels, by nature more excellent than us; that Christ should be pitched upon to go forth upon this glorious design. That he should effect it in such a way, by taking our nature and suffering the penalty of the law therein. That our deliverance should be wrought out and finished when the Redeemer and his design seemed both to be lost and perished. These with many more are such wonders as will take up eternity itself to search, admire, and adore them.

Before I part from this first end of the death of Christ, give me leave to deduce two useful corollaries from it, and then proceed to a second.

Coroll. 1. Hath Christ by death delivered his people from the wrath to come? *How ingrate and disingenuous a thing must it be then for those that have obtained such a deliverance as this, to repine and grudge at those light afflictions they suffer for a moment upon Christ's account in this world!*

Alas! What are these sufferings, that we should grudge at them? Are they like those which the Redeemer suffered for our deliverance? Did ever any of us endure for him what he endured for us? Or is there any thing you can suffer for Christ in this world, comparable to this *wrath to come*, which you must

have endured, had he not, by the price of his own blood rescued you from it.

Compare. Reader, wilt thou but make the comparison in thine own thoughts, in the following particulars, and then pronounce when thou hast duly compared.

www.libtool.com.cn

The Natures. *First*, What is the wrath of man to the wrath of God? What is the arm of a creature to the anger of a Deity? Can man thunder with an arm like God?

Subjects. *Secondly*, What are the sufferings of the vile body here, to the tortures of a soul and body in hell? The torments of the soul are the very soul of torments.

Duration. *Thirdly*, What are the troubles of a moment to that wrath, which, after millions of years are gone, will still be called *wrath to come?* O what compare betwixt a point of hasty time, and the interminable duration of vast eternity?

Continuity. *Fourthly*, What compare is there betwixt the intermitting sorrows and sufferings of this life, and the continued uninterrupted *wrath to come?* Our troubles here are not constant, there are gracious relaxations, lucid intervals here; but the wrath to come allows not a moment's ease or mitigation.

Designs. *Fifthly*, What light and easy troubles are those, which, being put into the rank and order of adjuvant causes, work under the influence and blessing of the first cause, to the everlasting good of them that love God, compared with that *wrath to come*, out of which no good effects or issues are possible to proceed to the souls on which it lies?

And companions. *Sixthly*, and *Lastly*, How much more comfortable is it, to suffer in fellowship with Christ and his saints for righteousness sake, than to suffer with devils and reprobates for wickedness sake? Grudge not then, O ye that are delivered by Jesus from wrath to come, at any thing ye do suffer, or shall suffer from Christ, or for Christ in this world.

Coroll. 2. If Jesus Christ hath delivered his people from the wrath to come, *how little comfort can any man take in his present enjoyments and accommodations in the world, whilst it remains a question with him, whether he be delivered from the wrath to come?* It is well for the present, but will it be so still? Man is a prospecting creature, and it will not satisfy

him that his present condition is comfortable, except he have some hope it shall be so hereafter. It can afford a man little content that all is easy and pleasant about him now, whilst such passages and terrible hints of *wrath to come* are given him by his own conscience daily. Oh, methinks such a thought as this, *what if I am reserved for the wrath to come?* should be to him, as the fingers appearing upon the plaister of the wall were to Belteshazzar, in the height of a frolic *. It is a custom with some of the Indians, when they have taken a prisoner (whom they intend not presently to eat) to bring him with great triumph into the village, where he dwelleth that hath taken him; and placing him in the house of one that was slain in the wars, as it were to re-celebrate his funerals, they give him his wives or sisters to attend on him, and use at his pleasure; they apparel him gorgeously, and feed him with all the dainty meats that may be had; affording him all the pleasure that can be devised; when he hath passed certain months in all these pleasures, and (like a capon) is made fat with delicate fare, they assemble themselves upon some festival day, and in great pomp bring him to the place of execution, where they kill and eat him.

Such are all the pleasures and enjoyments of the wicked, which feed them for the day of slaughter. How little stomach can a man have to those dainties that understands the end and meaning of them! Give not sleep therefore to thine eyes, reader, till thou hast got good evidence, that thou art of that number whom *Jesus hath delivered from wrath to come.* Till thou canst say, he is a Jesus to thee. This may be made out to thy satisfaction three ways.

First, *If Jesus have delivered thee from sin, the cause of wrath, thou mayest conclude he hath delivered thee from the wrath, the effect and fruits of sin.* Upon this account the sweet name of Jesus, was imposed upon him, Matth. i. 21. "Thou shalt call his "name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Whilst a man lies under the dominion and guilt of sin, he lies exposed to *wrath to come;* and when he is delivered from the guilt and power of sin, he is certainly delivered from the danger of this coming wrath. Where sin is not imputed, wrath is not threatned.

Secondly, *If thy soul do set an inestimable value on Jesus Christ, and be endeared to him upon the account of that inexpressible grace manifested in this deliverance, it is a good sign thy*

* Sir R. Barkley, on the felicity of Man, p. 12, 13.

soul hath a share in it. Mark what an epithet the saints give Christ upon this account, Col. i. 12, 13. "Giving thanks to the "Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, "and translated us into the kingdom of his [dear] Son." Christ is therefore *dear*, and dear beyond all compare, to his saved ones. I remember it is storied of the poor enthralled Grecians, that when † Titus Flaminius had restored their ancient liberties, and proclamation was to be made in the market-place by an herald; they so pressed to hear it, that the herald was in great danger of being stifled and pressed to death among the people; but when the proclamation was ended, there were heard such shouts and joyful acclamations, that the very birds of the air fell down astonished with the noise, while they continued to cry, Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, a Saviour, a Saviour; and all the following night they continu- dancing and singing about his pavilion.

www.libtool.com.cn

If such a deliverance so endeared them to Titus, how should the great deliverance from wrath to come, endear all the redeemed to love their dear Jesus? This is the native effect of mercy on the soul that hath felt it.

Thirdly, To conclude, *A disposition and readiness of mind to do, or endure any thing for Christ's sake, upon the account of his deliverance from the wrath to come; is a good evidence you are so delivered*, Col. i. 10, 11. "That we may walk worthy of the Lord "to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." There is readiness to do for Christ. "Strengthened with all might, "according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long- "suffering with joyfulness." There is a chearful readiness to endure any thing for Christ. And how both these flow from the sense of this great deliverance from wrath, the 12th verse will inform you, which was but now cited. Oh then be serious and assiduous in the resolution of this grand case. Till this be resolved, nothing can be pleasant to thy soul.

End 2. As the typical blood was shed and sprinkled to deliver from danger, so it was shed to make *atonement*, Lev. iv. 20. "He shall expiate (we translate, *atone*) the sin." The word imports both. And the true meaning is, that by the blood of the bullock, all whose efficacy stood in its relation to the blood of Christ, signified and shadowed by it, the people, for whom it was shed, should be reconciled to God, by the expiation and remission of their sins. And what was shadowed in this typical blood, was really designed and accomplished by Jesus Christ, in the shedding of his blood.

† *Plutarch. in vita T. Flaminii.*

Reconciliation of the elect to God, is therefore another of those beautiful births which Christ travailed for. So you find it expressly, Rom. v. 10. "If when we were enemies, we were "reconciled to God by the death of his Son." This [if] is not a word of doubting, but argumentation. The apostle supposes it is a known truth, or principle yielded by all Christians, that the death of Christ was to reconcile the elect to God. And again he affirms it with like clearness, Col. i. 20. "And having made "peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things." And that this was a main and principal end designed both by the Father and Son in the humiliation of Christ, is plain from 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world "to himself." God filled the humanity with grace and authority. The spirit of God was in him to qualify him. The authority of God was in him by commission, to make all he did valid. The grace and love of God to mankind was in him, and one of the principal effects in which it was manifested, was this design upon which he came, *viz.* to reconcile the world to God. Upon which ground Christ is called the "propitiation for our "sins," 1 John ii. 2. "‡ Now *reconciliation* or atonement is "nothing else but the making up of the ancient friendship be-"twixt God and men which sin had dissolved, and so to reduce "these enemies into a state of concord, and sweet agreement." And the means by which this blessed design was effectually compassed, was by the death of Christ, which made compleat satisfaction to God, for the wrong he had done him. There was a breach made by sin betwixt God and angels, but that breach is never to be repaired or made up; since, as Christ took not on him their nature, so he never intended to be a mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and them. That will be an eternal breach. But, that which Christ designed, as the end of his death, was to reconcile God and man. Not the whole *species*, but a certain *number*, whose names were given to Christ. Here I must briefly open, 1. How Christ's death reconciles. 2. Why this reconciliation is brought about by his death, rather than any other way. 3. What are the articles according to which it is made. And 4 What manner of reconciliation this is.

First, How Christ reconciles God and man by his death. And it must needs be by the satisfaction his death made to the justice

‡ *Reconciliare nihil aliud est quam amicitiam offensione aliqua gravi diremptam resacire, et sic inimicos in pristinam concordiam reducere.* B. Daven in Col. i. 20.

of God for our sins. And so, reparation being made, the enmity ceases. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 5. "The chastisement of our "peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." That is, (as our English Annotators well explain it) he was chastised to procure our peace, by removal of our sins, that set God and us asunder, the guilt thereof being discharged with the price of his blood.

Now this reconciliation is made and continued betwixt God and us, three ways; namely, by the *oblation* of Christ, which was the price that procured it, and so we were *virtually* or meritoriously reconciled. By the *application* of Christ and his benefits to us through faith, and so we are *actually* reconciled. And by the virtual *continuation* of the sacrifice of Christ in heaven, by his potent and eternal *intercession*, and so our state of reconciliation is *confirmed*, and all future breaches prevented. But all depends, as you see, upon the death of Christ. For had not Christ died, his death could never be applied to us, nor pleaded in heaven for us. How the death of Christ meritoriously procures our reconciliation, is evident from that fore-cited scripture, Rom. v. 10, "When we were enemies, we were re-"conciled to God by the death of his Son," (*i. e.*) Christ's death did meritoriously or virtually reconcile us to God, who, as to our state, were enemies long after that reconciliation was made. That the *application* of Christ to us by faith, makes that virtual reconciliation to become actual, is plain enough from Eph. ii. 16, 17. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one "body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And "came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to "them that were nigh. Now therefore (as it is added, verse "19.) Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-ci-"tizens with the saints," *&c.* And that this state of friendship is still *continued* by Christ's intercession within the vail, so that there can be no breaches made upon the state of our peace, notwithstanding all the daily provocations we give God by our sins, is the comfortable truth which the Apostle plainly asserts, after he had given a necessary caution to prevent the abuse of it, in 1 John ii. 1, 2. "My little children, these things I write un-"to you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an Ad-"vocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is "the propitiation," *&c.* Thus Christ reconciles us to God by his death.

Secondly, And if you enquire why this reconciliation was made by the death of Christ, rather than any other way, satisfaction is at hand in these two answers.

First, That we can imagine no other way by which it could be compassed. And,

Secondly, If God could have *reconciled* us as much by another way, yet he could not have *obliged* us so much by doing it in another way, as he hath by doing it this way. Surely, none but he that was God manifested in our flesh could offer a sacrifice of sufficient value to make God amends for the wrong done him by one sin, much less for all the sins of the elect. And how God should (especially after a peremptory threatning of death for sin) re-admit us into favour without full satisfaction, cannot be imagined. He is indeed inclined to acts of mercy, but none must suppose him to exercise one attribute in prejudice to another. That his *justice* must be *eclipsed*, whilst his *mercy shines*. But allow the infinite wisdom could have found out another means of reconciling us as much, can you imagine, that in any other way he could oblige us as much, as he hath done by reconciling us to himself by the death of his own Son? It cannot be thought possible. This therefore was the most effectual, just, honourable, and obliging way to make up the peace betwixt him and us.

Thirdly, This reconciliation, purchased by the blood of Christ, is offered unto men by the Gospel, upon certain articles and conditions; upon the performance whereof, it actually becomes theirs; and without which, notwithstanding all that Christ hath done and suffered, the breach still continues betwixt them and God. And let no man think this a derogation from the freeness and riches of grace, for these things serve singularly to illustrate and commend the grace of God to sinners.

As he consulted his own glory, in the terms on which he offers us our peace with him; so it is his grace which brings up souls to those terms of reconciliation. And surely he hath not suspended the mercy of our reconciliation upon unreasonable or impossible conditions. He hath not said, if you will do as much for me, *as you have done against me*, I will be at peace with you: But the two grand articles of peace with God, are *repentance* and *faith*. In the first, we lay down arms against God, and it is meet it should be so, before he re-admits us into a state of peace and favour; in the other, we accept Christ and pardon through him with a thankful heart, yielding up ourselves to his government. Which is equally reasonable.

These are the terms on which we are actually reconciled to God. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will

"have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon." So Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we "have peace with God." And surely it would not become the holy God to own, as his friend and favourite, a man that goes on perversely and impenitently in the way of sin; not so much as acknowledging, or once bewailing the wrong he hath done him, purposing to do so no more; or to receive into amity one that slights and rejects the Lord Jesus, whose precious blood was shed to procure, and purchase peace and pardon for sinners.

www.libtool.com.cn

But if there be any poor soul, that saith in his heart, it repents me for sinning against God, and is sincerely willing to come to Christ, upon gospel-terms, he shall have peace. And that peace,

Fourthly, Is no common peace. The reconciliation which the Lord Jesus died to procure for broken-hearted believers, it is,

First, A firm well-bottomed reconciliation, putting the reconciled soul beyond all possibility of coming under God's wrath any more. Isa. liv. 10. "Mountains may depart, and hills be "removed, but the covenant of this peace cannot be removed." Christ is a surety, by way of *caution*, to prevent the new breaches, 2 John i. 2.

Secondly, This reconciliation with God, is the fountain out of which all our other comforts flow to us; this is plainly included in those words of Eliphaz to Job, chap. xxii. 21. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, thereby good "shall come upon thee." As trade flourishes, and riches come in when peace is made betwixt states and kingdoms; So all spiritual and temporal mercies flow into our bosoms, when once we are reconciled to God. What the comfort of such a peace will be in a day of straits and dangers, and what it will be valued at in a dying day, who but he that feels it can declare? And yet such an one cannot fully declare it, for it passes all understanding, Phil. iv. 7. We shall now make some improvement of this, and pass on to the third end of the death of Christ.

Inf. 1. *If Christ died to reconcile God and man; how horrid an evil then is sin! And how terrible was that breach made betwixt God and the creature by it, which could no other way be made up but by the death of the Son of God!* I remember I have read, that when a great chasm or breach was made in the earth by an earthquake, and the oracle was consulted how it might be closed; this answer was returned, *That breach can never be closed, except something of great worth be thrown into it.* Such a breach was that which sin made, it could never be reconciled but by

the death of Jesus Christ, the most excellent thing in all the creation.

Infer. 2. *How sad is the state of all such as are not comprised in the articles of peace with God!* The impenitent unbeliever is excepted. God is not reconciled to him: And if God be his enemy, how little avails it, who is his friend? For, if God be a man's enemy, he hath an Almighty enemy in him, whose very frown is destruction, Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. "I lift up my "hand to heaven and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glit-"tering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will "render vengeance to my enemies, and I will reward them that "hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and "my sword shall devour flesh) and that with the blood of the "slain and the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon "the enemy."

Yea, he is an *unavoidable* enemy. Fly to the utmost parts of the earth, there shall his hand reach thee, as it is Psal. cxxxix. 10. The wings of the morning cannot carry thee out of his reach. If God be your enemy, you have an immortal enemy, who lives for ever to avenge himself upon his adversaries. And what wilt thou do when thou art in Saul's case, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. Alas, whither wilt thou turn? To whom wilt thou complain? But what wilt thou do, when thou shalt stand at the bar, and see that God, who is thine enemy, upon the throne? Sad is their case indeed, who are not comprehended in the articles of peace with God.

Infer. 3. If Christ died to reconcile us to God, *give diligence to clear up to your own souls, your interest in this reconciliation.* If Christ thought it worth his blood to purchase it, it is worth your care and pains to clear it. And what can better evidence it, than your conscientious tenderness of sin, lest you make new breaches. Ah, if reconciled, you will say, as Ezra ix. 14. "And now our God, seeing thou hast given us such a delive-"rance as this; should we again break thy commandments?" If reconciled to God, his friends will be your friends, and his enemies your enemies. If God be your friend, you will be diligent to please him, John xv. 10, 14. He that makes not peace with God, is an enemy to his own soul. And he that is at peace, but takes no pains to clear it, is an enemy to his own comfort. But I must pass from this to the third end of Christ's death.

End 3. You have seen two of those beautiful births of Christ's travail, and lo, a third cometh, namely, *The sanctification of his people.* Typical blood was shed, as you heard, to purify them

that were unclean; and so was the blood of Christ shed to purge away the sins of his people; so speaks the apostle expressly, Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ gave himself for the church, that he "might sanctify and cleanse it." And so he tells us himself, John xvii. 29. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself," *(i. e.)* consecrate or devote myself to death, "That they also might "be sanctified through the truth." Upon the account of this benefit received by the blood of Christ, is that *Doxology*, which, in a lower strain, is now sounded in the churches, but will be matter of the Lamb's song in heaven, Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him "that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own "blood,——be glory and honour for ever." Now, there is a two-fold evil in sin, the *guilt* of it, and the *pollution* of it. Justification properly cures the former, sanctification the latter; but both justification, and sanctification, flow unto sinners out of the death of Christ. And though it is proper to say the Spirit sanctifies, yet, it is certain, it was the blood of Christ that procured for us the Spirit of sanctification. Had not Christ died, the Spirit had never come down from heaven upon any such design.

The pouring forth of Christ's blood for us, obtained the pouring forth of the spirit of holiness upon us. Therefore, the Spirit is said to *come in his name, and to take of his, and shew it unto us.* Hence it is said, 1 John v. 6. "He came both by "blood and by water:" By blood, washing away the guilt; by water, purifying from the filth of sin. Now this fruit of Christ's death, even our sanctification, is a most incomparable mercy. For, do but consider a few particular excellencies of holiness.

First, Holiness is the image and glory of God. His image, Col. iii. 10. and his glory, Exod. xv. 11. "Who is like unto "thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness:" Now, when the guilt and filth of sin is washed off, and the beauty of God put upon the soul in sanctification, O what a beautiful creature is the soul now! So lovely in the eyes of Christ, even in its imperfect holiness, that he saith, Cant. vi. 5. "Turn away thine eyes from "me, for they have overcome me." So we render it, but the * Hebrew word signifies, "they have made me proud, or puf-"fed me up." It is a beam of divine glory upon the creature, enamouring the very heart of Christ.

Secondly, As it is the soul's highest beauty, so it is the soul's best evidence for heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for

* הרחבני.

"they shall see God," Mat. v. 8. "And without holiness no "man shall see God," Heb. xii. 14. No gifts, no duties, no natural endowments will evidence a right in heaven, but the least measure of true holiness will secure heaven to the soul.

Thirdly, As holiness is the soul's best evidence for heaven, so it is a continual spring of comfort to it, in the way thither. The purest and sweetest pleasures in this world, are the results of holiness. 'Till we come to live holily, we never live comfortably. Heaven is epitomized in holiness.

Fourthly, And to say no more; it is the peculiar mark, by which God hath visibly distinguished his own, from other men, Psal. iv. 3. "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly, for "himself," *q. d.* this is the man, and that the woman, to whom I intend to be good for ever. This is a man for me. O holiness, how surpassingly glorious art thou?

Inference 1. Did Christ die to sanctify his people, how deep then is the pollution of sin, that nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse it! All the tears of a penitent sinner, should he shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain, since the creation, to this day, cannot wash away one sin. The everlasting burnings in hell, cannot purify the flaming conscience, from the least sin. O guess at the wound by the largeness and length of this tent that follows the mortal weapon, Sin.

Inference 2. Did Christ die to sanctify his people? Behold then the love of a Saviour. "He loved us, and washed us from "our sins in his own blood." He did not shed the blood of beasts, as the priests of old did, but his own blood, Heb. ix. 12. And that not common, but precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 1, 19. The blood of God; one drop of which out-values the blood that runs in the veins of all Adam's posterity. And not some of that blood, but all; to the last drop. He bled every vein dry for us; and what remained lodged about the heart of a dead Jesus, was let out by that bloody spear which pierced the *Pericardium*: so that he bestowed the whole treasure of his blood upon us. And thus liberal was he of his blood to us, when we were enemies. This then is that heavenly Pelican that feeds his young with his own blood. O what manner of love is this! But I must hasten.

End 4. *As Christ died to sanctify his people; so he died also to confirm the New Testament to all those sanctified ones.* So it was in the type, Exod. xxiv. 8. and so it is in the text. "This is "the New Testament in my blood," Matth. xxvi. 28. *(i. e.)* ratified and confirmed by my blood. For, where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, Heb,

ix. 16. So that now all the blessings and benefits bequeathed to believers in the last will and testament of Christ, are abundantly confirmed and secured to them by his death. Yea, he died on purpose to make that testament in force to them. Men make their wills and testaments, and Christ makes his. What they bequeath, and give in their wills, is a free and voluntary act, they cannot be compelled to do it. And what is bequeathed to us in this testament of Christ, is altogether a free and voluntary donation *. Other testators use to bequeath their estates to their wives and children, and near relations; so doth this testator, all is settled upon his spouse the church, upon believers, his children. A stranger intermeddles not with these mercies. They give all their goods and estates, that can that way be conveyed, to their friends that survive them. Christ giveth to his church, in this New Testament, three sorts of goods.

First, All temporal good things, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Mat. vi. 33. *(i. e.)* the comfort and blessing of all, though not the possession of much. "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Secondly, All spiritual good things are bequeathed to them in this testament, as remission of sin, and acceptation with God, which are contained in their justification, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. Sanctification of their natures, both initial and progressive, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Adoption into the family of God, Gal. iii. 26. The ministry of angels, Heb. i. 14. Interest in all the promises, 2 Pet. i. 4. Thus all spiritual good things are in Christ's testament conveyed to them. And as all temporal, and spiritual, so,

Thirdly, All eternal good things. Heaven, glory, and eternal life, Rom. viii. 10, 11. No such bequests as these were ever found in the testaments of princes. That which kings and nobles settle by will upon their heirs, are but trifles to what Christ hath conferred in the New Testament upon his people. And all this is confirmed and ratified by the death of Christ, so that the promise is sure, and the estate indefeasible to all the heirs of promise.

How the death of Christ confirmed the New Testament is worth our enquiry. The Socinians, as they allow no other end of Christ's death, but the confirmation of the New Testament, so they affirm he did it only by way of testimony, or witness-

* *Nullo præsentis metu periculi.* i. e. Without any fear of present danger. *Coke's Instit. l. 3. cap. 10.*

bearing in his death. But this is a vile derogation from the efficacy of Christ's blood, to bring it down into an equality with the blood of martyrs. As if there were no more in it than was in their blood.

But know, Reader, Christ died not only, or principally, to confirm the testament by his blood, as witness to the truth of those things, but his death ratified it as the death of a testator, which makes the New Testament irrevocable. And so Christ is called in this text. Look as when a man hath made his will, and is dead, that will is presently in force, and can never be recalled. Besides, the will of the dead is sacred with men. They dare not cross it. It is certain the last will and testament of Christ is most sacred, and God will never annul or make it void. Moreover, it is not with Christ as with other testators, who die, and must trust the performance of their wills with their executors, but as he died to put it in force, so he lives again to be the executor of his own testament. And all power to fulfil his will is now in his own hands, Rev. i. 18.

Inference 1. Did Christ die to confirm the New Testament, in which such legacies are bequeathed to believers. How are all believers concerned then to prove the will of a dead Jesus! My meaning is, to clear their title to the mercies contained in this blessed testament. And this may be done two ways. By clearing to ourselves our covenant-relations to Christ. And by discovering those special covenant-impressions upon our hearts, to which the promises therein contained, do belong.

The probate of Christ's last will and testament.

First, Examine your relations to Christ. Are you his *spouse?* Have you forsaken all for him? Psal. xlv. 10. Are you ready to take your lot with him, as it falls in prosperity or adversity? Jer. ii. 2. And are you loyal to Christ? "Thou shalt be for me, "and not for another," Hos. iii. 3. Do you yield obedience to him as your head and husband? Eph. vi. 24. then you may be confident you are interested in the benefits and blessings of Christ's last will and testament; for can you imagine Christ will make a testament and forget his spouse? It cannot be. If he so loved the church as to give himself for her, much more what he hath is settled on her. Again, are you his spiritual seed, his children by regeneration? Are you born of the Spirit? John iii. Do you resemble Christ in holiness? 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. Do you find a reverential fear of Christ carrying you to obey him in all things? Mal. i. 6. Are you led by the Spirit of Christ? "As many as

"are so led, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. To conclude, Have you the *spirit of adoption*, enabling you to cry, *Abba Father*? Gal. iv. 6. That is, helping you in a gracious manner, with reverence mixed with filial confidence, to open your hearts spiritually to your Father on all occasions? If so, you are children; and if children, doubt not but you have a rich legacy in Christ's last will and testament. He would not seal up his testament, and forget his dear children.

Secondly, You may discern your interest in the new testament or covenant (for they are substantially the same thing) by the new covenant-impressions that are made on your hearts, which are so many clear evidences of your right to the benefits it contains. Such are spiritual illuminations, Jer. xxxi. 34. gracious softness and tenderness of heart, Ezek. xi. 19. the awful dread and fear of God, Jer. xxxii. 40. the copy or transcript of his laws on your hearts in gracious correspondent principles, Jer. xxxi. 33. These things speak you the children of the covenant, the persons on whom all these great things are settled.

Inference 2. To conclude, It is the indispensible duty of all on whom Christ hath settled such mercies, *to admire his love*, and *walk answerably* to it.

First, Admire the love of Christ. O how intense and ardent was the love of Jesus! who designed for you such an inheritance, with such a settlement of it upon you! These are the mercies with which his love had travailed big from eternity, and now he sees the travail of his soul, and you also have seen somewhat of it this day. Before this love, let all the saints fall down astonished, humbly professing that they owe themselves, and all they are, or shall be worth, to eternity, to this love.

Secondly, And be sure you walk becoming persons for whom Christ hath done such great things. Comfort yourselves under present abasures with your spiritual privileges, James ii. 5. and let all your rejoicing be in Christ, and what you have in him, whilst others are blessing themselves in vanity. Thus we have finished the state of Christ's humiliation, and thence proceed to the second state of his exaltation.

An Introduction to the State of Exaltation.

HAving finished what I designed to speak to, about the work of redemption, so far as it was carried on by Christ in his humble state, we shall now view that blessed work as it is further *advanced*, and *perfected* in *his state of exaltation*.

The whole of that work was not to be finished on earth in

a state of suffering and abasure, therefore the apostle makes his *exaltation*, in order to the finishing of the remainder of his work, so necessary a part of his priesthood, that without it he could not have been a priest, Heb. viii. 4. "If he were on earth he "should not be a priest," (*i. e.*) if he should have continued always here, and had not been raised again from the dead, and taken up into glory, *he could not have been a compleat and perfect priest.*

For look, as it was not enough for the sacrifice to be slain without, and his blood left there; but after it was shed without, it must be carried within the vail, into the most holy place before the Lord, Heb. ix. 7. so it was not sufficient that Christ shed his own blood on earth, except he carry it before the Lord into heaven, and there perform his *intercession-work* for us.

Moreover, God the Father stood engaged in a solemn covenant, to reward him for his deep humiliation, with a most glorious and illustrious advancement, Isa. xlix. 5, 6, 7. And how God (as it became him) made this good to Christ, the apostle very clearly expresses it, Phil. ii. 9.

Yea, justice required it should be so. For how could our surety be detained in the prison of the grave, when the debt for which he was imprisoned was by him fully discharged, so that the law of God must acknowledge itself to be fully satisfied in all its claims and demands? His resurrection from the dead was, therefore, but his discharge or acquittance upon full payment. Which could not in justice be denied him.

And, indeed, God the Father lost nothing by it, for there never was a more glorious manifestation made of the name of God to the world, than was made in that work. Therefore it is said, Phil. ii. 11., speaking of one of the designs of Christ's exaltation, it was, (saith the apostle), "That every tongue should confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." O how is the love of God to poor sinners illustriously, yea, astonishingly, displayed in Christ's exaltation. When, to shew the complacency and delight, which he took in our recovery, he hath openly declared to the world, that his exalting Christ to all that glory, such as no mere creature ever was, or can be exalted to, was bestowed upon him, as a reward for that work, that most grateful work, of our redemption, Phil. ii. 9. Wherefore, God also hath *highly exalted him*; there is an "*emphatical pleonasm

* Υπερυψωσε, *Pleonasmus emphaticus*, Hieron. *Multiplicavit sublimitatem ejus*, Arab. *Sublimitate sublimavit eum*, Syr. *Insigniter*

"in that word," our English is too flat, to deliver out the elegancy of the original, it is *super-exaltation*. The Syriac, renders it, "he hath multiplied his sublimity." The Arabic, "he hath "heightned him with an height." Justin, "he hath famous-"ly exalted him." Higher he cannot raise him, a greater argument of his high satisfaction and content, in the recovery of poor sinners, cannot be given. For this, therefore, God the Father, shall have glory and honour ascribed to him in heaven, to all eternity.

www.libtool.com.cn

Now this singular exaltation of Jesus Christ, as it properly respects his human nature, which alone is capable of advancement; for, in respect of his divine nature, he never ceased to be the Most High. So it was done to him as a common person, and as the head of all believers, their representative in this, as well as in his other works. God therein shewing what, in due time, he intends to do with the persons of his elect, after they, in conformity to Christ, have suffered a while. Whatever God the Father intendeth to do in us, or for us, he hath first done it to the person of our *Representative, Jesus Christ*. And this, if you observe, the scriptures carry in very clear and plain expressions, through all the degrees and steps of Christ's exaltation, *viz.* his *resurrection, ascension, session* at the right-hand of God, and returning to *judge* the world. Of which I purpose to speak distinctly in the following sermons.

He arose from the dead, as a common person, Col. iii. 1. "If "ye then be risen with Christ," saith the apostle; so that the saints have communion and fellowship with him in his resurrection.

He ascended into heaven, as a common person, for so it is said in Eph. ii. 6. "He hath raised us up," or exalted us together with Christ. He sits at God's right-hand, as a common person, for so it follows in the next clause, "and hath made us sit toge-"ther in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We sit there in our Representative. And when he shall come again to judge the world, the saints shall come with him. So it is prophesied, Zech. xiv. 5. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with "thee." And as they shall come with Christ from heaven, so they shall sit on thrones with him, judging by way of suffrage. They shall be assessors with the Judge, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This deserves a special remark, that all this honour is given to Christ, as our Head and Representative, for thence results abundance of

signiter extulit, Justin. M. * *Secundum eandem naturam dicitur exaltatus, secundum quam humiliatus fuit.* Zanch.

comfort to the people of God. Carry it therefore along with you in your thoughts, throughout the whole of Christ's advancement. Think when you shall hear that Christ is risen from the dead, and is in all that glory and authority in heaven, how sure the salvation of his redeemed is. "For if when we were enemies, we were "reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; much more, being "reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Surely, it cannot be supposed, but "he is able to save to the uttermost, all them that "come to God by him; seeing he ever lives to make intercession," Heb. vii. 25. Think how late the people of God in this world are, whose Head is in heaven. It was a comfortable expression of one of the fathers, encouraging himself and others with this truth in a dark day; "Come, (said he,) why do we tremble thus, "Do we not see our head above water †?" If he live, believers cannot die, John xiv. 19. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

And let no man's heart suggest a suspicious thought to him, that this wonderful advancement of Christ, may cause him to forget his poor people, groaning here below under sin and misery. For the temper and disposition of his faithful and tender heart, is not changed with his condition. He bears the same respect to us, as when he dwelt among us. For indeed he there lives and acts upon our account, Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

And how seasonable and comfortable will the meditations of Christ's exaltation be to thee, O believer, when sickness hath wasted thy body, withered its beauty, and God is bringing thee to the dust of death! Ah! think then, that that "vile body "shall be conformed to the glorious body of Christ," Phil. iii. 21. As God hath glorified, and highly exalted his Son, "whose "form was marred more than any man's;" so will he exalt thee also. I do not say, to a parity, or equality, in glory with Christ, for, in heaven he will be discerned and distinguished, by his peculiar glory, from all the angels and saints; as the sun is known by its excellent glory from the lesser stars. But we shall be conformed to this glorious Head, according to the proportion of members. O whither will love mount the believer in that day!

Having spoken thus much of Christ's exalted state, to cast some general light upon it, and engage your attentions to it, I shall now, according to the degrees of this his wonderful exaltation, briefly open it, under the fore-mentioned heads, *viz.* his resurrection, ascension, session at the Father's right-hand, and his return to judge the world.

† *Nonne videmus caput nostrum super aquas.* Greg.

SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Resurrection of CHRIST, with its Influences upon the Saints Resurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the first Step of his Exaltation.

www.libtool.com.cn

MATTH. xxviii. 6. *He is not here; for he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

WE have finished the doctrine of Christ's humiliation, whereing the Sun of righteousness appeared to you, as a setting sun, gone out of sight; but as the sun when it is gone down to us, begins a new day in another part of the world; so Christ, having finished his course and work in this world, rises again, and that, in order to the acting another glorious part of his work in the world above. In his death, he was upon the matter totally eclipsed; but in his resurrection, he begins to recover his light and glory again. God never intended, that the darling of his soul should be lost in an obscure sepulchre. An angel descends from heaven, to roll away the stone, and, with it, the reproach of his death. And to be the heavenly herald, to proclaim his resurrection to the two Mary's, whose love to Christ had, at this time, drawn them to visit the sepulchre, where they lately left him.

At this time (the Lord being newly risen) the keepers were trembling, and become as dead men. So great was the terrible majesty, and awful solemnity, attending Christ's resurrection: but, to encourage these good souls, the angel prevents them with these good tidings; "He is not here; for he is risen, as "he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay:" *q. d.* Be not troubled, though you have not the end you came for, *one sight more of your dear, though dead, Jesus;* yet you have not lost your labour; for, to your eternal comfort, I tell you, "he "is risen, as he said." And to put it out of doubt, come hither and satisfy yourselves, "See the place where the Lord lay."

In which words, we have both a declaration, and confirmation of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

First, A declaration of it by the angel, both negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, *He is not here.* Here indeed you laid him, here you left him, and here you thought to find him as you left him; but you are happily mistaken, *He is not here.*

However, this giving them no satisfaction, so he might continue dead still, though removed to another place, as indeed they suspected he was, John xx. 13. Therefore his resurrection is declared positively and affirmatively; *He is risen;* ἠγέρθη, the * word imports, the active power or self-quickening principle, by which Christ raised himself from the state of the dead. Which Luke takes notice of also, Acts i. 3. where he saith, *He shewed,* or presented, *himself alive after his passion.* It was the divine nature, or Godhead of Christ, which revived and raised the manhood.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, Here is also a plain confirmation of Christ's resurrection, and that, *first,* From Christ's own prediction, *He is risen, as he said.* He foretold that, which I declare to be now fulfilled. Let it not therefore seem incredible to you. *Secondly,* by their own sight, "Come, see the place where the "Lord lay." The grave hath lost its guest; it is now empty; death hath lost its prey. It received, but could not retain him. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Thus the resurrection of Christ is declared, and confirmed. Hence our observation is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, by the almighty power of his own Godhead, revived, and rose from the dead; to the terror and consternation of his enemies, and the unspeakable consolation of believers.*

That our Lord Jesus Christ, though laid, was not lost in the grave; but the third day revived and rose again, is a truth confirmed to us by many infallible proofs, as Luke witnesseth, Acts i. 3. We have testimonies of it, both from heaven and earth, and both infallible. From heaven, we have the testimony of angels, and to the testimony of an angel all credit is due; for angels are holy creatures, and cannot deceive us. The angel tells the two Marys, in the text, "He is risen." We have testimonies of it from men, holy men, who where eye-witnesses of this truth, to whom he shewed himself alive by the space of forty days after his resurrection, by no less than † nine solemn apparitions to them. Sometimes five hundred brethren saw him

* The argument whereby we prove that Christ raised himself by his own power, is drawn from the very activity of his resurrection: *Christus* ἠγέρθη, i. e. *Christ arose,* Matth. xxviii. 6. παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα, Acts i. 3. *Maccov. loc. Com. p.* 874.

† John xx. 14. Mark xvi. 12. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xv. 8. John vii. 26. John xxi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 36.

at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. These were holy persons, who durst not deceive, and who confirmed their testimony with their blood. So that no point of religion is of more confessed truth, and infallible certainty than this before us.

And blessed be God it is so. For if it were not, then were "the gospel in vain," 1 Cor. xv. 14. seeing it hangs the whole weight of our faith, hope, and salvation, upon Christ as risen from the dead †. If this were not so, then would the holy, and divinely inspired apostles be found *false-witnesses*, 1 Cor. xv. 15. For they all, with one mouth, constantly, and to the death affirmed it. If Christ be not risen, "then are believers "yet in their sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. For our justification is truly ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, Rom. iv. 25. Whilst Christ was dying, and continued in the state of the dead, the price of our redemption was all that while but in paying, the payment was compleated, when he revived and rose again. Therefore for Christ to have continued always in the state of the dead, had been never to have compleatly satisfied; hence the whole force and weight of our justification depends upon his resurrection. Nay, had not Christ risen, "the dead had "perished," 1 Cor. xv. 17. Even the dead who died in the faith of Christ, and of whose salvation there now remains no ground to doubt. Moreover,

Had he not revived, and risen from the dead, how could all the *types* that prefigured it have been satisfied? Surely they must have stood as insignificant things in the scriptures, and so must all the predictions of his resurrection, by which it was so plainly foretold. See Matth. xii. 40. Luke xxiv. 46. Psal. xvi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 4.

To conclude. Had he not risen from the dead, how could he have been installed in that glory whereof he is now possessed in heaven, and which was promised him before the world was, upon the account of his death and sufferings? "For to this "end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might "be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. And that, in this state of dominion and glorious advancement, he might powerfully apply the virtues and benefits of his blood to us, which else had been as a precious cordial spilt upon the ground.

† Our deliverance, was in his death, put in motion; or, as they say, *in fieri*, i. e. begun; but was finished in his resurrection, whence it is, that our justification or absolution from debt is justly by the apostle ascribed not to his death but resurrection, *&c.* Maccov. loc. Com. p. 869.

So then, there remains no doubt at all of the certainty of Christ's resurrection; it was so, and upon all accounts it must needs be so; for you see how great a weight the scriptures hang upon this nail. And blessed be God it is a nail fastened in a sure place. I need spend no more words to confirm it; but rather choose to explain and open the nature, and manner of his resurrection, which I shall do by shewing you four or five properties of it. And the first is this,

www.libtool.com.cn

First, Christ rose from the dead with awful majesty. So you find it in Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. "And behold, there was a "great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from "heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, "and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and "his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers "did shake, and became as dead men." Human infirmity was not able to bear such heavenly majesty as attended the business of that morning. Nature sank under it. This earthquake was, as one calls it, *triumphale signum*: a sign of triumph, or token of victory, given by Christ, not only to the keepers, and the neighbouring city, but to the whole world, that he had overcome death in its own dominions, and, like a conqueror, lifted up his head above all his enemies. So when the Lord fought from heaven for his people, and gave them a glorious, though but temporal deliverance; see how the prophetess drives on the triumph in that rhetorical song, Judg. v. 4, 5. Alluding to the most awful appearance of God, at the giving of the law. "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou "marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and "the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The "mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai "from before the Lord God of Israel." Our Lord Jesus went out of the grave, in like manner, and marched out of that bloody field, with a pomp and majesty ‡ becoming so great a conqueror.

Secondly, And to increase the splendor of that day, and drive on the triumph, his resurrection was attended with the resurrection of many of the saints; who had slept in their graves till then, and then were awakened and raised to attend the Lord at his rising. So you read, Mat. xxvii. 52. 53. "And the graves "were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept

‡ *Est incedere cum pompa et majestate. i. e.* It is to march with pomp and majesty.

"arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection; "and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This wonder was designed, both to adorn the resurrection of Christ, and to give a specimen or pledge of our resurrection; which also is to be in the virtue of his. This indeed was the resurrection of saints, and none but saints, the resurrection of many saints, yet it was but a special resurrection, intended only to shew what God will one day do for all his saints. And, for the present, to give testimony of Christ's resurrection, from the dead. They were seen, and known of many in the city, who doubtless never thought to have seen them any more in this world. To enquire curiously, as some do, who they were, what discourse they had with those to whom they appeared, and what became of them afterwards, is a vain thing. God hath cast a veil of silence, and secrecy upon these things, that we might content ourselves with the written word, and he that "will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will he be-"lieve though one rise from the dead," as these saints did.

Thirdly, As Christ rose from the dead with those *satellites*, or attendants, who accompanied him at his resurrection; so it was by the power of his own Godhead that he quickened and raised himself; and by the virtue of his resurrection were they raised also, who accompanied him. It was not the *Angel* who rolled back the stone that revived him in the sepulchre, but he resumed his own life, so he tells us, John x. 18. "I lay "down my life that I may take it again." Hence 1 Pet. iii. 18. He is said to be put to death in the flesh, but quickned by the Spirit, *(i. e.)* by the power of his Godhead, or divine nature, which is opposed there to flesh, or his human nature. By the eternal Spirit he offered himself up to God, when he died, Heb. ix. 14. *(i. e.)* by his own Godhead, not the third person in the Trinity, for then it could not have been ascribed to him as his own act, that he offered up himself. And by the same Spirit he was quickned again.

And, therefore, the apostle well observes, Rom. i. 4. "That "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his "resurrection from the dead. Now if he had been raised by the power of the Father, or Spirit only, and not by his own, how could he be declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God? What more had appeared in him than in others? For others are raised by the power of God, if that were all. So that in this respect also it was a marvellous resurrection. Never any did, or shall rise as Christ rose, by a self-quickning principle. For tho' many dead saints rose at that time also, yet it

was by the virtue of Christ's resurrection that their graves were opened, and their bodies quickned. In which respect, he saith, John xi. 25. when he raised dead Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life," *(i e.)* the principle of life and quickning, by which the dead saints are raised.

Fourthly, And therefore it may be truly affirmed, that though some dead saints are raised to life before the resurrection of Christ, yet that Christ is "the first-born from the dead," as he is called, Col. i. 18. For though Lazarus and others were raised, yet not by themselves, but by Christ. It was by his virtue and power, not their own. And though they were raised to life, yet they died again. Death recovered them again, but Christ dieth no more. "Death hath no dominion over him." He was the first that opened the womb of the earth, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

Fifthly, But lastly, Christ rose as a public or common person. "As the first fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20. I desire this may be well understood; for upon this account it is that our resurrection is secured to us by the resurrection of Christ; and not a resurrection only, but a blessed and happy one, for the first-fruits, both assured and sanctified the whole crop or harvest.

Now that Christ did rise, as a public person, representing and comprehending all the elect, who are called *the children of the resurrection*, is plain from Eph. ii. 6. Where we are said to be risen with, or in him. So that, we are said to die in Adam, (who also was a common person) as the * branches die in the death of the root; so we are said to be raised from death in Christ, who is the head, root, and representative, of all his elect seed. And why is he called the *first-born*, and *first-begotten from the dead*, but with respect to the whole number of the elect, that are to be born from the dead in their time and order also, and as sure as the whole harvest follows the first fruits, so shall the general resurrection of the saints to life eternal, follow this birth, of the first-born from the dead.

It shall surely follow it, I say, and that not only as a *consequent* follows an *antecedent*, but as an *effect* follows its proper *cause*. Now there is a three-fold casuality, or influence that Christ's resurrection hath upon the saints resurrection, of which it is both the *meritorious*, *efficient*, and *exemplary* cause.

* Mankind putrified in their first parent, as the branches in the root. *Greg.*

First, The resurrection of Christ, is the *meritorious* cause of the saints resurrection, as it compleated his satisfaction, and finished his payment, and so our justification is properly assigned to it, as before was noted from Rom. iv. 25. This his resurrection was the receiving of the acquittance, the cancelling of the bond. And had not this been done, we had still been in our sins, as he speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 7. and so our guilt had been still a bar to our happy resurrection. But now, the price being paid in his death, which payment was finished when he revived; and the discharge then received for us, now there is nothing lies in bar against our resurrection to eternal life.

Secondly, As it is the meritorious cause of our resurrection, so it is the *efficient cause* of it also. For when the time shall come, that the saints shall rise out of the dust, they shall be raised by Christ, as their head, in whom the *effective principle* of their life is. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," as it is Col. iii. 3. As when a man awakes out of his sleep †, "the "animal spirits seated in the brain, being set at liberty by the "digestion of those vapours that bound them up, do play freely "through every part and member of the body;" so Christ, the believer's mystical-head, being quickned; the spirit of life, which is in him, shall be diffused through all his members to quicken them also in the morning of the resurrection. Hence the warm animating dew of Christ's resurrection is said to be to our bodies, as the dew of the morning is to the withered, languishing plants, which revive by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy dew is as the dew of "herbs;" and then it follows, "the earth shall cast forth her "dead." So that by the same faith we put Christ's resurrection into the *promises*, we may put the believer's resurrection into the *conclusion*. And therefore, the apostle makes them convertibles, reasoning forward, from Christ's to ours; and back again from ours to his, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13. Which is also the sense of that scripture, Rom. viii. 10, 11. "And if Christ be in "you, the body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is "life because of righteousness." (*i. e.*) Though you are really united to Christ by the Spirit, yet your bodies must die as well

† *Proximum instrumentum sive sedes somni est cerebrum, utpote in quo spiritus animales frigefiunt et condensantur, aut etiam resolvuntur et dissipantur, proxime, tanquam in propria spirituum animalium officina, et in quo etiam radices nervorum obstruuntur, per vapores, ne spiritus animales sensui communi servire aut in partes reliquas inferiores corporis propagari libere possint.* Keckerm. Syst. Phys. *p.* (*mihi*) 441.

as other mens; but your souls shall be, presently, upon your dissolution, swallowed up in life. And then it follows, verse 11. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, "dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall "also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in "you," (*i. e.*) though your bodies must die, yet they shall live again in the resurrection; and that by virtue of the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in you; and is the bond of your mystical union with him your head. You shall not be raised as others are, by a mere word of power, but by the spirit of life dwelling in Christ your head, which is a choice prerogative indeed.

Thirdly, Christ's resurrection is not only the meritorious and efficient cause, but it is also the *exemplary* cause, or pattern of our resurrection. "‡ He being the first and best, is therefore "the pattern and measure of all the rest." So you read, Phil. iii. 21. "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fa-"shioned like unto his glorious body." Now the *conformity* of our resurrection to Christ's, stands in the following particulars. Christ's body was raised substantially the same, so will ours. His body was raised first; so will ours be raised before the rest of the dead. His body was wonderfully improved by the resurrection; so will ours. His body was raised to be glorified; and so will ours.

First, Christ's body was raised substantially the same that it was before; and so will ours. Not another, but the same body. Upon this very reason the apostle uses that identical expression, 1 Cor. xv. 53. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, "and this mortal, immortality." Pointing, as it were, to his own body when he spake it; the same body, I say, and that not only *specifically* the same, (for indeed no other species of flesh is so privileged) but the same *numerically*, that very body, not a new or another body, in its stead. So that it shall be both the *what* it was, and the *who* it was. And indeed to deny this, is to deny the resurrection itself. For should God prepare another body to be raised instead of this; it would not be a resurrection, but a creation; for *non resurrectio dici poterit, ubi non resurgit quod cecidit*. That cannot be called a resurrection, where one thing falls, and another rises, as Gregory long since pertinently observed.

Secondly, His body was raised, not by a word of power from the Father, but by his own Spirit. So will ours. Indeed the power of God shall go forth to unburrough sinners, and fetch

‡ *Optimum in unoquoque genere est regula et mensura cæterorum*

them forcibly out of their graves; but the resurrection of the saints is to be effected another way; as I opened but now to you. Even by his Spirit, which now dwelleth in them. That very Spirit of Christ, which effected their spiritual resurrection from sin, shall effect their corporal resurrection also from the grave.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, His body was raised first, he had in this, as well as in other things, the pre-eminence; so shall the saints, in respect of the wicked, have the pre-eminence in the resurrection, 1 Thes. iv. 16. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." They are to attend the Lord at his coming, and will be brought forth sooner than the rest of the world, to attend on that service. As the *sheriff*, with his men, goes forth to meet the judge, before the jaylor brings forth his prisoners.

Fourthly, Christ's body was marvellously improved by the resurrection, and so will ours. It fell in weakness, but was raised in power; no more capable of sorrows, pains and dishonours. In like manner our bodies are "sown in weakness, but raised "in strength, sown in dishonour, raised in glory. Sown natu- "ral bodies, raised spiritual bodies," as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. Spiritual bodies, not *properly*, but *analogically*. No distempers hang about glorified bodies, nor are they henceforth subject to any of those natural necessities, to which they are now tied. There are no flaws, defects, or deformities, in the children of the resurrection. What members are now defective or deformed, will then be restored to their perfect being and beauty; "for, if the universal death of all parts be rescinded "by the resurrection, how much more the partial death of any "single member?" ‖ As Tertullian speaks, and from thenceforth they are free from the law of mortality, "they can die no more," Luke xx. 35, 36. Thus shall they be improved by their resurrection.

Fifthly, To conclude, Christ's body was raised from the dead to be glorified, and crowned with honour. Oh it was a joyful day to him, and so will the resurrection of the saints be to them, the day of the gladness of their hearts. It will be said to them in that morning, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," as Isa. xxvi. 19. O how comfortable will be the meeting betwixt the glorified soul, and its new raised body. Much more comfortable than that of Jacob's and Joseph's, after twenty years

‖ *Membri detruncatio vel obtusio nonne mors membri est? Si universalis mors resurrectione rescinditur, quanto magis portionalis!* Tertull. de Resur.

absence, Gen. xlvi. 29. Or that of David's with Jonathan, when he came out of the cave to him, 1 Sam. xx. 41. Or that of the father of the prodigal with his son, who "was dead and is a-"live, was lost, and is found." As he speaks, Luke xv. And there are three things will make it so.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, The gratifications of the soul, by the satisfaction of its natural appetite of union with its own body. For even glorified souls in heaven have such an appetition and desire of re-union. Indeed, the angels, who are pure spirits, as they never had union with, so they have no inclination to matter; but souls are otherwise tempered and disposed. We are all sensible of its affection to the body now, in its compounded state, we feel the tender care it hath for the body, the sympathy with it, and lothness to be separated from it. It is said, 1 Cor. v. 6. "To be at "home in the body." And had not God implanted such an inclination to this its tabernacle, in it, it would not have paid that due respect it owes the body while it inhabited in it, nor have regarded what became of it when it left it. This inclination remains still with it in heaven, it reckons not itself compleatly happy till its old dear companion and partner be with it, and in that sense some understand those words, Job. xiv. 14. "All the "days of my appointed time," *i. e.* of the time appointed for my body to remain in the grave, *will I wait till my change* (*viz.* that which will be made by the resurrection) *come*; for it is manifest enough he speaks there of the resurrection. Now, when this its inclination to its own body, its longings and hankerings after it, are gratified with a sight and enjoymeet of it again, oh what a comfortable meeting will this make it! especially if we consider,

Secondly, The excellent temper and state in which they shall meet each other. For, as the body shall be raised with all the improvements and endowments imaginable, which may render it amiable, and every way desirable, so the soul comes down immediately from God out of heaven, shining in its holiness and glory. It comes perfumed out of those ivory palaces, with a strong scent of heaven upon it. And thus it re-enters its body, and animates it again. But,

Thirdly, And principally, that wherein the chief joy of this meeting consists, is the end for which the glorified soul comes down to quicken and repossess it, namely, *to meet the Lord*, and *ever to be with the Lord.* To receive a full reward for all the labours and services it performed to God in this world. This must needs make that day, a day of triumph and exultation. It comes out of the grave, as Joseph out of his prison, to be ad-

vanced to the highest honour. O do but imagine what an extasy of joy, and ravishing pleasure it will be, for a soul thus to resume its own body, and say as it were, unto it, come away, my dear, my ancient friend, who servedst and sufferedst with me in the world; come along with me to meet the Lord, in whose presence I have been ever since I parted with thee. Now thy bountiful Lord hath remembred thee also, and the day of thy glorification is come. Surely it will be a joyful awaking. For, do but imagine, what a joy it is for dear friends to meet after long separation, how do they use to give demonstrations of their love and delight in each other, by embraces, kisses, tears, *&c.* Or frame but to yourselves a notion of perfect health, when a sprightly vivacity runs through every part, and the spirits do, as it were, dance before us, when we go about any business; especially to such a business as the business of that day will be, to receive a crown, and a kingdom. Do but imagine, then, what a sun-shine morning this will be, and how the pains and agonies, cold sweats, and bitter groans at parting will be recompensed by the joy of such a meeting?

And thus I have shewed you the certainty of Christ's resurrection, the nature and properties of it, the threefold influence it hath on the saints resurrection, and the conformity of ours unto his, in these five respects. His body rose substantially the same, so shall ours; his body was raised by the Spirit, so shall ours. Not by the Godhead of Christ, as his was, but by the Spirit, who is the bond of our union with Christ. He was raised as the first-begotten from the dead, so the dead in Christ shall rise first. His body was improved by the resurrection, so shall ours. From the consideration of all which,

Inference 1. *We infer, that if Christ was thus raised from the dead, then death is fairly overcome, and swallowed up in victory* *; were it not so, it had never let Christ escape out of the grave. The prey of the terrible had never been thus rescued out of its paws. *Death* is a dreadful enemy, it defies all the sons and daughters of Adam. None durst cope with this king of ter-

* How far short do we come of the primitive Christians, whose faith in the resurrection, and contempt of death, Cyprian thus expresses: With a sound mind, firm faith, and undaunted courage, we are ready to submit to the whole will of God, all fear of death being excluded; we think on the immortality which follows; and when the set time of God's sending for us approaches, we come to him at his call willingly and without delay. *Cypr. sect.* 5. *de Lapsi.* But when we come to die, we pass into immortality by death: This is not a coming to our end but a translating of us. *Cypr. ubi supra.*

rors but Christ, and he, by dying, went into the very den of this dragon, fought with it, and foiled it in the grave, its own territories and dominions, and came off a conqueror. For, as the apostle speaks, Acts ii. 24. "It was impossible it should hold "or detain him." Never did death meet with its over-match before it met with Christ, and he conquering it for us, and in our names, rising as our representative, now every single saint triumphs over it as a vanquished enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O "death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through "our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, like Joshua, they set the foot of faith upon the neck of that king, and, with an holy scorn, deride its power. "O death, where is thy sting?" If it be objected that it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that is to "be destroyed is death." And if so, then it should seem the victory is not yet atchieved, and so we do but boast before the victory; it is at hand to reply, that the victory over death, obtained by Christ's resurrection, is twofold, either *personal* and *incompleat*, or *general* and *compleat*. He actually overcame it at his resurrection, in his own person, perfectly and virtually for us, as our head; but at the general resurrection of the saints (which his resurrection, as the first-fruits, assures them of) then it will be utterly vanquished and destroyed. Till then, it will exercise some little power over the bodies of the saints, in which respect it is called the *last enemy*. For sin, the chief enemy that let it in, that was conquered utterly and eradicated when they died; but death holds their bodies in the grave till the coming of Christ, and then it is utterly to be vanquished. For after that they can die no more, Luke xx. 35. "And then shall be brought to pass "that saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victo-"ry †." *Then* and not till then, will that conquest be fully compleated in our persons, though it be already so in Christ's; now incompleatly in ours, and then compleatly and fully for ever. For the same word which signifies *victory* doth also signify *perpetuity*, and in this place, a final or perpetual conquest. And, indeed, now it smites only with its dart, not with its sting, and that but the believer's body also, and the body but for a time remains under it neither. So that there is no reason why a believer should stand in a slavish fear of it.

Inference 2. Is Christ, and hath his resurrection such a po-

† *Absorpta est mors ut vinc in perpetuam, ex Hebraeo* נצח *quod et victoriam significat et perpetuitatem.* Glass. Rhet. sac. p. 408.

tent and comfortable influence into the resurrection of the saints? *Then it is the duty, and will be the wisdom of the people of God, so to govern, dispose, and employ their bodies, as become men and women, that understand what glory is prepared for them at the resurrection of the just.* Particularly,

www.libtool.com.cn

First, Be not fondly tender of them, but employ and use them for God here. How many good duties are lost and spoiled by sinful indulgence to our bodies? Alas! we are generally more solicitous to live long, than to live usefully. How many saints have active, vigorous bodies, yet God hath little service from them. If your bodies were animated by some other souls that love God more than you do, and burn with holy zeal to his service, more work would be done for God by your bodies in a day, than is now done in a month. To have an able, healthy body, and not use it for God, for fear of hurting it, is as if one should give you a strong and stately horse, upon condition you must not work or ride him. Wherein is the mercy of having a body, except it be employed for God? Will not its reward at the resurrection be sufficient for all the pains you now put it to in his service?

Secondly, See that you preserve the due honour of your bodies. "Possess them in sanctification and honour," 1 Thes. iv. 4. O let not these eyes be now defiled with sin, by which you shall see God. Those ears be inlets to vanity, which shall hear the *Allelujahs* of the blessed. God hath designed honour for your bodies, O make them not either the instruments or objects of sin. There are sins against the body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Preserve your bodies from those defilements, for they are the temples of God: "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy," 1 Cor. iii. 17.

Thirdly, Let not the contentment and accommodation of your bodies draw your souls into snares, and bring them under the power of temptations to sin. This is a very common case. O how many thousands of precious souls perish eternally, for the satisfaction of a vile body for a moment? Their souls must, because their bodies cannot, suffer. It is recorded to the immortal honour of those worthies in Heb. xi. 35. "That they accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection ‡." They might have had a temporal resurrection from death to life, from reproach to honour, from poverty to

‡ No man can rejoice both in this life and that which is to come, but he must necessarily let go the one, who would enjoy the other. *Aug.*

riches, from pains to pleasure; but upon such terms they judged it not worth acceptance. They would not expose their souls to secure their bodies. They had the same natural affections that other men have. They were made of as tender flesh as we are, but such was the care they had of their souls, and the hope of a better resurrection, that they listned not to the complaints and whinings of their bodies. O that we were all in the same resolutions with them.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fourthly, With-hold not, upon the pretence of the wants your own bodies may be in, that which God and conscience bid you to communicate for the refreshment of the saints, whose present necessities require your assistance. O be not too indulgent to your own flesh, and cruel to others. Certainly, the consideration of that reward which shall be given you at the resurrection, for every act of Christian charity, is the greatest spur and incentive in the world to it. And to that end it is urged as a motive to charity, Luke xiv. 13, 14. "When thou makest a "feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou "shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee, for thou "shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." It was the opinion of an eminent modern divine ‖, that no man living, fully understands and believes that scripture, Mat. xxv. 40. "In as much as you have done it to one of the least of these "my brethren, ye have done it unto me." How few saints would be exposed to daily wants and necessities, if that scripture were but fully understood and believed?

Inference 3. Is Christ risen from the dead, and that as a public person and representative of believers? *How are we all concerned, then, to secure to ourselves an interest in Christ; and, consequently, in this blessed resurrection?* What consolation would be left in this world, if the hope of the resurrection were taken away? It is this blessed hope, that must support you under all the *troubles* of life, and in the *agonies* of death. The securing of a blessed resurrection to yourselves, is, therefore the most deep concernment you have in this world. And it may be secured to yourselves, if upon serious heart-examination, you can discover the following evidences.

Evidence 1. *First, If you are regenerated creatures*, brought forth in a new nature to God, for we are "begotten again to "a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the "dead." Christ's resurrection is the ground-work of our hope. And the new birth is our title or evidence of our interest in it,

‖ Mr. Marshal.

So that until our souls are partakers of the spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, we can have no assurance our bodies shall be partakers of that blessed resurrection to life.

"Blessed and holy, (saith the Spirit,) is he that hath part in "the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no pow-"er," Rev. xx. 6. Never let unregenerated souls expect a comfortable meeting with their bodies again. Rise they shall by God's terrible citation, at the sound of the last trump, but not to the same end that the saints arise, nor by the same principle. They to whom the spirit is now a principle of *sanctification*, to them he will be the principle of a joyful *resurrection*. See then that you get gracious souls now, or never expect glorious bodies then.

Evidence 2. "If you be dead with Christ, you shall live a-"gain by the life of Christ. If we have been planted together "in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of "his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. σύμφυτοι, *planted together*. Some refer it to believers themselves; Jews and Gentiles are planted together in Christ. So * Erasmus, "Believers grow "together like branches upon the same root." which should powerfully enforce the great gospel-duty of unity among themselves. But I would rather understand it, with reference to Christ and believers, with whom believers are, in other scriptures, said to suffer together, and be glorified together; to die together, and live together; to be crucified together, and buried together; all noting the communion they have with Christ, both in his death, and in his life. Now, if the power of Christ's death *(i. e.)* the mortifying influence of it, have been upon our hearts, killing their lusts, deading their affections, and slatting their appetites to the creature, then the power of his life, or resurrection, shall come (like the animating dew) upon our dead withered bodies, to revive and raise them up to live with him in glory.

Evidence 3. *If your hearts and affections be now with Christ in heaven, your bodies in due time shall be there also*, and conformed to his glorious body. So you find it, Phil. iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile "body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious bo-"dy †." "The body is here called vile, or the body of our "vileness." Not as God made it, but as sin hath marred it,

* *In unum concrescere vel coalescere.*

† Το σωμα, της ταπεινωσεως.

Not *absolutely*, and in itself, but *relatively*, and in comparison of what it will be, in its second edition, at the resurrection. Then those scattered bones and dispersed dust, like pieces of old broken battered silver, will be new cast, and wrought in the best and newest fashion, even like to Christ's glorious body. Whereof we have this evidence, that our conversation is already heavenly. The temper, frame, and disposition of our souls is already so; therefore the frame and temper of our bodies in due time shall be so.

www.libtool.com.cn

Evidence 4. *If you strive now by any means to attain the resurrection of the dead, no doubt but you shall then attain what you now strive for.* This was Paul's great ambition, "that by any "means he might attain the resurrection of the dead," Phil. iii. 11. He means not simply a resurrection from the dead, for that all men shall attain, whether they strive for it or no. But by a *metonymy* of the *subject* for the *adjunct*, he intends that complete holiness and perfection, which shall attend the state of the resurrection, so it is expounded, ver. 12. So then, if God have raised in your hearts a vehement desire, and assiduous endeavour after a perfect freedom from sin, and full conformity to God, in the beauties of holiness; that very love of holiness, your present pantings, and tendencies after perfection, speak you to be the persons designed for it.

Evidence 5. *If you are such as do good in your generation.* If you be fruitful and useful men and women in the world, you shall have part in this blessed resurrection, John v. 28, 29. "All "that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; "they that have done good unto the resurrection of life." Now it is not every act *materially* good, that entitles a man to this privilege; but the same requisites that the ‡ schoolmen assign to make a good prayer, are also necessary to every good work. The person, matter, manner, and end, must be good. Nor is it any single good act, but a *series* and *course* of holy actions, that is here meant. What a spur should this be to us all, as (indeed, the apostle makes it, closing up the doctrine of the resurrection, with this solemn exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58. with which I also close mine) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, "unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, "for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in "the Lord."

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

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

SERMON XL.

Wherein the ASCENSION of CHRIST is opened, and variouſly improved, being the ſecond Step of his EXALTATION.

www.kostenlos.de

John xx. 17. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

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

In the former verſes you find Mary waiting at Chriſt's ſepulchre, in a very penſive frame; exceedingly troubled, becauſe ſhe knew not what was become of Chriſt, ver. 15. In the next verſe, Chriſt calls her by her name, *Mary;* ſhe knowing the voice, turned herſelf, and anſwered, *Rabboni.* And as a ſoul tranſported with joy *, ruſhes into his arms, as deſirous to claſp and embrace him. But Jeſus ſaid, "Touch me not," *&c.*

In which words we have Chriſt's inhibition, "Touch me "not:" Strange that Chriſt, who rendred himſelf ſo kind and tender to all, that not only admitted, but commanded Thomas to put his finger into his wounds, ſhould forbid Mary to touch him; but this was not for want of love to Mary; for he gives another reaſon for it preſently, "I am not yet aſcended;" *i. e.* ſay ſome, the time for embracing will be when we are in heaven. Then and there ſhall be the place and time, we ſhall embrace one another for evermore. So Auguſtin. Or, thou doteſt too

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

much upon my present state, as if I had now attained the very ακμη, culminating point of my exaltation. When as yet I am not ascended; so Cameron and Calvin expound it. Or lastly, Christ would signify hereby, that it was not his will and pleasure in so great a juncture of things as this, to spend time now in expressing (this way) her affections to him; but rather to shew it by hasting about his service. Which is

www.libtool.com.cn

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

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

Secondly, The message itself. "Tell my brethren, I ascend "to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God;" αναβαινω, *I ascend.* It is put in the present tense, as if he had been ascending; though he did not ascend in some weeks after this; but he so expresses it, to shew what was the next part of his work, which he was to act in heaven for them; and how much his heart was set upon it, and longed to be about it, "I "ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your "God." Not our Father, or God in common; but mine and yours in a different manner. Your's by right of donation, mine in a different manner. Your's by right of dominion, mine (in reference to my human nature) not only by right of creation, though so too; but also by special covenant and confederation. * By predestination of my manhood, to the grace of personal union, by designation of me, to the glorious office of Mediator. *My Father*, as I am God, by eternal generation. As man, by collation of the grace of union. And your Father by spiritual adoption and regeneration. Thus he is my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. This is the substance of that comfortable message, sent by Mary to the pensive disciples. Hence the observation is,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, did not only rise from the*

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

dead, but also ascended into heaven; there to dispatch all that remained to be done for the compleating the salvation of his people.

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

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

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

Secondly, Whence Christ ascended?

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

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

frame Christ was in, in that mount before his passion, and this he is now in, at his ascension! But,

Thirdly, Whither did he ascend?

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

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

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

Fifthly, How did Christ ascend into heaven?

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

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

‖ *Ne terrenam vitam videretur meditare.* Ames.

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

So it is said expresly, Heb. vi. 20. speaking of the most holy place within the veil: *whither* (saith he) *the forerunner is for us entred.* His entring into heaven as our forerunner implies both his *public capacity*, and *precedency*.

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

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

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

A cloud is prepared, as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion †. "A cloud received him "out of their sight," Luke xxiv. 51. And then a royal guard of mighty angels surround the chariot, if not for support, yet for greater state and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And oh what jubilations of the blessed angels were heard in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! For look as when "he brought his first-begotten into the world, "he said, let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. So at his return thither again, when he had finished redempti-

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

on-work, there were no less demonstrations given by those blessed creatures of their delight and joy in it. The very heavens echoed and resounded on that account. Yea, the triumph is not ended at this day, nor never shall.

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

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

"The chariots of God, (saith the Psalmist), are twenty "thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among "them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended "on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received "gifts for men; yea, for the rebellions also, that God might "dwell among them." Which words in their literal sense, are a celebration of that famous victory and triumph of David over the enemies of God, recorded 2 Sam. viii. These con-

* See Deodat. and English Annot. *&c.*

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

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

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

Surely these blessings at parting were sweet and rich ones. For the matter of them, they were the mercies which his blood

* Thou dost raise up teachers of thy church, among those who hate and persecute thy people; and, from time to time, bring many of thy enemies to this thy kingdom. *Mol. on the place.*

had so lately purchased for them. And for their extent, they were not only intended for them, who had the happiness to be upon the place with him from whence he ascended; but they reach us as well as them; and will reach the last saint that shall be upon the earth, till he come again. For they were but representatives of the future churches, Matth. xxviii. 20.; and in blessing them, he blessed us also. And by this we may be satisfied that Christ carried an heart full of love to his people away with him to heaven; since his love so abounded in the last act that ever he did in this world: and left such a demonstration of his tenderness with them at parting.

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

Sixthly, and lastly, Why did Christ ascend?

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

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

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

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

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

Fourthly, If Christ had not ascended, how could we have been satisfied, that his payment on the cross made full satisfaction to God, and that now God hath no more bills to bring in against us? How is it that the Spirit convinceth the world of righteousness, John xvi. 9. 10., but from Christ's going to the Father, and returning hither no more? which gives evidence of God's full content and satisfaction, both with his person and work.

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

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

ascension, it was that he charged his people not to be troubled at his leaving of them, John xiv. And hence learn,

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

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

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

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

www.libtool.com.cn

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

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

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

born of mercies; and deserves the first place in our hearts and esteems.

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

Consid. 3. *Thirdly*, But that is not the only consideration that should cause you to beware of grieving the Spirit, because he is sent in the name of such great and dear persons, to you, but he *deserves better entertainment than any of the saints give him, for his own sake, and upon his own account*, and that upon a double score, *viz.* of his nature and office.

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

Secondly, Upon the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him. We are obliged, even on the score of gratitude and ingenuity, to obey him; for he is sent in the quality of an advocate to help us to pray; to indite our requests for us; to teach us what and how to ask of God, Rom. viii. 26. He comes to us as a Comforter, John xiv. 16. And none like him. His work is to take of Christ's *and shew it to us* *, *i. e.* to take of

* John xvi. 14.

his death, resurrection, ascension, yea, of his very present intercession in heaven, and shew it to us. He can be with us in a moment, he can, (as * one well observes), tell you what were the very last thoughts Christ was thinking in heaven about you. It was he that formed the body of Christ in the womb, and so prepared him to be a sacrifice for us. He filled that humanity with his unexampled fulness †. So fitting and anointing him for the discharge of his office.

www.libtool.com.cn

It is he that puts efficacy into the ordinances, and without him they would be but a dead letter. It was he that blessed them to your conviction and conversion ‡. For if angels had been the preachers, no conversion had followed without the Spirit. It is he that is the *vinculum unionis*, bond of union betwixt Christ and your souls, without which you could never have had interest in Christ, or communion with Christ. It was he that so often hath helped your infirmities, when you knew not what to say; comforted your hearts when they were overwhelmed within you, and you knew not what to do; preserved you many thousand times from sin and ruin, when you have been upon the slippery brink of it in temptations. It is he, (in his sanctifying-work), that is the best evidence your souls have for heaven. It were endless to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, reader, dost thou not blush to think how unworthy thou hast treated such a friend? For which of all these his offices or benefits dost thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent as soon as ever he came to heaven, in his Father's name, and in his own name, to perform all these offices for you.

Infer. 5. Is Christ ascended to the Father as our forerunner? *Then the door of salvation stands open to all believers, and by virtue of Christ's ascension, they also shall ascend after him, far above all visible heavens* ‖. O my friends, what place hath Christ prepared and taken up for you! what a splendid habitation hath he provided for you! "God is not ashamed to be "called your God; for he hath prepared for you a city," Heb. xi. 16. In that city Christ hath provided mansions, and resting-places for your everlasting abode, John xiv. 2., and keeps them

* Mr. Tho. Goodwin. † Luke i. 35. Isa. lxi. 1. Col. i. 19.

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

‖ The hope of future inheritance is most fully secured to us in our Head, and we are set down together with him in heaven, Eph. ii. 6. *Synopsis purioris Theol. Disp.* 28. *p.* 342.

for you till your coming. O how august and glorious a dwelling is that, where sun, moon, and stars, shall shine as much below your feet, as they are now above your heads? Yea, such is the love Christ hath to the believer, that, as one saith, if thou only hadst been the chosen of God, Christ would have built that house for himself and thee. Now it is for himself, for thee, and for many more, who shall inherit with thee. God send us a joyful meeting within the veil with our Forerunner, and sweeten our passage into it, with many a foresight and foretaste thereof. And, in the mean time, let the love of a Saviour enflame our hearts, so that whenever we cast a look towards that place, where our Forerunner is for us entered, our souls may say, with melting affections, *Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ*; and again, *Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift*.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XLI.

Wherein CHRIST's sitting at GOD's right-hand is explained and applied, being the third Step of his glorious EXALTATION.

HEB. i. 3. ——*When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high.*

CHRIST being returned again to his Father, having finished his whole work on earth, is there bid by the Father to sit down in the seat of honour and rest. A seat prepared for him at God's right-hand, that makes it honourable; and all his enemies as a footstool under his feet that makes it easy. How much is the state and condition of Jesus Christ changed in a few days! Here he groaned, wept, laboured, suffered, sweat, yea, sweat blood, and found no rest in this world, but when he comes to heaven, there he enters into rest. Sits down for ever in the highest and easiest throne, prepared by the Father for him, when he had done his work. "When he had by himself purged our "sins, he sat down," *&c.*

The scope of this epistle is to demonstrate Christ to be the fulness of all legal types and ceremonies, and that whatever light glimmered to the world through them, yet it was but as the light of the day-star, to the light of this sun.

In this chapter, Christ the subject of the epistle, is described,

and particularly, in this third verse, he is described three ways.

First, By his essential and primeval glory and dignity, he is ἀπαύγασμα, the brightness of his Father's glory, the very splendor of glory, the very refulgency of that son of glory. "* The primary reason of that appellation is with respect to "his eternal and ineffable generation, light of light, as the "Nicene creed expresses it. As a beam of light proceeding from "the sun. And the secondary reason of it, is with respect to "men," for look as the sun communicates its light and influence to us, by its beams, which it projects; so doth God communicate his goodness, and manifest himself to us, by Christ. "Yea, "he is the *express image*, or character of his person. Not as "the impressed image of the seal upon the wax, but as the en-"graving in the seal itself †." Thus he is described by his essential glory.

Secondly, He is described by the work he wrought here on earth, in his humbled state, and it was a glorious work, and that wrought out by his own single hand, "when he had by "himself purged our sins." A work that all the angels in heaven could not do, but Christ did it.

Thirdly, and lastly, He is described by his glory, the which (as a reward of that work) he now enjoys in heaven. "When "he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right-"hand of the majesty on high," *i. e.* the Lord cloathed him with the greatest power, and highest honour, that heaven itself could afford; for so much this phrase of "sitting down on the "right-hand of the majesty" imports, as will appear in the explication of this point, which is the result of this clause, *viz.*

Doct. *That when our Lord Jesus Christ had finished his work on earth, he was placed in the seat of the highest honour, and authority; at the right-hand of God in heaven.*

This truth is transformingly glorious. Stephen had but a glimpse of Christ at his Father's right-hand, and it caused "his "face to shine, as it had been the face of an angel," Acts vii. 56. This, his high advancement, was foretold and promised

* *Ratio appellationes primaria est respectu Patris cœlestis à quo ab æterno, per ineffabilem generationem instar luminis, de lumine resplenduit, secundaria respectu hominum*, &c. Glass. Rhet. p. 174.

† Χαρακτὴρ *insculpere dicitur, non tam imaginem ex sigillo cerâ impressam, quam ipsum sigillum denotare*, Glass. Rhet. sac. p. 159.

before the work of redemption was taken in hand, Psal. cx. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right-hand, "until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And this promise was punctually performed to Christ, after his resurrection and ascension, in his supreme exaltation, far above all created beings, in heaven and earth, Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. We shall here open two things in the doctrinal part, *viz.* What is meant by God's right-hand, and what is implied in Christ's sitting there, with his enemies for a footstool.

First, What are we to understand here by God's right-hand? † It is obvious enough, that the expression is not proper, but figurative and borrowed. God hath no hand, right or left; but it is a condescending expression, wherein God stoops to the creature's understanding, and by it he would have us to understand honour, power, and nearness.

First, The right-hand is the hand of honour, the upper hand, where we place those whom we highly esteem and honour. So Solomon placed his mother in a seat, at his right-hand, 1 Kings ii. 19. So, in token of honour, God sets Christ at his right-hand; which, on that account, in the text is called the right-hand of *Majesty*. God hath therein expressed more favour, delight, and honour, to Jesus Christ, than ever he did to any creature. "To which of the angels said he "at any time, sit thou on my right-hand?" Heb. i. 13.

Secondly, The right-hand is the hand of power: we call it the *weapon hand*, and the *working hand*. And the setting of Christ there, imports his exaltation to the highest authority, and most supreme dominion. Not that God the Father hath put himself out of his authority, and advanced Christ above himself; no, "for in that he saith he hath put all things un-"der him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all "things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 27. But to sit as an enthroned king at God's right-hand, imports power, yea, the most sovereign and supreme power; and so Christ himself calls the right-hand at which he sits, Mat. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter ye "shall see the Son of man sitting on the right-hand of pow-"er."

Thirdly, And as it signifies honour and power, so nearness in

† The right hand of God denotes divine honour and glory, on which the Son of God, who existed before all ages, as God, in the highest, co-essential with the Father, and incarnate in the latter times, sat down with his glorified body. *Damasc. lib. 4. c. 2. de orth. fide.*

place, as we use to say *at one's elbow*, and so it is applied to Christ, in Psal. cx. 5. "The Lord at thy right-hand, shall "strike through kings in the day of his wrath;" that is, the Lord, who is very near thee, present with thee, he shall subdue thine enemies. This then is what we are to understand by God's right-hand, honour, power, and nearness.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, In the next place let us see what is implied in Christ's sitting at God's right-hand, with his enemies for his foot-stool. And, if we attentively consider, we shall find that it implies and imports divers great and weighty things in it. As,

First, It implies the compleating and perfecting of Christ's work, that he came into the world about. After his work was ended, then he sat down and rested from those labours, Heb. x. 11, 12. "Every priest standeth daily ministring, and offering "oftentimes the same sacrifices; which can never take away "sins: but this man when he had once offered one sacrifice for "sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God." Here he assigns a double difference betwixt Christ, and the Levitical priests; they stand, which is the posture of servants; he sits, which is the posture of a Lord. They stand daily, because their sacrifices cannot take away sin; he did his work fully, by one offering; and after that sits, or rests for ever in heaven. And this (as the accurate and judicious Dr. Reynolds * observes) was excellently figured to us in the ark, which was a lively type of Jesus Christ, and particularly in this, it had rings by which it was carried up and down, till at last it rested in Solomon's temple, with glorious and triumphal solemnity, Psal. cxxxii. 8, 9. 2 Chron. v. 13. So Christ, while he was here on earth, being anointed with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, went about doing good, Acts x. 38. and having ceased from his works, did at last enter into his rest, Heb. v. 10. which is the heavenly temple, Rev. xi. 19.

Secondly, His † sitting down at God's right-hand, notes the high content and satisfaction of God the Father in him, and in his work. "The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right-"hand;" the words are brought in as the words of the Father, welcoming Christ to heaven; and (as it were) congratulating the

* Dr. Edward Reynolds, on Psalm cx. p. 35, 36.

† They are said to sit down, who rest from their labour, and thereby refresh themselves, Gen. xviii. 1. in which sense some understand what is said of Christ. To sit at God's right-hand, *i. e.* in the heavens, to rest in that eternal blessedness with God, from these labours and miseries to which he voluntarily subjected himself for us. *Ravan. on the word* to sit.

happy accomplishment of his most difficult work. And it is as if he had said, "O my Son, what shall be done for thee this day? "Thou hast finished a great work, and in all the parts of it acquitted thyself as an able and faithful servant to me; what "honours shall I now bestow upon thee? The highest glory in "heaven is not too high for thee; come sit at my right-hand." O how well is he pleased with Christ, and what he hath done! He delighted greatly to behold him here in his work on earth, and by a voice from the excellent glory he told him so, when he spake from heaven to him, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, "in whom I am well pleased," 2 Pet. i. 17. And himself tells us, John x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because "I lay down my life," *&c.* for it was a work that the heart of God had been upon from eternity. He took infinite delight in it.

Thirdly, Christ's sitting down at God's right-hand in heaven, notes the advancement of Christ's human nature to the highest honour; even to be the object of adoration to angels and men. For it is properly his human nature that is the subject of all this honour and advancement; and being advanced to the right-hand of Majesty, it is become an object of worship and adoration. Not simply, as it is flesh and blood, but as it is personally united to the second person, and enthroned in the supreme glory of heaven.

O here is the mystery, that flesh and blood should ever be advanced to the highest throne of majesty, and being there installed in that glory, we may now direct our worship to him as *God-man*; and to this end was his humanity so advanced, that it might be adored and worshipped by all. "The Father hath committed "all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, "even as they honour the Father." And the Father will accept of no honour divided from his honour. Therefore it is added in the next clause, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth "not the Father which hath sent him," John v. 22, 23. Hence the apostles, in the salutations of their epistles, beg for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ; and in their *valedictions*, they desire the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the churches.

Fourthly, It imports the sovereignty and supremacy of Christ over all. The investiture of Christ, with authority over the empire of both worlds: For this belongs to him that sits down upon his throne. When the Father said to him *, Sit at my

* Therefore this sitting down of Christ at the Father's right-hand, does

right-hand, he did therein deliver to him the *dispensation* and *oeconomy* of the kingdom. Put the awful sceptre of government into his hand, and so the apostle interprets and understands it, 1 Cor. xv. 25. "He must reign, till he have put all his enemies under his feet." And to this purpose, the same apostle accommodates, (if not expounds) the words of the Psalmist, "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels," (*i. e.*) in respect of his humbled state on earth, "thou crownedst him with "glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy "hands, thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," Heb. ii.7, 8. He is over the spiritual kingdom, the Church, absolute Lord there, Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. He also is Lord over the providential kingdom, the whole world, Psal. cx. 2. and this providential kingdom, being subordinate to his spiritual kingdom; he orders and rules this, for the advantage and benefit thereof, Eph. i. 22.

Fifthly, To sit at God's right-hand with his enemies for a footstool, *implies Christ to be a conqueror over all his enemies.* To have his enemies under his feet, notes perfect conquest and compleat victory. As when Joshua set his foot upon the necks of the kings: So Tamerlane made proud Bajazet his footstool *. They trampled his name, and his saints, under their feet, and Christ will tread them under his feet. It is true indeed this victory is yet incompleat, and inconsummate; for now "we see "not yet all things put under him, (saith the apostle) but we see "Jesus crowned with glory and honour," and that is enough. Enough to shew the power of his enemies, is now broken; and though they make some opposition still, yet it is to no purpose at all; for he is so infinitely above them, that they must fall before him; it is not with Christ as it was with Abijah, against whom Jeroboam prevailed, because he was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them. His *incapacity* and *weakness*, gave the watchful enemy, an advantage over him. I say, it is not so with Christ, he is at God's right-hand. And all

does not signify properly that glory and essential kingdom which was common to the Son of God with the Father from eternity, for in this respect even the Holy Spirit sits at the right-hand of God; but the oeconomical and voluntary kingdom, over which he is appointed as Θεανθρωπος, *i. e.* God-man and Mediator by the Father, for the gathering in and defending of his church. *Synopf. pur. Theol. Disp.* 28. *p.* 343.

* The man who so often terrified the city Constantinople, was a dog and a footstool under Tamerlane. *Aurel. Vict.*

the power of God stands ready bent to strike through his enemies, as it is Psal. cx. 5.

Sixthly, Christ's sitting in heaven notes to us the great and wonderful change, that is made upon the state, and condition of Christ, since his ascention into heaven. Ah, it is far otherwise with him now, than it was in the days of his humiliation here on earth. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Oh what a wonderfull change hath heaven made upon him! It were good (as a † Worthy of ours speaks) to compare in our thoughts the abasement of Christ, and his exaltation together; as it were in columns, one over against the other. He was born in a stable, but now he reigns in his royal palace. Then he had a *manger* for his cradle, but now he sits on a chair of state. Then oxen and asses were his companions, now thousands of saints, and ten thousand of angels minister roun about his throne. Then, in contempt, they called him the *Carpenter's Son*, now he obtains a more excellent name than *angels*. Then he was led away into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, now it is proclaimed before him; "let all the angels of God worship him." Then he had not a place to lay his head on, now he is exalted to be heir of all things. In his state of humiliation, "he endured the contradiction of sinners;" in his state of exaltation, "he is adored and admired by saints and angels." Then "he had no form or comliness; and when we saw him, there was "no beauty, why we should desire him:" Now the beauty of his countenance shall send forth such glorious beams, as shall dazzle the eyes of all the celestial inhabitants round about him, *&c.*

O what a change is this! Here he sweated, but there he sits. Here he groaned, but there he triumphs. Here he lay upon the ground, there he sits in the throne of glory. When he came to heaven, his Father did, as it were, thus bespeak him.

My dear Son, *what an hard travail hast thou had of it? What a world of woe hast thou passed through, in the strength of thy love to me, and mine elect? Thou hast been hungry, thirsty, weary; scourged, crucified, and reproached: Ah what bad usage hast thou had in the ungrateful world! Not a day's rest for comfort since thou wentest out from me; but now thy suffering days are accomplished; now thy rest is come, rest for evermore. Henceforth sit at my right-hand. Henceforth thou shalt groan, weep, or bleed no more. Sit thou at my right-hand.*

* Mr. T. Case, Pisgah, part 3. p. 21.

Seventhly, Christ's sitting at God's right-hand, *implies the advancement of believers to the highest honour:* For this session of Christ's, respects them, and there he sits as our representative, in which regard we are made to sit with him in heavenly places, as the apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 6. How secure may we be (saith Tertullian) who do now already possess the kingdom? meaning in our head, Christ. This (saith another) is all my hope, and all my confidence, namely, that we have a proportion in that flesh and blood of Christ, which is so exalted, and therefore where he reigns, we shall reign; where our flesh is glorified, we shall be glorified. Surely, it is matter of exceeding joy, to believe that Christ our head, our flesh, and blood, is in all this glory at his Father's right-hand. *Thus we have opened the sense and importance of Christ's sitting at his Father's right-hand.* Hence we infer,

Inference 1. Is this so great an honour to Christ, to sit enthroned at God's right-hand? *What honour then is reserved in heaven for those that are faithful to Christ, now on the earth?* Christ prayed, and his prayer was heard, John xvii. 24. "That we may be "with him to behold the glory that God hath given him;" and what heart can conceive the felicity of such a sight? It made Stephen's face shine as the face of an angel, when he had but a glimpse of Christ at his Father's right-hand. "Thine eyes shall see the "king in his beauty," Isa. xxxiii. 17. which respected Hezekiah in the *type*, *Christ* in the *truth*. But this is not all, though this be much, to be spectators of Christ in his throne of glory; we shall not only see him in his throne, but also sit with him enthroned in glory. To behold him is much, but to sit with him is more. I remember it was the saying of a heavenly christian, now with Christ, *I would far rather look but through the hole of Christ's door, to see but one half of his fairest and most comely face, [for he looks like heaven] suppose I should never win to see his excellency and glory to the full; than to enjoy the flower, the bloom and chiefest excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds.* And you know how the Queen of the South fainted at the sight of Solomon in his glory. But this sight you shall have of Christ, will change you into his likness. "We shall "be like him (saith the apostle) for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. He will place us as it were in his own throne with him. So runs the promise, Rev. iii. 21. "To him that "overcometh, I will grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I "also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne;" and so 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we suffer with him, we shall also "reign with him." The Father set Christ on his right-hand,

and Christ will set the saints on his right-hand. So you know the sheep are placed by the angels, at the great day, Matth. xxv. and so the church, under the figure of the daughter of Egypt, whom Solomon married, is placed "on the king's right-hand, "in gold of Ophir," Psal. xlv. This honour have all the saints. O amazing love! What, we set on thrones, while as good as we by nature howl in flames! O what manner of love is this! These expressions indeed do not intend, that the saints shall be set in higher glory than Christ; or that they shall have a parity of glory with Christ, for in all things he must have the pre-eminence: But they note the great honour that Christ will put upon the saints; as also, that his glory shall be their glory in heaven. "As the glory of the husband redounds to the wife;" ‡ and again, their glory will be his glory, 2 Thes. i. 10. and so it will be a social glory. O it is admirable to think, whither free grace hath already mounted up poor dust and ashes!

To think how nearly we are related now to this royal, princely Jesus! But how much higher are the designs of grace, that are not yet come to their parturient fulness, they look beyond all this that we now know! "Now are we the sons of God, "but it doth not yet appear what we shall be," 1 John iii. 2. Ah what reason have you to honour Christ on earth, who is preparing such honours for you in heaven.

Infer. 2. *Is Christ Jesus thus enthroned in heaven, then how impossible is it, that ever his interest should miscarry or sink on earth?* The church hath many subtle and potent enemies. True, but as Haman could not prevail against the Jews, whilst Esther their friend spake for them to the king, no more can they, whilst our Jesus sits at his, and our Father's right-hand. Will he suffer his enemies that are under his feet, to rise up and pull out his eyes, think you? Surely they that touch his people, "touch the very apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. "He must reign "till all his enemies are put under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25. The enemy under his feet, shall not destroy the children in his arms. He sits in heaven on purpose to manage all to the advantage of his church, Eph. i. 22. Are our enemies powerful; lo our king *sits on the right-hand of power.* Are they subtle and deep in their contrivance; he that sits on the throne, overlooks all they do: Heaven overlooks hell. "He that sits in heaven beholds," and derides their attempts, Psal. ii. 4. He may permit his enemies to straiten them in one place, but it shall be for their en-

‡ *Uxor splendescit in radiis mariti.*

largement in another. For it is with the church, as it is with the sea; what it loses in one place, it gets in another; and so really loses nothing. He may suffer them also to distress us in outwards, but that shall be recompensed with inward and better mercies; and so we shall lose nothing by that. A footstool you know is useful to him that treads on it, and serves to lift him up higher; so shall Christ's enemies be to him, and his; albeit they think not so. What singular benefits the oppositions of his enemies, occasion to his people; I have ‖ elsewere discovered, to which I refer my reader; and pass to

Infer. 3. Is Christ set down on the right-hand of the Majesty in heaven? *O with what awful reverence should we approach him in the duties of his worship!* Away with light, and low thoughts of Christ. Away with formal, irreverent, and careless frames in praying, hearing, receiving, yea, in conferring and speaking of Christ. Away with all deadness, and drowsiness in duties; for he is a *great King* with whom you have to do. A King, to whom the kings of the earth, are but as little bits of clay. Lo the angels cover their faces in his presence. He is an adorable Majesty.

When John had a vision of this enthroned king, about sixty years after his ascension; such was the over-powering glory of Christ, *as the sun when it shineth in its strength;* that when he saw him, he fell at his feet as dead, and died it is like he had, if Christ had not laid his hand on him, and said, "Fear not, I am "the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, "and behold I am alive for evermore," Rev. i. 17, 18. When he appeared to Saul in the way to Damascus, it was in glory above the glory of the sun, which over-powered him also, and laid him as one dead upon the ground.

O that you did but know, what a glorious Lord you worship, and serve. Who makes the very *place of his feet glorious*, wherever he comes. Surely *He is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* There is indeed a παρρησια boldness or free liberty of speech allowed to the saints, Eph. iii. 12. But no rudeness or irreverance. We may indeed come, as the children of a king come to the father, who is both their awful sovereign, and tender father; which double relation causes a due mixture of love, and reverence in their hearts, when they come before him. You may be *free*, but not *rude*, in his presence. Though he be your Father, brother, friend; yet the distance betwixt him and you is *infinite*.

‖ A Saint indeed.

Inference 4. If Christ be so gloriously advanced in the highest throne *, *then none need to reckon themselves dishonoured, by suffering the vilest things for his sake* †. The very chains and sufferings of Christ have a glory in them. Hence Moses "esteemed the very reproaches of Christ greater riches than the "treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. He saw an excellency in the very worst things of Christ, his reproaches, and sufferings, as made him leap out of his honours, and riches into them. He did not (as one saith) only *endure the reproaches of Christ*, but counted them *treasures*. To be reckoned among his honours and things of value. So Thuanus reports of Ludovicus Marsacus, a noble knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs, that were bound with cords, to execution; and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, give me my chain too, let me be a knight of the same order ‡. Disgrace itself is honourable, when it is endured for the *Lord of Glory*. And surely there is (as one phraseth it) a little paradise, a young heaven, in sufferings for Christ. If there were nothing else in it, but that they are endured on his account, it would richly reward all we can endure for him; but if we consider how exceeding kind Christ is to them, that count it their glory to be abased for him; that though he be always kind to his people, (yet if we may so speak) he overcometh himself in kindness, when they suffer for him; it would make men in love with his reproaches.

Infer. 5. If Christ sat not down to rest in heaven till he had finished his work on earth; then it is in vain for us to think of rest, till we have finished our work, as Christ also did his.

How willing are we to find rest here! To dream of that, which Christ never found in this world, nor any ever found before us. O think not of resting, till you have done working and done sinning. Your life and your labours must end together. "Write (saith the spirit) blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, "for they rest from their labours," Rev. xiv. 13. Here you must have the *sweat*, and there the *sweet*. It is too much to have two heavens. Here you must be content to dwell in the *tents of Kedar*, hereafter you shall be *within the curtains of Solomon*. Heaven is the place of which it may be truly said, that *there the weary be at rest*. O think not of sitting down on this

* It is no disgrace for us to suffer what Christ suffered, nor is it any glory for you to do what Judas did. *Hieronym.*

† Dr. Manton on Jam. p. 228.

‡ *Cur et non me quoque torque donas? Et insignis hujus ordinis militem creas?* Thuan. Hist.

side heaven. There are four things will keep the saints from sitting down on earth, to rest, *viz.* grace, corruption, devils and wicked men.

First, *Grace* will not suffer you to rest here. Its tendencies are beyond this world. It will be looking and longing for the blessed hope. A gracious person takes himself for a pilgrim, seeking a better country, and is always suspicious of danger in every place and state. It is still beating up the sluggish heart with such language as that, Mic. ii. 10. "Arise, depart, this "is not thy rest, for it is polluted." Its further tendencies and continual jealousies, will keep you from sitting long still in this world.

Secondly, Your *corruptions* will keep you from rest here. They will continually exercise your spirits, and keep you upon your watch. Saints have their hands filled with work by their own hearts every day. Sometimes to prevent sin; and sometimes to lament it. And always to watch and fear to mortify and kill it. Sin will not long suffer you to be quiet, Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23, 24. And if a bad heart will not break your rest here, then

Thirdly, There is a busy devil will do it. He will find you work enough with his temptations, and suggestions, and except you can sleep quietly in his arms, as the wicked do, there is no rest to be expected. "Your adversary, the devil, goeth about as "a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist," 1 Pet. v. 8.

Fourthly, Nor will his servants and instruments let you be quiet on this side heaven. ‖ Their very name speaks their turbulent disposition. "My soul (saith the holy man) is among lions, and "I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of "men, whose teeth are spears and arrows," Psal. lvii. 4. Well then, be content to enter into your rest, as Christ did into his. He sweat, then sat, and so must you.

‖ רשע *Inquietum esse. Turbulentus.*

SERMON XLII.

Wherein CHRIST coming to Judgment, being the fourth and last Degree of his Exaltation, is opened and improved.

www.libtool.com.cn

Acts x. 42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

CHRIST enthroned in the highest glory in heaven, is there to abide for the effectual and successful government, both of the world, and of the church, until the number given him by the Father, before the world was, and purchased by the blood of the cross, be gathered in; and then cometh the judgment of the great day, which will perfectly separate the precious from the vile; put the redeemed in full possession of the purchase of his blood in heaven, and "then shall he deliver "up the kingdom to his Father, that God may be all in all."

This last act of Christ, namely, his judging the world, is a special part of his exaltation and honour, bestowed upon him, "because he is the Son of man," John v. 27. In that day shall his glory, as king, and absolute Lord, shine forth as the sun when it shineth in its strength. O what an honour will it be to the man Christ Jesus, who stood arraigned and condemned at Pilate's bar, to sit upon the great white throne, surrounded with thousands, and ten thousands of angels! men and devils waiting upon him to receive their final sentence from his mouth. In this will the glory of Christ's sovereignty and power, be eminently and illustriously displayed, before angels and men *. And this is that great truth, which he commanded to be preached and testified to the people; namely, that it is "he which is "ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead."

Wherein we have four things to be distinctly considered, *viz.* The subject, object, fountain and truth of the supreme judiciary authority.

First, The subject of it, Christ, it is he that is ordained to be judge. Judgment is the act of the whole undivided trinity. The Father and Spirit judge, as well as Christ, in respect of

* To the royal dignity, doth belong that power, or authority, by which Christ is made the judge of all men and angels. *Amef. Med.* p. 117.

authority and consent, but it is the act of Christ, in respect of visible management and execution, and so it is his *per proprietatem*, by *propriety*, the Father having conferred it upon him, as the Son of man; but not his *per appropriationem*, so as to exclude either the Father or Spirit from their authority, for they judge by him.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, The *object* of Christ's judiciary authority. The *quick and dead*, (i. e.) all that at his coming do live, or ever had lived. This is the *Object personal*. All the men and women that ever sprang from Adam; all the apostate spirits that fell from heaven, and are reserved in chains to the judgment of this great day. And in this personal object, is included the *real object*, viz. all the actions, both secret and open, that ever they did, 2 Cor. v. 5. Rom. ii. 16.

Thirdly, the *Fountain* of this delegated authority, which is God the Father; for he hath ordained Christ to be the Judge, "He is appointed †," as the Son of man, to this honourable office and work. The word notes, a firm establishment of Christ in that office by his Father. He is now, by right of redemption, Lord and King. He enacts laws for government, then he comes to judge of mens obedience and disobedience to his laws.

Fourthly, And lastly, here is the infallible truth, or unquestionable certainty of all this. "He gave us commandment to "preach and testify it to the people." We had it in charge from his own mouth; and dare not hide it. Hence the point of doctrine is plainly this.

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ is ordained by God the Father, to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

This truth stands upon the firm basis of scripture authority. You have it from his own hand, John v. 22. "The Father judg-"eth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," *viz.* in the sense before given. And so the apostle, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world "in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; where-"of he hath given assurance," *&c.* And again Rom. ii. 16. "In "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus "Christ." Three things will be opened here. *First*, The certainty of a judgment to come. *Secondly*, The quality and nature of it. *Thirdly*, That it is a special part of Christ's exaltation to be appointed Judge in this day.

† Ὡρισμένος. *Definitus seu constitutus.*

First, The certainty of a judgment. This is a truth of firmer establishment than heaven and earth. It is no devised fable; no cunning artifice to keep the world in awe: but a thing as confessedly true as it is awfully solemn. For,

The certainty of a judgment.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, As the scriptures aforementioned (with these, 2 Cor. v. 10. Eccles. xii. 14. Mat. xii. 36. and many other, the true and faithful sayings of God) do very plainly reveal it; so the justice and righteousness of God require it should be so. For the judge of all the earth will do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now righteousness itself requires that a difference be made betwixt the righteous and the wicked: "Say ye to the righteous, it "shall be well with him; woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with "him," Isa. iii. 10. But no such distinction is generally, and fully made betwixt one another in this world. Yea, rather the wicked prosper, and the righteous perish, "There is a just man "that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man "that prolongeth his life in his wickedness," Eccles. vii. 15. Yea, not only in, but for his righteousness, as it may be fairly rendered.

Here the "wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous "than himself," Hab. i. 13. As the fishes of the sea, where the great and strong swallow up the small and weak. And even in courts of judicature, where the innocent might expect relief; there they often meet with the worst oppressions. How fairly and justly therefore doth a wise man infer a judgment to come from this consideration, Eccles. iii. 16, 17. "I saw under the sun the "place of judgment, that wickedness was there, and the place "of righteousness, that iniquity was there; I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a "time there for every purpose, and for every work," *q. d.* the judgment to come, is the only relief and support, left to poor innocents, to quiet and comfort themselves withal *. To the same purpose also is that, Jam. v. 6, 7. "Ye have condemned "and killed the just; and he doth not resist you; be patient "therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." It is confessed, that sometimes God vindicates his providence against

* In considering so great injustice, I have betaken myself to the judgment of God, who will declare who are guilty. *Drusius.* I have applied this remedy to this evil. *Merc.* I have comforted myself against this injustice, with the thought that God judgeth all. *Geirus.*

the Atheism of the world, by particular strokes upon the wicked; but this is but rare. And as the Father well observes, "† if no sin were punished here, no providence would be be-" lieved; again, if every sin were openly punished here, no "judgment hereafter could be expected." Besides,

Secondly, Man is a reasonable being, and every reasonable being, is an accountable being. He is a subject capable of moral government. His actions have a relation to a law. He is swayed by rewards and punishments. He acts by counsel, and therefore of his actions, he must expect to give an account, as it is Rom. xiv. 12. "So then every one of us, shall give an ac-" count of himself to God." Especially if we add, that all the gifts of body, mind, estate, time, *&c.* are so many talents, concredited and betrusted to him by God, and every one of us hath one talent at least; therefore a time to render an account for all these talents will come, Mat. xxv. 14, 15. We are but stewards, and stewards must give an account, in order whereto, there must be a great *audit* day.

Thirdly, And what need we seek evidence of this truth, further than our own conscience? Lo, it is a truth engraven legibly upon every man's own breast. Every one hath a kind of little tribunal, or privy sessions in his own conscience, which both accuses, and excuses for good and evil, which it could never do, were there not a future judgment, of which it is now conscious to itself. In this court, records are now kept of all we do, even of our secret actions and thoughts, which never yet took air; but if no judgment, what need of records? Nor let any imagine, that this may be but the fruit of education and discourse. We have heard of such things, and so are scared by them. For if so, how comes it to obtain so universally? Who could be the author of such a common deception?

Reader, bethink thyself a little; if thou hadst a mind (as ‡ one saith) to impose a lie upon all the world, what course wouldest thou take? How wouldest thou lay the design? Or why dost thou in this case imagine what thou knowest not how to imagine? It is evident that the very consciences of the Heathens, have these offices of accusing and excusing, Rom. ii. 15. And it is hard to imagine, (as an ingenious author ‖ speaks) that

† *Si nullum peccatum manifesta plecteretur pœna; nullam esse divinam providentiam crederetur. Rursum si omne peccatum aperte puniretur, nullum fore judicium crederetur.* Aug.

‡ Mr. Howe's Blessedness of the Righteous, *p.* 343.

‖ Sir Charles Woolsely's Unreasonableness of Atheism, *p.* 76.

a general cheat should bow down the backs of all mankind, and induce so many doubts and fears, and troubles, amongst them; and give an interruption to the whole course of their corrupt living, and that there should be no account of it? And therefore it is undoubted that such a day will come. But I shall rather chuse, in the

The quality of the judgment.

Second Place, to open the nature, and manner of this judgment, than to spend more time in proving a truth, that cannot be denied without violence offered to a man's own light. If then the question be, what manner of judgment will this be? I answer,

First, It will be a great and awful day. It is called the "judgment of the great day," Jude 6. Three things will make it so, the manner of Christ's coming. The work he comes about. And the issues, or events of that work. The manner of Christ's coming, will be awfully solemn; "For the "Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the "voice of the archangel, with the trump of God; and the dead "in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet "the Lord in the air," *&c.* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Here Christ breaks out of heaven, with the shouts of angels ἐν κελευσματι, it signifies such a shout (* saith one) as is to be heard among sea men, when after a long and dangerous voyage, they first descry land, crying aloud, with united voices, *a shore, a shore.* As the poet describes the Italians when they saw their native country, "lifting up their voices, and making the heavens ring again with "† Italy, Italy; or as armies shout when the signal of battle "is given." Above all which (as some expound it) shall the voice of the Archangel be distinctly heard. And after this shout, *the trump of God* shall sound. By this tremendous blast, sinners will be affrighted out of their graves, but to the saints, it will carry no more terror, than the roaring of cannons, when armies of friends approach a besieged city, for the relief of them that are within it. The dead being raised, they shall be gathered before the great throne on which Christ shall sit in his glory; and there be divided exactly to the right and left-hand of Christ, by the angels. Here will be the greatest assembly that ever met. Where Adam may see his numerous offspring, even as the

* Case's Pisgah.

† *Italiam, Italiam, laeto clamore salutant.* Virgil. Æneid.

ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, which no man can number. And never was there ſuch a perfect diviſion made, (how many diviſions ſoever have been in the world) none was ever like it. The ſaints in this great *Oecumenical aſſize* (as the author ſtiles it) ſhall meet the Lord in the air, and there the Judge ſhall ſit upon the throne, and all the ſaints ſhall be placed upon bright clouds, as on ſeats or ſcaffolds round about him; the wicked remaining below upon the earth, there to receive their final doom and ſentence.

www.libtool.com.cn

Theſe preparatives will make it awful; and much more will the work itſelf, that Chriſt comes about, make it ſo. For it is "to judge the ſecrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. To ſever the tares from the wheat; to make every man's whites and blacks appear; and according as they are found in that trial, to be ſentenced to their everlaſting and immutable ſtate. O what a ſolemn thing is this!

And no leſs will the execution of the ſentence on both parts make it a great and ſolemn day. The heart of man cannot conceive what impreſſions the voice of Chriſt, from the throne, will make, both upon believers, and unbelievers.

Imagine Chriſt upon his glorious throne, ſurrounded with myriads and legions of angels, his royal guard; a poor unbeliever trembling at the bar; an exact ſcrutiny made into his heart and life; the dreadful ſentence given; and then a cry; and then his delivering him over to the executioners of eternal vengeance, never, never; to ſee a glimpſe of hope, or mercy any more.

Imagine Chriſt, like the general of an army, mentioning with honour, on the head of all the hoſts of heaven and earth, all the ſervices that the ſaints have done for him in this world: then ſententially juſtifying them by open proclamation; then mounting with him to the third heavens, and entering the gates of that city of God, in that noble train of ſaints and angels intermixed; and ſo for ever to be with the Lord. O what a great day muſt this be!

Secondly, As it will be an awful and ſolemn judgment, ſo it will be a critical and exact judgment, every man will be weighed to his ounces and drams. The name of the Judge is Καρδιογνώστης, the ſearcher of hearts. The Judge hath eyes as flames of fire, which pierce to the dividing of the heart and reins. It is ſaid, Matth. xii. 36. That men ſhall then "give an account of every "idle word that they ſhall ſpeak." It is a day that will perfectly fan the world. No hypocrite can eſcape; Juſtice holds the ballances in an even hand: Chriſt will go to work ſo exactly, that ſome divines of good note think, the day of judgment will laſt

as long as this day of the gospel's administration hath lasted, or shall last.

Thirdly, It will be an universal judgment, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We "must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." And Rom. xiv. 12. "Every one of us shall give an account of him-"self to God." Those that were under the law, "and those "that having no law, were a law to themselves," Rom. ii. 12. Those that had many talents, and he that had but one talent, must appear at this bar; those that were carried from the cradle to the grave, with him that stooped for age: the rich, and poor; the father, and the child; the master, and servant; the believer, and the unbeliever, must stand forth in that day. "I saw the "dead, both small and great, stand before God, and the books "were opened." Rev. xx. 12.

Fourthly, It will be a judgment full of convictive clearness. All things will be so sifted to bran, (as we say,) that the sentence of Christ, both on saints and sinners, shall be applauded. "Righ-"teous art thou, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus." His judgments will be as the light that goeth forth. So that those poor sinners whom he will condemn, shall be first αυτοκατακριτοι self-condemned. Their own consciences shall be forced to confess, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that sea of wrath, into which they are to be cast.

Fifthly, and lastly, It will be a supreme and final judgment, from which lies no appeal. For it is the sentence of the highest, and only Lord. "For as the ultimate resolution of faith is in-"to the word, and truth of God, so the ultimate resolution of "justice is into the judgment of God*." This judgment is supreme and imperial. For Christ is the *only Potentate*, 1 Tim. vi. 5., and therefore the sentence once passed, its execution is infallible. And so you find it in that judicial process, Matth. xxv. *ult.*; just after the sentence is pronounced by Christ, it is immediatly added, "these shall go away into everlasting punish-"ment, but the righteous into life eternal." This is the judgment of the great day.

That this judgment makes for Christ's honour.

Thirdly, In the last place, I must inform you, that God, in ordaining Christ to be the Judge, has very highly exalted him. This will be very much for his honour: for in this, Christ's royal dignity will be illustrated, beyond whatever

* *Ad Dei verbum fit ultima resolutio fidei, ad Dei tribunal ultima resolutio judicii.*

it was since he took our nature, till that day; now he will appear in his glory. For,

First, This act of judging pertaining properly to the kingly office, Christ will be glorified as much in his kingly office, as he hath been in either of the other. We find but some few glimpses of the kingly office, breaking forth in this world; as, his riding with Hosannahs into Jerusalem; his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple; his title upon the cross, *&c.* But these were but faint beams: Now that office will shine in its glory, as the sun in the midst of the heavens. For what were the Hosannahs of little children, in the streets of Jerusalem, to the shouts and acclamations of thousands of angels, and ten thousands of saints? what was his whipping the prophane out of the temple, to his turning the wicked into hell, and sending his angels to gather out of his kingdom every thing that offendeth? what was a title written by his judge, and fixed on the ignominious tree, to the name that shall now be seen on his vesture, and on his thigh, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Secondly, This will be a display of his glory in the highest, before the whole world. For there will be present at once, and together, all the inhabitants of heaven, and earth, and hell; angels must be there to attend and minister; those glittering courtiers of heaven must attend his person; so that heaven will, for a time, be left empty of all its inhabitants: men and devils must be there to be judged: and before this great assembly will Christ appear in royal Majesty. He will, (to allude to that text, Isa. xxiv. 23.), reign before his ancients gloriously. "For he will "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them "that believe," 2 Thess. i. 10. The inhabitants of the three regions, heaven, earth, and hell, shall then rejoice, or tremble before him, and acknowledge him to be supreme Lord and King.

Thirdly, This will roll away for ever the reproach of his death: for Pilate and the high-Priest, that judged him at their bars, shall now stand quivering at his bar; with Herod that set him at nought, the soldiers and officers that traduced and abused him: there they that reviled him on the cross, wagging their heads, will stand, with trembling knees, before his throne. For "every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him," Rev. i. 7. O what a contemptible person was Christ in their eyes once? As a worm, and no man. Every vile wretch could freely tread and trample on him; but now such will be the brightness of his glory, such the awful beams of majesty, that the wicked shall not stand in his presence, or "be able to rise up," (as that

† word imports, Psal. i. 5.), "before him." So that this will be a full and universal vindication of the death of Christ, from all that contempt and ignominy that had attended it. We next improve it.

Inference 1. Is Jesus Christ ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead? *Great then is the security believers have, that they shall not be condemned in that day.* Who shall condemn, when Christ is Judge? If believers be condemned in judgment, Christ must give sentence against them: yea, and they must condemn themselves too. I say, Christ must give sentence, for that is the proper and peculiar office of Christ. And, to be sure, no sentence of condemnation shall, in that day, be given Christ against them. For,

First, He died to save them, and he will never cross and overthrow the designs and ends of his own death. That cannot be imagined. Nay,

Secondly, They have been cleared, and absolved already. And being once absolved by divine sentence, they can never be condemned afterward. For one divine sentence cannot cross and rescind another. He justified them here in this world by faith: Declared in his word, (which shall then be the rule of judgment, Rom. ii. 16.), that "there is no condemnation to them that are "in Christ," Rom. viii. 1. And surely he will not retract his own word, and give a sentence quite cross to his own statute-book, out of which he hath told us that they shall be judged. Moreover,

Thirdly, The far greatest part of them will have passed their particular judgment, long before that day, and being therein acquitted by God, the Judge of all; and admitted into heaven upon the score and account of their justification; it cannot be imagined that Christ should now condemn them with the world. Nay,

Fourthly, He that judged them is their head, husband, friend, and brother: who loved them, and gave himself for them: O then, with what confidence may they go, even unto his throne? and say, with Job, "Though he try us as fire, we know we shall "come forth as gold." We know that we shall be justified. Especially, if we add, that they themselves shall be the assessors with Christ in that day. And, (as a judicious author pertinently observes), not a sentence shall pass without their votes. "So "as that they may by faith not only look upon themselves as al-"ready in heaven, sitting with Christ, as a common person, in

† לא יקמו ‡ Goodwin's Triumph, p. 146.

"their right; but they may look upon themselves as judges already. So that if any sin should arise to accuse, or condemn, yet it must be with their votes. And what greater security can they have than this, that they must condemn themselves, if they be condemned." No, no, it is not the the business of that day to condemn, but to absolve, and pronounce them pardoned and justified, according to the sentence of Acts iii. 19. and Mat. xii. 32. So that it must needs be a time of refreshing, (as all scriptures call it), to the people of God. You that now believe, shall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. You that now judge yourselves shall not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

Inference 2. If Christ be ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, *how miserable a case will Christless souls be in at that day!* They that are Christless now, will be speechless, helpless, and hopeless then. How will their hands hang down, and their knees knock together! O what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and roaring consciences will be among them in that day! O dreadful day! O astonishing sight! to see the world in a dreadful conflagration, the elements melting, the stars falling, the earth trembling, the judgment set, the prisoners brought forth; O who shall endure in this day, but those that by union with Christ are secured against the danger and dread of it! Let me demand of poor Christless souls, whom this day is like to overtake unawares.

First, Do you think it possible to avoid appearing, after what terrible citation is given to the world by the trump of God? Alas, how can you imagine it? is not the same power that revived your dust, able to bring you before the bar? There is a necessity that you must come forth, 2 Cor. v. 10. "We [must] all appear." It is not at the sinner's choice, to obey the summons or not.

Secondly, If you must appear, are there no accusers, nor witnesses, that will appear against you, and confront you in the court? What think you, was Satan so often a tempter to you here, and will he not be an accuser there? Yes, nothing surer; for that was the main design of all his temptations. What think you of your own consciences? are they not privy to your secret wickedness; do not they now whisper sometimes in your ears, what you care not to hear of? If they whisper now, they will thunder then, Rom. ii. 15, 16. Will not the Spirit accuse you, for resisting his motions, and stifling thousands of his convictions? Will not your companions in sin accuse you? who drew, or were drawn by you to sin? Will not your teachers be your

accusers? How many times have you made them complain, *Lord, they are iron and brass, they have made their faces harder than a rock; they refuse to return.* Will not your very relations be your accusers, to whom you have failed in all your relational duties? Yea, and every one whom you have tempted to sin, abused, defrauded, over-reached; all these will be your accusers. So that it is without dispute, you will have accusers enough to appear against you.

Thirdly, Being accused before Jesus Christ, what will you plead for yourselves: will you confess, or will you deny the charge? If you confess, what need more? "Out of thine own mouth "will I judge thee," saith Christ, Luke xix. 22. If you deny, and plead not guilty; thy Judge is the searcher of hearts, and knows all things. So that it will not at all help thee to make a lie thy last refuge. This will add to the guilt, but not cover it.

Fourthly, If no defence or plea be left thee, then what canst thou imagine should retard the sentence? Why should not Christ go on to that dreadful work? "Must not the Judge of all the "earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. Must not he render to every man according to his deeds? 2 Cor. v. 10. Yes, no question but he will proceed to that sentence, how terrible soever it be to you to think on it now, or hear it then.

Fifthly, To conclude, if sentence be once given by Christ against thy soul, what in all the world canst thou imagine should hinder the execution? Will he alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth? No, Psal. lxxxix. 34. Dost thou hope he is more merciful and pitiful than so? Thou mistakest, if thou expectest mercy out of that way in which he dispenses it. There will be thousands, and ten thousands that will rejoice in, and magnify his mercy then; but they are such as obey his call, repented, believed, and obtained union with his person here; but for unbelievers, it is against the settled law of Christ, and constitution of the gospel, to shew mercy to the despisers of it. But it may be, you think your tears, your cries, your pleadings with him, may move him; these, indeed, might have done somewhat in time, but they come out of season now. Alas, too late. What the success of such pleas and cries will be, you may see, if you will but consult two scriptures, Job xxvii 8, 9. "What "is the hope of the hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when "God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when "trouble cometh upon him?" No, no: And Mat. vii. 22. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

"prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out de-
"vils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And
"then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart
"from me ye that work iniquity."

And must it come to this dismal issue with you indeed? God forbid it should. Oh then,

www.libtool.com.cn

Inference 3. If Christ be appointed of God to be the Judge of all, *how are all concerned to secure their interest in him, and therein an eternity of happiness to their own souls, by the work of regeneration?* Of all the business that men and women have in this world, there is none so solemn, so necessary, and important, as this. O my brethren, this is a work, able to drink up your spirits, while you do but think of the consequence of it.

Summon in then thy self-reflecting, and considering powers: get alone, reader, and, forgetting all other things, ponder with thyself this deep, dear, eternal concernment of thine. Examine the state of thy own soul. Look into the scriptures, then into thine own heart, and then to heaven, saying, *Lord, let me not be deceived in so great a concernment to me as this.* O let not the trifles of time wipe off the impressions of death, judgment, and eternity, from thy heart. O that long word [*Eternity*,] that it might be night and day with thee. That the awe of it may be still upon thy spirit. A gentlewoman of this nation, having spent the whole afternoon, and a great part of the evening at cards, in mirth and jollity, came home late at night, and finding her waiting gentlewoman reading, she looked over her shoulder upon the book, and said, Poor melancholy soul, why dost thou sit here poring so long upon thy book? That night she could not sleep, but lay sighing and weeping; her servant asked her once and again what ailed her; at last she burst out into tears, and said, O! it was one word that I cast my eye upon in thy book, that troubles me; there I saw that word *Eternity*. How happy were I, if I were provided for eternity! Sure it concerns us, seeing we look for such things, to be diligent that we may be found of him in peace. O let not that day come by surprizal upon you. Remember that as death leaves, so judgment will find you.

Infer. 4. Is Jesus Christ appointed Judge of quick and dead, *then look to it*, all you that hope to be found of him in peace, *that you avoid those sins, and live in the daily practice of those duties, which the consideration of that day powerfully persuades you to avoid or practise.* For it not only presses to holiness *in actu primo*, in the being of it; but *in actu secundo*, in the daily exercise

and practice of it. Do you indeed expect such a day? Oh, then,

First, See you be meek and patient under all injuries and abuses for Christ's sake. Avenge not yourselves, but leave it to the Lord, who will do it. Do not anticipate the work of God. "Be patient my brethren, to the coming of the Lord," James v. 7, 8, 9.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, Be communicative, public-hearted Christians, studying and devising liberal things, for Christ's distressed members. And you shall have both an honourable remembrance of it, and a full reward of it in that day, Mat. xxv. 34, 35.

Thirdly, Be watchful, and sober, keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all your affections; and see that you be not over-charged with the cares and love of this present life, Luke xxi. 34, 35. Will you that your Lord come, and find you in such a posture? "O let your moderation be known unto all, "the Lord is at hand," Phil. iv. 5.

Fourthly, Improve all your Master's talents, diligently and carefully. Take heed of the napkin, Mat. xxv. 14, 18. Then must you make up your account for them all.

Fifthly, But above all, be sincere in your profession. Let your hearts be found in God's statutes, that you may never be ashamed; for this day will be the day of manifestation of all hidden things. And nothing is so secret, but that day will reveal it, Luke xii. 1, 2, 3. "Beware of hypocrisy, for there is "nothing covered, which shall not be revealed; neither hid, "that shall not be made known."——Thus I have finished, through divine aids, the whole doctrine of the impetration of redemption by Jesus Christ; we shall wind up the whole in a general exhortation, and I have done.

The General USE.

The general use of the whole, pressing to holiness, which is the main scope of the doctrine of redemption

AND now, to close up all, let me persuade all those for whom the dear Son of God came from the blessed bosom of the Father; assumed flesh, brake, by the strength of his own love, through all discouragements and impediments, laid down his own life a ransom for their souls; for whom he lived, died, rose, ascended, and lives for ever in heaven to intercede; to live wholly to Christ, as Christ lived, and died wholly for them.

O brethren, never was the Heathen world acquainted with

ſuch arguments to deter them from ſin; never acquainted with ſuch motives to urge them to holineſs, as I ſhall this day acquaint you with. My requeſt is, to give up both your hearts and lives to glorify the Father, Son, and Spirit, whoſe you are, by the holineſs and heavenlineſs of them. Other things are expected from you, than from other men. See that you turn not all this grace that hath ſounded in your ears, into wantonneſs. Think not becauſe Chriſt hath done ſo much for you, you may ſit ſtill; much leſs indulge yourſelves in ſin, becauſe Chriſt hath offered up ſuch an excellent ſacrifice for the expiation of it. No, no, though Chriſt came to be a curſe, he did not come to be a cloak for your ſins. "If one died for all, then were all "dead; that they that live, ſhould not henceforth live to them-"ſelves; but to him that died for them," 2 Cor. v. 15. O keep your lives pure and clean. Do not make freſh work for the blood of Chriſt every day. "If you live in the Spirit, ſee "that you walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. That is, (ſaith * Cornelius a Lapide very ſolidly) "Let us ſhape and order "our lives and actions according to the dictates, inſtinct, and "impulſes of the Spirit, and of that grace of the Spirit put "within us, and planted in our hearts, which tendeth to prac-"tical holineſs." O let the grace which is in your hearts, iſſue out into all your religious, civil, and natural actions. Let the faith that is in your hearts appear in your prayers; the obedience of your hearts in hearing; the meekneſs of your hearts in ſuffering; the mercifulneſs of your hearts in diſtributing; the truth and righteouſneſs of your hearts in trading; the ſobriety and temperance of your hearts in eating and drinking. Theſe be the fruits of Chriſt's ſufferings indeed, they are ſweet fruits. Let grace refine, ennoble, and elevate all your actions; that you may ſay, "Truly our converſation is in heaven." Let grace have the ordering of your tongues, and of your hands; the moulding of your whole converſation. Let not humility appear in ſome actions, and pride in others. Holy ſerioufneſs in ſome companies, and vain frothineſs in others. Suffer not the fountain of corruption to mingle with, or pollute the ſtreams of grace. Write as exactly as you can after your copy, Chriſt. O let there not be (as † one well expreſſes it) here a line and there a blank; here a word, and there a blot. One word of God, and two of the world. Now a ſpiritual rapture, and then

* *Secundum dictamen, inſtinctum, impulſum Spiritus eo gratiæ immiſſæ, et inditæ nobis a Spiritu Sancto.*

† R. A. *Vindiciæ Pietatis.*

a fleshly frolic. This day an advance towards heaven, and tomorrow a slide back again towards hell. But *be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long*. Let there be a due proportion betwixt all the parts of your conversation. Approve yourselves the servants of Christ in all things. "By pureness, by knowledge, long-suffering, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right-hand, and on the left," 2 Cor. vi. 6. See then how accurately you walk.——Cut off occasion from them that desire occasion; and in well-doing commit yourselves to God, and commend religion to the world. That this is your great concernment and duty, I shall evidence to your consciences, by these following considerations. That of all persons in the world the redeemed of the Lord, are most obliged to be holy; most assisted for a life of holiness; and that God intends to make great use of their lives, both for the conviction, and conversion of others.

www.libtool.com.cn

Consider, *First*, God hath more obliged them to live pure and strict lives. I know the command obliges all men to it, even those that cast away the cords of the commands, and break Christ's bonds asunder, are yet bound by them; and cannot plead a dispensation to live as they do. Yea, and it is not unusual for them to feel the obligations of the command upon their consciences, even when their impetuous lusts hurry them on to the violation of them; but there are special ties upon your souls, that oblige you to holiness more than others. Many special and peculiar engagements you are under. *First*, from *God*. *Secondly*, from *yourselves*. *Thirdly*, from your *brethren*. *Fourthly*, from your *enemies*.

Obligations from the Father.

First, God hath peculiarly obliged you to purity and strictness of life. Yea, every Person in the blessed Trinity hath cast his cord over your souls, to bind up your hearts and lives to the most strict and precise obedience of his commands. *The Father* hath obliged you, and that not only by the common tie of *creation*, which is yet of great efficacy in itself; for, is it reasonable, that God should create and form so excellent a piece, and that it should be employed against him? That he should plant the tree, and another eat the fruit of it? But, besides this common engagement, he hath obliged you to holiness of life.

First, By his wise and merciful designs and counsels for your recovery and salvation by Jesus Christ. It was he that laid the corner-stone of your salvation with his own hands. The first

motion sprang out of his breast. If God had not designed the Redeemer for you, the world had never seen him; he had never left that sweet Bosom for you. It was the act of the Father to give you to the Son to be redeemed, and then to give the Son to be a Redeemer to you. Both of them stupendous and astonishing acts of grace. And in both God acted as a most free Agent. When he gave you to Christ before the beginning of time, there was nothing out of himself that could in the least move him to it. When the Father, Son, and Spirit sat (as I may say) at the counsel table, contriving and laying the design for the salvation of a few out of many of Adam's degenerate offspring, there was none came before him to speak one word for thee; but such was the divine Pleasure to insert thy name in that catalogue of the saved. Oh how much owest thou to the Lord for this! And what an engagement doth it leave upon thy soul to obey, please, and glorify him?

Secondly, By *his bountiful remunerations of your obedience, which have been wonderful.* What service didst thou ever perform for him, for which he hath not paid thee a thousand times more than it is worth? Didst thou ever seek him diligently, and not find him a bountiful rewarder; none seek him in vain, unless such only as seek him vainly, Heb. xi. 6. Didst thou ever give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, and not receive a disciple's reward? Mat. x. 42. Hast thou not found inward peace and comfort flowing into thy soul, upon every piece of sincere obedience! Oh what a good master do saints serve? You that are remiss and unconstant in your obedience, you that are heartless and cold in duties; hear how your God expostulates with you, Jer. ii. 31. "Have I been a wilder-"ness to Israel, or a land of darkness?" *q. d.* Have I been a hard Master to you? Have you any reason to complain of me? To whomsoever I have been streight-handed, surely I have not been so to you. Are fruits of sin like the fruits of obedience? Do you know where to find a better Master? Why then are you so shuffling and unconstant, so sluggish and remiss in my work? Surely God is not behind-hand with any of you. May you not say with David, Psal. cxix. 56. "This I had, because "I kept thy precepts." There are fruits in holiness, even present fruit. It is a high favour to be employed for God. Reward enough that he will accept any thing thou dost. But to return every duty thou presentest to him with such comforts, such quickenings, such inward and outward blessings into thy bosom, so that thou mayest open the treasury of thine own experiences, view the variety of encouragements, and tokens of

his love, at several times received in duties; and say, this I had, and that I had, by waiting on God, and serving him. Oh what an engagement is this upon thee, to be ever abounding in the work of the Lord! Though thou must not work for *wages*; yet God will not let thy work go unrewarded. For *he is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.*

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, Your *Father* hath further obliged you to his holiness and purity of life, *by signifying to you* (as he hath frequently done) *the great delight and pleasure he hath therein.* He hath told you, "that such as are upright in the way are his delight," Prov. xi. 20. That he would not have you "forget "to do good, and to communicate, for with such sacrifices he "is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 16. You know you cannot "walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, (except) ye be "fruitful in every good word and work," Col. i. 10. And oh what a bond is this upon you to live holy lives! Can you please yourselves in displeasing your Father? If you have the hearts of children in you, sure you cannot. O you cannot grieve his spirit by loose and careless walking, but you must grieve your own spirits too. How many times hath God pleased you, gratified and contented you, and will you not please and content him? This mercy you have asked of him, and he gave it, that mercy, and you were not denied; in many things the Lord hath wonderfully condescended to please you, and now there is but one thing that he desires of you, and that most reasonable, yea, beneficial for you, as well as pleasing to him, Phil. i. 27. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Jesus "Christ." This is the one thing, the great and main thing, he expects from you in this world, and will not you do it? Can you expect he should gratify your desires, when you make no more of grieving and displeasing him? Well, if you know what will please God, and yet resolve not to do it, but will rather please your flesh, and gratify the devil, than him; pray pull off your vizards, fall into your own rank among hypocrites; and appear as indeed you are.

Fourthly, The Father hath further obliged you to strictness and purity of conversation, by his gracious promises made to such as so walk. He hath promised to do great things for you, if you will but do this one thing for him. If you will "order your "conversation aright," Psal. l. *ult.* He will be *your sun and shield*, if you walk before him and be upright, Gen. xv. 1. "He "will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold "from him that walketh uprightly," Psal. lxxxiv. 11. And he promises no more to you than he hath made good to others,

that have thus walked, and ſtands ready to perform to you alſo. If you look to enjoy the good of the promiſe, you are obliged by all your expectations and hopes, to order your lives purely and uprightly. This hope will ſet you on work to purge your lives, as well as your hearts, from all pollutions, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God."

Fifthly, Yea, *He hath yet more obliged you to ſtrict and holy lives, by his confidence in you, that you will thus walk and pleaſe him.* He expreſſeth himſelf in ſcripture, as one that dares truſt you with his glory, knowing that you will be tender of it, and dare do no otherwiſe. If but a man repoſe confidence in you, and truſt you with his concerns, it greatly obliges you to be faithful. What an engagement was that upon Abraham to walk uprightly, when God ſaid of him, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord," *q. d.* as for this wicked generation, whom I will ſpeedily conſume in my wrath, I know they regard not my laws, they will trample my commands under their feet, they care not how they provoke me, but I expect other things from Abraham, and I am confident he will not fail me. *I know him*, he is a man of another ſpirit, and what I promiſe myſelf from him, he will make good. And to the like purpoſe, is that in Iſa. lxiii. 7. "I will mention the loving-kindneſs 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 loving-kindneſſes. For he ſaid, ſurely they are my people, children that will not lie, (or fail me) ſo he was their Saviour." Here you have an ample account of the endearing mercies of God to that people, ver. 7. and the Lord's confident expectations of ſuitable returns from them, ver. 8. I ſaid, (*i. e.*) (ſpeaking after the manner of men in like caſes) I made a full account, that after all theſe endearments, and favours, beſtowed upon them, they would not offer to be diſloyal and falſe to me. I have made them ſure enough to myſelf, by ſo many bonds of love. Like to which is that expreſſion, Zeph. iii. 7. "I ſaid, ſurely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive inſtruction." Oh! how great are the expectations of God from ſuch as you! I know Abraham, there is no doubt of him. And again, they are children that will not lie, (*i. e.*) they will not *fallere fidem datam*, break their covenant

with me. Or they are my people that will not shrink, as Mr. Coverdale well translates, *filii non negantes*, such as will be true to me, and answer their covenant-engagements. And again, surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive *instruction*. And shall not all this engage you to God? What! Neither the ancient and bountiful love of God, in contriving your redemption from eternity, nor the bounty of God, in rewarding all, and every piece of service you have done for him. Nor yet the pleasure he takes in your obedience and upright walking: Nor the encouraging promises he hath made thereto, nor yet his confident expectations of such a life from you, whom he hath so many ways obliged, and endeared to himself? Will you forget your ancient friend, contemn his rewards, take no delight or care to please him? Slight his promises, and deceive and fail his expectations? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this! and be horribly afraid." Consider how God the Father hath fastned this five-fold cord upon your souls, and shew yourselves christians; yea, to use the prophet's words, Isa. xlvi. 8. "Remember this, and shew yourselves men."

Obligations from the Son.

Secondly, You are yet further engaged to this precise and holy life, by what the Son hath done for you; is not this pure and holy life the very aim, and next end of his death? Did he not shed his blood to "redeem you from your vain conversations?" 1 Pet. i. 18. Was not this the design of all his sufferings? "That being delivered out of the hands of your enemies, you might serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of your life," Luke i. 74, 75. And is not the apostle's inference, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. highly reasonable? "If on died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them." Did Christ only buy your persons, and not your services also? No, no, whoever hath thy time, thy strength, or any part of either; I can assure thee, christian, that Christ hath paid for it, and thou givest away what is none of thine own to give. Every moment of thy time, is his. Every talent, whether of grace or nature, is his. And dost thou defraud him of his own? O how liberal are you of your precious words and hours, as if Christ had never made a purchase of them! O think of this, when thy life runs muddy and foul. When the fountain of corruption flows out at thy tongue, in idle frothy discourses; or at thy hand, in sinful unwarrantable actions? Doth this become the redeemed of the Lord? Did Christ come from the

bosom of his Father for this? Did he groan, sweat, bleed, endure the cross, and lay down his life for this? Was he so well pleased with all his sorrows and sufferings, his pangs and agonies, upon the account of that satisfaction he should have in seeing the travail of his soul? Isa. liii. 11. as if he had said, "Welcome death, "welcome agonies, welcome the bitter cup, and heavy burthen; "I chearfully submit to all this. These are travailing pangs, "indeed, but I shall see the beautiful birth at last. These throws "and agonies shall bring forth many lovely children to God; I "shall have joy in them, and glory from them, to all eternity. "This blood of mine, these sufferings of mine, shall purchase to "me, the persons, duties, services, and obedience of many thou-"sands that will love me, and honour me, serve me, and obey "me, with their souls and bodies which are mine." And doth not this engage you to look to your lives, and keep them pure? Is not every one of Christ's wounds, a mouth open to plead for more holiness, more service, and more fruit from you? Oh! what will engage you if this will not? But,

Engagements from the Spirit.

Thirdly, This is not all; as a man when he weigheth a thing, casteth in weight after weight, till the scales are counterpoised; So doth God cast in engagement, after engagement, and argument upon argument, till thy heart, christian, be weighed up, and won to this heavenly life. And therefore, as Elihu said to Job, chap. xxxvi. 22. "Suffer me a little, and I "will shew thee what I have yet to speak on God's behalf." Some arguments have already been urged on the behalf of the Father and Son, for purity and cleanness of life; and next I have something to plead on the behalf of the Spirit. I plead now on his behalf, who hath so many times helped you to plead for yourselves with God. He that hath so often refreshed, quickened, and comforted you, he will be quenched, grieved, and displeased, by an impure, loose, and careless conversation; and what will you do then? Who shall comfort you, when the comforter is departed from you? When he that should relieve your souls, is far off? O grieve not the holy Spirit of God, by which you are sealed, to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. There is nothing grieves him more than impure practices; for he is a holy Spirit. And look, as water damps and quenches the fire, so doth sin quench the spirit, 1 Thes. v. 19. Will you quench the warm affections and burning desires which he hath kindled in your bosoms? If you do, it is a question, whether ever you may recover them again to your dying day. The spirit hath a delicate sense. It is the most tender thing in the whole world. He feels the last

touch of sin, and is grieved, when thy corruptions within, are stirred by temptations, and break out to the defiling of thy life; then is the holy Spirit of God, as it were, made sad, and heavy within thee. As that word μὴ λυπεῖτε, Eph. iv. 30. may be rendered. For thereby thou resistest his motions, whereby in the way of a loving constraint, he would lead and guide thee in the way of thy duty; yea, thou not only resistest his motions, but crossest his grand design, which is to purge and sanctify thee wholly, and build thee up more and more to the perfection of holiness. And when thou thus forsakest his conduct, and crossest his design in thy soul, then doth he usually withdraw as a man thatis grieved by the unkindness of his friend. He draws in the beams of his evidencing and quickening grace. Withholds all his divine cordials, and saith, as it were, to the unkind and disingenuous soul,

The Spirit's expostulation with careless Christians.

"Hast thou thus requited me, for all "the favours and kindnesses thou hast "received from me? Have I quickened "thee, when thou wast dead in transgressions? Did I descend upon thee in "the preaching of the gospel, and communicate life, even the "life of God, to thee; leaving others in the state of the dead? "Have I shed forth such rich influences of grace and comfort "upon thee? Comforting thee in all thy troubles, helping "thee in all thy duties; satisfying thee in all thy doubts and "perplexities of soul; saving thee, and pulling thee back from "so many destructive temptations and dangers? What had "been thy condition, if I had not come unto thee? Could the "word have converted thee without me? Could ministers, "could angels, have done that for thee which I did? And when "I had quickened thee, and made thee a living soul, what couldst "thou have done, without my exciting and assisting grace? "Couldest thou go on in the way of duty, If I had not led "thee? How wouldest thou have waded through the deeps of "spiritual troubles, if I had not borne thee up? Whither had "the temptations of satan and thine own corruptions, carried "thee before this day, If I had not stood thy friend, and come "in for thy rescue in the time of need? Did I ever fail thee "in thy extremities? Did I ever leave thee in thy dangers? "Have I not been tender over thee, and faithful to thee? And "now, for which of all these kindnesses, dost thou thus wrong "and abuse me? Why hast thou wounded me thus by thy unkindness? Ah! thou hast ill requited my love! And now thou

" ſhalt eat the fruit of thy doings. Let thy light now be dark-
" neſs; thy ſongs turned into howlings; the joy of thine heart,
" the light of thine eyes, the health of thy countenance, even
" the face of thy God, and the joy of ſalvation be hid from thee."

This is the fruit of careleſs and looſe walking. To this ſad iſſue it will bring thee at laſt, and when it is come to this, thou ſhalt go to ordinances, and duties, and find no good in them; no life-quickening comfort there. When thy heart which was wont to be enlarged, and flowing, ſhall be clung up and dry; when thou ſhalt kneel down before the Lord, and cry, as Eliſha, when with the mantle of Elijah, he ſmote the water, " Where " is the Lord God of Elijah?" So thou, where is the God of prayer? where is the God of duties? But there is no anſwer: When like Samſon, thou ſhalt go forth and ſhake thyſelf, as at other times; but thy ſtrength is gone; then tell me, what thou haſt done in reſiſting, quenching, and grieving the holy Spirit of God by impure and offenſive practices? And thus you ſee what engagements lie upon you from the Spirit alſo to walk uprightly, and keep the iſſues of life pure. I could willingly have enlarged myſelf upon this laſt branch, but that * a judicious hand hath lately improved this argument, to which I ſhall refer the reader. Thus God hath obliged you to circumſpect and holy lives.

Secondly, You are under great engagements to keep your lives pure, even from yourſelves, as well as from your God. As God hath bound you to purity of converſation, ſo you have bound yourſelves. And there are ſeveral things in you, and done by you, which wonderfully increaſe, and ſtrengthen your obligations to practical holineſs.

Firſt, Your *clearer illumination* is a ſtrong bond upon your ſouls, Eph. v. 8. " Ye were ſometimes darkneſs but now ye " are light in the Lord; walk as children of the light." You cannot pretend, or plead ignorance of your duty. You ſtand convinced in your own conſciences before God, that this is your unqueſtionable duty. Chriſtians, will you not all yield to this? I know you readily yield it. We live, indeed, in a contentious, diſputing age. In other things, our opinions are different. One Chriſtian is of this judgment, another of that; but doth he deſerve the name of a Chriſtian that dare once queſtion this truth? In this we all meet and cloſe in oneneſs of mind and judgment, *that it is our indiſputable duty, to live pure, ſtrict, and clean lives.* " The grace of God, which hath appeared to

* Mr. Polewheil's treatiſe of quenching the Spirit.

"you, hath taught you this truth clearly, and convincingly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. "You have received how you ought to walk, "and to please God," 1 Thes. iv. 1. Well then, this being yielded, the inference is plain and undeniable; that you cannot walk as others, in the vanity of their mind; but you must offer violence to your own light. You cannot suffer the corruptions of your hearts to break forth into practice, but you must slight, and put by the notices and rebukes of your own consciences, Jam. iv. 17. "He that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to "him it is sin." Yea, sin with a witness. Aggravated sin. Sin of a deeper tincture than that of Heathens. Sin that sadly wastes and violates conscience. Certainly whoever hath, you have no cloak for your sin. Light and lust struggling together, great light, and strong lusts: these make the soul a troubled sea that cannot rest. O but when masterless lusts over-bear conscience, this impresses horror upon the soul. This brake David's heart, Psal. li. 6. "Thou hast put knowledge in my inner "parts," *q. d.* Ah, Lord! I went against the rebukes of conscience, to the commission of this sin. I had a watchful light set up within me. I knew it was sin. My light endeavoured lovingly to restrain me, and I thrust it aside. Besides, what pleasure in sin can you have? Indeed, such as, for want of light know not what they do, or such, whose consciences are seared, and past feeling; they may seek a little pleasure (such as it is) out of sin: but what content or pleasure can you have, so long as your light is ever breaking in upon you, and smiting you for what you do? This greatly increases your obligation to a precise, holy life. Again,

Secondly, You are professors of holiness. You have given in your names to Christ, to be his disciples; and by this your engagements to a life of holiness, are yet further strengthened, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, "depart from iniquity." The name of Christ is called upon you, and it is, a *worthy name,* Jam. ii. 7. It is called upon you, as the name of the husband is called upon his wife, Isa. iv. 1. "Let thy name be called upon us." Or, as the name of a Father is called upon his child, Gen. xlviii. 16. "Let my name "be called on them, and the name of my fathers." Well then, you bear the name of Christ as his spouse or children; and will you not live suitably to your name? Every place and relation, every title of honour and dignity hath its decorum, and becomingness. O how will that worthy name of Christ be blasphemed through you, if you adorn it not with becoming deportments? Better you had never professed any thing, than to set

yourselves by your profession in the eye and observation of the world; and then to pour contempt on Jesus Christ, by your scandalous conversations, before the eyes of the world; who will laugh at it. I remember it was a *memento* given to one of his name by Alexander, *recordare nominis Alexandri*. Remember (said he) thy name Alexander, and do nothing unworthy of that name. O that is a heavy charge, Rom. ii. 24. "Through "you is the name of God blasphemed among the Heathens." Unhappy man that ever thou shouldest be a reproach to Christ! The herd of wicked men, they are *ignota capita*; men of no note, or observation. They may sin, and sin again; drink, swear, and tumble in all uncleanness; and it passes away silently; the world takes little notice of it. Their wicked actions make but little noise in the world; but the miscarriages of professors, are like a *blazing comet*, or an eclipsed sun, which all men gaze at, and make their observations upon; oh then, what manner of persons ought you to be, who bear the worthy name of Christ upon you!

Thirdly, But more than this, *You have obliged yourselves to this life of holiness by your own prayers*. How many times have you lifted up your hands to heaven, and cried with David, Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy sta-"tutes. Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have "dominion over me," ver. 133. Were you in earnest with God, when you thus prayed? Did you mean as you said? Or did you only compliment with God? If your hearts and tongues agreed in this request, doubtless it is as much your duty to endeavour, as to desire those mercies; and, if not, yet do all those prayers stand on record before the Lord, and will be produced against you as witnesses to condemn you, for your hypocrisy and vanity. How often also have you in your prayers lamented, and bewailed your careless and uneven walkings? You have said with Ezra, Chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I am ashamed and even "blush to look up unto thee." And do not your confessions oblige you to greater circumspection, and care for time to come? Will you confess, and sin? And sin, and confess? Go to God and bewail your evils, and when you have bewailed them, return again to the commission of them? God forbid, you should thus dissemble with God, play with sin, and dye your iniquities with a deeper tincture.

Fourthly, and lastly, to add no more, *You have often reproved or censured others for their miscarriages and falls, which adds to your own obligation, to walk accurately, and evenly*. Have you not often reproved your erring brethren? or at least privately

censured them, if not duly reproved them, (for to these left-handed blows of secret censurings, we are more apt, than to the fair and open strokes of just and due reproofs) and will you practise the same things, you criminate and censure others for? "Thou that teachest another, (saith the apostle) teachest thou "not thyself?" Rom. ii. 21. So say I, thou that censurest or rebukest another, condemnest thou not thyself? Will your rebukes ever do good to others, whilst you allow in yourselves what you condemn in them? And as these reproofs, and censures can do them no good, so they do you much evil, by reason of them you are αυτοκατακριτοι, self-condemned persons; and out of your own mouths God will judge you. For you need no other witness, than yourselves in this case. Your own tongues will fall upon you. Your censures and reproofs of others, will leave you without plea, or apology, if you look not to your lives with greater care. And yet will you be careless still? Fear you not the displeasure of God? Nor the wounding and disquieting your own consciences? Surely, these things are of no light value with you, if you be Christians indeed.

Thirdly, You are yet further engaged to practical holiness upon the account of your brethren, who are not a little concerned, and interested therein. For if, through the neglect of your hearts, your lives be defiled and polluted, this will be thrown in their faces, and many innocent and upright ones, both reproached, and grieved upon your account. This mischievous effect holy David earnestly deprecated, Psal. lxix. 5, 6. "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid "from thee; let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of "hosts, be ashamed for my sake. Let not them that seek thee, "be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel," *q. d.* Lord, thou knowest what a weak and foolish creature I am. And how apt to miscarry, if left to myself, and should I, through my foolishness, act unbecoming a saint; how would this shame the faces, and sad the hearts of thy people! They will be as men confounded at the report of my fall. The fall of one Christian, is matter of trouble and shame to all the rest; and, when they shall hear the sad and unwelcome news of your scandalous miscarriages, (which will certainly be the effect of a neglected heart and life) they will say as David concerning Saul and Jonathan, "tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon," *&c.* Or as Tamar concerning Amnon, "and we, whither shall "we cause our shame to go?" And for them, they shall be as fools in Israel. Thy loose and careless life will cause them to estrange themselves from thee, and look shy upon thee, as being

ashamed to own thee, and canst thou bear that? will it not grieve and pierce your very hearts to see a cloud of strangeness and trouble over the countenances of your brethren? To see yourselves disowned and lightly esteemed by them? This very consideration struck a great favourite in the Persian court to the very heart. * It was Ustazanes, who had been governor to Sapores in his minority. And this man for fear denied the Christian faith; and complied with the idolatrous worship of the king. And one day (saith the historian) sitting at the court-gate, he saw Simon, the aged archbishop of Seleucia, drawing along to prison, for his constancy in the Christian faith, and though he durst not openly own the Christian faith he had basely denied, and confess himself a Christian, yet he could not chuse but rise, and express his reverence to this holy man, in a respective and honourable salutation: but the zealous good man frowned upon him, and turned away his face from him; as thinking such an *apostate* unworthy of the least respect from him; this presently struck Ustazanes to the heart, and drew from him many tears and groans; and thus he reasoned with himself: Simon will not own me, and can I think but that God will disclaim me, when I appear before his tribunal? Simon will not speak unto me, will not so much as look upon me, and can I look for so much as a good word or look from Jesus Christ, whom I have so shamefully betrayed, and denied? Hereupon he threw off his rich courtly robes, and put on mourning apparel, and professed himself a Christian and died a martyr. O it is a piercing thing to an honest heart, to be cast out of the favour of God's people. If you walk loosely, neither God nor his people will look kindly upon you.

Fourthly, and lastly, *Your very enemies engage you to this pure and holy life upon a double ground.* You are obliged by them two ways, *viz.* as they are your *bold censurers*, and your *watchful observers*. They censure you as hypocrites, and will you give them ground and matter for such a charge? They say, only your tongues are more holy than other mens, and shall they prove it from your practice? They also observe you diligently; lie at catch, and are highly gratified by your miscarriages. If your lives be loose and defiled, you will not only be a shame to your friends, but the song of your enemies. You will make mirth in hell; and gratify all the enemies of God. This is that they watch for. They are curious observers of your goings. And that which makes them triumph at your falls and miscar-

* Sozomen. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 8.

riages, is not only that deep rooted enmity betwixt the two seeds, but because all your miscarriages and evils are so many absolutions to their consciences, and justifications (as they think) of their ways and practices. For look, as your strictness and holiness doth, as it were, cast and condemn them, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. by his practice, condemned the world, their consciences fly in their faces, when they see your holy and pure conversations. It lays a damp upon them. It works upon their consciences, and causes many smart reflections. So when you fall, you, as it were, absolve their consciences, loose the bonds of conviction you had made fast upon them, and now there is matter of joy put before them.

www.libtool.com.cn

Oh, say they, whatever these men talk; we see they are no better than we. They can do as we do. They can cozen and cheat for advantage. They can comply with any thing for their own ends; it is not conscience, as we once thought, but mere stomach and humour, that made them so precise. And oh, what a sad thing is this! hereby you shed soul-blood. You fasten the bonds of death upon their souls. You kill those convictions, which, for any thing you know, might have made way to their conversion. When you fall, you may rise again; but they may fall at your example, and never rise more. Never have a good opinion of the ways of God, or of his people any more. Upon this consideration, David begs of God, Psal. v. 8. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of my "enemies;" (or, as the Hebrew) *my observers, make thy way straight before my face.* And thus you see how your very enemies oblige you to this holy and pure conversation also.

Now put all this together, and see to what these particulars will amount. You have heard how God the Father hath engaged you to this purity of conversation, by his designment of your salvation; rewarded your obedience; his pleasure in it; his promises to it; and his great confidence in you, that you will thus walk before him. The Lord Jesus hath also engaged you thereunto by his death and sufferings, whereby you were redeemed from your vain conversations. The Spirit hath engaged you, by telling you plainly how much you will grieve and wrong him, resist and quench him, if you do not keep yourselves pure. Yea, you are obliged further, by yourselves; your clear illumination; your high profession; your many prayers and confessions; your many censures and reprehensions of others; do all strengthen your obligation to holiness. Yea, you are obliged further to this holy life, by the shame, grief, and trouble,

your loose walking will bring upon your friends; and the mirth it will make for, and mischief it will do to your enemies; who, thereby, may be made utterly to fall, where, it may be, you only have stumbled: who are justified and absolved, (as before you heard), by your miscarriages. And now, what think you of all this? Are you obliged or not, to this purity of life? Are all these bonds so tied, that you can get loose, and free yourselves at pleasure from them? If all these things are of no force with you, if none of these bonds can hold you, may it not be questioned, (notwithstanding your profession), whether any spiritual principle, any fear of God, or love to Christ, be in your souls or no? O you could not play fast and loose with God; if so, you could not, as Samson, snap these bonds asunder at your pleasure.

www.libtool.com.cn

Consid. 2. *Secondly*, As you are more obliged to keep the issues of life pure than others are, so God hath given you greater assistances and advantages for it, than others have. God hath not been wanting to any in helps and means. Even the Heathen, who are without the gospel, will be yet speechless and inexcusable before God: But how much more will you be so? Who, besides the light of nature, and the general light of the gospel, have, *First*, such a principle put within you. *Secondly*, such patterns set before you. *Thirdly*, such an assistant ready to help you. *Fourthly*, so many rods to quicken you and prevent your wandering: if notwithstanding all these helps, your life be still unholy.

First, Shall men of such principles walk as others do? Shall we lament for you, as David once did for Saul, saying, "There "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of "Saul; as though he had not been anointed with oil." There the honour of a Christian was vilely cast away, as though he had not been anointed with the Spirit? "You have received an unc-"tion from the holy One, which teacheth you all things," 1 John ii. 20. another Spirit, far above that which is in other men, 1 Cor. ii. 12. And as this spirit which is in you, is fitted for this life of holiness, "(for ye are his workmanship, created in Christ "Jesus to good works," Ephes. ii. 10.); so this holy spirit or principle, infused into your souls, hath such a natural tendency to this holy life, that if you live not purely and strictly, you must offer violence to your own principles, and new nature. A twofold help this principle affords you for a life of holiness.

1. *First*, it pulls you back from sin, as in Joseph; "How can "I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" And it also

inclines you powerfully to obedience. It is a curb to sin, and a spur to holiness. It is impossible for all others to live spiritually and heavenly, because they have no new nature to incline them hereunto. And, methinks, it should be hard for you to live carnally, and sensually; and therein cross the very bent and tendency of the new creature, which is formed in you. How can you neglect prayer, as others do, whilst the Spirit, by divine pulsations, is awaking and rousing up your sluggish hearts with such inward motions, and whispers, as that, Psal. xxvii. 8. "Seek my "face." Yea, whilst you feel, (during your omissions of duty), something within that bemoans itself, and, as it were, cries for food, pains and gripes you, like an empty stomach, and will not let you be quiet, till it be relieved. How can you let out your hearts to the world, as other men do; when all that while your spirit is restless, and akes like a bone out of joint? And you can never be at ease, till you come back to God, and say, as Psal. cxvi. "Return to thy rest, O my soul." Is it not hard, yea, naturally impossible to fix a stone, and make it abide in the fluid air? Doth not every creature, in a restless motion, tend to its proper centre, and desire its own perfection? So doth this new creature also. You see how the rivers in their course will not be checked, but bear down all the obstacles in their way, *et seavior abbice ibit*; a stop doth but make them rage the more, and run the swifter afterwards.

There is a central force in these natural motions, which cannot be stopped. And the like may you observe, in the motions of a renewed soul, John iv. 14. "It shall be in him as a well of "water springing up." And is it not hard for you to keep it down, or turn its course? How hard did Jeremy and David find that work? If you do not live holy lives, you must cross your own new nature, and violate the law that is written in your own hearts, and engraven upon your own bowels. To this purpose a late * writer speaks; Till you were converted, (saith he), the flesh was predominant, and therefore it was impossible for you to live any other than a fleshly life; for every thing will act according to its predominant principle. Should you not therefore live a spiritual life? Should not the law of God written in your hearts, be legible in your lives? O should not your lives be according to the tendency of your hearts? Thus he: Doubtless this is no small advantage to practical holiness. But,

Secondly, Besides this principle within, you have no small as-

* Mr. T. Mall's Exhortation to holy living.

stance for the purity of life, by these excellent patterns before you. The path of holiness, is no untrodden path to you. Christ and his servants have beaten it before you. The life of Christ is your copy, and it is a fair copy indeed, without a blot. Oh! what an advantage is this, to draw all the lines of your actions according to his example! This glorious grand example, is often pressed upon you for imitation, Heb. xii. 2. *Looking to Jesus*, he hath left you *an example, that ye should tread in his steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. His life is a living rule to his people; and besides Christ's example, (for you may say, who can live as Christ did? his example is quite above us) you have *a cloud of witnesses*. A cloud for its directive use, and these men of like passions, temptations, and constitutions with you; who have gone before you in exemplary holiness. The Holy Ghost (intending therein your special help and advantage) hath set many industrious pens to work, to write the lives of the saints, and preserve for your use, their holy sayings, and heavenly actions. He bids you "take them for an example," James v. 10. Oh! what excellent men are passed on before you! what renowned Worthies have led the way! Men, whose conversations were in heaven, whilst they tabernacled on earth. Whilst this lower world had their bodies, the world above had their hearts, and their affections. Their actions, and their designs were all for heaven. Men that improved troubles and comfort; losses and gains; smiles and frowns, and all for heaven. Men that did extract heaven out of spirituals, out of temporals, out of all things; their hearts were full of heavenly meditations, their mouths of heavenly communications, and their practices of heavenly inclinations: O what singular help is this! Where they followed Christ, and kept the way, they are propounded for your imitation; and where any of them turned aside, you have a mark set upon that action, for your caution and prevention. Doth any strange or unusual trial befal you, in which you are ready to say with the church, Lam. i. 12. "Was there ever any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Here you may see "the same affliction accomplished in your brethren," 1 Pet. v. 9. Here is store of good company to encourage you. Do the world and the devil endeavour to turn you from your duty, by loading it with shameful scoffs, or sufferings? In this case you may look to Jesus, who despised the shame; and to your brethren, "who counted it their honour to be dishonoured for the name of Christ *," as the original of the text, Acts v. 41. may be

* Οτι υπερ τ ονοματος αυτ κατηξιωθησαν ατιμασθηναι.

translated. Is it a dishonour to thee, to be ranked with Abraham, Moses, David, and such as were the glory of the ages they lived in? Art thou at any time under a faint fit of discouragement; and ready to despond under any burden? Oh how mayest thou be animated by such examples, when such a qualm comes over thy heart? Some sparks of their holy courage cannot chuse but steal into thy breast, whilst thou considerest them. In them, God hath set before thee the possibility of overcoming all difficulties, thou seest men of the same mould, who had the same trials, discouragements and fears, that now thou hast, and yet overcame all. How is thy unbelief checked, when thou sayest, *Oh! I shall never reach the end*, I shall one day utterly perish! Why dost thou say so? Why may not such a poor creature as thou art, be carried through as well as they? Had not they the same temptations and corruptions with you? Were they not all troubled with a naughty heart, an ensnaring world, and a busy devil, as well as you? Alas! when they put on the divine, they did not put off the human nature; but complained, and feared, as you do; and yet were carried through all.

O what an advantage have you this way! They that first trusted in Christ, had not such helps as you. You stand upon their shoulders. You have the benefit of their experiences. You that are fallen into the last times, have certainly the best helps to holiness; and yet, will not you live strictly and purely? Will you put on the name and profession of Christians, and yet be lofty in your spirits; earthly in your designs; neglective of duty; frothy in your communications? Pray, from which of all the saints did you learn to be proud? Did you learn that from Christ, or any of his? From which of his saints did you learn to be earthly and covetous, passionate or censorious, over-reaching and crafty? If you have read of any such evils committed by them, have you not also read of their shame and sorrow, their repentance and reformations? If you have found any such blots in their lives, it was left there designedly, to prevent the like in yours. O what an help to holiness is this!

Thirdly, And this is not all. You have not only a principle within you, and a pattern before you, but you have also an omnipotent assistant to help, and encourage you throughout your way. Are you feeble and infirm? and is every temptation, even the weakest, strong enough to turn you out of the way of your duty? Lo, God hath sent his Spirit to help your infirmities, Rom. viii. 26. no matter then how weak you are, how many and mighty your difficulties and temptations are, as long

as you have such an assistant to help you. Great is your advantage for a holy life this way also. For,

(1.) *First*, When a temptation to sin presses sore upon you, he pleads with your consciences within, whilst Satan is tempting without. How often hath he brought such scriptures to your remembrance, at the very opportunity, as have saved you out of the temptation? If you attend his voice, you may hear such a voice within you, as that, Jer. xliv. 4. "O do not this abomi-"nable thing which I hate!" What mighty strivings were there in the heart of Spira, as himself relates? He heard, as it were, a voice within him, saying, *Do not write, Spira, do not write.* To this purpose is that promise, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. "Thine eyes "shall behold thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word "behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye "turn to the right-hand, and when ye turn to the left." Here you have a two-fold help to holiness, the outward teaching of the word, ver. 20. and the inward teachings of the Spirit, ver. 21. He shall say *this is the way*, when ye are turning aside to the right-hand, or to the left. Alluding to a shepherd, saith one, who driving his sheep before him; whistles them in, when he sees them ready to stray.

(2.) *Secondly*, When ye walk holily and closely with God in your duties, and the Spirit encourages you to go on, by those inward comforts, sealings, and joys, you have from him at such times; how often does he entertain your souls in public ordinances, in private duties, with his hidden Manna, with marrow and fatness, with incomparable and unspeakable comforts, and all this to strengthen you in your way, and encourage you to hold on?

(3.) *Thirdly*, When you are indisposed for duties, and find your hearts empty and dry, he is ready to fill them, quicken and raise them; so that oftentimes the beginnings and end of your prayers, hearing, or meditations, are as vastly different, as if one man had begun, and another ended the duty. O then, what assistances for a holy life have you! Others indeed are bound to resist temptations, as well as you; but, alas, having no special assistance from the Spirit, what can they do? It may be, they reason with temptation a little while, and in their own strength resolve against it; but how easy a conquest doth Satan make, where no greater opposition is made to him, than this? Others are bound to hear, meditate, and pray as well as you; else the neglect of those duties would not be their sin: But, alas, what pitiful work do they make of it! being left to the hardness and vanity of their own hearts; when you spread your

ſails, you have a gale, but they lie wind-bound, heart-bound, and can do nothing ſpiritually in a way of duty.

Fourthly, and laſtly, to mention no more, You have a further advantage to this holy life, by all the rods of God, that are at any time upon you. I might ſhew you in many particulars, the advantages this way alſo, but I ſhall only preſent theſe three to your obſervation at this time.

First, By theſe you are clogged, to prevent your ſtraying and wandering. Others may wander even as far as hell, and God will not ſpend a ſanctified rod upon them, to reduce or ſtop them; but ſaith, "Let them alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. But if you wander out of the way of holineſs, he will clog you with one trouble or other, to keep you within bounds, 2 Cor. xii. 7. "Leſt I ſhould be "lifted up, a thorn in the fleſh; a meſſenger of Satan, was "ſent to buffet me." So David, Pſal. cxix. 67. "Before I was "afflicted, I went aſtray; but now I have kept thy word." Afflictions are uſed by God, as thorns by huſband-men, to ſtop the gaps and keep you from breaking out of God's way, Hoſ. ii. 6. "I will hedge up her way with thorns, and build a wall, "that ſhe ſhall not find her paths." A double alluſion; 1. To cattle that are apt to ſtray, *I will hedge up thy way with thorns.* 2. To the ſea, which is apt to overflow the country, *I will build a wall to prevent inundations.* Holy Baſil was a long time ſorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, he often prayed for the removal of it; at laſt, God removed it, but, in the room of it, he was ſorely exerciſed with the motions and temptations of luſt; which, when he perceived, he heartily deſired his head-ach again, to prevent a worſe evil. You little know the ends and uſes of many of your afflictions. Are you exerciſed with bodily weakneſs? it is a mercy you are ſo; and if theſe pains and infirmities were removed, theſe clogs taken off, you may with Baſil, wiſh for them again, to prevent worſe evils. Are you poor? why, with that poverty God hath clogged your pride. Are you reproached? with theſe reproaches God hath clogged your ambition. Corruptions are prevented by your afflictions. And, is not this a marvellous help to holineſs of life?

Secondly, By your afflictions, your corruptions are not only clogged, but purged. By theſe God dries up and conſumes that ſpring of ſin, that defiles your lives, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this "therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is "all the fruit to take away ſin." God orders your wants to kill your wantonneſs; and makes your poverty poiſon to your pride. They are God's phyſic, to purge ill humours out of

your souls. * "When they fall by the sword, and by famine, "and by captivity, and by spoil, it is to try them, and to purge "them, and to make them white?" They are both purges and lavatories to your souls. Others have the same afflictions that you have, but they do not work on them as on you; they are to you as fire for purging, and water for cleansing; and yet, shall not your lives be clean? It is true, (as one well observes upon that place of Daniel), Christ is the only lavatory, and his blood the only fountain to wash away sin: but, in the virtue and efficacy of that blood, sanctified afflictions are cleansers and purgers too.

A cross without a Christ never made any man better, but, with Christ, saints are much the better for the cross. Hath God been (as it were) so many days and nights a whitening you, and yet is not the hue of your conversation altered? Hath he put you so many times into the furnace, and yet is not your dross separated? The more afflictions you have been under, the more assistance you have had for this life of holiness.

Thirdly, By all your troubles, God hath been weaning you from the world, the lusts, loves, and pleasures of it; and drawing out your souls to a more excellent life and state than this. He makes your sorrows, in this life, give a lustre to the glory of the next. Whoever hath, be sure you shall have no rest here; and all, that you may long more ardently for that to come. He often makes you groan, "being burdened, to be "cloathed with your house from heaven," 1 Cor. v. 4. And yet will you not be weaned from the lusts, customs, and evils of it? O what manner of persons should you be for heavenly and holy conversations? You stand upon the higher ground. You have, as it were, the wind and tide with you. None are assisted for this life as you are. Put all this together, and see what this second argument contributes towards your further conviction, and persuasion to holiness of life. Have you received a supernatural principle, fitting you for, and inclining you to, holy actions, resisting and holding you back from sin? Hath God also set before you such eminent patterns to encourage, and quicken you, in your way? Doth the Spirit himself stand ready, so many ways, to assist and help you in all difficulties, and hath God hedged up the way of sin, with the thorns of affliction, to prevent your wandering, and yet will you turn aside? Will you offer violence to your own principles, and new nature? Refuse to follow such leaders as have beaten the way

* Dan. xi. 33, 34, 35.

before you? Resist, or neglect the gracious assistances of the blessed Spirit, which he offers you in every need, and venture upon sin, though God hath hedged up your way with afflictions? O how can you do such great wickedness, and sin against such grace as this!

Methinks, I need say no more to convince you how much you are concerned to keep the issues of life pure, none being so much obliged to it, or assisted for it, as you are. But when I remember that Joash lost the compleat victory over the Syrians, because he smote not his arrows often enough upon the ground, 2 Kings xiii. 8. I shall level one arrow more at this mark: For, indeed, that can never be enough pressed, which can never be enough practised. And therefore,

Consid. 3. *Thirdly*, It will yet farther appear to be your high concernment, to exalt holiness in your conversations, because of the manifold and great uses which God hath to make of the visible holiness and purity of your lives, both in this world and that to come. The uses God puts the conversation-holiness of his people in this world, are these, among others.

First, *To win over souls to Christ, and bring them in love with religion.* Practical holiness is a very lovely, attractive, and obliging thing. If the Heathen could call moral virtue *verticordia, turn-heart*, from that obliging and winning power it exercises upon the hearts of men: if they could say of it, that were it visible to human eyes, all men would adore it, and fall in love with it; how much rather may we say so of true holiness, made visible in the lives of saints! This is the *turn-heart* indeed. It makes the souls of men to cling and cleave to the persons in whom it is; as it is prophesied, Zech. viii. 23. of the Jews, when they shall be called (which shall be a time of great holiness) "in that day, ten men out of all languages of the nations "shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we "will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." So much of God as appears in men, so much drawing excellency there is in them. And this is the apostle's argument, 1 John i. 3. "That ye may have fellowship with us." Why, what is there in your fellowship to invite men to you? "Truly our "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus." Who can choose but covet their company, that keep company every day with God? Great is the efficacy of visible holiness to work upon the hearts of men; either as a *concause*, working in fellowship with the word, or as a single instrument, working solitarily without the word.

Where God is pleased to afford the word unto men, there the

practical holiness of saints is of singular use, to assist and help it in its operation upon the hearts of men. When the lives of *Christians* sensibly exhibit that to the eyes of *men*, which the gospel doth to their ears; when so we preach, and so ye believe and live; when we draw by our doctrines, and you draw with us by our examples, when we hold forth the word of life doctrinally, and you hold it forth practically; as Phil. ii. 16. Where is the heart that can stand before us? O! when the plain and powerful *gospel* pierces the ears of men, and, at the same time, the visible holiness of professors shines so full in their faces, that they must rather put out their own eyes, or else be forced to acknowledge, that God is in you of a truth; then it will work to purpose upon souls. Then will Christ see of the travail of his soul daily.

Yea, if God deny the word to men, yet this practical holiness I am speaking of, may be to them an ordinance for conversion. This way, souls *may be won to Christ without the word*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. iii. 1. Though pulpits should be silent, and vision fail; yet, if you would this way turn preachers, if your lives may but preach the reality, excellency, and sweetness of Jesus Christ, and his ways; and, if you would this way preach down the love of the world, and let men see what poor vanities these are; and preach up the necessity and beauty of holiness; surely you, even you, might be honoured to bring many souls to Christ, to turn many to righteousness, and cause many to bless God, on your behalf, in the day of visitation. This is the use God hath for the holiness and purity of your lives, and doth not this engage you strongly to it? What, not when it may prove the means of eternal life to others? Surely, if you have any bowels of mercy in you, you cannot hide from others that whereby they may be saved. How can you instead of holding forth the *word of life*, (which is your manifest duty) visibly hold forth the *works of death* before men? Have you been beholding to others, and shall none be beholding to you for help towards heaven? Dare you say, let others shift as well as they can, find the way to heaven by themselves if they can, they shall have no benefit by your light? If you be Christians, you are Christians of a different stamp and spirit from all those we find described in scripture. Should not you rather say as the Lepers did, 2 Kings vii. 6. "Do we well to hold our peace," whilst others are perishing? Shall the *lips of ministers*, and the *lives of Christians*, be both silenced together? Shall poor sinners neither hear any thing from us, nor see any thing from you, that may help them to Christ? The Lord have mercy then upon the

poor world, and pity it, for its case is desperate. O put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy. Destroy not, by the loosenes of your conversations, so many souls; for your scandalous miscarriages are like a bag of poison put into the spring, which supplies the whole city with water.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, *Another use God hath for it, is to recover and salve the credit of religion, which by the apostacies of hypocrites, and scandalous falls of careless Christians, is wounded, and exposed to contempt.* Much reproach by this means is brought upon religion, and how shall that reproach be rolled away, but by your strictness and purity? By this the world must be convinced that all are not so. Though some be a blot to the name of Christ, yet others are his glory. The more others slur and disgrace religion, the more God expects you to honour and adorn it. I remember Chrysostome brings in the persecutors speaking to two renowned martyrs, after this manner, *Nonne videtis alios vestri ordinis hoc fecisse?* (i. e.) Why are you so nice and scrupulous? See you not that others of your rank and profession have done these things? To which they returned this brave answer, *Nos hac potissimum ratione viriliter stabimus*, (i. e.) have they done it? For that very reason we will stand it out like men, and will never yield to it. There is an holy *Antiperistasis* in the zeal of a Christian, which makes it, like fire, burn most vehemently in the coldest weather. If men make void God's law, therefore will David love his commandments above gold, Psal. cxix. 127. If there be many Pendletons among professors who will betray Christ and his truth to save their flesh; God will have some Sanders to repair that breach, by their constancy and courage in appearing for them.

Thirdly, God makes use of it for the *encouragement of his ministers, who labour among you.* And indeed it is of no small use to refresh their hearts, and strengthen their hands, in their painful work: "Now we live (saith the apostle) if ye stand fast in "the Lord," 1 Thess. iii. 8. He speaks, as if their very life lay at the mercy of the people, because so much of the joy and comfort of it is wrapt up in their regularity and stedfastness. God knows what an hard providence his poor ministers have, and how many discouragements attend them in their work; hear how * one of them expresses it, "Ministers would not be gray-headed "so soon, nor die so fast, notwithstanding their great labours, if "they were but successful; but this cuts to the heart, and makes "us bleed in secret, that though we do much, yet it comes to "nothing. Our work dies, therefore we die. Not so much

* Lockyer upon the Colossians, p. 528, 529.

" that we labour, as that we labour in vain: When our mini-
" stry petrifies, turns hearts into stones, and these taken up
" and thrown at us, this kills us; the recoiling of our pains
" kills us. When our peace returns to us, when we spend
" our strength to make men more nought than they were;
" this wounds our hearts: Which should be considered by sin-
" ners, to kill one's self, and one's minister too, which would
" save them; what a bloody condition is this? † Every drop
" that hath fallen from our heart and hand, from our eye-
" lids, and eye-brows, shall be all gathered up, and put as mar-
" ginal notes by all our labours, and all put in one volume toge-
" ther, and this volume put in your hands at the great day, and
" opened leaf after leaf, and read distinctly and exactly to you."

Christians, you hear our case, you see our work, now a little to chear our spirits in the midst of our hard and killing labours, God sends us to you for a little refreshment, that, by beholding your holy and heavenly conversation, your chearful obedience, and sweet agreement in the ways of God; we may be comforted over all these troubles, 2 Thes. i. 3, 4. And will you wound and kill our hearts too? O what a cut will this be!

Fourthly, *God hath further use for holiness of your lives; this serves to daunt the hearts, and overawe the consciences of his, and your enemies.* And sometimes it hath had a strange influence, and effect upon them. There is a great deal of awful Majesty in holiness, and when it shines upon the conscience of a wicked man, it makes him stoop, and do obeysance to it. Which turns to a testimony for Christ and his ways before the world. Thus Herod was over-awed by the strict and holy life of John, he feared him, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and observed (or preserved and saved) him.

That bloody tyrant was convinced in his conscience of the worth and excellency of that servant of God, and was forced to reverence him for his holiness. So Darius, Dan. vi. 14, 18, 19, 20. What conflicts had he himself about Daniel, whom he had condemned; his conscience condemned him, for condemning so holy, and righteous a person. "Then the king went
" to his palace, and past the night in fastings; neither were in-
" struments of music brought before him, and his sleep went
" from him. He goes early in the morning to the den, and cries
" with a lamentable voice, O Daniel, servant of the living God."
How much is this for the honour of holiness, that it conquers the very persecutors of it; and makes them stoop to the meanest

† Lockyer, upon the Colossians, p. 551.

servant of God! It is said of Henry II. of France, that he was so daunted by the heavenly majesty of a poor taylor that was burnt before him, that he went home sad, and vowed, that he would never be present at the death of such men any more. When Valence the emperor came in person to apprehend Basil, he saw such majesty in his very countenance, that he reeled at the very sight of him; and had fallen backward to the ground, had not his servant stept in to support him. O holiness, holiness, thou art a conqueror. So much, O Christians, as you shew of it in your lives, so much you preserve your interest in the consciences of your enemies: cast off this, and they despise you presently.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, God will use the purity of your conversations, *to judge and convince the world in the great day* ‡. It is true, the world shall be judged by the gospel, but your lives shall also be produced as a commentary upon it; and God will not only shew them by the word how they ought to have lived, but bring forth your lives and ways to stop their mouths, by shewing how others did live. And this I suppose is intended in that text, 1 Cor. vi. 3. "The saints shall judge the world, yea, "we shall judge Angels;" that is, our examples are to condemn their lives and practices, as Noah, Heb. xi. 7. is said to condemn the world by building the ark, *i. e.* his faith in the threatning, and obedience to the command, condemned their supineness, infidelity and disobedience. They saw him every day about that work, diligently preparing for a deluge, and yet were not moved with the like fear that he was; this left them inexcusable: so when God shall say in that day to the careless world, did you not see the care, and diligence, the holy zeal, watchfulness, and self-denial, of my people, who lived among you? How many times have they been watching, and praying, when you have been drinking, or sleeping! Was it not easy to reflect when you saw their pains, and diligence; have not I a soul to look after as well as they; a heaven to win or lose, as well as they? O how speechless and inexcusable will this render wicked men, yea, it shall not only be used to judge them, but *angels* also. How many shocks of temptations have poor saints stood; whereas

‡ When therefore the faithful are said to sit in judgment with Christ, it must be understood, not of any authority and power of judging of themselves, but, (1.) Of that which is given them in Christ their head. (2.) Of their approbation of the sentence pronounced by Christ. *Apoc.* xix. 1. (3.) Of their bearing witness by their ministry or conversation (against the wicked) and the comparison of their own lives with theirs, by which the justice of the Judge shall be manifest.

they fell without a tempter? They stood not in their integrity, though created in such excellent natures; how much then are you concerned on this very account also, to walk exactly! if not instead of judging them, you shall be condemned with them.

And thus you see what use your lives and actions shall be put to; and are these inconsiderable uses? Is the winning over souls to God a small matter? Is the salving the honour, and reputation of godliness, a small matter? Is the encouraging the hearts, and strengthening the hands of God's poor ministers, amidst their spending, killing labours, a small matter? Is the awing of the consciences of your enemies, and judging them in the last day, a light thing? Which of these can you call so?

O then, since you are thus *obliged* to holiness of life, thus singularly *assisted* for it; and since there are such great dependencies upon it, and uses for it, both now, and in the world to come; see that ye be holy in all manner of conversation. See that, "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so ye walk in "him;" always remembring, that, for this very end, Christ hath redeemed, or "delivered you out of the hands of your e-"nemies, that you might serve him without fear, in righteous-"ness and holiness all the days of your lives," Luke i. 74, 75. And to how little purpose will be all that I have preached, and you have heard, of Christ, if it be not converted into practical godliness? This is the scope and design of it all.

And now, Reader, thou art come to the last leaf of this treatise of Christ, it will be but a little while, and thou shalt come to the last page or day of thy life; and thy last moment in that day. Wo, to thee, wo and alas for ever, if an interest in this blessed Redeemer be then to get. The world affords not a sadder sight, than a poor Christless soul shivering upon the brink of eternity. To see the poor soul that now begins to awake out of its long dream, at its entrance into the world of realities, to shrink back into the body, and cry, *O I cannot, I dare not die.* And then the tears run down. Lord, what will become of me? O what shall be my eternal lot? This, I say, is as sad a sight as the world affords. That this may not be thy case, reflect upon what thou hast read in these sermons; judge thyself in the light of them. Obey the calls of the Spirit in them. Let not thy slight and formal spirit, float upon the surface of these truths, like a feather upon the water; but get them deeply fixed upon thy spirit, by the Spirit of the Lord; turning them into life and power upon thee; and so animating the whole course and tenor of thy conversation by them, that it may proclaim to all that know thee, that thou art one who esteemest all to be but dross, that thou mayst win Christ.

THE METHOD OF GRACE IN THE GOSPEL-REDEMPTION.

www.libtool.com.cn

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY,

To the Worshipful JOHN UPTON, *of* Lupton, *Esq; and the most accomplished and virtuous* Lady, *his dear* Consort, *the* Author *wishes Grace, Mercy, and Peace.*

Honoured and worthy Friends,

IT was a comfortable expression, which Ambrose used in his funeral oration, at the death of Theodosius; * "That though "he were gone, yet he was not wholly gone; for he had left "Honorius, with others of his children, behind him, in whom "Theodosius still lived." Your renowned and worthy *ancestors* are gone, yet (blessed be God) they are not wholly gone; whilst the prudence, piety, and publicness of their spirits, still lives and flourishes in you, the top branch of a renowned and religious family. It is a great truth, which Philo Judaeus recommends to the observation of all posterity, "† That it is not a natural "descent from the most honourable and illustrious progenitors, "nor the greatest affluence of riches and pleasures that makes a "man either honourable or happy; but the inhabitation of God "in his soul, as in his temple, tho' (saith he) those that never "tasted religion, nor have seen its glory, will not credit this as-

* *Theodosius tantus imperator recessit a nobis, sed non totus recessit; reliquit enim nobis liberos suos, in quibus debemus eum agnoscere.* Ambros. in obit. Theod.

† Τους δ' υμνουσι την ευγενειαν ως μεγιστον αγαθον καὶ μεγαλων αγαθων αιτιον, ε μεβρωσις επιθυμητων, ε πρωτον μεν οιονται τους εκ παλαιοπλουτων καὶ φαλαινοδοξων ευγενεις, μητε των προγονων αφ' ων συγχωρει γενεσθαι.— Βελτιστους γαρ ο Θεος δια ημεροτητα καὶ φιλανθρωπιαν καὶ παρ' ημιν τον ιδρυσασθαι, νεων αξιοπρεπεστερον επι γης ου χ ευρε λογισμε κρειττω· ο γαρ νους αγαλμαφορει το αγαθον, καν απιστωσι τινες των μη γευσαμενων σοφας η χαλεπων ακρους. *Philo Judaeus* περι Ευγενειας, a book fit for the hands of all gentlemen, translated by *Laurentius Humphredus* in his excellent tract *de Nobilitate.*

"sertion." "The soul which is filled with God, (saith * Plotinus) and brings forth the beautiful fruits of righteousness, this "is the truly noble soul:" Our new birth makes us more honourable than our natural birth, let our birthright dignities be what they will. The children of nobles are, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others: *Omnis Sanguis concolor*, all blood is of one colour: it is all tainted in Adam, and mingled together in his posterity. "There is no king, saith † Seneca, which rose "not from a servant; there is no *servant* which rose not from "a *king*: these things have been blended, and tossed to and fro "by a long variety."

www.libtool.com.cn

But though the privileges of natural birth signify nothing as to eternal salvation, yet in civil and political respects and considerations, those that by birth, education, or estate, possess an higher station in the world, differ from the vulgar, as stars of greater magnitude and lustre: their interest and influence are great in these things, and the welfare of kingdoms ‡ greatly depends upon them.

It is therefore a great design of the enemy of mankind, to corrupt persons of eminent rank and quality both in religion and morality; and by their influence and example, to infect and poison the whole body politic; and his success herein, deserves to be greatly lamented and bewailed. Persons of eminency are more especially ‖ obliged to shun base and sordid actions. Hierom professed § he saw nothing desirable in *nobili-*

* Ψυχη πληρωθεισα θεου γεννα το καλλος, γεννα τε δικαιοσυνην. *Plotinus.*

† *Neminem regem non ex servis esse oriundum, neminem servum non ex regibus: omnia ista longa varietas miscuit, et sursum deorsum fortuna versavit.* Sen. Ep. 44.

‡ Who manages the reins of government, who is present at, and presides over, both private and public matters, but persons of eminent rank and quality? Who moderates in the senate, presides in courts, commands at home and abroad? Chief men and nobles surely. Who commands and countermands, acts and overacts, manages and canvasses all affairs, who makes laws and rescinds them, who governs the state in time of peace, and commands the forces in time of war, but great men and nobles? No wonder that the management of public affairs be committed to him, who both by personal merit and renown of his ancestors hath recommended himself to the good report and esteem of mankind. *Laurent. Humphred. on Nobility.*

‖ *In maxima fortuna, minima est licentia.* Salust.

§ *Nihil aliud video in nobilitate appetendum, nisi quod nobiles quadam*

ty, except this, that such persons are bound by a certain kind of necessity, not to degenerate from the probity, or stain the glory of their *ancestors*. But alas! how many in our times, have not only exposed Christianity to contempt, but obscured * the glory of their own families, and the kingdom in which they had their birth and breeding; so that if you will take right marks of your way to heaven you will have little direction from those of your own rank, but as † mariners take their direction at sea, by looking up to the heavens, so must you. In this general corruption it is very hard to escape infection; (many as Salvian complained) ‡ are compelled to be *evil*, lest they should be accounted *vile*, and incur the offence of God, to avoid the slights and censures of men. Although there is no more reason why they should be offended at the rational and religious pleasures, you, and other pious gentlemen take in the ways of godliness; than there is, that you should envy the sinful pleasures they take in the ways of wickedness. It was an excellent apology, that Tertullian made for the Christians of his time, against the Gentiles, "Wherein (saith § he) do we offend you, if we believe "there are other pleasures? If we will not partake with you in "your delights, it is only our own injury: we reject your plea-"sures, and you are not delighted with ours."

But by how much the infection spreads and prevails among

quadam necessitate constringuntur, ne ab antiquorum probitate degenerent. Hieron.

* God grant that the end proposed may be obtained, that the ancient and truly venerable nobility may at length return, who by the honour of prudence and knowledge, and lustre of renowned deeds, may obscure the fame of progenitors, and quite remove and wipe off the stain brought on its august name. *Humph. on Nobility.*

† In the same manner, you ought to seek the path of life, that the mariners at sea seek the designed course for their ships, who, if they observe not some luminary in the heavens, steer but an uncertain course, but whosoever is resolved to keep in the right path of life, must not look down to the earth but to heaven; and (to speak more plainly) he ought not to follow men but God; therefore if thou wouldst always keep thine eyes fixed on heaven, and observe the sun whence he ariseth, and take him as thy guide, thy feet of themselves will keep straight in the way. *Lactant. lib.* 1. *c.* 8.

‡ *Malt esse cogantur ne viles habeantur.* Salv. de Gubernat.

§ *Quo vos offendimus si alias præsumimus voluptates? si oblectari nolumus, nostra injuria est: reprobamus quæ placent vobis, nec vos nostra delectant.* Tertul. Apolog. adv. Gent.

those of your order, by so much the more we have reason to value you, and all those that remain sound and untainted, both in religion and morality, as persons worthy of singular respect and honour: and blessed be God there is yet a number of such left.

www.libtool.com.cn

Sir, It was a special happiness, which Chrysostom earnestly recommended to persons of quality, that they would so order their conversations, that their parents, might rather glory in them, than they in their parents; "Otherwise (saith * he) it is "better to rise to honour, from a contemptible parent, than to "be contemptible from an honourable parent;" but blessed be God, you and your worthy ancestors, mutually reflect honour upon each other.

Had God suffered you to degenerate, as many do, it would have been but a poor consolation to have said, My *progenitors* were men of honour, the love and delight of their country. This, as † one excellently expresseth it, would be the same thing, as if one that is blind himself, should boast what a sharp and piercing sight his father had; or one that is lame himself, should glory in those feats of activity his grandfather performed; but God (to whose bounty therefore you are doubly obliged) hath made you the inheritor of their virtues, as well as of their lands, and therein fulfilled many thousand prayers, which have been poured out to God upon your account. But I must forbear, lest I provoke others to envy, and draw upon myself the suspicion of flattery. What hath been already said, may serve for a sufficient reason of this dedication. I know the ‡ agreeableness of such discourses, to the pious dispositions of your souls, is of itself sufficient to make it welcome to you. It is a treatise of Christ, yea, of the method of grace, in the applicati-

* *Melius est de contemptibili fieri clarum, quam de claro genere contemptibilem esse*, Chrysost. in Mat. 4. *Nec fieri potest quin hunc comitetur ignobilitas etiamsi vel avis, vel proavis natus sit vita in culpatis, qui ab eorum studiis alienus est, seque longissime tum dictis, tum factis a nobilitate disjungit.*

† What profit is the sharp-sightedness of ancestors to the offspring, which is deprived of sight? What help can it give the man that is dumb, for attaining the power of speech, that his parents and grandfathers had the voice of orators? In like manner, just parents cannot help their unjust children; nor the temperate, those who are luxurious: nor at any rate, can the good communicate goodness to the bad. *Philo.* περι Ευγενειας.

‡ When the mind of the hearer is good and gracious, it easily assents to speeches of truth. *Chrysost. Hom.* 26. *in Mat.*

on of Christ; than which no subject can be more necessary to study, or sweet to experience. * All goodness is attractive, how powerfully attractive then must Jesus Christ be, who is the ocean of all goodness, from whom all streams off goodness are derived, and into whom, they all empty themselves? † If Pindarus could say of the lovely Theoxenus, that whosoever saw that august and comely face of his, and was not surprised with amazement, and inflamed with love, must have an heart of adamant or brass, what then shall we resemble that man's heart unto, that hath no ferverous affections kindled in it by the incomparable beauty of Christ! a beauty, which excels in lustre and brightness, that visible light which so dazzles our eyes ‡, as that light doth darkness itself; as Plato speaks of the divine light Christ is ὑπερβαλλοντως καλος, an inexpressible beauty, and all other beauties are but εικον, και σκια an image, nay, a shadow of his beauty. How was holy Ignatius ravished with desires after Christ, when § he cried out, O how I long to be thrown into the jaws of those lions, which I hear roaring for me! and if they will not dispatch me the sooner, και προσβιασομαι, I will enforce them to it by violence, that I may enjoy the sight of my blessed Jesus. O my heart, (saith ‖ another) how is it thou art not drawn up by the very root, by thy desires after Christ? The necessity, and the trial of our union with, and interest in, this lovely LORD JESUS, is the main subject of this discourse. Without the personal application of Christ by faith, our hopes of heaven are but deluding dreams, Heb. iii. 11. "I sware in my "wrath, ει εισελευσονται, if they shall enter into my rest:" What then? Nay, there is all: but it is a dreadful *Aposiopesis* (as one calls it) such a pause, as may justly shake every vein of the unbeliever's heart: *If they shall enter;* as if he had said, If ever they come into my glory, then say, I am no God, for I have sworn the contrary.

* Ουδεν αλλο εστιν ὁ ερωσιν ανθρωποι η τὸ αγαθὸ ανελκει παντα ἡ ανασπα τους οικειαις ελαμψεσιν ως ηλιος. *Plato.*

† Ακτινας προσωπῳ μαρμαρτιζουσας δρακεις ος μη πθω κυμαινεται, ως αδαμαντος.

‡ Το νοητον φως, το αοχετυπον παιδων τοσουτω τὸ ορατὸ λαμπροτερον τε ἡ αυγοειδες εστι ωσπερ ηλιος σκοτος. *Plato.*

§ Ο εμος ερως εσταυρωται ἡ ουκ εστιν ἐν εμοι το πυρ το φιλαυλον, αλλ υδωρ αλλομενον, &c. ωκαμμην των θηριων, ινα τὸ Ιησὸ Χριςὸ επιτυχω. *Ignatii Epist.*

‖ *O cor meum quomodo non te evellis post tantum decorem?* Niezemberg. *Vivere renuo, ut Christo vivam.*

I will not be tiresome, but conclude all in a few requests to you and to God for you both. That which I request of you is,

(1.) That you will search and try your own hearts by these truths, especially now, when so great trials are like to be made of every man's root and foundation in religion. Account that your first work, which Bellarmine calls "the first error of "Protestants," to make sure your interest in Christ; * every thing is as its foundation is: a true *diamond* will endure the smartest stroke of the hammer, but a false one will fly.

(2.) That you be humble under all that dignity and honour, which God hath put upon you; be ye cloathed with humility. It was the glory of the primitive Christians, that they † did not speak but live great things: humility will be the lustre of your other excellencies: estates and honours are but appendants and fine trappings, which add not any real worth, yet ‡ how are some vain minds puffed up with these things! But ye have not so learned Christ.

(3.) That you steadily persevere in those good ways of God, in which you have walked, and beware of heart, or life apostacy. You expect happiness whilst God is in heaven, and God expects holiness from you whilst you are on earth. It was an excellent truth which Tossanus § recommended to his posterity in his last-will and testament, from his own experience: "I beseech "you (saith he) my dear children and kindred, that you never "be ashamed of the truths of the gospel, either by reasons of "scandals in the church, or persecutions upon it; truth may la-"bour for a time, but cannot be conquered; and I have often "found God to be wonderfully present with them that walk be-"fore him in truth, though for a time they may be opposed "with troubles and calumnies."

* *Primus Hæreticorum error est, posse fideles cum nitidiam habere de sua gratia, ut certa fide statuant sibi remissa esse peccata.* Bellarm. de Just. lib. 3. cap. 3.

† *Non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus.* Tertul. Apolog.

‡ They report that Bucephalus without his furniture, would suffer a groom on his back, but when dressed with royal trappings and studded bridles, would suffer none to mount him but the king himself; so it is truly the case with these upstart nobles among us, &c.

§ *Obtester etiam vos liberos, et generos carissimos ne illius veritatis evangelicæ unquam vos pudeat: potest enim laborare, sed non vinci veritas: et non semel experius sum Dominum Deum mirabiliter adesse iis qui coram ipso ambulant, et in sua vocatione sedulo et integre versantur; licet ad tempus, odiis, aut simultatibus, aut calumniis agitentur.* Melch. Adamus, in vita Tossani.

(4.) Lastly, That you keep a strict and constant watch over your own hearts, lest they be ensnared by the tempting, charming, and dangerous snares, attending a full and easy condition in the world. There are temptations suited to all conditions. Those that are poor and low in estate and reputation, are tempted to cozen, cheat, lie, and flatter, and all to get up to the mount of riches and honours; but those that were born upon that mount, tho' they be more free from those temptations, yet lie exposed to others no less dangerous, and therefore we find, "Not "many mighty, not many noble are called," 1 Cor. i. 26. Many great and stately ships, which spread much sail, and draw much water, perish in the storms, when small barks creep along the shore under the wind, and get safe into their port. Never aim at an higher station in this world, than that you are in ‖: Some have wished in their dying hour, they had been lower, but no wise man ever wished himself at the top of honour, at the brink of eternity.

I will conclude all with this hearty wish for you that as God hath set you in a capacity of much service for him in your generation, so your hearts may be enlarged for God accordingly; that you may be very instrumental for his glory on earth, and may go safe, but late to heaven. That the blessings of heaven may be multiplied upon you both, and your hopeful springing branches; and that you may live to see your childrens children, and peace upon Israel. In a word, that God will follow these truths in your hands with the blessing of his Spirit; and that the manifold infirmities of him that ministers them, may be no prejudice or bar to their success with you, or any into whose hands they shall come; which is the hearty desire of

Your most faithful Friend,

and Servant in CHRIST,

JOHN FLAVEL.

* Hermanus, when dying, bewailed, that he had bestowed more time and pains on his palace than on the temple of God, and encouraged the luxury and wickedness of the court, which he ought to have restrained: Thus, with much grief for sin, his hope of mercy from God greatly wavering, by-standers being filled with great horror, and himself doubtful of his state, his soul entered into eternity. *Hist. Bohem.* lib. 11.

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

www.libtool.com.cn

EVERY creature, by the instinct of nature, or by the light of reason, strives to avoid danger, and get out of harm's way. The *cattle* in the fields presaging a storm at hand, fly to the hedges and thickets for shelter. The *fowls* of heaven, by the same natural instinct, perceiving the approach of winter, take their timely flight to a warmer *climate*. This * *naturalists* have observed of them, and their observation is confirmed by scripture-testimony: of the *cattle* it is said, Job xxxvii. 6, 7, 8. "He saith to the snow; Be thou on the earth, likewise the small "rain, and the great rain of his strength; then the beasts go "into dens, and remain in their places;" And of the fowls of the air it is said, Jer. viii. 7. "The stork in the heavens know-"eth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and "the swallow, observe the time of their coming."

But man being a prudent and prospecting creature, hath the advantage of all other cratures in his foreseeing faculty: "For "God hath taught him more than the beasts of the earth, and "made him wiser than the fowls of heaven," Job xxxv. 11. "And a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment," Eccl. viii. 5. For as there are natural signs of the change of the weather, Matth. xvi. 3. so there are moral signs of the changes of time and providences: yet such is the supineness and inexcusable regardlesness of most men, that they will not fear till they feel, nor think any danger very considerable, till it become inevitable.

We of this nation have long enjoyed the light of the glorious gospel among us; it hath shone in much clearness upon this sinful island, for more than a whole century of happy years: but the longest day hath an end, and we have cause to fear our bright sun is going down upon us; for the shadows in England are grown greater than the substance, which is one sign of approaching night, Jer. vi. 4. "The beasts of prey creep out of "their dens and coverts," which is another sign of night at hand, Psal. civ. 20. "And the workmen come home apace from "their labours, and go to rest," which is as sad a sign as any of the rest, Job vii. 1, 2. Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Happy were it, if, in

* Plin. l. 18, c. 35. Virg. Georg. l. 1.

such a juncture as this, every man would make it his work, and business to secure himself in Christ from the storm of God's indignation, which is ready to fall upon these sinful nations. It is said of the Egyptians, when the storm of hail was coming upon the land, Exod. ix. 20. "He that feared the word of the Lord "made his servants and cattle flee into the houses." It is but an old sight to see the prudence of an Egyptian, out-vying the wisdom, and circumspection of a Christian.

www.libtool.com.cn

God, who provides natural shelter and refuge for all creatures, hath not left his people unprovided with, and destitute of defence and security, in the most tempestuous times of national judgments. It is said, Mic. v. 5. "This man (meaning the "man Christ Jesus) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall "come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces." And Isa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy "chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it "were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

My friends, let me speak as *freely*, as I am sure I speak, *seasonably*. A sound of Judgment is in our ears; "the Lord's "voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see "thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. All things round about us seem to posture themselves for trouble and distress. Where is the man of wisdom that doth not foresee a shower of wrath and indignation coming? "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? "Wherefore do I see every man with his hand on his loins, as "a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? "Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even "the day of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of "it," Jer. xxx. 5, 6, 7.

Many eyes are now opened to see the common danger, but some foresaw it long ago; when they saw the general decay of *Godliness* every where, the *notorious prophanity* and *atheism* that overspread the *nations*: the spirit of enmity and bitterness against the power of *Godliness* wherever it appeared: and tho' there seemed to be a present calm, and general quietness; yet those that were wise in heart could not but discern distress of nations, with great *perplexity*, in these seeds of judgment and calamity: But as the *ephah* fills more and more, so the determined wrath grows *more* and *more* visible to every eye: and it is a fond thing to dream of *tranquillity*, in the midst of so much *iniquity*. Indeed, if these *nations* were once swept with the *besom* of *reformation*, we might hope God would not sweep

them with the *besom* of *destruction*; but what peace can be *expected*, whilst the highest *provocations* are *continued*?

It is therefore the great and present concernment of all to provide themselves of a refuge before the storm overtakes them: for, as Augustin well observes, *Non facile inveniuntur praesidia in adversitate, quae non fuerint in pace quaesita.* O take up your lodgings in the attributes and promises of God before the night overtake you; view them often by faith, and clear up your interest in them, that you may be able to go to them in the dark, when the ministers and ordinances of Christ have taken their leave of you, and bid you good night.

www.libtool.com.cn

Whilst many are hasting on the wrath of God by *profaneness*, and many be smiting their fellow-servants; and multitudes resolve, if trouble come, to fish in the troubled waters for safety and preferment, not doubting (whensoever the overflowing flood comes) but they shall stand dry. O that you would be mourning for their sins, and providing better for your own safety.

Reader, it is thy *one thing necessary* to get a cleared interest in Jesus Christ; which being once obtained, thou mayest face the storm with boldness, and say, come troubles and distresses, losses and trials, prisons and death, I am provided for you; do your worst, you can do me no harm: let the winds roar, the lightnings flash, the rains and hail fall never so furiously, I have a good roof over my head, a comfortable lodging provided for me: "My place of defence is the munition of rocks, where "bread shall be given me, and my waters shall be sure," Isa. xxxiii. 16.

The design of the ensuing treatise, is to assist thee in this great work; and though it was promised to the world many years past, yet providence hath reserved it for the fittest season, and brought it to thy hand in a time of need.

It contains the method of grace in the *application of the great redemption to the souls of men*, as the former part contains the method of grace in the interpretation thereof by Jesus Christ. The acceptation God hath given the former part, signified by the desires of many, for the publication of this, hath at last prevailed with me (notwithstanding the secret consciousness of my inequality to so great an undertaking) to adventure this *second part* also, upon the ingenuity and candour of the reader.

And I consent the more willingly to the publication of this, because the design I first aimed at, could not be entire and complete without it; but especially, the quality of the subject-matter, which (through the blessing and concurrence of the spirit)

may be useful both to rouze the drowsy consciences of this sleepy generation, and to assist the upright, in clearing the work of the spirit upon their own souls. These considerations have prevailed with me against all discouragements.

And now, *reader*, it is impossible for me to speak particularly and distinctly to the case of thy soul, which I am ignorant of, except the Lord shall direct my discourse to it in some of the following *suppositions*.

www.libtool.com.cn

If thou be one that hast sincerely *applied*, and received Jesus Christ by faith, this discourse (through the blessing of the Spirit) may be useful to thee, to clear and confirm thy evidences, to melt thy heart in the sense of thy mercies, and to engage and quicken thee in the way of thy duties. Here thou wilt see what great things the Lord hath done for thy soul, and how these dignities, as thou art his son or daughter, by the double title of *regeneration* and *adoption*, do oblige thee to yield up thyself to God entirely, and to say from thy heart, Lord, whatever I am, I am for thee, whatever I can do, I will do for thee, and whatever I can suffer, I will suffer the; and all that I am, or, have, all that I can do, or suffer, is nothing to what thou hast done for my soul.

If thou be a stranger to *regeneration* and *faith*; a person that makest a *powerless profession* of Christ; that hast a name to live, but art dead; here it is *possible* thou mayest meet with something that will convince thee how dangerous a thing it is, to be an old creature, in the new creature's dress and habit; and what it is that blinds thy judgment, and is likeliest to prove thy ruin; a seasonable and full conviction whereof, will be the greatest mercy that can befal thee in this world, if thereby at last, God may help thee to put on Christ, as well as the name of Christ.

If thou be in darkness about the state of thy own soul, and willing to have it faithfully and impartially tried by the rule of the word, which will not warp to any man's humour or interest, here thou wilt find some weak assistance offered thee, to clear and disentangle thy doubting thoughts, which (through thy prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ) may lead thee to a comfortable settlement and inward peace.

If thou be a proud, conceited, presumptuous soul, who hast too little knowledge, and too much pride and self-love, to admit any doubts or scruples of thy state towards God, there are many things in this *treatise* proper for thy conviction, and better information; for woe to thee, if thou shouldst not *fear*, till thou

begin to *feel* thy misery, if thy troubles do not *come on* till all thy hopes are *gone off*.

I know all these things are performed by me with much infirmity; and that the whole management is quite below the dignity of the subject. But when I consider the success of sermons and books in the world, hath but little relation to the elegancy of language, or accuracy of method, and that many may be *useful*, who cannot be *excellent*, I am willing in all humility and sincerity to commit it to be the direction of providence, and the blessing of the spirit.

www.libtool.com.cn

One thing I shall earnestly request of all the people of God, into whose hands this shall fall, that now at last they will be persuaded to end all their unbrotherly quarrels and strifes among themselves, which have wasted so much precious time, and decayed the vital spirits of religion; hindred the conversion of multitudes, and increased and confirmed the atheism of the times, and now at last opened a breach, at which the common enemy is ready to enter, and end the quarrel to our cost. O put on, as the *elect of God*, bowels of mercy, and a spirit of charity and forbearance, if not for your own sakes, yet for the church's sake: *Si non vis tibi parcere, parce Carthagini.*

I remember it is noted in our English history as a very remarkable thing, that when the Severn overflowed part of Somersetshire, it was observed that *dogs* and *hares*, *cats* and *rats*, to avoid the common destruction, would swim to the next rising ground, and abide quietly together in that common danger, without the least discovery of their natural antipathy.

The story *applies* itself, and O that Christians would every where depose their animosities, that the hearts of the fathers might be turned to the children, and the children to the fathers; lest God come and smite the earth with a curse.

O that you would dwell more in your closets, and be more frequently and fervently upon your knees. O that you would, search your hearts more narrowly, and sift them more throughly than ever, before the day pass as the chaff, and the Lord's fierce anger come upon you: look into your Bibles, then into your *hearts*, and then to *heaven*, for a true discovery of your conditions; and if this poor mite may contribute any thing to that end, it will be a great reward of the unworthy labours of

Thy servant in CHRIST,

JOHN FLAVEL.

SERMON I.

Opening the general Nature of effectual Application.

www.libtool.com.cn

1 Cor. i. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

HE that enquires what is the just value and worth of Christ, asks a question which puts all the men on earth, and angels in heaven, to an everlasting non-plus.

The highest attainment of our knowledge, in this life, is to know, that himself, and his love do pass knowledge, Eph. iii. 19.

But how excellent soever, Christ is in himself, what treasures of righteousness soever lie in his blood, and whatever joy, peace, and ravishing comforts, spring up to men out of his *incarnation*, *humiliation*, and *exaltation*, they all give down their distinct benefits and comforts to them, in the way of *effectual application*.

For never was any wound healed by a prepared, but unapplied plaister. Never any body warmed by the most costly garment made, but not put on: Never any heart refreshed and comforted by the richest cordial compounded, but not received: Nor from the beginning of the world was it ever known, that a poor *deceived*, *condemned*, *polluted*, miserable sinner, was actually delivered out of that woful state, until of God, Christ was made unto him, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

For look * as the condemnation of the *first Adam* passeth not to us, except (as by generation) we are his; so grace and remission pass not from the *second Adam* to us, except (as by regeneration) we are his. Adam's sin hurts none but those that are in him: And Christ's blood profits none but those that are in him: How great a weight therefore doth there hang upon the effectual application of Christ to the souls of men! And

* Parisiensis de causis, cur Deus homo, cap. 9. *Quemadmodum non transit Adæ damnatio, nisi per generationem in carnaliter ex eo generatos: sic non transit Christi gratia, et peccatorum remissio, nisi per regenerationem ad spiritualiter per ipsum regeneratos. Sicut delictum Adæ non nocet, nisi suis, in eo quod sui sunt: sic nec gratia Christi prodest, nisi suis, in eo quod sui sunt.*

what is there in the whole world so awfully solemn, so greatly important, as this is! Such is the strong consolation resulting from it, that the apostle, in this context, offers it to the believing Corinthians, as a superabundant recompense for the despicable meanness, and baseness of their outward condition in this world, of which he had just before spoken in ver. 27, 28. telling them, though the world contemned them as vile, foolish, and weak, yet "of God Christ is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

www.libtool.com.cn

In which words we have an *enumeration* of the chief privileges of believers, and *an account* of the method whereby they come to be invested with them †.

First, Their privileges are enumerated, namely, *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification*, and *redemption*, mercies of inestimable value in themselves, and such as respect a fourfold misery lying upon sinful Man, *viz. ignorance*, *guilt*, *pollution*, and the whole train of miserable consequences and effects, let in upon the nature of men, yea, the best and holiest of men, by sin.

Lapsed man is not only deep in misery, but grossly ignorant, both that he is so, and how to recover himself from it: Sin hath left him at once senseless of his state, and at a perfect loss about the true remedy.

To cure this, Christ is made to him *wisdom*, not only by *improvement* of those treasures of wisdom that are in himself, for the benefit of such souls as are united to him, as an head, consulting the good of his own members; but also, by *imparting* his wisdom to them by the Spirit of illumination, whereby they come to discern both their sin and danger; as also the true way of their recovery from both, through the application of Christ to their souls by faith.

But alas! simple illumination doth but increase our burden, and exasperate our misery, as long as sin in the guilt of it is, either imputed to our persons unto condemnation, or reflected by our consciences in a way of accusation.

With design therefore to remedy and heal this sore evil, *Christ* is made of God unto us *righteousness*, complete and perfect righteousness, whereby our obligation to punishment is dissolved, and thereby a solid foundation for a well-settled peace of conscience firmly established.

Yea, but although the removing of guilt from our persons

† He ascribes a fourfold commendation of Christ, which comprehends all his virtue, and all the good we receive from him. *Calvin on the place.*

and consciences be an inestimable mercy, yet alone it cannot make us completely happy: For though a man should never be damned for sin, yet what is it less than hell upon earth, to be under the dominion and pollution of every base lust? It is misery enough to be daily defiled by sin, though a man should never be damned for it.

www.libtool.com.cn

To complete therefore the happiness of the redeemed; Christ is not only made of God unto them *wisdom* and *righteousness*, the one curing our ignorance, the other our guilt; but he is made *sanctification* also, to relieve us against the dominion and pollutions of our corruptions: "He comes both by water and "by blood, not by blood only, but by water also," 1 John v. 6. *purging* as well as *pardoning*: How complete and perfect a cure is Christ!

But yet something is required beyond all this to make our happiness perfect and entire, wanting nothing; and that is the removal of those doleful effects and consequences of sin, which (notwithstanding all the forementioned privileges and mercies) still lie upon the souls and bodies of illuminated, justified, and sanctified persons. For even with the best and holiest of men, what swarms of vanity, loads of deadness, and fits of unbelief, do daily appear in, and oppress their souls! to the embittering of all the comforts of life to them? And how many diseases, deformities, pains, oppress their bodies, which daily moulder away by them, till they fall into the grave by death, even as the bodies of other men do, who never received such privileges from Christ as they do? For if "Christ be in us" (as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 10.) "the body is dead, because of sin:" Sanctification exempts us not from mortality.

But from all these, and whatsoever else, the fruits and consequences of sin, Christ is *redemption* to his people also: This seals up the sum of mercies: This so completes the happiness of the saints, that it leaves nothing to desire.

These four, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, take in all that is necessary or desirable, to make a soul truly and perfectly blessed.

Secondly, We have here the method and way, by which the elect come to be invested with these excellent privileges: the account whereof, the apostle gives us in these words, ["Who "of God is made unto us"] in which expression, four things are remarkable.

First, That Christ and his benefits go inseparably and undividedly together: it is Christ himself is made all this unto us: we can have no saving benefit separate and apart from the per-

ſon of Chriſt: many would willingly receive his *privileges*, who will not receive his perſon; but it cannot be; if we will have one, we muſt take the other too: Yea, we muſt accept his perſon firſt, and then his benefits: as it is in the marriage covenant, ſo it is here.

Secondly, That Chriſt with his benefits, muſt be perſonally and particularly applied to us, before we can receive any actual, ſaving privilege by him; he muſt be [*made unto us*] *i. e.* particularly applied to us; as a ſum of money becomes, or is made the ranſom and liberty of a captive, when it is not only promiſed, but paid down in his name, and legally applied for that uſe and end. When Chriſt died, the ranſom was prepared, the ſum laid down; but yet the elect continue ſtill in ſin and miſery, notwithſtanding, till by *effectual calling*, it be actually *applied* to their perſons, and then they are made free, Rom. v. 10, 11. reconciled by Chriſt's death, by whom "we have now received the atonement."

Thirdly, That this application of Chriſt, is the work of God, and not of man: "Of God he is made unto us:" The ſame hand that prepared it, muſt alſo apply it, or elſe we periſh, notwithſtanding all that the Father hath done in contriving, and appointing, and all that the Son hath done in executing, and accompliſhing the deſign thus far. And this actual application is the work of the Spirit, by a ſingular appropriation.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, This expreſſion imports the ſuitableneſs of Chriſt, to the neceſſities of ſinners; what they want, he is made to them; and indeed, as money anſwers all things, and is convertible into meat, drink, raiment, phyſic, or what elſe our bodily neceſſities do require; ſo Chriſt is virtually, and eminently all that the neceſſities of our ſouls require; bread to the hungry, and cloathing to the naked ſoul. In a word, God prepared, and furniſhed him on purpoſe to anſwer all our wants, which fully ſuits the apoſtle's ſenſe, when he ſaith, "Who of God is made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption." The ſum of all is,

Doct. *That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all his precious benefits, becomes ours, by God's ſpecial and effectual application.*

There is a twofold application of our redemption, one *primary*, the other *ſecondary*: The former is the act of God the *Father*, applying it to Chriſt our ſurety, and virtually to us in him; the latter is the act of the Holy *Spirit*, perſonally and actually applying it to us in the work of converſion: The for-

mer hath the respect and relation of an example, model, or pattern to this, and this is produced and wrought by the virtue of that. What was done upon the person of Christ, was not only virtually done upon us, considered in him as a common public representative person, in which sense, we are said to die with him, and live with him, to be crucified with him, and buried with him, but it was also intended for a platform, or idea, of what is to be done by the Spirit, actually upon our souls and bodies, in our single persons. As he died for sin, so the Spirit applying his death to us in the work of *mortification*, causes us to die to sin, by the virtue of his death: And as he was quickned by the Spirit, and raised unto life, so the Spirit applying unto us the life of Christ, causeth us to live, by spiritual *vivification*. Now this personal, secondary, and *actual application of redemption* to us by the Spirit, in his sanctifying work, is that which I am engaged here to discuss, and open; which I shall do in these following propositions.

www.libtool.com.cn

Prop. 1. *The application of Christ to us, is not only comprehensive of our justification, but of all those works of the Spirit, which are known to us in scripture, by the names of regeneration, vocation, sanctification, and conversion.*

Though all these terms have some small respective differences among themselves, yet they are all included in this general, the *applying*, and *putting* on of Christ, Rom. xiii. 14. "Put ye "on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Regeneration expresses those supernatural, divine, new qualities, infused by the Spirit into the soul, which are the principles of all holy actions.

Vocation expresses the terms from which, and to which, the soul moves, when the Spirit works savingly upon it, under the gospel-call.

Sanctification notes an holy dedication of heart and life to God: our becoming the temples of the living God, separate from all prophane sinful practices, to the Lord's only use and service.

Conversion denotes the great change itself, which the Spirit causeth upon the soul, turning it by a sweet irresistable efficacy from the power of sin and Satan, to God in Christ.

Now all these are imported in, and done by the *application of Christ to our souls*: For when once the efficacy of Christ's death, and the virtue of his resurrection, come to take place upon the heart of any man, he cannot but turn from sin to God, and become a new creature, living and acting by new principles and rules. So the apostle observes, 1 Thes. i. 5, 6. speaking of the

effect of this work of the Spirit upon that people, "Our Gospel (saith he) came not to you in word only, but in power; "and in the Holy Ghost:" There was the effectual application of Christ to them. "And you became followers of us, and "of the Lord," ver. 6. there was their effectual call. "And "ye turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God," ver. 9. there was their conversion. "So that ye were en-"samples to all that believe," ver. 9. there was their life of sanctification or dedication to God. So that all these are comprehended in effectual application.

© www.libtool.com.cn

Prop. 2. *The application of Christ to the souls of men, is that great project and design of God in this world, for the accomplishment whereof, all the ordinances, and all the officers of the gospel, are appointed and continued in the world.*

This the gospel expressly declared to be its direct end, and the great business of all its officers, Eph. iv. 11, 12. "And he gave "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and "some pastors and teachers; till we all come in the unity of "the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God; to a per-"fect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of "Christ," *i. e.* the great aim and scope of all Christ's ordinances and officers, are to bring men into union with Christ, and so build them up to perfection in him: or to unite them to, and confirm them in, Christ: And when it shall have finished this design, then shall the whole frame of gospel-ordinances be taken down, and all its officers disbanded. "The kingdom" (*i. e.* this present oeconomy, manner, and form of government) "shall be delivered up," 1 Cor. xv. 24. What are ministers, but the bridegroom's friends, ambassadors for God, to beseech men to be reconciled? When therefore all the elect are brought home in a reconciled state to Christ, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, our work and office expire together.

Prop. 3. *Such is the importance and great concernment of the personal application of Christ to us by the Spirit, that whatsoever the Father hath done in the contrivance, or the Son hath done in the accomplishment of our redemption, is all inavailable, and ineffectual, to our salvation, without this.*

It is confessedly true, that God's good pleasure appointing us from eternity to salvation, is, in its kind, a most full and sufficient *impulsive* cause of our salvation, and every way able (for so much as it is concerned) to produce its effect. And Christ's humiliation and sufferings are a most complete, and sufficient *meritorious* cause of our salvation, to which nothing can be added to make it more apt, and able to procure our

salvation, than it already is: Yet neither the one or the other can actually save any soul, without the *Spirit's application* of Christ to it: for where there are divers *social causes*, or *concauses*, necessary to produce one effect, there the effect cannot be produced, until the last cause hath wrought. Thus it is here, the *Father* hath elected, and the *Son* hath redeemed; but until the *Spirit* (who is the last cause) hath wrought his part also, we cannot be saved. For he comes in the Father's and in the Son's name and authority, to put the last hand to the work of our salvation, by bringing all the fruits of election and redemption home to our souls in this work of effectual vocation. Hence the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 2. noting the order of causes in their operations, for the bringing about of our salvation, thus states it: "Elect, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through "sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of "the blood of Jesus Christ." Here you find God's election and Christ's blood, the two great causes of salvation, and yet neither of these alone, nor both together can save us; there must be added the sanctification of the Spirit, by which God's decree is executed; and the sprinkling (*i. e.* the personal *application* of Christ's blood) as well as the shedding of it, before we can have the saving benefit of either of the former causes.

Prop. 4. *The application of Christ, with his saving benefits, is exactly of the same extent and latitude with the Father's election, and the Son's intention in dying, and cannot possibly be extended to one soul farther.*

"Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," Rom. viii. 30. and Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal "life, believed;" 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved and called "us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but ac-"cording to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in "Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world."

The Father, Son, and Spirit, (betwixt whom was the council of peace) work out their design in a perfect harmony and consent: As there was no jar in their council, so there can be none in the execution of it: those whom the Father, before all time, did chuse; they, and they only, are the persons, whom the Son, when the fulness of time for the execution of that decree was come, died for, John xvii. 6. "I have manifested "thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the "world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and ver. 19. "For their sakes I sanctify myself;" (*i. e.*) consecrate, devote, or set myself apart for a sacrifice for them. And those for

whom Christ died, are the persons to whom the Spirit effectually applies the benefits and purchases of his blood: He comes in the name of the Father and Son: "But the world cannot re-"ceive him, for it neither sees, nor knows him," John xiv. 17. "They that are not of Christ's sheep, believe not," John x. 26.

www.libtool.com.cn

Christ hath indeed a fulness of saving power, but the dispensation thereof is limited by the Father's will; therefore he tells us, Mat. xx. 23. "It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to "them for whom it is prepared of my Father:" In which words he no ways denies his authority, to give glory as well as grace; only shews that in the dispensation proper to him, as Mediator, he was limited by his Father's will and counsel.

And thus also are the dispensations of grace by the Spirit, in like manner, limited, both by the counsel and will of the Father and Son. For as he proceeds from them, so he acts in the administration proper to him, by commission from both. John xiv. 26. "The holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name;" and as he comes forth into the world by this joint commission, so his dispensations are limited in his commission; for it is said, John xvi. 13. "He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he "shall hear, that shall he speak;" *(i. e.)* He shall in all things act according to his commission, which the Father and I have given him.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, John v. 19. And the Spirit can do nothing of himself, but what he hears from the Father and Son: And it is impossible it should be otherwise, considering not only the unity of their nature, but also of their will and design. So that you see the applications of Christ, and benefits by the Spirit, are commensurable with the Father's secret counsel, and the Son's design in dying, which are the rule, model, and pattern of the Spirit's working.

Prop. 5. *The application of Christ to souls, by the regenerating work of the Spirit, is that which makes the first internal difference, and distinction among men.*

It is very true, that in respect of God's fore-knowledge and purpose, there was a distinction betwixt one man and another, before any man had a being, one was taken, another left: And with respect to the death of Christ, there is a great difference betwixt one and another: He laid down his life for the sheep, he prayed for them, and not for the world; but all this while, as to any *relative change* of state, or *real change* of temper, they are upon a level with the rest of the miserable world. The elect them-

selves are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 3. And to the same purpose the apostle tells the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. (when he had given in that black bill, describing the most lewd, profligate, abominable wretches in the world, men whose practices did stink in the very nostrils of nature, and were able to make the more sober Heathens blush; after this he tells the Corinthians) "And such were some of you, "but ye are washed," *&c. q. d.* look, these were your companions once: as they are, you lately were.

Digitized by Google

The work of the Spirit doth not only evidence, and manifest that difference which God's election hath made between men and man, as the apostle speaks, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. But it also makes a twofold difference itself, namely in *state* and *temper*; whereby they visibly differ, not only from other men, but also from themselves: after this work, though a man be the *who*, yet not the *what* he was. This work of the Spirit, makes us new creatures, namely, for quality and temper, 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be "in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, be-"hold, all things are become new."

Propos. 6. *The application of Christ, by the work of regeneration, is that which yields unto men all the sensible sweetness, and refreshing comforts, that they have in Christ, and in all that he hath done, suffered, or purchased for sinners.*

An unsanctified person may relish the natural sweetness of the creature, as well as he that is sanctified; he may also seem to relish and taste some sweetness in the delicious promises and discoveries of the gospel, by a *misapplication* of them to himself. But this is like the joy of a beggar, dreaming he is a king; but he awakes and finds himself a beggar still: but for the rational, solid, and genuine delights, and comforts of religion, no man tastes them, till this work of the Spirit hath first passed upon his soul: it is an enclosed pleasure, a stranger intermeddles not with it. "The white stone, and the new name," (denoting the pleasant results and fruits of justification and adoption) "no "man knows but he that receives it," Rev. ii. 7. There are all those things wanting in the unsanctified (though elect) soul, that should capacitate and enable it to relish the sweetness of Christ and religion, namely, *propriety*, *evidence*, and suitableness of spirit.

Propriety is the sweetest part of any excellency; therefore Luther was wont to say, that the sweetness of the gospel lay mostly in *pronouns*, as *me*, *my*, *thy*, &c. who loved [me] and gave himself for me, Gal. ii. 20. Christ Jesus [my] Lord, Phil.

iii. 18. So Mat. ix. 2. "Son, be of good cheer. [thy] sins are "forgiven." Take away propriety, and you deflower the very gospel, of its beauty and deliciousness: and as propriety, so

Evidence is requisite to joy and comfort; yea, so necessary, that even interest and propriety afford no sensible sweetness without it. For as to comfort, it is all one not to appear, and not to be. If I am registred in the book of life, and know it not, what comfort can my name there afford me? Besides, to capacitate a soul for the sweetness and comfort of Christ there is also *an agreeable temper* of spirit required; for how can Christ be sweet to that man's soul, whose thoughts reluctate, decline, or nauseate so holy and pure an object? Now, all these requisites being the proper effects and fruits of the Spirit's sanctifying operations upon us, it is beyond controversy, that the consolations of Christ cannot be tasted, until the application of Christ be first made.

Propos. 7. *The application of Christ to the soul effectually, though it be so far wrought in the first saving work of the Spirit, as truly to entitle the soul to Christ, and save it from the danger of perishing; yet it is a work gradually advancing in the believer's soul, whilst it abides on this side heaven and glory.*

It is true, indeed, that Christ is perfectly and completely applied to the soul in the first act, for righteousness. "Justification being a relative change *, properly admits no degrees, "but is perfected together, and at once, in one only act; tho' "as to its manifestation, and sense, it hath various degrees:" But the *application* of Christ to us, for wisdom, and sanctification, is not perfected in one single act, but rises by many, and slow degrees to its just perfection.

And though we are truly said to be come to Christ when we first believe, John vi. 35. yet the soul after that is still coming to him by farther acts of faith, 1 Pet. ii. 4. "To whom [coming] "as unto a living stone:" the *partiche* notes a continued motion, by which the soul gains ground, and still gets nearer and nearer to Christ; growing still more inwardly acquainted with him. The knowledge of Christ grows upon the soul as the morning light, from its first spring, to the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. every grace of the Spirit grows, if not sensibly, yet really; for it is in discerning the growth of sanctification, as it is in discerning the

* *Nullos proprie dictos gradus admittit, sed unico actu simul ac semel existit perfecta, quamvis quoad manifestationem, sensum, et effectus; varios habet gradus.* Ames.

growth of plants, which we perceive rather *crevisse, quam crescere*; to have grown, than to grow. And as it thrives in the soul, by deeper radications of the habits, and more promptitude and spirituality in the actings; so Christ, and the soul, proportionably, close more and more inwardly, and efficaciously, till at last it is wholly swallowed up in Christ's full and perfect enjoyment.

Propos. 8. *Lastly, Although the several privileges and benefits forementioned are all truly and really bestowed with Christ upon believers, yet they are not communicated to them in one and the same way and manner; but differently, and diversly, as their respective natures do require.*

These four illustrious benefits are conveyed from Christ to us in three different ways and methods: his righteousness is made ours by *imputation*: his wisdom and sanctification by *renovation*: his redemption by our *glorification*.

I know the communication of Christ's righteousness to us by imputation, is not only denied, but † scoffed at by Papists; who own no righteousness, but what is (at least) confounded with that which is inherent in us; and for *imputative* (blasphemously stiled by them *putative*) righteousness; they flatly deny it, and look upon it as a most absurd doctrine, every where endeavouring to load it with these and such like absurdities. That if God imputes Christ's righteousness to the believer, and accepts what Christ hath performed for him, as if he had performed it himself; then we may be accounted as righteous as Christ. Then we may be the redeemers of the world. False and groundless consequences; as if a man should say, my debt is paid by by surety, therefore I am as rich as he. "When we say the "righteousness of Christ is made ours by *imputation* ‡, we think "not it is made ours according to its universal value, but accord-"ing to our particular necessity: not to make others righteous "but to make us so: not that we have formal intrinsical righ-"teousness of Christ in us, as it is in him, but a relative righte-"ousness, which makes us righteous, even as he is righteous, "not as to the quantity, but as to the truth of it: nor is it im-"puted to us, as though Christ designed to make us the *causes*

† A phantom sprung of Luther's brain. *Stapleton.*

‡ *Non formali intrinseca justitia, sed relativa: non quoad quantitatem sed veritatem; sit enim finita applicatio infinitae justitiae; si aliter, aeque justi essemus ut Christus, at non: justitia Christi sit nostra, non quoad universalem valorem, sed particularem necessitatem; et imputatur nobis, non ut causis salvationis, sed ut subjectis salvandis.* Bradsh. de Justificat.

"of salvation to others, but the *subjects* of salvation ourselves;" it is *inhesively* in him, *communicatively* it becomes ours; by imputation, the sin of the first Adam becomes ours, and the same way the righteousness of the second Adam becomes ours, Rom. v. 17. This way the Redeemer became sin for us, and this way we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. This way Abraham the Father of believers was justified, therefore this way all believers, the children of Abraham, must be justified also, Rom. iv. 22, 23. And thus is Christ's righteousness made ours.

www.libtool.com.cn

But in conveying and communicating his *wisdom*, and *sanctification*, he takes another method, for this is not *imputed*, but really *imparted*, to us, by the illuminating and regenerating work of the Spirit: these are graces really inherent in us: our righteousness comes from Christ, as a *surety*, but our holiness comes from him, as a quickening *head*, sending vital influences into all his members.

Now these gracious habits being subjected and seated in the souls of poor imperfect creatures, whose corruptions abide and work in the very same faculties where grace hath its residence, it cannot be, that our sanctification should be so perfect and complete, as our justification is, which inheres only in Christ. See Gal. v. 17. Thus are righteousness, and sanctification, communicated and made ours: but then,

For *redemption*, that is to say, absolute and plenary deliverance from all the sad remains, effects, and consequents of sin, both upon soul and body; this is made ours, (or, to keep to the terms) *Christ is made redemption to us by glorification*; then, and not before, are these miserable effects removed; we put off these together with the body. So that look, as *justification* cures the *guilt* of sin, and *sanctification* the *dominion* and power of sin, so *glorification* removes, together with its *existence* and being, all those *miseries* which it let in (as at a flood-gate) upon out whole man, Eph. v. 26, 27.

And thus of God, Christ is made unto us ‖ wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; namely, by imputation, regeneration, and glorification.

I shall next improve the point in some useful inferences.

Inference 1. *Learn from hence what a naked, destitute, and*

‖ But it is said he is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, therefore any worth or merit in us excluded. Whence it likewise follows, that we were foolish, unrighteous, unholy, and slaves of the Devil.

empty thing, a poor sinner is, in his natural and unregenerate state.

He is one that naturally, and inherently, hath neither wisdom, nor righteousness, sanctification, nor redemption; all these must come from without himself, even from Christ; who is made all this to a sinner, or else he must eternally perish.

www.libtool.com.cn

As no creature (in respect of external abilities) comes under more natural weakness into the world than man, naked, and empty, and more shiftless and helpless than any other creature: so it is with his soul, yea, much more than so: all our excellencies are borrowed excellencies, no reason therefore to be proud of any of them; 1 Cor. iv. 7. "What hast thou that thou hast not "received? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glo-"ry, as if thou hadst not received it?" *q. d.* What intolerable insolence, and vanity, would it be for a man that wears the rich and costly robe of Christ's righteousness, in which there is not one thread of his own spinning; but all made by *free-grace*, and not by *free-will*; to jet proudly up and down the world in it, as if himself had made it; and he were beholden to none for it? O man! thine excellencies, whatever they are, are borrowed from Christ, they oblige thee to him, but he can be no more obliged to thee, who weareſt them, than the sun is obliged to him that borrows its light, or the fountain to him that draws its water for his use and benefit.

And it hath ever been the care of holy men, when they have viewed their own gracious *principles*, or best *performances*, still to disclaim themselves, and own free-grace, as the sole author of all. Thus holy Paul viewing the principles of divine life in himself, (the richest gift bestowed upon man in this world by Jesus Christ) how doth he renounce himself, and deny the least part of the praise and glory as belonging to him, Gal. ii. 20. "Now "I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me:" and so for the best duties that ever he performed for God; (and what mere man ever did more for God?) Yet when, in a just and necessary defence, he was constrained to mention them, 1 Cor. xv. 10. how carefully is the like [*Yet not I*] presently added? "I la-"boured more abundantly than they all, yet not I; but the "grace of God which was with me."

Well then, let the sense of your own emptiness by nature, humble, and oblige you the more to Christ, from whom you receive all you have.

Infer. 2. *Hence we are informed, that none can claim benefit by imputed righteousness, but those only that live in the power of*

inherent holineſs: to whomſoever Chriſt is made righteouſneſs, to him he alſo is made ſanctification.

The goſpel hath not the leaſt favour for licentiouſneſs. It is every way as careful to preſs men to their duties as to inſtruct them in their privileges, Tit. iii. 8. "This is a faithful ſaying; "and theſe things I will that you affirm conſtantly; that they "which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain "good works." It is a looſe principle, divulged by *libertines*, to the reproach of Chriſt, and his goſpel, that ſanctification is not the evidence of our juſtification. And Chriſt is as much wronged by them who ſeparate holineſs from righteouſneſs (as if a ſenſual vile life were conſiſtent with a juſtified ſtate) as he is in the contrary extreme, by thoſe who confound Chriſt's righteouſneſs with man's holineſs, in the point of juſtification; or that own no other righteouſneſs, but what is inherent in themſelves. The former opinion makes him a *cloak* for ſin, the latter a *needleſs ſacrifice* for ſin.

It is true, our ſanctification cannot juſtify us before God; but what then, cannot it evidence our juſtification before men? Is there no neceſſity, or uſe for holineſs, becauſe it hath no hand in our juſtification? Is the preparation of the ſoul for heaven, by altering its frame and temper, nothing? Is the glorifying of our Redeemer, by the exerciſes of grace in the world, nothing? Doth the work of Chriſt render the work of the Spirit needleſs? God forbid: "He came not by blood only, but by water alſo," 1 John v. 6. And when the apoſtle ſaith, in Rom. iv. 5. "But "unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſti- "fieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs:" the ſcope of it is neither to characterize and deſcribe the juſtified perſon, as one that is lazy, and ſlothful, and hath no mind to work, or rebellious and refractory, refuſing obedience to the commands of God; but to repreſent him as an humbled ſinner, who is convinced of his inability to work out his own righteouſneſs by the law, and ſees all his endeavours to obey the law fall ſhort of righteouſneſs, and therefore is ſaid, in a law-ſenſe, *not to work*, becauſe he doth not work ſo as to anſwer the purpoſe and end of the law, which accepts of nothing beneath perfect obedience.

And when (in the ſame text) the ungodly are ſaid to be juſtified, that character deſcribes not the temper and frame of their hearts and lives, after their juſtificaton, but what it was before, not as it leaves, but as it found them *.

* God juſtifies the ungodly antecedently not conſequently. *Par.*

Infer. 3. *How unreasonable, and worse than brutish, is the sin of infidelity; by which the sinner rejects Christ, and with him all those mercies, and benefits, which alone can relieve and cure his misery!*

He is by nature blind and ignorant, and yet refuses Christ, who comes to him with heavenly light and wisdom: he is condemned by the terrible sentence of the law to eternal wrath, and yet rejects Christ, who renders to him complete and perfect righteousness: he is wholly polluted and plunged into original and actual pollutions of nature and practice, yet will have none of Christ, who would become sanctification to him. He is oppressed in soul and body, with the deplorable effects and miseries sin hath brought upon him, and yet is so in love with his bondage, that he will neither accept Christ, nor the redemption he brings with him to sinners.

O! what monsters, what beasts, hath sin turned its subjects into! "You will not come to me, that ye may have life," John v. 40. Sin hath stabbed the sinner to the heart, the wounds are all mortal, eternal death is in his face; Christ hath prepared the only plaister that can cure his wounds, but he will not suffer him to apply it †. He acts like one in love with death, and that judges it sweet to perish. So Christ tells us, Prov. viii. 36. "All they that hate me, love death:" not in itself, but in its causes; with which it is inseparably connected. They are loth to burn, yet willing to sin; though sin kindle those everlasting flames. So that in two things the unbeliever shews himself worse than brutish, he cannot think of damnation, the effect of sin, without horror; and cannot yet think of sin, the cause of damnation, without pleasure; he is loth to perish to all eternity without remedy, and yet refuses and declines Christ as if he were an enemy, who only can and would deliver him from that eternal perdition.

How do men act therefore, as if they were in love with their own ruin! Many poor wretches now in the way to hell, what an hard shift do they make to cast themselves away! Christ meets them many times in the ordinances, where they studiously shun him: many times checks them in their way by convictions, which they make an hard shift to overcome and conquer.

† Not that any one is so mad, as willingly and knowingly to love death, which we all naturally abhor; but because that is the fruit of despising the wisdom of God, which at length brings death on us. *Lavat. on the place.*

Oh how willing are they to accept a cure, a benefit, a remedy, for any thing but their souls! You see then that sinners cannot, (should they study all their days to do themselves a mischief), take a readier course to undo themselves, than by rejecting Christ in his gracious offers.

www.libtool.com.cn

Surely the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is less than this sin. Mercy itself is exasperated by it, and the damnation of such as reject Christ, (so prepared for them, with whatever they need, and so seriously and frequently offered to them upon the knee of gospel entreaty), is just, inevitable, and will be more intolerable than any in the world beside them. It is just, for the sinner hath but his own option, or choice: he is but come to the end which he was often told his way would bring him to. It is inevitable, for there is no other way to salvation, but that which is rejected. And it will be more intolerable than the damnation of others, because, neither Heathens nor devils, ever aggravated their sins by such an horrid circumstance, as the wilful refusing of such an apt, offered, and only remedy.

Infer. 4. *What a tremendous symptom of wrath, and sad character of death, appears upon that man's soul, to which no effectual application of Christ can be made by the gospel.*

Christ, with his benefits, is frequently tendered to them in the gospel; they have been beseeched once and again, upon the knee of importunity, to accept him, those entreaties and persuasions have been urged by the greatest arguments, the command of God, the love of Christ, the inconceivable happiness or misery which unavoidably follow the accepting or rejecting of those offers, and yet nothing will affect them: all their pleas for infidelity have been over and over confuted, their reasons and consciences have stood convinced; they have been speechless, as well as Christless: not one sound argument is found with them to defend their infidelity: they confess in general, that such courses, as theirs are, lead to destruction. They will yield them to be happy souls that are in Christ; and yet, when it comes to the point, their own closing with him, nothing will do; all arguments, all entreaties, return to us without success.

Lord! what is the reason of this unaccountable obstinacy? In other things it is not so: if they be sick, they are so far from rejecting a physician that offers himself, that they will send, and pray, and pay him too. If they be arrested for debt, and any one will be a surety, and pay their debts for them, words can hardly express the sense they have of such a kindness: but though Christ would be both a physician and surety, and what-

ever else their needs require, they will rather perish to eternity, than accept him. What may we fear to be the reason of this, but because they are not of Christ's sheep, John x. 26. The Lord open the eyes of poor sinners, to apprehend not only how great a sin, but how dreadful a sign, this is.

Infer. 5. *If Christ, with all his benefits, be made ours, by God's special application, what a day of mercies then is the day of conversion! what multitudes of choice blessings visit the converted soul in that day!*

"This day, (saith Christ to Zaccheus, Luke xix. 9.), is salvation come to this house. In this day, Christ cometh into the soul, and he comes not empty, but brings with him all his treasures of wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Troops of mercies yea, of the best of mercies, come with him. It is a day of singular gladness and joy to the heart of Christ, when he is espoused to, and received by the believing soul; it is a coronation-day to a king. So you read, Cant. iii. 11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

Where, under the type of Solomon in his greatest magnificence and glory, when the royal diadem was set upon his head, and the people shouted for joy, so that the earth did ring again, is shadowed out the joy of Christ's heart, when poor souls, by their high estimation of him, and consent to his government, do, as it were, crown him with glory and honour, and make his heart glad.

Now, if the day of our espousals to Christ, be the day of the gladness of his heart, and he reckons himself thus honoured and glorified by us, what a day of joy and gladness should it be to our hearts, and how should we be transported with joy, to see a King from heaven, with all his treasures of grace and glory, bestowing himself freely, and everlastingly upon us, as our portion! No wonder Zaccheus came down joyfully, Luke xix. 6.; that the eunuch went home rejoicing, Acts viii. 39.; that the jaylor rejoiced, believing in God with all his houshold, Acts xvi. 34.; that they that were converted, did eat their meat with gladness, praising God, Acts ii. 41, 46.; that there was great joy among them of Samaria, when Christ came among them in the preaching of the gospel, Acts viii. 5, 8. I say, it is no wonder we read of such joy accompanying Christ into the soul, when we consider, that, in one day, so many blessings meet to-

gether in it, the least of which is not to be exchanged for all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. Eternity itself will but suffice to bless God for the mercies of this one day.

Infer. 6. *If Christ be made all this to every soul, unto whom he is effectually applied, what cause then have those souls, that are under the preparatory work of the Spirit, and are come nigh to Christ, and all his benefits, to stretch out their hands with vehement desire, to Christ, and give him the most importunate invitation into their souls!*

The whole world is distinguishable into three classes, or sorts of persons: such as are *far from Christ*; such as are *not far from Christ*; and such as are *in Christ*. They that are in Christ, have heartily received him. Such as are far from Christ; will not open to him; their hearts are fast barred by ignorance, prejudice, and unbelief against him: But those that are come under the preparatory workings of the Spirit, nigh to Christ, who see their own indispensible necessity of him, and his suitableness to their necessities, in whom also encouraging hopes begin to dawn, and their souls are waiting at the foot of God for power to receive him, for an heart to close sincerely and universally with him; Oh what vehement desires! what strong pleas! what moving arguments should such persons urge, and plead to win Christ, and get possession of him! they are in sight of their only remedy; Christ and salvation are come to their very doors: there wants but a few things to make them blessed for ever. This is the day in which their souls are exercised between hopes and fears: Now they are much alone, and deep in thoughtfulness, they weep and make supplication for a heart to believe, and that against the great discouragements with which they encounter.

Reader, if this be the case of thy soul, it will not be the least piece of service I can do for thee, to suggest such pleas as in this case are proper to be urged for the attainment of thy desires; and the closing of the match between Christ and thee.

First, Plead the absolute necessity which now drives thee to Christ: Tell him thy hope is utterly perished in all other refuges. Thou art come like a starving beggar to the last door of hope. Tell him thou now beginnest to see the absolute necessity of Christ. Thy body hath not so much need of bread, water, or air, as thy soul hath of Christ; and that wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that are in him.

Secondly, Plead the Father's gracious design in furnishing and sending him into the world, and his own design in accepting the Father's call. Lord Jesus, wast thou not "anointed to preach

"good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, and "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison "to them that are bound?" Isa. lxi. 1, 3. Behold an object suitable to thine office: whilst I was ignorant of my condition, I had a proud rebellious heart, but conviction and self-acquaintance have now melted it: my heart was harder than the nether mill-stone, and it was as easy to dissolve the obdure rocks, as to thaw and melt my heart for sin; but now God hath made my heart soft, I sensibly feel the misery of my condition. I once thought myself at perfect liberty, but now I see what I conceited to be perfect liberty, is perfect bondage; and never did a poor prisoner sigh for deliverance more than I. Since then thou hast given me a soul thus qualified, though still unworthy, for the exercise of thine office, and execution of thy commission; Lord Jesus, be, according to thy name, a Jesus unto me.

Thirdly, Plead the unlimited and general invitation made to such souls as you are, to come to Christ freely. Lord, thou hast made open proclamation; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, "come ye to the waters." Isa. lv. 1.; and Rev. xxii. 17. "Him "that is a-thirst come." In obedience to thy call, lo, I come; had I not been invited, my coming to thee, dear Lord Jesus, had been an act of presumption, but this makes it an act of duty and obedience.

Fourthly, Plead the unprofitableness of thy blood to God, Lord, there is no profit in my blood, it will turn to no more advantage to thee to destroy, than it will to save me; if thou send me to hell, (as the merit of my sin calls upon thy justice to do), I shall be there dishonouring thee to all eternity, and the debt I owe thee never paid. But, if thou apply thy Christ to me for righteousness, satisfaction for all that I have done, will be laid down in one full, complete sum; indeed, if the honour of thy justice lay as a bar to my pardon, it would stop my mouth; but when thy justice, as well as thy mercy, shall both rejoice together, and be glorified and pleased in the same act, what hinders but that Christ be applied to my soul, since, in so doing, God can be no loser by it?

Fifthly, and Lastly, Plead thy compliance with the terms of the gospel: tell him, Lord, my will complies fully and heartily to all thy gracious terms. I can now subscribe a blank: let God offer his Christ on what terms he will, my heart is ready to comply; I have no exception against any article of the gospel. And now, Lord, I wholly refer myself to thy pleasure; do with me what seemeth good in thine eyes, only give me an interest in Jesus Christ; as to all other concerns I lie at thy feet, in full re-

signation of all to thy pleasure. Never yet did any perish in that posture and frame; and I hope I shall not be made the first instance and example.

Infer. 7. Lastly, *If Christ, with all his benefits, be made ours, by a special application; how contented, thankful, comfortable, and hopeful, should believers be, in every condition which God casts them into in this world!*

After such a mercy as this, let them never open their mouths any more to repine and grudge at the outward inconveniencies of their condition in this world. What are the things you want, compared with the things you enjoy? What is a little money, health, or liberty, to wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? All the crowns and sceptres in the world, sold to their full value, are no price for the least of these mercies. But I will not insist here, your duty lies much higher than contentment.

Be thankful, as well as content, in every state. "Blessed be "God, (saith the apostle) the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who hath blessed us with all [spiritual blessings] in heavenly "places in Christ:" O think what are men to angels, that Christ should pass by them to become a Saviour to men! And what art thou among men, that thou shouldst be taken, and others left! And among all the mercies of God, what mercies are comparable to these conferred upon thee? O bless God in the lowest ebb of outward comforts, for such privileges as these.

And yet you will not come up to your duty in all this, except you be joyful in the Lord, and rejoice evermore, after the receipt of such mercies as these, Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the "Lord ye righteous, and again I say rejoice." For hath not the poor captive reason to rejoice, when he hath recovered his liberty? The debtor to rejoice when all scores are cleared, and he owes nothing? The weary traveller to rejoice, though he be not owner of a shilling, when he is come almost home, where all his wants shall be supplied? Why this is our case, when Christ once becomes yours: you are the Lord's freemen, your debts to justice are all satisfied by Christ; and you are within a little of compleat redemption, from all the troubles and inconveniences of your present state.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON II.

Wherein the Believer's union with CHRIST is stated and opened, as a principle Part of Gospel-Application.

www.libtool.com.cn

JOHN. xvii. 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*

THE design and end of the application of Christ to sinners is the communication of his benefits to them; but seeing all communications of benefits necessarily imply communion, and all communion as necessarily presupposes union with his person; I shall therefore, in this place, and from this scripture, treat of the mystical union betwixt Christ and believers; this union, being the principle act, wherein the Spirit's application of Christ consists, of which I spake (as to its general nature) in the former sermon.

In this verse (omitting the context) we find a threefold union, one betwixt the Father and Christ, a second betwixt Christ and believers, a third betwixt believers themselves.

First, *Thou in me:* This is a glorious ineffable union, and is fundamental to the other two. The Father is not only in Christ, in respect of dear affections, as one dear friend is in another, who is as his own soul; nor only essentially, in respect of the identity and sameness of nature and attributes, in which respect, Christ is the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. But he is in Christ also as Mediator, by communicating the fulness of the Godhead, which dwells in him as God-man, in a transcendent and singular manner, so as it never dwelt, nor can dwell in any other, Col. ii. 9.

Secondly, *I in them*: Here is the mystical union betwixt Christ and the saints, *q. d.* thou and I are one essentially, they and I are one mystically: and thou and I are one by communication of the Godhead, and singular fulness of the Spirit to me as Mediator; and they and I are one, by my communication of the Spirit to them in measure.

Thirdly, From hence results a third union betwixt believers themselves; *that they may be made perfect in one;* the same Spirit dwelling in them all, and equally uniting them all to me, as living members to their Head of influence, there must needs be a

dear and intimate union betwixt themselves, as fellow-members of the same body.

Now my business, at this time, lying in the second branch, namely, the union betwixt Christ and believers, I shall gather up the substance of it into this doctrinal proposition, to which I shall apply this discourse.

www.libtool.com.cn

Doct. *That there is a strict and dear union betwixt Christ and all true believers.*

The scriptures have borrowed from the book of nature, four elegant and lively metaphors, to help the nature of this mystical union with Christ into our understandings; namely, that of pieces of timber united by glue; that of a graff taking hold of its stock, and making one tree; that of the husband and wife, by the marriage-covenant, becoming one flesh; and that of the members and head animated by one soul, and so becoming one natural body. Every one of these is more lively and full than the other, and what is defective in one, is supplied in the other: but yet, neither any of these singly, or all of them jointly, can give us a full, and complete account of this mystery.

Not that of two pieces united by glue, 1 Cor. v. 17. "He that "is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," κολλωμενος, glewed to the Lord. For though this cementeth, and strongly joins them in one, yet this is but a faint and imperfect shadow of our union with Christ; for though this union, by glue, be intimate, yet not vital, but so is that of the soul with Christ.

Not that of the graff and stock, mentioned Rom. vi. 5. for though it be there said, that believers are συμφυτοι, implanted, or ingraffed by way of incision, and this union betwixt it and the stock be vital, for it partakes of the vital sap and juice of it; yet here also is a remarkable defect, for the graff is of a more excellent kind and nature than the stock, and, upon that account, the tree receives its denomination from it, as from the more noble and excellent part; but Christ into whom believers are ingraffed, is infinitely more excellent than they, and they are denominated from him.

Nor yet that conjugal union, by marriage-covenant, betwixt a man and his wife; for though this be exceeding dear and intimate, so that a man leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife, and they two become one flesh; yet this union is not indissolvable, but may and must be broken by death; and then the relict lives alone without any communion with, or relation

to, the person that was once so dear; but this betwixt Christ and the soul can never be dissolved by death, it abides to eternity.

Nor, lastly, that of the head and members united by one vital spirit, and so making one physical body, mentioned Eph. iv. 15, 16. for though one soul actuates every member, yet it doth not knit every member alike near to the head, but some are nearer, and others removed farther from it; but here every member is alike nearly united with Christ the Head, the weak are as near to him as the strong.

Two things are necessary to be opened in the doctrinal part of this point. 1. The reality. 2. The quality of this union.

First, For the reality of it, I shall make it appear, that there is such a union betwixt Christ and belivers; it is no *Ens rationis*, empty notion, or cunningly devised fable, but a most certain demonstrable truth, which appears,

First, From the communion which is betwixt Christ and believers; in this the apostle is express, 1 John i. 3. "Truly our "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" κοινωνια. It signifies such fellowship or copartnership, as persons have by a joint interest in one and the same enjoyment, which is in common betwixt them. So Heb. iii. 14. we are μετοχοι, *partakers of Christ*. And Psal. xlv. 7. מתברי here the saints are called the companions, consorts or fellows of Christ; "and that "not only in respect of his * assumption of our mortality, and "investing us with his immortality, but it hath a special refe-"rence and respect to the unction of the Holy Ghost, or graces "of the Spirit, of which believers are partakers with him and "through him." Now this communion of the saints with Christ, is entirely and necessarily dependent upon their union with him, even as much as the branch's participation of the sap and juice, depends upon its union and coalition with the stock; take away union, and there can be no communion, or communications, which is clear from 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All is yours, "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Where you see how all our participation of Christ's benefits is built upon our union with Christ's person.

Secondly, The reality of the believers union with Christ, is e-

* *Ipse venit in sortem nostræ mortalitatis, ut in sortem nos adduceret suæ immortalitatis: clarum autem est, hic agi de consortibus unctionis: quales sunt omnes fideles qui unctionis participes sunt.* Rivet.

vident from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to him for his justification. That a believer is justified before God by a righteousness without himself, is undeniable from Rom. iii. 24. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption "that is in Christ Jesus." And that Christ's righteousness becomes ours by imputation, is as clear from Rom. iv. 23, 24. but it can never be imputed to us, except we be united to him, and become one with him: which is also plainly asserted in 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye (in Christ Jesus) who of God is made "unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemp-"tion." He communicates his merits unto none but those that are in him. Hence all those vain cavils of the Papist's, disputing against our justification by the righteousness of Christ; and asserting it to be by inherent righteousness, are solidly answered.

www.libtool.com.cn

When they demand, How can we be justified by the righteousness of another? Can I be rich with another man's money, or preferred by another's honours? Our answer is, Yes, if that other be my surety or husband. Indeed Peter cannot be justified by the righteousness of Paul; but both may be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; they being members, jointly knit to one common Head. Principal and surety are one in obligation and construction of law. Head and members are one body, branch and stock are one tree; and it is no strange thing, to see a graff live by the sap of another stock, when once it is engraffed into it.

Thirdly, The sympathy that is betwixt Christ and believers, proves a union betwixt them; Christ and the saints smile and sigh together. St. Paul in Col. i. 24. tells us, that he did "fill "up that which is behind," τα υστερηματα,——the remainders of the "sufferings of Christ in his flesh:" not as if Christ's sufferings were imperfect, ("for by one offering he hath per-"fected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14.) but in these two scriptures, Christ is considered in a twofold capacity; he suffered once in *corpore proprio*, in his own person, as Mediator; these sufferings are complete and full, and in that sense he suffers no more; he suffers also in *corpore mystico*, in his church and members; thus he still suffers in the sufferings of every saint for his sake; and though these sufferings in his mystical body are not equal to the other, either *pondere et mensura*, in their weight and value, nor yet designed *ex officio*, for the same use and purpose, to satisfy by their proper merit, offended justice; nevertheless they are truly reckoned the sufferings of Christ, because the head suffers when the members do; and without this supposition, that place, Acts ix. 5. is never to be understood, when

Christ, the Head in heaven, cries out, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" when the foot was trod upon on earth: How doth Christ sensibly feel our sufferings, or we his, if there be not a mystical union betwixt him and us?

Fourthly, and lastly, The way and manner in which the saints shall be raised at the last day, proves this mystical union betwixt Christ and them; for they are not to be raised as others, by the naked power of God without them, but by the virtue of Christ's resurrection as their Head, sending forth vital quickening influences into their dead bodies, which are united to him as well as their souls. For so we find it, Rom. viii. 11. "But if the "Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in "you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quick-"en your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;" even as it is in our awaking out of natural sleep, first the animal-spirits in the head begin to rouze and play there, and then the senses and members are loosed throughout the whole body.

Now it is impossible the saints should be raised in the last resurrection, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, if that Spirit did not knit and unite them to him, as members to their head. So then by all this, it is proved, that there is a real union of the saints with Christ.

Next, I shall endeavour to open the quality and nature of this union, and shew you what it is, according to the weak apprehensions we have of so sublime a mystery; and this I shall do in a general and particular account of it.

First, More generally, it is an intimate conjunction of believers to Christ, by the imparting of his Spirit to them, whereby they are enabled to believe and live in him.

All divine spiritual life is originally in the Father, and cometh not to us, but by, and through the Son, John v. 26. to him hath the Father given to have an αυτοζωη,——a quickening, enlivening power in himself; but the Son communicates this life which is in him to none, but by, and through the Spirit, Rom. viii. 2. "The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made "me free from the law of sin and death."

The Spirit must therefore first take hold of us, before we can live in Christ, and when he doth so, then we are enabled to exert that vital act of faith, whereby we receive Christ; all this lies plain in that one Scripture, John vi. 57. "As the living Fa-"ther hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eat-"eth me (that is, by faith applies me) even he shall live by me." So that these two, namely, the Spirit, on Christ's part, and faith,

his work on our part, are the two ligaments by which we are knit to Christ.

So that the Spirit's work in uniting or engraffing a soul into Christ, is like the cutting off the graff from its native stock (which he doth by his illuminations and convictions) and closing it with the living, when it is thus prepared, and so enabling it (by the infusion of faith) to suck and draw the vital sap, and thus it becomes one with him. Or as the many members in the natural body, being all quickened and animated by the same vital spirit, become one body with the head, which is the principal member, Eph. iv. 4. "There is one body, and one spirit."

www.libtool.com.cn

More particularly, we shall consider the properties of this union, that so we may the better understand the nature of it. And here I shall open the nature of it both negatively and affirmatively.

First, Negatively, by removing all false notions and misapprehensions of it. And we say,

First, The saints union with Christ, is not a mere mental union, only in conceit and notion, but really exists *extrà mentem*, whether we conceit it or not. I know the atheistical world censures all these things as fancies and idle imaginations, but believers know the reality of them; John xiv. 20. "At that day "you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and "I in you." This doctrine is not fantastical, but scientifical.

Secondly, The saints union with Christ is not a physical union, such as is betwixt the members of a natural body and the head; our nature indeed is assumed into union with the person of Christ, but it is the singular honour of that blessed and holy flesh of Christ, to be so united as to make one person with him; that union is hypostatical, this only mystical.

Thirdly, Nor is it an essential union, or union with the divine nature, so as our beings are thereby swallowed up and lost in the Divine Being.

Some there be indeed that talk at that wild rate, of being godded into God, and christed into Christ; and those unwary expressions of Greg. Naz. Θεοποιεῖν, and Χριστοποιεῖν, do but too much countenance those daring spirits; but oh, there is an infinite distance betwixt us and Christ, in respect of nature and excellency, notwithstanding this union.

Fourthly, The union I here speak of, is not a foederal union, or an union by covenant only; such an union indeed, there is betwixt Christ and believers, but that is consequential to, and wholly dependent upon, this.

Fifthly, and lastly, It is not a mere moral union by love and

affection; thus we say, one soul is in two bodies, a friend is another self; the lover is in the person beloved; such an union of hearts and affections there is also betwixt Christ and the saints, but this is of another nature; that we call a moral, this a mystical union; that only knits our affections, but this our persons, to Christ.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, Positively. And first, Though this union neither makes us one person or essence with Christ, yet it knits our persons most intimately and nearly to the person of Christ. The church is Christ's body, Coloss. i. 24. not his natural, but his mystical body; that is to say, his body is a mystery, because it is to him as his natural body. The saints stand to Christ in the same relation that the natural members of the body stand to the head, and he stands in the same relation to them, that the head stands in to the natural members; and consequently they stand related to one another, as the members of a natural body, do to each other.

Christ and the saints are not one, as the oak, and the ivy that clasps it are one, but as the graff and stock are one; it is not an union by adhesion, but incorporation. Husband and wife are not so near, soul and body are not so near, as Christ and the believing soul are near to each other.

Secondly, The mystical union is wholly supernatural, wrought by the alone power of God. So it is said, 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of "him are ye in Christ Jesus." We can no more unite ourselves to Christ, than a branch can incorporate itself into another stock; it is of him, *i. e.* of God, his proper and alone work.

There are only two ligaments, or bands of union betwixt Christ and the soul, *viz.* the Spirit on his part, and faith on ours. But when we say faith is the band of union on our part, the meaning is not, that it is so our own act, as that it springs naturally from us, or is educed from the power of our own wills; no, for the apostle expresly contradicts it, Eph. ii. 8. "It is not "of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But we are the subjects of it, and though the act on that account be ours, yet the power enabling us to believe is God's, Eph. i. 19, 20.

Thirdly, The mystical union is an immediate union; immediate I say, not as excluding means and instruments, for several means and many instruments, are employed for the effecting of it; but immediate, as excluding degrees of nearness among the members of Christ's mystical body.

Every member in the natural body stands not as near to the head as another, but so do all the mystical members of Christ's body to him: every member, the smallest as well as the greatest,

hath an immediate coalition with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 2. "To the "church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanc- "tified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every "place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs "and ours."

Among the factions, in this church at Corinth, those that said, *I am of Christ*, as arrogating Christ to themselves, were as much a faction, as those that said, *I am of Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 30. To cure this he tells them, he is *both theirs and ours*. Such inclosers are against law.

Fourthly, The saints mystical union with Christ is a fundamental union; it is fundamental by way of sustentation; all our fruits of obedience depend upon it, John xv. 4. "As the "branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more "can ye, except ye abide in me." It is fundamental to all our privileges and comfortable claims, 1 Cor. iii. 23. "All is yours, "for ye are Christ's." And it is a fundamental to all our hopes and expectattions of glory; for it is "Christ in you the hope of "glory," Col. i. 27. So then destroy this union, and with it you destroy all our fruits, privileges, and eternal hopes, at one stroke.

Fifthly, The mystical union is a most efficacious union, for through this union the divine power flows into our souls, both to quicken us with the life of Christ, and to conserve and secure that life in us, after it is so infused.

Without the union of the soul to Christ, which is to be conceived efficiently as the Spirit's act, there can be no union formally considered; and, without these, no communications of life from Christ to us, Eph. iv. 16. And as there is that ενεργεια, or effectual working of the spirit of life in every part, which he there speaks of, (as though you should say, the first appearances of a new life, a spiritual vitality diffused through the soul, which ere while was dead in sin) yet still this union with Christ is as necessary to the maintaining, as before it was to the producing of it.

For why is it that this life is not again extinguished, and wholly suffocated in us, by so many deadly wounds as are given it by temptations and corruptions? Surely no reason can be assigned more satisfying than that, which Christ himself gives us, in John xiv. 19. "Because I live, ye shall live also:" *q. d.* whilst there is vital sap in me the root, you that are branches in me cannot wither and die.

Sixthly, The mystical union is an indissoluble union; there is an everlasting tye betwixt Christ and the believer; and here-

in also it is beyond all other unions in the world; death dissolves the dear union betwixt the husband and wife, friend and friend, yea, betwixt soul and body, but not betwixt Christ and the soul, the bands of this union rot not in the grave. "What "shall separate us from the love of Christ?" saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. He bids defiance to all his enemies, and triumphs in the firmness of this union over all hazards that seem to threaten it. It is with Christ and us, in respect of the *mystical union*, as it was with Christ himself, in respect of the *hypostatical union*: That was not dissolved by his death, when the *natural union* betwixt his soul and body was, nor can this mystical union of our souls and bodies with Christ be dissolved, when the union betwixt us and our dearest relations, yea, betwixt the soul and body, are dissolved by death. God calls himself the God of Abraham, long after his body was turned into dust.

Seventhly, It is an *honourable union* *, yea, the highest honour that can be done unto men: The greatest honour that was ever done to our common nature, was by its assumption into union with the second person *hypostatically*, and the highest honour that was ever done to our single persons, was their union with Christ *mystically*. To be a servant of Christ, is a dignity transcendent to the highest advancement among men; but to be a member of Christ, how matchless and singular is the glory thereof! And yet such honour have all the saints, Eph. v. 30. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his "bones."

Eightly, It is a most *comfortable union*: Yea, the ground of all solid comfort, both in life and death: Whatever troubles, wants, or distresses, befal such, in this is abundant relief and support. Christ is mine, and I am his; what may not a good soul make out of that! If I am Christ's, then let him take care for me, and, indeed, in so doing, he doth but care for his own: He is my head, and to him it belongs to consult the safety and welfare of his own members, Eph. i. 22, 23. He is not only an head to his own, by way of *influence*, but to all things else, by way of *dominion*, for their good. How comfortably may we

* Christ is the head, summit, and crown of all dignity, without whom there is nothing (truly) noble in all this sublunary world, who has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool. The earth, I say, with all the persons of high rank and station in it are put under his feet. *Laur. Humphred. on Nobility.*

repose ourselves, under that cheering consideration, upon him at all times, and in all difficult cases!

Ninthly, It is a *fruitful union*: The immediate end of it is fruit, Rom. vii. 4. "We are married to Christ, that we should "bring forth fruit to God:" All the fruit we bear before our ingrafture into Christ, is worse than none: Till the person be in Christ, the work cannot be evangelically good and acceptable to God: "We are made accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. Christ is a fruitful root, and makes all the branches, that live in him, so too, John xv. 8.

Tenthly, and *Lastly*, It is an *enriching union*: For, by our union with his person, we are immediately interested in all his riches, 1 Cor. i. 30. How rich and great a person do the little arms of faith clasp and embrace! "All is yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. All that Christ hath becomes ours, either by communication to us, or improvement for us: His father, John xx. 17. His promises, 2 Cor. i. 20. His providences, Rom. viii. 28. His glory, John xvii. 24. It is all ours by virtue of our union with him.

Thus you see, briefly, what the mystical union is. Next we shall improve it.

Infer. 1. *If there be such an union betwixt Christ and believers, Oh then what transcendent dignity hath God put upon believers!*

Well might Constantine prefer the honour of being a member of the church, before that of being head of the empire †; for it is not only above all earthly dignities and honours, but, in some respect, above that honour which God hath put upon the angels of glory.

Great is the dignity of the angelical nature: The angels are the highest and most honourable species of creatures: They also have the honour continually to behold the face of God in heaven, and yet, in this one respect, the saints are preferred to them, they have a mystical union with Christ, as their head of influence, by whom they are quickned with spiritual life, which the angels have not.

It is true, there is an ἀνακεφαλαιωσις, or gathering together of all in heaven and earth under Christ as a common head, Eph. i. 10. He is the Head of *angels*, as well as saints, but in different

† If thou wouldst be called a man of power, put on Christ who is the power and wisdom of God, and in all things join thyself to the Lord, that thou mayest be one spirit with him, and then thou shalt become a man of power. *Orig. Hom. in Num.* xxxi.

respects. To angels he is an head of *dominion* and government, but to saints he is both an head of dominion, and vital *influence* too: They are his chief and most honourable subjects, but not his mystical members: They are as the Barons and Nobles in his kingdom, but the saints as the dear spouse and wife of his bosom. This dignifies the believer above the greatest angel. And as the nobles of the kingdom think it a preferment and honour to serve the queen, so the glorious angels think it no degradation or dishonour to them to serve the saints; for to this honourable office they are appointed, Heb. i. 14. to be ministring, or serviceable spirits, for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation. The chiefest servant disdains not to honour and serve the heir.

Some imperious grandees would frown, should some of these persons but presume to approach their presence; but God sets them before his face with delight, and angels delight to serve them.

Infer. 2. *If there be such a strict and inseparable union betwixt Christ and believers, then the graces of believers can never totally fail: Immortality is the privilege of grace, because sanctified persons are inseparably united to Christ the fountain of life:* "Your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. Whilst the sap of life is in the root, the branches live by it. Thus it is betwixt Christ and believers, John xiv. 19. "Because I live, "ye shall live also." See how Christ binds up their life in one bundle with his own, plainly intimating, it is as impossible for them to die, as it is for himself, he cannot live without them.

True it is, the spiritual life of believers is encountred by many strong and fierce oppositions: It is also brought to a low ebb in some, but we are always to remember, there are some things which pertain to the essence of that life, in which the very being of it lies, and some things that pertain only to its well-being. All those things which belong to the well-being of the new creature, as manifestations, joys, spiritual comforts, *&c.* may, for a time, fail; yea, and grace itself may suffer great losses and remissions in its degrees, notwithstanding our union with Christ; but still the essence of it is immortal, which is no small relief to gracious souls: When the means of grace fall, as it is threatned, Amos viii. 11. When temporary, formal professors drop away from Christ like withered leaves from the trees in a windy day, 2 Tim. ii. 18. And when the natural union of their souls and bodies is suffering a dissolution from each other by death, when

that *silver cord* is loosed, this *golden chain* holds firm, 1 Cor. iii. 23.

Infer. 3. *Is the union so intimate betwixt Christ and believers? How great and powerful a motive then is this, to make us open-handed and liberal in relieving the necessities and wants of every gracious person! For in relieving them we relieve Christ himself.*

www.libtool.com.cn

Christ *personal* is not the object of our pity and charity, he is at the fountain-head of all the riches in glory, Eph. iv. 10. but Christ *mystical* is exposed to necessities, and wants, he feels hunger and thirst, cold and pains, in his body the church *; and he is refreshed, relieved, and comforted, in their refreshments and comforts. Christ the Lord of heaven and earth, in this consideration, is sometimes in need of a penny; he tells us his wants and poverty, and how he is relieved, Mat. xxv. 35, 40. A text believed and understood by very few. "I was an "hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me "drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Then shall the "righteous answer, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, *&c.* "And the King shall answer, and say unto them, verily I say "unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least "of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

It was the saying of a great divine; that he thought scarce any man on earth did fully understand, and believe this truth, and he conceives so much hinted in the very text, where the righteous themselves reply, "Lord, when saw we thee sick," *&c.* intimating in the question, that they did not thoroughly understand the nearness, yea, *oneness* of those persons with Christ, for whom they did these things. And, indeed, it is incredible, that a Christian can be hard-hearted, and close-handed, to that necessitous Christian, in refreshing and relieving of whom, he verily believes, that he ministers refreshment to Christ himself.

O think again and again, upon this scripture, consider what forcible and mighty arguments are here laid together, to engage relief to the wants of Christians.

Here you see their near relation to Christ; they are mystically one person; what you did to them, you did to me. Here you see also how kindly Christ takes it at our hands: acknow-

* He who is not moved with the condition of a brother in the church, let him be moved with the contemplation of Christ: and he who does not regard his fellow servant in straits and want, let him regard the Lord, dwelling in that man whom he despises. *Cyprian on Works and Charity.*

ledging all those kindnesses that were bestowed upon him, even to a bit of bread: He is, you see, content to take it as a courtesy, who might demand it by authority, and bereave you of all immediately upon refusal.

Yea, here you see one single branch or act of obedience, (our charity to the saints) is singled out from among all the duties of obedience, and made the test and evidence of our sincerity in that great day, and men blessed or cursed according to the love they have manifested this way to the saints.

O then, henceforth, let none that understand the relation the saints have to Christ, as the members to the head, or the relation they have to each other thereby, as fellow-members of the same body, from henceforth suffer Christ to hunger, if they have bread to relieve him, or Christ to be thirsty, if they have wherewith to refresh him: this union betwixt Christ and the saints, affords an argument beyond all other arguments in the world to prevail with us. Methinks, a little *rhetoric* might persuade a Christian to part with any thing he hath for Christ who parted with the glory of heaven, yea, and his own blood for his sake.

Infer. 4. *Do Christ and believers make but one mystical person? How unnatural and absurd then are all those acts of unkindness, whereby believers wound and grieve Jesus Christ! This is as if the hand should wound his own head, from which it receives life, sense, motion, and strength.*

When satan smites Christ by a wicked man, he then wounds him with the hand of an enemy; but when his temptations prevail upon the saints to sin, he wounds him, as it were with his own hand: As the *eagle* and *tree* in the *fable* complained, the one that he was wounded by an arrow winged with his own feathers; the other, that it was cleaved asunder by a wedge hewn out of its own limbs.

Now the evil and disingenuity of such sins, are to be measured, not only by the near relation Christ sustains to believers as their Head; but more particularly, from the several benefits they receive from him as such; for in wounding Christ by their sins,

First, They wound their *head of influence*, through whom they live, and without whom they had still remained in the state of sin and death, Eph. iv. 16. Shall Christ send life to us, and we return that which is death to him! O how absurd, how disingenuous is this;

Secondly, They wound their *head of government*. Christ is a

guiding, as well as a *quickening* head, Col. i. 18. He is your wisdom, he guides you by his counsels to glory: but must he be thus requited for all his faithful conduct! What do you, when you sin, but rebel against his government, refusing to follow his counsels, and obeying, in the mean time, a deceiver, rather than him.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, They wound their *consulting head*, who cares, provides, and projects, for the welfare and safety of the body. Christians, you know your affairs below have not been steered and managed by your own wisdom, but that orders have been given from heaven for your security and supply from day to day. "I "know, O Lord, (saith the prophet) that the way of man is not "in himself, neither is it in him that walks to direct his own "steps," Jer. x. 23.

It is true, Christ is out of your sight, and you see him not: but he sees you, and orders every thing that concerns you. And is this a due requital of all that care he hath taken for you? Do you thus requite the Lord for all his benefits? What, recompense evil for good! O let shame cover you.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, They wound *their head of honour*. Christ your Head, is the fountain of honour to you: This is your glory that you relate to him as your head: You are, on this account, (as before was noted) exalted above angels.

Now then consider, how vile a thing it is to reflect the least dishonour upon him, from whom you derive all your glory. O consider and bewail it.

Infer. 5. *Is there so strict and intimate a relation and union betwixt Christ and the saints? Then surely they can never want what is good for their souls or bodies.*

Every one naturally cares and provides for his own, especially for his own body; yet we can more easily violate the law of nature, and be cruel to our own flesh, than Christ can be so to his mystical body *. I know it is hard to rest upon, and rejoice in a promise, when necessities pinch, and we see not from whence relief should arise; but O! what sweet satisfaction and comfort, might a necessitous believer find in these considerations, would he but keep them upon his heart in such a day of strait.

First, Whatever my distresses are for quality, number, or degree, they are all known even to the least circumstance, by Christ my Head: He looks down from heaven upon all my af-

* *Qui misit filium, immisit spiritum, promisit vultum, quid tandem denegabit?* i. e. He who hath sent his Son, put the Spirit within us, and promised his countenance, What will he deny us?

flictions, and understands them more fully than I that feel them, Psal. xxxviii 9. "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my "groaning is not hid from thee."

Secondly, He not only knows them, but feels them, as well as knows them; "We have not an High-priest that cannot be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," Heb. iv. 15. In all your afflictions he is afflicted; tender sympathy cannot but flow from such intimate union; therefore, in Matth. xxv. 35. he saith, I was an hungred, and I was a-thirst, and I was naked. For indeed his sympathy, and tender compassion, gave him as quick a resentment, and as tender a sense of their wants, as if they had been his own. Yea,

Thirdly, He not only knows and feels my wants, but hath enough in his hand, and much more than enough to supply them all; for all things are delivered to him by the Father, Luke x. 22. All the storehouses in heaven and earth are his, Phil. iv. 19.

Fourthly, He bestows all earthly good things, even to superfluity and redundance, upon his very enemies, "They have "more than heart can wish," Psal. lxxiii. 7. He is bountiful to strangers; he loads very enemies with these things, and can it be supposed he will in the mean while starve his own, and neglect those whom he loves as his own flesh? It cannot be. Moreover,

Fifthly, Hitherto he hath not suffered me to perish in any former straits; when, and where was it, that he forsook me? This is not the first plunge of trouble I have been in; have I not found him a God at hand! How oft have I seen him in the mount of difficulties!

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, I have his promise and engagement that he will never leave me nor forsake me, Heb. xiii. 5. and John xiv. 18. a promise which hath never failed, since the hour it was first made. If then the Lord Jesus knows and feels all my wants, hath enough, and more than enough to supply them, if he gives even to redundance unto his enemies, hath not hitherto forsaken me, and hath promised he never will? Why then is my soul thus disquieted in me! Surely there is no cause it should be so.

Infer. 6. *If the saints are so nearly united to Christ, as the members to the head: O then how great a sin, and full of danger is it for any to wrong and persecute the saints! For in so doing, they must needs persecute Christ himself.*

"Saul, Saul, (saith Christ) why persecutest thou me?" Acts

ix. 4. † The righteous God holds himself obliged to vindicate oppressed innocency, though it be in the persons of wicked men, how much more when it is in a member of Christ? "He that "toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye," Zech. ii. 8. And is it to be imagined, that Christ will sit still, and suffer his enemies to hurt or injure the very apples of his eyes: No, no, "He hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors," Psalm vii. 13.

O it were better thine hand should wither, and thine arm fall from thy shoulder, than ever it should be lifted up against Christ, in the poorest of his members. Believe it, sirs, not only your violent actions, but your hard speeches, are all set down upon your doom's-day book; and you shall be brought to an account for them in the great day, Jude 15. Beware what arrows you shoot, and be sure of your mark before you shoot them.

Infer. 7. *If there be such a union betwixt Christ and the saints, as hath been described, upon what comfortable terms then, may believers part with their bodies at death?*

Christ your head is risen, therefore you cannot be lost: nay, he is not only risen from the dead himself, but is also "become "the first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20. Believers are his members, his fulness, he cannot therefore be complete without you: a part of Christ cannot perish in the grave ‡, much less burn in hell. Remember, when you feel the natural union dissolving, that this mystical union can never be dissolved: the pangs of death cannot break this tie. And as there is a peculiar excellency in the believer's life, so there is a singular support, and peculiar comfort in his death; "To me to live is "Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21.

Infer. 8. If there be such a union betwixt Christ and believers, *How doth it concern every man to try and examine his estate, whether he is really united with Christ or not, by the natural and proper effects, which always flow from this union?* As,

† Agesilaus was wont to say, That he very much wondered, that those were not reckoned up in the number of sacrilegious persons, who injured those who made supplication to God, or worshipped him: By which he signified, that not only those should be reckoned injurious, who robbed the Gods themselves, or their temples, but even these chiefly who affronted their servants or heralds. *Æmyl. Prob.*

‡ To say that the temple of God, in which the Spirit of the Father dwells, and the members of Christ, shall not partake of salvation, but be brought into perdition, what is it but the greatest blasphemy? *Iren. lib.* 5.

First, The real communication of Christ's holiness to the soul. We cannot be united with this root, and not partake of the vital sap of sanctification from him; all that are planted into him, are planted into the likeness of his death, and of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5, 6. *viz.* by mortification and vivification.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, They that are so nearly united to him, as members to the head, cannot but love him and value him, above their own lives; as we see in nature, the hand and arm will interpose to save the head. The nearer the union, the stronger always is the affection.

Thirdly, The members are subject to the head. Dominion in the head must needs infer subjection in the members, Eph. v. 24. In vain do we claim union with Christ as our head, whilst we are governed by our own wills, and our lusts give us law.

Fourthly, All that are united to Christ, do bear fruit to God, Rom. vii. 4. Fruitfulness is the next end of our union: there are no barren branches growing upon this fruitful root.

Infer. 9. *Lastly, How much are believers engaged to walk as the members of Christ, in the visible exercises of all those graces and duties, which the consideration of their near relation to him exacts from them.* As,

First, How contented and well pleased should we be with our outward lot, however providence hath cast it for us in this world. O do not repine, God hath dealt bountifully with you; upon others he hath bestowed the good things of this world; upon you, himself in Christ.

Secondly, How humble and lowly in spirit should you be under your great advancement! It is true, God hath magnified you greatly by this union, but yet do not swell, "You bear not "the root, but the root you," Rom. xi. 18. You shine, but it is as the stars, with a borrowed light.

Thirdly, How zealous should you be to honour Christ, who hath put so much honour upon you! Be willing to give glory to Christ, though his glory should rise out of your shame. Never reckon that glory that goes to Christ, to be lost to you: when you lie at his feet, in the most particular heart-breaking confessions of sin, yet let this please you, that therein you have given him glory.

Fourthly, How exact and circumspect should you be in all your ways, remembring whose you are, and whom you represent! Shall it be said, that a member of Christ was convicted of unrighteousness and unholy actions! God forbid. "If we say,

"we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie," 1 John i. 6. "And he that saith he abideth in him, ought al-"so himself to walk even as he also walked," 1 John ii. 6.

Fifthly, How studious should you be of peace, among yourselves, who are all so nearly united to such a Head, and thereby are made fellow-members of the same body! The Heathen world was never acquainted with such an argument as the apostle urges for unity, in Eph. iv. 3, 4.

Sixthly, and lastly, How joyful and comfortable should you be, to whom Christ, with all his treasures and benefits, is effectually applied in this blessed union of your souls with him! This brings him into your possession: O how great! how glorious a person do these little, weak arms of your faith embrace!

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON III.

Opening the Nature and Use of the Gospel-ministry, as an external Means of applying CHRIST.

2 COR. v. 20. *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 to God.*

THE effectual application of Christ, principally consists in our union with him, but, ordinarily, there can be no union without a gospel-tender, and overture of him to our souls; for, "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have "not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? "and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" Rom. x. 14.

If God be upon a design of espousing poor sinners to his Son, there must be a treaty in order to it; that treaty requires interlocution betwixt both the parties concerned in it; but such is our frailty, that, should God speak immediately to us himself, it would confound and overwhelm us: God therefore graciously condescends, and accomodates himself to our infirmity, in treating with us in order to our union with Christ, by his *ambassadors*, and these not *angels*, whose converses we cannot bear, but *men* like ourselves, who are commissionated for the effecting of this great business betwixt Christ and us. "Now then, we are am-"bassadors for God," &c. In which words you have,

First, Christ's ambassadors commissionated.

Secondly, Their commission opened.

First, Christ's ambassadors commissionated. "Now then, we "are ambassadors for Christ." The Lord Jesus thought it not sufficient to print the law of grace, and blessed terms of our union with him in the scriptures, where men may read his willingness to receive them, and see the just and gracious terms and conditions upon which he offers to become theirs; but hath also so set up and established a standing office in the church, to expound that law, inculcate the precepts, and urge the promises thereof; to woo and espouse souls to Christ, "I have espoused "you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin "to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 20.; and this not simply from their own affections and compassions to miserable sinners, but also by virtue of their office and commission, whereby they are authorized and appointed to that work. "We then are ambassadors for "Christ."

Secondly, Their commission opened: Wherein we find,

1. Their work appointed.
2. Their capacity described.
3. And the manner of their acting in that capacity prescribed.

First, The work whereunto the ministers of the gospel are appointed, is to *reconcile the world to God*; to work these sinful, vain, rebellious hearts, which have a strong aversation from God naturally in them; to close with him according to the articles of peace contained in the gospel, that thereby they may be capable to receive the mercies and benefits purchased by the death of Christ, which they cannot receive in the state of enmity and alienation.

Secondly, Their capacity described: They act *in Christ's stead*, as his *vicegerents*. He is no more in this world to treat personally with sinners, as once he did in the days of his flesh; but yet he still continues the treaty with this lower world, by his officers, requiring men to look upon them, and obey them as they would himself, if he were corporally present, Luke x. 16. "He "that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, de-"spiseth me."

Thirdly, The manner of their acting in that capacity prescribed; and that is, by humble, sweet, and condescending entreaties and beseechings. This best suits the meek and lamb-like Saviour whom they represent: thus he dealt with poor sinners himself, when he conversed among them; he "would not

"break a bruised reed, *nor* quench the smoaking flax," Isa. xlii. 3. This is the way to allure and win the souls of sinners to Christ.

From hence the note is,

Doct. *That the preaching of the gospel by Christ's ambassadors, is the means appointed for the reconciling and bringing home of sinners to Christ.*

www.libtool.com.cn

This is clear from Rom. x. 14., 1 Cor. i. 21. and many other scriptures.

Here we shall take into consideration these three things.

First, What is implied in Christ's treating with sinners by his ambassadors or ministers.

Secondly, What is the great concernment they are to treat with sinners about.

Thirdly, What, and when is the efficacy of preaching, to bring sinners to Christ.

First, We will open what is implied and imported in Christ's treaty with sinners, by his ambassadors or ministers.

And here we find these six things implied.

1. It necessarily implies the defection and fall of man, from his estate of favour and friendship with God: If no war with heaven, what need of ambassadors of peace? The very office of the ministry, is an argument of the fall. Gospel-ordinances, and officers came in upon the fall, and expire with the Mediator's dispensatory-kingdom, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. "Then shall he "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father:" Thenceforth no more ordinances, no more ministers; What use can there be of them, when the treaty is ended? They have done and accomplished all they were ever intended and designed for, when they shall have reconciled to God all the number of his elect, that dispersed among the lost and miserable posterity of Adam, and have brought them home to Christ in a perfect state, Eph. iv. 12, *&c.*

2. It implies the singular grace and admirable condescension of God to sinful man. That God will admit any treaty with him at all, is wonderful mercy, it is more than he would do for the angels that fell, Jude 6. "*They are* reserved in everlasting "chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Christ took not on him their nature, but suffered myriads of them to perish, and fills up their vacant places in glory, with a number of sinful men and women, to whom the law awarded the same punishment.

But that God will not only treat, but entreat and beseech sinful men to be reconciled, is yet more wonderful. Barely to propound the terms of peace, had been an astonishing mercy; but to woo and beseech stubborn enemies to be at peace, and accept their pardon, oh, how unparralleled was this condescension!

www.libtool.com.cn

3. It implies the great dignity and honour of the gospel-ministry. *We are ambassadors for Christ* *. Ambassadors represent and personate the prince that sends them; and the honours or contempts done to them, reflect upon, and are reckoned to the person of their master, Luke x. 16. "He that heareth you, "heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."

Neither their persons, nor parts, are the proper ground and reason of our respects to them; but their office and commission from Jesus Christ.

We are fallen into the dregs of time, wherein a vile contempt is poured, not only upon the persons, but the very office of the ministry; and I could heartily wish that scripture, Mal. ii. 7, 8, 9., were thoroughly considered by us, possibly it might inform us of the true cause and reason of this sore judgment; but surely Christ's faithful ministers deserve a better entertainment than they ordinarily find in the world; and if we did but seriously bethink ourselves, in whose name they come, and in whose stead they stand, we should receive them as the Galatians did Paul, Gal. iv. 14., as angels of God, even as Christ Jesus.

4. Christ's treating with sinners by his ministers, who are his ambassadors, implies the strict obligation they are under, to be faithful in their ministerial employment. Christ counts upon their faithfulness, whom he puts into the ministry, 1 Tim. i. 12. They are accountable to him for all acts of their office, Heb. xiii. 17. If they be silent, they cannot be innocent: "Necessity is laid upon them, and woe to them, if they preach "not the gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 16.

Yea, necessity is not only laid upon them to preach, but to keep close to their commission in preaching the gospel, 1 Thes. ii. 3, 4, 5. "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile, but as we were allowed of God to be put

* We are ambassadors among those who serve the King of kings; we represent the person of God and Christ: never any yet despised us with impunity, nay, without being injurious to God and Christ. *Bowles, Præfat. ad Past. Evan.*

"in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing "men, but God who trieth our hearts:" the word is not to be corrupted to pleaſe men, 2 Cor. ii. 17. their buſineſs is not to make them their diſciples, but Chriſt's; not to ſeek theirs, but them, 2 Cor. xii. 14. to keep cloſe to their inſtructions, both in the matter, manner, and end of their miniſtry. So did Chriſt himſelf, the treaſure of wiſdom and knowledge, yet being ſent by God, he ſaith, John vii. 16. "My doctrine is not "mine, but his that ſent me." And ſo he expects and requires that his ambaſſadors keep cloſe to the commiſſion he hath given them, and be (according to their meaſure) faithful to their truſt, as he was to his. Paul is to deliver to the people, that which he alſo received from the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. And Timothy muſt keep that which was committed to him, 2 Tim. i. 14.

5. It implies the removal of the goſpel-miniſtry to be a very great judgment to the people. The remanding of ambaſſadors, preſages an enſuing war. If the reconciling of ſouls to God be the greateſt work, then the removal of the means and inſtruments thereof, muſt be the foreſt judgment. Some account "the falling of the ſalt upon the table" ominous, but ſurely the falling of them, whom Chriſt calls *the ſalt of the earth*, is ſo indeed.

What now are thoſe, once famous and renowned places, from whence Chriſt, (as he threatned), hath removed the candleſtick, but *magna latrocinia*, dens of robbers, and mountains of prey!

6. And laſtly, It implies both the wiſdom and condeſcenſion of God to ſinful men, in carrying on a treaty of peace with them by ſuch ambaſſadors, negociating betwixt him and them: Without a treaty, there would be no reconciliation; and no method to carry on ſuch a treaty like this: for had the Lord treated with ſinners perſonally, and immediately, they had been overwhelmed with his awful majeſty. The appearances of God confound the creature, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my "God, (ſaith Iſrael) neither let me ſee this great fire any more, "that I die not: Yea, ſo terrible was that ſight, that Moſes "ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake," Deut. xviii. 16. Heb. xii. 21.

Or had he commiſſionated *angels* for this employment, though they ſtand not at ſuch an infinite diſtance from us as God doth, yet ſuch is the excellence of their glory (being the higheſt *ſpecies* and order of creatures) that their appearances would be more apt to aſtoniſh than perſuade us: beſides, they being creatures of another rank and kind, and not partaking with us, ei-

ther in the misery of the fall, or benefit of the recovery by Christ; it is not to be supposed, they should speak to us so feelingly and experimentally, as these his ministers do; they can open to you the mysteries of sin, feeling the workings thereof daily in their own hearts; they can discover to you the conflicts of the flesh and Spirit, as being daily exercised in that warfare; and then being men of the same mould and temper, they can say to you as Elihu did to Job, Chap. xxxiii. 6, 7. "Behold, I am "according to thy wish, in God's stead, I also am formed out "of the clay; behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, "neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee."

www.libtool.com.cn

So that in this appointment, much of the divine wisdom and condescension to sinners is manifested: "We have this treasure "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of "God, and not of us," 2 Cor. iv. 7. God's glory and man's advantage are both promoted by this dispensation.

Secondly, Next we are to consider that great concernment, about which these *ambassadors* of Christ are to treat with sinners; and that (as the text informs us) is their reconciliation to God.

Now reconciliation with God, is the restoring of men to that former friendship they had with God, which was broken by the fall *, and is still continued by our enmity and aversation whilst we continue in our natural and unregenerate estate. Now this is the greatest and most blessed design that ever God had in the world; an astonishing and invaluable mercy to men, as will clearly appear, by considering these particulars following.

First, That God should be reconciled after such a dreadful breach as the fall of man made, is wonderful; no sin, all things considered, was ever like to this sin: other sins, like a single bullet, kill particular persons, but this, like a chain-shot, cuts off multitudes as the sand upon the sea-shore, which no man can number.

If all the posterity of Adam in their several generations, should do nothing else but bewail and lament this sin of his, whilst this world continues, yet would it not be enough lamented; for a man so newly created out of nothing, and admitted the first moment into the highest order, crowned a king over the works of God's hands, Psal. viii. 5. a man perfect and upright, without the least inordinate motion, or sinful inclination: a man whose mind was most clear, bright, and apprehensive of

* To reconcile is nothing else, than to make up that friendship, which was broke by some grievous offence, and thus to bring enemies back into their former state of concord. *Dav. on Col.* i. 20.

the will of God, whose will was free, and able to have easily put by the strongest temptation: a man in a paradise of delights, where nothing was left to desire for the advancing happiness of soul or body: a man understanding himself to be a public, complexive person, carrying not only his own, but the happiness of the whole world in his hand: so soon, upon so slight a temptation, to violate the law of his God, and involve himself and all his posterity with him, in such a gulph of guilt and misery; all which he might so easily have prevented! O wonderful amazing mercy, that ever God should think of being reconciled, or have any purposes of peace towards so vile an apostate creature as man.

Secondly, That God should be reconciled to *men*, and not to *angels*, a more high and excellent order of creatures, is yet more astonishing: when the angels fell they were lost irrecoverably; no hand of mercy was stretched out to save one of those *myriads* of excellent beings, but chains of darkness were immediately clapped on them, to reserve them to the judgment of the great day, Jude 6.

That the milder attribute should be exercised to the inferior, and the severer attribute to the more excellent creature, is just matter for eternal admiration. Who would cast away vessels of gold, and save earthen potsherds! Some indeed undertake to shew us the reasons, why the wisdom of God made no provision for the recovery of *angels* by a *Mediator* of reconciliation; partly from the high degree of the malignity of their sin, who sinned in the light of heaven, partly because it was decent, that the first breach of the divine law should be punished, to secure obedience for the future. And besides, the angelical nature was not entirely lost, *myriads* of *angels* still continuing in their innocency and glory; when as all mankind was lost in Adam.

But we must remember still the law made no distinction, but awarded the same punishment, and therefore it was mercy alone that made the difference, and mercy for ever to be admired by men; how astonishing is the grace of God, that moves in a way of reconciliation to us, out of design to fill up the vacant places in heaven, from which angels fell, with such poor worms as we are! Angels excluded, and men received. O stupendous mercy!

Thirdly, That God should be *wholly* and *thoroughly* reconciled to man, so that no fury remains in him against us; according to that scripture, Isa. xxvii. 4. is still matter of farther wonder.

The design he sends his *ambassador* to you about, is not the allaying and mitigating of his wrath, (which yet would be matter of great joy to the damned) but thoroughly to quench all his wrath, so that no degree thereof shall ever be felt by you. O blessed embassy! "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of "them that bring such tidings." God offers you a full reconciliation, a plenary remission.

Fourthly, That God should be *freely* reconciled to sinners, and discharge them without any the least satisfaction to his justice from them, is, and for ever will be, marvellous in their eyes.

Oh what mercy would the damned account it, if after a thousand years torments in hell, God would at last be reconciled to them, and put an end to their misery! But believers are discharged without bearing any part of the curse, not one farthing of that debt is levied upon them.

Object. If you say, how can this be, when God stands upon full satisfaction to his justice before any soul be discharged and restored to favour? freely reconciled, and yet fully satisfied, how can this be?

Solut. Very well, for this mercy comes freely to your hands, how costly soever it proved to Christ; and that free remission, and full satisfaction, are not contradictory and inconsistent things, is plain enough from that scripture, Rom. iii. 24. "Being "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is "in Christ Jesus:" freely, and yet in the way of redemption.

For though Christ, your surety, hath made satisfaction in your name and stead, yet it was his life, his blood, and not yours, that went for it, and this surety was of God's own appointment, and providing, without your thoughts or contrivance. O blessed reconciliation, happy is the people that hear the joyful sound of it.

Fifthly and lastly, That God should be finally reconciled to sinners, so that never any new breach shall happen betwixt him and them any more, so as to dissolve the league of friendship, is a most ravishing and transporting message.

Two things give confirmation and full security to reconciled ones, *viz.* the terms of the covenant, and the intercession of the Mediator.

The covenant of grace gives great security to believers, against new breaches betwixt God and them. It is said, Jer. xxxii. 40. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, "that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I "will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart

"from me." The fear of the Lord, is a choice preservative against second revolts, and therefore taken into the covenant. It is no *hindrance*, but a special *guard* to assurance.

There is no doubt of God's faithfulness: that part of the promise is easily believed, that he will not turn away from us to do us good: all the doubt is of the inconstancy of our hearts with God, and against that danger, this promise makes provision.

Moreover the *intercession* of Christ in heaven secures the saints in their reconciled state, 1 John ii. 1, 2. "If any man sin, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righ-"teous, and he is the propitiation." He continually appears in heaven before the Father, "as a lamb that had been slain," Rev. v. 6. And as the *bow* in the clouds, Rev. iv. 3. So that as long as Christ thus appears in the presence of God for us, it is not possible our state of justification, and reconciliation can be again dissolved.

And this is that blessed *embassy* gospel-ministers are employed about; he hath committed to them the word of this reconciliation.

In the last place, we are to enquire what, and whence, is this efficacy of preaching, to reconcile and bring home sinners to Christ.

That its efficacy is great in convincing, humbling, and changing the hearts of men, is past all debate and question. "The "weapons of our warfare (saith the apostle) are not carnal, but "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalt-"eth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into "captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. No heart so hard, no conscience so stupid, but this sword can pierce and wound; in an instant, it can cast down all those vain reasonings and fond imaginations, which the carnal heart hath been building all its life long, and open a fair passage for convictions of sin, and the fears and terrors of wrath to come into that heart that never was afraid of these things before. So Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the "heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "men and brethren, what shall we do?"

What shall we do? is the doleful cry of men at their wits end; the voice of one in deepest distress: and such outcries have been no rarities under the preaching of the word; its power hath been felt by persons of all orders and conditions; the great and honourable of the earth, as well as the poor and de-

ſpicable. The learned and the ignorant, the civil and profane, the young and the old, all have felt the heart-piercing efficacy of the goſpel.

If you aſk, whence hath the word, preached, this mighty power? The anſwer muſt be, neither from itſelf, nor him that preaches it, but from the Spirit of God, whoſe inſtrument it is, by whoſe bleſſing and concurrence with it, it produceth its bleſſed effects upon the hearts of men.

Firſt, This efficacy, and wonderful power, is not from the word itſelf; take it in an abſtract notion, ſeparated from the ſpirit, it can do nothing: it is called "the fooliſhneſs of preaching," 1 Cor. i. 21. Fooliſhneſs, not only becauſe the world ſo accounts it, but becauſe in itſelf it is a weak and unſuitable, and therefore a very improbable way to reconcile the world to God; that the ſtony heart of one man ſhould be broken by the words of another man; that one poor ſinful creature ſhould be uſed to breathe ſpiritual life into another; this could never be, if this ſword were not managed by an omnipotent hand.

And beſides, we know what works naturally, works neceſſarily; if this efficacy were inherent in the word, ſo that we ſhould ſuppoſe it to work as other natural agents do, then it muſt needs convert all to whom it is at any time preached, except its effect were miraculouſly hindered, as the fire when it could not burn the three children; but alas, thouſands hear it, that never feel the ſaving power of it, Iſa. liii. i. and 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Secondly, It derives not this efficacy from the *inſtrument* by which it is miniſtred; let their gifts and abilities be what they will, it is impoſſible that ever ſuch effects ſhould be produced from the ſtrength of their natural or gracious abilities, 2 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treaſure (ſaith the apoſtle) in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

The treaſure of the goſpel-light is carried ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, *in earthen veſſels*, as Gideon and his men had their lamps in earthen pitchers, or in *oyſter-ſhells*, for ſo the word alſo ſignifies; the *oyſter-ſhell* is a baſe and worthleſs thing in itſelf; however, there lies the rich and precious pearl of ſo great value. And why is this precious treaſure lodged in ſuch weak, worthleſs veſſels? Surely, it is upon no other deſign, but to convince us of the truth I am here to prove, that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us; as it follows in the next words. To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks the ſame apoſtle, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "So then, neither is he that

"planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that "giveth the increase."

Not any thing! What can be more diminutively spoken of the gospel-preachers? But we must not understand these words in a simple and *absolute*, but in a *comparative* and relative sense; not as if they were not necessary and useful in their place, but that how necessary soever they be, and what excellent gifts soever God hath furnished them with; yet it is neither in their power nor choice, to make the word they preach effectual to men: if it were, then the damnation of all that hear us must needs lie at our door: then also, many thousands would have been reconciled to God, which are yet in the state of enmity, but the effect of the gospel is not in our power.

Thirdly, But whatever efficacy it hath to reconcile men to God, it derives from the Spirit of God, whose co-operation and blessing (which is arbitrarily dispensed) gives it all the fruit it hath.

Ministers, saith one *, are like trumpets which make no sound, if breath be not breathed into them. Or like Ezekiel's wheels, which move not unless the Spirit move them; or Elisha's servant, whose presence doth no good except Elisha's spirit be there also. For want of the Spirit of God, how many thousands of souls do find the ministry to be nothing to them? If it be something to the purpose to any soul, it is the Lord that makes it so. This Spirit is not limited by mens gifts or parts; he concurs not only with their labours who have excellent gifts, but oftentimes blesses mean, despicable gifts: with far greater success.

Suppose saith † Austin, there be two conduits in a town, one very plain and homely, the other built of polished marble, and adorned with excellent images, as eagles, lions, angels; the water refreshes as it is water, and not as it comes from such or such a conduit. It is the Spirit that gives the word all that virtue it hath: he is the Lord of all saving influences: he hath dominion over the *word*, over our *souls*, over the *times* and *seasons* of conversion; and if any poor creature attends the ministry without benefit, if he go away as he came, without fruit, surely we may

* Mr. Anthony Burgess.

† What is the reason why of two adult ungodly persons, the one is so called as to follow him who calls, the other not? Do not thou judge, if thou wouldst not err: the judgments of God are unsearchable, and he hath mercy on whom he will. *Aug. de bono perseu. cap.* 8.

say in this case, as Martha said to Christ, in reference to her brother Lazarus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; so, Lord, if thou hadst been in this prayer, in this sermon, this poor soul had not gone dead and carnal from under it. And now what remains, but that we apply this truth in those uses that it gives us.

www.libtool.com.cn

First use of information.

Is the preaching of the gospel by Christ's *ambassadors*, the way which God takes to reconcile sinners to himself? *Then how inexcusable are all those that continue in their state of enmity, though the ambassadors of peace have been with them all their lives long, wooing and beseeching them to be reconciled to God?*

O invincible, obstinate, incurable disease, which is aggravated by the only proper remedy! Hath God been wooing and beseeching you by his ambassadors so many years to be reconciled to him, and will you not yield to any intreaties? Must he be made to speak in vain, to charm the deaf adder? Well, when the milder attribute hath done with you, the severer attribute will take you in hand.

The Lord hath kept an account of every year and day of his patience towards you, Luke xiii. 7. "These three years I came "seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none;" and Jer. xxv. 3. "These three and twenty years have I spoken unto you, rising "early and speaking, but you have not hearkened."

Well be you assured, that God hath both the glass of your time, and the vials of his wrath, by him; and so much of his abused patience as runs out of one, so much of his incensed wrath runs into the other. There is a time when this treaty of peace will end, when the Master of the house will rise up, and the doors be shut, Luke xiii. 25. Then will you be left without hope, and without apology.

We read, indeed, of some poor and ineffectual pleas that will be made by some at the last day; so Mat. vii. 22. "We have "prophesied in thy name," *&c.* These pleas will not avail; but as for you, what will you plead? Possibly many thousand *ideots*, or poor weak-headed persons, may perish; many young ones that had little or no time in the world to acquaint themselves with matters of religion, or understand the way of salvation. Many millions of Heathens that never heard the name of Christ, nor came within the sound of salvation, who will yet perish, and that justly.

Now whatsoever apologies any of these will make for themselves in the last day, to besure you can make none. God hath

given you a capacity, and competent understanding; many of you are wise and subtle in all your other concernments, and only shew your folly in the great concernments of your salvation. You cannot plead want of time, some of you are grown gray-headed under the gospel; you cannot plead want of means and opportunities, the ordinances and ministers of Christ have been with you all your life long to this day; sure, if you be Christless now, you must also be speechless then.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 2. Hence it also follows, *That the world owes better entertainment, than it gives, to the ministers of Christ: Christ's ambassadors deserve a better welcome than they find among men.*

Your respects to them is founded upon their office and employment for you, Heb. xiii. 17. and 1 Thess. v. 12. They watch for your souls, dare any of you watch for their ruin? They bring glad tidings, shall they return with sad tidings to him that sent them? They publish peace, shall they be rewarded with trouble? O ungrateful world! We read in Eph. vi. 20. of an *ambassador in bonds*, and he no ordinary one neither. We read also a strange challenge, made by another at his own death, Acts vii. 52. "Which of all the prophets have not your fathers "persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before "the coming of the just One." Some that brake the bread of life to you, might want bread to eat, for any regard you have to them. The office of the ministry speaks the abundant love of God to you; your contempt and abuse of it, speaks the abundant stupidity or malignity of your hearts towards God. What a sad protestation doth Jeremy make against his ungrateful people, Jer. xviii. 20. "Shall evil (saith he) be recompensed for "good? for they have digged a pit for my soul; remember "that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn "away thy wrath from them."

God's *mercy* is eminently discovered in the *institution* of, and Satan's *malice* is eminently discovered in the *opposition* to, the ministerial office. Satan is a great and jealous prince, and it is no wonder he should raise all the forces he can to oppose the *ambassadors* of Christ; when, saith * one, the gospel comes into his dominions, it doth, as it were, by sound of trumpet, and beat of drum, proclaim liberty to all his slaves and vassals, if they will quit that tyrant that hath so long held their souls in bondage, and come under the sweet and easy government of Christ. And can the devil endure this, think you? If Christ sends forth *ambassadors*, no wonder if Satan sends forth *opposers*; he certain-

* Mr. Gurnal's Christian Armour.

ly owes them a ſpite, that undermine his government in the world.

Infer. 3. Hence it follows, *That it nearly concerns all Chriſt's ambaſſadors, to ſee that they be in a ſtate of reconciliation with God themſelves.*

www.libtool.com.cn

Shall we ſtand in Chriſt's ſtead by *office*, and yet not be in Chriſt by union? Shall we entreat men to be reconciled to God, and yet be at enmity with him ourſelves? O let us take heed, "Leſt after we have preached to others, we ourſelves ſhould be "caſt-a-ways," 1 Cor. ix. 27. Of all men living we are the moſt miſerable, if we be Chriſtleſs and graceleſs: our conſciences will make more terrible applications of our doctrine to us in hell, than ever we made to the vileſt of ſinners on earth. O it is far eaſier to ſtudy and preſs a thouſand truths upon others, than to feel the power of one truth upon our own hearts; to teach others *facienda quam faciendo:* duties to be done, than duties by doing them.

They are ſad *dilemma's* with which a learned † writer poſes ſuch graceleſs miniſters; If ſin be evil, why do ye live in it? If it be not, why do you diſſuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? If it be not, why do you tell men ſo? If God's threatnings be true why do you not fear them? If they be falſe, why do you trouble men needleſsly with them, and put them into ſuch frights without a cauſe?

Take heed to yourſelves, leſt you ſhould cry down ſin, and not overcome it; leſt while you ſeek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its ſlaves yourſelves: it is eaſier to chide at ſin than to overcome it. That is a ſmart queſtion Rom. ii. 21. "Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf?" A profane miniſter was converted by reading that text once, but how many have read it as well he, who never trembled at the conſideration of it as he did!

2. *Uſe for Conviction.*

Is this the method God uſes to reconcile men to himſelf? O then examine yourſelves, whether yet the preaching of the goſpel hath reconciled you to God. It is too manifeſt that many among us are in the ſtate of enmity unto this day. We may ſay with the prophet, Iſa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our re-"port? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We offer you peace upon goſpel-terms and articles, but our peace returns to us again; enemies you were to God, and enemies you ſtill continue. The evidence is undeniable; for,

† Gildas Salv. p. 15, 16.

1. *Evidence.* Many of you were never convinced, to this day, of your state of enmity against God; and without conviction of this, reconciliation is impossible; without repentance, there can be no reconciliation, and without conviction, there can be no repentance. When we repent, we lay down our weapons, Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. But how few have been brought to this? Alas! if a few poor, cold, heartless, ineffectual confessions of sin, may pass for a due conviction, and serious repentance, then have we been convinced, then have we repented; but you will find, if ever the Lord intend to reconcile you to himself, your convictions and humiliations for sin, will be other manner of things; and will cost you more than a few cheap words against sin, 2 Cor. vii. 11. "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what "carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of your-"selves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what ve-"hement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge?"

2. *Evidence.* Many of us never treated seriously with the Lord about peace, and how then are we reconciled to him? What, a peace without a treaty? Reconciliation without any consideration about it? It can never be. When was the time, and where was the place, that you were found in secret upon your knees, mourning over the sin of your nature, and the evils of your ways? Certainly you must be brought to this; you must, with a broken heart, bewail your sin and misery.

Friend, That stony heart of thine must feel remorse and anguish for sin, it will cost thee some sad days, and sorrowful nights, or ever thou canst have peace with God: it will cost thee many a groan, many a tear, many a hearty cry to heaven: If ever peace be made betwixt God and thee, thou must "take "with thee words, and turn to the Lord, saying, Take away all "iniquity, and receive me graciously." O for one smile, one token of love, one hint of favour! The child of peace is not born without pangs, and agonies of soul.

3. *Evidence.* Many of us are not reconciled to the duties of religion, and ways of holiness, and how then is it possible we should be reconciled to God? What, reconciled to God, and unreconciled to the ways of God? By reconciliation we are *made nigh*: in duties of communion we *draw nigh*, and can we be made nigh to God, and have no heart to draw nigh to God? it can never be.

Examine your hearts, and say, Is not the way of strictness a bondage to you? Had you not rather be at liberty to fulfil the desires of the flesh, and of the mind? Could you not wish that the scriptures had not made some things else your sins, and

other things your duties: do you delight in the law of God after the inner man, and *esteem his judgments, concerning all things to be right?* Do you love secret prayer, and delight in duties of communion with God; or rather, are they not an ungrateful burden, and irksom imposition? Give conscience leave to speak plain.

www.libtool.com.cn

4. *Evidence.* Many of us are not enemies to sin, and how then are we reconciled to God? What, friends with God, and our lusts too? It cannot be. Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the "Lord hate evil:" The same hour our reconciliation is made with God, there is an everlasting breach made with sin: this is one of the articles or conditions of our peace with God, Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will "have mercy on him; and to our God, and he will abundantly "pardon."

But it is manifest in many of us, that we are no enemies to sin, we secretly indulge it, what bad names soever we call it: We will commit ten sins to cover one: we cannot endure the most serious, faithful, seasonable, private, tender, and necessary reproofs for sin, but our hearts swell and rise at it; sure we are not reconciled to God, whilst we embrace his enemy in our bosoms.

5. *Evidence.* We *love not the children of God*, nor are reconciled to them that bear his image, and how then can we be reconciled to God? 1 John v. 1. "He that loveth him that "begat, loveth them also that are begotten: What, at peace with the Father, and at war with the children: it cannot be: Do not some that hope they have made their peace with God, hate, revile, and persecute the children of God? Surely, in that day we are reconciled to the Lord, we are reconciled to all his people: we shall then love a Christian, as a Christian, and by this we know that we are passed from death to life.

6. *Evidence.* Lastly, How can any man think himself to be reconciled to God, who *never closed heartily with Jesus Christ* by faith, who is the only days-man, and peace-maker: the alone Mediator of reconciliation betwixt God and man.

This is a sure truth, that all whom God accepts into favour, are "made accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6. If any man will make peace with God, he must take hold of his strength, accept and close with Christ, who is the power of God, or he can never make peace, Isa. xxvii. He must be made "nigh by "the blood of Christ," Eph. ii. 13. But alas, both Christ

and faith are strangers to many souls, who yet persuade themselves they are at peace with God: O fatal mistake!

3. *Use of Exhortation.*

Lastly, This point deserves a close, vigorous application in a threefold exhortation.

First, To Christ's ambassadors, who treat with souls in order to their reconciliation with God.

Secondly, To those that are yet in their enmity, and unreconciled state.

Thirdly, To those that have embraced the terms of peace, and submitted to the gospel-overtures.

First, *To the ambassadors of reconciliation.* God hath put a great deal of honour upon you in this high and noble employment: great is the dignity of your office, to some you are "the "favour of death unto death, and to others a favour of life un-"to life; and who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii. 16. But yet the duty is no less than the dignity. O what manner of men should we be for judgment, seriousness, affections, patience, and exemplary holiness, to whom the management of so great a concern betwixt God and man is committed!

First, For judgment and prudence, how necessary are these in so weighty and difficult a business as this! He had need be a man of wisdom, that is to inform the ignorant of the nature and necessity of this great work, and win over their hearts to consent to the articles of peace propounded in the gospel; that hath so many subtle temptations to answer, and so many intricate cases of conscience to resolve: there are many strong holds of Satan to be battered, and many stout and obstinate resistances made by the hearts of sinners, which must be overcome; and he had need be no novice in religion, to whom so difficult a province is committed.

Secondly, Let us be serious in our work as well as judicious. Remember, O ye ambassadors of Christ, you bring a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men. The eternal decrees are executed upon them in your ministry: to some you are "the favour of life unto life, and to "some the favour of death unto death," 2 Cor. ii. 16. Heaven and hell are matters of most awful and solemn consideration. O what an account have we also shortly to give unto him that sent us!

These are matters of such deep concernment, as should swallow up our very spirits; the least they can do, is to compose our hearts unto seriousness in the management of them.

Thirdly, Be filled with tender affections toward the souls of men, with whom you treat for reconciliation: you had need be men of bowels, as well as men of brains *: you see a multitude of poor souls upon the brink of eternal misery, and they know it not, but promise themselves peace, and fill themselves with vain hopes of heaven: and is there a more moving, melting spectacle in the world, than this! O think with what bowels of commiseration Moses and Paul were filled, when the one desired rather to be blotted out of God's book, and the other to be accursed from Christ, than that Israel should not be saved, Exod. xxxii. 33. and Rom. ix. 3. Think how the bowels of Christ yearned over Jerusalem, Mat. xxiii. 37. And over the multitude, Mat. ix. 36. "Let the same mind be in you, which "also was in Christ Jesus."

Fourthly, Be patient and long-suffering toward sinners: such is the value of one soul, that it is worth waiting all our days to save it at last: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but "be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness "instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure "will give them repentance," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. The Lord waits with patience upon sinners, and well may you. Consider yourselves, how long was God treating with you, ere you were won to him? Be not discouraged, if your success presently answer not your expectation.

Fifthly, and lastly, Be sure to back your exhortations with drawing examples; else you may preach out your last breath before you gain one soul to God. The devil, and the carnal hearts of your hearers, will put hinderances enough in the way of your labours; do not you put the greatest of all yourselves. O study not only to preach exactly, but to live exactly; let the misplacing of one action in your lives, trouble you more than the misplacing of words in your discourses: this is the way to succeed in your embassy, and give up your account with joy.

Secondly, The exhortation speaks to all those that are yet in a state of enmity, and unreconciled to God unto this day. O that my words might prevail, and that you would now be entreated to be reconciled to God! The *ambassadors* of peace are yet with you, the *treaty* is not yet ended, the Master of the house is not yet risen up, nor the door of mercy and hope finally shut: hitherto God hath waited to be gracious; O that the long-suffering of God might be your salvation: a day is hasting when

* See Bowle's Pastor. Evang. p. 136.

God will treat with you no more, when a *gulph shall be fixed* betwixt him and you for ever, Luke xvi. 26. O what will you do when the season of mercy, and all hopes of mercy, shall end together! When God shall become inaccessible, inexorable, and unreconcilable to you for evermore.

O what wilt thou do, when thou shalt find thyself shut up under eternal wrath! when thou shalt feel that misery thou art warned of! Is this the place where I must be! Are these the torments I must endure! What, for ever! yea, for ever: Will not God be satisfied with the sufferings of a thousand years? no, nor millions of years! Ah sinners, did you but clearly see the present and future misery of unreconciled ones, and what that wrath of the great and terrible God is, which is coming as fast as the wings of time can bring it upon you, it would certainly drive you to Christ, or drive you out of your wits. O it is a dreadful thing to have God for your eternal enemy: to have the great and terrible God causing his infinite power to avenge the abuse of his grace and mercy.

Believe it, friends, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men: an eternal weight hangs upon an inch of time. O that you did but know the time of your visitation! That you would not dare to adventure, and run the hazard of one day more in an unreconciled state.

Thirdly, and lastly, This point speaks to those who have believed our report, who have taken hold of God's strength, and made peace with him: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy: who once were afar off, but now are made nigh by the blood of Christ: with you I would leave a few words of exhortation, and I have done.

First, *Admire and stand amazed at this mercy.* "I will "praise thee, O Lord, (saith the church, Isa. xii. 1.) Though "thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and "thou comfortest me." O how overwhelming a mercy is here before you! God is at peace, at peace with you that were "enemies in your minds by wicked works," Col. i. 21. At peace with you, and at enmity with millions as good by nature as you: at peace with you that sought it not: at peace for ever; no dissolving this friendship for evermore. O let this consideration melt your hearts before the Lord, and make you cry, What am I, Lord, that mercy should take in me, and shut out fallen angels, and millions of men and women as capable of mercy as myself! O the riches! O the depths of the mercy and goodness of God!

Secondly, *Beware of new breaches with God:* God will speak "peace to his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn "again to folly," Psal. lxxxv. 8. What tho' this state of friendship can never be dissolved, yet it is a dreadful thing to have it clouded: you may lose the sense of peace, and with it all the joy of your hearts, and comforts of your lives, in this world.

Thirdly, *Labour to reconcile others to God:* especially those that are endeared to you by the bonds of natural relation: When Paul was reconciled to God himself, his heart was full of heavinesS for others that were not reconciled; for his "bre-"thren and kinsmen according to the flesh," Rom. ix. 2, 3. When Abraham was become God's friend himself, then, "O "that Ishmael might live before thee!" Gen. xvii. 18.

Fourthly and lastly, "Let your reconciliation with God re-"lieve you under all burdens of affliction you shall meet with "in your way to heaven:" Let them that are at enmity with God droop under crosses and afflictions; but do not you do so. *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia*, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. Let the peace of God keep your hearts and minds. As nothing can comfort a man that must go to hell at last, so nothing should deject a man that shall, through many troubles, at last, reach heaven.

SERMON IV.

Explaining the Work of the Spirit, as the internal, and most effectual Means of the Application of CHRIST.

JOHN vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.*

OUR last discourse informed you of the usefulness and influence of the preaching of the gospel, in order to the *application* of Christ to the souls of men. There must be (in God's ordinary way) the external ministerial offer of Christ, before men can have union with him.

But yet, all the preaching in the world can never effect this union with Christ in itself, and in its own virtue, except a supernatural, and mighty power, go forth with it, for that end and purpose. Let Boanerges and Barnabas try their strength, let

the *angels* of heaven be the preachers; till God draw, the soul cannot come to Christ.

No saving benefit is to be had by Christ, without union with his person, no union with his person without faith, no faith, ordinarily wrought, without the preaching of the gospel by Christ's *ambassadors*, their preaching hath no saving efficacy, without God's drawings, as will evidently appear, by considering these words, and the occasion of them.

www.libtool.com.cn

The occasion of these words is found (as learned * Cameron well observes) in the 42d verse. "And they said, is not this Jesus "the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Christ had been pressing upon them in his ministry, the great and necessary duty of faith; but notwithstanding the *authority* of the preacher; the *holiness* of his life; the miracles by which he confirmed his *doctrine*; they still objected against him, "is not this "the carpenter's Son?" From whence Christ takes occasion for these words; "No man can come unto me, except my Father "which hath sent me, draw him," *q. d.* In vain is the authority of my person urged; in vain are all the miracles wrought in your sight, to confirm the doctrine preached to you; till that secret, almighty power of the Spirit be put forth upon your hearts, you will not, you cannot, come unto me.

The words are a negative proposition.

In which the author, and powerful manner of divine operation in working faith, are contained: there must be drawing before believing, and that drawing must be the drawing of God: every word hath its weight: we will consider them in the order they lie in the text.

Οὐδεὶς——*No Man*] not one, let his natural qualifications be what they will, let his external advantages, in respect of means and helps, be never so great: it is not in the power of any man: all persons, in all ages, need the same power of God, one as well as another; every man is alike dead, impotent, and averse to faith in his natural capacity. No man, or—not one, among all the sons of men.

Δύναται,——*Can*] or is able: he speaks of impotency to special and saving actions, such as believing in Christ is: no act that is saving, can be done without the concurrence of special grace. Other acts that have a remote tendency to it, are performed by a more general concourse and common assistance; so men may come to the word, and attend to what is spoken, remember, and consider what the word tells them; but as to believing or com-

* *Cameronis Myrothec. p.* 139.

ing to Christ, that no man can do of himself, or by a general and common assistance. No man can.

Ελθειν προς με,——*Come unto me*] *(i. e.)* believe in me unto salvation. Coming to Christ, and believing in him, are terms *aequipollent*, and are indifferently used to express the nature of saving faith, as is plain ver. 35. "He that cometh to me, shall "never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst:" it notes the terms from which, and to which the soul moves, and the voluntariness of the motion, notwithstanding that divine power, by which the will is drawn to Christ.

Εαν μη ο Πατηρ,——*Except my Father*] not excluding the other two persons; for every work of God relating to the creatures, is common to all the three persons: nor only to note that the Father is the first in order of working: but the reason is hinted in the next words.

Ο πεμψας με,——*who hath sent me,*] God hath entered into covenant with the Son, and sent him, stands obliged thereby, to bring the promised seed to him, and that he doth by drawing them to Christ by faith: so the next words tells us the Father doth.

Ελκυση αυτον.——*Draw him.*] That is powerfully and effectually incline his will to come to Christ: "† Not by a violent "coaction, but by a benevolent bending of the will which was "averse;" and as it is not in the way of force and compulsion, so neither is it by a simple *moral suasion*, by the bare proposal of an object to the will, and so leaving the sinner to his own election; but it is such a persuasion, as hath a mighty overcoming efficacy accompanying it: of which more anon.

The words thus opened, the observation will be this:

Doct. *That it is utterly impossible for any man to come to Jesus Christ, unless he be drawn unto him by the special and mighty power of God.*

No man is compelled to come to Christ against his will, he that cometh, comes willingly, but even that will, and desire to come, is the effect of grace, Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that work-"eth in you, both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure."

"If we desire the help and assistance of grace, (saith ‡ Ful-

† *Non violenta coactio immediata, sed voluntatis a Deo aversæ benevola flectio.* Glas. Rhet. Sacra p. 236.

‡ *Ut ergo desideremus adjutorium, hoc quoque est gratiæ; ipsa namque incipit effundi, ut incipiat posci.* Fulgen. Epist. 6. ad Theod.

"gentius) even the desire is of grace; grace must first be shed "forth upon us, before we can begin to desire it:" "By grace "are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is "the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. suppose the utmost degree of natural ability; let a man be as much disposed and prepared, as nature can dispose or prepare him, and to all this, add the proposal of the greatest arguments, and motives, to induce him to come; let all these have the advantage of the fittest season to work upon his heart; yet no man can come till God draw him: we move as we are moved; as Christ's coming to us, so our coming to him are the pure effects of grace.

Three things require explication in this point before us.

First, *What the drawing of the Father imports.*

Secondly, *In what manner he draws men to Christ.*

Thirdly, *How it appears that none can come till they be so drawn.*

First, What the drawing of the Father imports.

To open this, let it be considered, that drawing is usually distinguished into *physical* and *moral*. The former is, either by co-action, force, and compulsion: or, by a sweet, congruous efficacy upon the will. As to violence and compulsion, it is none of God's way and method, it being both against the nature of the will of man, which cannot be forced, and against the will of Jesus Christ, who loves to reign over a free and willing people, Psal. cx. 5. "Thy people shall be willing in "the day of thy power." Or, as that word may be rendered, they shall be *voluntarinesses*, as willing as willingness itself. It is not then by a forcible *co-action*, but in a *moral* way of persuasion, that God the Father draws men to Jesus Christ: He draws *with the bands of a man*, as they are called, Hos. xi. 14. *(i. e.)* in a way of rational conviction of the mind and conscience, and effectual persuasion of the will.

But yet by *moral persuasion*, we must not understand a simple and bare proposal, or tender of Christ and grace, leaving it still at the sinner's choice, whether he will comply with it or no. ‖ For though God does not force the will contrary to its nature, yet there is a real internal efficacy implied in this *draw-*

‖ We do not see God preaching, writing, and teaching, yet we believe as if we saw thus; for all truth hath a power of inclining the mind to assent; the greater truth, the greater power, and the greatest truth, the greatest power of all; But why then do not all believe the gospel? I answer, because all are are not drawn by God. *Baptist Mantuanus de patientia, lib. 3. cap. 2.*

ing, or an immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart and will, which, in a way congruous and suitable to its nature, takes away the rebellion and reluctance of it, and of unwilling, makes it willing to come to Christ. And, in this respect, we own a *physical*, as well as *moral* influence of the Spirit in this work; and so the scripture expresses it, Eph. i. 19, 20. "That "we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to-"ward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty "power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from "the dead." Here is much more than a naked proposal made to the will; there is a *power* as well as a *tender*; greatness of power; and yet more, the exceeding greatness of his power; and this power hath an actual efficacy ascribed to it, he works upon our hearts and wills, *according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.* Thus he fulfils in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power, 2 Thess. i. 11.

And this is that which the schools call *gratia efficax*, effectual grace; and others *victrix delectatio*, an overcoming, conquering delight †: Thus the work is carried on with a most efficacious sweetness. So that the liberty of the will is not infringed, whilst the obstinacy of the will is effectually subdued and overruled. For want of this, there are so many *almost Christians* in the world; hence are all those vanishing and imperfect works which come to nothing, called in scripture, a *morning cloud, an early dew*. Had this mighty power gone forth with the word, they had never vanished or perished like *embryo's* as they do. So then, God draws not only in a *moral* way, by proposing a suitable object to the will, but also in a *physical* way, or by immediate powerful influence upon the will; not infringing the liberty of it, but yet infallibly and effectually persuading it to come to Christ.

Secondly, Next let us consider the marvellous way and manner, in which the Lord draws the souls of poor sinners to Jesus Christ, and you will find he doth it,

1. Gradually,	4. Effectually,
2. Congruously,	and
3. Powerfully,	5. Finally.

First, This blessed work is carried on by the Spirit gradually; bringing the soul step by step, in the due method and order of the gospel to Christ; illumination, conviction, compunction, prepare the way to Christ; and then faith unites the soul to him:

† A certain heavenly sweetness. *Jansenius Aug. lib. cap.*

Without humiliation, there can be no faith, Matth. xxi. 32. "Ye repented not, that ye might believe." It is the burdensome sense of sin, that brings the soul to Christ for rest, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." But without conviction there can be no compunction; no humiliation; he that is not convinced of his sin and misery, never bewails it, nor mourns for it: Never was there one tear of true repentance seen to drop from the eye of an unconvinced sinner.

www.libtool.com.cn

And without illumination, there can be no conviction; for what is conviction, but the application of the light which is in the understanding, or mind of a man, to his heart and conscience? Acts. ii. 37. In this order therefore, the Spirit (ordinarily) draws souls to Christ, he shines into their minds by illumination; applies that light to their consciences by effectual conviction; breaks and wounds their hearts for sin in compunction; and then moves the will to embrace and close with Christ, in the way of faith, for life and salvation.

These several steps are more distinctly discerned in some Christians than in others; they are more clearly to be seen in the *adult convert*, than in those that were drawn to Christ in their youth; in such as were drawn to him out of a state of prophaneness, than in those that had the advantage of a pious education; but in this order, the work is carried on, ordinarily, in all; however it differ in point of clearness in the one, and in the other.

Secondly, He draws sinners to Christ congruously, and very agreeably to the nature and way of man, so he speaks, Hos. xi. 4. "I drew them with the * cords of a man, with bands of "love:" Not as beasts are drawn; but as men are inclined, and wrought to compliance, by rational conviction of their judgments, and powerful persuasion of their wills; the minds of sinners are naturally blinded by ignorance, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And their affections bewitched to their lusts, Gal. iii. 4. and whilst it is thus, no arguments or entreaties can possibly prevail, to bring them off from the ways of sin to Christ.

The way therefore which the Lord takes to win and draw them to Christ, is by rectifying their false apprehensions, and shewing them infinitely more good in Christ, than in the creature, and in their lusts; yea, by satisfying their understandings, that there is goodness enough in Jesus Christ, to whom he is drawing them.

* *Funibus hominum* (i. e.) *humanis: non quibus trahi ac deduci solent boves.*

First, Enough to out-bid all temporal-good, which is to be denied for his sake.

Secondly, Enough to preponderate all temporal-evils, which are to be suffered for his sake.

First, That there is more good in Christ than in all temporal good things, which we are to deny, or forsake, upon his account. This being once clearly, and convincingly discovered to the understanding, the will is, thereby, prepared to quit all that which entangles, and with-holds it from coming to Christ: there is no man that loves money so much, but he will willingly part with it, for that which is more worth to him, than the sum he parts with to purchase it: Matth. xiii. 45, 46. "The kingdom "of heaven is like to a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls, "who when he hath found one pearl of great price, goeth and "selleth all that he hath and buyeth it."

Such an invaluable *pearl* is Jesus Christ; infinitely more worth than all that a poor sinner hath to part with for him; and is a more real good than the creature. These are but vain shadows; Prov. xxiii. 5. Christ is a solid, substantial good: yea, he is, and by conviction appears to be a more suitable good than the creature: The world cannot justify, and save, but Christ can. Christ is a more necessary good than the creature, which is only for our temporal conveniency, but he is of eternal necessity. He is a more durable good than any creature-comfort is, or can be: "The fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 13. But durable riches and righteousness are in him, Prov. viii. 17. Thus Christ appears in the day of conviction, infinitely more excellent than the world; he out-bids all the offers that the world can make; and this greatly forwards the work of drawing a soul to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, And (then to remove every thing out of the way to Christ) God discovers to the soul enough in him to preponderate, and much more than will recompense all the evils and sufferings it can endure for his sake.

It is true, they that close with Chrst, close with his cross also: they must expect to save no more but their souls by him. He tells us what we must trust to, Luke xiv. 26, 27. "If any "man come to me, and hate not his Father and mother, and "wife and children, and brethren and sisters; yea, and his "own life also, he cannot be my disciple: And whosoever "doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my dis-"ciple."

To read such a text as this, with such a comment upon it, as

satan and our flesh can make; is enough to fright a Man from Christ for ever: Nor is it possible, by all the arguments in the world, to draw any soul to Christ upon such terms as these, till the Lord convince it, that there is enough, and much more than enough in Jesus Christ to recompense all these sufferings, and losses, we endure for him.

www.libtool.com.cn

But when the soul is satisfied, that these sufferings are but *external*, upon the vile *body*, but that the benefit which comes by Christ is *internal*, in a man's own *soul*; these afflictions are but *temporal*, Rom. viii. 18. But Christ and his benefits are *eternal*: This must needs prevail with the will to come over to Christ; notwithstanding all the evils of suffering that accompany him, when the reality of all this is discovered by the Lord, and the power of God goes along with these discoveries. Thus the Lord draws us in our own way; by rational convictions of the understanding, and allurements of the will.

And it is possible this may be the reason why some poor souls mis-judge the workings of the Spirit of God upon themselves, thinking they never had that wonderful and mighty power of God in conversion, acting upon their hearts, because they find all that is done upon their hearts that way, is done in the ordinary course and method of nature: They consider, compare, are convinced, and then resolve to choose Christ and his ways; whereas they expect to feel some strange operations, that shall have the visible characters of the immediate power of God upon them, and such a power they might discern, if they would consider it as working in this way and method: But they cannot distinguish God's acts from their own, and that puzzles them.

Thirdly, The drawings of the Father are very *powerful*. "The arm of the Lord is revealed in this work," Isa. liii. 1. It was a powerful word indeed, that made the light at first shine out of darkness, and no less power is required to make it shine into our hearts, 2 Cor. v. 14. That day in which the soul is made willing to come to Christ, is called "the day of "his power," Psal. cx. 3. The scripture expresseth the work of conversion, by a threefold *metaphor*, viz.

That of a *resurrection* from the dead, Rom. vi. 4.

That of *creation*, Eph. ii. 10. And

That of *victory* or *conquest*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. All these set forth the infinite power of God in this work; for no less than almighty Power is required to each of them; and if you strictly examine the distinct notions, you shall find the power of God more and more illustriously displayed in each of them.

To raise the dead, is the effect of almighty Power; but then

the resurrection supposeth pre-existent matter. In the work of *creation*, there is no pre-existent matter; but then there is no opposition: That which is not, rebels not against the power which gives it being. But *victory* and *conquest* supposes *opposition*, all the power of corrupt nature arming itself, and fighting against God; but yet not able to frustrate his design.

www.libtool.com.cn

Let the soul whom the Father draws, struggle, and reluctate as much as it can, it shall come, yea, and come willingly too, when the drawing power of God is upon it †. O the self-conflicts, the contrary resolves, with which the soul finds itself distracted, and rent asunder! The hopes, and fears; the encouragements, and discouragements; they will, and they will not: but victorious grace conquers all opposition at last. We find an excellent example of this in blessed ‡ Augustin, who speaks of this very work, the drawing of his soul to Christ, and how he felt in that day two wills in himself, "one old, the other "new; one carnal, the other spiritual; and how in these their "contrary motions, and conflicts, he was torn asunder in his "own thoughts and resolutions, suffering that unwillingly, "which he did willingly." And certainly, if we consider how deep the soul is rooted, by natural inclination, and long continued custom, in sin, how extremely averse it is to the ways of strict godliness, and mortification; how Satan, that invidious enemy, that strong man armed, fortifies the soul to defend his possession, against Christ, and intrenches himself in the understanding, will, and affections, by deep-rooted prejudices against Christ and holiness, it is a wonder of wonders, to see a soul quitting all its beloved lusts, and fleshly interests and endearments, and coming willingly under Christ's yoke.

Fourthly, The drawings of God are very effectual: There is indeed a common and *ineffectual* work upon hypocrites, and apostates, called in scripture a "morning cloud, an early dew," Hos. vi. 4. These may believe for a time, and fall away at last, Luke viii. 13. Their wills may be half won, they may

† A sweet moving from the word, and a powerful drawing on God's part. For there is a certain kind of voluntary necessity. *Moulin Amut. Armin.*

‡ *Ita duae voluntates meae, una vetus, alia vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis illa spiritualis confligebant inter se, atque discordando dissipabant animam meam----ibi enim magis jam non ego, quia, ex magna parte id patiebar invitus, quod faciebam volens.* Aug. confes. lib. 8. cap. 5.

be drawn half way to Christ, and return again. So it was with Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 28. ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις, within a very little, thou persuadest me to be a Christian: But in God's elected ones, it is effectual: * Their wills are not only *almost*, but *altogether* persuaded to embrace Christ, and quit the ways of sin, how pleasant, gainful, and dear soever they have been to them. The Lord not only draws, but draws home those souls to Christ, John vi. 37. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come "to me."

www.libtool.com.cn

It is confessed, that in drawing home of the very elect to Christ, there may be, and frequently are, many pauses, stands, and demurs; they have convictions, affections, and resolutions stirring in them, which, like early blossoms, seem to be nipt and die away again. There is frequently, (in young ones especially), an hopeful appearance of grace; they make conscience of avoiding sins, and performing duties: they have sometimes great awakenings under the word, they are observed to retire for meditation and prayer; and delight to be in the company of Christians: and after all this, youthful lusts and vanities are found to stifle and choak these hopeful beginnings, and the work seems to stand, (it may be some years), at a pause; however, at last, the Lord makes it victorious over all opposition, and sets it home with power upon their hearts.

Fifthly, To conclude, those whom the Father draws to Christ, he draws them finally and for ever. "The gifts and "calling of God are without repentance," Rom. xi. 29.: they are so, as to God the giver; he never repents that he hath called his people into the fellowship of his Son Christ Jesus: and they are so on the believer's part; he is never sorry, whatever he afterwards meets with, that he is come to Christ.

There is a time when Christians are drawn to Christ, but there shall never be a time in which they shall be drawn away from Christ, John x. 29. There is no plucking them out of the Father's hand. It was common to a proverb, in the primitive times, when they would express an impossibility, to say, "You may as soon draw a Christian from Christ, as do it." When Christ asked that question of the disciples, "Will ye "also go away? Lord, (said Peter, in the name of them all), "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,"

* Suasion is the act of one using endeavours; persuasion the act of an efficient cause. He uses suasion, who gives advice; persuasion is the deed of him who determines a man to what he pleases. *Erasmus.*

John vi. 68. They are thus drawn, do with full purpose of heart, cleave unto the Lord. And thus of the manner and quality of effectual drawing.

Thirdly, In the last place, I am to evince the impossibility of coming to Christ without the Father's drawings: and this will evidently appear upon the consideration of these two particulars.

First, The difficulty of this work is above all the power of nature to overcome.

Secondly, That little power and ability that nature hath, it will never employ to such a purpose as this; till the drawing power of God be upon the will of a sinner.

First, If all the power of nature were employed in this design, yet such are the difficulties of this work, that it surmounts all the abilities of nature. This the scripture very plainly affirms, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and "that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." To think of Christ is easy, but to come to Christ, is, to nature, impossible: To send forth cold and ineffectual wishes to Christ we may, but to bring Christ and the soul together, requires the almighty power of God, Eph. i. 19. The grace of faith by which we come to Christ, is as much the free gift of God, as Christ himself, who is the object of faith, Phil. i. 29. "To you it is free-"ly given to believe." And this will easily appear to your understandings, if you do but consider

The { Subject / Act, *and* / Enemies } of this work of faith, or coming to Christ,

First, Consider the subject of faith in which it is wrought; or what it is that is drawn to Christ: It is the heart of a sinner which is naturally as indispposed for this work, as the wood which Elijah laid in order upon the altar, was to catch fire, when he had poured so much water upon it, as did not only wet the wood, but also filled up the trench round about it, 1 Kings xviii. 33. For it is naturally a dark, blind, and ignorant, heart, Job. xi. 12. And such an heart can never believe, till he that commanded the light to shine out of darkness do shine into it, 2 Cor. v. 14.

Nor will it avail any thing to say, though man be born in darkness and ignorance, yet afterwards he may acquire knowledge in the use of means, as we see many natural men do to a very high degree: For this is not that light that brings the soul to Christ, yea, this natural, unsanctified light blinds the soul, and

prejudices it more against Christ than ever it was before, 1 Cor. i. 21, 26.

As it is a blind ignorant heart, so it is a selfish heart by nature: All its designs and aims terminate in self: this is the center and weight of the soul; no righteousness but its own is sought after, that, or none, Rom. x. 3. Now, for a soul to renounce and deny self, in all its forms, modes, and interests, as every one doth that cometh to Christ; to disclaim and deny natural, moral, and religious self, and come to Christ, as a poor, miserable, wretched, empty creature; to live upon his righteousness for ever, is as supernatural and wonderful, as to see the hills and mountains start from their bases and centres, and fly like wandering atoms in the air.

Nay, this heart which is to come to Christ, is not only dark and selfish, but full of pride. O it is a desperate proud heart by nature, it cannot submit to come to Christ, as Benhadad's servants came to the king of Israel, with sackcloth on their loins, and ropes upon their heads. To take guilt, shame, and confusion of face to ourselves, and acknowledge the righteousness of God in our eternal damnation; to come to Christ naked, and empty, as one that justifies the ungodly: I say, nature left to itself, would as soon be damned as do this: the proud heart can never come to this, till the Lord have humbled and broken it by his power.

Secondly, Let us take the act of faith into consideration also, as it is here described by the soul's coming to Jesus Christ; and you will find a necessity of the Father's drawings; for this evidently implies, that which is against the stream and current of corrupt nature, and that which is above the sphere and capacity of the most refined and accomplished nature.

First, It is against the stream and current of our corrupt nature to come to Christ. For let us but consider the term from which the soul departs, when it comes to Christ. In that day it leaves all its lusts, and ways of sin, how pleasant, sweet, and profitable soever they have been unto it, Isa. lv. 7. "Let the "wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, "and let him return unto the Lord:" Way and thoughts, *i. e.* both the practice of and delight he had in sin, must be forsaken, and the outward and inward man must be cleansed from it. Now there are in the bosoms of unregenerate men such darling lusts, that have given them so much practical and speculative pleasure, which have brought so much profit to them; which have been born and bred up with them; and which, upon all these accounts, are endeared to their souls to that degree, that

it is easier for them to die, than to forsake them: yea, nothing is more common among such men, than to venture eternal damnation, rather than suffer a separation from their sins.

And which is yet more difficult in coming to Christ, the soul forsakes not only its sinful self, but its righteous self: *i. e.* not only its worst sins, but its best performances, accomplishments, and excellencies. Now this is one of the greatest straits that nature can be put to: Righteousness, by works, was the first liquor that ever was put into the vessel, and it still retains the tang and savour of it, and will to the end of the world, Rom. x. 3. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going "about to establish their own righteousness, have not submit-"ted themselves unto the righteousness of God." οὐ ὑπετάγησαν, they have not submitted: To come naked and empty to Christ, and receive all from him as a free-gift, is, to proud corrupt nature, the greatest abasement and submission in the world.

Let the gospel furnish its table with the richest and costliest dainties that ever the blood of Christ purchased, such is the pride of nature, that it disdains to taste them, except it may also pay for the same. If the old hive be removed from the place where it was wont to stand, the bees will come home to the old place, yea, and many of them you shall find will die there, rather than go to the hive, though it stand in a far better place than it did before. Just so stands the case with men. The *hive* is removed, *i. e.* we are no more to expect righteousness as Adam did, by obeying and working, but by believing and coming to Christ; but nature had as lieve be damned as do this: It still goes about to establish its own rigteousness.

Virtues, duties, and moral excellencies, these are the ornaments of nature; here is nature set off in its sumptuous attire, and rich embellishments, and now to renounce it, disclaim and contemn it, as dross and dung, in comparison of Christ, as believers do, Phil. iii. 8. This, I say, is against the grain of nature. We reckon it the strange effect of self-denial in Mahomet the Great *, who being so enamoured with his beautiful Irene, would be persuaded, upon reasons of state, with his own hand to strike off her head; and that, even when she appeared in all her rich ornaments before him, rather like such a goddess, as the poets in their extasies use to feign, than a mortal creature. And yet certainly this is nothing to that self-denial which is exercised in our coming to Christ.

Secondly, And if we look to the other term to which the soul

* Knolles History of the Turks.

moves, we shall find it acting as much above the sphere and ability of improved nature, as here it acts and moves against the stream and current of corrupted nature: for how wonderful and supernatural an adventure is that, which the soul makes in the day that it comes to Jesus Christ.

www.libtool.com.cn

Surely, for any poor soul to venture itself for ever upon Jesus Christ, whom it never saw, nay, upon Christ, whose very existence, its own unbelief calls in question whether he be or no: and that when it is even weighed down to the dust, with the burdensome sense of its own vileness and total unworthiness, feeling nothing in itself but sin and misery, the workings of death and fears of wrath: to go to Christ, of whose pardoning grace and mercy it never had any the least experience, nor can find any ground of hope in itself that it shall be accepted; this is as much above the power of nature, as it is for a stone to rise from the earth, and fix itself among the stars. Well might the apostle ascribe it to that almighty Power which raised up Christ from the dead, Eph. i. 19, 20. If the Lord draw not the soul, and that omnipotently, it can never come from itself to Christ. And yet farther,

Thirdly, The natural impossibility of coming to Christ, will more clearly appear, if we consider the enemies to faith; or what blocks are rolled by Satan and his instruments, into the way to Christ: to mention, in this place, no more but our own carnal reason, as it is armed and managed by the subtilty of Satan, what a wonder is it that any soul should come to Christ?

These are the strong holds, (mentioned 2 Cor. x. 4) out of which those objections, fears, and discouragements sally, by which the soul is fiercely assaulted in the way to Christ.

Wilt thou forsake all thy pleasures, merry company, and sensible comforts, to live a sad, retired, pensive life? Wilt thou beggar and undo thyself, let go all thy comforts in hand, for an hope of that which thine eyes never saw, nor hast thou any certainty that it is any more than a fancy? Wilt thou that hast lived in reputation and credit all thy life, now become the scorn and contempt of the world? Thinkest thou thyself able to live such a strict, severe, mortified, and self-denying a life, as the word of God requires? And what if persecution should arise, (as thou mayest expect it will), canst thou forsake father and mother, wife and children, yea, and give up thine own life too, to a cruel and bloody death! be advised better, before thou resolve in so important a matter. What thinkest thou of thy forefathers, that lived and died in that way thou art now living? Art thou wiser than they? Do not the generality of men walk in the same

paths thou haſt hitherto walked in? If this way lead to hell, as thou feareſt it may, think then how many millions of men muſt periſh as well as thyſelf; and is ſuch a ſuppoſition conſiſtent with the gracious and merciful nature of God? Beſides, think what ſort of people thoſe are, unto whom thou art about to join thyſelf in this new way? Are there not to be found among them many things to diſcourage thee, and cool thy zeal? They are generally of the lower and baſer ſort of men, poor and deſpicable: Seeſt thou not, though their profeſſion be holy, how earthly, carnal, proud, factious, and hypocritical, many of them are found to be! And doubtleſs, the reſt are like them, though their hypocriſy be not yet diſcovered.

O what ſtands and demurs? what heſitations and doubts, is the ſoul clogged with in its way to Chriſt! But yet none of theſe can withhold and detain the ſoul, when the Father draws; Greater, then, is he that is in us, than he that is in the world. And thus you ſee the nature, manner, and efficacy of divine drawings, and how impoſſible it is for any ſoul to come to Chriſt without them.

The inferences and improvements of the point follow.

Infer. 1. *How deeply and thoroughly is the nature of man corrupted, and what an enemy is every man to his own happineſs, that he muſt be drawn to it?* John v. 40. "You will not come "unto me, that ye might have life."

Life is deſireable in every man's eyes, and eternal is the moſt excellent life; yet, in this, the world is rather agreed to die and periſh for ever, than come to Chriſt for life. Had Chriſt told us of fields and vineyards, ſheep and oxen, gold and ſilver, honours and ſenſual pleaſures, who would not have come to him for theſe? But to tell of mortification, ſelf-denial, ſtrictneſs of life, and ſufferings for his ſake, and all this for an happineſs to be enjoyed in the world to come, nature will never like ſuch a propoſition as this.

You ſee where it ſticks, not in a ſimple inability to believe, but in an inability complicated with enmity; they neither can come, nor will come to Chriſt: It is true, all that do come to Chriſt, come willingly; but thanks be to the grace of God, that hath freed and perſuaded the will, elſe they had never been willing to come: Who ever found his own heart firſt ſtir and move towards Chriſt? How long may we wait and expect, before we ſhall feel our hearts naturally burn with deſires after, and love to Jeſus Chriſt?

This averſion of the will and affections from God, is one of

the main roots of original sin. No argument can prevail to bring the soul to Christ, till this be mastered and overpowered by the Father's drawing. In our motions to sin, we need restraining, but in all our motions to Christ, we as much need drawing. He that comes to heaven may say, Lord, if I had had my own way and will, I had never come here; if thou hadst not drawn me, I should never have come to thee. O the riches of the grace of God! Oh unparalleled mercy and goodness! not only to prepare such a glory as this for an unworthy soul, but to put forth the exceeding greatness of thy power, afterwards to draw an unwilling soul to the enjoyment of it.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 2. *What enemies are they to God, and the souls of men, that do all they can to discourage and hinder the conversion of men to Christ? God draws forward, and these do all that in them lies to draw backward,* (i. e.) *to prejudice and discourage them from coming to Jesus Christ in the way of faith: this is a direct opposition to God, and a plain confederacy with the devil.*

O, how many have been thus discouraged in their way to Christ, by their carnal relations, I cannot say friends! Their greatest enemies have been the men of their own house. These have pleaded (as if the devil had hired and fee'd them) against the everlasting welfare of their own flesh. O cruel parents, brethren, and sisters, that jeer, frown, and threaten, where they should encourage, assist, and rejoice! Such parents are the devil's children. Satan chuses such instruments as you are, above all others, for this work: he knows what influence and authority you have upon them, and over them; and what fear, love, and dependance, they have for you, and upon you; so that none in all the world are like to manage the design of their damnation so effectually, as you are like to do.

Will you neither come to Christ yourselves, nor suffer your dear relations that would? Had you rather find them in the alehouse, than in the closet? Did you instrumentally give them their being, and will you be the instruments of ruining for ever those beings they had from you? Did you so earnestly desire children, so tenderly nurse and provide for them; take such delight in them; and, after all this, do what in you lies to damn and destroy them; If these lines shall fall into any such hands O that God would set home the conviction, and sense of this horrid evil upon their hearts.

And no less guilty of this sin are scandalous and loose professors, who serve to furnish the devil with the greatest arguments he hath to dissuade men from coming to Christ: it your loosenes, and hypocrisy, by which he hopes to scare othe

from Christ. It is said, Cant. ii. 7. "I charge you by the roes "and hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my be-"loved till he please."

Roes and hinds, like young converts and comers towards Christ, are shy and timerous creatures, that start at the least sound, or yelp of a dog, and fly away. Take heed what you do in this case, lest you go down to hell under the guilt of damning more souls than your own.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 3. *Learn hence, the true ground and reason of those strange, amazing, and supernatural effects, that you behold, and so admire in the world, as often as you see sinners forsaking their pleasant, profitable corruptions, and companions, and embracing the ways of Christ, godliness, and mortification.*

It is said, 1 Pet. iv. 4. "They think it strange, that you "run not with them into the same excess of riot;" The word is, ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται, they stand at a gaze, as the hen that hath hatch-partridge eggs doth, when she sees them take the wing and fly away from her.

Beloved, it is the world's wonder to see their companions in sin forsake them; those that were once as prophane, and vain as themselves, it may be more, to forsake their society, retire into their closets, mourn for sin, spend their time in meditation and prayer, embrace the severest duties, and content to run the greatest hazard in the world for Christ; but they see not that almighty power that draws them, which is too strong for all the sinful ties and engagements in the world to withhold and detain them.

A man would have wondered to see Elisha leave the oxen, and run after Elijah, saying, "Let me go, I pray thee, and kiss "my father and mother, and then I will follow thee;" when Elijah had said nothing to persuade him to follow him, only, as he passed by him, he cast his mantle on him, 1 Kings x. 19, 20. Surely that soul whom God draws, must needs leave all and follow Christ, for the power of God resteth on it. All carnal ties and engagements to sin, break and give way, when the Father draws the soul to Christ in the day of his power.

Infer. 4. *Is this the first spring of spiritual motion after Christ? Learn then from hence, how it comes to pass that so many excellent sermons, and powerful persuasions are ineffectual, and cannot draw and win one soul to Christ. Surely it is because ministers draw alone; and the special saving power of God goes not forth, at all times alike, with their endeavours.*

Paul was a chosen vessel, filled with a greater measure of gifts

and graces by the Spirit, than any that went before him, or followed after him; and, as his talents, so his diligence in improving them, was beyond any recorded example we read of amongst men; "He rather flew like a seraphim, than travelled "upon his master's errand about the world*." Apollos was an eloquent preacher, and mighty in the scriptures, yet Paul is "nothing, and Apollos nothng; but God that gives the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 7. We are too apt to admire men, yea, and the best are but too apt to go forth in the strength of their own parts and preparations; but God secures his own glory, and magnifies his own power, frequently, in giving success to weaker endeavours, and men of lower abilities, when he withholds it from men of more raised, refined, and excellent gifts and abilities.

www.libtool.com.cn

It is our great honour, who are the ministers of the gospel, that we are συνεργοι, *workers together with God,* 1 Cor. iii. 9. in his strength we can prevail; "the weapons of our warfare are "mighty through God," 2 Cor. x. 4. But if his presence, blessing, and assistance, be not with us, we are nothing, we can do nothing.

If we prepare diligently, pray heartily, preach zealously, and our hearers go as they came, without any spiritual effects and fruits of our labours, what shall we say, but as Martha said to Christ, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not "died:" Had the Spirit of God gone forth with his especial efficacy and blessing, with this prayer, or that sermon, these souls had not departed dead, and senseless from under it.

Infer. 5. *Doth all success and efficacy depend upon the Father's drawings? Let none then despair of their unregenerate, and carnal relations, over whose obstinacy they do, and have cause to mourn.*

What, if they have been as many years under the preaching of the gospel, as the poor man lay at the pool of Bethesda, and hitherto to no purpose? A time may come at last, (as it did for him) when the Spirit of God may move upon the waters; I mean put a quickening and converting power into the means, and then the desire of your souls for them shall be fulfilled.

It may be, you have poured out many prayers, and tears to the Lord for them; you have cried for them as Abraham for his son, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" O that this poor husband, wife, child, brother, or sister, might live in thy sight; and still you see them continue carnal, dead, and sense-

* Ως πτηνος την οικουμενην, και ως ασωματος διεδραμε. Chrysost.

less: Well, but yet give not up your hopes, nor cease your pious endeavours, the time may come when the Father may draw as well as you, and then you shall see them quit all, and come to Christ; and nothing shall hinder them. They are now drawn away of their own lusts; they are easily drawn away by their sinful companions; but when God draws, none of these shall withdraw them from the Lord Jesus. What is their ignorance, obstinacy, and hardness of heart, before that mighty power that subdues all things to itself? Go therefore to the Lord, by prayer, for them, and say, Lord, I have laboured for my poor relations in vain, I have spent my exhortations to little purpose; the work is too difficult for me, can I carry it no farther, but thou canst: O let thy power go forth; they shall be willing day of thy power.

Infer 6. *If none can come to Christ, except the Father draw them, then surely none can be drawn from Christ except the Father leave them: That power which at first drew them to Christ, can secure and establish them in Christ to the end,* John x. 29. "My Father which gave them me is greater than "all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's "hand."

When the power of God at first draws us out of our natural state to Christ, it finds us not only *impotent*, but *obstinate*, not only unable, but unwilling to come; and yet this power of God prevails against all opposition: How much more is it able to preserve and secure us, when his fear is put into our inward parts, so that we dare not depart, we have no will to depart from him? Well then, if the world say, I will ensnare thee; if the devil say, I will destroy thee; if the flesh say I will betray thee; yet thou art secure and safe, as long as God hath said, "I will never leave "thee nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

Infer. 7. *Let this engage you to a constant attendance upon the ordinances of God, in which this drawing power of God is sometimes put forth upon the hearts of men.*

Beloved, there are certain seasons in which the Lord comes nigh to men in the ordinances and duties of his worship; and we know not at what time the Lord cometh forth by his Spirit upon this design: he many times comes in an hour when we think not of him; "I am found of them that sought me not," Isa. lxv. 1. It is good therefore, to be found in the way of the Spirit: Had that poor man, that lay so long at the pool of Bethesda, reasoned thus with himself, So long have I lain here in vain expecting a cure, it is to no purpose to wait longer, and so had been absent at that very time when the angel came down,

he had, in all likelihood, carried his disease to the grave with him.

How dost thou know but this very *sabbath*, this sermon, this prayer, which thou hast no heart to attend, and are tempted to neglect, may be the season, and instrument wherein, and by which, the Lord may do that for thy soul, which was never done before?

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 8. *To conclude, How are all the saints engaged to put forth all the power and ability they have for God, who hath put forth his infinite almighty power to draw them to Christ!*

God hath done great things for your souls; he hath drawn you out of the miserable state of sin and wrath; and that when he let others go, by nature as good as you, he hath drawn you into union with Christ, and communion with his glorious privileges. O that you would henceforth employ all the power you have, for God, in the duties of obedience, and in drawing others to Christ, as much as in you lies, and say continually with the Church, "Draw me, we will run after thee," Cant. i. 4.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON V.

Opening the Work of the Spirit more particularly, by which the Soul is enabled to apply CHRIST.

Eph. ii. 1. *And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.*

IN the former sermons we have seen our union with Christ in the general nature of it, and the means by which it is effected, both *external*, by the preaching of the gospel, and *internal*, by the drawing of the Father. We are now to bring our thoughts yet closer to this great mystery, and consider the bands, by which Christ and believers are knit together in a blessed union.

And if we heedfully observe the scripture-expressions, and ponder the nature of this union, we shall find there are two bands which knit Christ and the soul together, *viz.*

1. The Spirit on Christ's part.
2. Faith on our part.

The *Spirit* on Christ's part, *quickening* us with spiritual life, whereby Christ first takes hold of us, and *faith* on our part, when thus quickened, whereby we take hold of Christ: Accor-

dingly, this union with the Lord Jesus, is expressed in scripture, sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other of these means or bands, by which it is effected. Christ is sometimes said to be in us; so Col i. 27. "Christ is in you the hope of "glory." And Rom. viii. 10. "And if Christ be in you, the "body is dead because of sin." And other times it is expressed by the other band on our part, as 1 John v. 20. "We are in "him that is true, even in his Son Christ Jesus." And 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

www.libtool.com.cn

The difference betwixt both these, is thus aptly expressed by a late author *. "Christ is in beleivers by his *Spirit*, 1 John "iv. 13. The believer is in Christ by *faith*, John i. 12. Christ "is in the believer by *inhabitation*, Rom. iii. 17. The believer "is in Christ by *implantation*, Rom. vi. 35. Christ is in the "believer as the head is in the body, Col. i. 18. As the root "in the branches, John xv. 5. Believers are in Christ as the "members are in the head, Eph. i. 23. Or as the branches "are in the root, John xv. 1, 7. Christ in the believer, im-"plieth life, and influence from Christ, Col. iii. 4. The be-"liever, implieth *communion*, and *fellowship* with Christ, 1 Cor. "i. 30. When Christ is said to be in the believer, we are to "understand it in reference to *sanctification*. When the be-"liever is said to be in Christ, it is in order to justification."

Thus we apprehend, being ourselves first apprehended by Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 12. We cannot take hold of Christ, till first he take hold of us; no vital act of faith can be exercised till a vital principle be first inspired: Of both these bands of union we must speak distinctly; and first of "Christ quickening "us by his Spirit, in order to our union with him," of which we have an account in the scripture before us, "You hath he "quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins:" In which words we find these two things noted, *viz.*

1. The infusion of a vital principle of grace.
2. The total indispoedness of the subject by nature.

First, The infusion of a vital principle of grace, *You hath he quickened.* These words [*hath he quickened*] are a supplement made to clear the sense of the apostle, which else would have been more obscure, by reason of that long parenthesis betwixt the first and fifth verses, "for as the † learned observe

* Mount Pisgah. p. 22, 23.

† *Illud* υμας *regitur a* συνεζωοποιησε, v. 5. *est igitur hoc loco et* hyperbaton *et synchysis et* αποκοπη της περιοδου, *quæ est species* του ἀ-

νακ-

" this word ὑμᾶς, you, is governed of the verb συνεζωοποιησε, *hath* " *he quickened*, ver. 5. So that here the words are transposed " from the plain grammatical order, by reason of the interjec- " tion of a long sentence, therefore, with good warrant our " translators have put the verb into the first verse, which is re- " peated ver. 5. and so keeping faithfully to the scope, have ex- " cellently cleared the syntax and order of the words." Now this verb συνεζωοποιησε, *hath he quickened*, imports the first vital act of the Spirit of God, or his first enlivening work upon the soul, in order to its union with Jesus Christ: For look, as the blood of Christ is the fountain of all merit, so the spirit of Christ is the fountain of all spiritual life: And until he quicken us, (*i. e.*) infuse the principle of the divine life into our souls, we can put forth no hand, or vital act of faith, to lay hold upon Jesus Christ.

This his quickening work, is therefore the first in order of nature to our union with Christ, and fundamental to all other acts of grace done, and performed by us, from our first closing with Christ, throughout the whole course of our obedience: and this quickening act is said, ver. 5. to be together with Christ: Either noting (as some expound it) that it is the effect of the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead, according to Eph. i. 19. or rather, to be *quickened together with Christ*, notes that new spiritual life which is infused into our dead souls in the time of our union with Christ: " For it is Christ to " whom we are conjoined and united in our regeneration, out of " whom, as a fountain, all spiritual benefits flow to us, among " which, this vivification or quickening is one, * and a most " sweet and precious one."

Zanchy, Bodius, and many others will have this *quickening* to comprize, both our justification and regeneration, and to stand opposed both to *eternal* and *spiritual* death, and it may well be allowed; but it most properly imports our regeneration, wherein the Spirit, in an ineffable and mysterious way, makes the soul to live to God, yea, to live the life of God, which soul was before *dead in trespasses and sins*: In which words we have,

Secondly, In the next place, the total indisposedness of the

ἀναποδότως, *cujus quidem anomaliæ causa est* παρεμβολη *interjectio sententiæ prolixioris.* Piscator. Pool's Synop.

* *Ex Christo conjuncto nobiscum, ut capite cum membris, profluunt in nos omnia beneficia, in quorum numero est vivificatio.* Rolloc. in Loc.

subjects by nature: For, as it is well noted by a ‡ learned man, "the apostle doth not say of these Ephesians that they were half "dead, or sick, and infirm, but dead wholly; altogether dead, "destitute of any faculty or ability, so much as to think one "good thought, or perform one good act." You were dead in respect of *condemnation*, being under the damning sentence of the law, and you are dead in respect of the privation of spiritual life; dead in opposition to justification, and dead in opposition to regeneration and sanctification: And the fatal instrument by which their souls died is here shewed them; you were dead in, or by *trespasses* and *sins*; this was the sword that killed your souls, and cut them off from God. Some do curiously distinguish betwixt trespasses and sins, as if one pointed at *original*, the other at *actual* sins; but I suppose they are promiscuously used here, and serve to express the cause of their ruin, or means of their spiritual death and destruction: this was their case when Christ came to quicken them, *dead in sin*, and being so, they could not move themselves towards union with Christ, but as they were moved by the quickening Spirit of God. Hence the observation will be this,

Doct. *That those souls which have union with Christ, are quickened with a supernatural principle of life by the Spirit of God in order thereunto.*

The Spirit of God is not only a living Spirit, *formally* considered; but he is also the Spirit of life, *effectively* or *casually* considered: And without his breathing, or infusing life into our souls, our union with Christ is impossible.

It is the observation of learned ‖ Camero, "that there must "be an *unition* before there can be an *union* with Christ. *Uni-* "*tion* is to be conceived *efficiently* as the work of God's Spirit, "joining the believer to Christ, and *union* is to be conceived "*formally*, the joining itself of the persons together;" We close with Christ by faith, but that faith being a vital act, pre-

‡ *Non vocat hic semimortuos aut aegrotos ac infirmos, sed prorsus mortuos, omni facultate bene cogitandi aut agendi destituti.* Rolloc. in Loc.

‖ *Observandum est unionem et unitionem inter se differe: unio est rerum actus, qui forma rationem habet, nempe actus rerum unitarum qua unitæ sunt: unitio autem actus significat causæ efficientis*, &c. Camero de Eccles. p. 222.

ſuppoſes a principle of life communicated to us by the Spirit; therefore it is ſaid, John xi. 26. "Whoſoever liveth and be-"lieveth in me, ſhall never die:" The vital act and operation of faith ſprings from this quickening Spirit: So in Rom. viii. 1, 2. The apoſtle, having in the firſt verſe opened the bleſſed eſtate of them that are in Chriſt, ſhews us, in the ſecond verſe, how we come to be in him: "The Spirit of life (ſaith he) which "is in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and "death."

www.libtool.com.cn

There is indeed a quickening work of the Spirit, which is *ſubſequent* to regeneration, conſiſting in his exciting, recovering, and actuating of his own graces in us: and from hence is the *livelineſs* of a Chriſtian; and there is a quickening act of the Spirit *in our regeneration*, and from hence is the ſpiritual life of a Chriſtian; of this I am here to ſpeak, and, that I may ſpeak profitably to this point, I will in the doctrinal part labour to open theſe five particulars.

Firſt, What this ſpiritual life is in its nature, and properties.

Secondly, In what manner it is wrought or inſpired into the ſoul.

Thirdly, For what end, or with what deſign, this life is ſo inſpired.

Fourthly, I ſhall ſhew this work to be wholly ſupernatural.

And then, *Fifthly*, Why this quickening muſt be antecedent to our actual cloſing with Chriſt by faith.

Firſt, We ſhall enquire into the nature and properties of this life, and diſcover (as we are able) what it is. And we find it to conſiſt in that *wonderful change which the Spirit of God makes upon the frame and temper of the ſoul, by his infuſing or implanting the principles of grace in all the powers and faculties thereof.*

A change it makes upon the ſoul, and that a marvellous one, no leſs than from death to life; for though a man be *phyſically* a living man *(i. e.)* his natural ſoul hath union with his body, yet his ſoul having no union with Chriſt, he is *theologically* a dead man, Luke xv. 24. and Col. ii. 13. Alas, it deſerves not the name of life, to have a ſoul ſerving only to ſeaſon, and preſerve the body a little while from corruption: To carry it up and down the world, and only enable it to eat and drink, and talk, and laugh, and then die: Then do we begin to live, when we begin to have union with Chriſt the fountain of life, by his Spirit communicated to us: From this time we are to reckon our life * as ſome have done: There be many changes made upon

* *Hic jacet ſimilis, cujus aetas multorum annorum fuit, ipſe ſeptem duntaxat annos vixit.*

men besides this, many are changed from prophaneness to civility, and from mere civility to formality, and a shadow of religion, who still remain in the state, and power of spiritual death, notwithstanding; but when the Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us, to quicken us with the new spiritual life, this is a wonderful change indeed: It gives us an *esse supernaturale*, a new supernatural being, which is therefore called a *new creature*, *the new man*, *the hidden man of the heart*: The natural essence and faculties of the soul remain still, but it is divested of the old qualities, and endued with new ones, 2 Cor. v. 17. "Old "things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

And this change is not made by altering and rectifying the disorders of the life only, leaving the temper and frame of the heart still carnal; but by the infusion of a supernatural permanent principle into the soul, John iv. 14. "It shall be in him a "well of water:" principles are to a course of actions, as fountains or springs are to the streams and rivers that flow from them, and are maintained by them: and hence is the evenness, and constancy of renewed souls in the course of Godliness.

Nor is this principle or habit *acquired* by accustoming ourselves to holy actions, as natural habits are acquired by frequent acts, which beget a *disposition*, and thence grow up to an *habit* or second nature, but it is infused, or implanted in the soul by the Spirit of God. So we read, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. "A new "heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within "you:" It grows not up out of our natures, but is put or infused into us: as it is said of the two witnesses, Rev. xi. 11. who lay dead in a *civil sense*, three days and a half, that *the spirit of life from God entered into them*; so it is here in a *spiritual sense*, the spirit of life from God enters into the dead, carnal heart: it is all by way of supernatural infusion.

Nor is it limited to this, or that faculty of the soul, but grace or life is poured into all the faculties: "Behold all things "are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. The *understanding*, *will*, *thoughts*, and *affections*, are all renewed by it: the whole inner *man* is changed; yea, the *tongue* and *hand*, the *discourses* and *actions*, even all the *ways* and *courses* of the outward *man* are renewed by it.

But more particularly, we shall discern the *nature* of this *spiritual life*, by considering the *properties* of it; among which, these are very *remarkable*.

First, The soul that is joined to Christ, is quickened with a *divine life*, so we read in 2 Pet. i. 4. Where believers are said

to be *partakers of the divine nature*: a very high expression, and warily to be understood. *Partakers of the divine nature*, not *essentially*; so, it is wholly incommunicable to the creature, nor yet *hypostatically*, and personally; so, Christ only was a partaker of it; but our participation of the divine nature, must be understood in a way proper to believers; that is to say, we partake of it by the inhabitation of the Spirit of God in us, according to 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. "Know ye not that ye are the "temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The Spirit, who is God by nature, dwells in, and actuates the soul whom he regenerates, and by sanctifying causes it to live a *divine life*: from this life of God, the unsanctified are said to be alienated, Eph. iv. 18. but believers are partakers of it.

Secondly, And being divine, it must needs be the most *excellent*, and transcendent life that any creature doth, or can live in this world: it surmounts the natural, rational, and moral life of the unsanctified, as much as the angelical life excels the life of flies, and worms of the earth.

Some think it a rare life to live in sensual pleasures; but the scripture will not allow so much as the name of life to them; but tells us, "they are dead whilst they live," 1 Tim. v. 6. certainly it is a wonderful elevation of the nature of man, to be quickened with such a life as this. There are two ways wherein the blessed God hath honoured poor man above the very angels of heaven. One was by the hypostatical union of our nature in Christ, with the divine nature; the other is by uniting our persons mystically to Christ, and thereby communicating spiritual life to us: this latter is a most glorious privilege, and in one respect a more singular mercy than the former; for that honour which is done to our nature by the hypostatical union, is common to all, good and bad, even they that perish have yet that honour; but to be implanted into Christ by regeneration, and live upon him as the branch doth upon the vine, this is a peculiar privilege, a mercy kept from the world that is to perish, and only communicated to God's elect, who are to live eternally with him in heaven.

Thirdly, This life infused by the regenerating spirit, is a most *pleasant life*. All delights, all pleasures, all joys, which are not phantastic and delusive, have their spring and origin here, Rom. viii. 6. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," *(i. e.)* a most serene, placid life; such a soul becomes, so far as it is influenced and sanctified by the Spirit, the very region of life and peace: when one thing is thus predicated of another, *in casu recto*, (saith a learned man) it speaks their intimate

connexion: peace is so connatural to this life, that you may either call it a life that hath peace in it, or a peace that hath life in it: yea, it hath its enclosed pleasures in it, "Such as a "stranger intermeddles not with," Prov. xiv. 10. Regeneration is the term from which all true pleasure commences; you never live a chearful day, till you begin to live to God: therefore it is said, Luke xv. 24. When the *prodigal son* was returned to his father, and reconciled, then *they began to be merry.*

None can make another, by any words, to understand what that pleasure is which the renewed soul feels diffused through all its faculties, and affections, in its communion with the Lord, and in the sealings and witnessings of his Spirit. That is a very apt and well known similitude which Peter Martyr used, and the Lord blessed to the conversion of that noble marquis Galeacus: if, said he, a man should see a company of people dancing upon the top of a remote hill, he would be apt to conclude they were a company of wild distracted people; but if he draw nearer, and behold the excellent order, and hear the ravishing sweet music that are among them, he will quickly alter his opinion of them, and be for dancing himself with them.

All the *delights* in the sensual *life*, all the pleasure that ever your *lusts* gave you, are but as the putrid, stinking *waters* of a corrupt *pond*, where *toads* lie croaking and spawning, compared to the *crystal streams* of the most pure and pleasant *fountain.*

Fourthly, This life of God, with which the regenerate are quickened in their union with Christ, as it is a *pleasant*, so it is also *a growing increasing life*, John iv. 14. "It shall be in him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It is not in our sanctification, as it is in our justification; our justification is complete and perfect, no defect is found there; but the new creature labours under many defects: all believers are equally justified, but not equally sanctified: Therefore you read, 2 Cor. iv. 16. that "the inward man is renewed day by "day:" And 2 Pet. iii. 18. Christians are exhorted "to grow "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour:" if this work were perfect, and finished at once, as justification is, there could be no renewing day by day, nor growth in grace. *Perfectum est cui nihil deest, & cui nihil addi potest:* i. e. that is perfect which wants nothing, and to which nothing can be added. The apostle indeed prays for the Thessalonians, "that "God would sanctify them," ολοτελεις,—wholly, perfectly, 1 Thess. v. 23. And this is matter of prayer and hope; for, at

last, it will grow up to perfection; but this perfect holiness is reserved for the perfect state in the world to come, and none but * deluded, proud spirits boast of it here: but when "that "which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be "done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. And upon the imperfection of the new creature in every faculty, that warfare and daily conflict spoken of, Gal. v. 17. and experienced by every Christian, is grounded: grace rises gradually in the soul, as the sun doth in the heavens, "which shineth more and more unto a perfect day," Prov. iv. 18.

Fifthly, to conclude; This life with which the regenerate are quickened, is an *everlasting life*. "This is the record, that God "hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 11. This principle of life is the seed of God; and that remains in the soul for ever, 1 John iii. 9. It is no transient, vanishing thing, but a fixed, permanent principle, which abides in the soul for ever; a man may lose his *gifts*, but grace abides; the soul may, and must be, separated from the body, but grace cannot be separated from the soul: when all forsake us, this will not leave us.

This infused principle is therefore vastly different, both from the extraordinary gifts of prophecy, wherein the Spirit sometimes was said to come upon men, under the Old Testament, 1 Sam. x. 6, 10. and from the common vanishing effects he sometimes produceth in the unregenerate, of which we have frequent accounts in the New Testament, Heb. vi. 4. and John v. 35. It is one thing for the Spirit to come upon a man in the way of present influence, and assistance, and another thing to dwell in a man as in his temple.

And thus of the nature, and quality of this blessed work of the Spirit in quickening us.

Secondly, Having seen the nature and properties of the spiritual life, we are concerned in the next place to enquire into the way and manner in which it is wrought, and infused by the Spirit: and here we must say,

First of all, that the work is wrought in the soul very *mysteriously*; so Christ tells Nicodemus, John iii. 8. "The wind blow-"eth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but "canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is "every one that is born of the Spirit:" There be many opinions among *philosophers* about the original of wind; but we have no

* Perfection of sanctification is not found in this life, unless in the dreams of some phanatics. *Ames.*

certain knowledge of it: we describe it by its effects and properties, but know little of its original: and if the works of God in nature be so abstruse, and unsearchable, how much more so are these sublime, and supernatural works of the Spirit?

We are not able to solve the *Phaenomena* of nature, we can give no account of our own formation in the womb, Eccles. xi. 5. Who can exactly describe how the parts of the body are formed, and the soul infused? "It is curiously wrought in the low-"est parts of the earth," as the Psalmist speaks, Psal. cxxxix. 16. but how, we know not. Basil saith, divers questions may be moved about a *fly*, which may puzzle the greatest *philosopher*: we know little of the forms, and essences of natural things, much less of these profound, and abstruse spiritual things.

Secondly, But though we cannot pry into these secrets by the eye of reason, yet God hath revealed this to us in his word, that it is wrought by his own almighty power, Eph. i. 19. The *apostle* ascribes this work to *the exceeding greatness* of the power of God: and this must needs be, if we consider, how the Spirit of God expresses it in scripture by a new creation: *(i. e.)* a giving being to something out of nothing, Eph. ii. 10. In this it differs from all the effects of human power: for man always works upon some pre-existent matter, but here is no such matter: all that is in man, the subject of this work, is only a passive capacity, or receptivity, but nothing is found in him to contribute towards this work: this supernatural life is not, nor can it be educed out of natural principles: this wholly transcends the sphere of all natural power: but of this more anon.

Thirdly, This also we may affirm of it; that this divine life is infused into all the natural faculties and powers of the soul, not one exempted, 1 Thes. v. 23. The whole soul and spirit is the recipient subject of it: and with respect to this general infusion into all the faculties and powers of the soul, it is called a new creature; a new man; having an integral perfection, and fulness of all its parts and members: it becomes light in the mind; John xvii. 3. Obedience in the will; 1 Pet. i. 2. In the affections an heavenly temper and tenderness, Col. iii. 1, 2. And so is variously denominated, even as the sea is from the several shores it washes, though it be one and the same sea. And here, we must observe, lies one main difference betwixt a re-regenerate soul, and an hypocrite; * the one is all of a piece, as

* *Ab uno desuper principio quod convenienter voluntati operatur dependent prima, secunda et tertia. Quemadmodum minima pars ferri*

I may say, the principle of spiritual life runs into all, and every faculty and affection, and sanctifies, or renews the whole man; whereas the change upon hypocrites is but partial and particular; he may have new light, but no new love; a new tongue, but not a new heart; this or that vice may be reformed, but the whole course of his life is not altered.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fourthly and lastly, This infusion of spiritual life is done *instantaneously;* as all *creation*-work is: hence it is resembled to that *plastic power*, which, in a moment, made the light to shine out of darkness; just so God shines into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

It is true, a soul may be a long time under the preparatory works of the Spirit, he may be under convictions and humiliations, purposes and resolutions a long time; he may be waiting at the pool of Bethesda, attending the means and ordinances, but when the Spirit comes once to quicken the soul, it is done in a moment: even as it is in the infusion of the rational soul, the body is long ere it be prepared and moulded, but when once the *embryo* or matter is ready, it is quickened with the spirit of life in an instant: so it is here: but O what a blessed moment is this! Upon which the whole weight of our eternal happiness depends; for it is Christ in us, *(i. e.)* Christ formed in us, who is the hope of glory, Col. i. 27. And our Lord expressly tells us, John iii. 3. That except we be regenerate and born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. And thus of the way, and manner of its infusion.

Thirdly, Let the design and end of God, in this his *quickening work*, be next considered; for what end, and with what design and aim this work is wrought. And if we consult the scriptures in this matter, we shall find this principle of life is infused in order to our glorifying God, in this world, by a *life of obedience*, and our enjoying of God in the world to come.

First, Spiritual life is infused in order to a course of obedience in this world, whereby God is glorified: So we read in Eph. ii, 10. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God "hath before ordained that we should walk in them;" habits are to actions, as the root is to the fruit, it is for fruit sake that we plant the root, and ingraff the branches. So in Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. "A new spirit will I also put within you, and

ferri lapidis magnetis spiritu movetur, per multos annulos ferreos extensa: ita etiam qui sunt virtute præditi, divino spiritu attracti, cum prima mansione, conjungantur, deinceps autem alii usque ad postremam. Clem. Alexand. Strom. lib. 7.

"cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judg-"ments and do them." This is the next, or immediate design and end, not only of the first infusion of the principle of life into the soul, but of all the exciting, actuating, and assisting works of the Spirit afterwards. Now this principle of spiritual life infused, hath a twofold influence into obedience.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, This makes it sincere and true *obedience*, when it flows from an inward vital principle of Grace. The hypocrite is moved by some thing *ab extra*, from without, as the applause of men, the accommodation of fleshly interests, the force of education; or if there be any thing from within that moves him, it is but self-interest, to quiet a disturbing conscience, and support his vain hopes of heaven: but he never acts from a new principle, a new nature, inclining him to holy actions. Sincerity mainly lies in the harmony and correspondency of actions to their principles: from this infused principle it is, that men hunger and thirst for God, and go to their duties, as men do to their meals, when they find an empty, craving stomach.

O reader, pause a little upon this ere thou pass on, ask thy heart whether it be so with thee: are holy duties connatural to thee? Doth thy soul move and work after God by a kind of supernatural instinct? This then will be to thee a good evidence of thy integrity.

Secondly, From this infused principle of life, results the *excellency of our obedience*, as well as the sincerity of it: for by virtue and reason thereof, it becomes free and voluntary, not forced and constrained, it drops like honey, and of its own accord, out of the comb, Cant. iv. 11. Or as waters from the fountain, without forcing, John iv. 14. An unprincipled professor must be pressed hard by some weight of affliction, ere he will yield one tear, or pour out a prayer, Psal. lxxviii. 34. "When he slew them, then they sought him."

Now the freedom of obedience is the excellency of it, God's eye is much upon that, 1 Cor. ix. 17. Yea, and the uniformity of our obedience, which is also a special part of the beauty of it, results from hence: he that acts from a principle, acts fluently and uniformly, and there is a proportion betwixt the parts of his conversation: this is it which makes us holy, ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ, *in all manner of conversation*, or in every point, and turning of our conversations, as the word imports, 1 Pet. i. 15. Whereas he that is moved by this, or that external accidental motive, must needs be very uneven, "like the legs of a lame man," as the expression is, Prov. xxvi. 7. "which are not equal:" Now a

word of God and then the discourse runs muddy and prophane, or carnal again: all that evenness, and uniformity that are in the several parts of a Christian's life, are the effect of this infused principle of spiritual life.

Thirdly, Another aim and design of God in the infusion of this principle of life, is thereby to prepare and qualify the soul for the enjoyment of himself in heaven: "Except a man be born "again he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. All that shall possess that inheritance must be begotten again to it, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. This principle of grace is the very seed of that glory; it is eternal life in the root and principle, John xvii. 3. by this the soul is attempered and qualified for that state and employment. What is the life of glory, but the vision of God, and the soul's assimilation to God by that vision? From both which results that unspeakable joy and delight which passeth understanding: but what vision of God, assimilation to God, or delight in God, can that soul have, which was never quickened with the supernatural principle of grace? The temper of such souls is expressed in that sad character, Zech. xi. 8. "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me." For want of this vital principle it is, that the very same duties and ordinances, which are the delights and highest pleasures of the saints, are no better than a mere drudgery and bondage to others, Mal. i. 13. Heaven would be no heaven to a dead soul; this principle of life, in its daily growth and improvement, is our meetness, as well as our evidence, for heaven: these are the main ends of its infusion.

Fourthly, In the next place, according to the method proposed, I am obliged to shew you, *that this quickening work is wholly supernatural;* it is the sole and proper work of the Spirit of God. So Christ himself expressly asserts it, in John iii. 6, 8. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born "of the Spirit is Spirit: the wind bloweth where it listeth, and "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it "cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of "the Spirit."

Believers are the birth or offspring of the Spirit, who produceth the new creature in them in an unintelligible manner, even to themselves. So far it is above their own ability to produce, that it is above their capacity to understand the way of its production: as if you should ask, Do you know from whence the wind comes? No: Do you know whither it goes? No: But you hear and feel it when it blows? Yes: Why, so is every one that is born of the Spirit: he feels the efficacy, and dis-

cerns the effects of the Spirit on his own soul, but cannot understand, or describe the manner of its production: This is not only above the carnal, but above the renewed mind to comprehend; we can contribute nothing, I mean actively, to the production of this principle of life: we may indeed be said to concur passively, with the spirit in it; that is, there is found in us a capacity, aptness, or receptiveness of this principle of life: our nature is endowed with such faculties and powers as are meet subjects to receive, and instruments to act this spiritual life: God only quickens the rational nature with spiritual life.

www.libtool.com.cn

It is true also, that in the *progress of sanctification*, a man doth actively concur with the Spirit, but in the first production of this spiritual principle he can do nothing: he can indeed perform those external duties that have a remote tendency to it, but he cannot by the power of nature perform any saving act, or contribute any thing more than a passive capacity to the implantation of a new principle: as will appear by the following arguments.

Arg. 1. He that actively concurs to his own regeneration, makes himself to differ; but this is denied to all regenerate men, 1 Cor. iv. 7. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And "what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

Arg. 2. That to which the scripture ascribes both *impotency* and *enmity*, with respect to grace, cannot actively, and of itself, concur to the production of it: but the scripture ascribes both impotency and enmity to nature, with respect to grace. It denies to it a power to do any thing of itself, John xv. 5. And, which is less, it denies to it a power to speak a good word, Mat. xii. 34. And, which is least of all, it denies it power to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. This impotency, if there were no more, cuts off all pretence of our active concurrence; but then if we consider that it ascribes enmity to our natures, as well as impotency, how clear is the case! See Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And Col. i. 21. "And you that were enemies in your minds by "wicked works." So then nature is so far productive of this principle, as impotency and enmity can enable it to be so.

Arg. 3. That which is of natural production, must needs be subject to natural dissolution; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, a perishing thing, for every thing is as its principle is, and there can be no more in the effect, than there is in the cause: but this principle of spiritual life is not subject to dissolution, it is the water that springs up into everlasting life, John iv. 14.

The seed of God, which remaineth in the regenerate soul, 1 John iii. 9. And all this, because it is "born not of corruptible, but "of incorruptible, seed," 1 Pet. i. 23.

Arg. 4 If our new birth be our resurrection, a new creation, yea, a victory over nature, then we cannot, actively, contribute to its production; but under all these notions it is represented to us in the scriptures; it is our resurrection from the dead, Eph. v. 14. And you know the body is wholly passive in its resurrection: but though it concurs not, yet it gives pre-existent matter: therefore the metaphor is designedly varied, Eph. iv. 24. where it is called a *creation*: in which there is neither active concurrence, nor pre-existent matter; but though creation excludes pre-existent matter, yet in producing something out of nothing, there is no reluctancy nor opposition; therefore to shew how purely supernatural this principle of life is, it is cloathed and presented to us in the notion of a victory, 2 Cor. x. 4. And so leaves all to grace.

Arg. 5. If nature could produce, or but actively concur to the production of this spiritual life, then the best natures would be soonest quickened with it; and the worst natures not at all, or at last, and least of all: but contrarily, we find the worst natures often regenerated, and the best left in the state of spiritual death: with how many sweet *homilitical* virtues was the young man adorned? Mark x. 21. yet graceless: and what a sink of sin was Mary Magdalen, Luke vii. 37. yet sanctified. Thus beautiful Rachel is barren, while Leah bears children. And there is scarce any thing that affects and melts the hearts of Christians more than this comparative consideration doth, when they consider vessels of gold cast away, and leaden ones chosen for such noble uses. So that it is plain enough to all wise, and humble souls, that this new life is wholly of supernatural production.

Fifthly, and lastly, I shall briefly represent the necessary antecedency of this quickening work of the Spirit, to our first closing with Christ, by faith: and this will easily let itself into your understandings, if you but consider the nature of the vital act of faith; which is the soul's receiving of Christ, and resting upon him for pardon and salvation: in which two things are necessarily included, *viz.*

1. The renouncing of all other hopes and dependencies.
2. The opening of the heart fully to Jesus Christ.

First, The renouncing of all other hopes and dependencies whatsoever. Self in all its acceptations, natural, sinful, and moral, is now to be denied, and renounced for ever, else Christ can never be received, Rom. x. 3. not only self in its vilest pol-

lutions, but self in its richest ornaments, and endowments: but this is as impossible to the unrenewed and natural man, as it is for rocks or mountains to start from their centre, and fly like wandering atoms in the air: nature will rather chuse to run the hazard of everlasting damnation, than escape it by a total renunciation of its beloved lusts, or self-righteousness: this supernatural work necessarily requires a supernatural principle, Rom. viii. 2.

Secondly, The opening the heart fully to Jesus Christ, without which Christ can never be received, Rev. iii. 20. but this also is the effect of the quickening Spirit, the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus: sooner may we expect to see the flowers and blossoms open without the influence of the sun, than the heart and will of a sinner open to receive Christ without a principle of spiritual life first derived from him: and this will be past doubt to all that consider, not only the impotence of nature, but the ignorance, prejudice, and aversations of nature, by which the door of the heart is barred, and chained against Christ, John v. 40. So that nature hath neither ability, nor will, power, or desire, to come to Christ: if any have an heart opened to receive him, it is the Lord that opens it by his Almighty Power, and that in the way of an infused principle of life supernatural.

Quest. But here it may be doubted and objected, against this position. If we cannot believe till we are quickened with spiritual life, as you say, and cannot be justified till we believe, as all say, then it will follow, that a regenerate soul may be in the state of condemnation for a time, and consequently perish, if death should befal him in that juncture.

Sol. To this I return, That when we speak of the priority of this quickening work of the Spirit to our actual believing, we rather understand it of the priority of nature, than of time, the nature and order of the work requiring it to be so: a vital principle must, in order of nature, be infused before a vital act can be exerted. First, Make the tree good, and then the fruit good: and admit we should grant some priority in time also to this quickening principle, before actual faith, yet the absurdity mentioned would be no way consequent upon that concession: for as the vital act of faith quickly follows the regenerating principle, so the soul is abundantly secured against the danger objected; God never beginning any special work of grace upon the soul, and then leaving it, and the soul with it, in hazard, but preserves both to the finishing and compleating of his gracious design, Phil. i. 6.

First Use of Information.

Infer. 1. If such be the nature and necessity of this principle of divine life, as you have heard it opened in the foregoing discourse, then hence it follows, *That unregenerate men are no better than dead men.* So the text represents them. "You hath "he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins:" (*i. e.*) spiritually dead, though naturally alive; yea, and lively too as any other persons in the world. There is a threefold consideration of objects, *viz.*

1. Naturally.
2. Politically.
3. Theologically.

First Naturally, To all those things that are natural, they are alive: they can understand, reason, discourse, project, and contrive, as well as others; they can eat, drink, and build, plant, and suck out the natural comfort of these things, as much as any others. So their life is described, Job xxi. 12. "They "take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the "organ; they spend their days in wealth," *&c.* And James v. 5. "Ye have lived in pleasure upon earth," as the fish lives in the water its natural element, and yet this natural sensual life is not allowed the name of life, 1 Tim. v. 9. such persons are *dead whilst they live;* it is a base, and ignoble life, to have a soul only to salt the body, or to enable a man for a few years to eat, and drink, and talk, and laugh, and then die.

Secondly, Objects may be considered politically, and with respect to such things, they are alive also: they can buy and sell, and manage all their worldly affairs with as much dexterity, skill, and policy, as other men; yea, "the children of this "world are wiser in their generation than the children of light," Luke xvi. 8. The entire * stream of their thoughts, projects, and studies, running in that one channel; having but one design to manage, they must needs excel in worldly wisdom: But then,

Thirdly, Theologically considered, they are dead; without life, sense, or motion, towards God, and the things that are above: their understandings are dead, 1 Cor. ii. 14. and cannot receive the things that are of God: their wills are dead, and cannot move towards Jesus Christ, John vi. 65. Their affections are dead, even to the most excellent and spiritual objects; and all their duties are dead duties, without life or spirit. This is the sad case of the unregenerate world.

* May God free me from him who is a man only of one business. *Bern.*

Infer. 2. *This speaks encouragement to ministers and parents, to wait in hopes of success at last, even upon those that yet give them little hope of conversion at the present.*

The work you see is the Lord's, when the Spirit of life comes upon their dead souls, they shall believe, and be made willing; till then, we do but plough upon the rocks: yet let not our hand slack in duty, pray for them, and plead with them; you know not in which prayer, or exhortation, the Spirit of life may breathe upon them: *Can these dry bones live?* Yes, if the Spirit of life from God breathe upon them, they can, and shall live: what though their dispositions be averse to all things that are spiritual and serious, yet even such have been regenerated, when more sweet and promising natures have been passed by, and left under spiritual death.

www.libtool.com.cn

It was the observation of Mr. Ward, upon his brother Mr. Daniel Rogers, (who was a man of great gifts and eminent graces, yet of a very bad temper and constitution,) Though my brother Rogers, saith he, hath grace enough for two men, yet not half enough for himself.

It may be you have prayed, and striven long with your relations and to little purpose, yet be not discouraged. How often was Mr. John Rogers, that famous successful divine, a grief of heart to his relations in his younger years, proving a wild and lewd young man, to the great discouragement of his pious friends; yet, at last, the Lord graciously changed him, so that Mr. Richard Rogers would say, when he could exercise the utmost degree of charity or hope, for any that at present were vile and naught, *I will never despair of any man for* John Roger's *sake.*

Infer. 3. *How honourable are Christians by their new birth!* "They are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor "of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. *(i. e.)* not in an impure, or mere natural way, but in a most spiritual and supernatural manner: they are the offspring of God, the children of the Most High, as well by regeneration as by adoption; which is the greatest advancement of the human nature, next to its hypostatical union with the second person. Oh what honour is this for a poor sinful creature, to have the very life of God breathed into his soul! All other dignities of nature are trifles compared with this; this makes a Christian a sacred hallowed thing, the living temple of God, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The special object of his delight.

Infer. 4. *How deplorable is the condition of the unregenerate world, in no better case than dead men!* Now to affect our

hearts with the misery of such conditions, let us consider and compare it in the following particulars.

First, There is no *beauty* in the dead, all their loveliness goes away at death; there is no spiritual beauty or loveliness in any that are unregenerate: It is true, many of them have excellent moral *homilitical virtues*, which adorn their conversations in the eyes of men; but what are all these, but so many sweet flowers strewed over a dead corps?

Secondly, The dead have no *pleasure* nor delight; even so the unregenerate are incapable of the delights of the Christian life: "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," Rom. viii. 6 *(i. e.)* this is the only serene, placid, and pleasant life: when the *prodigal*, who was once dead, was alive, then he began to be merry, Luke xv. 24. They live in sensual pleasures, but this is to be dead while alive, in scripture-reckoning.

Thirdly, the dead have no *heat*, they are as cold as clay: so are all the unregenerate towards God and things above: their *lusts* are *hot*, but their *affections* to God *cold* and *frozen*: that which makes a gracious heart *melt*, will not make an unregenerate heart *move*.

Fourthly, The dead must be buried, Gen. xxiii. 4. "Bury my "dead out of my sight:" So must the unregenerate be buried out of God's sight for ever: buried in the lowest hell, in the place of darkness, for ever, John iii. 3. Wo to the unregenerate, good had it been for them they had never been born.

Infer. 5. *How greatly are all men concerned to examine their condition, with respect to spiritual life and death!* It is very common for men to * presume upon their union with, and interest in Christ: This privilege is, by common mistake, extended generally to all that profess the Christian religion, and practise the external duties of it, when, in truth, no more are, or can be, united to Christ, than are quickened by the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1, 2. O try your interest in Christ by this rule, if I am quickened by Christ, I have union with Christ. And,

First, If there be spiritual sense in your souls, there is spiritual life in them: there are αἰσθητήρια, senses belonging to the spiritual, as well as to the animal life, Heb. v. 14. They can feel, and sensibly groan, under soul pressures and burdens of sin, Rom. vii. 24. The dead feel not, moan not, under the burdens of sin, but the living do: they may be sensible, indeed, of the evil of sin, with respect to themselves, but not as against God; dam-

* By presuming they hope, and by hoping they perish. *Ames.*

nation may ſcare them, but pollution doth not; hell may frigh them, but not the offending of God.

Secondly, If there be ſpiritual *hunger and thirſt*, it is a ſweet ſign of ſpiritual life; this ſign agrees to Chriſtians of a day old, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Even "new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of "the word:" If ſpiritual life be in you, you know how to expound that ſcripture, Pſal. xlii. 1. without any other interpreter than your own experience: you will feel ſomewhat like the gnawing of an empty ſtomach, making you reſtleſs during the interruption of your daily communion with the Lord.

Thirdly, If there be *ſpiritual conflicts* with ſin, there is ſpiritual life in your ſoul, Gal. v. 17. Not only a combat betwixt *light* in the higher, and *luſt* in the lower faculties; not only oppoſition to more groſs external corruptions, that carry more infamy and horror with them, than other ſins do: but the ſame faculty will be the ſeat of war; and the more inward, and ſecret any luſt is, by ſo much the more will it be oppoſed, and mourned over.

In a word the weakeſt Chriſtian may, upon impartial obſervation, find ſuch ſigns of ſpiritual life in himſelf (if he will allow himſelf time to reflect upon the bent and frame of his own heart) as deſires after God, conſcience of duties, fears, cares, and ſorrows, about ſin; delight in the ſociety of heavenly and ſpiritual men, a loathing and burden in the company of vain and carnal perſons.

Object. O! but I have a very dead heart to ſpiritual things.

Sol. It is a ſign of life that you feel, and are ſenſible of that deadneſs; and beſides, there is a great deal of difference betwixt *ſpiritual deadneſs* and *death*: the one is the ſtate of the unregenerate, the other is the *diſeaſe* of regenerate men.

Object. Some ſigns of ſpiritual life are clear to me, but I cannot cloſe with others.

Sol. If you can really cloſe with any, it may ſatisfy you, though you be dark in others: for if a child cannot go, yet if it can ſuck; but if it cannot ſuck, yet if it can cry; yea, if it cannot cry, yet if it breathe, it is alive.

SERMON VI.

Describing that Act on our Part, by which we do actually and effectually apply CHRIST to our own Souls.

www.libtool.com.cn

JOHN i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.*

NO sooner is the soul quickened by the Spirit of God, but it answers, in some measure, the end of God in that work, by its *active reception of Jesus Christ, in the way of believing:* What this vital act of faith is, upon which so great a weight depends, as our interest in Christ, and everlasting blessedness, this scripture before us will give you the best account of; wherein, (omitting the consideration of the coherence and context of the words) we have three things to ponder.

First, The high and glorious privilege conferred, *viz.* "Power to become the sons of God."

Secondly, The subject of this privilege described, "As many as received him."

Thirdly, The description explained, by way of opposition, "even as many as believe on his name."

First, The privilege conferred is a very high and glorious one, than which no created being is capable of greater; "power to become the sons of God:" This word ἐξουσίαν is of large extent and signification, and is, by some, rendered "*this* * *right*, by others *this dignity*, by others *this prerogative*, this *privilege* or *honour*:" It implies a title or right to *adoption*, not only with respect to the present benefits of it in this life, but also to that blessed inheritance which is laid up in heaven for the sons of God. And so Grotius rightly expounds it of our *consummate* sonship, consisting in the actual enjoyment of blessedness, as well as that which is *inchoate:* not only a right to pardon, favour and acceptance now, but to heaven, and the full enjoyment of God hereafter. O what an honour, dignity, and privilege is this!

* Beza, *hoc jus:* Piscator, *hanc dignitatem.* Lightfoot, *prerogativam.* Heinsius, *privilegium; nec multo aliter voce* ἐξουσία *Hellenistæ usi videntur cum Chaldæorum* שלטן *expresserunt.* Heins.

Secondly, The subjects of this privilege are described: "As "many as received him." This text describes them by that very grace, *faith*, which gives them their title and right to Christ and his benefits; and by that very act of faith, which primarily confers their right to his person, and secondarily to his benefits, *viz. receiving him*: there be many graces besides faith, but faith only is the grace that gives us right to Christ; and there be many acts of faith besides receiving, but this receiving or embraeing of Christ, is the justifying and saving act: "As many as "received him," [ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν,] *as many*, be they of any nation, sex, age, or condition. For "there is neither Greek, "nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scy-"thian, bond or free: but Christ is all, and in all," Col. iii. 11.

Nothing but unbelief bars men from Christ and his benefits. As many as [*received* † *him*;] the word signifies "to accept, "take," or, (as we fitly render), to receive, assume, or take to us, a word most aptly expressing the nature and office of faith, yea, the very justifying and saving act: and we are also heedfully to note its special object, ἔλαβον αὐτόν: The text saith not αὐτᾶ, *his*, but αὐτόν, *him*, *i. e.* his person, as he is clothed with his offices, and not only his benefits and privileges. These are secondary, and consequential things to our *receiving him* ‡. So that it is a receiving, assuming, or accepting the Lord Jesus Christ, which must have respect to the tenders and proposals of the gospel, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed "from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17. therein is Jesus Christ revealed, proposed, and offered unto sinners, as the only way of justification and salvation; which gospel-offer, as before was opened, is therefore ordinarily necessary to believing, Rom. x. 11, 12, 13, &c.

Thirdly, This description is yet further explained, by this additional exegetical clause, [*even to them that believe in his name*]; here the terms are varied, though the things expressed in both be the same; what he called *receiving* there, is called *believing on his name* here, to shew us that the very essence of saving faith, consists in our receiving of Christ. By *his name*,

† Λαμβανειν and παραλαμβανειν, both signify *to receive*.

‡ The gospel offer is God's act, made by means of the word: acceptance is man's act; yet so, as it is also the gift of God; for a man cannot receive the Mediator, unless faith, which is the instrument of this acceptance, be given him by God.

we are to understand Christ himself: it is usual to take these two, believing in him, and believing in his name, as terms convertible, and of the same importance, הוא ושמו ושמו, *Ipse est nomen suum, et nomen ejus ipse est* *: His name is Himself, and himself is his name. So that here we have the true nature, and precious benefits, of saving faith, excellently expressed in this scripture; the sum of which take in this proposition:

www.libtool.com.cn

Doct. *That the receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that saving and vital act of faith, which gives the soul right both to his person and benefits.*

We cannot act spiritually, till we begin to live spiritually: Therefore the spirit of life must first join himself to us, in his quickening work, (as was shewn you in the last sermon), which being done, we begin to act spiritually, by taking hold upon, or receiving Jesus Christ, which is the thing designed to be opened in this sermon.

The soul is the life of the body, faith is the life of the soul, and Christ is the life of faith. There are several sorts of faith, besides saving faith, and in saving faith there are several acts, besides the justifying or saving act; but this receiving act, which is to be our subject this day, is that upon which both our righteousness and eternal happiness do depend. "This, as a *form*, "differences saving faith from all other kinds or sorts of "faith †;" by this it is that we are justified and saved. "To "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become "the sons of God:" yet it doth not justify and save us by reason of any proper dignity that is found in this act, but by reason of the object it receives or apprehends. The same thing is often expressed in scripture by other terms, as "Coming to "Christ," John vi. 35. *Trusting* or *staying* upon Christ, Isa. l. 10. But whatever is found in those expressions, it is all comprehended in this, as will appear hereafter. Now, the method into which I shall cast my discourse on this subject, that I may handle it with as much perspicuity and profit as I can, shall be,

First, To explain and open the nature of this receiving of Christ, and shew you what it includes.

Secondly, To prove, that this is the justifying and saving act of faith.

* Drusius.

† *Forma vel aliquid formae analogum ponitur differentiae loco.*

Thirdly, To shew you the excellency of this act of faith.

Fourthly. To remove some mistakes, and give you the true account of the dignity and excellency of this act.

Fifthly, And then bring home all, in a proper and close application.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, In the first place then, I will endeavour to explain and open the nature of this receiving of Christ, and shew you what is implied in it.

And, indeed, it involves many deep mysteries, and things of greatest weight. People are generally very ignorant and unacquainted with the importance of this expression, they have very slight thoughts of faith, who never passed under the illuminating, convincing, and humbling work of the Spirit: but we shall find, that saving faith is quite another thing, and differs in its whole kind and nature from that traditional faith, and common assent, which is so fatally mistaken for it in the world ‡.

For, *First*, It is evident, that no man can receive Jesus Christ in the darkness of natural ignorance: we must understand and discern who and what he is, whom we receive to be *the Lord our righteousness*. If we know not his person, and his offices, we do not take, but mistake Christ. It is a good rule in the civil law, *Non consentit qui non sentit*: A mistake of the person invalidates the match. He that takes Christ for a mere man, or denies the satisfaction of his blood, or divests him of his human nature, or denies any of his most glorious and necessary of-

‡ There are divers other expressions by which the nature of saving faith is expressed in scripture, *viz*. Eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, John vi. 40. Coming to Christ, Mat. xi. 28. Having the Son, 1 John v. 12. Trusting or depending upon him, for which the Hebrew uses three emphatical words, אמן בטח and חסה. The first signifies a firm and stable trust. The second, to lean or depend with security. The third, to betake one's self to a sanctuary for a protection. All which is supposed or included in our receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ: in eating and drinking we must receive meat and drink; coming to Christ is necessarily supposed in receiving him, for there is no receiving at a distance. Having the Son, and receiving him, are notions of the same importance; and for trusting, relying with security, and betaking ourselves to Christ for refuge, they are all involved in the receiving act; for as God offers him to us as the only prop of our hearts and hopes, so we receive him to rely upon him: And as he is held forth in the gospel as the only *Asylum*, or city of refuge, so we take or receive him, and accordingly betake our souls to him for refuge.

fices, let them cry up as high as they will his spirituality, glory, and exemplary life and death, they can never receive Jesus Christ aright: This is such a crack, such a flaw, in the very foundation of faith, as undoes and destroys all. *Ignorantia non est consensus:* All saving faith is founded in light and knowledge, and therefore it is called *knowledge*, Isa. liii. 11.; and *seeing* is inseparably connected with *believing*, John vi. 40. Men must hear and learn of the Father, before they can come to Christ, John vi. 45. The receiving act of faith is directed and guided by knowledge. I will not presume to state the degree of knowledge, which is absolutely necessary to the reception of Christ; I know the first actings of faith are, in most Christians, accompanied with much darkness and confusion of understanding: but yet we must say in the general, that wherever faith is, there is so much light as is sufficient to discover to the soul, its own sins, dangers and wants; and the all-sufficiency, suitableness, and necessity of Christ, for the supply and remedy of all; and without this, Christ cannot be received. "Come unto me, all "ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Mat. xi. 28.

Secondly, The receiving Christ necessarily implies the assent of the understanding of the truths of Christ revealed in the gospel, *viz.* his person, natures, offices, his incarnation, death, and satisfaction; which assent, though it be not in itself saving faith, yet is it the foundation and ground-work of it; it being impossible the soul should receive and fiducially embrace, what the mind doth not assent unto as true and infallibly certain ‖. Now, there are three degrees of assent; *conjecture*, *opinion*, and *belief*. Conjecture is but a slight and weak inclination to assent to the thing propounded, by reason of the weighty objections that lie against it. Opinion is a more steady and fixed assent, when a man is almost certain, though yet some fear of the contrary remains with him. Belief is a more full and assured assent to the truth; to which the mind may be brought four ways.

First, By the perfect intelligence of sense, not hindered or deceived. So I believe the truth of these propositions, Fire is hot, water moist, honey is sweet, gall is bitter.

Secondly, By the native clearness of self-evidencing principles. So I believe the truth of these propositions, The whole is more than a part; the cause is before the effect.

Thirdly, By discourse, and rational deduction. So I believe

‖ See Dr. Sclater, on Rom. iv. 3.

the truth of this proposition, Where all the parts of a thing are, there is the whole.

Fourthly, By infallible testimony, when any thing is witnessed or asserted, by one whose truth is unquestionable *. And of this sort is the assent of faith; which is therefore called our receiving the witness of God, 1 John v. 9. our setting to our seal that God is true, John iii. 33. This *prima veritas*, divine verity, is the very formal object of faith: into this we resolve our faith. *Thus saith the Lord*, is that firm foundation upon which our assent is built. And thus we see good reason to believe those profound mysteries of the incarnation of Christ; the hypostatical union of the two natures in his wonderful person; the mystical union of Christ and believers; though we cannot understand these things, by reason of the darkness of our minds. It satisfies the soul to find these mysteries in the written word; upon that foundation it firmly builds its assent; and without such an assent of faith, there can be no embracing of Christ: all acts of faith and religion, without assent, are but as so many arrows shot at random into the open air, they signify nothing for want of a fixed determinate object.

It is therefore the policy of Satan, by injecting or fomenting atheistical thoughts, (with which young converts use to find themselves greatly infested) to undermine and destroy the whole work of faith. But God makes his people victorious over them: yea, and even at that time they do assent to the truths of the word, when they think they do not: As appears by their tenderness and fear of sin, their diligence and care of duty. If I discern these things in a Christian's life, he must excuse me if I believe him not, when he saith he doth not assent to the truths of the gospel.

Thirdly, Our receiving Christ necessarily implies our hearty *approbation*, liking, and estimation; yea, the acquiescence of our very souls in Jesus Christ, as the most excellent, suitable, and complete remedy for all our wants, sins and dangers, that ever could be prepared by the wisdom and love of God for us: We must receive him with such a frame of heart as rests upon,

* It is not becoming, that God, when he would speak to men, should confirm his words with arguments, as if otherwise he was not to be believed; but, as becomes himself, he speaks as the supreme Judge of all things, whose (prerogative) it is, not to argue, but to pronounce what is truth, *&c. Lactan. de falsa religione, p.* (*mihi*) 179. Faith fails, where the divine authority of the scripture is wanting.

and trusts in him, if ever we receive him aright; "To them "that believe he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. This is the only sovereign plaister in all the world that is large enough, and efficacious enough, to cure our wounds: And therefore as Christ is most highly esteemed, and heartily approved, as the only remedy for our souls; so the sovereign grace and wisdom of God are admired, and the way and method he hath taken to save poor souls, by Jesus Christ, most heartily approved, as the most apt and excellent method, both for his glory, and our good, that ever could be taken: For it is a plain case, that none will espouse themselves with conjugal affections, to that person whom they esteem not as the best for them that can be chosen: None will forsake and quit all for his sake, except they account him as the spouse did, "The chiefest of ten thousand."

There are two things in Christ, which must gain the greatest approbation in the soul of a poor, convinced sinner, and bring it to rest upon Jesus Christ.

First, That it can find nothing in Christ that is distastful, or unsuitable to it, as it doth experimentally find in the best creatures. In him is no *weakness*, but a fulness of all saving abilities; "Able to save to the uttermost:" No *pride*, causing him to scorn and contemn the most wretched soul that comes to him: No inconstancy or *levity*, to cause him to cast off the soul, whom he hath once received: No *passion* but a Lamb for meekness and patience: There is no spot to be found in him, but "He is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 16.

Secondly, As the believer can find nothing in Christ that is distastful, so it finds nothing wanting in Christ that is necessary, or desireable: Such is the fulness of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that is in Christ, that nothing is left to desire, but the full enjoyment of him. O saith the soul, how completely happy shall I be, if I can but win Christ! I would not envy the *nobles* of the earth, were I but in Christ. I am hungry, and athirst, and Christ is meat indeed, and drink indeed; this is the best thing in all the world for me, because so necessary, and so suitable, to the needs of a soul ready to perish. I am a law-condemned, and a self-condemned sinner; trembling for fear of the execution of the curse upon me every moment; in Christ is complete righteousness to justify my soul; O there is nothing better for me than Christ. I see myself plunged both in nature and practice, into the odious pollutions of sin, and in Christ is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness: His blood is a fountain of *merit*, his spirit is a fountain of holiness and purity: None but Christ, none but

Christ. O the manifold wisdom, and unsearchable love of God, to prepare, and furnish such a Christ, so fully answering all the needs, all the distresses, all the fears and burdens of a poor sinner! Thus the believing soul approves of Christ as best for it. And thus in believing, it gives glory to God, Rom. iv. 21.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fourthly, Receiving Christ consists in the *consent and choice of the will;* and this is the opening of the heart and stretching forth of the soul to receive him: "Thy people shall be willing "day of thy power," Psal. cx. 3.

It is the great design, and main scope of the gospel, to work over the wills of poor sinners to this: And this was the great complaint of Christ against the incredulous Jews, John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

It is disputed by some, whether faith can be seated in two distinct faculties, as we seem to place it, when we say it involves both the *approbation* of the *judgment*, and the *consent* of the *will*. I will not here intangle my discourse with that fruitless dispute. I am of the same judgment with those divines, that think faith cannot be expressed fully by any one single habit, or act of the mind or will distinctly, for that (as * one well notes) there are such descriptions given of it in scripture, such things are proposed as the object of it, and such is the experience of all that sincerely believe; as no one single act, either of the mind or will, can answer unto: Nor do I see any thing repugnant to *scripture* or *philosophy* if we place it in both faculties. Consent (faith † Vasquez) seems to denote the concourse of the will with the understanding; but to leave that, it is most certain the saving, justifying act of faith lies principally in the consent of the will, which consent is the effect of the Almighty Power of God, Eph. i. 19. He allures and draws the will to Christ, and he *draws with the cords of a man*, (i. e.) he prevails with it by rational arguments: For the soul being prepared by convictions of its lost and miserable estate by sin, and that there is but one door of hope open to it for an escape from the wrath to come, and that is Christ; being also satisfied of the

* Dr. Owen in his doctrine of Justification, p. 135.

† Consent seems to denote the concurrence of the will with the understanding, by relishing the same thing which the understanding doth perceive. 12. *Q.* 15. *a.* 1. Faith is not a simple act, but consists of diverse parts, knowledge, assent, and trust, which do not all belong to the same faculty. *Wendel. Theol. p.* 450.

fulness, and completeness of his saving ability, and of his willingness to make it over for our salvation, upon such just and equal terms; this cannot but prevail with the will of a poor distressed sinner, to consent, and choose him.

Fifthly and *Lastly*, The last, and principle thing included in our receiving of Christ, is the *respect* that this act of acceptance hath, unto the terms upon which Christ is tendered to us in the gospel ‡, to which it is most agreeable, 1 Cor. xv. 11. "So we "preach, and so ye believed:" Faith answers the gospel-offer, as the impress upon the *wax* doth the engraving in the *seal*; and this is of principal consideration, for there is no receiving Christ upon any other terms but his own, proposed in the gospel to us: He will never come lower, nor make them easier than they are, for any man's sake in the world; we must either receive him upon these, or part with him for ever as thousands do, who could be content to agree to some articles, but rather choose to be damned for ever, than submit to all: This is the great controversy betwixt Christ and sinners; upon this, many thousands break off the treaty, and part with Christ, because he will not come to their terms; but every true believer receives him upon his own, (*i. e.*) their acceptance of him by faith, is in all things consentaneous to the overtures made of him in the written word. So he tenders himself, and so they receive him; as will be evident in the following particulars.

First, The gospel offers Christ to us *sincerely* and really, and so the true believer receives and accepts him; even with a *faith unfeigned*: 1 Tim. i. 5. If ever the soul be serious and in earnest in any thing, it is so in this: Can we suppose the heart of him that flies for his life to the *refuge-city*, to be serious and in earnest, to escape by flight the *avenger of blood* who pursues him? Then is the heart of a convinced sinner serious in this matter; for under that notion is the work of faith presented to us, Heb. vi. 18.

Secondly, Christ is offered to us in the gospel *entirely* and *undividedly*, as cloathed with all his offices, priestly, prophetical, and regal; as Christ Jesus the Lord, Acts xvi. 31. and so the true believer receives him: The *hypocrite*, like the *harlot*, is for dividing, but the sincere believer finds the need he hath of every office of Christ, and knows not how to want any thing that is in him.

‡ Rom. iv. 17. υπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης: The will like melted metal, is delivered into the gospel-mould, where it receives the same form and figure that the mould gives.

His ignorance makes him necessary and desireable to him as a *prophet:* His guilt makes him necessary as a *priest:* His strong and powerful lusts and corruptions make him necessary as a *king;* and in truth he sees not any thing in Christ that he can spare; he needs all that is in Christ, and admires infinite wisdom in nothing more, than the investing Christ with all these offices, which are *so* suited to the poor sinner's wants and miseries. Look, as the three offices are undivided in Christ, so they are in the believer's acceptance; and before this trial no hypocrite can stand; for all hypocrites reject and quarrel with something in Christ; they like his pardon better than his government. They call him, indeed, Lord and Master, but it is but an empty title they bestow upon him; for let them ask their own hearts, if Christ be Lord over their *thoughts*, as well as *words*: over their *secret*, as well as *open* actions; over their *darling* lusts, as well as others; let them ask, who will appear to be Lord and Master over them, when Christ and the world come in competition? When the pleasures of sin shall stand upon one side, and sufferings to death, and deepest points of self-denial, upon the other side? Surely it is the greatest affront, that can be offered to the divine Wisdom and Goodness, to separate in our acceptance, what is so united in Christ, for our salvation and happiness. As without any one of these offices, the work of our salvation could not be completed, so without acceptance of Christ in them all, our union with them by faith cannot be completed.

The gospel-offer of Christ includes all his offices, and gospel-faith just so receives him; to submit to him, as well as to be redeemed by him; to imitate him in the holiness of his life, as well as to reap the purchases and fruits of his *death*. It must be an entire receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ ‖.

Thirdly, Christ is offered to us in the gospel *exclusively*, as the alone and only Saviour of sinners; with whose blood and intercession nothing is to be mixed; but the soul of a sinner is singly to rely and depend on him, and no other, Acts iv. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 11. and so faith receives him, Psal. lxxi. 16. "I will make "mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Phil. iii. 9. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, "which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of

‖ A man may as lawfully join saints or angels in his mediation with Christ, as graces. It is gross idolatry to make the works of God a God, and it is but a more subtle idolatry to make the works of Christ, a Christ. *Burgess de Lage.*

"Christ:" To depend partly upon Christ's righteousness, and partly upon our own, is to set one foot upon a rock, and the other in a quick-sand; either Christ will be to us all in all, or nothing at all, in point of righteousness and salvation; he affects not social honour; as he did the whole *work*, so he expects the sole *praise*; if he be not able to save to the uttermost, why do we depend upon him at all? and if he be, why do we lean upon any beside him?

Fourthly, The gospel offers Christ *freely* to sinners as the *gift*, not the *sale* of God, John iv. 10. Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. and even so faith receives him. The believer comes to Christ with an empty hand, not only as an undeserving, but as an hell-deserving sinner; he comes to Christ as to one that justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. "Unto him that worketh not, but "believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is count-"ed for righteousness:" Where by him that worketh not, he means a convinced, humbled sinner, who finds himself utterly unable to do the task the law sets him, (*i. e.*) perfectly to obey it; and therefore in a law sense is said not to work; for it is all one as to the intent and purpose of the law, not to work, and not to work perfectly: This he is convinced of, and therefore comes to Christ as one that is in himself ungodly, acknowledging the righteousness, by which alone he can stand before God, is in Christ, and not in himself, in whole, or in part; and by the way, let this encourage poor souls that are scared and daunted for want of due qualifications, from closing with and embracing Christ: There is nothing qualifies any man for Christ more than a sense of his unworthiness of him, and the want of all excellencies or ornaments, that may commend him to divine acceptance.

Fifthly, The gospel offers Christ *orderly* to sinners; first his *person*, then his *privileges*. God first gives his Son, and then with him, or as a consequent of that gift, he gives us all things, Rom. viii. 32. In the same order must our faith receive him. The believer doth not marry the *portion* first, and then the *person*, but to be found in him is the first and great care of a believer.

I deny not but it is lawful for any to have an eye to the benefits of Christ. Salvation from wrath is, and lawfully may be intended and aimed at: "Look unto me, and be saved all ye "ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22. Nor do I deny but there are many poor souls, who being in deep distress and fear, may, and often do, look mostly to their own safety at first; and that there is much confusion, as well in the actings of their faith, as

in their condition; but sure I am, it is the proper order in believing, first to accept the person of the Lord Jesus: Heaven is no doubt very desireable, but Christ is more: "Whom have I in "heaven but thee?" Psal. lxxiii. 25. Union with Christ is, in order of nature, antecedent to the communication of his privileges, therefore so it ought to be in the order and method of believing.

www.libtool.com.cn

Sixthly, Christ is *advisedly* offered in the gospel to sinners, as the result of God's eternal counsel, a project of grace upon which his heart and thoughts have been much set, Zech. vi. 13. The counsel of peace was betwixt the Father and Son. And so the believer receives him, most deliberately weighing the matter in his most deep and serious thoughts; for this is a time of much solicitude and thoughtfulness. The soul's espousals are acts of judgment, Hos. ii. 19. on our part, as well as on God's: We are therefore bid to sit down and count the cost, Luke xiv. 28. Faith, or the actual receiving of Christ, is the result of many previous debates in the soul: The matter hath been pondered over and over: The objections and discouragements, both from the self-denying terms of the gospel, and our own vileness and deep guilt, have been ruminated, and lain upon our hearts day and night, and after all things have been balanced in the most deep consideration, the soul is determined to this conclusion, I must have Christ, be the terms never so hard, be my sins never so great and many, I will yet go to him, and venture my soul upon him; if I perish, I perish. I have thought out all my thoughts, and this is the result, union with Christ here, or separation from God for ever must be my lot.

And thus doth the Lord open the hearts of his elect, and win the consent of their wills to receive Jesus Christ upon the deepest consideration, and debate of the matter in their own most solemn thoughts: They understand and know, that they must deeply deny themselves, take up his cross and follow him, Matth. xvi. 24. renounce not only *sinful*, but *religious* self; these are hard and difficult things, but yet the necessity and excellency of Christ make them appear eligible, and rational; by all which you see faith is another thing than what the sound of that word (as it is generally understood) signifies to the understandings of most men. This is that fiducial receiving of Christ here to be opened.

Secondly, Our next work will be to evince this receiving of Christ as hath been opened, to be that special saving faith of God's elect: This is that faith of which such great and glorious things are spoken in the gospel, which, whosoever hath shall

be saved, and he that hath it not shall be damned: and this I shall evidently prove by the following arguments or reasons.

Arg. 1. *First*, That faith which gives the soul right and title to spiritual adoption, with all the privileges and benefits thereof, is true and saving faith.

But such a receiving of Christ as hath been described, gives the soul right and title to spiritual adoption, with all the privileges and benefits thereof.

Therefore such a receiving of Christ as hath been described, is true and saving faith.

The major proposition is undeniable, for our right and title to spiritual adoption, and the privileges thereof arise from our union with Jesus Christ; we being united to the Son of God, are, by virtue of that union, reckoned or accounted sons, Gal. iii. 26. "You are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ:" The effect of saving faith is union with Christ's person, the consequent of that union is adoption, or right to the inheritance.

The minor is most plain in the text: "To as many as received him, to them gave he power or right to become the "sons of God:" A false faith hath no such privilege annexed to it; no unbeliever is thus dignified: No stranger entitled to this inheritance.

Arg. 2. *Secondly*, That only is saving and justifying faith, which is in all true believers, in none but true believers; and in all true believers at all times.

But such a receiving of Christ as hath been described, is in all true believers, in none but true believers, and in all true believers at all times.

Therefore such a receiving of Christ as hath been described, is the only saving and justifying faith.

The major is undeniable, that must needs contain the essence of saving faith, which is proper to every true believer, at all times, and to no other.

The minor will be as clear, for there is no other act of faith, but this of *fiducial receiving Christ* as he is offered, that doth agree to all true believers, to none but true believers, and to all true belivers at all times.

There be three acts of faith, * *assent*, *acceptance*, and *assurance*: The Papists generally give the essence of saving faith to

* The act of faith consists in assent, by which one assents to any proposition revealed by God on the authority of the revealer. *Becan. Theol. Schol. Tom.* 3. *cap.* 3. *Q.* 4.

the first, *viz. assent*. The Lutherans, and some of our own, give it to the last, *viz. assurance*: But it can be neither way so. *Assent* doth not agree only to true believers, or justified persons. *Assurance* agrees to justified persons, and them only, but not to all justified persons, and that at all times.

Assent is too low to contain the essence of saving faith; it is found in the unregenerate as well as the regenerate: Yea, in devils as well as men, James ii. 19. it is supposed and included in justifying faith, but it is not the justifying or saving act. *Assurance* is as much too high, being found only in some eminent believers: and in them too but at some times: There is many a true believer, to whom the joy and comfort of assurance are denied: They may say of their union with Christ, as Paul said of his vision; whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; so they, whether in Christ or out of Christ, they cannot tell †.

A true believer may "walk in darkness, and see no light," Isa. l. 10. Nay a man must be a believer, before he know himself to be so; the *direct act* of *faith* is before the *reflex act*; so that the justifying act of faith lies neither in *assent*, nor in *assurance*. *Assent* saith, I believe that Christ is, and that he is the Saviour of the elect. *Assurance* saith, I believe, and am sure that Christ died for me, and that I shall be saved through him. So that *assent widens* the nature of faith too much, and *assurance* upon the other hand *straitens* it too much; but *acceptance*, which saith, I take Christ in all his offices to be mine, this fits it exactly, and belongs to all true believers, and to none but true believers; and to all true believers at all times: This therefore must be the justifying and saving act of faith.

Arg. 3. *Thirdly*, That, and no other, is the justifying and saving act of faith, to which the properties and effects of saving faith do belong, or in which they are only found.

But in the fiducial receiving of Christ, are the properties and effects of saving faith only found.

This therefore must be the justifying and saving act of faith.

First, By saving faith, Christ is said to "dwell in our hearts," Eph. iii. 17. but it is neither by *assent*, nor *assurance*, but by *acceptance*; and receiving him that he dwells in our hearts; not by *assent*, for then he would dwell in the unregenerate;

† Many new born Christians live like the new-born babe, *Vivit et est vitae nescius ipse suae*: The whole stock of many a believer consists in the bare direct acts of faith.

such a pardon, which thou canst not read without tears of joy, is brought thee by the hand of faith. O inestimable grace! This cloaths the pure righteousness of Jesus upon our defiled souls, and so causes us to become the "righteousness of God in "him;" or as it is 1 John iii. 7. "Righteous as he is righte-"ous:" *Non formali & intrinsica justitia, sed relativa:* Not with a formal inherent righteousness of our own, but with a relative imputed righteousness from another.

www.libtool.com.cn

I know this most excellent and most comfortable doctrine of imputed righteousness, is not only *denied*, but *derided* by Papists. Stapleton calls it *spectrum cerebri Lutherani:* The monstrous birth of Luther's brain! But, blessed be God, this comfortable truth is well secured against all attempts of its adversaries. Let their blasphemous mouths call it in derision, as they do *putative righteousness, (i. e.)* a mere fancied or conceited righteousness: Yet we know assuredly, Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and that in the way of faith. If Adam's sin became ours by imputation, then so doth Christ's righteousness also become ours by imputation, Rom. v. 17. If Christ were made a sinner by the imputation of our sins to him, who had no sin of his own, then we are made righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, who have no righteousness of our own, according to 1 Cor. v. 21. This was the way in which Abraham, the Father of them that believe, was justified, and therefore this is the way in which all believers, the children of Abraham, must, in the like manner, be justified, Rom. iv. 22, 23, 24. Who can express the worth of faith in this one respect, were this all it did for our souls?

But, *Thirdly*, It is the *spring* of our spiritual peace and joy; and that as it is the instrument of our *justification*. If it be an instrument of our *justification*, it cannot but be the spring of our *consolation*, Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have "peace with God:" In uniting us with Christ, and apprehending and applying his righteousness to us, it becomes the seed, or root of all the peace and joy of a Christian's life. Joy, the child of faith, therefore bears its name, Phil. i. 25. "The joy of "faith," So 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. "Believing we rejoice with joy "unspeakable:" We cannot forbear rejoicing when, by faith, we are brought to the sight, and knowledge of such a privileged state: when faith hath first given, and then cleared our title to Christ, joy is no more under the soul's command; we cannot but rejoice, and that with joy unspeakable.

Fourthly, It is the *means* of our spiritual livelihood and subsistence: all other graces, like birds in the nest, depend upon

what faith brings in to them: take away faith, and all the graces languish and die: joy, peace, hope, patience, and all the rest, depend upon faith, as the members of the natural body do upon the vessels by which blood and spirits are conveyed to them. "The life which I now live (saith the apostle) is by "the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. It provides our *ordinary food*, and *extraordinary cordials*, Psal. xxvii. 13. "I "had fainted unless I had believed." And seeing it is all this to our souls,

Fifthly, In the last place, it is no wonder that it is the main scope and drift of the gospel, to press and bring souls to believing: it is the gospel's grand design to bring up the hearts of men and women to faith. The urgent *commands* of the gospel aim at this, 1 John iii. 23. Mark i. 14, 15. John xii. 36. Hither also look the great *promises* and encouragements of the *gospel*, John vi. 35, and 37. So Mark xvi. 16. And the opposite sin of unbelief is every where fearfully aggravated, and *threatned*, John xvi. 8, 9. John iii. 18, 35. And this was the third thing promised, namely, a discovery of the transcendent worth and excellency of saving faith.

Fourthly, But lest we commit a mistake here, to the prejudice of Christ's honour and glory, which must not be given to another, no not to faith itself; I promised you in the fourth place, to shew you upon what account faith is thus dignified and honoured: that so we may give unto *faith*, the things that are *faith's*; and to Christ the things that are Christ's.

And I find four opinions about the interest of faith in our justification: some will have it to justify us *formally*, not relatively; *i. e.* upon the account of its own intrinsical value and worth; and this is the *popish* sense of justification by faith. Some affirm, that though faith be not our perfect legal righteousness, considered as a work of ours, yet the *act* of believing is imputed to us for righteousness, *i. e.* God graciously accepts it instead of perfect legal righteousness, and so, in his esteem, it is our evangelical righteousness. And this is the Arminian sense of Justification by faith.

Some there are also, even among our reformed divines, that contend that faith justifies and saves us, as it is the condition of the new covenant. And lastly, others will have it to justify us as an *instrument* apprehending or receiving the righteousness of Christ: with which opinion I must join: when I consider my text calls it a *receiving of Christ*: most certain it is,

That, *First*, it doth not justify in the *popish sense*, upon the account of its own proper worth and dignity: for then,

First, Justification should be of debt, not of grace; contrary to Rom. iii. 23, 24.

Secondly, This would frustrate the very scope and end of the death of Christ; for if righteousness come by the law, *i. e* by the way of works and desert, then is Christ dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21.

Thirdly, Then the way of our justification by faith would be so far from excluding, that it would establish boasting, expressly contrary to the apostle, Rom. iii. 26, 27.

Fourthly, Then there should be no defects or imperfections in faith, for a defective and imperfect thing can never be the matter of our justification before God: if it justify upon the account of its own worth, and proper dignity, it can have no flaw nor imperfection in it, contrary to the common sense of all believers. Nay,

Fifthly, Then it is the same thing to be justified by faith, and to be justified by works, which the apostle so carefully distinguisheth and opposeth, Phil. iii. 9. and Rom. iv. 6. So that we conclude it doth not justify in the Popish sense, for any worth or proper excellency that is in itself.

Secondly, And it is as evident, it doth not justify us in the Arminian sense, *viz.* as the τὸ *credere*, the act of believing is imputed, or accepted by God, as our evangelical righteousness, instead of perfect legal righteousness. In the former opinion you have the dregs of Popery, and here you have refined Popery. Let all Arminians know, we have as high esteem for faith, as any men in the world, but yet we will not rob Christ to cloath faith. We cannot embrace their opinion, because,

First, We must then dethrone Christ to exalt faith: we are willing to give it all that is due to it, but we dare not despoil Christ of his glory, for faith's sake: "*He is* the Lord our "righteousness," Jer. xxiii. We dare not set the servant above the master. We acknowledge no righteousness but what the obedience and satisfaction of Christ yields us. His blood, not our faith; his satisfaction, not our believing it, is the matter of our justification before God.

Secondly, We dare not yield this point, lest we undermine all the comfort of Christians, by setting their pardon and peace upon a weak, imperfect work of their own. Oh how tottering and unstable must their station be, that stand upon such a bottom as this! What alterations are there in our faith, what mixtures of unbelief at all times, and prevalency of unbelief at

some times; and is this a foundation to build our justification and hope upon? *Debile fundamentum fallit opus*: If we lay the stress here, we build upon very loose ground, and must be at a continual loss, both as to safety and comfort.

Thirdly, We dare not wrong the justice and truth of God at that rate, as to affirm that he esteems and imputes our poor weak faith for perfect legal righteousness *. We know that the judgment of God is always according to truth: if the justice of God requires full payment, sure it will not say, it is fully satisfied by any acts of ours, when all that we can do, amounts not to one mite of the vast sum we owe to God. So that we deservedly reject this opinion also.

Thirdly, And for the third opinion, That it justifies as the *condition of the new covenant*, though some of great name and worth among our Protestant divines seem to go that way, yet I cannot see, according to this opinion, any reason why repentance may not as properly be said to justify us as faith, for it is a condition of the new covenant as much as faith; and if faith justify as a condition, then every other grace that is a condition, must justify as well as faith. I acknowledge faith to be a condition of the covenant, but cannot allow that it justifies as a condition. And therefore must profess myself best satisfied in the last opinion, which speaks it an instrument in our justification: it is the hand which receives the righteousness of Christ that justifies us, and that gives it its value above all other graces: as when we say a diamond ring is worth one hundred pounds, we mean not the gold that receives, but the stone that is set in it, is worth so much. Faith considered as an habit, is no more precious than other gracious habits are, but considered as an instrument to receive Christ and his righteousness, so it excels them all; and his instrumentality of faith is noted in these phrases, επι τη πιστει, Rom. iii. 28. and δια της πιστεως, Rom. iii. 22. *By faith, and through faith.* And thus much of the nature and excellency of saving faith.

* Because faith receives Christ our righteousness, and ascribes all to the grace of God in him, therefore we are said to be justified by it, only on account of Christ, and not as it is our work. *Confes. Helv.*

SERMON VII.

JOHN i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.*

www.libtool.com.cn

THE nature and excellency of saving faith, together with its relation to justification, as an instrument in receiving Christ and his righteousness, having been discoursed doctrinally already, I now come to make application of it, according to the nature of this weighty and fruitful point.

And the uses I shall make of it, will be for our,

1. Information,	3. Exhortation, And
2. Examination,	4. Direction.

First Use of Information.

Use 1. And in the first, this point yields us many, and great, and useful truths, for our information: As,

Infer. 1. Is the receiving of Christ, the vital and saving act of faith, which gives the soul right to the person and privileges of Christ? Then it follows, *That the rejecting of Christ by unbelief, must needs be the damning and soul-destroying sin, which cuts a man off from Christ, and all the benefits purchased by his blood.* If there be life in receiving, there must needs be death in rejecting Christ.

There is no grace more excellent than faith; no sin more execrable, and abominable, than unbelief. Faith is the saving grace, and unbelief the damning sin, Mark xvi. 16. "He that "believeth not, shall be damned." See John iii. 18, 36. and John viii. 24.

And the reason why this sin of unbelief is the damning sin is this, Because, in the justification of a sinner, there must be a co-operation of all the con-causes that have a joint-influence on that blessed effect: As there must be free-grace for an impulsive cause, the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause, so, of necessity, there must be faith, the instrumental cause, to receive and apply what the free-grace of God designed, and the blood of Christ purchased for us. For where there are many social causes or con-causes, to produce one effect, there the effect is not produced till the last cause be in act.

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his "name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of "sins," Acts x. 43. Faith in its place, is as necessary as the blood of Christ in its place: "It is Christ in you the hope of

"glory," Col. i. 27. Not Christ in the *womb*, not Christ in the *grave*, nor Christ in *heaven*, except he be also *Christ in you*.

Though Christ be come in the flesh; though he died and rose again from the dead; yet if you believe not, you must for all that *die in your sins*, John viii. 24. And what a dreadful thing is this! better die any death whatever, than die in your sins. If you die in your sins, you will also rise in your sins, and stand at the bar of Christ in your sins: you can never receive remission, till first you have received Christ. O cursed unbelief, which *damns* the soul: *dishonours* God, 1 John v. 10. *slights* Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, as if that glorious design of redemption by his blood, the triumph and master-piece of divine wisdom, were mere *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *frustrates* the great design of the gospel, Gal. iv. 11. and consequently it must be the sin of sins; the worst and most dangerous of all sins; leaving a man under the guilt of all his other sins.

Infer. 2. If such a receiving of Christ, as hath been described, be saving and justifying faith, *then faith is a work of greater difficulty than most men understand it to be, and there are but few sound believers in the world.*

Before Christ can be received, the heart must be emptied, and opened: but most mens hearts are full of self-righteousness and vain-confidence: this was the case of the Jews, Rom. x. 3. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

Man's righteousness was once in himself, and what liquor is first put into the vessel, it ever afterwards savours of it: It is with Adam's posterity as with *bees*, which have been accustomed to go to their own hive, and carry all thither; if the *hive* be removed to another place, they will still fly to the old place, hover up and down about it, and rather die there, than go to a new place. So it is with most men. God hath removed their righteousness from *doing*, to *believing*; from *themselves* to *Christ*; but who shall prevail with them to forsake self? Nature will venture to be damned rather than do it: there is much submission in believing, and great self-denial: a proud self-conceited heart, will never stoop to live upon the stock of another's righteousness.

Besides, it is no easy thing to persuade men to receive Christ as their Lord in all things, and submit their necks to his strict and holy precepts, though it be a great truth that "* Christ's yoke

* *Jugum Christi non deterit sed honestat colla.* Bern.

"doth not gall, but grace and adorn the neck that bears it;" that the truest and sweetest liberty is in our freedom from our lusts, not in our fulfilling them; yet who can persuade the carnal heart to believe this? And much less will men ever be prevailed withal, to forsake father, mother, wife, children, inheritance, and life itself, to follow Christ: and all this upon the account of spiritual and invisible things: and yet this must be done by all that receive the Lord Jesus Christ upon gospel-terms; yea, and before the soul hath any encouraging experience of its own, to balance the manifold discouragements of sense, and carnal reason, improved by the utmost craft of Satan to dismay it; for experience is the fruit and consequent of believing. So that it may well be placed among the great *mysteries* of godliness, that Christ is believed on in the world, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Infer. 3. Hence it will follow, *That there may be more true and sound believers in the world, than know, or dare conclude themselves to be such.*

For, as many ruin their own souls by placing the essence of saving faith in naked assent, so some rob themselves of their own comfort, by placing it in full assurance. Faith, and sense of faith, are two distinct and separable mercies: you may have truly received Christ, and not receive the knowledge or assurance of it, Isa. l. 10. Some there be that say, *Thou art our God*, of whom God never said, *You are my people*: these have no *authority* to be called the sons of God: others there are, of whom God saith, *These are my people*, yet dare not call *God their God*: these have authority to be called the sons of God, but know it not. They have received Christ, that is their *safety*; but they have not yet received the knowledge and assurance of it; that is their *trouble*: the Father owns his child in the cradle, who yet knows him not to be his father.

Now there are two reasons why many believers, who might argue themselves into peace, do yet live without the comforts of their faith: and this may come to pass, either from,

First, The inevidence of the *premises*.

Secondly, Or the weighty importance of the *conclusion*.

First, It may come to pass from the inevidence of the premises. Assurance is a practical *syllogism*, and it proceeds thus:

All that truly have received Christ Jesus, they are the children of God.

I have truly received Jesus Christ,

Therefore I am the child of God.

The major proposition is found in the scripture, and there can

be no doubt of that. The *assumption* depends upon experience, or internal sense; *I have truly received Jesus Christ:* Here usually is the stumble; many great objections lie against it, which they cannot clearly answer: As,

Obj. 1. Light and knowledge are necessarily required to the right receiving of Christ, but I am dark and ignorant, many carnal unregenerate persons know more than I do, and are more able to discourse of the mysteries of religion than I am.

Sol. But you ought to distinguish of the *kinds* and *degrees* of knowledge, and then you would see that your bewailed ignorance is no bar to your interest in Christ. There are two kinds of knowledge:

1. Natural. | 2. Spiritual.

There is a *natural knowledge*, even of spiritual objects, a spark of nature blown up by an advantageous education; and though the objects of this knowledge be spiritual things, yet the light in which they are discerned, is but a mere natural light.

And there is *a spiritual knowledge* of spiritual things, the *teaching of the anointing*, as it is called, 1 John ii. 27. *(i. e.)* the effect and fruit of the Spirit's sanctifying work upon our souls, when the experience of a man's own heart informs, and teacheth his understanding, when by feeling the workings of grace in our own souls, we come to understand its nature: this is spiritual knowledge. Now, a little of this knowledge is a better evidence of a man's interest in Christ, than the most raised and excellent degree of natural knowledge: As the philosopher truly observes; *Praestat paucula de meliori scientia degustasse, quam de ignobiliori multa:* One dram of knowledge of the best and most excellent things, is better than much knowledge of Jesus Christ, that hath life and savour in it, is more than all the common things. So it is here, a little spiritual knowledge of natural, sapless knowledge of the unregenerate, which leaves the heart dead, carnal, and barren: it is not the *quantity*, but the *kind*, not the *measure*, but *the savour:* If you know so much of the evil of sin, as renders it the most bitter and burdensome thing in the world to you, and so much of the necessity and excellency of Christ, as renders him the most sweet and desirable thing in the world to you, though you may be defective in many degrees of knowledge, yet this is enough to prove yours to be the fruit of the Spirit: you may have a sanctified heart, though you have an irregular or weak head: many that knew more than you, are in *hell*; and some that once knew as little as you, are now in *heaven: In absoluto et facili stat aeternitas:* God hath not

prepared heaven only for clear and subtle heads. A little sanctified, and effectual knowledge of Christ's person, offices, suitableness, and necessity, may bring thee thither, when others with all their curious speculations and notions, may perish for ever.

Obj. 2. But you tell me, that *assent* to the truths of the gospel is necessarily included in saving faith, which, though it be not the justifying and saving act, yet it is pre-supposed and required to it. Now I have many staggerings and doubtings about the certainty and reality of these things; many horrid atheistical thoughts, which shake the assenting act of faith in the very foundation, and hence I doubt I do not believe.

Sol. There may be, and often is, a true and sincere *assent* found in the soul, that is assaulted with violent atheistical suggestions from Satan; and thereupon questions the truth of it. And this is a very clear evidence of the reality of our assent, that whatever doubts, or contrary suggestions there be, yet we dare not in our practice, contradict or slight those truths or duties which we are tempted to disbelieve, *ex. gr.* We are assaulted with atheistical thoughts, and tempted to slight and cast off all fears of sin, and practice of religious duties, yet when it comes to the point of practice, we dare not commit a known sin, the awe of God is upon us; we dare not omit a known duty, the tie of conscience is found strong enough to hold us close to it: in this case, it is plain we do really assent, when we think we do not. A man thinks he doth not love his child, yet carefully provides for him in health, and is full of grief and fears about him in sickness: why now, so long as I see all fatherly duties performed, and affections to his child's welfare manifested, let him say what he will as to the want of love to him, whilst I see this, he must excuse me if I do not believe him, when he saith he hath no love for him. Just so is it in this case, a man saith I do not assent to the being, necessity, or excellency of Jesus Christ; yet, in the mean time, his soul is filled with cares and fears about securing his interest in him, he is found panting and thirsting for him with vehement desires, there is nothing in all the world would give him such joy, as to be well assured of an interest in him; while it is thus with any man, let him say or think what he will of his assent, it is manifest by this he doth truly, and heartily assent, and there can be no better proof of it than these real effects produced by it.

Secondly, But if these, and other objections were never so fully answered for the clearing of the *assumption*, yet it often falls out, that believers are afraid to draw the *conclusion*, and that fear partly arises from,

First, The weighty importance of this matter.

Secondly, The sense of the deceitfulness of their own hearts.

First, The conclusion is of infinite importance to them, it is the everlasting happiness of their souls, than which nothing is, or can be, of greater weight upon their spirits: things in which we are most deeply concerned, are not lightly and hastily received by us: it seems so great and so good, that we are still apt (if there be any room for it) to suspect the truth and certainty thereof, as never being sure enough.

Thus when the women that were the first messengers and witnesses of Christ's resurrection, Luke xxiv. 10, 11. came and told the disciples those wonderful and comfortable tidings, it is said, "That their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they "believed them not:" They thought it was too good to be true; too great to be hastily received; so it is in this case.

Secondly, The sense they have of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and the daily workings of hypocrisy there, makes them afraid to conclude in so great a point as this is.

They know that very many daily cozen and cheat themselves in this matter; they know also that their own hearts are full of falseness and deceit; they find them so in their daily observations of them; and what if they should prove so in this? Why then they are lost for ever! They also know there is not the like danger in their fears and jealousies, that would be in their vain confidences and presumptions: by the one, they are only deprived of their present comfort, but by the other, they would be ruined for ever: and therefore chuse rather to dwell with their own fears (though they be uncomfortable companions) than run the danger of so great a mistake, which would be infinitely more fatal. And this being the common case of most Christians, it follows that there must be many more believers in the world than do think, or dare conclude, themselves to be such.

Infer. 4. If the right receiving of Jesus Christ, be true, saving, and justifying faith, *then those that have the least, and lowest degree and measure of saving faith, have cause for ever to admire the bounty and riches of the grace of God to them therein.*

If you have received never so little of his bounty by the hand of providence, in the good things of this life, yet if he have given you any measure of true saving faith, he hath dealt bountifully indeed with you: this mercy alone is enough to balance all other wants and inconveniencies of this life, "poor in the

"world, rich in faith," James ii. 5. O let your hearts take in the full sense of this bounty of God to you; say with the apostle, Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Je-"sus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" and you will in this one mercy, find matter enough of praise and thanksgiving, wonder and admiration to your dying day, yea, to all eternity: for, do but consider,

First, The smallest measure of saving faith which is found in any of the people of God, receives Jesus Christ: and in receiving him, what mercy is there which the believing soul doth not receive in him, and with him? Rom. viii. 32.

O believer, though the arms of thy faith be small and weak, yet they embrace a great Christ, and receive the richest gift that ever God bestowed upon the world: no sooner art thou become a believer, but Christ is in thee the hope of glory; and thou hast authority to become a son or daughter of God? thou hast the broad seal of heaven to confirm thy title and claim to the privileges of adoption, for "to as many as received him, to them "gave he power to become the sons of God." [*To as many*,] be they strong, or be they weak, provided they really receive Christ by faith; there is authority or power given, so that it is no act of presumption in them to say, God is our Father, heaven is our inheritance. O precious faith! the treasures of ten thousand worlds cannot purchase such privileges as these: all the crowns and scepters of the earth, sold at their full value, are no price for such mercies.

Secondly, The least degree of saving faith, brings the soul into a state of perfect and full justification. For if it receives Jesus Christ, it must therefore needs in him, and with him, receive a free, full, and final pardon of sin: the least measure of faith receives remission for the greatest sins. "By him all that "believe are justified from all things," Acts xiii. 39. it unites thy soul with Christ, and then as the necessary consequent of that union, there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. οὐδὲν κατάκριμα, not one condemnation, how many soever our sins have been.

Thirdly, The least measure, or degree of saving faith, is a greater mercy than God hath bestowed, or ever will bestow upon many that are far above you in outward respects: *All men have not faith*: nay, it is but a remnant among men that believe. Few of the *nobles* and *potentates* of the world, have such a gift as this: they have houses and lands, yea, crowns and sceptres, but no faith, no Christ, no pardon; they have autho-

rity to rule over men, but no authority to become the sons of God, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

Say therefore in thy most debased, straitned, afflicted condition, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt "bountifully with thee."

Fourthly, The least degree of saving faith is more than all the power of nature can produce: There must be a special revelation of the arm of the Lord in that work, Isa. liii. 1. Believers are not "born of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the "will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. all believing motions towards Christ, are the effects of the Father's drawing, John vi. 44. a glorious and irresistable power goes forth from God to produce it, whence it is called "the faith of the opera-"tion of God," Col. ii. 12.

So then, let not believers despise the day of small things, or overlook that great and infinite mercy which is wrapt up in the least degree of saving faith.

Infer. 5. *Learn hence the impossibility of their salvation, who neither know the nature, nor enjoy the means of saving faith.*

My soul pities and mourns over the infidel world. Ah! what will become of the millions of poor unbelievers! there is but one door of salvation, *viz.* Christ; and but one key of faith to open that door: and as that key was never given to the Heathen world; so it is laid aside, or taken away from the people by their cruel guides, all over the Popish world; were you among them, you should hear nothing else pressed as necessary to your salvation but a blind, implicit faith, to believe as the church believes; that is, to believe they know not what.

To believe as the *pope* believes; that is, as an infidel believes, for so they confess he may be, * and though there be such a thing, as an explicit faith sometimes spoken of among them, yet it is very sparingly discoursed, very falsely described, and exceedingly slighted by them, as the meerest trifle in the world.

First, It is but sparingly discoursed of: they love not to accustom the peoples ears to such a doctrine; one of themselves confesses that there is so deep a silence of explicit, particular faith in the *Romish church*, that you may find many every where, that believe no more of these things than *Heathen philosophers* †.

Secondly, When it is preached or written of, it is falsely de-

* For the Pope's internal faith is not necessary to the church. *Canus in loc. Theol. p.* 344.

† Navarr. cap. 11. p. 142.

ſcribed: for they place the whole nature and eſſence of juſtifying and ſaving faith in a naked aſſent: which the devils have as well as men, James ii. 19. no more than this is preſſed upon the people at any time, as neceſſary to their ſalvation.

Thirdly, And even this particular explicit faith, when it is ſpoken or written of, is exceedingly ſlighted. I think if the *devil* himſelf were in the *pulpit*, he could hardly tell how to bring men to a more low and ſlight eſteem of faith; to repreſent it more as a very trifle, or a quite needleſs thing, than theſe his agents have done. Some ‡ ſay, if a man believe with a particular explicit faith, (*i. e.*) if he actually aſſent to the ſcripture-truths once in a year, it is enough. Yea, and others ‖ think it too much to oblige people to believe once in twelve months; and, for their eaſe, tell them, if they believe once in twelve years it is ſufficient: and, leſt this ſhould be too great a task, others * affirm, that if it be done but once in their whole life, and that at the point of death too, it is enough, eſpecially for the rude and common people. Good God! what a doctrine is here! It was a ſaying long ago of Gregory (as I remember) *Malus miniſter eſt niſus diaboli*: A wicked miniſter is the devil's *gooſehawk*, that goes a birding for hell; and O what game have theſe hawks of hell among ſuch numerous flocks of people! O bleſs God, while you live, for your deliverance from Popery; and ſee that you prize the goſpel, and means of grace, you enjoy at an higher rate, leſt God bring you once more under that yoke, which neither you nor your fathers could bear.

Second uſe for examination.

Doth ſaving faith conſiſt in a due and right receiving of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? then let me perſuade you to examine yourſelves in this great point of faith. Reflect ſolemnly upon the tranſactions that have been betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls: think cloſe on this ſubject of meditation.

If all you were worth in the world lay in one precious ſtone, and that ſtone were to be tried by the ſkilful *Lapidary*, whether it were true or falſe, whether it would fly, or endure under the ſmart ſtroke of his hammer, ſure your thoughts could not be unconcerned about the iſſue: Why all that you are worth in both worlds depends upon the truth of your faith, which is now to be tried.

O therefore read not theſe lines with a running careleſs eye,

‡ Petr. a S. Joſeph. ſum. Art. 1. p. 6.

‖ Bonacina. Tom. 2. in 1 precept. * Jo. San. Diſp. 41. n. 32.

but seriously ponder the matter before you: You would be loth to put to sea, though it were but to cross the *channel*, in a rotten leaky bottom: And will you dare to venture into the ocean of eternity in a false rotten faith! God forbid: You know the Lord is coming to try every man's faith as by fire, and that we must stand or fall for ever with the sincerity or hypocrisy of our faith. Surely, you can never be too exact and careful about that, on which your whole estate depends, and that for ever.

www.libtool.com.cn

Now there are three things upon which we should have a very tender and watchful eye, for the discovery of the sincerity of our faith, and they are,

The { Antecedents / Concomitants / Consequents } of Faith.

As these are, so we must judge and reckon our faith to be. And, accordingly, they furnish us with three general marks or trials of faith.

First, If you would discern the sincerity of your faith, examine whether those *antecedents*, and preparative works of the spirit, were ever found in your souls, which use to introduce and usher it into the souls of God's elect: Such are illumination, conviction, self-despair, and earnest cries to God.

First, *Illumination* is a necessary antecedent to faith: You cannot believe till God hath opened your eyes to see your sin, your misery by sin, and your remedy in Jesus Christ alone: You find this act of the Spirit to be the first, in order both of nature and time, and introductive to all the rest, Acts xxvi. 18. "To "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Sa-"tan to God." As faith without *works* (which must be a *consequent* to it) is *dead*, so faith without *light*, which must be an *antecedent* to it, is *blind*: Faith is the *hand* by which Christ is received, but knowledge is the eye by which that hand is directed.

Well then, hath God opened your eyes to see sin, and misery in another manner than ever you saw them before? For certainly, if God have opened your eyes by saving illumination, you will find as great a difference betwixt your former and present apprehensions of sin and danger, as betwixt the painted *lion* upon the wall or sign-post, and the real living *lion* that meets you roaring in the way.

Secondly, *Conviction* is an *antecedent* to believing: Where this goes not before, no faith can follow after: The Spirit first convinces of sin, then of righteousness, John xvi. 8. So Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel:" Believe it, O man,

that breast of thine must be wounded, that vain and frothy heart of thine must be pierced and stung with conviction, sense, and sorrow for sin: Thou must have some sick days, and restless nights for sin, if ever thou rightly close with Christ by faith. It is true, there is much difference found in the strength, depth, and continuance of conviction, and spiritual troubles in converts; for sure it is, the child of faith is not ordinarily born without some pangs. Conviction is the application of that light which God makes to shine in our minds, to our particular case and condition, by the conscience; and sure, when men come to see their miserable, and sad estate by a true light, it cannot but wound them, and that to the very heart.

Thirdly, *Self-despair*, or a total and absolute loss in our selves about deliverance, and the way of escape, either by our selves, or any other mere creature, doth, and must go before faith.

So it was with those believers, Acts ii. 37. "Men and brethren what shall we do?" They are the words of men at a total loss: It is the voice of poor distressed souls, that saw themselves in misery, but knew not, saw not, nor could devise any way of escape from it, by any thing they could do for themselves, or any other creature for them: And hence the apostle uses that emphatical word, Gal. iii. 23. συγκεκλεισμενοι, (i. e.) *shut up to the faith*, (i. e.) as men besieged, and distressed in a garrison in time of a storm, when the enemy pours in upon them through the breaches, and over-powers them: There is but one *sally-port* or gate, at which they can escape, and to that they all throng, as despairing of life, if they take any other course. Just so do mens convictions besiege them, distress them, beat them off from all their holds and intrenchments, and bring them to a pinching distress in themselves, shutting them up to Christ as the only way to escape. Duties cannot save me, reformation cannot save me, nor angels, nor men can save me; there is no way but one, *Christ*, or condemnation for ever.

I thought once, that a little repentance, reformation, restitution, and a stricter life, might be a way to escape wrath to come, but I find the bed is too short, and the covering too narrow: All is but loss, dung, dross, in comparison with Jesus Christ; If I trust to those *Egyptian reeds*, they will not only fail me, but pierce and wound me too, I see no hope within the whole *Horizon* of sense.

Fourthly, Hence come *vehement and earnest cries to God* for faith, for Christ, for help from heaven, to transport the soul out of this dangerous condition, to that strong rock of salvation; to bring it out of this furious, stormy sea of trouble,

where it is ready to wreck every moment, into that safe and quiet harbour, Christ.

O when a man shall see his misery and danger, and no way of escape but Christ, and that he hath no ability in himself to come to Christ, to open his heart thus to receive him, but that this work of faith is wholly supernatural, the operation of God; how will the soul return again, and again upon God, with such cries as in Mark ix. 24. "Lord, help my unbelief?" "Lord "enable me to come to Christ; give me Christ or I perish for "ever; What profit is there in my blood? Why should I die "in the sight and presence of a Saviour? O Lord, it is thine "own work, a most glorious work: Reveal thine Arm in this "work upon my soul, I pray thee; give me Christ, if thou "deny me bread; give me faith, if thou deny me breath. "It is more necessary that I believe, than that I live."

O *Reader*, reflect upon days and nights that are past, the places where thou hast been conversant: Where are the bedsides, or the secret corners where thou hast besieged heaven with such cries? If God have thus enlightened, convinced, distressed thy soul, and thus set thee a mourning after Christ, it will be one good sign that faith is come into thy soul; for here are certainly the *harbingers* and fore-runners of it, that ordinarily make way for faith into the souls of men.

Secondly, If you would be satisfied of the sincerity and truth of your faith, then examine what *concomitants* it is attended with in your souls. I mean, what frames and tempers your souls were in, at that time when you think you received Christ. For certainly, in those that receive Christ, (excepting those into whose hearts, God hath in a more still and insensible way infused faith betime, by his blessing upon pious education) such concomitant frames of spirit may be remarked, as these following.

First, The heart is deeply *serious*, and as much in earnest in this matter, as ever it was, or can be, about any thing in the world. This you see in that example of the Jaylor, Acts xvi. 29. "He came in trembling and astonished:" It is the most solemn and important matter that ever the soul had before it, in this world, or ever shall, or can have: How much are the hearts of men affected in their outward straits and distresses, about the concernments of the body? Their hearts are not a little concerned in such questions as these, "What shall I eat? "what shall I drink?" wherewithal shall I and mine be fed and cloathed? but certainly the straits that souls are in about salva-

tion, must be allowed to be greater than these; and such question as that of the Jaylor's, "Sirs! What must I do to be "saved?" make deeper impressions upon the heart, than what shall I eat, or drink? Some, indeed, have their thoughts sinking deeper into these things than others: These thoughts lie with different degrees of weight upon men; but all are most solemnly and awfully concerned about their condition: All frothiness and frolics are gone, and the heart settles itself in the deepest earnest about its eternal state.

Secondly, The heart that receives Jesus Christ, is in a frame of deep humiliation and self-abasement. O, when a man begins to apprehend the first approaches of grace, pardon, and mercy by Jesus Christ to his soul: When a soul is convinced of its utter unworthiness, and desert of hell; and can scarce expect any thing else from the just and holy God, but damnation, how do the first dawnings of mercy melt and humble them! "O "Lord, what am I that thou shouldest feed me and preserve "me! that thou shouldest but for a few years spare me, and "forbear me! but that ever Jesus Christ should love me, and "give himself for me; that such a wretched sinner as I, should "obtain union with his person, pardon, peace and salvation "by his blood! Lord, whence is this to such a worm as I? "and will Christ indeed bestow himself upon me? shall so great "a blessing as Christ ever come within the arms of such a soul "as mine? will God in very deed be reconciled to me in his "Son? what, to me! to such an enemy as I have been! shall "my sins which are so many, so horrid, so much aggravated, "beyond the sins of most men, be forgiven? O what am I, "vile dust? base wretch, that ever God should do this for "me!" And how is that scripture fulfilled and made good, Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember, and be con-"founded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy "shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast "done, saith the Lord God." Thus, that poor broken-hearted believer stood behind Christ weeping, and washing his feet with tears, as one quite melted down, and overcome with the sense of mercy to such a vile sinner, Luke vii. 38.

Thirdly, The soul that receives Jesus Christ is in a *weary condition*, restless, and full of disquietness, neither able to bear the burden of sin, nor knowing how to be discharged from it, except Christ will give it ease, Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me," that is, believe in me, "you that are weary and heavy laden:" If they do not look into their own souls, they know there is no *safety*, and if they do, there's no *comfort*. O! the burdensome sense

of sin overweighs them; they are ready to fall, to sink under it.

Fourthly, The soul that rightly receives Christ, is not only in a weary, but in a *longing condition*: never did the *hart* pant more earnestly for the water-brooks: never did the *hireling* desire the shadow: never did a *condemned person* long for a pardon more than the soul longs after Jesus Christ. O, said David, that one would give me of the water of the well of Bethlehem to drink. O, saith the poor humbled sinner, that one would give me of the opened fountain of the blood of Christ to drink! O for one drop of that precious blood! O for one encouraging smile from Christ! O now were ten thousand worlds at my command, and Christ to be bought, how freely would I lay them all down to purchase him! but he is the *gift* of God. O that God would give me Christ, if I should go in rags, and hunger and thirst all my days in this world!

Fifthly, The soul in the time of its closing with, or receiving Christ, is in a *state of conflict*: It hangs between hopes and fears, encouragements and discouragements, which occasions many a sad stand and pause in the way to Christ; sometimes the number and nature of its sins discourage it, then the riches and freeness of the grace of Christ, erects his hopes again: there's little hope, saith unbelief; nay, it is utterly impossible, saith Satan, that ever such a wretch as thou shouldst find mercy; now the hands hang down. O but then there's a necessity, an absolute necessity; I have not the choice of two, but am shut up to one way of deliverance: others have found mercy, and the invitation is to all that are weary, and to all that are athirst: he saith, he that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out; now new hopes inspire the soul, and the hands that did hang down are again strengthened.

These are the *concomitant frames* that accompany faith.

3. *Mark*. Lastly, Examine the *consequents* and effects of faith, if you would be satisfied of the truth and sincerity of it: And such are,

First, *Evangelical meltings*, and ingenuous thawings of the heart under the apprehensions of grace and mercy: Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall "mourn."

Secondly, *Love to Christ, his ways and people*, Gal. v. 6 *Faith worketh by love*, (i. e.) it represents the love of God, and then makes use of the sweetness of it by way of argument, to constrain the soul to all acts of obedience, wherein it may testify the reality of its love to God and Christ.

Thirdly, Heart *purity*, Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by "faith:" It doth not only cleanse the *hands* but the *heart*: No principle in man, besides faith, can do this: Morality may hide corruption, but faith only *purifies* the heart from it.

Fourthly, Obedience to the commands of Christ, Rom. xvi. 26. the very name of faith is called upon obedience; for it accepts Christ as Lord, and urges upon the soul the most powerful arguments in the world to draw it to obedience.

www.libtool.com.cn

In a word, let the poor doubting believer, that questions his faith, reflect upon those things that are unquestionable in his own experience, which being well considered, will greatly tend to his satisfaction in this point.

It is very doubtful to you whether you believe, but yet in the mean while, it may be past doubt, (being a matter of clear experience) that you have been deeply convinced of sin, struck off from all carnal props and refuges, made willing to accept Jesus Christ upon what terms soever you might enjoy him; you doubt whether Christ be yours, but it is past doubt that you have a most high and precious esteem of Christ, that you heartily long for him, that you prize and love all, whether persons or things, that bear his image; that nothing in the world would please your hearts like a transformation into his likeness; that you had rather your souls should be filled with his spirit, than your houses with gold and silver. It is doubtful whether Christ be yours, but it is past doubt that one smile from Christ, one token of his love would do you more good than all the honours and smiles of the world; and nothing so grieves you, as your grieving him by sin doth: You dare not say that you have received him, nor can you deny but that you have had many sick days and nights for him; that you have gone into many secret places with earning bowels after him; whether he be yours or not, you cannot tell; but that you are resolved to be his, that you can tell; whether he will save you is but a doubt, but that you resolve to lie at his feet, and wait only on him, and never look to another for salvation, is no doubt.

Well, well; poor pensive soul, if it be so, arise, lift up thy dejected head, take thine own Christ into thy arms. These are undoubted signs of a real closure with Christ; thou makest thyself poor, and yet hast great riches: Such things as these are not found in them that despise and reject Christ by unbelief.

3. *Use of exhortation.*

3. *Use.* This point is likewise very improveable by way of exhortation, and that both to

Unbelievers and Believers.

First, To unbelievers, who from hence must be pressed, as ever they expect to see the face of God in peace, to receive Jesus Christ, as he is now offered to them in the gospel. This is the very scope of the gospel, I shall therefore press it by three great considerations, *viz.*

www.libtool.com.cn

First, What is in Christ whom you are to receive.

Secondly, What is in the offer of Christ by the gospel.

Thirdly, What is in the rejecting of that offer.

First motive.

First, Consider well what is in Christ, whom I persuade you this day to receive: Did you know what is in Christ, you would never neglect or reject him as you do: For,

First, "God is in Christ," 2 Cor. v. 19. the Deity hath chosen to dwell in his flesh; he is "God manifest in flesh," 1 Tim iii. 16. a Godhead dwelling in flesh, is the world's wonder: so that in receiving Christ, you receive God himself.

Secondly, The authority of God is in Christ, Exod. xxiii. 21. "My name is in him: Him hath God the Father sealed," John vi. 27. he hath the commission, the great seal of heaven to redeem and save you: All power in heaven and earth is given to him, Matth. xxviii. 18. he comes in his Father's name to you, as well as in his own name.

Thirdly, The wisdom of God is in Christ, 1 Cor. i. 24. "Christ the wisdom of God:" yea, "in him are hid all the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3. Never did the wisdom of God display itself before the eyes of angels and men, as it hath done in Christ. The "angels desire to look in-"to it," 1 Pet. 1. 12. yet they are not so much concerned in the project and design of this wisdom in redemption, as you are.

Fourthly, The *fulness of the Spirit* is in Christ; yea, it fills him so as it never did, nor will fill any creature, John iii. 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him:" all others have their limits, stints, and measures; some more, some less; but the Spirit is in Christ without measure. O how lovely and desirable are those men that have a large measure of the Spirit in them! but he is anointed with the Spirit of holiness, *above all his fellows*, Psal. xlv. 2, 7. Whatever grace is found in all the saints, which makes them desirable and lovely, wisdom in one, faith in another, patience in a third; they all centre in Christ as the rivers do in the sea, *que faciunt divisa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt.*

Fifthly, The righteousness of God is in Christ, by which only a poor guilty sinner can be justified before God, 2 Cor. v. 21. we are "made the righteousness of God in him:" he is חיוה צדקבו

"the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. *i. e.* "* the author "of our righteousness," or the Lord who justifies us; by that name he will be known, and called by his people, than which none can be sweeter.

Sixthly, The love of God is in Christ; yea, the very yearning bowels of divine love are in him: What is Christ, but the love of God wrapt up in flesh and blood? 1 John iv. 9, 10. "In this "was manifested the love of God towards us;" and herein is love, that God sent his Son: this is the highest flight that ever divine love made; and higher than this it cannot mount. O love, unparalleled and admirable!

Seventhly, The mercies and compassions of God are all in Christ, Jude ver. 21. Mercy is the thing that poor sinners want, it is that they cry for at the last gasp; it is the only thing that can do them good. O what would they give to find mercy in that great day? Why, if you receive Christ, you shall with him receive mercy; but out of him, there is no mercy to be expected from the hands of God; for God will never exercise mercy to the prejudice of his justice; and it is in Christ that justice and mercy meet and embrace each other.

Eighthly, To conclude, The salvations of God are in Christ, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Christ is the *door* of salvation, and faith is the *key* that opens that door to men. If you therefore believe not, *i. e.* if you so receive not Jesus Christ, as God hath offered him, you exclude yourselves from all hopes of salvation. The devils have as much ground to expect salvation as you: you see what is in Christ to induce you to receive him.

Motive 2.

Next, I beseech you, consider what there is in the offer of Christ to sinners, to induce you to receive him. Consider well to *whom*, and *how* Christ is offered in the gospel.

First, To *whom* he is offered; not to the fallen angels, but to you; they lie in chains of darkness, Jude 6. as he took not their nature, so he designs not their recovery; and therefore will have no treaty at all with them: but he is offered to you, creatures of an inferior rank and order by nature; nor is he offered to the *damned*, the treaty of peace is ended with them: Christ will never make them another tender of salvation; nor is he offered to millions of millions as good as you, now living in the world. The sound of Christ, and salvation is not come to their ears, but he is offered to you by the special favour and

* *Autorem justitiæ nostræ.* Calv. in loc.

bounty of heaven; and will you not receive him? O! then how will the devils, the damned, and the Heathens, upbraid your folly! and say, had we had one such tender of mercy, of which you have had thousands, we would never have been now in this place of torments.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, Consider how Christ is offered to you, and you shall find that he is offered,

1. Freely, *as the gift of God*, to your souls; you are not to *purchase* him, but only to *receive* him. Isa lv. 1. "Ho, every "one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath "no money, let him come," *&c.*

2. Christ is offered importunately, by repeated intreaties. 2 Cor. v. 20. "As though God did beseech you, we pray you "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." O! what amazing condescension is here in the God of mercy! God now beseeches you, will you not yield to the intreaties of your God? O then what wilt thou say for thyself, when God will not hear thee, when thou shalt intreat and cry for mercy? Which brings us to

Motive 3. Consider the sin and danger that there is in refusing, or neglecting the present offers of Christ in the gospel, and surely there is much sin in it; the very malignity of sin, and the sum of all misery, lies here; for in refusing Christ,

1. You put the greatest contempt and slight upon all the attributes of God that it is possible for a creature to do; God hath made his justice, his mercy, his wisdom, and all his attributes, to shine in their brightest glory in Christ. Never was there such a display of the glory of God made to the world in any other way.

O then, what is it to reject and despise Jesus Christ, but to offer the greatest affront to the glory of God, that it is possible for men to put upon it?

2. You hereby frustrate and evacuate the very design, and importance of the gospel to yourselves; you "receive the grace "of God in vain," 2 Cor. vi. 1. As good, yea, better had it been for you, that Christ had never come into the world, or, if he had, that your lot had fallen in the dark places of the earth, where you had never heard his name; yea, good had it been for that man if he had never been born.

3. Hereby a man murthers his own soul. "I said therefore "unto you, that you shall die in your sins; for if ye believe "not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," John viii. 24. Unbelief is self-murder; you are guilty of the blood of your

own souls: life and salvation was offered you, and you rejected it. Yea,

4. The refusing of Christ by unbelief, will aggravate your damnation, above all others that perish in ignorance of Christ. O 'twill be more tolerable for Heathens, than for you; the greatest measures of wrath are reserved to punish the worst of sinners, and among sinners, none will be found worse than unbelievers.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, To believers, this point is very useful to persuade them to divers excellent duties; among which, I shall single out two principal ones, *viz.*

1. To bring up their faith of acceptance, to the faith of assurance.

2. To bring up their conversations to the principles and rules of faith.

1. You that have received Jesus Christ truly, give yourselves no rest till you are fully satisfied that you have done so; acceptance brings you to heaven hereafter, but assurance will bring heaven into your souls now. O what a life of delight and pleasure doth the assured believer live! What pleasure is it to him to look back and consider where once he was, and where he now is? To look forward, and consider where he now is, and where shortly he shall be! I was in my sins, I am now in Christ: I am in Christ now, I shall be with Christ, and that for ever, after a few days. I was upon the brink of hell, I am now upon the very borders of heaven; I shall be, in a little while, among the innumerable company of angels and glorified saints, bearing part with them in the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, for evermore.

And why may not you, that have received Christ, receive the comfort of your union with him? There be all the grounds and helps of assurance furnished to your hand; there is a real union betwixt Christ and your souls, which is the very ground-work of assurance. † You have the scriptures before you which contain the signs of faith, and the very things within you that answer those signs in the word. So you read, and so, just so, you might feel it in your own hearts, would you attend to your own experience. The Spirit of God is ready to seal you, it is his office and his delight so to do. O therefore give diligence to this work, attend the study of the scriptures, and of your own hearts more, and grieve not the holy Spirit of God, and you may arrive to the very desire of your hearts.

† The power and constancy of a firm hope reigns in us. *Cypr. Serm. de patientia.*

2. Bring up your conversations to the excellent principles and rules of faith; "As you have received Christ Jesus the "Lord, so walk in him," Col. ii 6. Live as you believe; you received Christ sincerely in your first close with him, O maintain the like seriousness and sincerity in all your ways, to the end of your lives: you received him entirely and *undividedly* at first, let there be no exceptions against any of his commands afterward. You received him *exclusively* to all others, see that you watch against all self-righteousness, and self-conceitedness now, and mingle nothing of your own with his blood, whatever gifts or enlargements in duty God shall give you afterwards.

You received him *advisedly* at first, weighing and considering the self-denying terms upon which he was offered to you; O shew that it was real, and that you see no cause to repent the bargain, whatever you shall meet with in the ways of Christ, and duty afterwards: convince the world of your constancy and chearfulness in all your sufferings for Christ, that you are still of the same mind you were, and that Christ, with his cross, Christ, with a prison, Christ, with the greatest afflictions, is worthy of all acceptation: "As ye have received him, so walk ye "in him." Let him be as sweet, as lovely, as precious to you now, as he was the first moment you received him; yea, let your love to him, delights in him, and self-denial for him, increase with your acquaintance with him, day by day.

Use of direction.

Use. Lastly, I will close all with a few words of *directions* to all that are made willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ; and sure it is but need that help were given to poor Christians; in this matter, it is a time of trouble, fear, and great temptation; mistakes are easily made, and of dangerous consequence; attend heedfully, therefore, to a few directions.

Direction 1. First, In your receiving Christ, *beware you do not mistake the means, for the end.* Many do so, but see you do not. Prayer, sermons, reformations, are means to bring you to Christ, but they are not Christ; to close with those duties is one thing, and to close with Christ is another thing. If I go into a *boat*, my design is not to dwell there, but to be carried to the place whereon I desire to be landed: so it must be in this case, all your duties must land you upon Christ; they are means to bring you to Christ.

Direct. 2. Secondly, *See that you receive not Christ for a present help, but for your everlasting portion.* Many do so; they will enquire after Christ, pray for Christ, cast themselves (in

their way) upon Christ, and the satisfaction of his blood, when the efficacy and terror of conscience is upon them, and they feel the sting of guilt within them; but as soon as the storm is over, and the rod that conscience shaked over them laid by, there's no more talk of Christ then: alas! it was not Christ, but quietness, that they sought; beware of mistaking peace for Christ.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, *In receiving Christ come empty handed unto him:* "believing on him who justifies the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. and know that the deepest sense of your own vileness, emptiness, and unworthiness, is the best frame of heart that can accompany you to Christ. Many persons stand off from Christ for want of fit qualifications; they are not prepared for Christ as they should be, *i. e.* they would not come naked and empty, but have something to commend them to the Lord Jesus for acceptance. O! this is the pride of mens hearts, and the snare of the Devil. Let him that hath no money come: You are not to come to Christ because you are qualified, but that you may be qualified with whatever you want; and the best qualification you can bring with you, is a deep sense that you have no worth nor excellency at all in you.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, *In receiving Christ, beware of dangerous delays.* O follow on that work till it be finished. You read of some that are almost persuaded, and others not far from the kingdom of God; O take heed of what the prophet says, Hosea xiii. 13. Delays here are full of danger, life is uncertain, so are means of grace too. The man-slayer needed no motives to quicken his flight to the city of refuge.

Direct. 5. Fifthly, *See that you receive all Christ, with all your heart.* To receive all Christ, is to receive his person cloathed with all his offices; and to receive him with all your heart, is to receive him into your understanding, will, and affections, Acts viii. 37. As there is nothing in Christ that may be refused, so there is nothing in you from which he must be excluded.

Direct. 6. Lastly, Understand that the opening of your hearts to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, is not a work done by any power of your own, but the arm of the Lord is revealed therein, Isa. liii. 1. It is therefore your duty and interest to be daily at the feet of God, pouring out your souls to him in secret, for abilities to believe. And so much, as to our actual reception of Christ.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON VIII.

Setting forth the Believer's Fellowship with CHRIST, the next End of his Application to them.

www.libtool.com.cn

PSALM xlv. 7. ——*Thereforé God thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

THE method of grace in uniting souls with Jesus Christ, hath been opened in the former discourses; thus doth the Spirit (whose office it is) make application of Christ to God's elect, the result and next fruit whereof is *communion* with Christ in his graces and benefits. Our *mystical union* is the very groundwork, and foundation of our sweet, soul-enriching *communion*, and participation of spiritual privileges; we are first ingrafted into Christ, and then suck the sap and fatness of the root: first married to the person of Christ, then endowed and instated in the privileges and benefits of Christ. This is my proper work to open at this time, and from this scripture.

"The words read, are a part of that excellent *song of love* *, "that heavenly *Epithalamium*, wherein the spiritual espousals "of Christ and the church are figuratively, and very elegantly, "celebrated and shadowed. The subject matter of this psalm "is the very same with the whole book of the Canticles;" and in this psalm, under the figure of king Solomon, and the daughter of Egypt, whom he espoused, the spiritual espousals of Christ and the church are set forth and represented to us. Among many rapturous and elegant expressions in praise of this glorious bridegroom, Christ, this is one, which you have before you: "God thy fellow hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness a-"bove thy fellows:" (*i. e.*) enriched and filled thee, in a singular and peculiar manner, with the fulness of the Spirit, whereby thou art consecrated to thy office: and by reason whereof thou outshinest and excellest all the saints, who are thy *fellows* or copartners in these graces. So that in these words you have two parts; *viz. First*, The saints *dignity*, and *Secondly*, Christ's *pre-eminency*.

First, The saints *dignity*, which consists in this, that they

* *Hic Psalmus propheticus est, continetque Epilathamium quo Christi cum ecclesia nuptiæ celebrantur, idemque habet argumentum quod canticum canticorum ejusque videtur esse epitome.* Coccejus in loc.

are Christ's *fellows*. The Hebrew word † is very full and copious, and is translated "consorts, companions, copartners, "partakers: or, as ours read it, *fellows*;" (i. e.) such as are partakers with him in the anointing of the Spirit, who do, in their measure, receive the same Spirit, every Christian being anointed, *modo sibi proportionato*, with the same grace, and dignified with the same titles, 1 John ii. 27. Rev. i. 6. Christ and the saints are in common one with another: doth the spirit of holiness dwell in him? So it doth in them too. Is Christ *king* and *priest*? Why, so are they too by the grace of union with him. He hath made us kings and priests to God, and his Father. This is the saints dignity to be Christ's fellows, consorts, or copartners; so that look, whatever spiritual grace or excellency is in Christ, it is not appropriated to himself, but they do share with him: for indeed he was filled with the fulness of the Spirit, for their sakes and use: as the sun is filled with light, not to shine to itself, but to others; so is Christ with grace. And therefore, some translate the text, not *prae consortibus*, above thy fellows; but *propter consortes*, for thy fellows ‡. Making Christ the first receptacle of grace, who first and immediately is filled from the fountain, the Godhead: but it is for his people, who receive and derive from him, according to their proportion.

This is a great truth, and the dignity of the saints lies chiefly in their partnership with Christ, though our translation, *above thy fellows*, suits best, both with the importance of the word, and scope of the place.

Secondly, But then, whatever *dignity* is ascribed herein to the saints, there is, and still must be, a *pre-eminency* acknowledged, and ascribed to Christ; if they are anointed with the spirit of grace, much more abundantly in Christ: "God thy God hath "anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

By the *oil of gladness*, understand the spirit of holiness, compared here with oil, of which there was a double use under the law, *viz.* a *civil*, and a *sacred* use. It had a sacred and a solemn use, in the inauguration and consecration of the Jewish kings and high-priests; it had also a civil, and common use, for the anointing their bodies ‖, to make their limbs more agile,

† חברים *Consortes, participes, sodales, socios. Vox Hebraea quadamque societatis sive communionis genus significat.* Mun.

‡ Rivet.

‖ Oil itself is pure and clear; which supplies and feeds the flame, with

expedite, and nimble; to make the face shine, for it gave a lustre, freshness, and liveliness to the countenance. It was also used in lamps, to feed and maintain the fire, and give them light. These were the principal uses of oil. Now, upon all these accounts, it excellently expresseth, and, figuratively, represents to us the spirit of grace poured forth upon Christ and his people. For,

First, By the spirit poured out upon him, he was prepared for, and consecrated to his offices; he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, Acts x. 38.

Secondly, As this precious oil runs down from Christ, the head, to the borders of his garments, I mean, as it is shed upon believers, so it exceedingly beautifies their faces, and makes them shine with glory.

Thirdly, It renders them apt, expedite, and ready to every good work; *Non tardat uncta rota.*

Fourthly, It kindles and maintains the flame of divine love in their souls, and, like a lamp, enlightens their minds in the knowledge of spiritual things; the anointing teaches them.

"And this oil is here called *the oil of gladness* †, because "it is the cause of all joy and gladness to them that are anoint-"ed with it:" Oil was used (as you heard before) at the installment of sovereign princes, which was the day of the gladness of their hearts; and, among the common people, it was liberally used at all their *festivals*, but never upon their days of mourning. Whence it becomes excellently expressive of the nature and use of the spirit of grace, who is the cause and author of all joy in believers, John xvii. 13.

And with this oil of gladness is Christ said to be anointed *above his fellows*, *i. e.* to have a far greater share of the spirit of grace than they: "For to every one of the saints is given grace "according to the measure of the gift of Christ," Eph. iv. 7. But to him the Spirit is not given by measure, John iii. 34.

fuel; hence the metaphor of anointing with oil used in scripture, frequently signifies the internal illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit, and the communication of the true knowledge of God, and suitable affections of soul to it. *Moller. on the place.*

† Ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως dicitur id quod causam dat summi gaudii. Grot. in Heb. i. 9. Αὐτος ὑμῖν αἴτιος τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ πνεύματος, καὶ χρισθεὶς καθ' ὅσον ἐστὶν ἀνθρωπος τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡμῖν μεταδίδωσι. *i. e.* He is the cause of the gift of the Spirit to you, and being anointed with the Spirit as he is man, he communicates the Spirit to us also. *Œcum.*

"It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness "dwell," Col. i. 19. and "of his fulness we all receive grace "for grace," John i. 16. The saints partake with him, and through him, in the same spirit of grace, for which reason they are his fellows; but all the grace poured out upon believers, comes exceeding short of that which God hath poured out upon Jesus Christ. The words being thus opened, give us this note.

www.libtool.com.cn

Doct. *That all true believers have a real communion, or fellowship, with the Lord Jesus Christ.*

From the saints union with Christ, there doth naturally, and immediately, result a most sweet and blessed communion or fellowship with him in graces and spiritual privileges, Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places "(or things) in Christ: in giving us his Son, he freely gives us "all things," Rom. viii. 32. So in 1 Cor. i. 30. "Of him are ye "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righte-"ousness, sanctification and redemption." And once more, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All are yours, and ye are Christ's." What Christ is, and hath, is theirs by communication to them, or improvement for them; and this is very evidently implied in all those excellent scripture metaphors, by which our union with Christ is figured and shadowed out to us: as the *marriage-union* betwixt a man and his wife, Eph. v. 31, 32. You know that this conjugal union gives the wife interest in the estate and honour of the husband, be she never so meanly descended in herself ‡: The *natural union* betwixt the head and members of the body, by which also the mystical union of Christ and believers is set forth, 1 Cor. xii. 12. excellently illustrates this fellowship or communion betwixt them: for from Christ "the whole bo-"dy fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every "joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the "measure of every part, maketh increase of the body," as the apostle speaks, Eph. iv. 16. The union betwixt the graff and the stock, which is another emblem of our union with Christ, John xv. 1. imports, in like manner, this communion, or partnership betwixt Christ and the saints; for no sooner doth the graff take hold of the stock, but the vital sap of the stock is communicated to the graff, and both live by one and the same juice.

‡ *Ubi ego Cajus tu Caja. Uxor clarescit in radiis mariti.*

Now, that the scope of this discourse be not mistaken, let the reader know that I am not here treating of the saints communion, or fellowship with God in his duties, as in prayer, hearing, sacraments, *&c.* but of that interest which believers have in the good things of Christ, by virtue of the mystical union betwixt them through faith: there is a twofold communion of the saints with Christ.

The first is an *act*.

The second is a *state*.

There is an actual fellowship, or communion the saints have with Christ in holy duties, wherein Christians let forth their hearts to God by desires, and God lets forth his comforts and refreshments again into their hearts; they open their mouths wide, and he fills them: this communion with God is the joy and comfort of a believer's life, but I am not to speak of that here. It is not any act of communion, but the state of communion, from which all acts of communion flow, and upon which they all depend, that I am now to treat of; which is nothing else but the joint interest that Christ and the saints have in the same things: as when a ship, an house, or estate, is among many partners, or joints heirs, every one of them hath a right to it, and interest in it, though some of them have a greater, and others a lesser part. So it is betwixt Christ and his people; there is a κοινωνια, *(i. e.)* a fellowship or joint interest betwixt them, upon which ground they are called *coheirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. This communion or participation in Christ's benefits, depends upon the hypostatical union of our nature, and the mystical union of our persons with the Son of God: in the first he partakes with us, in the second we partake with him: the former is the remote, the latter the next cause thereof.

In the explication of this point, I shall speak to these four things:

1. What are those things in which Christ and believers have fellowship.
2. By what means they come to have such a fellowship with Christ.
3. How great a dignity this is to have fellowship with Jesus Christ.
4. And then apply the whole in divers practical inferences.

First, What are those things in which Christ and believers have fellowship, to which I must speak both *negatively* and *positively*.

1. *Negatively*, The saints have no fellowship with Jesus Christ in those things that belong to him as God; such as his

consubstantiality, coequality, and coeternity with the Father: It is the blasphemy of the wicked *Familists* to talk of being godded into God, and christed into Christ. Neither men or angels partake in these things; they are the proper and incommunicable glory of the Lord Jesus.

2. The saints have no communion or fellowship in the honour and glory of his mediatory works, *viz.* his satisfaction to God, or redemption of the elect. It is true, we have the benefit and fruit of his mediation and satisfaction; his righteousness also is imputed to us for our personal justification, but we share not in the least with Christ in the glory of this work: nor have we an inherent righteousness in us as Christ hath; nor can we justify and save others as Christ doth: we have nothing to do with his peculiar honour, and praise in these things. Tho' we have the benefit of being saved, we may not pretend to the honour of being Saviours, as Christ is to ourselves or others, "‖ Christ's righteousness is not made ours as to its universal "value, but as to our particular necessity; nor is it imputed to "us as to so many causes of salvation to others, but as to so "many subjects to be saved by it ourselves."

Secondly, But then there are many glorious and excellent things, which are in common betwixt Christ and believers, tho' in them all he hath the pre-eminence, he shines in the fulness of them, as the sun, and we with a borrowed and lesser light, but of the same kind and nature as the stars. Some of these I shall particularly, and briefly, unfold in the following particulars.

First, Believers have communion with Christ in his *names* and *titles*; they are called Christians from Christ, Eph. iii. 15. from him the whole family in heaven and earth is named: this is that worthy name the apostle speaks of, James ii. 7. He is the Son of God, and they also, by their union with him, have power or authority to become the Sons of God, John i. 12. He is the heir of all things, and they are joint-heirs with him, Rom. viii. 17. He is both king and priest, and he hath made them kings and priests, Rev. i. 6. But they do not only partake in the names and titles, but this communion consists in things as well as titles. And therefore,

Secondly, They have communion with him in his *righteousness*, (i. e.) the righteousness of Christ is made theirs, 2 Cor. v. 21. and he is "the Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. It

‖ *Justitia Christi fit nostra, non quoad universalem valorem sed particularem necessitatem, et imputatur nobis non ut causis salvationis, sed ut subjectis salvandis.* Bradshaw de justificatione.

is true, the righteousness of Christ is not inherent in us, as it is in him; but it is ours by imputation, Rom. iv. 5, 11. and our union with him is the ground of the imputation of his righteousness to us, 2 Cor. v. 21. "We are made the righteousness "of God in him," Phil. iii. 9. for Christ and believers are considered as one person, in construction of law; as a man and his wife, a *debtor* and *surety*, are one: and so his payment or satisfaction is in our name, or upon our account.

Now, this is a most inestimable privilege, the very ground of all our other blessings and mercies. O what a benefit is this to a poor sinner, that owes to God infinite more than he is ever able to pay, by doing or suffering; to have such a rich treasure of merit as lies in the obedience of Christ, to discharge, in one entire payment, all his debts to the last farthing? "Surely shall one say, "in the Lord I have righteousness," Isa. xlv. 24. even as a poor woman that owes more than she is worth, in one moment is discharged of all her obligations, by her marriage to a wealthy man.

Thirdly, Believers have communion with Christ in his holiness or sanctification, for of God he is made unto them, not only righteousness, but sanctification also; and as in the former privilege they have a stock of merit in the blood of Christ to justify them, so here they have the Spirit of Christ to sanctify them, 1 Cor. i. 30. and therefore we are said of his fulness to receive "grace for grace," John i. 16. (*i. e.*) say some, grace upon grace, manifold graces, or abundance of grace; or grace for grace, that is, grace answerable to grace: as in the seal and wax, there is line for line, and cut for cut, exactly answerable to each other; or grace for grace, that is, say others, the free grace of God in Christ, for the sanctification or filling of our souls with grace; be it in which sense it will, it shews the communion believers have with Jesus Christ in grace and holiness. Now, holiness is the most precious thing in the world, it is the image of God, and chief excellency of man: it is our evidence for glory, yea, and the first-fruits of glory. In Christ dwells the fulness of grace, and from him, our head, it is derived and communicated to us: thus he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, Heb. ii. 11. You would think it no small privilege to have bags of gold to go to, and enrich yourselves with, and yet that were but a very trifle in comparison to have Christ's righteousness and holiness to go to for your justification, and sanctification. More particularly,

Fourthly, Believers have communion with Christ *in his death*; they die with him, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ,"

(i. e.) the death of Christ hath a real killing and mortifying influence upon the lusts, and corruptions of my heart and nature: true it is, he died for sin one way, and we die to sin another way: he died to *expiate* it, we die to it, when we *mortify* it: the death of Christ is the death of sin in believers: and this is a very glorious privilege; for the death of sin is the life of your souls: if sin do not die in you by mortification, you must die for sin by eternal damnation: if Christ had not died, the Spirit of God, by which you now mortify the deeds of the body, could not have been given unto you; then you must have lived vassals to your sins, and died at last in your sins; but the fruit, efficacy, and benefit of Christ's death is your's for the killing those sins in you, which else had been your ruin.

Fifthly, Believers have communion with Christ in *his life, and resurrection* from the dead: as he rose from the dead, so do they; and that by the power and influence of his *vivification* and resurrection: it is the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. our spiritual life is from Christ, Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he "quickned who were dead in trespasses and sins:" and hence Christ is said to live in the believer, Gal. ii. 20. "Now, I live, "yet not I; but Christ liveth in me:" and it is no small privilege to partake of the very life of Christ, which is the most excellent life that ever any creature can live; yet such is the happiness of all the saints, the life of Christ is manifest in them, and such a life as shall never see death.

Sixthly, To conclude, believers have fellowship with Jesus Christ *in his glory*, which they shall enjoy in heaven with him; they "shall be ever with the Lord," 1 Thes. iv. 17. and that is not all, (though, as one saith, it were a kind of heaven but to look through the key-hole, and have but a glimpse of Christ's blessed face) but they shall partake of the glory which the Father hath given him; for so he speaks, John xvii. 22, 24. and more particularly, they shall sit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. and when he comes to judge the world, he will come to be glorified in the saints, 2 Thes. i. 10. So that you see what glorious and inestimable things are, and will be in common betwixt Christ and the saints. His titles, his righteousness, his holiness, his death, his life, his glory. I do not say that Christ will make any saint equal with him in glory; that is impossible, he will be known from all the saints in heaven, as the sun is distinguished from the stars; but they shall partake of his glory, and be filled with his joy there; and thus you see what those things are that the saints have fellowship with Christ in.

Secondly, Next I would open the way and means by which we come to have fellowship with Jesus Christ, in these excellent privileges; and this I shall do, briefly, in the following positions.

Position 1.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, *No man hath fellowship with Christ in any special saving privilege by nature, howsoever it be cultivated or improved; but only by faith uniting him to the Lord Jesus Christ: It is not the privilege of our first, but second birth.* * This is plain from John i. 12, 13. "But to as many as received him, to them gave "he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as be-"lieved on his name, who are born not of flesh, nor of blood, "nor of the will of man, but of God." We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. we have fellowship with Satan in sin and misery: the wild branch hath no communication of the sweetness and fatness of a more noble and excellent root, until it be ingrafted upon it, and have immediate union and coalition with it, John xv. 1, 2.

Position 2.

Believers themselves have not an equal share, one with another, in all the benefits and privileges of their union with Christ, but in some there is an equality, and in others an inequality; according to the measure and gift of Christ, to every one.

In justification they are all equal: the weak and the strong believer are alike justified, because it is one and the same perfect righteousness of Christ, which is applied to the one and to the other, so that there are no different degrees of justification, but all that believe are justified from all things, Acts xiii. 39. and "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Je-"sus," Rom. viii. 1. be they never so weak in faith, or defective in degrees of grace. But there is apparent difference in the measures of their sanctification, some are strong men, and others are babes in Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 1. The faith of some flourishes and grows exceedingly, 2 Thes. i. 3. the things that are in others are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. It is a plain case, that there is great variety found in the degrees of grace, and comfort among them that are jointly interested in Christ, and equally justified by him.

* The truly faithful only are members of Christ, not as they are men, but as they are Christians; not by their first, but second birth. *Polan. Syntag. book 6. chap. 35.*

Position 3.

The saints have not fellowship and communion with Christ, in the fore mentioned benefits and privileges by one and the same medium, but by various mediums and ways, according to the nature of the benefits, in which they participate.

For instance, they have partnership and communion with Christ, as hath been said, in his righteousness, holiness, and glory, but they receive these distinct blessings by divers mediums of communion: we have communion with Christ in his righteousness, by the way of imputation; we partake of his holiness, by the way of infusion; and of his glory in heaven, by the beatifical vision. Our justification is a relative change, our sanctification a real change, our glorification a perfect change, by redemption, from all the remains both of sin and misery.

Thus hath the Lord appointed several blessings for believers in Christ, and several channels of conveying them from him to us; by imputed righteousness, we are freed from the guilt of sin; by imparted holiness, we are freed from the dominion of sin, and by our glorification with Christ, we are freed from all the relics and remains both of sin and misery, let in by sin upon our natures.

Position 4.

That Jesus Christ imparts to all believers, all the spiritual blessings that he is filled with, and withholds none from any that have union with him; be these blessings never so great, or they that receive them never so weak, mean, and contemptible in outward respects, Gal. iii. 27. "Ye are all the children of God by faith "in Jesus Christ" The salvation that comes by Christ is stiled the *common salvation*, Jude 3. and heaven the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, "(saith the apostle) circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, "Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all," Col. iii. 11. He means, there is no privilege in the one to commend them to God, and no want of any thing in the other to debar them from God; let men have or want outward excellencies, as beauty, honour, riches, nobility, gifts of the mind, sweetness of nature, and all such like ornaments, what is that to God? He looks not at these things, but respects them, and communicates his favour to them as they are in Christ: *He is all, and in all.* The gifts and blessings of the Spirit are given to men as they are in Christ, and without respect to any external differences made in this world among men: hence we find excellent treasures of grace in mean and contemptible persons in

the world; poor in the world, and rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom; and as all believers, without difference, receive from Christ, so they are not debarred from any blessing that is in Christ: "All is yours, for ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. *ult.*; with Christ, God "freely gives us all things," Rom. viii. 32.

www.libtool.com.cn

Position 5.

The communion believers have with Christ, in spiritual benefits, is a very great mystery, far above the understanding of natural men. There are no footsteps of this thing in all the works of creation, therefore the apostle calls it "The unsearchable riches "of Christ," Eph. iii. 8. ανεξιχνιαστον πλουτον τυ Χριστυ: The word signifies, that which hath no footsteps to trace it by: yea, it is so deep a mystery, that the angels themselves stoop down to look into it, 1 Pet. i. 12. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, "neither have it entered into the heart of man the things which "God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath "revealed them unto us by his Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

Thirdly, and lastly, I shall, in a few particulars, open the dignity and excellency of this fruit of our union with Christ, and shew you, that a greater glory and honour cannot be put upon man, than to be thus in fellowship with Jesus Christ, John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have giv-"en them, that they may be one, as we are one:" And therefore, more particularly, let it be considered,

First, With whom we are associated; even the Son of God; with him that is *over all, God blessed for ever.* Our association with angels is an high advancement, for angels and saints are fellow-servants in the same family, Rev. xix. 10. and through Christ we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22. But what is all this to our fellewship with Jesus Christ himself, and that in another manner than angels have? For though Christ be to them an head of dominion, yet not an head of vital influences, as he is to his mystical body the church: this therefore is to them a great mystery, which they greatly affect to study and pry into.

Secondly, What we are that are dignified with this title, the *fellows* or *co-partners* with Jesus Christ: Not only dust by nature, *(Dust thou art)*, but sinful dust; such wretched sinners, as, by nature, and the sentence of the law, ought to be associated with devils, and partakers with them of the wrath of the almighty God to all eternity.

Thirdly, The benefits we are partakers of, in and with the Lord Jesus Christ; and, indeed, they are wonderful and astonishing things, so far as they do already appear, but yet we see

but little of them, comparatively, to what we shall see, 1 John iii. 1, 2. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet "appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall "appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." O what will that be! to see him as he is, and to be transformed into his likeness.

Fourthly, The way and manner in which we are brought into this fellowship with Christ: which is yet more admirable. The apostle gives us a strange account of it in 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that "ye through his poverty might be rich;" he empties himself of his glory, that we might be filled; he is made a curse, that we might enjoy the blessing; he submits to be crowned with thorns, that we might be crowned with glory and honour; he puts himself into the number of worms, Psal. xxii. 6., that we might be made equal to the angels. O the unconceivable grace of Christ!

Fifthly, The reciprocal nature of that communion which is betwixt Christ and believers: We do not only partake of what is his, but he partakes of what is ours: he hath fellowship with us in all our wants, sorrows, miseries, and afflictions; and we have communion with him in his righteousness, grace, sonship and glory: he takes part of our misery, and we take part of his blessedness; our sufferings are his sufferings, Col. i. 24. O what an honour is it to thee, poor wretch, to whom a great many would not turn aside to ask how thou dost; to have a King, yea, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, to pity, relieve, sympathize, groan and bleed with thee, to sit by thee in all thy troubles, and give thee his cordials, to say thy troubles are my troubles, and thy afflictions are my afflictions: whatever toucheth thee, toucheth me also. O what name shall we give unto such grace as this is?

Sixthly, and lastly, Consider the perpetuity of this privilege: Your fellowship with Christ is interminable, and abides for ever. Christ and the saints shall be glorified together, Rom. viii. 17. while he hath any glory they shall partake with him. It is said indeed, 1 Cor. xv. 24. that there shall be a time when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to his Father; but the meaning is not that ever he will cease to be an Head to his saints, or they from being his members: No, no, the relation never ceases; justification, sanctification, and adoption, are everlasting things, and we can never be divested of them.

Infer. 1. Are the saint's Christ's fellows? *What honourable*

persons then are they! and how should they be esteemed and valued in the world! If a king, who is the fountain of honour, do but raise a man by his favour, and dignify him by bestowing some honourable title upon him, what respect and observance is presently paid him by all persons? But what are all the vain and empty titles of honour, to the glorious and substantial privileges with which believers are dignified, and raised above all other men by Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, and they are the sons of God also: he is the heir of all things, and they are joint-heirs with Christ: he reigns in glory, and they shall reign with him: he sits upon the throne, and they shall sit with him in his throne. O that this vile world did but know the dignity of believers, they would never slight, hate, abuse, and persecute them as they do. And O that believers did but understand their own happiness, and privileges by Christ, they would never droop, and sink under every small trouble at that rate they do.

Infer. 2. *How abundantly hath God provided for all the necessities and wants of believers!* Christ is a storehouse filled with blessings and mercies, and it is all for them: from him, they "receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," Rom. v. 17. "Of his fulness they all receive grace for grace," John i. 16. All the fulness of Christ is made over to them for the supply of their wants: "My God shall supply all your need "(saith the apostle), according to his riches in glory by Jesus "Christ," Phil. iv. 19. If all the riches of God can supply your needs, then they shall be supplied. Say not, Christ is in the possession of consummate glory, and I am a poor creature, struggling with many difficulties, and toiling in the midst of many cares and fears in the world; for care is taken for all thy wants, and orders given from heaven for their supply: *My God shall supply all your need.* O say with a melting heart, I have a full Christ, and he is filled for me: I have his pure and perfect righteousness to justify me, his holiness to sanctify me, his wisdom to guide me, his comforts to refresh me, his power to protect me, and his all-sufficiency to supply me. O be chearful, be thankful, you have all your hearts can wish; and yet be humble; it is all from free-grace to empty and unworthy creatures.

Infer. 3. *How absurd, disingenuous, and unworthy of a Christian, is it to deny, or withhold from Christ any thing he hath, or by which he may be served, or honoured?* Doth Christ communicate all he hath to you, and can you withhold any thing from Christ? On Christ's part it is not *mine*, and *thine*, but *ours*, or *mine* and *yours*; John xx. 17. "I ascend to my Father, and "your Father; to my God, and your God." But O this cur-

sed idol *self!* which appropriates all to its own designs and uses. How liberal is Christ! and how penurious are we to him! Some will not part with their credit for Christ, when yet Christ abased himself unspeakably for them. Some will not part with a drop of blood for Christ, when Christ spent the whole treasure of his blood freely for us; yea, how loth are we to part with a shilling for Christ, to relieve him in his distressed members, when as yet "we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, "that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, "that we through his poverty might be rich!" O ungrateful return! O base and disingenuous spirits! The things Christ gives us are great, and the things we deny to him are small: he parts with the greatest, and yet is denied the least. The things he communicates to us, are none of ours, we have no right nor title by nature, or any desert of ours to them; the things we deny or grudge to Christ, are by all titles his own, and he hath the fullest and most unquestionable title to them all: what he gives to us, he gives to them that never deserved it; what we withhold from him, we withhold from one that hath deserved that, and infinitely more from us, than we have, or are.

He interested you freely in all his riches when you were enemies; you stand upon trifles with him, and yet call him your best and dearest friend: he gave himself, and all he hath to you, when you could claim nothing from him; you deny to part with these things to Christ, who may not only claim them upon the highest title, his own sovereignty, and absolute property, but by your own act, who profess to have given all in covenant to him: what he gives you, returns no profit to him; but what you give or part with for him, is your greatest advantage. O that the consideration of these things might shame and humble your souls.

Infer. 4. *Then certainly no man is, or can be supposed to be a loser by conversion, seeing from that day, whatever Christ is, or hath, becomes his.*

O what an inheritance are men possessed of by their new birth! Some men cry out, Religion will undo you; but with what eyes do these men see? Surely, you could never so reckon, except your souls were so incarnated, as to reckon pardon, peace, adoption, holiness, and heaven, for nothing; that invisibles are non-entities, and temporals the only realities. It is true, the converted soul may lose his estate, his liberty, yea, his life for Christ; but what then? Are they losers that exchange brass for gold? or part with their present comforts for

an hundred-fold advantage? Mark x. 29. So that none need be frightned at religion, for the losses that attend it, whilst Christ and heaven are gained by it: they that count religion their loss, have their portion in this life.

Infer. 5. *How securely is the saints inheritance settled upon them, seeing they are in common with Jesus Christ?* Christ and his saints are joint-heirs, and the inheritance cannot be alienated, but by his consent; he must lose his interest, if you lose yours. Indeed, Adam's inheritance was by a single title, and moreover, it was in his own hand, and so he might, (as indeed he soon did) divest himself and his posterity of it; but it is not so betwixt Christ and believers, we are secured in our inheritance by Christ our co-heir, who will never alienate it: and therefore it was truly observed by the father, *Foelicior Job in sterquilinio, quam Adamus in paradiso:* Job was happier upon the dunghill, than Adam was in paradise. The covenant of grace is certainly the best tenure; as it hath the best mercies, so it gives the fullest security to enjoy them.

Infer. 6. *How rich and full is Jesus Christ, who communicates abundantly to all the saints, and yet hath infinitely still more in himself, than hath ever been received by them all.*

Take all the faith of Abraham, all the meekness of Moses, all the patience of Job, all the wisdom of Solomon, all the zeal of David, all the industry of Paul, and all the tender-heartedness of Josiah; add to this, all the grace that is poured, (tho' in lesser measure), into all the elect vessels in the world, yet still it is far short of that which remains in Christ; "He is anointed with the "oil of gladness above his fellows:" And in all things he hath, and must ever have the pre-eminence. There are many thousand stars glittering above your heads, and one star differs from another star in glory, yet there is more light and glory in one sun, than in the many thousand stars. Grace beautifies the children of men exceedingly, but still that is true of Christ, Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into "thy lips." For all grace is secondarily, and derivatively in the saints, but it is primitively and originally in Christ, John v. 16. Grace is imperfect and defective in them, but in him it is in its most absolute perfection and fulness, Col. i. 19. In the saints it is mixed with abundance of corruption, but in Christ it is altogether unmixed, and exclusive of its opposite, Heb. vii. 26. So that as the Heathen said of moral virtue, I may much more say of Christ, That were he to be seen with mortal eyes, he would compel love and admiration from all men, for "he is altogether "lovely," Cant. v. 16.

Infer. 7. *What delight, and singular advantage must needs be in the communion of the saints, who have communion with Jesus Christ in all his graces and benefits.*

"That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, "that ye also may have fellowship with us: And truly our fel-"lowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. O it is sweet to have fellowship with those that have fellowship with God in Jesus Christ. Christ hath communicated to the saints, varieties of graces, in different measures and degrees; and as they all receive from Christ the fountain, so it is sweet and most delightful to be improving themselves by spiritual communion one with another: Yea, for that end one is furnished with one grace more eminently than another, that the weak may be assisted by the strong, as a *modern divine** well observes. Athanasius was prudent, and active, Basil of an heavenly, sweet temper, Chrysostome laborious, without affectation, Ambrose resolved, and grave, Luther couragious, and Calvin acute, and judicious. Thus every one hath his proper gift from Christ, the fountain of gifts and graces, 1 Cor. vii. 7. One hath quickness of parts, another solidity of judgment, but not ready and presential; one is zealous, but unrounded; another well principled, but timerous; one is wary, and prudent; another open and plain; one is trembling, and melting; another chearful and joyous; one must impart his light, another his heat: The *eye*, the knowing man, cannot say to the *hand*, the active man, I have no need of thee. And O how sweet would it be, if gifts, graces, and experiences were frequently, and humbly imparted! But idle notions, earthly-mindedness, self-interests, and want of more communion with Christ, have, almost, destroyed the comfort of Christian fellowship every where in the world.

Infer. 8. *In a word, those only have ground to claim interest in Christ, who do really participate of his graces, and in whom are found the effects and fruits of their union and communion with him.*

If you have interest in Christ, you have communion in his graces and benefits; and if you have such communion, it will appear in your maintaining daily *actual communion with God* in duties; whereby will be produced,

First, The increase of your sanctification, by fresh participations from the fountain; as *cloth* which is often dipt into the *fat* receives the deeper dye, and livelier tincture; so will you

* Mr. Turshel.

souls by assiduous communion with God. It will also be discerned,

Secondly, In your deeper humiliation, and spiritual sense of your own vileness: The more any man partakes of God, and is acquainted with him, and assimilated to him, the more base and vile in his own sight he still grows, Job xlii. 5, 6. Isa. vi. 5.

Thirdly, It will appear in your more vehement longings after the full enjoyment of God in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 8. and Rom. viii. 23. You that have the first fruits, will groan within yourselves after the full harvest, and satisfying fruition; you will not be so taken with things below, as to be content with the best lot on earth for your everlasting portion. O! if these communicated drops be so sweet, what is there in Christ the fountain?

And thus I have opened the method of grace in bringing home Christ and his benefits to God's elect by union, in order to communion with him.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON IX.

Containing the first general Use of Exhortation, inviting all Men to apply JESUS CHRIST.

MATTH. xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

THE *impetration* of our redemption by Jesus Christ, being finished in the first part, and the way and means by which Christ is *applied* to sinners in the foregoing part of this *treatise*; I am now orderly come to the general *use* of the whole; which in the first place shall be by way of *exhortation*, to invite and persuade all men to come to Christ; who in all the former sermons, hath been represented in his *garments of salvation*, red in his apparel, prepared and offered to sinners as their all-sufficient and only remedy: And in the following sermons will be represented in his *perfumed garments* coming out of his *ivory palaces*, Psalm xlv. 8. to allure and draw all men unto him.

For a general head to this use, which will be large, I have chosen this scripture, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and "are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

These words are the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, in which there is a vital, ravishing sound: It is your mercy to have such a joyful sound in your ears this day. And in them I will consider their *dependance*, *parts*, and *scope*.

As to their dependance, it is manifest they have an immediate relation to the foregoing verse, wherein Christ opens his commission, and declares the fulness of this authority and saving power, and the impossibility of coming to God any other way. "All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man "knoweth the Son but the Father: Neither knoweth any man "the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will "reveal him," ver. 27.

This 28th verse is brought in proleptically to obviate the discouragements of any poor, convinced, and humbled soul, who might thus object: Lord, I am fully satisfied of the fulness of thy saving power, but greatly doubt whether ever I shall have the benefit thereof; for I see so much sin and guilt in myself, so great vileness and utter unworthiness, that I am overweighed, and even sink under the burden of it: My soul is discouraged because of sin. This objection is prevented in the words of my text, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy la-"den," *q. d.* Let not the sense of your sin and misery drive you from your only remedy: Be your sins never so many, and the sense and burden of them never so heavy, yet, for all that, *Come unto me*: You are the persons whom I invite and call. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In the words, three things are especially remarkable.

1. The soul's spiritual distress and burthen: *Weary and heavy laden.*

2. Its invitation to Christ under that burthen: *Come unto me.*

3. Its encouragement to that great duty: *I will give you rest.*

First, The soul's spiritual distress and burthen, expressed in two very emphatical words *, οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι. "Ye "that labour and are heavy laden." The word which we tran-

* Οἱ κοπιῶντες, *i. e.* They who labour even to fainting and tiring, for this Greek word τὸ κοπιᾶν differs by this emphasis from the word πονεῖν, which signifies only in general to labour. *Piscator on the place*, explains it thus, Ye who feel the burden of your sins, and yet do not sink under the weight thereof. *Chrysostome* expounds it of those who are burdened with the legal rites and ceremonies; but we understand it in general, of all those who being pressed with the burden of their sins, and the sense of the malignity of their corrupt natures, do strive with all their might to throw off this depravity, and to obtain righteousness. *Musculus on the place.*

ſtate labour, ſignifies a labouring even to faintneſs and tiring, to the conſumption and waſte of the ſpirits; and the other word ſignifies ſuch a preſſure by a burthen that is too heavy to be borne, that we do even ſink down under it.

There is ſome difference among expoſitors about the quality of this burthen. Chryſoſtome, and ſome others after him, expound it of the burthen of the legal *rites* and *ceremonies*, which was a heavy burthen indeed, ſuch as neither they, nor their fathers, could bear. Under the taſk and burthen of theſe legal obſervances, they did ſweat and toil to obtain a righteouſneſs to juſtify them before God, and all in vain; and this is a pious ſenſe: But others expound it of the burthen of ſin in general; the corruption of nature, and evils of practice, which ſouls are convinced have brought them under the curſe, and will bring them to hell, and therefore labour, and ſtrive, all that in them lies, by repentance, and reformation, to clear themſelves from it: but all in vain, whilſt they ſtrive in their own ſtrength. Such are they that are here called to come to Chriſt, which is the ſecond thing; namely,

Secondly, The invitation of burthened ſouls to Chriſt: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden: Come "unto me," *i. e.* believe in me, lean and reſt your burthened ſouls upon me. I am able to eaſe all your burthens; in me is that righteouſneſs and peace which you ſeek in vain in all the legal rites and ceremonies; or in your repentance, reformations, and duties; but it will give you no eaſe, it will be no benefit to you except you come unto me. Faith is often expreſſed under this notion, ſee John vi. 37. and John vii. 37. and it is to be further noted, that [*all*] burthened ſouls are invited to come, "All ye that labour." Whatever your ſin or guilt have been, whatever your fears or diſcouragements are, yet come, (*i. e.*) believe in me.

Thirdly, Here is the encouragement Chriſt gives to this duty, *And I will give you reſt:* αναπαυσω υμας. * I will refreſh you, I will give you reſt from your labour, your conſciences ſhall be pacified, your heart at reſt and quiet in that pardon, peace, and favour of God, which I will procure for you by my death. But here it muſt be heedfully noted, that this promiſe of reſt in Chriſt is not made to men ſimply, as they are ſinners, nor yet as they are burthened, and heavy laden ſinners, but as they come to Chriſt; *i. e.* as they are believers. For let a man break

* Why doſt thou ſeek that where thou canſt not find it? I am he only that can help thee. *Muſ. on the place.*

his heart for sin, let him weep out his eyes, let him mourn as a dove, and shed as many tears for sin (if it were possible) as ever there fell drops of rain upon the ground, yet if he come not to Christ by faith, his repentance shall not save him, nor all his sorrows bring him to true rest. Hence note,

www.libtool.com.cn

Doct. 1. *That some souls are heavy laden with the burthensome sense of sin.*

Doct. 2. *That all burthened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ.*

Doct. 3. *That there is rest in Christ for all that come to him under the heavy burthen of sin.*

Doct. 1. *Some souls are heavy laden with the burthensome sense of sin.*

Doct. 1. I do not say all are so, for "fools make a mock at "sin," Prov. xiv. 9. It is so far from being burthensome to some, that it is a *sport* to them, Prov. x. 23. But when a man's eyes are opened to see the evil that is in sin, and the eternal misery that follows it, (sin and hell being linked together with such strong chains as nothing but the blood of Christ can loose) then no burden is like that of sin: "A wounded con-"science who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. For let us but consider the efficacy that the law of God hath upon the consciences of men, when it comes in the spirituality and power of it, to convince and humble the soul of a sinner. For then,

What inward troubles for sin are.

First, *The memory of sin, long since committed, is refreshed and revived, as if it had been but yesterday*: There are fresh recognitions of sin long since acted and forgotten, as if they had never been: What was done in our youth is fetched back again, and by a new impression of fear, and horror, set home upon the trembling conscience. Job xiii. 26. "Thou "writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the "sins of my youth." Conscience can call back the days that are past, and draw up a new charge upon the score of old sins, Gen. xlii. 21. All that ever we did is recorded, and entered into the book of conscience, and now is the time to open that book, when the Lord will convince, and awaken sinners. We read in Job xiv. 17. of sealing up iniquities in a bag, which is an allusion to the *Clerk of the assizes*, that takes all the indictments that are made against persons at the *assizes*, and seals them up in a bag, in order to a trial. This is the first office and work of conscience; upon which

The *second*, namely, its *accusations*, do depend. These accusations of conscience are terrible things; who can stand before them? They are full, they are clear, and all of them referring to the approaching judgment of the great and terrible God.

Conscience dives into all sins †, secret as well as open, and into all the circumstances and aggravations of sin, as being committed against light, against mercy, against the strivings, warnings, and regrets of conscience. So that we may say of the efficacy of conscience, as it is said, Psalm. xix. 6. of the influence of the *sun*, "nothing is hid from the heat and power "thereof." "Come (saith the woman of Samaria) see a man "that hath told me all that ever I did," John iv. 29. Christ convinced her but of one sin, by this discourse, but conscience, by that one, fetched in, and charged all the rest upon her. And as the accusations of conscience are full, so they are clear and undeniable: A man becomes self-convinced, and there remains no shift, excuse, or plea, to defend himself: A thousand witnesses cannot prove any point more clearly than one testimony of conscience doth. Matth. xxii. 12. "The man was speechless, "a mute;" muzzled (as the word signifies ‡) by the clear testimony of his own conscience: These accusations are the second work or office of conscience, and they make way for the third, namely,

Thirdly, The *sentence* and *condemnation* of conscience: And truly this is an insupportable burthen: The condemnation of conscience is nothing else but its application of the condemning sentence of the law to a man's person: The law curseth every one that transgresseth it, Gal. iii. 10. Conscience applies this curse to the guilty sinner. So that it sentences the sinner in God's name and authority, from whence there is no appeal: The voice of conscience is the voice of God, and what it pronounces in God's name and authority, he will confirm and ratify, 1 John iii. 20. "If our hearts, (*i. e.*) our consciences, condemn us, God is "greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things:" This is that torment which no man can endure. See the effects of it in Cain, in Judas, and in Spira; it is a real foretaste of hell-torments: This is that *Worm that never dies*, Mark ix. 44. For look, as a worm in the body is bred of the corruption that is there, so the accusations and condemnations of conscience are bred in the soul by the corruption and guilt that is there: As the worm in the

† This is the first punishment of sin, that no guilty person can be acquitted in his own conscience. *Juv. lib. 13. l. 2.*

‡ Ὁ δὲ φιμωθὴς, *et ille capistratus est.*

body preys and bites upon the tender, sensible, inward parts, so doth conscience touch the very quick. This is its third effect, or work, to sentence and condemn; and this also makes way for a fourth, namely,

Fourthly, *To upbraid and reproach the sinner under his misery:* and this makes a man a very *terror to himself:* To be pitied in misery is some relief, but to be upbraided, and reproached, doubles our affliction: You know it was one of the aggravations of Christ's sufferings, to be reproached by the tongues of his enemies, whilst he hanged in torments upon the cursed tree; but all the scoffs and reproaches, the bitter jeers and *sarcasms* in the world, are nothing to those of a man's own conscience; which will cut to the very bone.

O! when a man's conscience shall say to him in a day of trouble, as Reuben to his afflicted brethren, Gen. xliii. 22. "Spake I "not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would "not hear; therefore behold also his blood is required." So conscience; did I not warn you, threaten you, persuade you, in time, against these evils; but you would not hearken to me, therefore behold now you must suffer to all eternity for it. The wrath of God is kindled against thy soul for it: This is the fruit of thy own wilful madness and obstinacy. Now thou shalt know the price of sinning against God, against light, and conscience. O this is terrible! every bite of conscience makes a poor soul to startle, and in a terrible fright to cry, O the worm! O the bitter foretaste of hell! A wounded spirit who can bear?

This is a fourth wound of conscience, and it makes way for a fifth; for here it is as the pouring out of the vials, and the sounding of those woe-trumpets in Revelations; one woe is past, and another cometh. After all these deadly blows of conscience upon the very heart of a sinner, comes another as dreadful as any that is yet named; and that is,

Fifthly, The fearful expectations of wrath to come, which it begets in the soul of a guilty sinner: Of this you read, Heb. x. 27. "A fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indigna-"tion:" And this makes the stoutest sinner faint and sink under the burthen of sin. For the tongue of man cannot declare what it is to lie down, and rise with those fearful expectations: The case of such sinners is somewhat like that which is described in Deut. xxviii. 65, 66, 67. "The Lord shall give thee "there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of "mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and "thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of

"thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were "even: And at even thou shalt say, would God it were mor-"ning: For the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear," &c. Only in this it differs, in this scripture you have the terror of those described, whose temporal life hangs in doubtful suspence, but in the persons I am speaking of, it is a trembling under the apprehensions and expectations of the vengeance of eternal fire.

Believe it, friends, words cannot express what those poor creatures feel, that lie down, and rise up under these fears, and frights of conscience. Lord, what will become of me! I am free among the dead, yea, among the damned. I hang by the frail thread of a momentary life, which will, and must, break shortly, and may break the next moment, over the everlasting burnings: No pleasant bread is to be eaten in these days, but what is like the bread of condemned men.

And thus you see what the burden of sin is, when God makes it to bear upon the consciences of men, no burden of affliction is like it: Losses of dearest relations, sorrows for an only son, are not so pungent, and penetrating as these: For,

First, No creature enjoyment is pleasant under these inward troubles: In other troubles they may signify something to a man's relief; but here they are nothing; the wound is too deep to be healed by any thing but the blood of Jesus Christ: conscience requires as much to satisfy it, as God requires to satisfy him. When God is at peace with thee, (saith conscience) then will I be at peace with thee too; but till then, expect no rest nor peace from me: All the pleasures and diversions in the world shall never stop my mouth: Go where thou wilt, I will follow thee like thy shadow: Be thy portion in the world as sweet as it will, I will drop in gall and wormwood into thy cup, that thou shalt taste no sweetness in any thing, till thou hast got thy pardon.

These inward troubles for sin alienate the mind from all former pleasures and delights; there is no more taste or savour in them, than the white of an egg. Music is out of tune; all instruments jar and groan. Ornaments have no beauty; what heart hath a poor creature to deck that body, in which dwells such a miserable soul! to feed and pamper that carcase that hath been the soul's inducement to, and instrument in sin, and must be its companion in everlasting misery.

Secondly, These inward troubles for sin, put a dread into death, beyond whatever the soul saw in it before. Now it looks like the *King of terrors* indeed. You read in Heb. ii. 15. of

ſome that through fear of death are all their life long ſubject to bondage. O what a lively comment is a ſoul in this caſe able to make upon ſuch a text! They would not ſcare at the pale horſe, nor at him that ſits on him, though his name be called *Death*, if it were not for what follows him, Rev. vi. 8. but when they conſider that hell follows, they tremble at the very name, or thoughts of death.

Thirdly, Such is the nature of theſe inward troubles of ſpirit, that they ſwallow up the ſenſe of all outward troubles: Alas! theſe are all loſt in the deeps of ſoul-ſorrows, as the little rivulets are in the vaſt ſea; he that is wounded at the heart, will not cry *Oh*, at the bite of the ſmalleſt inſect. And ſurely no greater is the proportion betwixt outward and inward ſorrows. A ſmall matter formerly would diſcompoſe a man, and put him into a fret; now ten thouſand outward troubles are lighter than a feather: For, ſaith he, "why doth the "living man complain?" Am I yet on this ſide eternal burnings! O let me not complain, then, whatever my condition be: Have I loſſes in the world, or pains upon my body? Alas! theſe are not to be named with the loſs of God, and the feeling of his wrath and indignation for evermore. Thus you ſee what troubles, inward troubles for ſin be.

How ſouls are ſupported under ſuch troubles.

Secondly, If you aſk, in the ſecond place, how it comes to paſs that any ſoul is ſupported under ſuch ſtrong troubles of ſpirit, that all that feel them do not ſink under them; that all that go down into theſe deep waters of ſorrow, are not drowned in them? The anſwer is,

Firſt, Though this be a very ſad time with the ſoul (much like that of Adam, betwixt the breach of the firſt covenant, and the firſt promiſe of Chriſt made to him) yet the ſouls that are thus heavy laden, do not ſink, becauſe God hath a moſt tender care over them, and regard to them; underneath them are the everlaſting arms, and thence it is they ſink not: Were they left to grapple with theſe troubles in their own ſtrength, they could never ſtand. But God takes care of theſe mourners, that their ſpirits do not fail before him, and the ſouls that he hath made; I mean thoſe of his elect, whom he is this way preparing for, and bringing unto Chriſt.

Secondly, The Lord is pleaſed to nouriſh ſtill ſome hope in the ſoul under the greateſt fears and troubles of ſpirit: Though it have no comfort or joy, yet it hath ſome *hope*, and that keeps up the heart. The afflicted ſoul doth, in this caſe, as the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 29. "He putteth his mouth in the duſt;

"*if* yet there may be hope:" He saith, "It is good for a man "to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God." There are usually some glimmerings or dawnings of mercy through Christ, in the midnight darkness of inward troubles; *non dantur purae tenebrae.* In hell, indeed, there is no hope to enlighten the darkness, but it is not so upon earth.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, The experiences of others, who have been in the same deeps of trouble, are also of great use to keep up the soul above water. The experience of another is of great use to prop up a desponding mind, whilst, as yet, it hath none of its own; and, indeed, for the support of souls in such cases, they were recorded. 1 Tim. i. 16. "For this cause I obtained mercy, "that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffer-"ing, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on "him to life everlasting:" For an encouraging * *Pattern*, an eminent precedent to all poor sinners that were to come after him, that none might absolutely despair of finding mercy through Christ. You know if a man be taken sick, and none can tell what the disease is, none can say that ever they heard of such a disease before, it is exceeding frightful; but if one and another, it may be twenty, come to the sick man's bed-side, and tell him, sir, be not afraid, I have been in the very same case that you now are, and so have many more, and all did well at last; why this is half a cure to the sick man. So it is here a great support to hear the experiences of other saints.

Fourthly, As the experiences of others support the soul under these burdens, so the riches of free grace through Jesus Christ uphold it: It is rich and abundant, Psal. cxxx. 7, 8. plenteous redemption: and it is free, and to the worst of sinners, Isa. i. 18. And under these troubles it finds itself in the way, and proper method of mercy, for so my text (a text that hath upheld many thousand drooping hearts) states it: All this gives hope and encouragement under trouble.

Fifthly, and *Lastly*, Though the state of the soul be sad and sinking, yet Jesus Christ usually makes haste in the extremity of trouble to relieve it, by sweet and seasonable discoveries of

* The word Ὑποτύπωσις as well as Τυπος (which is the word rendered Pattern in 1 Tim. 16.) signifies the first draught of a picture, it is here taken for example, that men might see what they might expect from God: That grace much more abounds, and is more powerful than sin, and that no believer may be diffident of the forgiveness provided for him. *Pol. Synopf. on the Place.*

his grace; *cum duplicantur lateres, venit* Moses, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. It is with Christ as it was with Joseph, whose bowels yearned towards his brethren, and he was in pain till he had told them, "I am Joseph your brother." This is sweetly exhibited to us in that excellent parable of the prodigal, Luke xv. when his father saw him, being yet a great way off, he ran and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. Mercy runs nimbly to help, when souls are ready to fall under the pressure of sin. And thus you see both how they are burthened, and how upheld under the burthen.

Why doth God make the burden of sin lie so heavy upon the souls of some sinners?

Thirdly, If it be enquired, in the last place, why God makes the burden of sin press so heavy upon the hearts of poor sinners? It is answered,

First, He doth it to divorce their hearts from sin, by giving them an experimental taste of the bitterness and evil that is in sin: Men's hearts are naturally glewed with delight to their sinful courses; all the persuasions and arguments in the world are too weak to separate them and their beloved lusts. The morsels of sin go down smoothly and sweetly, they roll them with much delectation under their tongues, and it is but need that such bitter potions as these should be administred "to make their "stomachs rise against sin," as that † word used by the apostle in 2 Cor. vii. 11. signifies, *in that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what indignation it wrought?* It notes the rising of the stomach with rage, a being angry even unto sickness; and this is the way, the best and most effectual way to separate the soul of a sinner from his lusts; for in these troubles, conscience saith, as it is in Jer. iv. 18. "Thy way and thy doings have procured "these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is "great, because it reacheth unto thy heart."

Secondly, the Lord doth this to make Jesus Christ most welcome and desirable to the soul. Christ is not *sweet*, till sin be made *bitter* to us. Matth. ix. 12. "They that be whole need "not a physician, but they that are sick." If once God wounds the heart of a sinner, with the stinging sense of sin, then nothing in the world is so precious, so necessary, so vehemently desired, and panted for, as Jesus Christ! O that I had Christ, if I did go in rags, if I did feed upon no other food all my days, but the bread and water of affliction? this is the language of a soul filled with the sense of the evil of sin.

† Ἀγανακτησις, *indignatio, stomachatio.* Leigh's Critica, in verb.

Thirdly, The Lord doth this to advance the riches of h free grace in the eyes of sinners. Grace never appears grace ti sin appears to be sin. The deeper our sense of the evil of si is, the deeper our apprehensions of the free grace of God i Christ will be. The louder our *groans* have been under th burden of sin, the louder will our *acclamations* and praises b for our salvation from it by Jesus Christ. "To me (saith Pau "the chiefest of sinners, was this grace given," 1 Tim. i. 1 Never doth the grace of a prince so melt the heart of a traito as when trial, sentence, and all preparations for his executio have passed, before his unexpected pardon comes.

Fourthly, The Lord doth this to prevent relapses into sin "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness "wrought!" 2 Cor. ii. 7. The burnt child dreads the fir the bird that is delivered out of the *talons* of the *hawk*, trem bles afterward at the noise of his bells. "After such a delive "rance as this, should we again break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. Ask a poor penitent soul, that hath been i the deeps of sorrow for sin, Will you return to your forme course of sin again? And it sounds in his ears, as if you shoul ask him, Will you run into the fire, will ye go to the rack a gain? O no, it hath cost him dear already *.

Fifthly, Lastly, This the Lord doth, to make them both skil ful and compassionate in relieving others that are under like in ward troubles. None can speak so judiciously, so pertinently so feelingly to another's case, as he that hath been in the sam case himself †; this furnishes them with the tongue of th learned, to speak a word in season to the weary soul; by thi means they are able to "comfort others with the same comfort "wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God, 2 Cor. i. 4.

Thus you have had a brief account, what the burden of si is, how souls are supported under that burden, and why th Lord causes sin to lie so heavy upon the souls of some sinner The improvement of all will be in a double use, *viz.*

Of information, and direction.

First use for information.

Infer. 1. Is there such a load and burden in sin? *What the*

* *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam.* i. e. I will not purchase repen tance at so dear a rate.

† *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurere dico.* Virg.

Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity woes, so like mine own. *Dryden.*

was the burden that our Lord Jesus Christ felt and bare for us, upon whom the whole weight of all the sins of all God's elect lay! Isa. liii. 6. "He hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on "him." Our burden is heavy, but nothing to Christ's. O there is a vast difference betwixt that which Christ bare, and that which we bear. We feel but the single weight of our own sins; Christ felt the whole weight of all our sins. You do not feel the whole weight that is in any one sin; alas, it would sink you, if God should let it bear in all its aggravations and effects upon you. Psal. cxxx. 2, 3. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark "iniquity, O Lord who shall stand!" You would sink presently, you can no more stand under it, than under the weight of a mighty mountain. But Christ bare all the burden upon himself; his understanding was deep and large; he knew the extent of its evil, which we do not: we have many reliefs and helps under our burden, he had none; we have friends to counsel, comfort, and pity us; all his friends and familiars forsook him, and fled in the day of his trouble: we have comforts from heaven, he had frowns from heaven: "My God, my God, (saith he in "that doleful day) why hast thou forsaken me?" There is no compare betwixt our load and Christ's.

Infer. 2. If there be such a burden in sin, *then certainly sinners will pay dear for all the pleasure they find in sin, in the days of their vanity.* "What ‡ one saith of crafty counsels, we "may say of all sins; though they seem pleasant in their first "appearance, they will be found sad in the event:" they are honey in the mouth, but the gall of asps in the belly; they tickle the fancy; but rend the conscience. O sinner, thy mirth will certainly be turned into mourning, as sure as thou livest; that vain and frothy breast of thine shall be wounded; thou shalt feel the sting and pain, as well as relish the sweet, and pleasure of sin. O that thou wouldst but give thyself the leisure seriously to ponder those ‖ scriptures in the margin; methinks they should have the same effect that the hand-writing upon the plaister of the wall had upon that jovial king in the height of a frolic, Daniel v. 5. Reason thus with thine own heart, and thou wilt find the conclusion unavoidable; either I shall repent for sin, or I shall not: If I shall not, then must I howl under the wrath of God for sin, in the lowest hell for e-

‡ *Consilia callida prima specie laeta; tractatu dura; eventu tristia.* Livy.

‖ Prov. xx. 7. Ibid. xxiii. 31, 32. Job xx. 12, 13, 14. James i. 15. Rom. vi. 21.

vermore. If I shall, then by what I have now read, of the throbs and wounds of conscience, I see what this heart of mine, this vain heart of mine, must feel in this world. O how much wiser was the choice that Moses made, Heb. xi. 25. the worst of sufferings, rather than the best of sin, the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season!

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 3. Is there such a burden in sin, *then the most tender compassion is a debt due to souls afflicted and heavy laden with sin.* Their condition cries for pity, whatever their tongues do; they seem to call upon you, as Job upon his friends; "Have pity, "have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God "hath touched me," Job xix. 21. And O let all that have felt the wounds, and anguish of an afflicted conscience themselves, learn from their own experience tenderly to pity and help others. Gal. vi. 1. "You that are spiritual, restore (* or set him "in joint again) in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself."

Israel was commanded to be kind to strangers, for, saith God, you know the heart of a stranger. And surely if any case in the world require help, pity, and all compassionate tenderness, this doth; and yet how do some slight spiritual troubles upon others? Parents slight them in their own children, masters in their servants; the more brutish and wicked they. O had you but felt yourselves what they feel, you would never treat them as you do. But let this comfort such poor creatures, Christ hath felt them, and will pity and help them; yea, he therefore would feel them himself, that he might have compassion upon you. If men will not, God will pity you; if men be so cruel to persecute him whom God hath smitten, God will be so kind to pour balm into the wounds that sin hath made: if they pull away the shoulder from you, and will not be concerned about your troubles, except it be to aggravate them, God will not serve you so: but certainly you that have passed through the same difficulties, you cannot be without compassion to them that are now grappling with them.

Infer. 4. *How unexpressibly dreadful is the state of the damned, who must bear the burden of all their sins upon themselves, without relief, or hope of deliverance!* Mark. ix. 44. "where their worm "dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

O! If sin upon the soul that is coming to Christ for deliverance, be so burdensome, what is it upon the soul that is shut out from Christ, and all hopes of deliverance for ever! For, do but ponder these differences betwixt these two burdens.

* Καταρτίζειν, *laxta membra in suum locum restituere.*

First, No soul is so capacious now, to take in the fulness of the evil and misery of sin, as they are who are gone down to the place of torments. Even as the joys of God's face above are much unknown to them that have the foretastes and first-fruits of them here by faith, so the misery of the damned is much unknown, even to them that have in their consciences now, the bitterest taste and sense of sin in this world: as we have the visions of heaven, so we have the visions of hell also, but darkly through a glass.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, No burden of sin presseth so continually upon the soul here as it doth there. Afflicted souls, on earth, have intermissions, and breathing-times; but in hell there are no lucid intervals, the wrath of God there is still flowing; it is in *fluxu continuo*, Isa. xxx. 33. a stream of brimstone.

Thirdly, No burden of sin lies upon any of God's elect so long as on the damned, who do, and must bear it: our troubles about sin are but short, though they should run parallel with the line of life; but the troubles of the damned are parallel with the endless line of eternity.

Fourthly, Under these troubles, the soul hath hope, but there, all hope is cut off: all the gospel is full of hope, it breathes nothing but hope to sinners that are moving Christ-ward under their troubles; but in hell the pangs of desperation rend their consciences for ever. So that, upon all accounts, the state of the damned is inexpressibly dreadful.

Infer. 5. *If the burden of sin be so heavy, how sweet then must the pardon of sin be to a sin-burdened soul!* Is it a refreshment to a prisoner, to have his chains knocked off? A comfort to a debtor to have his debts paid, and obligations cancelled? What joy must it then be to a sin-burthened soul, to hear the voice of pardon and peace in his trembling conscience! Is the light of the morning pleasant to a man after a weary tiresome night? the spring of the year pleasant after a hard and tedious winter? They are so, indeed; but nothing so sweet as the favour, peace, and pardon of God, to a soul that hath been long restless, and anxious, under the terrors and fears of conscience. For, though after pardon and peace a man remembers sin still, yet it is as one that remembers the dangerous pits, and deep waters, from which he hath been wonderfully delivered, and had a narrow escape. O the unconceiveable sweetness of a pardon! Who can read it, without tears of joy? Are we glad when the grinding pain of the stone, or racking fits of the cholic are over? And shall we not be transported, when the accusations and condemnations of conscience are over? Tongue cannot express what these things

are; his joy is something that no words can convey to the understanding of another, that never felt the anguish of sin.

Infer. 6. Lastly, *In how sad a case are those that never felt any burden in sin, that never were kept waking and restless one night for sin?*

There is a *burdened* conscience, and there is a *benumbed* conscience. The first is more *painful*, but the last more *dangerous*. O it is a fearful blow of God upon a man's soul, to strike it senseless and stupid, so that though mountains of guilt lie upon it, it feels no pain or pressure: and this is so much more sad, because it incapacitates the soul for Christ, and is a presage and forerunner of hell. It would grieve the heart of a man, to see a *delirious person* in the rage and height of a fever, to laugh at those that are weeping for him, call them fools, and telling them he is as well as any of them: much so is the case of many thousand souls; the God of mercy pity them.

Second use for counsel.

The only further use I shall make of this point here, shall be to direct and counsel souls that are weary, and heavy laden with the burden of sin, in order to their obtaining true rest and peace. And first,

First counsel.

Satisfy not yourselves in fruitless complaints to men. Many do so, but it is never the nearer. I grant it is lawful in spiritual distresses to complain to men, yea, and it is a great mercy if we have any near us in times of trouble, that are judicious, tender and faithful, into whose bosoms we may pour out our troubles; but to rest in this, short of Christ, is no better than a snare of the devil to destroy us. Is there not a God to go to in trouble? The best of men, in the neglect of Christ, are but physicians of no value. Be wise and wary in your choice of Christian friends, to whom you open your complaints; some are not clear themselves in the doctrine of Christ, and faith, others are of a dark and troubled spirit, as you are, and will but entangle you more. "As for me (saith Job) is my complaint to "man, and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?" Job xxi. 4. One hour betwixt Christ and thy soul in secret, will do more, to thy true relief, than all other counsellors, and comforters in the world can do.

Second counsel.

Beware of a false peace, which is more dangerous than your trouble for sin can be. Many men are afraid of their troubles, but I think they have more cause to fear their peace, a great deal.

There is a twofold peace that ruins most men, peace in sin, and peace with sin: O how glad are some persons when their troubles are gone; but I dare not rejoice with them. It is like him that rejoices his ague is gone, though it hath left him in a deep consumption. You are got rid of your troubles, but God knows how you have left them; your wounds are skinned over, better they were kept open. Surely they have much to answer for, that help on these delusions, healing the hurt of souls slightly, by crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. The false peace you beget in them, will be a real trouble to yourselves in the issue, Jer. vi. 14.

www.libtool.com.cn

Third counsel.

Let all that are under inward troubles for sin, take heed of drawing desperate conclusions against themselves, and the final state of their own souls. Though your case be sad, it is not desperate; though the night be troublesome and tedious, keep on in the way to Christ, and light will spring up. To mourn for sin is your duty; to conclude there is no hope for you in Christ, is your sin. You have wronged God enough already, do not add a farther and greater abuse to all the rest, by an absolute despair of mercy. It was your sin, formerly, to *presume beyond any promise*, it is your sin, now, to *despair against many commands.* I would say as the apostle in another case, I would not have you mourn as men that have no hope: your condition is sad as it is, but yet it is much better than once it was. You were once full of sin, and void of sense; now you have the sense of sin, which is no small mercy. You were once quite out of the way and method of mercy, now you are in that very path wherein mercy meets the elect of God. Keep hope, therefore, at the bottom of all your troubles.

Fourth counsel.

Observe whether your troubles for sin, produce such fruits and effects in your souls, as theirs do, which end, at last, in Christ and everlasting peace.

First, One that is truly burdened with sin, will not allow himself to live in the secret practice of sin: either your trouble will put an end to your course of sinning, or your sinning will put an end to your troubles. Consult 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Secondly, True sorrow for sin will give you very low, and vile thoughts of yourselves; as you were covered with *pride* before, so you will be covered with *shame*, after God hath convinced, and humbled you, Rom. vi. 21.

Thirdly, A soul really burdened with sin, will never stand in

his own justification before God, nor extenuate and mince it in his confessions to him, Psal. li. 3, 4.

Fourthly, The burdens of sin will make a man set light by all other burdens of affliction, Lam. iii. 22. Micah vii. 9. The more you feel sin, the less you feel affliction.

Fifthly, A soul truly burdened for sin, will take no hearty joy or comfort in any outward enjoyment of this world, till Christ come and seek peace to the soul, Lam. iii. 28. Just so the soul sits alone, and keepeth silence; merry company is a burden, and music is but howling to him.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fifth counsel.

Beware of those things that make your troubles longer than they ought to be. There be several errors and mistakes that hold poor souls much longer in their fears and terrors, than else they might be: and such are,

First, Ignorance of the nature of saving faith, and the necessity of it. Till you come to believe, you cannot have peace; and while you mistake the nature, or apprehend not the necessity of faith, you are not like to find that path of peace.

Secondly, Labouring to heal the wounds that the law hath made upon your consciences, by a more strict obedience to it for the future, in the neglect of Christ and his righteousness.

Thirdly, In observance of what God hath already done for you, in these preparatory works of the law, in order to your salvation by Jesus Christ. O! if you would but compare what you now are, with what you lately were, it would give some relief. But the last and principal thing is this:

Sixth counsel.

Hasten to Christ in the way of faith, and you shall find rest; and, till then, all the world cannot give you rest. The sooner you transact with Christ, in the way of faith, the sooner you shall be at peace, and enter into his rest; for those that believe, do now enter into rest. You may labour and strive, look this way and that, but all in vain; Christ and peace come together. No sooner do you come to him, and roll your burden on him, receive him as he offers himself, but the soul feels itself eased on a sudden; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. And thus in finishing the first, we are brought home to the second observation.

Doct. 2. *That sin-burthened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ.*

This point sounds sweetly in the ear of a distressed sinner; it is the most joyful voice that ever the soul heard: the voice of

blessing from mount Gerizim, the ravishing voice from mount Sion, "Ye are come to Jesus the Mediator." In opening of it; I will shew,

1. What it is to come to Christ.
2. How Christ invites men to come to him.
3. Why his invitation is directed to burdened souls.

First, We will enquire what it is to come to Christ, and how many things are included in it.

In general, to come to Christ, is a phrase equipollent, or of the same amount with believing in Christ. It is an expression that carries the nature and necessity of faith in it, and is reciprocated with believing. John vi. 35. "He that cometh to me, "shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never "thirst." Coming to Christ, is believing in Christ; and believing in Christ, is coming to Christ: they are *synonyma's*, and import the self same thing. Only in this notion of faith, there are many rich and excellent things hinted to us, which no other word can so aptly convey to our minds. As,

First, It hints this to us, That the souls of convinced and burdened sinners do not only discern the *reality* of Christ, or that he is, but also the necessity of applying Christ, and that their eternal life is in their union with him: for this is most certain, that the object of faith must be determinate and fixed; the soul must believe that Christ is, or else there can be no emotions of the soul after him: all coming presupposes a fixed term to which we come. Heb. xi. 6. "He that cometh to God, must "believe that God is." Take away this, and all motions after Christ presently stop. No wonder, then, that souls, in their first motions to Christ, find themselves clogged with so many atheistical temptations, shaking their assent to the truth of the gospel at the very root and foundation of it; but they that come to Christ, do see that *he is*, and that their life and happiness lie in their union with him; else they would never come to him upon such terms as they do.

Secondly, Coming to Christ implies the soul's despair of salvation any other way. The way of faith is a supernatural way, and souls will not attempt it, until they have tried all natural ways to help, and save themselves, and find it all in vain: therefore the text describes these *comers to Christ* as weary persons, that have been labouring and striving in all other ways for rest, but can find none; and so are forced to relinquish all their fond expectations of salvation in any other way, and come to Christ as their last and only remedy.

Thirdly, Coming to Christ notes a supernatural and almighty

power, acting the soul quite above its own natural abilities in this motion. John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except "my Father which hath sent me draw him." It is as possible for the ponderous mountains to start from their bases and centres, mount themselves aloft into the air, and there fly like wandering atoms hither and thither; as it is for any man, of himself, *i. e.* by a pure natural power of his own, to come to Christ. It was not a stranger thing for Peter to come to Christ, walking upon the waves of the sea, than for his, or any man's soul, to come to Christ in the way of faith.

Fourthly, Coming to Christ, notes the voluntariness of the soul in its motion to Christ. It is true, there is no coming without the Father's drawing; but that drawing hath nothing of coaction in it; it doth not destroy, but powerfully, and with an overcoming sweetness, persuade the will. It is not forced or driven, *but it comes*; being made "willing in the day of God's power," Psal. cx. 3. Ask a poor distressed sinner, in that season, Are you willing to come to Christ? O rather than live! life is not so necessary as Christ is! O! with all my heart, ten thousand worlds for Jesus Christ, if he could be purchased, were nothing answerable to his value in mine eyes! The soul's motion to Christ is free and voluntary, it is *coming*.

Fifthly, It implies this in it, That no duties, or ordinances, (which are but the ways or means by which we come to Christ), are, or ought to be, central, and terminative to the soul: *i. e.* the soul of a believer is not to sit down, and rest in them, but to come, by them, or through them, to Jesus Christ, and take up his rest in him only. No duties, no reformations, no ordinances of God, how excellent soever these things are in themselves, and how necessary soever they are in their proper place, and use, can give rest to the weary and heavy laden soul: it cannot centre in any of them, and you may see it cannot, because it still gravitates, and inclines to another thing, even Christ, and cannot terminate in its motion till it be come to him. Christ is the term to which a believer moves, and therefore he cannot sit down by the way; or be as well satisfied as if he were at his journey's end. Ordinances and duties have the nature and use of means to bring us to Christ, but not to be to any man instead of Christ.

Sixthly, * Coming to Christ, implies an hope or expectation from Christ in the coming soul. If he hath no hope, why doth

* Come unto me, *i. e.* with the graces of faith, religious hope, and desire. *Brugensis on the place.*

it move forward? As good sit still, and resolve to perish where it is, as to come to Christ, if there is no ground to expect salvation by him. Hope is the spring of motion and industry; if you cut off hope, you hinder faith: it cannot move to Christ, except it be satisfied, at least, of the possibility of mercy and salvation by him. Hence it is, that when comers to Christ are struggling with the doubts and fears of the issue, the Lord is pleased to enliven their faint hopes, by setting home such scriptures as these, John vi. 37. "He that cometh to me, I will in "no wise cast out." And Heb. vii. 25. "He is able to save to "the uttermost, all that come unto God by him." This puts life into hope, and hope puts life into industry and motion.

Seventhly, Coming to Christ for rest, implies, that believers have, and lawfully may have an eye to their own happiness, in closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. The poor soul comes for rest; it comes for salvation; its eye and aim are upon it; and this aim of the soul, at its own good, is legitimated, and allowed by that expression of Christ, John v. 40. "Ye will not "come unto me, that ye may have life." If Christ blame them for not coming to him, that they might have life, sure he would not blame them, had they come to him for life.

Eightly, but *Lastly*, and which is the principal thing in this expression; Coming to Christ, notes the all-sufficiency of Christ, to answer all the needs and wants of distressed souls, and their betaking themselves, accordingly, to him only, for relief, being content to come to Christ for whatever they need, and live upon that fulness that is in him. If there were not an all-sufficiency in Christ, no soul would come to him; for this is the very ground upon which men come. Heb. vii. 25. "He is "able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him:" Εἰς τὸ παντελὲς, to the uttermost: In the greatest plunges, difficulties, and dangers. He hath a fulness of saving power in him, and this encourages souls to come unto him. One beggar uses not to wait at the door of another, but all at the doors of them they conceive able to relieve them. And as this notes the fulness of Christ as our Saviour, so it must needs note the emptiness and humility of the soul as a comer to him. This is called submission, in Rom. x. 3. Proud nature must be deeply distressed, humbled, and moulded into another temper, before it will be persuaded to live upon those terms, to come to Christ for every thing it wants, to live upon Christ's fulness in the way of grace and favour, and have no stock of its own to live upon. O! this is hard, but it is the way of faith.

Secondly, In the next place, let us see how Christ invites men

to come to him, and you shall find the means employed in this work, are either *internal*, and *principal*, namely, the Spirit of God, who is Christ's vicegerent, and comes to us in his name and room, to persuade us to believe, John xv. 26.; or *external*, namely, the preaching of the gospel by commissionated ambassadors, who, *in Christ's stead, beseech men to be reconciled to God, i. e.* to come to Christ by faith, in order to their reconciliation and peace with God. But all means and instruments, employed in this work of bringing men to Christ, entirely depend upon the blessing and concurrence of the Spirit of God, without whom they signify nothing. How long may ministers preach before one soul comes to Christ, except the Spirit cooperate in that work! Now as to the manner in which men are persuaded, and their wills wrought upon to come to Christ, I will briefly note several acts of the Spirit, in order thereunto.

First, There is an *illustrating work* of the Spirit, upon the minds of sinners, opening their eyes, to see their danger and misery; till this be discovered, no man stirs from his place: It is sense of danger that rouzes the secure sinner, that distresses him, and makes him look about for deliverance, crying, *What shall I do to be saved?* And it is the discovery of Christ's ability to save, which is the ground and reason, (as was observed above), of its motion to Christ. Hence, *seeing the Son*, is joined with believing, or *coming to him*, in John vi. 40.

Secondly, There is the *authoritative call*, or commanding voice of the Spirit in the word; a voice that is full of awful majesty and power. 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that "we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." This call of the Spirit to come to Christ, removes one great obstruction, namely, the fear of presumption out of the soul's way to Christ, and, instead of presumption in coming, makes it rebellion, and inexcusable obstinacy, to refuse to come. This answers all pleas against coming to Christ, from our unworthiness and deep guilt, and mightily encourages the soul to come to Christ, whatever it hath been, or done.

Thirdly, There are soul-encouraging, *conditional promises*, to all that do come to Christ in obedience to the command. Such is that in my text, *I will give you rest*: And that in John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." And these breathe life and encouragement into poor souls, that fear, and are daunted through their own unworthiness.

Fourthly, There are *dreadful threatnings*, denounced by the Spirit in the word, against all that refuse or neglect to come to Christ, which are of great use to engage and quicken souls in

their way to Christ. Mark xvi. 16. "He that believes not, shall "be damned. Die in his sins." John. viii. 14. "The wrath of "God shall remain on him," John iii. *ult.* Which is as if the Lord had said, Sinners, do not dally with Christ, do not be always treating, and never concluding, or resolving: for if there be justice in heaven, or fire in hell, every soul that comes not to Christ, must, and shall perish to all eternity. Upon your own heads let the blood and destruction of your own souls be for ever, if you will not come unto him.

Fifthly, There are *moving examples* set before souls in the word, to prevail with them to come, alluring and encouraging examples of such as have come to Christ, under the deepest guilt and discouragement, and yet found mercy. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I "am chief: howbeit, (or nevertheless) for this cause I have "obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth "all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should here-"after believe in him to life everlasting." Who would not come to Christ after such an example as this? And if this will not prevail, there are dreadful examples recorded in the word, setting before us the miserable condition of all such as refuse the calls of the word to come to Christ. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. "By "which also he went and preached to the spirits which are "in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the "long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." The meaning is, the sinners that lived before the flood, but now are in hell, clapt up in that prison, had the offers of grace made them, but despised them, and now lie for their disobedience in prison, under the wrath of God for it, in the lowest hell.

Sixthly, and *lastly*, There is an effectual *persuading*, overcoming, and victorious work of the Spirit upon the hearts and wills of sinners, under which they come to Jesus Christ. Of this I have spoken at large before, in the *fourth sermon*, and therefore shall not add any thing more here. This is the way and manner in which souls are prevailed with to come to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, In the last place, if you enquire why Christ makes his invitations to weary and heavy laden souls, and to no other, the answer is briefly this:

First, Because in so doing, he follows the commission which he received from his Father; for so you will find it runs, in Isa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord "hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath

"sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to "the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are "bound." You see here how Christ's commission directs him: his Father sent him to poor broken-hearted sinners, and he will keep close to his commission. "He came not to call the righ-"teous, but sinners, (*i. e.* sensible burdened sinners) to repen-"tance." Matth ix. 13. "I am not sent, (saith he), but unto "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Thus his instructions and commissions from the Father, limit him only to sensible and burdened souls, and he will be faithful to his commission.

Secondly, The very order of the Spirit's work in bringing men to Christ, shews us to whom the invitation and offers of grace in Christ are to be made. For none are convinced of righteousness, *i. e.* of complete and perfect righteousness, which is in Christ for their justification, until first they be convinced of sin; and, consequently, no man will, or can come to Christ by faith, till convictions of sin have awakened and distressed them, John xvi. 8, 9. This being the due order of the Spirit's operation, the same order must be observed in gospel-offers and invitations.

Thirdly, It behoves, that Christ should provide for his own glory, as well as for our safety; and not expose one, to secure the other; but save us in that way which will bring him most honour and praise. And certainly such a way is this, by first convincing, humbling, and burdening the souls of men, and then bringing them home to rest in himself.

Alas! let those that never saw, or felt the evil of sin, be told of rest, peace, and pardon in Christ, they will but despise it, as a thing of no value. Luke v. 31. "The whole need not a phy-"sician, but those that are sick." Bid a man that thinks himself sound and whole, go to the physician, and he will but laugh at the motion; if you offer him the richest composition, he will refuse it, slight it, and, it may be, spill it upon the ground: Ay, but if the same man did once feel an acute disease, and were made to sweat and groan under strong pains, if ever he come to know what sick days, and restless nights are, and to apprehend his life to be in imminent hazard; then messengers are sent, one after another, in post-haste to the physician; then he begs him, with tears, to do what in him lies for his relief: he thankfully takes the bitterest potions, and praises the care and skill of his physician, with tears of joy. And so the patient's safety and the physician's honour are both secured. So is it in this Method of grace. The uses follow.

Infer. 1. If sin-burdened souls are solemnly invited to come

to Christ, *Then it follows, that whatever guilt lies upon the conscience of a poor humbled sinner, it is no presumption, but his duty, to come to Christ, notwithstanding his own apprehended vileness, and great unworthiness.*

Let it be carefully observed, how happily that universal particle *all*, is inserted in Christ's invitation, for the encouragement of sinners: "Come unto me, [all] ye that labour:" *q. d.* Let no broken-hearted sinner exclude himself, when as he is not by me excluded from mercy: my grace is my own, I may bestow it where I will, and upon whom I will. It is not I, but Satan, that impales and incloses my mercy from humbled souls that are made willing to come unto me: he calls that your presumption, which my invitation makes your duty.

Object. 1. But I doubt my case is excepted by Christ himself, in Matth. xii. 31. where blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is exempted from pardon; and I have had many horrid blasphemous thoughts injected into my soul.

Sol. Art thou a burdened, and heavy laden soul? If so, thy case is not in that, or any other scripture exempted from mercy; for the unpardonable sin is always found in an impenitent heart: as that sin finds no pardon with God, so neither is it followed with contrition and sorrow in the soul that commits it.

Object. 2. But if I am not guilty of that sin, I am certainly guilty of many great and heinous abominations of another kind, too great for me to expect mercy for; and therefore I dare not go to Christ.

Sol. The greater your sins have been, the more need you have to go to Jesus Christ. Let not a *motive* to Christ be made an *obstacle* in your way to him. Great sinners are expresly called, Isa. i. 18. great sinners have come to Christ, and found mercy, 1 Cor. vi. 7. and, to conclude, it is an high reproach, and dishonour to the blood of Christ, and mercy of God, which flows so freely through him, to object the greatness of sin to either of them. Certainly you have not sinned beyond the *extent of mercy*, or beyond the *efficacy of the blood of Christ*; but pardon and peace may be had, if you will thus come to Christ for it.

Object. 3. Oh! but it is now too late; I have had many thousand calls by the gospel, and refused them; many purposes in my heart to go to Christ, and quenched them: my time, therefore, is past, and now it is to no purpose.

Sol. If the time of grace be past, and God intends no mercy for thee, how comes it to pass thy soul is now filled with trouble and distress for sin? Is this the frame of a man's heart that is past hope? Do such signs as these appear in men that are hope-

less? Beside, the time of grace is a *secret* hid in the breast of God; but coming to Christ is a *duty* plainly revealed in the *text*: And why will you object a thing that is secret and uncertain, against a duty that is so plain and evident? Nor do you yourselves believe what you object; for at the same time that you say your seasons are over, it is too late; you are, notwithstanding, found repenting, mourning, praying, and striving to come to Christ. Certainly, if you knew it were too late, you would not be found labouring in the use of means. Go on, therefore, and the Lord be with you. It is not presumption, but obedience, to come when Christ calls, as here he doth; "Come "unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden."

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *That none have cause to be troubled, when God makes the souls of their friends or relations sick with the sense of sin.* It was the saying (as I remember) of Hierom to Sabinian, Nothing (said he) makes my heart sadder, than that nothing can make my heart sad. It is matter of joy, to all that rightly understand the matter, when God smites the heart of any man with the painful sense of sin; of such sickness it may be said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the "glory of God." Yet how do many carnal relations lament and bewail this, as a misery, as an undoing to their friends and acquaintance; as if then they must be reckoned lost, and never till then, that Christ is finding and saving them. O! if your hearts were spiritual, and wise, their groans for sin would be as music in your ears. When they go alone to bewail their sin, you would go alone, also, to bless God for such a mercy; that ever you should live to such a happy day: You would say, Now is my friend in the blessed pangs of the new birth; now is he in the very way of mercy: never in so hopeful a condition, as now. I had rather he should groan now, at the feet of Christ, than groan hereafter, under the wrath of God, for ever. O! parents, beware, as you love the souls of your children, that you do not damp and discourage them, tempt or threaten them, divert or hinder them, in such cases as this; lest you bring the *blood* of their *souls* upon your own heads.

Infer. 3. It also follows, from hence, *That those to whom sin was never any burthen, are not yet come to Christ, nor have any interest in him.* We may as well suppose a child to be born without any pangs, as a soul to be born again, and united to Christ, without any sense or sorrow for sin. I know many have great *frights of conscience*, that never were made duly sensible of the evil of sin; many are afraid of *burning*, that never

were afraid of *sinning*. Slight and transient troubles some have had, but they vanished like an early cloud, or morning dew. Few men are without checks and throbs of conscience, at one time or other; but, instead of going to the closet, they run to the *alehouse* or *tavern*, for a cure. If their sorrow for sin had been right, nothing but the sprinkling of the blood of Christ could have appeased their consciences, Heb. x. 22. How cold should the consideration of this thing strike to the hearts of such persons! Methinks, *reader*, if this be thy case, it should send thee away with an aking heart; thou hast not yet tasted the bitterness of sin, and if thou do not, then shalt thou never taste the sweetness of Christ, his pardons, and peace.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 4. How great a mercy is it for sin-burthened souls to be within the sound and call of Christ in the gospel!

There be many thousands in the Pagan and Popish parts of the world, that labour under distresses of conscience, as well as we, but have no such reliefs, or means of peace and comfort, as we have, that live within the joyful sound of the gospel. If the conscience of a Papist be burdened with guilt, all the relief he hath, is, to afflict his body, to quiet his soul; a penance, or pilgrimage, is all the relief they have: If a Pagan be in trouble for sin, he hath no knowledge of Christ, nor notion of a satisfaction made by him; the voice of *nature* is, Shall I give my *first-born* for my *transgression*, the *fruit* of my *body* for the sin of my soul? The damned endure the terrible blows and wounds of conscience, for sin; they roar under that terrible lash, but no voice of peace, or pardon is heard among them. It is not, "Come unto me, ye that labour, and are heavy "laden;" but "depart from me, ye cursed."

Blessed are your ears, for you hear the voice of peace; you are come to Jesus the Mediator, and to the blood of sprinkling. O you can never set a due value upon this privilege.

Infer. 5. *How sweet, and unspeakably relieving, is the closing of a burthened soul with Jesus Christ, by faith! It is rest to the weary soul.*

Soul-troubles are spending, wasting troubles; the pains of a distressed conscience are the most acute pains. A poor soul would fain be at rest, but knows not where; he tries this duty, and that, but finds none: At last, in a way of believing, he casts himself, with his burthen of guilt and fear, upon Christ, and there is the rest his soul desired. Christ and rest come together; till faith bring you to the bosom of Jesus, you can find no true rest: The soul is rolling and tossing, sick and weary, upon the billows of its own guilt and fears. Now the soul

is come like a ship tossed with storms and tempests, out of a raging ocean, into the quiet harbour! or like a *lost sheep* that hath been wandering in wearinesS, hunger, and danger, into the fold. Is a soft bed, in a quiet chamber, sweet, to one that is spent, and tired with travel? Is the sight of a shore sweet to the *shipwrecked mariner*, that looks for nothing but death? Much more sweet is Christ to a soul that comes to him pressed in conscience, and broken in spirit, under the sinking weight of sin.

www.libtool.com.cn

How did the Italians rejoice, after a long and dangerous voyage, to see Italy again! crying, with loud and united voices, which made the very heavens ring again, * Italy! Italy! But no shore is so sweet, to the weather-beaten passenger, as Christ is to a broken-hearted sinner: This brings the soul to a sweet repose. Heb. iv. 3. "We which have believed, do enter into "rest." And this endears the way of faith to their souls, ever after.

Infer. 6. *Learn hence, the usefulness of the law to bring souls to Jesus Christ.* It is utterly useless, as a *covenant* to *justify* us; but exceeding useful, to convince and humble us: It cannot relieve, nor ease us; but it can, and doth awaken, and rouze us. It is a fair glass, to shew us the face of sin, and, till we have seen that, we cannot see the face of Jesus Christ.

The law, like the *fiery serpent*, smites, stings, and torments the conscience; this drives us to the Lord Jesus, lifted up in the gospel, like the *brazen serpent* in the wilderness, to heal us. The use of the law, is, to make us feel our *sickness*; this makes us look out for a *Physician*: "I was alive once, without the "law, (saith Paul) but when the commandment came, sin re-"vived, and I died," Rom. vii. 9. The hard, vain, proud hearts, of men, require such an hammer, to break them to pieces.

Infer. 7. *It is the immediate duty of weary and heavy-laden sinners to come to Christ, by faith, and not stand off from Christ, or delay to accept him, upon any pretence whatsoever.*

Christ invites, and commands such to come unto him; it is therefore your sin to neglect, draw back, or defer, whatever seeming reasons, and pretences, there may be to the contrary. When the *Goaler* was brought (where I suppose thee now to be) to a pinching distress, that made him cry, "Sirs, what must I "do to be saved?" the very next counsel the apostles gave him, was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be

* *Italiam, Italiam, læto clamore salutant.* Virg.

"saved," Acts xvi. 30, 31. And, for your encouragement, know, he that calleth you to come, knows your burthen, what your sins have been, and troubles are, yet he calls you: If your sin hinder not Christ from *calling*, neither should it hinder you from *coming*. He that calls you, is able to ease you, "to "save, to the uttermost, all that come to God by him," Heb. vii. 25. Whatever fulness of sin be in you, there is a greater fulness of saving power in Christ. Moreover, he that calls you to come, never yet rejected any poor burthened soul that came to him; and hath said he never will. John vi. 37. "He that "cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Fear not, therefore, he will not begin with thee, or make thee the first instance and example of the feared rejection.

www.libtool.com.cn

And, *Lastly*, Bethink thyself, what wilt thou do, and whither wilt thou go, in this case, if not to Jesus Christ? Nothing shall ease, or relieve thee, till thou dost come to him. Thou art under an happy necessity to go to him: with him, only, is found rest for the weary soul. Which brings us to the third and last observation.

Doct. 3. *That there is rest in Christ, for all that come unto him, under the heavy burthen of sin.*

Rest, is a sweet word, to a weary soul; all seek it, but none, but believers, find it. *We which have believed*, (saith the apostle) * *do enter into rest*, Heb. iv. 3. "He doth not say, they "*shall*, but they do, enter into rest: noting their spiritual rest "to be already begun, by faith, on earth, in the tranquility of "conscience, and shall be consummated in heaven, in the full "enjoyment of God." There is a sweet calm upon the troubled soul after believing, an ease, or rest of the mind, which is an unspeakable mercy to a weary poor soul. Christ is to it, as the Ark was to the Dove, when she wandered over the watery world, and found no place to rest the soal of her foot. Faith centers the unquiet spirit of man in Christ, brings it to repose itself, and its burthen, on him. It is the soul's dropping *anchor* in a storm, which stays and settles it.

The great debate, which cost so many anxious thoughts, is now issued into this resolution; I will venture my all upon Christ, let him do with me as seemeth him good. It was impossible for the soul to find rest, whilst it knew not where to bestow itself, or how to be secured from the wrath to come; but when

* *Non dicit* εισηλθομεν, *ingressi sumus, sed* εισερχομεθα, *ingredimur, significans, initia quietis fideles nunc habere: Plenam quietem suo tempore consecuturos.* Pareus in loc.

all is embarked, in Christ, for eternity, and the soul fully resolved to lean upon him, and to trust to him, now it feels the very *initials* of eternal rest in itself: It finds an heavy burthen unloaded from its shoulders; it is come, as it were, into a new world; the case is strangely altered. The word *rest*, in this place, notes †, (and is so rendered by some) a *recreation*; it is restored, renewed, and recreated, as it were, by that sweet repose it hath upon Christ. Believers, know, that faith is the sweetest recreation you can take. Others seek to divert and lose their troubles, by sinful recreations, vain company, and the like; but they little know what the recreation, and sweet restoring rest, that faith gives the soul, is. You find, in Christ, what they seek, in vain, among the creatures. Believing is the highest recreation known in this world. But to prevent mistakes, three *Cautions* need to be premised, lest we do, *in ipso limine impingere*, stumble at the threshold, and so lose our way all along afterward.

www.libtool.com.cn

Caution 1.

You are not to conceive, that all the soul's fears, troubles, and sorrows, are presently over, and at an end, as soon as it is come to Christ, by faith. ‡ They will have many troubles in the world, after that, it may be, more than ever they had in their lives: "Our flesh (saith Paul) had no rest," 2 Cor. vii. 5. They will be infested with many temptations, after that; that, it may be, the assaults of Satan may be more violent, upon their souls, than ever. *Horribilia de Deo, terribilia de fide:* injections that make the very bones to quake, and the belly to tremble; They will not be freed from sin: that rest remains for the people of God; not from inward trouble, and grief of soul, about sin; These things are not to be expected presently.

Caution 2.

We may not think all believers do immediately enter into the full, actual sense of rest and comfort, but they presently enter into the state of rest. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. *i. e.* we enter into the state of peace immediately. "Peace is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright "in heart," Psal. cxvii. 11. And he is a rich man, that hath a thousand acres of corn in the ground, as well as he that hath so much in his barn, or the money in his purse. They have rest and peace in the seed of it, when they have it not in the fruit;

† I will give you recreation from weariness, troubles, and burdens. *Vatab. et Erasm.*

‡ Luther, upon his conversion, was so buffeted by Satan, that neither heat, blood, sensation, or speech remained.

they have rest in the promise, when they have it not in possession: and he is a rich man that hath good bonds, and bills, for a great sum of money, if he have not twelvepence in his pocket. All believers have the promise, have rest, and peace, granted them, under God's own hand, in many promises, which faith brings them under; and we know that the truth and faithfulness of God stands engaged to make good every line, and word, of the promise, to them. So that though they have not a full, and clear actual sense and feeling of rest, they are, nevertheless, by faith, come into the state of rest.

www.libtool.com.cn

Caution 3.

We may not conceive, that faith itself is the soul's rest, but the means and instrument of it only. We cannot find rest in any work, or duty of our own, but we may find it in Christ, whom faith apprehends for justification and salvation.

Having thus regarded the point against misapprehensions, by these needful cautions, I shall next shew you, how our coming to Christ, by faith, brings us to rest in him. And here let it be considered, what those things are, that burden, grieve and disquiet the soul, before its coming to Christ; and how it is relieved and eased in all those respects, by its coming to the Lord Jesus: And you shall find,

First, That one principal ground of trouble, is the guilt of sin upon the conscience, of which I spake in the former point. The curse of the law lies heavy upon the soul, so heavy, that nothing is found, in all the world, able to relieve it, under that burden; as you see in a condemned man, spread a table in prison, with the greatest dainties, and send for the rarest musicians, all will not charm his sorrow: but if you can produce an authentic pardon, you ease him presently. Just so it is here; faith plucks the thorn out of the conscience, which so grieved it, unites the soul with Christ, and then that ground of trouble is removed: for "there is no condemnation to them that are in "Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. The same moment the soul comes to Christ, it is passed from death to life, is no more under the law, but grace. If a man's debt be paid by this surety, he need not fear to shew his face boldly abroad; he may freely meet the serjeant at the prison-door.

Secondly, The soul of a convinced sinner is exceedingly burdened with the uncleanness and filthiness, wherwith sin hath defiled and polluted it. Conviction discovers the universal pollution of heart and life, so that a man loaths and abhors himself, by reason thereof: if he do not look into his own corruptions, he cannot be safe; and if he do, he cannot bear the sight of

them; he hath no quiet; nothing can give rest, but what gives relief against this evil: And this, only, is done by faith, uniting the soul with Jesus Christ. For though it be true, that the pollution of sin be not presently, and perfectly taken away, by coming to Christ; yet the burden thereof is exceedingly eased: for, upon our believing, there is an heart-purifying principle planted in the soul, which doth, by degrees, cleanse that fountain of corruption, and will, at last, perfectly free the soul from it. Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith;" and being once in Christ, he is concerned for the soul, as a member, now, of his own mystical body, to purify and cleanse it, that, at last, he may present it perfect to the Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 26. The reigning power of it is gone, immediately, upon believing, and the very existence and being of it shall at last be destroyed. O! what rest must this give, under those troubles for sin?

Thirdly, It was an intolerable burden to the soul, to be under the continual fears, alarms, and frights of death, and damnation; its life hath been a life of bondage, upon this account, ever since the Lord opened his eyes to see his condition. Poor souls lie down with tremblings, for fear what a night may bring forth. It is a sad life, indeed, to live in continual bondage to such fears; but faith sweetly relieves the trembling conscience, by removing the guilt which breeds its fears. The sting of death is sin. When guilt is removed, fears vanish. "Smite, "Lord, smite, said Luther, for my sins are forgiven ‡." Now, if sickness come, it is another thing than it was wont to be. Isa. xxxiii. 24. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, the "people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquities." A man scarce feels his sickness, in comparison to what he did, whilst he was without Christ and hope of pardon.

Fourthly, A convinced sinner, out of Christ, sees every thing against him; nothing yields any comfort, yea, every thing increases and aggravates his burden, when he looks to things past, present, or to come. If he reflects upon things past, his soul is filled with anguish, to remember the sins committed, and the seasons neglected, and the precious mercies that have been abused; if he looks upon things present, the case is doleful and miserable; nothing but trouble and danger, Christless and comfortless; and if he looks forward, to things to come, that gives him a deeper cut, to the heart, than any thing else; for though

‡ *Feri, Domine, feri, nam a peccatis meis absolutus sum.* Luth.

it be sad and miserable, for the present, yet he fears it will be much worse hereafter; all these are but the beginning of sorrows. And thus the poor, awakened sinner, becomes a *Magor Missabib*; fear round about.

But, upon his coming to Christ, all things are marvellously altered; a quite contrary face of things appear to him; every thing gives him hope and comfort, which way soever he looks. So speaks the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All things are yours, "(saith he) whether life or death, or things present, or things "to come; all is yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's:" They are ours, *i. e.* for our advantage, benefit, and comfort. More particularly upon our coming to Christ,

First, Things past are ours, they conduce to our advantage and comfort. Now the soul can begin to read the gracious end and design of God, in all its preservations and deliverances; whereby it hath been reserved for such a day as this. O! it melts his heart to consider, his companions in sin and vanity are cut off, and he spared; and that for a day of such mercy, as the day of his espousals with Christ, is. Now all his past sorrows, and deep troubles of spirit, which God hath exercised him with, begin to appear the greatest mercies that ever he received; being all necessary and introductive to this blessed union with Christ.

Secondly, Things present are ours, though it be not yet with us as we would have it; Christ is not sure enough, the heart is not pure enough; sin is too strong, and grace is too weak; many things are yet out of order; yet can the soul bless God, for this, with tears of joy and praise, being full of admiration and holy astonishment, that it is as it is; and that he is where he is, though he be not yet where he would be. O! it is a blessed life to live as a poor recumbent, by acts of trust and affiance, though, as yet, it have but little evidence; that it is resolved to trust all with Christ, though it be not yet certain of the issue. O this is a comfortable station, a sweet condition, to what it was, either when it wallowed in sin, in the days before conviction, or was swallowed up in fears and troubles for sin, after conviction: now it hath hope, though it want assurance; and hope is sweet, to a soul coming out of such deep distresses. Now it sees the remedy, and is applying it; whereas, before, the wound seemed desperate. Now all hesitations, and debates, are at an end in the soul; it is no longer unresolved what to do; all things have been deeply considered, and, after consideration, issued into this resolve, or decree of the will. I will go to Christ; I will venture all, upon his command and call; I will embark my

eternal interests in that bottom; here I fix, and here I resolve *to live and die.* O! how much better, is this, than that floating life it lived before, rolling upon the billows of inward fears, and troubles, not able to drop anchor any where, nor knowing where to find an harbour?

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, *Things to come are ours*; and this is the best, and sweetest of all: Man is a prospecting creature, his eye is much upon things to come, and it will not satisfy him, that it is well at present, except he have a prospect that it shall be so hereafter. But now the soul hath committed itself, and all its concernments, to Christ, for eternity, and this being done, it is greatly relieved against evils to come.

I cannot (saith the believer) think all my troubles over, and that I shall never meet any more afflictions; it were a fond vanity to dream of that; but I leave all these things where I have left my soul: he that hath supported me under inward, will carry me through outward troubles, also. I cannot think all my *temptations*, to sin, past; O! I may yet meet with sore assaults from Satan, yet it is infinitely better to be watching, praying, and striving against sin, than it was when I was obeying it in the lusts of it. God, that hath delivered me from the love of sin, will, I trust, preserve me from ruin by sin. I know, also, death is to come; I must feel the pangs and agonies of it: but yet the aspect of death is much more pleasant than it was. I come, Lord Jesus, to thee, who art the death of death, whose death hath disarmed death of its sting; for I fear not its dart, if I feel not its sting. And thus you see, briefly, how by faith, believers enter into rest; how Christ gives rest, even at present, to them that come to him, and all this but as a beginning of their everlasting rest.

Infer. 1. Is there rest in Christ for weary souls that come unto him? *Then, certainly, it is a design of Satan against the peace and welfare of men's souls, to discourage them from coming to Christ in the way of faith.*

He is a restless spirit himself, and would make us so too; it is an excellent note of † Minutius Felix, "Those desperate and "restless spirits (saith he) have no other pleasure, but in bring-"ing us to the same misery themselves are in:" He goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. It frets and grates his proud and envious mind, to see others find rest,

† *Ad solamen calamitatis suae, non desinunt perditi perdere.* Minut. Felix.

when he can find none; an effectual plaister, applied to heal our wound, when his own must bleed to eternity: And he obtains his end fully, if he can but keep off souls from Christ. Look, therefore, upon all those objections, and discouragements, raised in your hearts against coming to Christ, as so many artifices, and cunning devices of the devil, to destroy and ruin your souls. 'Tis true, they have a very specious and colourable appearance; they are gilded over with pretences of the Justice of God, the heinous nature of sin, the want of due and befitting qualifications for so holy and pure a God, the lapsing of the season of mercy, and an hundred others, of like nature: but, I beseech you, lay down this as a sure conclusion, and hold it fast; that whatever it be that discourages and hinders you from coming to Christ, is directly against the interest of your souls, and the hand of the devil is certainly in it.

Infer. 2. Hence, also, it follows, *that unbelief is the true reason of all that disquietness, and trouble, by which the minds of poor sinners are so rack'd and tortur'd.*

If you will not believe, you cannot be established; till you come to Christ, peace cannot come to you: Christ and peace are undivided. Good souls, consider this; you have tried all other ways, you have tried duties, and no rest comes; you have tried reformation, restitution, and a stricter course of life; yet your wounds are still open, and fresh bleeding: these things, I grant, are, in their places, both good, and necessary; but, of themselves, without Christ, utterly insufficient to give what you expect from them: why will you not try the way of faith? Why will you not carry your burthen to Christ? O! that you would be persuaded to it, how soon would you find, what so long you have been seeking in vain! How long will you thus oppose your own good? How long will you keep yourselves upon the rack of conscience? Is it easy to go under the throbs and wounds of an accusing and condemning conscience; You know it is not: you look for peace, but no good comes; for a time of healing, and behold trouble. Alas! it must, and will be so, still, until you are in the way of faith, which is the true and only method to obtain rest.

Infer. 3. *What cause have we all to admire the goodness of God, in providing for us a Christ, in whom we may find rest to our souls!*

How hath the Lord filled and furnished Jesus Christ with all that is suitable to a believer's wants! Doth the guilt of sin terrify his conscience? Lo, in him is perfect righteousness, to remove that guilt, so that it shall neither be imputed to his per-

son, nor reflected by his conscience, in the way of condemnation, as it was before. In him, also, is a fountain opened, for washing and for cleansing the filth of sin from our souls; in him is the fulness both of *merit*, and of *spirit*, two sweet springs of peace to the souls of men: well might the apostle say, "Christ, "the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 30. and well might the Church say, "He is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 16. Had not God provided Jesus Christ for us, we had never known one hour's rest to all eternity.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 4. *How unreasonable, and wholly inexcusable, in believers, is the sin of backsliding from Christ!* Have you found rest in him, when you could not find it in any other! Did he receive, and ease your souls, when all other persons and things were *physicians of no value?* And will you, after this, backslide from him again? O what madness is this! "Will a man "leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of "the field? Or shall the cold, flowing waters, that come from "another place, be forsaken?" No man, that is in his wits, would leave the pure, cold, refreshing stream, of a crystal fountain, to go to a filthy puddle, lake, or an empty cistern; such the best enjoyments of this world are, in comparison with Jesus Christ.

That was a melting expostulation of Christ's with the disciples, John vi. 67, 68. when some had forsaken him, "will ye, also, "go away?" And it was a very suitable return, they made, Lord, whither away from thee should we go! *q. d.* From thee, Lord! No, no; where can we mend ourselves? be sure of it, when ever you go from Christ, ye go from rest to trouble. Had Judas rest? Had Spira rest? and do you think you shall have rest? No, no, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his "own ways," Prov. xiv. 14. "Cursed be the man that depart-"eth from him, he shall be as the heath in the desart, that "seeth not when good cometh, and shall inhabit the parched "places of the wilderness," Jer. xvii. 5. If fear of sufferings, and worldly temptations, ever draw you off from Christ, you may come to those straits, and terrors of conscience, that will make you wish yourselves back again with Christ in a prison, with Christ at a stake.

Infer. 5. *Let all that come to Christ, learn to improve him, to the rest and peace of their own souls, in the midst of all the troubles, and outward distresses, they meet with in the world.*

Surely rest may be found in Christ, in any condition; he is able to give you peace in the midst of all your troubles here. So he tells you in John xvi. 33. "These things have I spoken to

"you, that in me you might have peace; in the world ye shall "have tribulation." By peace, he means not a deliverance from troubles, by taking off affliction from them, or taking them away, by death, from all afflictions; but it is something they enjoy from Christ, in the very midst of troubles, and amidst all their afflictions, that quiets, and gives them rest, so that troubles cannot hurt them. Certainly, believers, you have peace in Christ, when there is little in your own hearts; and your hearts might be filled with peace, too, if you would exercise faith upon Christ for that end. 'Tis your own fault, if you be without rest, in any condition, in this world. Set yourselves to study the *fulness* of Christ, and to clear your *interest* in him; believe what the scriptures reveal of him, and live as you believe, and you will quickly find the peace of God filling your hearts and minds.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced, by one Motive drawn from the first Title of CHRIST.

MATTH. ix. 12. *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*

HAVING opened, in the former discourses, the *nature*, and *method*, of the *application* of Christ to sinners; it remains, now, that I press it upon every soul, as it expects peace, and pardon from God, to *apply* and *put on Jesus Christ*; *(i. e.)* to get union with him, by faith, whilst he is yet held forth in the free, and gracious tenders of the gospel. To which purpose, I shall now labour, in this general *use of exhortation* in which my last subject engaged me; wherein divers arguments will be further urged, both from

1. The titles, and
2. The privileges, of Jesus Christ.

The titles of Christ are so many motives, or arguments, fitted to persuade men to come unto him. Amongst which, *Christ, as the physician of souls*, comes under our first consideration, in the text before us.

The occasion of these words of Christ, was the call of Matthew the publican, who having first opened his heart, next o-

pened his house to Christ, and entertains him there. This strange and unexpected change, wrought upon Matthew, quickly brings in all the neighbourhood, and many Publicans and sinners resorted thither; at which the stomachs of the proud Pharisees began to swell. From this occasion, they took offence at Christ, and, in this verse, Christ takes off the offence, by such an answer as was fitted, both for their *conviction*, and his own *vindication*. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."

He gives it, saith one, as a reason why he conversed so much with Publicans and sinners, and so little among the Pharisees, because there was more work for him; Christ came to be a physician to sick souls; Pharisees were so well, in their own conceit, that Christ saw they would have little to do with him; and so he applied himself to those who were more sensible of their sickness.

In the words, we have an account of the *temper*, and *state*, both of,

1. The secure and unconvinced sinner.
2. The humbled and convinced sinner. And,
3. Of the carriage of Christ, and his different respect to both.

First, The secure sinner is here described, both with respect to his own apprehensions of himself, as one that is *whole*, and also by his low value and esteem for Christ, he sees no need of him; "The whole have no need of the physician."

Secondly, The convinced and humbled sinner, is here, also, described, and that both by his state and condition, he is *sick*; and by his valuation of Jesus Christ, he greatly needs him: they that are sick need the *physician*.

Thirdly, We have here Christ's carriage, and different respect to both; the former he rejects, and passeth by, as those with whom he hath no concernment; the latter he converses with, in order to their cure.

The words, thus opened, are fruitful in observations. I shall neither note, nor insist upon any, beside this one, which suits the scope of my discourse, *viz.*

Doct. *That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only physician for sick souls.*

The world is a great *hospital*, full of sick and dying souls, all wounded by one and the same mortal weapon, sin. Some are senseless of their misery, feel not their pains, value not a physician; others are full of sense, as well as danger; mourn under the apprehension of their condition, and sadly bewail it. The merciful God hath, in his abundant compassion to the perishing

world, sent a physician from heaven, and given him his orders, under the great seal of heaven, for his office, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. which he opened, and read, in the audience of the people. Luke iv. 18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he "hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he "hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," *&c.* He is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations: he is *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord that healeth us; and that as he is *Jehovah Tzidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness. The *brazen serpent* that healed the Israelites in the wilderness, was an excellent type of our great physician Christ, and is expressly applied to him, John iii. 14. He rejects none that come, and heals all whom he undertakes; but, more particularly, I will,

First, Point at those diseases which Christ heals in sick souls, and by what means he heals them.

Secondly, The excellency of this physician above all others: there is none like Christ, he is the only physician for wounded souls.

First, We will enquire into the diseases which Christ, the physician, cures; and they are reducible to two heads, *viz.*

1. Sin; and,
2. Sorrow.

First, *The disease of sin;* in which three things are found exceeding burdensome to sick souls.

1. The guilt,
2. The dominion,
3. The inherence of sin; all cured by this physician, and how.

First, The guilt of sin; this is a mortal wound, a stab in the very heart of a poor sinner. It is a fond, and groundless distinction, that Papists make of sins *mortal* and *venial;* all sin, in its own nature, is mortal; Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of "sin is death." Yet though it be so in its own nature, Christ can, and doth cure it, by the sovereign balsam of his own precious blood; Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption, through "his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of "his grace." This is the deepest, and deadliest wound, the soul of man feels in this world: What is guilt, but the obligation of the soul to everlasting punishment and misery? It puts the soul under the sentence of God to eternal wrath; the condemning sentence of the great and terrible God; than which, nothing is found more dreadful, and insupportable: put all pains, all poverty, all afflictions, all miseries, in one scale, and God's condemnation in the other, and you weigh but so many feathers, against a talent of lead.

This disease, our great physician, Christ, cures, by remission, which is the dissolving of the obligation to punishment; the loosing of the soul that was bound over to the wrath and condemnation of God, Col. i. 13, 14. Heb. vi. 12. Micah vii. 17, 18, 19. This remission being made, the soul is immediately cleared from all its obligations to punishment. Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation." All bonds are cancelled, the guilt of all sins is healed, or removed, original and actual, great and small. This cure is performed upon souls, *by the blood of Christ*: nothing is found, in heaven, or earth, besides his blood, that is able to heal this disease. Heb. ix. 22. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission;" nor is it any blood that will do it, but that, only, which dropped from the wounds of Christ. Isa. liii. 5. "By his stripes we are "healed." His blood, only, is innocent, and precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. blood of infinite worth, and value; blood of God, Acts xx. 18. blood prepared for this very purpose, Heb. x. 5. This is the blood that performs the cure; and how great a cure is it! for this cure, the souls of believers shall be praising and magnifying their great physician in heaven, to all eternity; Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, "in his own blood, *&c.* to him be glory and dominion, for "ever and ever."

Secondly, The next evil in sin cured by Christ, is the dominion of it over the souls of poor sinners. Where sin is in dominion, the soul is in a very sad condition; for it darkens the understanding, depraves the conscience, stiffens the will, hardens the heart, misplaces and disorders all the affections; and thus every faculty is wounded, by the power and dominion of sin over the soul. How difficult is the cure of this disease! it passes the skill of angels, or men, to heal it; but Christ undertakes it, and makes a perfect cure of it, at last, and this he doth by his Spirit. As he cures the guilt of sin by pouring out his blood for us; so he cures the dominion of sin, by pouring out his Spirit upon us. Justification is the cure of guilt, sanctification the cure of the dominion of sin. For,

First, As the dominion of sin darkens the *understanding*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. so the Spirit of holiness, which Christ sheds upon his people, cures the darkness and blindness of that noble faculty, and restores it again, Eph. v. 8. They that were darkness, are hereby light in the Lord; the anointing of the Spirit, teacheth them all things, 1 John ii. 27.

Secondly, As the dominion of sin depraved and defiled the

conscience, Tit. i. 15. wounded it to that degree, as to disable it to the performances of all its offices, and functions; so that it was neither able to apply, convince, or tremble at the word: So, when the Spirit of holiness is shed forth, O what a tender sense fills the renewed conscience! For what small things will it check, smite, and rebuke! How strongly will it bind to duty, and bar against sin!

Thirdly, As the dominion of sin stiffened the will, and made it stubborn, and rebellious; so Christ, by sanctifying it, brings it to be pliant, and obedient to the will of God. "Lord (saith "the sinner,) what wilt thou have me to do!" Acts ix. 6.

Fourthly, As the power of sin hardeneth the heart, so that nothing could affect it, or make any impression upon it; when sanctification comes upon the soul, it thaws, and breaks it, as hard as it was, and makes it dissolve, in the breast of a sinner, in godly sorrow, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "I will take away the heart "of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of "flesh." It will now melt, ingenuously, under the threatnings of the word, 2 Kings xxii. 19. or the strokes of the rod, Jer. xxxi. 18. or the manifestations of grace and mercy, Luke vii. 38.

Fifthly, As the power of sin misplaced and disordered all the affections, so sanctification reduces them again, and sets them right, Psal. iv. 6, 7. And thus you see how sanctification becomes the rectitude, health, and due temper of the soul, so far as it prevails, curing the diseases that sin, in its dominion, filled the soul with. True it is, this cure is not perfected in this life; there are still some remains of the old diseases, in the holiest souls, notwithstanding sin be dethroned from its dominion over them: but the cure is begun, and daily advances towards perfection, and at last will be compleat, as will appear in the cure of the next evil of sin; namely,

Thirdly, The *inherence* of sin in the soul: this is a sore disease, the very core and root of all our other complaints and ailes. This made the holy apostle bemoan himself, and wail so bitterly, Rom. vii. 17. because of "sin that dwelt in him:" And the same misery is bewailed by all sanctified persons, all the world over.

'Tis a wonderful mercy to have the guilt and dominion of sin cured, but we shall never be perfectly sound, and well, till the existence, or in-dwelling of sin, in our natures, be cured too: when once that is done, then we shall feel no more pain, nor sorrows for sin: and this our great *physician* will at last perform for us, and upon us. But as the cure of guilt was by our *justification*, the cure of the dominion of sin by our *sanctification*;

so the third and last, which perfects the whole cure, will be by our *glorification*; and, till then, it is not to be expected. For it is a clear case, that sin, like ivy in the old walls, will never be gotten out till the walls be pulled down, and then it is pulled up by the roots. This cure Christ will perform in a moment, upon our dissolution. For it is plain,

First, That none but perfected souls, freed from all sin, are admitted into heaven, Eph. v. 27. Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xxi. 27.

Secondly, It is as plain, that no such personal perfection, and freedom is found in any man, on this side death, and the grave, 1 John i. 8. 1 Kings viii. 46. Phil. iii. 12. a truth, sealed by the sad experience of all the saints on earth.

Thirdly, If such freedom, and perfection must be before we can be perfectly happy, and no such thing be done in this life; it remains that it must be done immediately upon their *dissolution*, and at the very time of their glorification: as sin came in at the time of the union of their souls and bodies in the womb, so it will go out at the time of their separation by death; then will Christ put the last hand to this glorious work, and perfect that cure which hath been so long under his hand, in this world: and thenceforth sin shall have no power upon them, it shall never tempt them more, it shall never defile them more, it shall never grieve and sadden their hearts any more: henceforth it shall never cloud their evidences, darken their understandings, or give the least interruption to their communion with God. When sin is gone, all these, its mischievous effects, are gone with it. So that I may speak it to the comfort of all gracious hearts, according to what the Lord told the Israelites, in Deut. xii. 8, 9. (to which I allude, for illustration of this most comfortable truth) "Ye shall not do after all the things that ye do "here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes, "for ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance "which the Lord your God giveth you." Whilst you are under Christ's cure upon earth, but not perfectly healed, your understandings mistake, your thoughts wander, your affections are dead, and your communion with God is daily interrupted; but it shall not be so in heaven, where the cure is perfect: you shall not there know, love, or delight in God, in the manner you do this day; for you are not, as yet, come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. And so much as to the diseases of sin, and Christ's method of curing them.

Secondly, As Sin is the disease of the *saints*, so, also, is *sorrow*; the best *saints* must pass thro' the valley of *Bacha*, to

heaven. How many tears fall from the eyes of the *saints*, upon the account of outward, as well as inward troubles; even after their reconciliation with God? "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. It would be too great a digression, in this place, to note but the more general heads, under which almost infinite particulars, of troubles and afflictions, are found: it shall suffice only to shew, that whatever distress, or trouble, any poor soul is in, upon any account whatsoever; if that soul belongs to Jesus Christ, he will take care of it, *for the present*, and deliver it, at last, by a complete cure.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, Christ cures troubles, by *sanctifying* them to the souls of his, that are under affliction, and makes their very troubles *medicinal*, and healing to them. Trouble is a *scorpion*, and hath a deadly sting; but Christ is a wise *physician*, and extracts a sovereign oil out of this *scorpion*, that heals the wound it makes. By afflictions, our wise physician purges our corruptions, and so prevents, or cures, greater troubles, by lesser; inward sorrows, by outward ones. Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin."

Secondly, Christ cures outward *troubles*, by inward *consolations*, which are made to rise in the inner man, as high as the waters of affliction do upon the outward man, 2 Cor. i. 5. One drop of spiritual comfort, is sufficient to sweeten a whole ocean of outward trouble. It was an high expression of an afflicted father, whom God comforted, just upon the death of his dear and only son, † with some clearer manifestations of his love than was usual: "O, said he, might I but have such consolations as these, I could be willing (were it possible) to lay an only son into the grave every day I have to live in this world." Thus all the troubles of the world are cured by Christ. John xvi. 33. "In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace."

Thirdly, Christ cures all outward sorrows and troubles in his people *by death*, which is their removal from the place of sorrows, to peace and rest for evermore. Now God wipes all tears from their eyes, and the days of their mourning are at an end; the then put off the garments and spirit of mourning, and enter into peace, Isa. lvii. 2. They come to that place, and state, where tears and sighs are things unknown to the inhabitants;

† *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo, cum anima sit in cœlo.* i. e. The body has no feeling, when the soul is in heaven.

one step beyond the state of this mortality, brings us quite out of the sight and hearing, of all troubles and lamentations. These are the diseases of *souls*; *sin*, and *sorrow*; and thus they are cured by Christ, the *physician*.

Secondly, Next I shall shew you, that Jesus Christ is the only *physician* of souls, none like him for a sick *sinner*: And this will be evident, in divers respects.

First, None so *wise*, and judicious, as Jesus Christ, to understand, and comprehend the nature, depth, and danger of soul-diseases. O how ignorant and unacquainted are men with the state and case of afflicted souls! But "Christ hath the tongue "of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in "season to him that is weary," Isa. l. 4. He only understands the weight of sin, and depth of inward troubles of sin.

Secondly, None so able to cure, and heal the wounds of afflicted souls, as Christ is; he, only, hath those medicines that can cure a sick soul. The blood of Christ, and nothing else, in heaven or earth, is able to cure the mortal wounds which guilt inflicts upon a trembling conscience: let men try all other receipts, and costly experience shall convince them of their insufficiency. Conscience may be benumbed by stupefactive medicines, prepared by the devil for that end; but pacified it can never be, but by the blood of Christ, Heb. xvi. 22.

Thirdly, None so tender-hearted, and sympathizing with sick souls, as Jesus Christ; he is full of bowels and tender compassions to afflicted souls: he is one that can have compassion, because he hath had experience, Heb. v. 2. If I must come into the chirurgeon's hands with broken bones, give me such an one, to chuse, whose own bones have been broken; who hath felt the anguish in himself. Christ knows what it is, by experience, having felt the anguish of inward troubles, the weight of God's wrath, and the terrors of a forsaking God, more than any, or all the sons of men: this makes him tender over distressed souls. Isa. xlii. 3. "A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax "he will not quench."

Fourthly, None cures, in so wonderful a method, as Christ doth; he heals us by his stripes, Isa. liii. 5. The physician dies, that the patient may live; his wounds must bleed, that ours may be cured: he feels the smart and pain, that we might have ease and comfort. No physician, but Christ, will cure others at this rate.

Fifthly, None so ready to relieve a sick soul, as Christ; he is within the call of a distressed soul at all times. Art thou sick for sin, weary of sin, and made truly willing to part with sin?

lift up but thy sincere cry to the Lord Jesus for help, and he will quickly be with thee. When the prodigal, the emblem of a convinced, humbled sinner, said, in himself, I will return to my father, the father ran to meet him, Luke xv. 20. He can be with thee in a moment.

www.libtool.com.cn

Sixthly, None so willing to receive and undertake all distressed and afflicted souls, as Jesus Christ is: he refuses none that come to him. John vi. 37. "He that cometh unto me, I will "in no wise cast out." Whatever their sins have been, or their sorrows are; however they have wounded their own souls with the deepest gashes of guilt; how desperate and helpless soever their case appears, in their own, or others eyes; he never puts them off, or discourages them, if they be but willing to come, Isa. i. 18, 19.

Seventhly, None so happy and successful, as Christ; he never fails of performing a perfect cure upon those he undertakes: never was it known that any soul miscarried in his hands, John iii. 15, 16. Other physicians, by mistakes, by ignorance, or carelessness, fill church yards, and cast away the lives of men; but Christ suffers none to perish, that commit themselves to him.

Eighthly, None so free and generous, as Christ; he doth all *gratis*: he sells not his medicines, though they be of infinite value; but freely gives them; Isa. lv. 1. "He that hath no mo-"ney, let him come." If any be sent away, it is the rich, Luke i. 53. not the poor and needy: those that will not accept their remedy as a free gift, but will needs purchase it at a price.

Ninthly, and lastly, None rejoice in the recovery of souls, more than Christ doth. O! it is unspeakably delightful to him to see the efficacy of his blood upon our souls; Isa. liii. 11. "He "shall see the travail of his soul, (*i. e.* the success of his death "and sufferings) and shall be satisfied." When he foresaw the success of the gospel upon the world, it is said, Luke x. 21. "In "that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And thus you see, there is no physician like Christ, for sick souls.

The uses of this point are,

For information and direction.

First, From whence we are informed of many great and necessary truths, deducible from this: As,

Infer. 1. *How inexpressible is the grace of God, in providing such a physician as Christ, for the sick and dying souls of sinners!* O blessed be God, that there is a *balm in Gilead, and a physician there!* that their case is not desperate, forlorn and remediless, as that the devils and damned is. There is but one case excepted from cure, and that, such as is not incident to any sensible,

afflicted soul, Mat. xii. 31. and this only excepted, all manner of sins and diseases are capable of a cure. Though there be such a disease as is incurable, yet take this for thy comfort, never any soul was sick (*i. e.*) sensibly burthened with it, and willing to come to Jesus Christ for healing: for under that sin the will is so wounded, that they have no desire to Christ. O inestimable mercy! that the sickest sinner is capable of a perfect cure! There be thousands, and ten thousands, now in heaven and earth, who said once, Never was any case like theirs; so dangerous, so hopeless. The greatest of sinners have been perfectly recovered by Christ, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 11. O mercy, never to be duly estimated!

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 2. *What a powerful restraint from sin, is the very method ordained by God for the cure of it!* Isa. liii. 5. "By his stripes "we are healed." The physician must die, that the patient might live; no other thing but the blood, the precious blood of Christ, is found in heaven or earth able to heal us, Heb. ix. 22, 26. This blood of Christ must be freshly applied to every new wound sin makes upon our souls, 1 John ii. 1, 2. every new sin wounds him afresh, opens the wounds of Christ anew. O think of this, again and again, you that so easily yield to the solicitations of Satan: Is it so easy, and so cheap, to sin, as you seem to make it? Doth the cure of souls cost nothing? True, it is free to us, but was it so to Christ? No, no, it was not; he knows the price of it, though you do not: Hath Christ healed you by his stripes, and can you put him under fresh sufferings for you so easily? Have you forgot also your own sick days and nights for sin, that you are careless in resisting and preventing it? Sure it is not easy for saints to wound Christ, and their own souls, at one stroke. If you renew your sins, you must also renew your sorrows and repentance, Psal. li. title. 2 Sam. xii. 13. you must feel the anguish and pain of a troubled spirit again, things with which the saints are not unacquainted; of which they may say, as the church, "Remembring my affliction, the wormwood and "the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance," Lam. iii. 19. Yea, and if you will yet be remiss in your watch, and so easily incur new guilt, though a pardon in the blood of Christ may heal your souls, yet some rod or other, in the hand of a displeased father, shall afflict your bodies, or smite you in your outward comforts, Psal. lxxxix. 23.

Infer. 3. *If Christ be the only physician of sick souls, what sin and folly is it for men to take Christ's work out of his hands, and attempt to be their own physician?*

Thus do those that superstitiously endeavour to heal their

souls, by afflicting their bodies; not Christ's blood, but their own, must be the plaister: and as blind Papists, so, many carnal and ignorant Protestants strive, by confession, restitution, reformation, and stricter course of life, to heal those wounds that sin hath made upon their souls, without any respect to the blood of Christ: but this course shall not profit them at all. It may, for a time, divert, but can never heal them: the wounds, so skinned over, will open and bleed again. God grant it be not when our souls shall be out of the reach of the true and only remedy.

www.eptool.com.cn

Infer. 4. *How sad is the case of those souls, to whom Christ hath not yet been a physician?* They are mortally wounded, by sin, and are like to die of their sickness; no saving, healing applications have hitherto been made unto their souls: and this is the case of the greatest part of mankind, yea, of them that live under the discoveries of Christ in the gospel. Which appears by these sad symptoms.

First, In that their eyes have not yet been opened, to see their sin and misery; in which illumination, the cure of souls begins, Acts xxvi. 18. To this day he hath not given them eyes to see, Deut. xxix. 4. but that terrible stroke of God, which blinds and hardens them, is too visibly upon them, mentioned in Isa. vi. 9, 10. No hope of healing, till the sinner's eyes be opened to see his sin and misery.

Secondly, In that nothing will divorce and separate them from their lusts; a sure sign they are not under Christ's cure, nor were ever made sick of sin. O if ever Christ be a physician to thy soul, he will make thee loathe what now thou loveſt, and say to thy most pleasant and most profitable lusts, *Get ye hence*, Isa. xxx. 22. Till then, there is no ground to think that Christ is a physician to you.

Thirdly, In that they have no sensible and pressing need of Christ, nor make any earnest enquiry after him, as, most certainly, you would do, if you were in the way of healing and recovery. These, and many other sad symptoms, do too plainly discover the disease of sin, to be in its full strength upon your souls; and if it so continue, how dreadful will the issue be? See Isa. vi. 9, 10.

Infer. 5. *What cause have they to be glad, that are under the hand and care of Christ, in order to a cure, and who do find, or may, upon due examination, find their souls are in a very hopeful way of recovery!* Can we rejoice when the strength of a natural disease is broken, and nature begins to recover ease and vigour again? And shall we not much more re-

joice, when our souls begin to mend, and recover sensibly, and all comfortable signs of health and life appear upon them? particularly, when the understanding, which was ignorant and dark, hath the light of life beginning to dawn into it; such is that in 1 John ii. 27. When the will, which was rebellious and inflexible to the will of God, is brought to comply with that holy will, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. When the heart, which was harder than an adament, is now brought to contrition for sin, and can mourn as heartily over it, as ever a father did for a dead son, a beloved, and only son; when its aversations from God are gone, at least have no such power as once they had; but the thoughts are now fixed much upon God, and spiritual things begin to grow pleasant to the soul; when times of duty come to be longed for; and the soul never better pleased than in such seasons: when the hypocrisy of the heart is purged out, so that we begin to do all that we do heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, Col. iii. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 4.: when we begin to make conscience of secret sins, Psal. cxix. 113., and of secret duties, Matth. vi. 5, 6.: when we have an equal respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 8., and our hearts are under the holy, and awful eye of God, which doth, indeed, over-awe our souls, Gen. xvii. 1. O what sweet signs of a recovering soul are these! Surely such are in the skilful hand of the great Physician, who will perfect what yet remains to be done.

Second use for direction.

In the last place, this point yields us matter of advice and direction to poor souls that are under the disease of sin; and they are of two sorts, which I will distinctly speak to: *viz. First*, Such as are under their first sickness of spiritual sorrow for sin, and know not what course to take: or, *Secondly*, Such as have been longer in the hands of Christ the Physician, but are troubled to see the cure advance so slowly upon them, and fear the issue.

First, As to those that are in their first troubles for sin, and know not what course to take for ease and safety; I would address to them these following counsels.

First, Shut your ears against the dangerous counsels of carnal persons, or relations; for as they themselves are unacquainted with these troubles, so also are they with all proper remedies: and it is very usual with the devil to convey his temptations to distressed souls, by such hands; because, by them, he can do it with least suspicion. It was Augustine's complaint, that his

own father took little care for his soul; and many parents act, in this case, as if they were employed by Satan.

Secondly, Be not too eager to get out of trouble, but be content to take God's way, and wait his time. No woman that is wise, would desire to have her travail hastened one day before the due time; nor will it be your interest to hasten too soon out of trouble. It is true, times of trouble are apt to seem tedious; but a false peace will endanger you more than a long trouble: a man may lengthen his own troubles to the loss of his own peace, and may shorten them to the hazard of his own soul.

Thirdly, Open your case to wise, judicious, and experienced Christians, and especially the ministers of Christ, whose office it is to counsel and direct you in these difficulties; and let not your troubles lie, like a secret, smothering fire, always in your own breasts. I know men are more ashamed to open their sins under convictions, than they were to commit them before conviction: but this is your interest, and the true way to your rest and peace. If there be with you, or near you, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew you your righteousness, and remedy, as it lies in Christ; neglect not your own souls, in a sinful concealment of your case: it will be the joy of their hearts to be employed in such work as this.

Fourthly, Be much with God in secret, open your hearts to him, and pour out complaints into his bosom. The cii. Psalm bears a title very suitable to your case and duty; yea, you will find if your troubles work kindly, and God intend a cure upon your souls, that nothing will be able to keep God and your souls asunder: whatever your incumbrances in the world be, some time will be daily redeemed, to be so spent betwixt you and God.

Fifthly, Plead hard with God, in prayer, for help and healing. "Heal my soul, (saith David) for I have sinned against thee," Psal. xli. 4. Tell him Christ hath his commission sealed for such as you are: he was sent to "bind up the broken-hearted," Isa. lxi. 1. Tell him he came into the world, "to seek and "save that which was lost," and so are you now, in your own account and apprehensions. Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou pursue a dried leaf? And why is my heart wounded with the sense of sin, and mine eyes open to see my danger and misery? Are not these the first dawnings of mercy upon sinners? O let it appear, that the time of mercy, even the set time, is now come.

Sixthly, Understand your peace to be in Christ only, and faith to be the only way to Christ and rest; let the great enquiry of your souls be after Christ and faith; study the nature and ne-

ceſſity of theſe, and cry to God, day and night, for ſtrength to carry you to Chriſt in the way of faith.

Secondly, As to thoſe that have been longer under the hands of Chriſt, and yet are ſtill in troubles, and cannot obtain peace, but their wounds bleed ſtill, and all they hear in ſermons, or do in the way of duty, will not bring them to reſt; to ſuch I only add two or three words for a cloſe.

First, Conſider whether you ever rightly cloſed with Chriſt ſince your firſt awakening, and whether there be not ſome way of ſin, in which you ſtill live: if ſo, no wonder your wounds are kept open, and your ſouls are ſtrangers to peace.

Secondly, If you be conſcious of no ſuch flaw in the foundation, conſider how much of this trouble may ariſe from your conſtitution and natural temper, which being melancholy, will be doubtful and ſuſpicious; you may find it ſo in other caſes of leſs moment, and be ſure Satan will not be wanting to improve it.

Thirdly, Acquaint yourſelves more with the nature of true juſtifying faith; a miſtake in that hath prolonged the troubles of many: if you look for it in no other act but aſſurance, you may eaſily overlook it, as it lies, in the mean time, in your affiance or acceptance. A true and proper conception of ſaving faith would go far in the cure of many troubled ſouls.

Fourthly, Be more thankful to ſhun ſin, than to get yourſelves clear of trouble: it is ſad to walk in darkneſs, but worſe to lie under guilt. Say, Lord, I would rather be grieved myſelf, than be a grief to thy Spirit. O keep me from ſin, how long ſoever thou keep me under ſorrow. Wait on God in the way of faith, and in a tender ſpirit towards ſin, and thy wounds ſhall be healed at laſt by thy great Phyſician.

Thanks be to God for Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON XI.

Containing the Second Motive to enforce the general Exhortation, from a ſecond Title of CHRIST.

Luke i. 72. *To perform the mercy promiſed to our fathers, and remember his holy covenant.*

THIS ſcripture is part of Zechariah's prophecy, at the riſing of that bright ſtar John, the harbinger and fore-

runner of Christ: They are some of the first words he spake after God had loosed his tongue, which, for a time, was struck dumb for his unbelief. His tongue is now unbound, and at liberty to proclaim to all the world, the unspeakable riches of mercy through Jesus Christ, in a song of praise. Wherein note,

The mercy celebrated, *viz.* redemption by Christ, ver. 68.

The description of Christ by place and property, ver. 69.

The faithfulness of God in our redemption this way, ver. 70.

The benefit of being so redeemed by Christ, ver. 71.

The exact accomplishment of all the promises made to the *fathers* in sending Christ, the mercy promised into the world, ver. 72. "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers," &c. In these words we find two parts, *viz.*

1. A mercy freely promised.
2. The promised mercy faithfully performed.

First, You have a mercy freely promised, *viz.* by God the Father, from the beginning of the world, and often repeated and confirmed in several succeeding ages, to the fathers, in his covenant-transactions.

This mercy is Jesus Christ, of whom he speaks in this prophecy; the same which he stiles "An horn of salvation in the "house of David," ver. 69.

The mercy of God in scripture, is put either for,

1. His free favour to the creature. Or,
2. The effects and fruits of that favour.

It is put for the free and undeserved favour of God to the creature, and this favour of God may respect the creature two ways, either as *undeserving*, or as *ill-deserving*.

It respected innocent man, as *undeserving*; for Adam could put no obligation upon his benefactor. It respecteth fallen man, as *ill-deserving*. Innocent man could not merit favour, and fallen man did merit wrath: the favour or mercy of God to both is every way free; and that is the first acceptation of the word *mercy*: but then it is also taken for the effects and fruits of God's favour, and they are either

1. Principal and primary: or,
2. Subordinate and secondary.

Of secondary and subordinate mercies, there are multitudes, both temporal, respecting the body, and spiritual, respecting the soul; but the principal and primary mercy is but one, and that is Christ, the first-born of mercy; the capital mercy, the comprehensive root-mercy, from whom are all other mercies; and therefore called by a singular emphasis in my text, *The mercy*, *i. e.* the mercy of all mercies; without whom no drop of saving

mercy can flow to any of the sons of men; and in whom are all the tender bowels of divine mercy yearning upon poor sinners. *The mercy*, and *the mercy promised*. The first promise of Christ was made to Adam, Gen. iii. 15. and was frequently renewed afterwards, to Abraham, to David, and, as the text speaks, *unto the fathers*, in their respective generations.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, We find here also, the promised mercy faithfully performed: "To perform the mercy promised." What mercy soever the love of God engaged him to promise, the faithfulness of God stands engaged for the performance thereof. Christ, the promised mercy, is not only performed, *truly*, but he is also performed, according to the promise in all the circumstances thereof, *exactly*. So he was promised to the fathers, and just so performed to us their children: Hence the note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ, the mercy of mercies, was graciously promised, and faithfully performed by God to his people.*

Three things are here to be opened:

First, Why Christ is stiled *the mercy*.

Secondly, What kind of mercy Christ is to his people.

Thirdly, How this mercy was performed.

First, Christ is the mercy, *emphatically* so called; the peerless, invaluable, and matchless mercy: Because he is the prime fruit of the mercy of God to sinners. The mercies of God are infinite; mercy gave the world, and us, our being; all our protections, provisions, and comforts, in this world, are the fruits of mercy, the free gifts of divine favour: But Christ is the first and chief; all other mercies, compared with him, are but fruits from that root, and streams from that fountain of mercy; the very bowels of divine mercy are in Christ, as in ver. 78. according to the tender mercies, or, as the Greek, the yearning bowels of the mercy of God.

Secondly, Christ is the *mercy*, because all the mercy of God to sinners, is dispensed, and conveyed through Christ to them, John i. 16. Col. ii. 3. Eph. iv. 7. Christ is the *medium* of all divine communications, the *channel* of grace; through him are both the *decursus et recursus gratiarum*; the flows of mercy from God to us, and the returns of praise from us to God. Fond and vain, therefore, are all the expectations of mercy out of Christ; no drop of saving mercy runs beside this channel.

Thirdly, Christ is the *mercy*, because all inferior mercies derive both their *nature*, *value*, *sweetness*, and *duration* from Christ, the fountain-mercy of all other mercies.

First, They derive their *nature* from Christ; for out of him, those things which men call mercies, are rather traps, and snares,

than mercies to them, Prov. i. 32. The time will come, when the *rich*, that are christless, will wish, O that we had been poor! And *nobles*, that are not ennobled by the new birth, O that we had been among the low rank of men! All these things that pass for valuable mercies, like *cyphers*, signify much when such an important figure as Christ stands before them, else they signify nothing to any man's comfort or benefit.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, They derive their *value*, as well as nature, from Christ: For how little, I pray you, doth it signify to any man to be rich, honourable, politic, and successful in all his designs in the world, if, after all, he must lie down in hell?

Thirdly, All other mercies derive their *sweetness* from Christ, and are but insipid things without him. There is a twofold sweetness in things; one *natural*, another *spiritual*: Those that are out of Christ can relish the first, believers only relish both: They have the natural sweetness that is in mercy itself, and a sweetness supernatural, from Christ and the covenant, the way in which they receive them. Hence it is, that some men taste more spiritual sweetness in their *daily bread*, than others do in the *Lord's Supper*; and the same mercy, by this means, becomes a feast to soul and body at once.

Fourthly, All mercies have their *duration*, and perpetuity, from Christ; all christless persons hold their mercies upon the greatest contingencies, and terms of uncertainty; if they be continued during this life, that is all: There is not one drop of mercy after death. But the mercies of the saints are continued to eternity; the end of their mercies on earth, is the beginning of their better mercies in heaven. There is a twofold end of mercies, one *perfective*, another *destructive*; the death of the saints perfects and completes their mercies, the death of the wicked destroys and cuts off their mercies: For these reasons, Christ is called the mercy.

Secondly, In the next place, let us enquire what manner of mercy Christ is; and we shall find many lovely, and transcendent properties to commend him to our souls.

First, He is a *free*, and undeserved mercy, called upon that account, *The gift of God*, John iv. 10. And to shew how free this gift was, God gave him to us when we were enemies, Rom. v. 8. Needs must that mercy be free, which is given, not only to the undeserving, but to the ill-deserving; the benevolence of God was the sole, impulsive cause of this gift, John iii. 16.

Secondly, Christ is a *full* mercy, replenished with all that answers to the *wishes*, or *wants* of sinners; in him, alone, is found whatever the justice of an angry God requires for satisfaction, or the

necessities of souls require for their supply. Christ is full of mercy, both *extensively*, and *intensively*: in him are all kinds, and sorts of mercies; and in him are the highest and most perfect degrees of mercy; "For it pleased the Father, that in him should "all fulness dwell," Col. i. 19.

Thirdly, Christ is the *seasonable* mercy, given by the Father to us in due time, Rom. v. 6. In the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4. a seasonable mercy in his *exhibition* to the world in *general*, and a seasonable mercy in his *application* to the soul in *particular*; the wisdom of God pitched upon the best time for his incarnation, and it takes the very propereſt for his application. When a poor soul is distressed, lost, at its wits end, and ready to perish; then comes Christ: All God's works are done in season, but none more seasonable than this great work of salvation by Christ.

Fourthly, Christ is the *necessary mercy*, there is an absolute necessity of Jesus Christ; hence in scripture he is called the "bread of life," John vi. 48. he is bread to the hungry; he is the "water of life," John vii. 37. as cold water to the thirsty soul. He is a ransom for captives, Mat. xx. 28. a garment to the naked, Rom. xiii. *ult.* Bread is not so necessary to the hungry, nor water to the thirsty, nor a ransom to the captive, nor a garment to the naked; as Christ is to the soul of a sinner: The breath of our nostrils, the life of our souls, is in Jesus Christ.

Fifthly, Christ is a *fountain-mercy*, and all other mercies flow from him: A believer may say with Christ, "All my "springs are in thee;" from his merit, and from his spirit, flow our redemption, justification, sanctification, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, and blessedness in the world to come: "In that day shall there be a fountain opened, Zech. xiii. 1.

Sixthly, Christ is a *satisfying mercy*; he that is full of Christ, can feel the want of nothing. "I desire to know nothing, "but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Christ bounds and terminates the vast desires of the soul: He is the very sabbath of the soul. How hungry, empty, and straitned, on every side, is the soul of man, in the abundance and fulness of all outward things, till it come to Christ? the weary motions of a restless soul, like those of a river, cannot be at rest till they pour themselves into Christ, the ocean of blessedness.

Seventhly, Christ is a *peculiar mercy*, intended for, and applied to a remnant among men; some would extend redemption as large as the world, but the gospel limits it to those, only, that believe; and those believers are, upon that account, called

a *peculiar people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. The offers of Christ, indeed, are large, and general; but the application of Christ is but too few, Isa. liii. 1. The greater cause have they, to whom Christ comes, to lie with their mouths in the dust, astonished, and overwhelmed with the sense of so peculiar and distinguishing a mercy.

Eightly, Jesus Christ is a *suitable mercy*, fitted, in every respect, to all our needs and wants, 1 Cor. i. 20. wherein the admirable wisdom of God is illustriously displayed; "Ye are "complete in him," (saith the apostle) Col. ii. 20. Are we enemies? He is *reconciliation*: Are we sold to sin and Satan? He is *redemption*: Are we condemned by the law? He is the Lord our righteousness: Hath sin polluted us? He is a *fountain opened* for sin, and for uncleanness: Are we lost, by departing from God? he is the *way* to the Father. Rest is not so suitable to the weary, nor bread to the hungry, as Christ is to the sensible sinner.

Ninthly, Christ is an *astonishing and wonderful merey*; his Name is called *wonderful*, Isa. ix. 6. and as his name is, so is he, a wonderful Christ: His Person is a wonder. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the "flesh:"

His abasement wonderful, Phil. ii. 6. His love is a wonderful love; his redemption full of wonders; angels desire to look into it. He is, and will be admired by *angels* and *saints* to all *eternity*.

Tenthly, Jesus Christ is *an incomparable, and matchless mercy*; "as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my be-"loved among the sons," (saith the enamoured spouse) Cant. ii. 3. Draw the comparison how you will, betwixt Christ and all other enjoyments, you will find none, in heaven or earth, to equal him: He is more than all *externals*, as the light of the *sun* is more than that of a *candle*: Nay, even the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world; his reproaches are better than the world's pleasures, Heb. xi. 25. He is more than all *spirituals*, as the *fountain* is more than the *stream*. He is more than justification, as the *cause* is more than the *effect*; more than sanctification, as the *person* himself is more than the image, or *picture*. He is more than all peace, all comfort, all joys, as the *tree* is more than the *fruit*. Nay, draw the comparison betwixt Christ and things external, and you will find him better than they; for what is heaven without Christ? Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" If Christ should say to the saints take heaven among you, but as for me I will withdraw myself from you; the saints would weep, even in heaven itself,

and say, Lord, heaven will be no more heaven to us, except thou be there; who art by far the better half of heaven.

Eleventhly, Christ is an *unsearchable mercy*; who can fully express his wonderful name? Prov. xxx. 4. Who can tell over his *unsearchable riches*? Eph. iii. 8. Hence it is, that souls never tire in the study or love of Christ, because new wonders are eternally rising out of him: He is a deep which no line of any created understanding, angelical or human, can fathom.

Twelfthly, and *lastly*, Christ is an *everlasting mercy*; "the "same yesterday, to day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. All other enjoyments are perishable, time-eaten things; time, like a moth, will fret them out: But the riches of Christ are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. The graces of Christ are durable graces, John iv. 14. All the creatures are flowers, that appear and fade in their month; but this Rose of Sharon, this Lilly of the Valley never withers. Thus you see the mercy performed, with its desirable properties.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened, is the manner of God's performing his mercy to his people; which the Lord did,

1. Really, and truly, as he had promised him.

2. Exactly agreeable to the promises and predictions of him.

First, Really, and truly: as he had promised, so he made good the promise. Acts ii. 36. "Let all the house of Israel know al- "suredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye cruci- "fied, both Lord and Christ."

The manifestation of Christ in the flesh, was no phantasm, or delusion, but a most evident and palpable truth. 1 John i. 1. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, "which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." A truth so certain, that the assertors of it appealed to the very enemies of Christ for the certainty thereof, Acts ii. 22. Yea, not only the sacred, but prophane writers, witness to it; not only the *evangelists* and *apostles*, but even the *heathen* writers of those times, both *roman* and *jewish*, as Suetonius, Tacitus, Plinius the younger, and Josephus the *jewish antiquary*, do all acknowledge it.

Secondly, As God did really, and truly perform Christ the promised mercy, so he performed this promised mercy *exactly*, agreeable to the promises, types, and predictions made of him to the fathers, even the most minute circumstances thereof. This is a great truth for our faith to be established in: Let us therefore cast our eyes, both upon the *promises*, and *performances* of God, with respect to Christ, the mercy of mercies. See how he

was represented to the fathers, long before his manifestation in the flesh; and what an one he appeared to be when he was really exhibited in it.

First, As to his person and qualifications, as it was *foretold*, so it was *fulfilled*. His original was said to be unsearchable, and eternal, Micah v. 2. and so he affirmed himself to be, Rev. i. 11. "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." John vi. 31, 32. "Before Abraham was, I am." His two natures, united into one person, were plainly foretold, Zech. xiii. 7. *The man my Fellow*; and such a one God performed, Rom ix. 5. His immaculate purity and holiness were foretold Dan. ix. 24. "To anoint the most Holy;" some render it, *the great Saint*, the Prince of Saints; and such a one he was indeed, when he lived in this world. John viii. 46. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" His Offices were foretold, the prophetical Office predicted, Deut. xviii. 15. and fulfilled in him, John i. 18. His priestly Office foretold, Psal. cx. 4. fulfilled, Heb. ix. 14. his kingly Office foretold, Micah v. 2. and in him fulfilled; his very enemies being judges, Matth. xxvii. 37.

Secondly, As to his birth, the time, place, and manner thereof were foretold to the fathers, and exactly performed, to a tittle.

First, The time prefixed, more generally in *Jacob's prophecy*, Gen. xliv. 10. When the Scepter should depart from Judah, as, indeed, it did in Herod the Idumean: More particularly in Daniel's seventy weeks, from the decree of Darius, Dan. ix. 24. answering exactly to the time of his birth; so cogent, and full of proof, that Porphyry, the great enemy of Christians, had no other evasion, but that this prophecy was devised after the event: Which yet the Jews (as bitter enemies to Christ, as himself) will by no means allow to be true. And, lastly, the time of his birth was exactly pointed at in Haggai's prophecy, Hag. ii. 7, 9. compared with Mal. iii 1. He must come whilst the second temple stood; at that time was a general expectation of him, John i. 19. and at that very time he came, Luke ii. 38.

Secondly, The place of his birth was foretold to be Bethlehem Ephrata, Micah v. 2. and so it was Mat. ii. 5, 6. to be brought up in Nazareth, Zech. vi. 12. "Behold the man whose name is the branch." The word is *Netzer*, whence is the word Nazarite. And there, indeed, was our Lord brought up, Mat. ii. 23.

Thirdly, His parent was to be a *virgin*, Isa. vii. 14. punctually fulfilled, Mat. i. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Fourthly, His stock, or tribe, was foretold to be Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. and it is evident (saith the apostle) "that our Lord "sprang out of Judah," Heb. vii. 14.

Fifthly, His *harbinger*, or forerunner, was foreteld, Mal. iv. 5, 6. fulfilled in John the Baptist, Luke i. 16, 17.

Sixthly, The obscurity, and meanness of his birth were predicted, Isa. liii. 2. Zech. ix. 9. to which the event answered, Luke ii. 12.

Thirdly, His doctrine, and miracles were foretold, Isa. xvi. 1, 2. Ib. xxxv. 4, 5. the accomplishment whereof in Christ, is evident in the history of all the *evangelists*.

Fourthly, His death for us was foretold by the prophets, Dan. ix. 26. "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself:" Isa. liii. 5. "He was wounded for our transgressions." And so he was, John xi. 50. The very kind, and manner of his death, was prefigured in the brazen serpent, his type; and answered in his death upon the cross, John iii. 14.

Fifthly, His Burial in the *tomb* of a rich man, was foretold, Isa. liii. 9. and accomplished most exactly, Mat. xxvii. 59, 60.

Sixthly, His resurrection from the dead was typed out in Jonah, and fulfilled in Christ's abode three days and nights in the grave, Mat. xii. 49.

Seventhly, The wonderful spreading of the gospel in the world, even to the Isles of the Gentiles, was prophesied of, Isa. xlix. 6. to the truth whereof we are not only the witnesses, but the happy instances and examples of it. Thus the promised mercy was performed.

Infer. 1. *If Christ be the mercy of mercies, the medium of conveying all other mercies, from God to men: then, in vain, do men expect, and hope for mercy of God, out of Jesus Christ.*

I know many poor sinners comfort themselves with this, when they come upon a bed of sickness; I am sinful, but God is merciful: and it is very true, God is merciful; plenteous in mercy; his mercy is great above the heavens; mercy pleaseth him: and all this they that are in Christ shall find experimentally, to their comfort and salvation. But what is all this to thee, if thou art Christless? There is not one drop of saving mercy that comes in any other channel than Christ, to the soul of any man.

But must I then expect no mercy out of Christ? This is a hard case; very uncomfortable doctrine. Yes, thou mayest be a Christless, and covenantless soul, and yet have variety of temporal mercies, as Ishmael had, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. God may give thee the fatness of the earth, riches, honours, pleasures,

a numerous and prosperous posterity; will that content thee? Yes, yes, if I may have heaven too: No, no, neither heaven, nor pardon, nor any other spiritual, or eternal mercy, may be expected out of Christ, Jude, ver. 21. O deceive not yourselves in this point; there are two bars betwixt you and all spiritual mercies, *viz.* the guilt of sin, and the filth of sin: and nothing, but your own union with Christ, can remove these, and so open the passage for spiritual mercies to your souls.

www.libtool.com.cn

Why, but I will repent of sin, strive to obey the commands of God, make restitution for the wrongs I have done, cry to God for mercy, bind my soul with vows, and strong resolutions against sin, for time to come: will not all this lay a groundwork for hope of mercy to my soul? No, no, this will not, this cannot do it.

First, All your *sorrows*, tears, and mournings for sin, cannot obtain mercy: could you shed as many tears for any one sin that ever you committed, as all the children of Adam have shed upon any account whatsoever, since the creation of the world; they will not purchase the pardon of that one sin; for the law accepts no short payment; it requires plenary satisfaction, and will not discharge any soul without it: nor can it acknowledge, or own your souls to be such. The repentance of a soul finds, through Christ, acceptance with God, but out of him 'tis nothing.

Secondly, All your *strivings* to obey the commands of God, and live more strictly for time to come, will not obtain mercy. Mat. v. 20. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righte-"ousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter "into the kingdom of heaven."

Thirdly, Your *restitution*, and reparation of wrongs you have done, cannot obtain mercy: Judas restored, and yet was damned. Man is repaired, but God is not. Remission is the act of God, 'tis he must loose your consciences from the bond of guilt, or they can never be loosed.

Fourthly, All your *cries* to God for mercy, will not prevail for mercy, if you be out of Christ, Mat. vii. 22. Job xxvii. 29. A righteous judge will not reverse the just sentence of the law, though the prisoner at the bar fall upon his knees, and cry, Mercy, mercy.

Fifthly, Your *vows* and engagements to God for time to come, cannot obtain mercy; for they being made in your own strength, 'tis impossible you should keep them; and if you could, yet it is impossible they should obtain remission and mercy: should you never sin more for time to come, yet how shall God

be satisfied for sins past? Justice must have satisfaction, or you can never have remission, Rom. iii. 25, 26. and no work wrought by man can satisfy divine justice; nor is the satisfaction of Christ made over to any for their discharge, but to such, only, as are in him; therefore, never expect mercy out of Christ.

Infer. 2. *Is Christ, the mercy of mercies, greater, better, and more necessary than all other mercies; then let no inferior mercy satisfy you for your portion.*

God hath mercies of all sorts to give, but Christ is the chief, the prime mercy of all mercies: O be not satisfied without that mercy. When * Luther had a rich present sent him, "he protested God should not put him off so:" and David was of the same mind, Psal. xvii. 14. If the Lord should give any of you the desires of your hearts in the good things of this life, let not that satisfy you, whilst you are Christless. For,

First, What is there in these earthly enjoyments, whereof the vilest men have not a greater fulness than you? Job xxi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Psal. xvii. 10. and lxxiii. 3, 12.

Secondly, What comfort can all these things give to a soul already condemned, as thou art? John iii. 18.

Thirdly, What sweetness can be in them, whilst they are all unsanctified things to you? enjoyments, and sanctification, are two distinct things, Psal. xxxvii. 16. Prov. x. 22. Thousands of unsanctified enjoyments will not yield your souls one drop of solid spiritual comfort.

Fourthly, What pleasure can you take in these things, of which death must, shortly, strip you naked? You must die, you must die; and whose then shall all those things be, for which you have laboured? Be not so fond, to think of leaving a great name behind you; 'tis but a poor felicity (as Chrysostome well observes) to be tormented where thou art, and praised where thou art not †: the sweeter your portion hath been on earth, the more intolerable will your condition be in hell; yea, these earthly delights do not only increase the torments of the damned, but also prepare (as they are instruments of sin) the souls of men for damnation, Prov. i. 32. "Surely the prosperity of fools shall "destroy them." Be restless, therefore, till Christ, the mercy of mercies, be the root and fountain, yielding and sanctifying all other mercies to you.

Infer. 3. *Is Christ, the mercy of mercies, infinitely better than*

* *Valde protestatus sum, me nolle sic ab eo satiari.* Luth.

† For then the devouring flame burns up those whom carnal pleasure pollutes.

all other mercies; then let all that be in Christ be content, and well satisfied, whatever other inferior mercies the wisdom of God sees fit to deny them. You have a Benjamin's portion, a plentiful inheritance in Christ; will you yet complain? Others have houses, splendid and magnificent upon earth; but you have "an house made without hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. Others are cloathed with rich and costly apparel, your souls are clothed with the white, pure robes of Christ's righteousness. Isa. lxi. 10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, "my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath cloathed me "with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the "robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with "ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." Let those that have full tables, heavy purses, rich lands, but no Christ; be rather objects of your pity, than envy: it is better, like store-cattle, to be kept lean and hungry; than, with the fatted ox, to tumble in flowery meadows, thence to be led away to the shambles. God hath not a better mercy to give than Christ, thy portion; in him all necessary mercies are secured to thee, and thy wants and straits sanctified to thy good. O! therefore, never open thy mouth to complain against the bountiful God.

Infer. 4. Is Christ *the mercy*, (i. e.) he in whom all the tender mercies of God towards poor sinners are; *then let none be discouraged in going to Christ, by reason of the sin and unworthiness that are in them:* his very name is *mercy*, and as his name is, so is he. Poor drooping sinner, encourage thyself in the way of Faith; the Christ to whom thou art going, is mercy itself to broken-hearted sinners, moving towards him in the way of faith: doubt not that mercy will repulse thee; it is against both its name, and nature, so to do. Jesus Christ is so merciful to poor souls, that come to him, that he hath received and pardoned the chiefest of sinners; men that stood as remote from mercy, as any in the world, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Those that shed the blood of Christ, have yet been washed in that blood from their sin, Acts ii. 36, 37. Mercy receives sinners, without exception of great and heinous ones. John vii 37. "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Gospel invitations run, in general terms, to all sinners that are heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28. When Mr. Bilney, the martyr, heard a minister preaching at this rate, O thou old sinner, who hast been serving the devil these fifty or sixty years; dost thou think that Christ will receive thee now? O! said he, what a preaching of Christ is here? Had Christ been thus preached to me in the day

of my trouble for sin, what had become of me? But, blessed be God, there is a sufficiency, both of merit, and mercy, in Jesus Christ, for all sinners, for the vilest among sinners, whose hearts shall be made willing to come unto him. So merciful is the Lord Jesus Christ, that he moves first, Isa. lxii. 1, 2. so merciful, that he upbraids none, Ezek. xviii. 22. so merciful, that he will not despise the weakest, if sincere, desires of souls, Isa. xlii. 3. so merciful, that nothing more grieves him, than our unwillingness to come unto him for mercy, John v. 40. so merciful, that he waiteth, to the last, upon sinners, to shew them mercy, Rom. x. 21. Mat. xxiii. 37. in a word, so merciful, that it is his greatest joy when sinners come unto him, that he may shew them mercy, Luke xv. 5, 22.

www.libtool.com.cn

Object. But yet it cannot enter into my thoughts that I should obtain mercy.

Sol. First, You measure God by yourselves, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. "If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Man will not, but the merciful God will, upon the submission of the enemies to him.

Secondly, You are discouraged, because you have not tried. Go to Jesus Christ, poor distressed sinners; try him, and then report what a Christ thou findest him to be.

Object. But I have neglected the time of mercy, and now it is too late.

Sol. How know you that? Have you seen the book of life, or turned over the records of eternity? Or do you not unwarrantably intrude into the secrets of God, which belong not to you? Besides, if the treaty were at an end, how is it that thy heart is now distressed for sin, and sollicitous after deliverance from it?

Object. But I have waited long, and yet see no mercy for me.

Sol. May not mercy be coming, and you not see it? Or have you not waited at the wrong door? If you wait for the mercy of God through Christ, in the way of humiliation and faith, and continue waiting; assuredly mercy shall come at last.

Infer. 5. *Hath God performed the mercy promised to the Fathers, the great mercy, the capital mercy, Jesus Christ; then let no man distrust God for the performance of lesser mercies, contained in any other promises of the scripture.* The performance of this mercy secures the performance of all other mercies to us. For,

First, Christ is a greater mercy than any other which yet remains to be performed, Rom. viii. 32.

Secondly, This mercy virtually comprehends all other mercies, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

Thirdly, The promises that contain all other mercies, are ratified and confirmed to believers in Christ, 2. Cor. i. 20.

Fourthly, It was much more improbable that God would bestow his own Son upon the world, than that he should bestow any other mercy upon it. Wait, therefore, in a comfortable expectation of the fulfilling of all the rest of the promises in their seasons. Hath he given thee Christ? He will give thee bread to eat, raiment to put on, support in troubles, and whatsoever else thy soul or body stands in need of: The blessings contained in all other promises, are fully secured by the performance of this great promise; thy pardon, peace, acceptance with God now, and enjoyment of him for ever, shall be fulfilled: The great mercy, Christ, makes way for all other mercies to the souls of believers.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 6. Lastly, *How mad are they that part with Christ, the best of mercies, to secure and preserve any temporal lesser mercies to themselves!* Thus Demas and Judas gave up Christ to gain a little of the world; O soul-undoing bargain! How dear do they pay for the world, that purchase it with the loss of Christ, and their own peace for ever!

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the mercy of mercies.

* *

SERMON XII.

Containing a third Motive to enliven the general Exhortation, from a third Title of CHRIST.

CANT. v. Part of Verse 16.——*Yea, He is altogether lovely.*

AT the ninth verse of this chapter, you have a query propounded to the *spouse*, by the *daughters* of *Jerusalem*; "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" To this question the spouse returns her answer in the following verses, wherein she asserts his excellency in general. Ver. 10. "He is "the chiefest among ten thousands;" confirms that general assertion, by an enumeration of his particular excellencies, to ver. 16. where she closes up her *character* and *encomium* of her beloved, with an elegant *epiphonema*, in the words that I have read; "Yea, he is altogether lovely."

The words, you see, are an affirmative proposition, setting forth the transcendent loveliness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and naturally resolve themselves into three parts, *viz.*

1. The subject.
2. The predicate.
3. The manner of predication.

First, The *subject*, *He*, *viz.* the Lord Jesus Christ, after whom she had been seeking, for whom she was sick of love; concerning whom these daughters of Jerusalem had enquired: whom she had endeavoured so *graphically* to describe in his particular excellencies. This is the great and excellent *subject* of whom she here speaks.

Secondly, The *predicate*, or what she affirmeth, or saith of him, *viz.* That he is a *lovely one*, *Machamaddim*, desires; according to the import of the * original, "which signifies earnestly "to desire, covet; or long after that which is most pleasant, "grateful, delectable, and admirable;" The original word is both in the *abstract*, and of the *plural number*, which speaks Christ to be the very essence of all delights and pleasures; the very soul and substance of them. As all the rivers are gathered into the ocean, which is the congregation or meeting-place of all the waters in the world: so Christ is that ocean in which all true delights and pleasures meet.

Thirdly, The *manner of predication*: He is [*altogether*] lovely, *Totus, totus desiderabilis*; lovely in all, and in every part: as if she had said, Look on him, in what respect or particular you will; cast your eye upon this lovely object, and view him any way; turn him in your serious thoughts, which way you will; consider his person, his offices, his works, or any other thing belonging to him; you shall find him *altogether lovely*: There is nothing ungrateful in him; there is nothing lovely without him. Hence note,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ is the loveliest person souls can set their eyes upon.* Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children "of men."

That is said of Jesus Christ, which cannot be said of any creature; that he is "altogether lovely." In opening this lovely point, I shall,

1. Weigh the importance of this phrase, "altogether lovely."
2. Shew you in what respects Christ is so.

First, Let us weigh this excellent expression, and particularly consider what is contained in it, and you shall find this expression, "Altogether lovely:"

* *Significat appetere, expetere quod jucundum, gratum, voluptuosum, utile et amabile est.* Pag.

First, That it excludes all unlovelinefs, and diftaftefulnefs, from Jefus Chrift. So † Vatablus; "There is nothing in him "which is not amiable:" The excellencies of Jefus Chrift are perfectly exclufive of all their oppofites; there is nothing of a contrary nature, or quality found in him, to alloy, or debafe his excellency. And in this refpect Chrift infinitely tranfcends the moft excellent and lovelieft creatures. For whatfoever lovelinefs is found in them, it is not without a diftafteful tang; the fairefl pictures muft have their *fhadows:* The moft orient, and tranfplendent ftones, muft have their *foils* to fet off their beauty; the beft creature is but a bitter fweet, at beft: If there be fomewhat pleafing, there is alfo fomewhat diftafting; if there be gracious and natural excellencies in the fame perfon, to delight us, yet there is, alfo, fome natural corruption intermixed with it, to diftafte us. But it is not fo in our altogether lovely Chrift; his excellencies are pure, and unmixed; he is a fea of fweetnefs, without one drop of gall.

Secondly, ‡ *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) as there is nothing unlovely found in him, fo all that is in him is wholly lovely; as every ray of God is precious, fo every thing that is in Chrift is precious: Who can weigh Chrift in a pair of balances, and tell you what his worth is? "His price is above rubies, and all that thou "canft defire is not to be compared with him," Prov. viii. 11.

Thirdly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) He is comprehenfive of all things that are lovely; he feals up the fum of all lovelinefs: *Quae faciunt divifa beatum, in hoc mixta fluunt;* Things that fhine as fingle ftars, with a particular glory, all meet in Chrift, as a glorious conftellation. Col. i. 19. "It pleafed the Father "that in him fhould all fulnefs dwell." Caft your eyes among all created beings, furvey the univerfe, obferve ftrength in one, beauty in a fecond, faithfulnefs in a third, wifdom in a fourth; but you fhall find none excelling in them all, as Chrift doth. Bread hath one quality, water another, raiment another, phyfic another; but none hath all in itfelf, as Chrift hath: He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirfty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded; and whatever a foul can defire, is found in him, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Fourthly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) Nothing is lovely in *oppofition* to him, or in feparation from him. If he be altogether lovely, then whatfoever is oppofite to, or feparate from him, can

† *Nihil in eo quod non eft amabile.*

‡ The more excellent he is, the more is he to be fought after by earneft prayers and defires. *Brightman.*

have no loveliness in it; take away Christ, and where is the loveliness of any enjoyment? The best creature-comfort out of Christ, is but a broken cistern; it cannot hold one drop of true comfort, Psal. lxxiii. 26. It is with the creature, the sweetest and loveliest creature, as with a beautiful image in the glass: turn away the face, and where is the image? Riches, honours, and comfortable relations, are sweet, when the face of Christ smiles upon us through them; but without him, what empty trifles are they all?

Fifthly, *Altogether lovely*, (i. e.) Transcending all created excellencies, in beauty and loveliness; so much it speaks. If you compare Christ and other things, be they never so lovely, never so excellent, and desirable; Christ carries away all loveliness from them: "He is (saith the apostle) before all things," Col. i. 17. Not only before all things, in time, nature and order; but before all things, in dignity, glory, and true excellency: In all things he must have the pre-eminence. For let us but compare Christ's excellency with the creatures, in a few particulars, and how evidently will the transcendent loveliness of Jesus Christ appear! For,

First, All other loveliness is *derivative* and secondary; but the loveliness of Christ is *original* and *primary*. Angels and men, the world, and all the desirables in it, receive what excelency they have from him; they are streams from the fountain: But as the waters, in the fountain itself, are more abundant; so more pure and ‖ pleasant than the streams: And the farther any thing departs and is removed from its fountain and original, the less excellency there is in it.

Secondly, The loveliness and excellency of all other things, is but *relative*, and *respective*, consisting in its reference to Christ, and subserviency to his glory; but Christ is lovely, considered *absolutely* in himself: He is desirable for himself, other things are so for him.

Thirdly, The beauty and loveliness of all other things, is fading and perishing; but the loveliness of Christ is fresh to all eternity: the sweetness of the best creatures is a fading flower; if not before, yet certainly at death, it must fade away. Job iv. 21. "Doth not their excellency, which is in them, go away?" Yes, yes, whether natural excellencies of the body, or acquired endowments of the mind, lovely features, amiable qualities, attracting

‖ *Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ.* Waters drink more pleasantly from the fountain itself.

excellencies; all these, like pleasant flowers, are withered, faded, and destroyed, by death; "but Christ is still the same, yester-"day, to day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8.

Fourthly, The beauty and loveliness of creatures are *ensnaring*, and dangerous; a man may make an *idol* thereof, and dote, beyond the bounds of moderation, upon them; but there is no danger of excess in the love of Christ: The soul is then in the healthiest frame and temper, when it is most sick of love to Christ, Cant. v. 8.

Fifthly, The loveliness of every creature is of a *cloying* and glutting nature; our estimation of it abates, and sinks by our nearer approach to it, or longer enjoyment of it; creatures, like pictures, are fairest at a due distance: but it is not so with Christ; the nearer the soul approacheth him, and the longer it lives in the enjoyment of him, still the more sweet and desirable is he.

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, All other loveliness is *unsatisfying*, and straitening to the soul of man; there is not room enough in any one, or in all the creatures, for the soul of man to dilate and expatiate itself; but it still feels itself confined, and narrowed within those strait limits *: And this comes to pass from the inadequateness, and unsuitableness of the creature, to the nobler and more excellent soul of man; which like a ship in a narrow river, hath not room to turn; and, besides, is ever, and anon, striking ground, and foundering in those shallows. But Jesus Christ is every way adequate to the vast desires of the soul; in him it hath sea room enough; there it may spread all its sails, no fear of touching the bottom. And thus you see what is the importance of this phrase, *Altogether lovely*.

Secondly, Next I promised to shew you in what respects Jesus Christ is altogether lovely. And,

First, *He is altogether lovely in his person*: a Deity dwelling in flesh, John i. 14. The wonderful union and perfection of the divine and human nature in Christ, render him an object of admiration, and adoration to angels and men, 1 Tim. iii. 16. God never presented to the world such a vision of glory before: And then, consider how the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ is replenished with all the graces of the Spirit, so as never

* *Unus Pellæo juveni non sufficit orbis:*
Æstuat infelix angusto in limite mundi.

One world is not sufficient for the Macedonian youth; (*viz.* Alexander) he frets for being confined within the narrow boundary of the world.

www.libtool.com.cn

any of all the saints was filled; O how lovely doth this render him! John iii. 34. "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him:" This makes him fairer than the children of men, grace being poured into his lips, Psal. xlv. 2. If a small measure of grace in the saints, makes them such sweet and desirable companions; what must the riches and fulness of the Spirit of grace, filling Jesus Christ without measure, make him in the eyes of believers? O what a glory and a lustre must it stamp upon him!

Secondly, *He is altogether lovely in his offices*: for let us but consider the suitableness, fulness, and comfortableness of them.

First, The *suitableness* of the offices of Christ to the miseries and wants of men; and we cannot but adore the infinite wisdom of God in his investiture with them; we are, by nature, blind and ignorant, at best but groping in the dim light of nature after God, Acts xvii. 27. Jesus Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, Isa. xlix. 6. When this great prophet came into the world, then did the day-spring from on high visit us, Luke i. 78. The state of nature is a state of alienation from, and enmity against God; Christ comes into the world an atoning sacrifice, making peace by the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20. All the world, by nature, are in bondage and captivity to Satan, a lamentable thraldom; Christ comes, with a kingly power, to rescue sinners, as a prey from the mouth of the terrible one.

Secondly, Let the *fulness* of his offices be also considered, by reason whereof he is able "to save to the uttermost, all that "come to God by him," Heb. vii. 25. The three offices, comprising in them all that our souls do need, become an universal relief to all our wants; and therefore,

Thirdly, Unspeakably *comfortable* must the offices of Christ be to the souls of sinners. If light be pleasant to our eyes, how pleasant is that light of life springing from the Sun of righteousness! Mal. iv. 2. If a pardon be sweet to a condemned malefactor, how sweet must the sprinkling the blood of Jesus be to the trembling conscience of a law-condemned sinner? If a rescue from a cruel tyrant be sweet to a poor captive, how sweet must it be to the ears of enslaved sinners, to hear the voice of liberty and deliverance proclaimed by Jesus Christ? Out of the several offices of Christ, as out of so many fountains, all the promises of the new covenant flow, as so many soul-refreshing streams of peace and joy: all the promises of illumination, counsel and direction flow out of the *prophetical office*; all the promises of reconciliation, peace, pardon and acceptation flow out of the *priestly office*, with the sweet streams of joy, and spiritual com-

forts depending thereupon: all the promises of converting, increasing, defending, directing, and supplying grace, flow out of the *kingly office* of Christ; indeed, all promises may be reduced to the three offices: so that Jesus Christ must needs be *altogether lovely* in his offices.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is altogether *lovely* in his relations.

First, He is a lovely *Redeemer*. Isa. lxi. 1. He came to open the prison-doors to them that are bound. Needs must this Redeemer be a lovely one, if we consider the *depth of misery* from which he redeemed us, even "from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10. How lovely was Titus, in the eyes of the poor enthralled Greeks, whom he delivered from their bondage! this endeared him to them unto that degree, that when their liberty was proclaimed, they even trod one another to death to see the herald that proclaimed it; and all the night following, with instruments of music, danced about his tent, crying with united voices, "a Saviour, a Saviour." Or, whether we consider the *numbers redeemed*, and the *means* of their redemption. Rev. v. 9. "And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to "take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast "slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of eve-"ry kindred and tongue, and people, and nation." He redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, by way of price, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. with his out-stretched and glorious arm, by way of *power*, Col. i. 13. he redeemed us *freely*, Eph. i. 7. *fully*, Rom. viii. 1. *seasonably*, Gal. iv. 4. and out of special and peculiar *love*, John xvii. 9. In a word, he hath redeemed us for ever, never more to come into bondage, 1 Pet. i. 5. John x. 28. O how lovely is Jesus Christ in the relation of a Redeemer to God's elect!

Secondly, He is a lovely bridegroom to all that he espouses to himself. How doth the church glory in him, in the words following in my text; "This is my Beloved, and this is my "Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" *q. d.* Heaven and earth cannot shew such another: which needs no fuller proof than the following particulars.

First, That he espouses to himself, in mercy and in loving-kindness, such deformed, defiled, and altogether unworthy souls as we are; who have no beauty, no excellency to make us desirable in his eyes: all the springs of his love to us are in his own breast, Deut. vii. 7. he chuseth us, not because we were, but that he might make us lovely, Eph. v. 27. he passed by us when we lay in our blood, and said unto us, Live; and that was the time of love, Ezek. xvi. 5.

Secondly, He expects nothing with us, and yet bestows himself, and all that he hath, upon us. Our poverty cannot enrich him, but he made himself poor to enrich us, 2 Cor. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Thirdly, No husband loves the wife of his bosom, as Christ loved his people, Eph. v. 25. He loved the church, and gave himself for it.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fourthly, None bears with weaknesses and provocations as Christ doth; the church is stiled "the Lamb's wife," Rev. xix. 9.

Fifthly, No husband is so immortal and everlasting a husband as Christ is; death separates all other relations, but the soul's union with Christ is not dissolved in the grave: yea, the day of a believer's death, is his marriage day, the day of his fullest enjoyment of Christ. No husband can say to his wife, what Christ saith to the believer, "I will never leave thee, nor "forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

Sixthly, No bridegroom advanceth his bride to such honours by marriage, as Christ doth; he relates them to God as their father, and from that day the mighty and glorious angels think it no dishonour to be their servants, Heb. i. 14. they are brought in admiring the beauty and glory of the spouse of Christ, Rev. xxi. 9.

Seventhly, and lastly, No marriage was ever consummated with that triumphal solemnity, as the marriage of Christ and believers shall be in heaven, Psal. xlv. 14, 15. "She shall be brought "to the king in raiment of needle-work, the virgins, her com-"panions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee; with "gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter "into the king's palace." Among the Jews the marriage-house was called *Bethillula*, the house of praise; there was joy upon all hands, but none like the joy that will be in heaven, when believers, the spouse of Christ, shall be brought thither: *God the Father* will rejoice, to behold the blessed accomplishment and consummation of those glorious designs of his love. *Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom*, will rejoice, to see the travail of his soul, the blessed birth and issue of all his bitter pangs and agonies, Isa. liii. 11. *The Holy Spirit* will rejoice, to see the completion and perfection of that sanctifying design which was committed to his hand, 2 Cor. v. 5. to see those souls whom he once found as rough stones, now to shine as the bright, polished stones of the spiritual temple. *Angels* will rejoice: great was the joy when the foundation of this design was laid, in the incarnation of Christ, Luke ii. 13. great therefore must their joy be, when the

top-stone is set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace. The *saints* themselves shall rejoice unspeakably, when they shall enter into the King's palace, and be for ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17. Indeed there will be joy on all hands, except among the devils and damned; who shall gnash their teeth with envy, at the everlasting advancement, and glory of believers.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thus Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of a Bridegroom.

Thirdly, Christ is altogether lovely, in the relation of an Advocate. 1 John ii. 1. "If any man sin, we have an advocate "with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the pro-"pitiation;" it is he that pleads the cause of believers in heaven; appears for them in the presence of God, to prevent all new breaches, and continues the state of friendship and peace betwixt God and us. In this relation Christ is altogether lovely. For,

First, He makes our cause his own, and acts for us in heaven, as for himself, Heb. iv. 15. He is touched with the tender sense of our troubles and dangers, and is not only one with us, by way of representation, but also one with us in respect of sympathy and affection.

Secondly, Christ our Advocate, follows our suit and business in heaven, as his great and main design and business; therefore, in Heb. vii. 25. he is said to "live for ever to make in-"tercession for us;" as if our concernments were so minded by him there, as to give up himself wholly to that work, as if all the glory and honour which is paid him in heaven, would not satisfy him, or divert him one moment from our business.

Thirdly, He pleads the cause of believers by his blood; it satisfies him not, as other advocates, to be at the expence of words and oratory, which is a cheaper way of pleading; but he pleads for us by the voice of his own blood, Heb. xii. 24. where we are said to be come "to the blood of sprinkling, that "speaketh better things than that of Abel:" Every wound he received for us on earth, is a mouth opened to plead with God on our behalf in heaven; *Quot vulnera, tot ora.* And hence it is, that in Rev. v. 6. he is represented standing before God, *as a lamb that had been slain*: as it were, exhibiting, and opening, in heaven, those deadly wounds received on earth, from the justice of God, on our account. Other advocates spend their breath, Christ his blood.

Fourthly, He pleads the cause of believers freely. Other advocates plead for reward, and exhaust the purses, while they plead the causes of their clients.

Fifthly, In a word, he obtaineth for us all the mercies for which he pleads; no cause miscarries in his hand, which he undertakes, Rom. viii. 33, 34. O what a lovely Advocate is Christ for believers!

Fourthly, Christ is altogether lovely in the relation of a *friend*, for in this relation he is pleased to own his people, Luke xii. 4, 5. There are certain things in which one friend manifests his affection and friendship to another, but none like Christ. For,

First, No friend is so *open-hearted* to his friend, as Christ is to his people: he reveals the very counsels and secrets of his heart to them. John xv. 15. "Henceforth I call you not servants, "for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth; but I have "called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my "Father, I have made known unto you."

Secondly, No friend in the world is so *generous and bountiful* to his friend, as Jesus Christ is to believers; John xvi. 13. he parts with his very blood for them; "Greater love (saith he) "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his "friends." He hath exhausted the precious treasures of his invaluable blood, to pay our debts. O what a lovely friend is Jesus Christ to believers!

Thirdly, No friend *sympathizes* so tenderly with his friend in affliction, as Jesus Christ doth with his friends: "In all our af-"flictions he is afflicted," Heb. iv. 15. He feels all our sorrows, wants, and burthens, as his own. Whence it is, that the sufferings of believers are called the sufferings of Christ, Col. i. 24.

Fourthly, No friend in the world takes that *complacency* in his friend, as Jesus Christ doth in believers. Cant. iv. 9. "Thou "hast ravished my heart, (saith he to the spouse) thou hast ra-"vished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of "thy neck." The Hebrew, here rendered *ravished*, signifies to puff up, or to make one proud: how is the Lord Jesus pleased to glory in his people! how is he taken and delighted with those gracious ornaments, which himself bestows upon them! No friend so lovely as Christ.

Fifthly, No friend in the world loves his friend with so fervent and strong *affection*, as Jesus Christ loves believers. Jacob loved Rachel, and endured for her sake, the parching heat of summer, and cold of winter: but Christ endured the storms of the wrath of God, the heat of his indignation, for our sakes. David manifested his love to Absalom, in wishing, "O that I had "died for thee!" Christ manifested his love to us, not in wishes that he had died, but in death itself, in our stead, and for our sakes.

Sixthly, No friend in the world is so *constant* and *unchangeable* in friendship, as Christ is. John xiii. 1. "Having loved his "own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He bears with millions of provocations and injuries, and yet will not break friendship with his people. Peter denied him, yet he will not disown him; but after his resurrection he saith, "Go, tell the disciples, and tell Peter," *q. d.* Let him not think he hath forfeited, by that sin of his, his interest in me; though he have denied me, I will not disown him, Mark xvi. 7. O how lovely is Christ in the relation of a friend! I might farther shew you the loveliness of Christ in his ordinances, and in his providences, in his communion with us, and communications to us; but there is no end of the account of Christ's loveliness: I will rather chuse to press believers to their duties towards this altogether lovely Christ, which I shall briefly dispatch in a few words.

Use. First, Is Jesus Christ altogether lovely, then I beseech you *set your souls upon this lovely Jesus*. Methinks such an object as hath been here represented, should compel love from the coldest breast, and hardest heart. Away with those empty nothings, away with this vain, deceitful world, which deserves not the thousandth part of the love you give it; let all stand aside and give way to Christ. O did you but know his worth and excellency, what he is in himself, what he hath done for, and deserved from you; you would need no arguments of mine to persuade you to love him.

Secondly, *Esteem nothing lovely, but as it is enjoyed in Christ, or improved for Christ:* Affect nothing for itself, love nothing separate from Jesus Christ. In two things we all sin in love of creatures, *viz.* in the *excess* of our affections, loving them above the rate and value of creatures; and in the *inordinacy* of our affections, *(i. e.)* in loving them out of their proper places.

Thirdly, *Let us all be humbled for the baseness of our hearts, that are so free of their affections to vanities, and trifles; and so hard to be persuaded to the love of Christ, who is altogether lovely.* O how many pour out streams of love and delight upon the vain and empty creature; whilst no arguments can draw forth one drop of love from their obdurate and unbelieving hearts to Jesus Christ! I have read of one Joannes Mollius, who was observed to go often alone, and weep bitterly; and being pressed by a friend to know the cause of his troubles; O! said he, it grieves me that I cannot bring this heart of mine to love Jesus Christ more fervently.

Fourthly, *Represent Christ, as he is, to the world, by your carriage towards him.* Is he altogether lovely; let all the world

ſoe, and know that he is ſo, by your delights in him, and communion with him; zeal for him, and readineſs to part with any other lovely thing upon his account; proclaim his excellencies to the world, as the ſpouſe here did; convince them how much your beloved is better than any other beloved; diſplay his glorious excellencies in your heavenly converſations; hold him forth to others, as he is in himſelf, altogether lovely. See that you "walk worthy of him unto all well-pleaſing," Col. i. 10. "Shew forth the praiſes of Chriſt," 1 Pet. ii. 19. Let not that "worthy name be blaſphemed through you," James ii. 7. He is glorious in himſelf, and will put glory upon you; take heed ye put not ſhame and diſhonour upon him: he hath committed his honour to you, do not betray that truſt.

Fifthly, *Never be aſhamed to own Chriſt:* he is altogether lovely; he can never be a ſhame to you; it will be your great ſin, to be aſhamed of him. Some men glory in their ſhame; be not you aſhamed of your glory: if you be *aſhamed of Chriſt now, he will be aſhamed of you when he ſhall appear in his own glory, and the glory of all his holy angels.* Be aſhamed of nothing but ſin; and among other ſins, be aſhamed, eſpecially for this ſin, that you have no more love for him who is *altogether lovely.*

Sixthly, *Be willing to leave every thing that is lovely upon earth, that you may be with the altogether lovely Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in heaven.* Lift up your voices with the ſpouſe, Rev. xx. 20. "Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly." It is true, you muſt paſs through the pangs of death into his boſom and enjoyment; but ſure it is worth ſuffering much more than that, to be with this lovely Jeſus. "The Lord direct your hearts into "the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jeſus Chriſt," 2 Theſ. iii. 5.

Seventhly, *Strive to be Chriſt-like, as ever you would be lovely in the eyes of God and man.* Certainly, my brethren, it is the Spirit of Chriſt within you, and the beauty of Chriſt upon you, which only can make you lovely perſons; the more you reſemble him in holineſs, the more will you diſcover of true excellency and lovelineſs: and the more frequent and ſpiritual your converſe and communion with Chriſt is, the more of the beauty and lovelineſs of Chriſt will ſtill be ſtamped upon your ſpirits, changing you into the ſame image from glory to glory.

Eightly, *Let the lovelineſs of Chriſt draw all men to him.* Is lovelineſs in the creature ſo attractive? And can the tranſcendent lovelineſs of Chriſt draw none? O the blindneſs of man!

If you see no beauty in Christ, why you should desire him, it is because the god of this world hath blinded your minds.

SERMON XIII.

www.libtool.com.cn

Alluring the Hearts of Men to come to CHRIST, by a fourth Motive contained in another Title of CHRIST.

HAGGAI ii. 7. ——*And the desire of all nations shall come.*

THE former chapter is mainly spent, in reproving the negligence of the Jews, who, being discouraged, from time to time, had delayed the rebuilding the *temple*; and, in the mean time, employed their care and cost in building and adorning their own houses: but, at last, being persuaded to set about the work, they meet with this discouragement, that such was the poverty of the present time, that the second structure would no way answer the magnificence and splendor of the first. In Solomon's days the nation was wealthy, now drained; so that there would be no proportion betwixt the second and the first. To this grand discouragement, the prophet applies this relief; that whatsoever should be wanting in external pomp and glory, should be more than recompensed by the presence of Jesus Christ in this *second temple*. For Christ, "the desire of all nations," saith he, shall come into it. Which, by the way, may give us this useful note; That the presence of Jesus Christ gives a more real and excellent glory to the places of his worship, than any external beauty, or outward ornaments, whatsoever, can bestow upon them. Our eyes, like the disciples, are apt to be dazzled with the goodly stones of the temple, and, in the mean time, to neglect and overlook that which gives it the greatest honour and beauty.

But to return. In these words we have both the description of Christ, and an *index* pointing at the time of his incarnation: he is called, "the desire of all nations;" and the time of his coming, in the flesh, is plainly intimated to be whilst the second *temple* should be standing. Where, by the way, we find just cause to admire at, and bemoan the blindness that is happened to the Jews; who owning the truth of this prophecy, and not able to deny the destruction of the second temple, many hundred years past, will not yet be brought to acknowledge the incarnation of the true Messiah, notwithstanding.

But to the point. The character, or description of Christ, stiled *the desire of all nations*, who was to come into the world in the time of the second *temple*, Mal. iii. 12. and that, after grievous concussions, and shakings of the world, which were to make way for his coming; for so our prophet here speaks, "I "will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall "come," to which the apostle alludes, in Heb. xii. 26. applying this prophecy to Jesus Christ, here called the "desire of all "nations:" putting the act for the object, desire for the thing desired; as in Ezek. xxiv. 16. "The desire of thine eyes," that is, the desirable wife of thy bosom; so here, the "desire of "all nations," that is, Christ, the object of the desires of God's elect, in all nations of the world: a Saviour infinitely desirable in himself, and actually desired by all the people of God, dispersed among all kindreds, tongues, and nations of the world. From whence this note is,

Doct. *That the desires of God's Elect, in all kingdoms, and among all people of the earth, are, and shall be drawn out after, and fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The merciful God beholding the universal ruins, of the world by sin, hath provided an universal remedy for his own elect, in every part of the earth. Christ is not impropriated to any one kingdom, or nation in the world; but intended to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth; and accordingly, speaks the apostle, Col. iii. 11. "There is neither Greek, nor "Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all "and in all." In the explication of this point, two things must be enquired into.

1. Why Christ is called the desire of all nations.

2. Upon what account the people of God, in all nations, desire him.

First, Why he is called the desire of all nations; and what that phrase may import: and there are divers things that are supposed, or included in it.

First, That God the Father hath appointed him as a common remedy, for the sins and miseries of his people, in all parts and quarters of the world. So in the covenant of redemption, betwixt the Father and the Son, the Lord expresseth himself, Isa. xlix. 6. and he said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be "my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the "preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the "Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of

"the earth." Suitable whereunto, is that prophecy, Isa. lii. 15. "He shall sprinkle many nations." If God had not appointed him for, he could not be desired by all nations.

And, indeed, herein the grace of God doth admirably shine forth in the freeness of it, that even the most barbarous nations are not excluded from the benefit of redemption by Christ. This is what the apostle admires, that Christ should be *preached to the Gentiles*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. a people that seemed to be lost in the darkness of idolatry; yet even for them, Christ was given by the Father, "Ask of me (saith he) and I will give thee the "Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the "earth for thy possession."

Secondly, Christ, *the desire of all nations*, plainly notes the sufficiency that is in him, to supply the wants of the whole world: as the sun in the heavens suffices all nations, for light, and influence, so doth the Sun of righteousness suffice for the redemption, justification, sanctification, and salvation of the people of God, all over the world; Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be "ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

Thirdly, It implies the *reality that is in godliness*. It shews you, that religion is no fancy, as the atheistical world would persuade us; and this evidently appears, in the uniform effects of it upon the hearts of all men, in all nations of the world, that are truly religious: all their desires, like so many needles touched by one and the same loadstone, move towards Jesus Christ, and all meet together in one and the same blessed object Christ. Were it possible for the people of God to come out of all nations, kindreds, and languages in the world, into one place, and there confer, and compare the desires and workings of their hearts; though they never saw each other's faces, nor heard of each other's names; yet, as face answers to face in a glass, so would their desires after Christ answer to each other. All hearts work after him in the same manner; what one saith, all say: These are my troubles and burdens, these my wants and miseries; the same things, my desires and fears: one and the same Spirit works in all believers throughout the world; which could never be, if religion were but a fancy, as some call it; or a combination, or confederacy, as others call it: fancies are as various as faces; and confederacies presuppose mutual acquaintance and conference.

Fourthly, Christ, the desire of all nations, implies the vast extent his kingdom hath, and shall have in the world, out of every nation, under heaven, some shall be brought to Christ, and to heaven by him; and though the number of God's elect, com-

pared with the multitudes of the ungodly in all nations, is but a remnant, a little flock; and, in that comparative sense, there are few that shall be saved: yet considered absolutely, and in themselves, they are a vast number, which no man can number, Mat. viii. 11. "Many shall come from the East, and from the "West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, "in the kingdom of heaven." In order whereunto, the gospel, like the sun in the heavens, circuits the world. It arose in the East, and takes its course towards the *western world:* rising, by degrees, upon the remote, idolatrous nations of the earth: out of all which a number is to be saved, even "Ethiopia shall stretch "out her hands to God," Psal. lxviii. 31. And this consideration should move us to pray earnestly for the poor Heathens, who yet sit in darkness, and the shadow of death; there is yet hope for them.

Fifthly, It holds forth this, that when God opens the eyes of men to see their sin and danger by it; nothing but Christ can give them satisfaction; it is not the amenity, fertility, riches and pleasures, the inhabitants of any kingdom of the world do enjoy, that can satisfy the desires of their souls: when once God touches their hearts with the sense of sin and misery: then Christ, and none but Christ, is desirable, and necessary, in the eyes of such persons. Many kingdoms of the world abound with riches and pleasures; the providence of God hath carved liberal portions of the good things of this life to many of them, and scarce left any thing to their desires that the world can afford. Yet all this can give no satisfaction, without Jesus Christ, the desire of all nations, the one thing necessary, when once they come to see the necessity and excellency of him: then take the world, who will, so they may have Christ, the desire of their souls. Thus we see upon what grounds, and reasons, Christ is stiled the desire of all nations.

Object. But there lies one great objection against this truth, which must be solved; *viz.* If Christ be the desire of all nations, how comes it to pass, that Jesus Christ finds no entertainment in so many nations of the world, among whom Christianity is hissed at, and Christians not tolerated to live among them? Who see no beauty in him that they should desire him.

Sol. First, We must remember, the nations of the world have their times and seasons of conversion; those that once embraced Christ, have now lost him, and idols are now set up, in the places where he once was sweetly worshipped. The sun of the gospel is gone down upon them, and now shines in another *Hemisphere;* and so the nations of the world are to have their

distinct days, and seasons of illumination. The gospel, like the sea, gaineth in one place, what it loseth in another; and in the times and seasons appointed by the Father, they come successively to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ; and then shall that promise be fulfilled, Isa. xlix. 7. "Thus saith the "Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his holy One, to him "whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, "to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise, princes also "shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful."

Secondly, Let it also be remembred, that altho' Christ be rejected by the rulers and body of many nations; yet he is the desire of all the elect of God, dispersed, and scattered among those nations.

In the next place, *Secondly*, we are to enquire, upon what account Christ becomes the desire of all nations, (*i. e.*) of all those, in all the nations of the world, that belong to the election of grace. And the true ground, and reason thereof, is, because Christ, only, hath that in himself, which relieves their wants, and answers to all their need. As,

First, They are all, by nature under condemnation, Rom. v. 16, 18. under the curse of the law; against which, nothing is found in heaven or earth, able to relieve their consciences, but the blood of sprinkling, the pure and perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus: and hence it is, that Christ becomes so desirable in the eyes of poor sinners, all the world over. If any thing in nature could be found to pacify and purge the consciences of men from guilt and fear, Christ would never be desirable in their eyes; but finding no other remedy but the blood of Jesus, to him, therefore, shall all the ends of the earth look for righteousness, and for peace.

Secondly, All nations of the world are polluted with the filth of sin, both in nature and practice, which they shall see, and bitterly bewail, when the light of the gospel shall shine amongst them; and the same light, by which this shall be discovered, will, also, discover the only remedy of this evil to lie in the spirit of Christ, the only fountain opened to all nations for sanctification, and cleansing: and this will make the Lord Jesus incomparably desirous in their eyes. O how welcome will he be that cometh unto them, not by blood only, but by water also! John i. 5, 6.

Thirdly, When the light of the gospel shall shine upon the nations, they shall then see, that, by reason of the guilt and filth of sin, they are all barred out of heaven; those doors are chained up against them, and that none but Christ can open an

entrance for them, into that kingdom of God: that "no man "cometh to the Father but by him," John xiv. 6. "Neither "is there any name under heaven given among men, whereby "they must be saved, but the name of Christ," Acts iv. 12. Hence the hearts of sinners shall pant after him, as a hart panteth for the water-brooks. And thus we see upon what grounds Christ becomes the *desire of all nations*. The improvement of all followeth, in five several uses of the point; *viz.*

1. For information.
2. For examination.
3. For consolation.
4. For exhortation.
5. For direction.

First use, for information.

First, Is Christ the desire of all nations; *how vile a sin is it, then, in any nation, upon whom the light of the gospel hath shined, to reject Jesus Christ?* And say, as those in Job xxi. 14. "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." To thrust away his worship, government, and servants, from amongst them; and, in effect, to say, as it is Luke xix. 14. "We will not have this man to reign over us." Thus did the Jews, Acts xiii. 46. they put away Christ from among them, and thereby judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. This is, at once, a fearful *sin*, and a dreadful *sign*. How soon did vengeance overtake them, like the overthrow of Sodom? O let it be for a warning unto all nations, to the end of the world. He would have gathered the children of Israel under his wings, as a *hen* doth her brood, even when the *Roman Eagle* was hovering over them, but they would not; therefore their houses were left unto them desolate, their city and temple made an heap.

Secondly, If Jesus Christ be the desire of all nations, *how incomparably happy, then, must that nation be, that enjoys Christ, in the power, and purity of his gospel-ordinances!* If Christ, under a veil, made Canaan a glorious land (as it is called) Dan. xi. 41. what a glorious place must that nation be, that beholds him with open face, in the bright sun-shine of the gospel! O England, know thy happiness, and the day of thy visitation; what others desire, thou enjoyest: provoke not the Lord Jesus to depart from thee, by corrupting his worship, longing after idolatry, abusing his messengers, and oppressing his people, lest his soul depart from thee.

Second use, for examination.

If Christ be the desire of all nations, examine whether he be

the desire of your souls, in particular; else you shall have no benefit by him. Are your desires, after Christ, true, spiritual desires? Reflect, I beseech you, upon the frames and tempers of your hearts. Can you say, of your desires after Christ, as Peter did of his love to Christ? Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I desire thee. Try your desires, as to their sincerity, by the following characters:

First, Are they vehement, and ardent? Hath Christ the supreme place, in your desires? Do you esteem all things to be but dross, and dung, in comparison of the excellencies of Jesus Christ your Lord? Phil. iii. 8. Is he to you, as the refuge-city to the man-slayer? Heb. vi. 18, 19. As a spring of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Isa. xxxii. 2. Such vehement desires are true desires.

Secondly, Are your desires after Christ universal; (*i. e.*) Is every thing in Christ desirable in your eyes? The *hypocrite*, like the *harlot*, is for a divided Christ; they would be called by his name, but live upon their own stock, Isa. iv. 1. If his holiness, and government, his cross, and sufferings, be desirable for his sake; such universal desires are right desires.

Thirdly, Are your desires after Christ, industrious desires, using all the means of accomplishing what you desire! You say you desire Christ, but what will you do to obtain your desires! If you seek him carefully, and incessantly, in all the ways of duty; if you will strive in prayer, labour to believe, cut off right hands, and pluck out right eyes, (*i. e.*) be content to part with the most profitable, and pleasant ways of sin, that you may enjoy Christ, the desire of your souls; then are your desires right desires.

Fourthly, Are your desires after Christ permanent desires, or only a sudden motion, or fit which goes off again, without effect! If your desires after Christ abide upon your hearts; if your longings be after him at all times, though not in the same height and degree; then are your desires, right desires. Christ always dwells in the desires of his people; they can feel him in their desires, when they cannot discern him in their love or delight.

Fifthly, Will your desires after Christ admit no satisfaction, nor find rest any where, but in the enjoyment of Christ? Then are your desires right desires. The soul that desires Christ, can never be at rest, till it come home to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 2, 6. Phil. i. 23. The devil can satisfy others with the riches and pleasures of this world, as children are quieted with rattles; but if nothing but Christ can rest, and terminate your desires; surely such restless desires are right desires.

Sixthly, Do your desires after Christ spring from a deep sense of your need and want of Christ? Hath conviction opened your eyes to see your misery, to feel your burthens, and to make you sensible that your remedy lies only in the Lord Jesus? Then are your desires right desires. Bread and water are made necessary and desirable, by hunger and thirst: by these things try the truth of your desires after Christ.

www.libtool.com.cn

Third use, for consolation.

Do you indeed, upon serious trial, find such desires after Christ, as were described above? O bless the Lord for that day wherein Christ, the desire of all nations, became the desire of your souls; and, for your comfort, know that you are happy and blessed souls at present.

First, Blessed in this, that your eyes have been opened to see both the want and worth of Christ. Had not Christ applied his precious eye-salve to the eyes of your mind, you could never have desired him; you would have said, with them in Isa. liii 2, 3. "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall "see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:" Or, as they to the spouse, Cant. v. 9. "What is thy beloved more "than another beloved?" O blessed souls, enlightened of the Lord; to see those things that are hid from them that perish!

Secondly, You are blessed in this, that your desires after Christ are a sure evidence that the desire of Christ is towards you: had he not first desired you, you could never have desired him. We may say of desires, as it is said of love, we desire him because he first desired us: your desires after Christ are inflamed from the desires of Christ after you.

Thirdly, Blessed in this, that your desires shall surely be satisfied; Mat. v. 6. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst af-"ter righteousness, for they shall be filled." Prov. x. 24. "The "desires of the righteous shall be granted." God never raised such desires as these in the souls of his people, to be a torment to them for ever.

Fourthly, Blessed in this, that God hath guided your desires to make the best choice that ever was made in the world: whilst the desires of others are hunting after riches, pleasure, and honours in the world; toiling themselves, like children, in pursuit of a painted butter-fly, which, when they have caught, doth but daub their fingers: God, mean while, hath directed your desires to Christ, the most excellent object in heaven or earth. Any good will satisfy some men; O happy soul, if none but Christ can satisfy thee! Psal. iv. 6.

Fifthly, Bleſſed in this, that there is a work of grace certainly wrought upon thy ſoul; and theſe very deſires after Chriſt, are a part thereof.

Sixthly, Bleſſed in this, that theſe deſires after Chriſt, keep thy ſoul active, and working after him continually in the ways of duty; Pſal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I deſired, that will I "ſeek after." Deſire will be a continual ſpring to diligence and induſtry, in the ways of duty: the deſire of the end, quickens to the uſe of means, Prov. xviii. 1. Others may fall aſleep, and caſt off duty; but it will be hard for you to do ſo, whoſe ſouls burn with deſire after Chriſt.

Seventhly, Bleſſed in this, that your deſires after Chriſt will make death much the ſweeter and eaſier to you; Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far "better." When a Chriſtian was once aſked, Whether he was willing to die? He returned this anſwer *, "Let him be "unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Chriſt." And much like it, was that of another, *Vivere renuo, ut Chriſto vivam*; I refuſe this life, to live with Chriſt.

Fourth uſe, for exhortation.

In the fourth place, let me exhort and perſuade all to make Jeſus Chriſt the deſire and choice of their ſouls. And here I fall in with the main ſcope and deſign of the goſpel. And O that I could effectually preſs home this exhortation upon your hearts: let me offer ſome moving conſiderations to you, and may the Lord accompany them to your hearts.

Firſt, Every creature naturally deſires its own preſervation; do not you deſire the preſervation of your precious and immortal ſouls! If you do, then make Chriſt your deſire and choice, without whom, they can never be preſerved, Jude, ver. 1.

Secondly, Do not your ſouls earneſtly deſire the bodies they live in? How tender are they over them, how careful to provide for them? though they pay a dear rent for thoſe tenements they live in. And is not union with Chriſt infinitely more deſirable than the union of ſoul and body? O covet union with him! then ſhall your ſouls be happy, when your bodies drop off from them, at death, 2 Cor. v. 1, 3. yea, ſoul and body ſhall be happy in him, and with him, for evermore.

Thirdly, How do the men of this world deſire the enjoyments of it? They pant after the duſt of the earth; they riſe early, ſit up late, eat the bread of carefulneſs; and all this for very vanity: Shall a worldling do more for earth, than you for heaven?

* *Illius eſt nolle mori, qui nolle ire ad Chriſtum.*

Shall the creature be so earnestly desired, and Christ neglected?

Fourthly, What do all your desires in this world benefit you, if you go christless? Suppose you had the desire of your hearts in these things, how long shall you have comfort in them, if you miss Christ?

Fifthly, Doth Christ desire you, who have nothing lovely or desirable in you? And have you no desires after Christ, the most lovely, and desirable one in both worlds? "His desires are towards you," Prov. viii. 31. O make him the desire and choice of your souls.

Sixthly, How absolutely necessary is Jesus Christ to your souls? Bread and water, breath and life, are not so necessary as Christ is; "One thing is necessary," Luke x. 42. and that one thing is Christ. If you miss your desires in other things, you may yet be happy; but if you miss Christ you are undone for ever.

Seventhly, How suitable a good is Christ to your souls? comprising whatsoever they want, 1 Cor. i. 30. Set your hearts where you will, none will be found to match and suit them, as Christ doth.

Eigthly, How great are the benefits that will redound to you by Jesus Christ! In him you shall have a rich inheritance settled upon you; all things shall be yours, when you are Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 22. And is not such a Christ worth desiring?

Ninthly, All your well-grounded hopes of glory are built upon your union with Christ, 1 Cor. i. 21. If you miss Christ, you must die without hope. Will not this draw your desires to him?

Tenthly, Suppose you were at the judgment-seat of God, where you must shortly stand, and saw the terrors of the Lord in that day; the sheep divided from the goats; the sentences of absolution and condemnation passed, by the great and awful Judge, upon the righteous and wicked: would not Christ be then desireable in your eyes? As ever you expect to stand with comfort at that bar, let Christ be the desire and choice of your souls now.

Fifth use, for direction.

Do these, or any other considerations, put thee upon this enquiry; how shall I get my desires kindled and enflamed towards Christ? Alas! my heart is cold and dead, not a serious desire stirring in it after Christ. To such I shall offer the following directions.

Direct. 1. Redeem some time every day for meditation; get out of the noise and clamour of the world, Psal. iv. 4. and seri-

ously bethink yourselves how the present state of your soul stands, and how it is like to go with you for ever: here all sound conversion begins, Psal. cxix. 59.

Direct. 2. Consider seriously of that lamentable state, in which you came into the world; children of wrath by nature, under the curse and condemnation of the law: so that either your state must be changed, or you inevitably damned, John iii. 3.

Direct. 3. Consider the way and course you have taken since you came into the world, proceeding from iniquity to iniquity. What command of God have you not violated a thousand times over? What sin is committed in the world, that you are not, one way or other, guilty of before God? How many secret sins upon your score, unknown to the most intimate friend you have in the world? Either this guilt must be separated from your souls, or your souls from God to all eternity.

Direct. 4. Think upon the severe wrath of God due to every sin; "The wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. And how intolerable the fulness of that wrath must be, when a few drops sprinkled upon the conscience in this world, is so unsupportable, that hath made some to chuse strangling, rather than life; and yet this wrath must abide for ever upon you, if you get not interest in Jesus Christ, John iii. 36.

Direct. 5. Ponder well the happy state and condition they are in who have obtained pardon, and peace by Jesus Christ, Psal. xxxii. 12. And seeing the grace of God is free, and you are set under the means thereof; why may not you be as capable thereof as others?

Direct. 6. Seriously consider the great uncertainty of your time, and preciousness of the opportunity of salvation, never to be recovered, when they are once past, John ix. 4. let this provoke you to lay hold upon those golden seasons whilst thy are yet with you; that you may not bewail your folly and madness, when they are out of your reach.

Direct. 7. Associate yourselves with serious Christians; get into their acquaintance, and beg their assistance; beseech them to pray for you; and see that you rest not here, but be frequently upon your knees, begging of the Lord a new heart, and a new state.

In conclusion of the whole, let me beseech and beg all the people of God, as upon my knees, to take heed, and beware, lest by the carelessness and scandal of their lives, they quench the weak desires beginning to kindle in the hearts of others. You know what the law of God awards for striking a woman with child, so that her fruit go from her, Exod. xxi. 22, 23. O

shed not soul-blood, by stifling the hopeful desires of any after Christ.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the desire of all nations.

* *

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XIV.

Containing the fifth Motive to apply CHRIST, drawn from another excellent Title of CHRIST.

1 COR. ii. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world have known, for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

IN this chapter, the apostle discourses to the Corinthians, of the excellency of his ministry, both to obviate the contempt which some cast upon it for want of human ornaments, and to give the greater authority unto it among all: and whereas the spiritual simplicity of his ministry laid it under the contempt of some, he removes that several ways, by shewing them,

First, That it was not suitable to the design and end of his ministry, his aim being "to know nothing among them, save Je-"sus Christ, and him crucified," ver. 1, 2.

Secondly, Neither was it for the advantage of their souls: it might indeed tickle their fancies, but could be no solid foundation to their faith and comfort, ver. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Though his discourses seemed jejune and dry to carnal hearers, yet they had a depth and excellency in them, which spiritual and judicious Christians saw and acknowledged, ver. 6, 7.

Fourthly, Therefore this excellent wisdom which he preached far transcended all the natural wisdom of this world; yea, the most raised and improved understandings of those that were most renowned and admired in that age for wisdom, ver. 8. "which "none of the princes of this world knew."

In which words we have,

1. A negative proposition.

2. The proof of the proposition.

First, A negative proposition: None of the princes of this world knew that spiritual wisdom which he taught. By *princes of this world*, or rather, *principes seculi*, the princes of that age, he means, as Cameron well notes, the learned Rabbi's, Scribes, and Pharisees, renowned for wisdom and learning a

mong them; and honoured, upon that account, as so many princes: but he adds a diminutive term, which darkens all glory. They are but the *princes of this world*, utterly unacquainted with the wisdom of the other world. To which he adds,

Secondly, A clear and full proof; "For had they known it, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." In which words we find one of Christ's glorious and royal titles, *The Lord of glory*: upon which title will be my present discourse. The words being fitly rendered, and nothing of ambiguity in them, they give us this observation.

Doct. *That Christ crucified is the Lord of glory.*

Great and excellent is the glory of Jesus Christ, the scriptures every where proclaim his glory; yea, we may observe a notable *climax*, or gradation, in those scriptures that speak of his glory. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of him, calls him *glorious*; Isa. iv. 2. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and "glorious." John, speaking of his glory, rises a step higher, and ascribeth to him a "glory, as of the only begotten Son of the "Father," John i. 14. *i. e.* a glory meet for, and becoming the Son of God: proper to him, and incommunicable to any other. The apostle James rises yet higher, and doth not only call him glorious, or glorious as the only begotten of the Father; but *the glory*, James ii. 1. glory in the abstract; "My brethren, (saith "he), have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory, "with respect of persons;" For the word *Lord*, which is in our translation, is a supplement; Christ is glory itself, yea, the glory emphatically so stiled; the glory of heaven; the glory of Sion; the glory of our souls for ever. The author to the Hebrews goes yet higher, and calls him not simply the glory, but "the "brightness of the Father's glory," * Heb. i. 3. as though he should say, the radiancy, sparkling, or beaming forth of his Father's glory; the very splendor, or refulgency of divine glory. O what a glorious Lord is our Lord Jesus Chrst! the bright, sparkling diamond of heaven; who shines in glory there, above the glory of angels and saints, as the glory of the sun excels the lesser, twinkling stars. When he appeared to Paul, Acts xxvi. 13. "I saw, saith he, a light from heaven above the bright-"ness of the sun, shining round about me:" Needs must the glory of Christ be unspeakable, who reflects glory upon all that are with him, John xvii. 24. and stamps glory upon all that belong to him. His works on earth were *glorious works*, Luke xiii. 17. the purchased liberty of his people, a glorious liberty,

* Απαυγασμα της δοξης.

Rom. viii. 21. the church his mystical body, a glorious church, Eph. v. 27. the gospel which reveals him, is a glorious gospel, 1 Tim. i. 11.

But, more particularly, let us consider the glory of Christ, as it is distinguished into his, either,

www.libtool.com.cn

1. Essential, or,
2. Mediatorial glory.

First, The essential glory of Christ, which he hath as God from everlasting; which is unspeakable and unconceivable glory: For (saith the apostle, Phil. ii. 6.) "He being in the form "of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," (*i. e.*) he had a peerage or equality with his Father in glory; John x. 30. "I and my Father are one." And again, John xvi. 15. "All things that the Father hath, are mine:" the same name, the same nature, the same essential properties, the same will, and the same glory.

Secondly, The mediatorial glory of Christ is exceeding great, This is proper to him, as the head of the church, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Of this glory the apostle speaks, Phil. ii. 9, 10. "Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and "given him a name, which is above every name," ὅτι. ὑπερύψωσε, exalted above all exaltation. Now the mediatorial glory of our Lord Jesus Christ consisteth either,

1. In the fulness of grace inherent in him: or,
2. In the dignity and authority put upon him.

First, In the fulness of grace inherent in him: The humanity of Christ is filled with grace, as the sun with light: John i. 14. "Full of grace and truth." Never any creature was filled by the Spirit of grace, as the man Christ Jesus is filled; for "God gives not the Spirit to him by measure," John iii. 34. By reason of this fulness of grace inherent in him, he is "fairer "than the children of men," Psal. xlv. 2. excelling all the saints in spiritual lustre and gracious excellencies.

Secondly, In the dignity and authority put upon him. He is crowned King in Sion; all power in heaven and earth is given unto him, Mat. xxviii. 18. he is a law-giver to the church, James iv. 12. all acts of worship are to be performed in his name; prayer, preaching, censures, sacraments, all to be administred in his name. Church-officers are commissioned by him, Eph. iv. 11. The judgment of the world in the great day will be administred by him; Mat. xxv. 31. "Then shall "he sit upon the throne of his glory."

To conclude, Jesus Christ shall have glory and honour a-

scribed to him for evermore, by angels and saints, upon the account of his mediatorial work: this some divines call his passive glory, the glory which he is said to receive from his redeemed ones. Rev. v. 8, 9, 10. "And when he had taken the book, "the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, fell down be- "fore the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden "vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints; and "they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the "book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and "hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, "and tongue, and people, and nation," *&c.* And thus you see, that our Lord Jesus Christ is, upon all accounts, the *Lord of glory*. The uses follow.

Inference 1.

How wonderful was the love of Christ, the Lord of glory, to be so abased and humbled, as he was for us, vile and sinful dust? It is astonishing to conceive, that ever Jesus Christ should strip himself of his robes of glory, to clothe himself with the mean garment of our flesh: O what a stoop did he make, in his incarnation, for us! If the most magnificent monarch upon earth had been degraded into a toad; if the sun in the heavens had been turned into a wandering atom; if the most glorious angel in heaven had been transformed even into a fly; it had been nothing to the abasement of the Lord of glory. This act is every where celebrated in scripture, as the great mystery, the astonishing wonder of the whole world, 2 Tim. iii. 16. Phil. ii. 8. Rom. viii. 3. The Lord of glory looked not like himself, when he came in the habit of a man; Isa. liii. 3. "We hid, as it were, "our faces from him:" Nay, rather like a worm, than a man; Psal. xxii. 6. "A reproach of men, and despised of the people." The birds of the air, and beasts of the earth were here provided of better accomodations than the Lord of glory, Mat. viii. 20. O stupendous abasement! O love unspeakable! "Though "he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through "his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. He put off the crown of glory, to put on the crown of thorns: *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior*, said Bernard; The lower he humbled himself for me, the dearer he shall be to me.

Infer. 2. *How transcendently glorious is the advancement of believers, by their union with the Lord of glory!* This, also, is an admirable and astonishing mystery; it is the highest dignity of which our *nature* is capable, to be *hypostatically* united; and the greatest glory of which our *persons* are capable, to be *mystically* united to this Lord of glory; to be bone of his

bone, and flesh of his flesh. O what is this! Christian dost thou know and believe all this, and thy heart not burn, within thee, in love to Christ? O! then, what a heart hast thou? What art thou, by nature, but sinful dust, a loathsome sinner, viler than the vilest creature, cast out to the loathing of thy person in the day of thy nativity! O that ever the Lord of glory should unite himself to such a lump of vileness! take such a wretch into his very bosom! Be astonished, O heavens and earth, at this! this is the great mystery which the angels stooped down to look into: Such an honour as this, could never have entered into the heart of man. It would have seemed a rude blasphemy in us, to once have thought, or spoken of such a thing, had not Christ made first the motion thereof: Yet how long didst thou make this Lord of glory wait upon thy undetermined will, before he gained thy consent? Might he not justly have spurned thee into hell, upon thy first refusal, and never have made thee such another offer? Wilt thou not say, Lord, what am I, and what is my father's house, that so great a King should stoop so far beneath himself, to such a worm as I am! That strength should unite itself to weakness, infinite glory to such baseness! O grace, grace, for ever to be admired!

Infer. 3. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of glory? *Then let no man count himself dishonoured by suffering the vilest indignities for his sake:* The Lord of glory puts glory upon the very suffering you undergo in this world for him. "Moses esteemed the re-' proaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 26. he cast a kingdom at his heels, to be crowned with reproaches, for the name of Christ. The *diadem* of Egypt was not half so glorious, as self-denial for Christ. This Lord of glory freely degraded himself for thee, wilt thou stand hesitating with him upon terms? It is certainly your honour to be dishonoured for Christ, Acts v. 41. to you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. i. 29. The gift of suffering is there matched with the gift of faith; it is given as an *honorarium*, a badge of honour to suffer for the Lord of glory. As all have not the honour to wear the crown of glory in heaven, so few have the honour to wear the chain of Christ upon earth. * Thuanus reports of Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, that, being led to suffer with other martyrs, who were bound, and he unbound, because a

* *Cur me non quoque torque donas, et insignis hujus ordinis militem creas?* Thuanus.

person of honour; he cried out, "Why don't you honour "me with a chain, too, and create me a knight of that no-"ble order?" My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, James i. 2. *(i. e.)* trials by sufferings. David thought it an honour to be vile for God, and that is a true observation, that disgrace itself is glorious when endured for the Lord of glory.

Infer. 4. Is Christ the Lord of glory? *How glorious, then, shall the saints one day be, when they shall be made like this glorious Lord, and partake of his glory in heaven?* John xvii. 22. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them:" Yea, the vile bodies of believers shall be made like to the glorious body of Christ, Phil. iii. 21. What glory, then, will be communicated to their souls? True, his essential glory is incommunicable; but there is a glory which Christ will communicate to his people. "When he comes to judge the world, he will come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them "that believe," 2 Thes. i. 10. Thus he seemeth to account his social glory, which shall result from his saints, a great part of his own glory: As we have now fellowship with him in his sufferings, so we shall have a fellowship, or communion with him, in his glory: When he shall appear, then shall we, also, appear with him in glory; then the poorest believer shall be more glorious than Solomon, in all his royalty. It was a pious saying of Luther, that he had rather be *Christianus rusticus, quam Ethnicus Alexander*; a Christian-*clown*, than a Pagan *emperor*. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, though he live next door to a graceless nobleman: But it doth not yet appear what they shall be. The day will come, it certainly will come, for the Lord hath spoken it, when they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Infer. 5. *How hath the devil blindfolded, and deluded them that are frighted off from Christ, by the fears of being dishonoured by him?* Many persons have half a mind to religion, but when they consider the generality of its professors to be persons of the lowest, and meanest rank in the world, and that reproaches and sufferings attend that way; they shrink back as men ashamed, and as Salvian saith, *Mali esse coguntur, neviles habeantur*; they chuse rather to remain wicked, than to become vile: But to them that believe, Christ is an honour; as the word, which we translate *precious*, might be rendered, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Till God opens mens eyes thus, they will put evil for good, and good for evil. But O dear bought honours, for which men stake their souls, and everlasting happiness! Paul was not of your mind,

yet for birth he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews; for dignity, and esteem, a Pharisee; for moral accomplishments, touching the law, blameless: Yet all this he trampled under his feet, counting it all but dross, and dung, in comparison of Jesus Christ. Moses had more honour, to lay down for Christ, than you; yet it was no temptation to him, to conceal or deny the faith of Christ. Noble Galeacius would not be with-held from Christ by the splendor and glory of Italy; but O how doth the glory of this world dazzle, and blind the eyes of many: "How "can ye believe (saith Christ) who receive honour one of ano-"ther?" John v. 44. Saints and sinners, upon this account, are wonders one to the other. It is the wonder of the world, to see Christians glorying in reproaches; they wonder that the saints run not with them into the same excess of riot; and it is a wonder to believers, how such poor toys, and empty titles (rather than titles of honour) should keep the world, as it doth, from Jesus Christ, and their everlasting happiness in him.

Infer. 6. If Christ be the Lord of glory, *how careful should all be who profess him, that they do not dishonour Jesus Christ, whose name is called upon by them?* Christ is a glory to you, be not you a shame and dishononr to him. How careful had Christians need be, to draw every line, and action of their lives exactly: The more glorious Christ is, the more circumspect and watchful ye had need to be. How lovely would Jesus Christ appear to the world, if the lives of Christians did adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, in all things! Remember you represent the Lord of glory to the world; it is not your honour only, but the honour of Christ which is engaged, and concerned in your actions. O let not the carelessness, or scandals of your life, make Jesus Christ ashamed to be called your Lord. When Israel had grievously revolted from God, he bids Moses rise and get down from thence; for (saith he) *thy people*, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves, Deut. ix. 12. as the Lord were ashamed to own them for his people any longer. It was a cutting question, James ii. 7. apt to startle the consciences of those loose professors; "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which "ye are called?" Your duty is, to adorn the gospel by your conversations, Titus ii. 10. The words signify to deck, trim, or adorn the gospel, & make it trim, neat, and lovely, to the eyes of beholders. When there is such a beautiful harmony, and lovely proportion betwixt Christ's doctrine and your practices, as there is in the works of creation, wherein the comeliness and elegancy of the world much consists, (for to this the

apostle's word here alludes) then do we walk suitably to the Lord of glory.

Infer. 7. *What delight should Christians take in their daily converse with Jesus Christ in the way of duty?* * Your converses in prayer, hearing, and meditation, are with the Lord of glory: The greatest peers in the kingdom, account it more honour to be in the presence of a king, bare-headed, or upon the knee at *court*, than to have thousands standing bare to them in the country. When you are called to the duties of communion with Christ, you are called to the greatest honour, dignified with the noblest privilege creatures are capable of in this world: Had you but a sense of that honour God puts upon you by this means, you would not need so much pressing and striving, to bring a dead and backward heart into the special presence of Jesus Christ. When he saith, Seek ye my face, your hearts should echo to his calls; Thy face, Lord, will we seek. But, alas! the glory of Christ is much hid, and veiled, by ignorance, and unbelief, from the eyes of his own people; it is but seldom the best of saints, by the eye of faith, do see the king in his glory.

Infer. 8. If Christ be so glorious, *how should believers long to be with him, and behold him in his glory above?* Most men need patience to *die*, a believer should need patience to *live*. Paul thought it well worth enduring the pangs of death, to get a sight of Jesus Christ in his glory, Phil. i. 23. "The Lord direct "your hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for "Christ," (saith the apostle) 2 Thess. iii. 5. intimating, that the saints have great need of patience, to enable them to endure the state of distance and separation from Christ, so long as they must endure it in this world. *The Spirit and the bride say, come, and let him that heareth, say, come, and let him that is a thirst come: even so, come Lord Jesus, and be thou as a swift roe upon the mountains of* separation.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

* Suppose (saith Mr. Rutherford) there were no letter of command, yet there is a suitableness betwixt the law engraven on the heart, and the spiritual matter commanded. There is an heaven in the bosom of prayer, though there were not a granting of the suit. *Rutherford's Treatise of the Covenant, p.* 4[illegible].

SERMON XV.

Opening the sixth Motive to come to CHRIST, contained in the sixth and last Title of CHRIST.

www.libtool.com.cn

LUKE ii. 25. ——*Waiting for the* [*Consolation*] *of Israel.*

SEveral glorious titles of Christ have been already spoken to, out of each of which, much comfort flows to believers: It is comfortable to a wounded soul, to eye him as a *physician;* comfortable to a condemned and unworthy soul, to look upon him under the notion of *mercy:* The lovelinesS, the desirableness, and the glory of Christ, are all so many springs of consolation. But now I am to shew you, from this scripture, that the saints have not only much consolation from Christ, but that Christ himself is the *very consolation* of believers: He is pure comfort wrapped up in flesh and blood.

In this context, you have an account of Simeon's prophecy concerning Christ; and in this text, a description of the person, and quality of Simeon himself, who is described two ways.

1. By his *practice.*
2. By his *principle.*

His practice was heavenly, and holy; he was a *just and devout man:* The principle from which his righteousness and holiness did flow, was his faith in Christ; "he waited for the consolation "of Israel." In which words by way of *periphrasis,* we have,

1. A description of Christ, the consolation of Israel.
2. The description of a believer, one that waited for Christ.

First, That *the consolation of Israel* is a phrase descriptive of Jesus Christ, is beyond all doubt, if you consult ver. 26. where he, (*i. e.*) Simeon is satisfied by receiving Christ into his arms, *the consolation* for which he had so long waited.

Secondly, * And that waiting for Christ is a phrase describing the believers of those times that preceded the incarnation of Christ, is past doubt; they all waited for that blessed day: But it was Simeon's lot to fall just upon that happy point of time, wherein the prophecies and promises of his incarnation were fulfilled. Simeon, and others that waited with him, were sensible, that the time of the promise was come, which could not but

* It is a phrase, common and well known among the Jews at that time, by which the coming of Christ was signified. *Ludov. Capell.*

raise (as indeed it did) a general expectation of him, John ix. 19. But Simeon's faith was confirmed, by a particular revelation, ver. 26. That he should see Christ before he saw death, which could not but greatly encourage and raise his expectation to look out for him, whose coming would be the greatest consolation to the whole *Israel* of God. *The consolation* παρακλησις. The Spirit is frequently called in scripture, παρακλητης, *the Comforter*: But Christ, in this place, is called παρακλησις, *comfort*, or *consolation itself*: The reason of both is given in John xvi. 14. "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you:" Where Christ is said to be the matter, and the Spirit, the applier of true comfort to the people of God. Now this consolation is here expressed both with a singular *emphasis* [*the consolation*] intimating that there is nothing of consolation in any thing besides him; all other comforts compared with this, are not worth naming. And as it is emphatically expressed, so it is also limited and bounded within the compass of God's *Israel*, (*i. e.*) true believers, stiled the *Israel of God*, whether Jews or Gentiles, Gal. vi. 16. From whence the point of doctrine is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ is the only consolation of believers, and of none besides them.*

So speaks the apostle, Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Those that *worship God in the Spirit* are sincere believers; to such sincere believers, Christ is consolation, *our rejoicing is in Christ Jesus*: And they have no consolation in any thing beside him; nothing in the world can give them comfort without Christ, *We have no confidence in the flesh.* The gospel is glad tidings of great joy; but that which makes it to be so, is Jesus Christ, whom it imparts and reveals to us, Luke ii. 10, 11. In the opening of this comfortable point, four things must be spoken to, for the right stating the method of our discourse, *viz.*

1. What is meant by consolation.
2. That Christ, and he only, is consolation to believers.
3. That believers only have consolation in Christ.
4. How it comes to pass, that any believer should be dejected, since Christ is consolation to all believers.

The first thing to be opened, is the nature of consolation, which is nothing else but *the chearinesse of a man's spirit, whereby he is upheld, and fortified against all evils felt, or feared.* Consolation is to the soul, what health is to the body after wasting sickness; or the reviving spring, to the earth, after a long and hard winter. And there are three sorts of consolation, or

comfort, suitable to the disposition and temper of the mind; *viz.*

Natural,
Sinful, and
Spiritual.

Natural comfort is the refreshment of our natural spirits by the good creatures of God, Acts xiv. 17. "Filling their hearts "with food and gladness." *Sinful comfort* is the satisfaction and pleasure men take in the fulfilling of their lusts, by the abuse of the creatures of God, James v. 5. "Ye have lived in "pleasure upon earth," *(i. e.)* your life hath been a life of sensuality and sin.

Spiritual comfort is the refreshment, peace, and joy, gracious souls have in Christ, by the exercise of faith, hope, and other graces, Rom. v. 2. And this only deserves the name of true solid consolation: To which four things are required.

First, That the matter thereof be some *spiritual*, eminent, and durable good; else our consolation in it will be but as the crackling of thorns under a pot, a sudden blaze, quickly extinct with the failing matter of it. Christ only gives the matter of solid durable consolation; the righteousness of Christ, the pardon of sin, the favour of God, the hopes of glory, are the substantial materials of a believer's consolation, Rom. v. 2. Matth. ix. 2. Psal. iv. 6, 7. 2 Pet. i. 8. Things are as their foundations be.

Secondly, *Interest* and propriety in these comfortable things, are requisite to our consolation by them; Luke i. 47. "My spi-"rit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." It is no consolation to him that is hungry, to see a feast; to him that is poor to see a treasure; if the one may not taste, or the other partake thereof.

Thirdly, *Knowledge*, and evidence of interest, in some degree, is requisite, to actual consolation, though without it a man may be in the state of consolation; for that which appears not, is (in point of actual comfort) as if it were not.

Fourthly, In order hereunto, the work of the Spirit upon our hearts is requisite, both to give, and clear our interest in Christ, and the promises: And both these ways he is the Comforter, "The fruit of the Spirit is joy," Gal. v. 22. And thus briefly of the nature of consolation.

Secondly, Next I will shew you that Christ, and he only, is matter of consolation to believers: which will demonstratively appear by this argument.

Arg. He that brings to their souls all that is comfortable, and

removes from their souls all that is uncomfortable, must needs be the only consolation of believers.

But Jesus Christ brings to their souls all that is comfortable, and removes from their souls all that is uncomfortable.

Therefore Christ only is the consolation of believers.

First, Jesus Christ brings whatsoever is comfortable to the souls of believers. Is pardon comfortable to a person condemned? Nothing can be matter of greater comfort in this world. Why, this Christ brings to all believers, Jer. xxiii. 6. "And this "is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righte-"ousness." This cannot but give strong consolation; righteousness is the foundation of peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and "the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever," Isa. xxxii. 17. Come to a dejected soul, labouring under the burden of guilt, and say, cheer up, I bring you good tidings, there is such an estate befallen you, or such a troublesome business comfortably ended for you; alas! this will not reach the heart: If you can bring me (saith he) good news from heaven, that my sins are forgiven, and God reconciled, how soon should I be comforted! And therefore (as one well observes) this was the usual receipt with which Christ cured the souls of men and women, when he was here on earth; Son or daughter, "be "of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." And, indeed, it is as easy to separate light and warmth from the beams of the sun, as cheerinesS and comfort from the voice of pardon.

Are the hopes and expectations of heaven and glory comfortable! Yes sure, nothing is comfortable if this be not; Rom. v. 2. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now, Christ brings to the souls of men all the solid grounds, and foundations upon which they build their expectations of glory, Col. i. 27. "Which is Christ, in you, the hope of glory." Name any thing else that is solid matter of comfort to the souls of men, and the grounds thereof will be found in Christ, and in none but Christ: as might easily be demonstrated by the enumeration of multitudes of particular instances, which I cannot now insist upon.

Secondly, Jesus Christ removes from believers whatever is uncomfortable; therein relieving them against all the matters of their affliction and sorrow. As namely,

First, Is sin a burden and matter of trouble, to believers? Christ, and none but Christ, removes that burden, Rom. vii. 24, 25. "O wretched man that I am! (saith sin-burdened Paul) "who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank

"God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The satisfaction of his blood, Eph. v. 2. The sanctification of his Spirit, John i. 5, 6. His perfect deliverance of his people from the very being of sin at last, Eph. v. 26, 27. This relieves at present, and removes at last the matter and ground of all their troubles and sorrows for sin.

Secondly, Do the temptations of satan burden believers? O yes by reason of temptations; they go in trouble and heaviness of spirit. Temptation is an enemy under the walls; temptation greatly endangers, and therefore cannot but greatly afflict the souls of believers; but Christ brings the only matter of relief against temptations. The intercession of Christ is a singular relief at present, Luke xxii. 32. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy "faith fail not." And the promises of Christ are a full relief for the future; "The God of peace shall shortly tread satan "under your feet," Rom. xvi. 20.

Thirdly, Is spiritual *desertion*, and the hiding of God's face, matter of affliction and casting down to believers? Yes, yes, it distresses their hearts; nothing can comfort them; "Thou hidest "thy face, and I was troubled," Psal. xxx. 7. Outward afflictions do but break the *skin*, this touches the *quick*; they like rain fall only upon the tiles, this soaks into the house; but Christ brings to believers substantial matter of consolation against the troubles of desertion: He himself was deserted of God for a time, that they might not be deserted for ever. In him also the relieving promises are made to believers, that notwithstanding God may desert them for a time, yet the union betwixt him and them shall never be dissolved, Heb. xiii. 4. Jer. xxxii. 40. Though he forsake them for a moment, in respect of evidenced favour, yet he will return again and comfort them, Isa. liv. 7. Though satan pull hard, yet he will never be "able to pluck them out of "his Father's hand," John x. 20. Oh what relief is this! What consolation is Christ to a deserted believer.

Fourthly, Are outward afflictions matter of dejection and trouble? Alas, who finds them not to be so? How do our hearts fail and our spirits sink under the many smarting rods of God upon us? But our relief and consolation under them all is in Christ Jesus; for the rod that afflicts us is in the hand of Christ that loveth us, Rev. iii. 29. "Whom I love, I rebuke "and chasten." His design in affliction is our profit, Heb. xii. 10. That design of his for our good shall certainly be accomplished, Rom. viii. 28. And after that no more afflictions for ever, Rev. xxi. 3, 4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." So that upon the whole, two things are most evident.

First, Nothing can comfort the soul without Christ! he is the soul that animates all comforts, they would be dead things without him. Temporal enjoyments, riches, honours, health, relations, yield not a drop of true comfort without Christ. Spiritual enjoyments, ministers, ordinances, promises, are fountains sealed and springs shut up; till Christ open them, a man may go comfortless in the midst of them all.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, No troubles, sorrows, or afflictions can deject or sink the soul that Christ comforteth, 2 Cor. vi. 20. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." A believer may walk with a heart full of comfort amidst all the troubles of this world: Christ makes the darkness of troubles to be light round about his people. So that the conclusion stands firm, and never to be shaken, that Christ, and Christ only, is the consolation of believers; which was the thing to be proved.

In the third place, I am to shew you that believers, and none but believers, can have consolation in Christ; which will convincingly appear from the consideration of those things which we laid down before as the requisites to all true spiritual consolation. For,

First, No unbeliever hath the *materials*, out of which spiritual comfort is made, which (as I there told you) must be some solid, spiritual and eternal good, as Christ and the covenant are: what do unregenerate men rejoice in, but trifles and mere vanities, in a thing of nought? Amos vi. 13. See how their mirth is described in Job xxi. 12. "They take their timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." He doth not say, they take the Bible, turn to the promises, and rejoice in Christ and the Covenant; 'tis not the melody of a good conscience, the joy of the holy Ghost; no, no, they have no acquaintance with such music as that; but the rejoicing of believers is in those things, 2 Cor. i. 12. and this is well-built consolation, which reaches the heart.

Secondly, I told you, that propriety and interest in Christ and the promises, are required to all spiritual consolation: but no unbeliever hath any title or interest in Christ and the promises, and so they can signify nothing to him in point of comfort. 'Tis not another man's money, but my own, that must feed, cloth and comfort me; nor is it another man's Christ, but my own Christ, that must justify, save and comfort my soul.

Thirdly, You were told, that evidence of a man's peace and reconciliation with God, is necessary to his actual consolation, which no unbeliever can possibly have; he hath neither grace within him to make him a qualified subject of any special pro-

mise, nor any witness or seal of the Spirit, t[illegible] his propriety in Christ; for he never seals, [illegible] sanctifies. So that it is beyond all contradicti[illegible] and none but believers, are partakers of the [illegible] are in Christ Jesus.

Fourthly, and *lastly*, There is one inquiry r[illegible] tisfied; namely, seeing Jesus Christ is consolati[illegible] how it comes to pass, that so many believers in the world should walk so dejectedly as they do, without any spiritual consolation?

First, This need not be wonder'd at, if we consider, that the consolations of Christ are of two sorts; *seminal* and in preparation, or *actual* in present possession. Every *believer* in the world hath the root and seed of comfort planted and sown for him, Psal. xcvii. 11. "Light is sown for the righteous, and "gladness for the upright in heart." They have Christ and the promises, which are the seeds of consolation, and will bring forth joy at last, though at present they have have no actual consolation; the seed of all joy is sown, and in due time they shall reap the full ripe fruit thereof.

Secondly, It must be remembered, that *interest* and *evidence* are distinct blessings, every *believer* hath interest in Christ; but every *believer* hath not the evidence thereof, Isa. l. 10. "Who "is among you, that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice "of his servant; that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" Every child of God is not of sufficient age to know his father, or take comfort in that blessed inheritance whereunto he is begotten again, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Every believer doth not walk with like strictness, and exact holiness: all do not exercise faith in a like degree. Among Christians some are strong in grace, rich in faith, strict in obedience, tender of sin to an eminent degree; these usually are owners of much consolation: but others are weak in grace, poor in faith, comparatively careless of their hearts and ways, frequently grieving the good spirit of God, and wounding their own consciences (the vessel into which spiritual consolation is poured); and these are usually denied the joy and comfort which others abound withal.

Fourthly, The consolations of Christ are arbitrarily dispensed by the Spirit, who is the Comforter, and giveth to every man in such proportions, and at such seasons, as pleaseth him: whence it comes to pass, that he that is rich in comfort to day, may be poor to morrow; and, contrarily, the heart that is quite full of sorrow one hour, is filled with peace and joy in believing the

First, things that are necessary to *the being* of a Christian, are stable; but things belonging only to the well-being of a Christian, come and go, according to the good pleasure and appointment of the Spirit. The use of all follows.

Infer. 1. Hence it follows, *That the state of unbelivers is the most sad and uncomfortable state in the world, having no interest in Christ, the consolation of Israel.* It is true, they abound in creature-comforts; they live in pleasure upon earth: joy displays its colours in their faces; but for all this, there is not the least drop of true consolation in any of their hearts; they have some comfort in the creature, but none in Christ: that little they gather from the creature now, is all their portion of joy, Luke vi. 24. "Ye have received your consolation:" as this is all they have, so they shall enjoy it but a little while, Job xxi. 13, 17. And while they do enjoy it, it is mixed with many gripes of conscience, Job xiv. 13. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Whatever consolation any unbeliever speaks of besides this, is but by rote; for when the day of his distress cometh, and the terrors of conscience shall awake him out of his pleasant dreams, all his sensual joys will vanish from him, and the doors of true consolation will be shut against him. Let him go to Jesus Christ, knock at that door, and say, Lord Jesus, thy name is consolation: my heart is ready to burst within me; hast thou no consolation for me? O Lord, for one drop of spiritual comfort now; but alas there is none, no not in Christ himself, for any unbeliever. It is childrens bread, the saints privilege; comfort and grace are undivided. Let him return into himself, search his own conscience for comfort, and say, O conscience! thou art more than a thousand witnesses, and thousands have been comforted by thee; where thou speakest comfort, none can speak trouble; hast thou no consolation for me in my deepest distress? Alas, no; if God condemn thee, wherewithal shall I comfort thee? I can speak neither more nor less than the scriptures put into my mouth, and I find not one word in all the book of God, warranting me to be thy comforter. Believe it as an undoubted truth (though the sense of the bewitched world over-rules it) that the state of unbelievers, even at the best, is a sad and dismal state.

Infer. 2. *Let all believers fetch all their comfort out of Christ, who is the consolation of his people:* "We rejoice (saith the apostle) in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." That is the true temper of a believing soul: take heed you live not partly upon Christ, and partly upon the creature for your

comfort; much rather beware, that you forsake not Christ, the fountain of living waters, and hew out cisterns for yourselves which can hold no water, Jer. ii. 13. If you make any creature the spring and fountain of your comfort, assuredly God will dry up that spring. If your souls draw their comfort from any creature, you know they must out-live that creature, and what then will you do for comfort? Besides, as your comforts are, so are you. The food of every creature is suitable to its nature. You see divers creatures feeding upon several parts of the same herb, the bee upon the flower, the bird upon the seeds, the sheep upon the stalk, and the swine upon the root, according to their nature so is their food. Sensual men feed upon sensual things, spiritual men upon spiritual things; as your food is, so are you. If carnal comforts can content thy heart, sure thy heart must then be a very carnal heart. Yea, and let Christians themselves take heed, that they fetch not their consolations out of themselves instead of Christ. Your graces and duties are excellent means and instruments, but not the ground-work and foundation of your comfort, they are useful buckets to draw, but not the well itself in which the springs of consolation rise. If you put your duties in the room of Christ, Christ will put your comforts out of the reach of your duties.

Infer. 3. *If Christ be the consolation of believers, what a comfortable life should all believers live in the world?* Certainly, if the fault be not your own, you might live the happiest and comfortablest lives of all men in the world. If you would not be a discomfort to Christ, he would be a comfort to you every day, and in every condition, to the end of your lives. Your condition abounds with all the helps and advantages of consolation. You have the command of Christ to warrant your comforts, Phil. iv. 4. You have the Spirit of Christ for a spring of comfort; you have the scriptures of Christ for the rules of comfort; you have the duties of religion for the means of comfort: Why is it then that you go comfortless? If your afflictions be many in the world, yet your encouragements be more in Christ. Your troubles in the world may be turned into joy, but your comforts in Christ can never be turned into trouble. Why should troubles obstruct your comfort, when the blessing of Christ upon your troubles makes them subservient to promote your happiness? Rom. viii. 28. Shake off the despondency then, and live up to the principles of religion. Your dejected life is uncomfortable to yourselves, and of very ill use to others.

Infer. 4. *If Christ be the consolation of believers, then let all*

that desire comfort in this world, or in that to come, embrace Jesus Christ, and get real union with him. The same hour you shall be in Christ, you shall also be at the fountain-head of all consolations: thy soul shall be then a pardoned soul, and a pardoned soul hath all reason in the world to be a joyful soul: in that day the conscience shall be sprinkled with the blood of Christ; and a sprinkled conscience hath all the reason in the world to be a comforting conscience: in that day you become the children of your Father in heaven, and he that hath a Father in heaven, hath all reason to be the joyfullest man upon earth; in that day you are delivered from the sting and hurt of death; and he that is delivered from the sting of death, hath the best reason to take in the comfort of life. O come to Christ! come to Christ! till you come to Christ, no true comfort can come to you.

www.libtool.com.cn

* *

SERMON XVI.

Enforcing the general Exhortation, by a seventh Motive drawn from the first Benefit purchased by CHRIST.

EPH. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

SIX great motives have been presented already from the titles of Christ, to draw the hearts of sinners to him; more are now to be offered from the benefits redounding to believers by Christ; essaying, by all means, to win the hearts of men to Christ. To this end I shall, in the first place, open that glorious *privilege of gospel-remission*, freely and fully conferred upon all that come to Christ by faith, "in whom we have redemption by "faith," *&c.*

In which words we have, *first*, a singular benefit, or choice mercy bestowed, *viz. redemption*, interpreted by way of *apposition*, *the remission of sins*: this is a privilege of the first rank, a mercy by itself; none sweeter, none more desirable among all the benefits that come by Christ. And therefore,

Secondly, You have the price of this mercy, an account what it cost, even the *blood of Christ*, in whom we have redemption [through his blood:] precious things are of great price; the blood of Christ is the *meritorious cause* of remission.

Thirdly, You have here also the *impulsive cause*, moving God

to grant pardons at this rate to sinners, and that is said to be the *riches of his grace:* where, by the way, you see, that the freeness of the grace of God, and the fulness of the satisfaction of Christ, meet together without the least jar in the remission of sin, contrary to the vain cavil of the Socinian adversaries: "In "whom we have redemption, even the remission of sins, ac-"cording to the riches of his grace."

www.libtool.com.cn

Fourthly, You have the *qualified subjects* of this blessed privilege, *viz.* Believers, in whose name he here speaks, [*we*] *have remission*; (*i. e.*) We the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, ver. 1. We whom he hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated unto the adoption of children, ver. 4, 5. We that are made accepted in the beloved, ver. 6. It is *we*, and *we* only, who have redemption through his blood. Hence observe,

Doct. *That all believers, and none but believers, receive the remission of their sins, through the riches of grace, by the blood of Jesus Christ.*

In the explication of this point, three things must be spoken to.

1. That all that are in Christ, are in a pardoned state.
2. That their pardon is the purchase of the blood of Christ.
3. That the riches of grace are manifested in remission.

First, That all that are in Christ, are in a pardoned state: where I will first shew you what pardon or remission of sin is.

Secondly, That this is the privilege of none but believers.

First, Now remission of sin is the gracious act of God, in and through Christ, discharging a believing sinner from all the guilt and punishment of his sin, both temporal and eternal.

It is the act of God; he is the author of remission; none can forgive sins but God only, Mark ii. 7. Against him only, (*i. e.*) principally and especially, the offence is committed, Psal. li. 4. To his judgment guilt binds over the soul; and who can remit the debt, but the creditor? Mat. vi. 12.

It is an act of God, discharging the sinner; it is God's loosing of one that stood bound, the cancelling of his bond or obligation, called therefore remission, or releasing in the text; the blotting out of our iniquities, or the removing of our sins from us, as it is called in other scriptures; see Psal. ciii. 11. Micah vii. 18, 19.

It is a gracious act of God, the effect of pure grace, done for his own name's sake, Isa. xliii. 25. discharging us without any satisfaction at all by us: there is much grace in that; and pro-

viding a surety for us every way able to pay our debt, there is more grace in that.

It is the gracious act of God in and through Christ: the satisfaction of Christ is the procuring cause of our remission, and so God declares himself just in the remission of our sin, Rom. iii. 25. "Gracious is the Lord and righteous," Psal. cxvi. 5. Justice and mercy meet here, and embrace each other; "in "whom (saith the text) we have remission:" no other price could purchase this privilege, Micah vi. 6, 7. not rivers of oil, or of human blood.

www.libtool.com.cn

And this gracious act of God discharges the pardoned soul both from guilt and punishment. Guilt is nothing else but the force and power that is in sin, to oblige the sinner to undergo the penalty due to sin; therefore sinners are said to be *guilty of hell-fire*, Mat. v. 22. *Guilty of eternal judgment*, Mark iii. 29. To be under the judgment of God, Rom. iii. 19. Remission takes away both guilt and punishment together; it takes away all guilt, Acts xiii. 38, 39. and all punishment. And so much of the first thing to be opened; namely, what the remission of sin is.

Secondly, Now that this remission of sin is the privilege of believers, is most apparent; for all the causes of remission are in conjunction to procure it for them: the love of God, which is the impulsive cause of pardon; the blood of Christ, which is the meritorious cause of pardon; and saving faith, which is the instrumental cause of pardon, do all co-operate for their remission, as is plain in the text.

Besides, all the promises of pardon are made to them, Jer. xxxi. 34. Micah vii. 18. And, lastly, all the signs of pardon are found in them, and in them only, that love God, Luke vii. 47. Mercifulness to others, Mat. vi. 14. A blessed calmness and peace in the conscience, Rom. v. 1. So that it is a truth beyond controversy, that all that are in Christ are in a pardoned state.

Secondly, Next I will shew you, that the pardon of believers is the purchase of the blood of Christ: nothing but the blood of Christ is a price equivalent to the remission of sin, for this blood was innocent and untainted blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. the blood of a Lamb without spot: this blood was precious blood, blood of infinite worth and value, the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. It was prepared blood for this very purpose, Heb. x. 5. Prepared by God's eternal appointment; prepared by Christ's miraculous and extraordinary production by the operation of the Spirit,

prepared by his voluntary sequestration, or sanctification of himself to this very use and purpose.

The blood of Jesus is not only innocent, precious, and prepared blood, but it is also blood actually shed, and sacrificed to the justice of God, for the expiation of guilt, and procurement of our discharge, Isa. liii. 5. To conclude: the severe justice of God could put in no exception against the blood of Christ; it is unexceptionable blood, being, (as before was noted), untainted by sin, and dignified above all estimation by the person whose blood it was: Justice required no less, and could demand no more; and this is the price at which our pardons are purchased, and without which no sin could be pardoned; for "without shedding of blood, (such blood as this) there is no "remission," Heb. ix. 22.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened is, That God hath manifested the riches of his grace, in the remission of our sins. So speaks the apostle, Rom. v. 20. "Where sin abounded, grace "did much more abound:" And, 1 Tim. i. 14. "The grace "of our Lord (*viz.* in the pardon of sin) was exceeding a-"bundant." Which will appear, if we bring our thoughts close to the matter, in several particulars.

First, From the nature of the mercy, which is the riches of all mercies, except Christ the purchaser of it: No mercy sweeter than a pardon to a condemned sinner: no pardon like God's pardon to a man condemned at his bar; all the goodness of God is made to pass before our eyes in his pardoning acts of grace, Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Secondly, The very riches of grace must needs be in the pardon of sin, if we consider the method in which pardons are dispensed, which is, as the text speaks, "through his blood." Herein "God commends his love to us," Rom. v. 8. He commends it more than if he had pardoned sin without such a sacrifice; for then he had only displayed his mercy, but not caused mercy and justice to meet and triumph together.

Thirdly, The riches of his grace shine forth in the peculiarity of the mercy. Remission is no common favour; it was never extended to the fallen angels, nor to the greater part of the children of men, but only to a little flock, a small remnant of mankind, Luke xii. 32. John xvii. 9.

Fourthly, The riches of grace are manifested in remission, if we consider the subjects of this privilege, who are not only equally plunged into sin and misery with others by nature, Eph. ii. 3. but many of the Lord's pardoned ones, have been actual-

ly guilty of a deeper-dyed abomination, than many unpardoned ones, in the civilized world, are defiled with. "To me, "(saith Paul), the greatest of sinners, one that was before a "blasphemer, a persecutor, *&c.* yet to me is this grace given; "I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 15. "And such were some of "you, but ye are justified," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Yea, God singles out the most base, despised, poor, and contemptible ones among men, to be the subjects of this glorious privilege, 2 Cor. i. 26. "You see your calling brethren," *&c.*

Fifthly, More of the riches of grace still appear, if we view the latitude and extent of this act of grace. O how innumerable are our transgressions! "Who can understand his errors?" Psal. xix. 12. "Yet the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all "sin," 1 John i. 7. Small and great sins, open and secret sins, old and new sins, all pardoned without exception. O the riches of grace! O the unsearchable goodness of God! "With the "Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemp-"tion; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," Psal. cxxx. 7, 8.

Sixthly, and lastly, The riches of grace shine forth in the irrevocableness and perpetuity of remission. As grace pardons all sins without exception, so the pardons it bestows are without revocation: The pardoned soul shall "never come into "condemnation," John v. 24. "As far as the east is from "the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," Psal. ciii. 10. The *east* and *west* are the two opposite points of heaven, which can never come together; neither shall the pardoned soul, and its sins, ever meet any more. "Thou hast "cast, (saith Hezekiah), all my sins behind thy back." The penitent believer sets his sins before his face, but the merciful God casts them all behind his back, never to behold them more, so as to charge them upon his pardoned people. And thus you see what the pardon of sin is, what the price that purchaseth pardon is, and what riches of grace God manifesteth in the remission of a believer's sins; which were the things to be explained and opened in the doctrinal part. The improvement of the whole you will have in the following uses.

Infer. 1. If this be so, that all believers, and none but believers, receive the remission of their sins through the riches of grace, by the blood of Christ; *What a happy condition then are believers in!* Those that never felt the load of sin, may make light of a pardon; but so cannot you, that have been in the deeps of trouble and fear about it: those that have been upon the rack of an accusing and condemning conscience, as David,

Heman, and many of the saints have been, can never sufficiently value a pardon. "Blessed is the man whose transgression "is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto "whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. or, O the blessedness and felicities of the pardoned man! as in the Hebrew *. Remission cannot but appear the wonder of mercies, if we consider through what difficulties the grace of God makes way for it to our souls; what strong bars the love of God breaks asunder, to open our way to this privilege; for there can be no pardon without a Mediator; no other Mediator but the Son of God: the Son of God cannot discharge our debts, but by taking them upon himself as our surety, and making full payment, by bearing the wrath of God for us; and when all this is done, there can be no actual pardon, except the Spirit of grace open our blind eyes, break our hard hearts, and draw them to Christ in the way of believing. And as the mercy of remission comes to us through wonderful difficulties, so it is in itself a complete and perfect mercy: God would not be at such vast expence of the riches of his grace: Christ would not lay out the invaluable treasures of his precious blood to procure a cheap and common blessing for us. Rejoice then, ye pardoned souls, God hath done great things for you, for which you have cause to be glad.

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *That interest in Christ by faith, brings the conscience of a believer into a state of rest and peace.* Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." I say not that every believer is presently brought into actual peace and tranquility of conscience; there may be many fears, and much trouble even in a pardoned soul: but this is an undoubted truth, that faith brings the pardoned soul into that condition and state, where he may find perfect rest in his conscience, with respect to the guilt and danger of sin. The blood of Christ sprinkles us from an evil (that is, an accusing, condemning) conscience. We are apt to fear, that this or that special sin, which hath most terrified and affrighted our consciences, is not forgiven: but if there be riches enough in the grace of God, and efficacy enough in the blood of Christ, then the sins of believers, all their sins, great as well as small, one as well as another, without limitation or exception, are pardoned.

For let us but consider, If God remits no sin to any man, but with respect to the blood of Christ, then all sins are pardoned,

* אשרי בשוי.

as well as any one sin; because the dignity and desert of that blood is infinite, and as much deserves an universal pardon for all sins, as the particular pardon of any, even the least sin: moreover, remission is an act of God's fatherly love in Christ; and if it be so, then certainly no sin of any believer can be retained or excluded from pardon; for then the same soul should be in the favour of God, so far as it is pardoned; and out of favour with God, so far as it is unpardoned, and all this at one and the same instant of time; which is a thing both repugnant to itself, and to the whole strain of the gospel.

www.libtool.com.cn

To conclude: What is the design and end of remission, but the saving of the pardoned soul? But if any sin be retained or excluded from pardon, the retaining of that sin must needs make void the pardon of all other sins; and so the acts of God must cross and contradict each other, and the design and end of God miscarry and be lost; which can never be. So then we conclude, faith brings the believing soul into a state of rest and peace.

Infer. 3. Hence it also follows, *That no remission is to be expected by any soul, without interest by faith in Jesus Christ: no Christ, no pardon; no faith, no Christ.* Yet how apt are many poor deluded souls to expect pardon in that way, where never any soul yet did, or ever can meet it. Some look for pardon from the absolute mercy of God, without any regard to the blood of Christ, or their interest therein; we have sinned, but God is merciful. Some expect remission of sin by virtue of their own duties, not Christ's merits: I have sinned, but I will repent, restore, reform, and God will pardon. But little do such men know how they therein diminish the evil of sin, undervalue the justice of God, slight the blood of Christ, and put an undoing cheat upon their own souls for ever. To expect pardon from absolute mercy, or our own duties, is to knock at the wrong door, which God hath shut up to all the world, Rom. iii. 20. Whilst these two principles abide firm, that the price of pardon is only in the blood of Christ, and the benefit of pardon, only by the application of his blood to us; this must remain a sure conclusion, that no remission is to be expected by any soul, without interest by faith in Jesus Christ. Repentance, restitution, and reformation are excellent duties in their kind, and in their proper places, but they were never meant for saviours, or satisfactions to God for sin.

Infer. 4. If the riches of grace be thus manifested in the pardon of sin, *How vile an abuse is it of the grace of God, to take the more liberty to sin, because grace abounds in the pardon of it!*

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!" Rom. vi. 1, 2. Will nothing cheaper than the grace of God serve to make a cloak for sin? O vile abuse of the most excellent thing in the whole world? Did Christ shed his blood to expiate our guilt, and dare we make a plea to extenuate our guilt? God forbid!

www.libtool.com.cn

If it be intolerable ingratitude, among men, to requite good with evil, sure that sin must want a name bad enough to express it, which puts the greatest dishonour upon God, for the greatest mercy that ever was given by God to the world. "There is mercy with thee, (saith the Psalmist), that thou mayest be feared," not that thou mayest be the more abused, Psal. cxxx. 4. Nay, let me say, the devils never sinned at this rate; they cannot abuse the pardoning grace of God, because such grace was never offered unto them. And certainly, if the abuse of the common mercies of God, as meat and drink, by gluttony and drunkenness, be an henious sin, and highly provoking to God; then the abuse of the riches of his grace, and the precious blood of his Son, must be out of measure sinful, and the greatest affront we can put upon the God of mercy.

Infer. 5. To conclude: *If this be so, as ever you expect pardon and mercy from God, to come Christ in the way of faith; receive and embrace him now in the tenders of the gospel.*

To drive home this great exhortation, I beseech you, as in the bowels of Christ Jesus, and by all the regard and value you have for your own souls, let these following considerations sink down into your hearts.

First, That all christless persons are actually under the condemnation of God, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, is condemned already:" and it must needs be so, for every soul is concluded under the curse of the law, till Christ make him free, John viii. 36. Till we are in Christ, we are dead by law; and when we believe unto justification, then we *pass from death to life.* A blind mistaken conscience may possibly acquit you, but assure yourselves, God condemns you.

Secondly, Consider what a terrible thing it is to lie under the condemnation of God; the most terrible things in nature cannot shadow forth the misery of such a state: put all sicknesses, all poverty, all reproaches, the torments invented by all tyrants into one scale, and the condemnation of God into the other, and they will be all found lighter than a feather. Condemnation is the sentence of God, the great and terrible God; it is a sentence shutting you up to everlasting wrath; it is a sentence never to

be reverſed, but by the application of Chriſt in the ſeaſon thereof. O ſouls! you cannot bear the wrath of God; you do not underſtand it, if you think it tolerable: One drop of it upon your conſciences now, is enough to diſtract you in the midſt of all the pleaſures and comforts of this world: yet all that are out of Chriſt, are ſentenced to the fulneſs of God's wrath for ever.

Thirdly, There is yet a poſſibility of eſcaping the wrath to come; a door of hope opened to the worſt of ſinners; a day of grace is offered to the children of men, Heb. iii. 15. God declares himſelf unwilling that any ſhould periſh, 2 Pet. iii. 9. O what a mercy is this! Who, that is on this ſide heaven or hell, fully underſtands the worth of it?

Fourthly, The door of mercy will be ſhortly ſhut, Luke xii. 25. God hath many ways to ſhut it: he ſometimes ſhuts it by withdrawing the means of grace, and removing the *candleſticks*; a judgment at this time to be greatly feared. Sometimes he ſhuts it, by withdrawing his Spirit and bleſſing from the means, whereby all ordinances loſe their efficacy, 1 Cor. iii. 7. But if he ſhut it not by removing the means of grace from you, certain it is, it will be ſhortly ſhut by your removal from all the means and opportunities of ſalvation by death.

Fifthly, When once the door of mercy is ſhut, you are gone beyond all the poſſibilities of pardon and ſalvation for evermore. The night is then come, in which no man can work, John ix. 4. All the golden ſeaſons, you now enjoy, will be irrecoverably gone out of your reach.

Sixthly, Pardons are now daily granted to others: ſome (and they once as far from mercy as you now are), are at this day reading their pardons with tears of joy dropping from them. The world is full of the examples and inſtances of the riches of pardoning grace. And whatever is needful for you to do in the way of repentance and faith to obtain your pardon, how eaſily ſhall it be done, if once the day of God's power come upon you? Pſal. cx. 3. O therefore, lift up your cries to heaven, give the Lord no reſt, take no denial till he open the blind eye, break the ſtony heart, open and bow the ſtubborn will, effectually draw thy ſoul to Chriſt, and deliver thy pardon ſigned in his blood.

SERMON XVII.

Opening the eighth Motive to come to CHRIST, drawn from the sixth Benefit purchased by CHRIST for Believers.

www.libtool.com.cn

EPH. i. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*

IN our last discourse we opened to you the blessed privilege of remission of sin, from the following verse; in this verse lies another glorious privilege, *viz.* the *acceptation* that believers have with God through Jesus Christ: both which comprise (as the two main branches) our justification before God. In the words read, (to omit many things that might be profitably observed from the method and dependance of the apostle's discourse) three things are observable, *viz.*

1. The privilege itself.
2. The meritorious cause.
3. The ultimate end thereof.

First, The privilege itself, which is exceeding rich and sweet in its own nature; "he hath made us accepted;" the word is εχαριτωσεν ημας, he hath ingratiated us, or brought us into grace, favour, and acceptance of God the Father; endeared us to him, so that we find grace in his sight.

Secondly, The meritorious cause, purchasing and procuring this benefit for us, noted in the words, εν τω ηγαπημενω, *in the Beloved;* which words are a *periphrasis* of Christ, who is here emphatically stiled *the Beloved*, the great favourite of heaven, the delight of God's soul, the prime object of his love: it is he that obtaineth this benefit for believers: he is accepted for his own sake, and we for his.

Thirdly, The ultimate end and aim of conferring this benefit upon believers; "To the praise of the glory of his grace;" or, to the end that his grace might be made glorious in praises: there are riches of grace in this act of God; and the work and business of believers, both in this world and in that to come, is to search and admire, acknowledge and magnify God for his abundant grace herein. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ hath purchased and procured special favour and acceptation with God for all that are in him.*

This point lies plain in scripture, Eph. ii. 13. "But now in

"Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh "by the blood of Christ," ἐγγὺς ἐγενήθητε, made nigh, a term of endearedness: nothing is taken into the very bosom and embraces but what is very dear, precious and acceptable: and in Rev. ii. 5, 6. believers are said to be made by Jesus Christ "kings "and priests unto God, and his Father," *(i. e.)* dignified favourites, upon whom the special marks of honour are set by God.

www.libtool.com.cn

In opening of this point, three things must be doctrinally discussed and opened, *viz.*

1. What the acceptation of our persons with God is?
2. How it appears that believers are so accepted with God?
3. How Christ the Beloved procures this benefit for believers?

First, What the acceptation of our persons with God is? To open which, it may be proper to remember, that there is a twofold acceptance of persons mentioned in scripture.

1. One is the sinful act of corrupt man.
2. The other the gracious act of a merciful God.

First, Accepting of persons is noted in scripture as the sinful act of a corrupt man; a thing which God abhors, being the corruption and abuse of that power, and authority which men have in judgment; overlooking the merit of the cause through sinful respect to the quality of the person whose cause it is; so that the cause doth not commend the person, but the person the cause. This God every where brands in men, as a vile perverting of judgment, and utterly disclaims it himself, Gal. ii. 6. "God ac-"cepteth no man's person;" Rom. ii. 11. "There is no respect "of persons with God."

Secondly, There is also an accepting of persons, which is the gracious act of a merciful God; whereby he receives both the persons and duties of believers into special grace and favour for Christ's sake; and of this my text speaks. In which act of favour three things are supposed or included.

First, It supposes an estate of alienation and enmity: those only are accepted into favour, that were out of favour; and indeed so stood the case with us, Eph. ii. 12, 13. "Ye were aliens and "strangers, but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were a-"far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ:" So the apostle Peter, in 1 Pet. ii. 10. "Which in time past were not a people, "but now are the people of God; which had not obtained mer-"cy, but now have obtained mercy." The fall made a fearful breach betwixt God and man. Sin, like a thick cloud, intercepted all the beams of divine favour from us; the satisfaction of Christ dissolves that cloud, Isa. xliv. 22. "I have blotted out, as a thick

" cloud, thy transgressions; and, as a cloud, thy sins." This dark cloud thus dissolved, the face of God shines forth again with cheerful beams of favour and love upon all, who, by faith, are interested in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, It includes the removing of guilt from the persons of believers, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, Rom. v. 1, 2. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, " thro' our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by " faith into this grace wherein we stand:" for the face of God cannot shine upon the wicked; the person must be first made righteous, before it can be made accepted.

Thirdly, It includes the offering up, or tendring of our persons and duties to God by Jesus Christ. Accepting implies presenting or tendring: believers indeed do present themselves to God, Rom. xii. 1. But Christ's presenting them makes their tender of themselves acceptable to the Lord; Col. i. 22. " In the body " of his flesh through death to present you holy, and unblame- " able, and unreprovable, in his sight." Christ leads every believer, as it were by the hand, into the gracious presence of God; after this manner bespeaking acceptance for him: " Father, here " is a poor soul that was born in sin, hath lived in rebellion a- " gainst thee all his days; he hath broken all thy laws, and de- " served all thy wrath; yet he is one of that number which thou " gavest me before the world was. I have made full payment " of my blood for all his sins: I have opened his eyes to see the " sinfulness and misery of his condition; broken his heart for " his rebellions against thee; bowed his will in obedience unto " thy will; united him to my self by faith, as a living member " of my body: and now, Lord, since, he is become mine by re- " generation, let him be thine also by special acceptation: let " the same love with which thou lovest me embrace him also, " who is now become mine." And so much for the first particular, *viz.* What acceptation with God is.

Secondly, In the next place, I must shew you how it appears that believers are thus ingratiated, or brought into the special favour of God by Jesus Christ. And this will be evidenced divers ways.

First; By the *titles* of love and endearedness, with which the Lord graceth, and honoureth believers, who are sometimes called *the houshold of God*, Eph. ii. 19. the *friends of God*, James ii. 23. the *dear children of God*, Eph. v. 1. the *peculiar people of God*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. *a crown of glory*, and a *royal diadem* in the hand of their God, Isa. lxii. 3. The object of his *delight* and *pleasure*,

Psal. cxlvii. 10, 11. O what terms of endeardness doth God use towards his people! Doth not all this speak them to be in special favour with him? Which of all these alone, doth not signify a person highly in favour with God?

Secondly, The gracious manner in which he treats them upon the throne of grace, to which he allows them to come with boldness, Heb. iv. 16. This also speaks them in the special favour of God: he allows them to come to him in prayer, with the liberty, confidence, and filial boldness of children to a father; Gal. iv. 6. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth "the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" the familiar voice of a dear child: yea, which is a wonderful condescension of the great God to poor worms of the earth, he saith, Isa. xlv. 11. "Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Is-"rael, and his maker, ask me of things to come concerning "my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye "me:" an expression so full of grace, and special favour to believers, that it needs great caution in reading and understanding such an high and astonishing expression, the meaning is, that God hath, as it were, subjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his saints; and it is as if he had said, if my glory, and your necessity shall require it, do but ask me in prayer, and whatever my Almighty Power can do, I will do it for you. However, let no favourite of heaven forget the infinite distance betwixt himself and God. Abraham was a great favourite of heaven, and was called *the friend of God;* yet see with what humility of spirit, and reverential awe he addresseth to God, Gen. xviii. 27. "Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the "Lord, which am but dust and ashes." So that you see the titles of favour above-mentioned are no empty titles.

Thirdly, God's readiness to grant, as well as their liberty to ask, speaks them the special favourites of God. The heart of God is so propense, and ready, to grant the desires of believers, that it is but ask and have, Mat. vii. 7. The door of grace is opened by the key of prayer. That is a favourite indeed, to whom the king gives a blank to insert what request he will: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask "what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John xv. 7. O blessed liberty of the sons of God! David did but say, "Lord, "turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness," and it was done as soon as asked, 2 Sam. xv. 31. Joshua did but say, "thou sun stand still in Gibeon," and a miraculous stop was presently put to its swift motion in the heavens; nay, which is wonderful to consider, a prayer, yet unborn, I mean conceived

in the heart, and not yet uttered by the lips of believers, is often anticipated by the propensiveness of free grace, Isa. lxv. 24. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, "and whilst they are yet speaking I will hear." The prayers of others are rejected as an abomination, Prov. xv. 8. God casts them back into their faces, Mal. ii. 3. But free grace signs the petitions of the saints more readily than they are presented: we have not that freedom to ask, that God hath to give: it is true, the answer of a believer's prayers may be a long time suspended from his sense and knowledge; but every prayer, according to the will of God, is presently granted in heaven, though, for wise and holy ends, they may be held in a doubtful suspense about them upon earth.

Fourthly, The free discoveries of the secrets of God's heart to believers, speak them to be his special favourites: men open not the counsels and secrets of their own hearts to enemies, or strangers; but to their most inward and intimate friends: "The "secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will "shew them his covenant," Psal. xxv. 14. When God was about to destroy Sodom, he would do nothing in that work of Judgment 'till he had acquainted Abraham his friend, with his purpose therein, Gen. xviii. 17. "And the Lord said, Shall I "hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know "him," *&c.* So when a *king* was to be elected for Israel, and the person whom God had chosen, was yet unknown to the people, God, as it were, whispered that secret unto Samuel the day before, 1 Sam. ix. 15. "Now the Lord had told Samuel "in his ear a day before Saul came:" according to the manner of princes with some special favourite.

Fifthly, The Lord's receiving every small thing that comes from them with grace and favour, when he rejects the greatest things offered by others, doth certainly bespeak believers the special favourites of God. There was but one good word in a whole sentence from Sarah, and that very word is noted and commended by God, 1 Pet. iii. 6. "She called him Lord." There were but some small beginnings, or buddings of grace in young Abijah, and the Lord took special notice thereof, 1 Kings xiv. 13. "Because in him there is found some good thing toward "the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam." Let this be an encouragement to young ones, in whom there are found any breathing desires after Christ: God will not reject them if any sincerity be found in them; a secret groan, uttered to God in sincerity, shall not be despised, Rom. viii. 26. The very bent of a believer's will, when he had no more to offer un-

to God, is an acceptable present, 2. Cor. viii. 11. The very intent, and purpose that lie secretly in the heart of a believer, not yet executed, are accepted with him, 1 Kings viii. 18. "Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house to my name, thou "didst well that it was in thine heart." Thus small things offered to God by believers find acceptance with him, whilst the greatest presents, even solemn assemblies, sabbaths, and prayers from others are rejected: "They are a trouble unto me (saith "God); I am weary to bear them," Isa. i. 14, 15. "Incense "from Sheba, the sweet cane from a far country" are not acceptable, nor sacrifices sweet unto God from other hands, Jer. vi. 20. From all which it appears, beyond doubt, that the persons and duties of believers are accepted in the special favour of God by Jesus Christ: which was the second thing to be spoken to, and brings us to the third general, *viz.*

Thirdly, How Christ, the beloved, procures this benefit for believers? And this he doth four ways.

First, By *the satisfaction of his blood*, Rom. v. 10. "When "we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death "of his Son." No friendship without reconciliation, no reconciliation, but by the blood of Christ: therefore the new and living way, by which believers come unto God with acceptance, is said to be consecrated for us through the veil of Christ's flesh; and hence believers have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19, 20.

Secondly, The favour of God is procured for believers, *by their mystical union with Christ*, whereby they are made "members "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. So that as Adam's posterity stood upon the same terms that he, their natural head, did; so believers, Christ's mystical members, stand in the favour of God, by the favour which Christ their spiritual head hath, John xvii. 33. "I in them, and thou in me, that they "may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that "thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

Thirdly, Believers are brought into favour with God *by Christ becoming their altar*, upon which their persons and duties are all offered up to God: *The altar* sanctifies the gift, Heb. xiii. 10. And this was typified by the legal rite mentioned Luke i. 9, 10. Christ is that golden altar from whence all the prayers of the saints ascend to the throne of God, perfumed with the odours, and incense of his merits, Rev. viii. 34. "And another angel came "and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was "given unto him much incense that he should offer it, with the "prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before

"the throne; and the smoke of the incense which came with "the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the "angel's hand." And thus you see how the persons, and duties of believers are brought into favour and acceptance with God by Jesus Christ. The uses follow.

Infer 1. *If all believers be in favour with God, how great a mercy is it to have the prayers of such engaged on our behalf?* Would we have our business speed in heaven, let us get into favour with God ourselves, and engage the prayers of his people, the favourites of heaven, for us: *Vis unita fortior*, one believer can do much, many can do more: when Daniel designed to get the knowledge of that secret, hinted in the obscure dream of the king, which none but the God of heaven could make known, it is said, Dan. ii. 17. "Then Daniel went to his house, and "made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "his companions; that they would desire mercies of the God "of heaven concerning this secret." The benefits of such assistance in prayer by the help of other favourites with God, is plainly intimated by Jesus Christ to us, Mat. xviii. 19. "If two "of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they "shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in "heaven." God sometimes stands upon a number of voices, for the carrying of some public mercy, because he delighteth in the harmony of many praying souls; and also loves to oblige and gratify many in the answer, and return of the same prayer. I know this usage is grown too formal, and complemental among professors: but certainly it is a great advantage to be sincere with them, who are so with God. St. Bernard prescribing rules for effectual prayer, closes them up with this wish, *et cum talis fueris, memento mei*, when thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

Infer. 2. *If believers be such favourites in heaven, in what a desperate condition is that cause, and those persons, against whom the generality of believers are daily engaged in prayers and cries to heaven?*

Certainly Rome shall feel the dint, and force of the many millions of prayers that are gone up to heaven, from the saints, for many generations: the cries of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, joined with the cries of thousands of believers, will bring down vengeance at last upon the man of sin. It is said, Rev. viii. 4, 5, 6. "That the smoke of the incense which came with "the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the "angel's hand:" And immediately it is added, ver. 5. "And "the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar,

"and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunder-
"ings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and the seven angels,
"which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound."
The prayer of a single saint is sometimes followed with wonderful effects, Psal. xviii. 6, 7. "In my distress I called upon the
"Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his
"temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears: then
"the earth shook and trembled; the foundation also of the hills
"moved and were shaken, because he was wroth:" what then can a thundering legion of such praying souls do? It was said of Luther, *Iste vir potuit cum Deo quicquid voluit*, that man could have of God what he would; his enemies felt the weight of his prayers, and the church of God reaped the benefits thereof. The *queeen of Scots* professed, she was more afraid of the prayers of Mr. Knox *, than of an army of ten thousand men: these were mighty wrestlers with God, however contemned and vilified among their enemies. There will a time come, when God will hear the prayers of his people, who are continually crying in his ears, *How long? Lord, how long?*

Infer. 3. *Let no believer be dejected at the contempts and slightings of men, so long as they stand in the grace and favour of God.* It is the lot of the best men to have the worst usage in the world: those of whom the world was not worthy, were not thought worthy to live in the world, Heb. xi. 38. Paul and his companions were men of choice and excellent spirits; yet saith he, 1 Cor. iv. 12. "Being defamed, we intreat;
"we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring
"of all things unto this day." They are words signifying the basest, most contemptible, and abhorred things among men. How are heaven and earth divided in their judgments and estimations of the saints? Those whom men call filth and dirt, God calls a peculiar treasure, a crown of glory, a royal diadem. But trouble not thyself, believer, for the unjust censures of the blind world; they speak evil of the things they know not: "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself
"is judged of no man," 1 Cor. ii. 14. You can discern the earthliness and baseness of their spirits, they want a faculty to discern the excellency and choiceness of your spirits: he that carries a dark lantern in the night, can discern him that comes against him, and yet is not discerned by him. A courtier regards not a

* Jacobus Songius, the Sorbonne doctor, who wrote the lives of Luther, Knox and Calvin, speaks as if the devil had hired his pen to abuse those precious servants of Christ.

flight in the country, so long as he hath the ear and favour of his prince.

Infer. 4. *Never let believers fear the want of any good thing necessary for them in this world.* The favour of God is the fountain of all blessings, provisions, protections, even of all that you need. He hath promised that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. He that is bountiful to his enemies will not withhold what is good from his friends. The favour of God will not only supply your needs, but protect your persons, Psal. v. 12. "Thou wilt bless "the righteous, with favour wilt thou compass him as with a "shield."

Infer. 5. Hence also it follows, *that the sins of believers are very piercing things to the heart of God.* The unkindness of those whom he hath received into his very bosom, upon whom he hath set his special favour and delight, who are more obliged to him than all the people of the earth beside, O this wounds the very heart of God. What a melting expostulation was that which the Lord used with David, 2 Sam. xii. 7, 8. "I anointed thee "king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, "and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives "into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah, "and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given "unto thee such and such things: wherefore hast thou des-"pised the commandment of the Lord?" But reader, if thou be a reconciled person, a favourite with God, and hast grieved him by any eminent transgression, how should it melt thy heart to hear the Lord thus expostulating with thee: I delivered thee out of the hand of Satan; I gave thee into the bosom of Christ; I have pardoned unto thee millions of sins; I have bestowed upon thee the riches of mercy; my favour hath made thee great; and, as if all this were too little, I have prepared heaven for thee: for which of all these favours dost thou thus requite me?

Infer. 6. *How precious should Jesus Christ be to believers, by whose blood they are ingratiated with God, and by whose intercession they are, and shall for ever be continued in his favour?* When the apostle mentions the believers translation, from the sad state of nature to the blessed privileged state of grace, see what a title he bestows upon Jesus Christ, the purchaser of that privilege, calling him the *dear Son*, Col. i. 13. Not only dear to God, but exceeding dear to believers also. Christ is the favourite in heaven, to him you owe all the preferment there: Take away Christ, and you have no ground on which to stand one

minute in the favour of God. O then let Jesus Christ, the fountain of your honour, be also the object of your love and praise.

Infer. 7. *Estimate by this, the state and condition of a deserted saint, upon whom the favour of God is eclipsed.* If the favour of God be better than life, the hiding of it from a gracious soul must be more bitter than death: Deserted saints have reason to take the first place among all the mourners in the world: The darkness before conversion had, indeed, more danger, but this hath more of trouble. Darkness after light is dismal darkness. Since therefore the case is so sad, let your preventing care be the more; grieve not the good Spirit of God, you prepare but for your own grief in so doing.

Infer. 8. Lastly, *Let this persuade all men to accept Jesus Christ, as ever they expect to be accepted with the Lord themselves.* It is a fearful case, for a man's person, and duties to be rejected of God; to cry and not be heard: And much more terrible to be denied audience in the great and terrible day. Yet, as sure as the scriptures are the sealed and faithful sayings of God, this is no more than what every Christless person must expect in that day, Mat. vii. 22. Luke xiii. 26. trace the history of all times, even as high as Abel, and you shall find that none but ‡ believers did ever find acceptance with God; all experience confirms this great truth, that *they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Reader, if this be thy condition, let me beg thee to ponder the misery of it in a few sad thoughts.

Consider how sad it is to be rejected of God, and forsaken by all creatures at once; what a day of straits thy dying day is like to be, when heaven and earth shall cast thee out together. Be assured whatever thy vain hopes for the present quiet thee withal, this must be thy case, the door of mercy will be shut against thee, no man cometh to the Father but by Christ. Sad was the case of Saul, when he told Samuel, "the Philistines "make war against me, and God is departed from me," 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. The saints will have boldness in the day of judgment, 1 John iv. 17. But thou wilt be a confounded Man; there is yet, blessed be the God of mercy, a capacity and opportunity of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 19. Isa. xxvii. 5. But this can be of no long continuance. O therefore, by all the regard and love you have for the everlasting welfare of your own souls, come to Christ; embrace Christ in the offers of the gospel, that you may be made accepted in the beloved.

‡ If any one desires to know the will of God, let him be a friend of God. *Aug.*

SERMON XVIII.

The Liberty of Believers, opened and ſtated.

www.libtool.com.cn

JOHN viii. 36. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

FROM the 30th verſe of this chapter unto my text, you have an account of the different effects which the words of Chriſt had upon the hearts of his hearers: Some believed, ver. 30. theſe he encourageth to continue in his word, ver. 31. giving them this encouragement, ver. 32. "Ye ſhall know the truth, "and the truth ſhall make you free." Hereat the unbelieving Jews take offence, and commence a quarrel with him, ver. 33. "We be Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man." We are of no ſlaviſh extraction; the blood of Abraham runs in our veins. This ſcornful boaſt of the proud Jews, Chriſt confutes, ver. 34. where he diſtinguiſheth on a twofold bondage; one to men, another to ſin; one civil, another ſpiritual: Whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin, then tells them, ver. 36. "The ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever, but the Son "abideth for ever." Wherein he intimateth two great truths, *viz.* That the ſervants, and ſlaves of ſin may, for a time, enjoy the external privileges of the houſe, or church of God; but it would not be long before the maſter of the houſe will turn them out of door: But if they were once the adopted children of God, then they ſhould abide in the houſe for ever. And this privilege is only to be had by their believing in, and union with the natural Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt: Which brings us fairly to the text; "If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, "ye ſhall be free indeed." In which words we have two parts;

viz. { 1. A ſupppoſition.
2. A conceſſion.

Firſt, A *ſuppoſition*, "If the Son therefore ſhall make you "free," *q. d.* The womb of nature caſt you forth into the world in a ſtate of bondage; in that ſtate you have lived all your days; ſervants to ſin; ſlaves to your luſts; yet freedom is to be obtained: And this freedom is the prerogative belonging to the Son of God to beſtow: "If the Son ſhall make you free."

Secondly, Chriſt's conceſſion upon this ſuppoſition, "Then "ſhall ye be free indeed," *(i. e.)* you ſhall have a real freedom, an excellent, and everlaſting freedom: No conceit only, as that

which you now boast of is: If ever therefore you will be free men indeed, believe in me. Hence note,

Doct. *That interest in Christ sets the soul at liberty from all that bondage whereinto it was subjected in its natural state.*

Believers are the children of the new covenant, the Denizons of Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of them all, Gal. iv. 26. The glorious liberty, *viz.* that which is spiritual and eternal, is the liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21. Christ and none but Christ delivers his people out of the hand of their enemies, Luke i. 74.

www.libtool.com.cn

In the doctrinal part of this point, I must shew you,

First, What believers are not freed from by Jesus Christ in this world.

Secondly, What that bondage is from which every believer is freed by Christ.

Thirdly, What kind of freedom that is which commences upon believing.

Fourthly, Open the excellency of this state of spiritual freedom.

First, What those things are from which believers are not made free in this world: We must not think that our spiritual liberty by Christ, presently brings us into an absolute liberty, in all respects, For,

First, *Christ, doth not free blievers from obedience to the moral law:* It is true we are no more under it as a *covenant* for our *justification:* but we are, and must still be under it, as a *rule* for our *direction*. The matter of the moral law is unchangeable, as the nature of good and evil is, and cannot be abolished except that distinction could be destroyed, Mat. v. 17, 18. The precepts of the law are still urged under the gospel to enforce duties upon us, Eph. vi. 12. It is therefore a vain distinction, invented by Libertines, to say it binds us as *creatures*, not as Christians; or that it binds the unregenerate part, but not the regenerate: but this is a sure truth, that they who are freed from its *penalties*, are still under its *precepts*. Though believers are no more under its *curse*, yet they are still under its *conduct*: The law sends us to Christ to be *justified*, and Christ sends us to the law to be *regulated*. Let the heart of every Christian join therefore with David's in that holy wish, Psal. cxix. 4, 5. "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently; "O that my heart were directed to keep thy statutes." It is excellent when Christians begin to obey the law *from* life, which others obey *for* life; because they *are* justified, not that they *may be* justified. It is also excellent when duties are done in

the strength, and for the honour of Christ, which is evangelical; and not in our own strength, and for our own ends, which is servile, and legal obedience: Had Christ freed us from obedience, such a liberty had been to our loss.

Secondly, Christ hath not freed believers, in this world, from the temptations and assaults of Satan: even those that are freed from his *dominion*, are not free from his *molestation*. It is said indeed, Rom. xvi. 20. "God shall shortly bruise Satan under "your feet:" But mean time he hath power to bruise, and buffet us by his injections, 2 Cor. xii. 7. He now bruiseth Christ's heel, Gen. iii. 15 *(i. e.)* bruiseth him in his tempted, and afflicted members: Though he cannot kill them, yet he can, and doth afflict and fright them, by shooting his fiery darts of temptation among them, Eph. vi. 16. It is true, when the saints are got safe into heaven, they are out of gunshot; there is perfect freedom from all temptation. A believer may then say, O thou enemy, temptations are come to a perpetual end. I am now arrived there, where none of thy fiery darts can reach me: But this freedom is not yet.

Thirdly, Christ hath not yet freed believers, in this world, from the motions of indwelling Sin: These are continually acting, and infesting the holiest of men, Rom. vii. 21, 23, 24. Corruptions, like Canaanites, are still left in the land to be thorns in your eyes, and goads in your sides. Those that boast most of freedom from the motions of sin, have most cause to suspect themselves still under the dominion of sin. All Christ's freemen are troubled with the same complaint: who among them complains not as the apostle did, Rom. vii. 24. "Oh wretched "man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this "death?"

Fourthly, Jesus Christ doth not free believers in this world from inward troubles, and exercises of soul, upon the account of sin. God may let loose Satan, and conscience too, in the way of terrible accusations, which may greatly distress the soul of a believer, and woefully eclipse the light of God's countenance, and break the peace of their souls. Job, Heman, and David were all made free by Christ, yet each of them hath left upon record his bitter complaint upon this account, Job. vii. 19, 20. Psal. lxxxviii. 14, 15, 16. Psal. xxxviii. unto ver. 11.

Fifthly, Christ hath not freed believers, in this world, from the rods of affliction. God in giving us our liberty, doth not abridge his own liberty; Psal. lxxxix. 32. All the children of God are made free, yet what son is there whom the father chasteneth not? Heb. xii. 8. Exemption from affliction is so far from

being the mark of a freeman, that the apostle there makes it the mark of a slave. Bastards not sons, want the discipline and blessing of the rod: To be free from affliction would be no benefit to believers, who receive so many benefits by it.

Sixthly, No believer is freed by Christ from the *stroke* of death, though they are all freed from the *sting* of death, Rom. viii. 10. The bodies of believers are under the same law of mortality with other men, Heb. ix. 27. We must come to the grave as well as others; yea, we must come to it through the same agonies, pangs, and dolours that other men do: The foot of death treads as heavy upon the bodies of the redeemed, as of other men. Believers, indeed, are distinguished by mercy from others, but the distinguishing mercy lies not here. Thus you see what believers are not freed from in this world: If you shall now say, what advantage then hath a believer, or what profit is there in regeneration? I answer,

Secondly, That believers are freed from many great, and sad miseries, and evils, by Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all that hath been said. For,

First, All believers are freed from the *vigour*, and *curse* of the law: The rigorous yoke of the law is broken off from their necks, and the sweet and easy yoke of Jesus Christ put on, Matth. xi. 28. The law required perfect working, under the pain of a curse, Gal. iii. 10. accepted of no short endeavours; admitted no repentance; gave no strength: It is not so now, proportionable strength is given, Phil. iv. 13. Sincerity is reckoned perfection, Job i. 1. Transgression brings not under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. O blessed freedom! when duty becomes delight, and failings hinder not acceptance! This is one part of the blessed freedom of believers.

Secondly, All believers are freed from the guilt of sin; it may *trouble*, but it cannot *condemn* them, Rom. viii. 33. The hand-writing which was against us is cancelled by Christ, nailed to his cross, Colos. ii. 14. When the seal and hand-writing are torn off from the bond, the debtor is made free thereby: Believers are totally freed, Acts xiii. 39. "Justified from all "things:" And finally freed, John v. 24. "They shall never "come into condemnation." O blessed freedom! How sweet is it to lie down in our beds, yea, in our graves, when guilt shall neither be our bed-fellow, nor grave-fellow!

Thirdly, Jesus Christ frees all believers from the *dominion*, as well as the guilt of sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over "you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. "The law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus

"hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. viii. 2. Now who can estimate such a liberty as this? What slavery, what an intolerable drudgery is the service of divers lusts; from all which believers are freed by Christ; not from the *residence*, but from the *reign* of sin. It is with sin in believers as it was with those beasts mentioned Dan. vii. 12. "They had their "dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a "season and time."

Fourthly, Jesus Christ sets all believers free from the power of Satan; in whose right they were by nature, Col. i. 13. they are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. Satan had the possession of them, as a man of his own goods; but Christ dispossesseth that strong man armed, alters the property, and recovers them out of his hand, Luke xi. 21, 22. There are two ways by which Christ frees believers out of Satan's power and possession; namely,

1. By price. | 2. By power.

First, By *price*. The blood of Christ purchaseth believers out of the hands of justice, by satisfying the law for them, which being done, Satan's authority over them falls of course, as the power of a jailor over the prisoner doth, when he hath a legal discharge, Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch then as children are partakers of flesh and blood; he also himself took part of the same, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power "of death, that is, the devil." The cruel tyrant beats, and burdens the poor captive no more after the ransom is once paid, and he thereby actually freed; and therefore Christ delivers his.

Secondly, By *power*. Satan is exceeding unwilling to let go his prey: He is a strong and a malicious enemy: every rescue, and deliverance out of his hand, is a glorious effect of the Almighty power of Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. x. 5. How did our Lord Jesus Christ grapple with Satan at his death, and triumphed over him, Col. ii. 15. O glorious salvation! blessed liberty of the children of God!

Fifthly, Christ frees believers from the poisonous sting and hurt of death: Kill us it can, but hurt us it cannot, 1 Cor xv. 55, 56. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy "victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is "the law: But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory "through our Lord Jesus Christ." If there be not hurt, there should be no horror in death: It is guilt that arms death, both with its hurting and terrifying power. To die in our sins, John viii. 24. To have our bones full of the sins of our youth, which shall lie down with us in the dust, Job xx. 11. To have death,

like a dragon, pulling a poor guilty creature as a prey into its dreadful den, Pſal. xlix. 14. In this lies the danger and horror of death: But from death, as a curſe, and from the grave, as a priſon, Chriſt hath ſet believers at liberty, by ſubmitting to death in their room, by his victorious reſurrection from the grave, as the first-born of the dead: death is diſarmed of its hurting power: The death of believers is but a ſleep in Jeſus.

Thirdly, The next thing to be briefly ſpoken to, is the kind and nature of that freedom and liberty purchaſed, and procured by Chriſt for believers.

Now liberty may be conſidered two ways; *viz.*

1. As civil. | 2. As ſacred.

As to civil freedom, or liberty, it belongs not to our preſent buſineſs: Believers, as to their civil capacity, are not freed from the duties they owe to their ſuperiors. Servants, though believers, are ſtill to be ſubject to their maſters, according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, Eph. vi. 5. nor from obedience to lawful magiſtrates, whom we are to obey in the Lord, Rom. xii. 1, 4. Religion diſſolves not the bonds of civil relations: nor is it to be uſed as an occaſion to the fleſh, 1 Pet. ii. 16. It is not a carnal, but a ſpiritual freedom Chriſt hath purchaſed for us: And this ſpiritual freedom is again to be conſidered, either as,

1. Inchoate. | 2. Conſummate.

The liberty believers have at preſent is but a beginning liberty; they are freed but in part from their ſpiritual enemies: but it is a growing liberty every day, and will be conſummate, and complete at laſt.

To conclude, Chriſtian liberty is either,

1. Privative, or, | 2. Poſitive.

The liberty believers are inveſted with, is of both kinds: They are not only freed from many miſeries, burdens and dangers, but alſo inveſted by Jeſus Chriſt with many royal privileges and invaluable immunities.

Fourthly, And this brings us to the fourth and laſt thing: namely, the properties of this bleſſed freedom which the ſaints enjoy by Jeſus Chriſt; and, if we conſider it duly, it will be found to be,

First, A wonderful liberty, never enough to be admired. How could it be imagined that ever thoſe who owed unto God more than ever they could pay by their own eternal ſufferings; thoſe that were under the dreadful curſe, and condemnation of the law, in the power and poſſeſſion of Satan the ſtrong man armed; thoſe that were bound with ſo many chains in their ſpiritual priſon; their underſtanding bound with ignorance, their wills with

obstinacy, their hearts with impenetrable hardness, their affections with a thousand bewitching vanities, that slight their state of slavery so much, as industriously to oppose all instruments and means of deliverance; for such persons to be set at liberty, notwithstanding all this, is the wonder of wonders, and will be deservedly marvellous in the eyes of believers for ever.

Secondly, The freedom of believers is a peculiar freedom; a liberty which few obtain; the generality abiding still in bondage to Satan, who, from the multitude of his subjects, is stiled *the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Believers in scripture are often called a remnant, which is but a small part of the whole piece: The more cause have the people of God to admire distinguishing mercy. How many nobles and great ones of the world are but royal slaves to Satan, and their own lusts!

Thirdly, The liberty of believers is a liberty dearly purchased by the blood of Christ. What that captain said, Acts xxii. 28. "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," may be much more said of the believers freedom: It was not silver or gold; but the precious blood of Christ that purchased it, 1 Pet. i. 18.

Fourthly, The freedom and liberty of believers is a growing and encreasing liberty; they get more and more out of the power of sin, and nearer still to their complete salvation every day, Rom. xiii. 11. The body of sin dieth daily in them: they are said to be crucified with Christ: the strength of sin abates continually in them, after the manner of crucified persons, who die a slow, but sure death: And look in what degree the power of sin abates, proportionably their spiritual liberty encreases upon them.

Fifthly, The freedom of believers is a comfortable freedom: the apostle comforts Christians of the lowest rank, poor servants, with this consideration, 1 Cor. vii. 22. "He that is called in the "Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman," *q. d.* Let not the meanest of your outward condition, which is a state of subjection and dependance, a state of poverty and contempt, at all trouble you: you are the Lord's freemen, of precious account in his eyes. O it is a comfortable liberty!

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, It is a perpetual and final freedom; they that are once freed by Christ, have their manumission, and final discharge from that state of bondage they were in before: sin shall never have dominion over them any more: it may tempt them, and trouble them, but shall never more rule and govern them, Acts xxvi. 18. And thus you see what a glorious liberty the liberty of believers is.

The improvement whereof will be in the following inferences.

Infer. 1. *How rational is the Joy of Christians, above the joy*

of all others in the world? Shall not the captive rejoice in his recovered liberty? the very birds of the air (as one obſerves) had rather be at liberty in the woods, though lean and hungry, than in a golden cage with the richeſt fare: every creature naturally prizes it; none more than believers, who have felt the burden and bondage of corruption: who in the days of their firſt illumination and conviction have poured out many groans and tears for this mercy. What was ſaid of the captive people of God in Babylon, excellently ſhadows forth the ſtate of God's people under ſpiritual bondage, with the way and manner of their deliverance from it, Zech. ix. 11. "By the blood of the covenant I "have ſent forth thy priſoners out of the pit, wherein is no wa-"ter." Believers are delivered by the blood of Chriſt, out of a worſe pit than that of Babylon; and look, as the tribes in their return from thence were overwhelmed with joy and aſtoniſhment, Pſal. cxxvi. 1, 2. "When the Lord turned again the "captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream: Then was "our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging." They were overwhelmed with the ſenſe of the mercy: So ſhould it be with the people of God. It is ſaid, Luke xv. 24. when the prodigal ſon (there made the emblem of a returning, converting ſinner) was returned again to his father's houſe, that there was heard muſic and dancing, mirth and feaſting in that houſe. The angels in heaven rejoice when a ſoul is recovered out of the power of Satan: And ſhall not the recovered ſoul, immediately concerned in the mercy, greatly rejoice? Yea, let them rejoice in the Lord, and let no earthly trouble or affliction ever have power to interrupt their joy, for a moment, after ſuch a deliverance as this.

Infer. 2. *How unreaſonable, and wholly inexcuſable is the ſin of apoſtacy from Jeſus Chriſt?* What is it but for a delivered captive to put his feet again into the ſhackles; his hands into the manacles; his neck into the iron yoke, from which he hath been delivered? 'Tis ſaid, Mat. xii. 44, 45. "When the un-"clean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry "places, ſeeking reſt and findeth none: Then he ſaith, I will "return into mine houſe from whence I came out; and when "he is come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſhed; then "goeth he, and taketh with him ſeven other ſpirits more wicked "than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there, and the laſt "ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt." Even as a priſoner that hath eſcaped, and is again recovered, is loaded with double irons. Let the people of God be content to run any hazard, endure any difficulties in the way of religion, rather than return

again into their former bondage, to sin and Satan. O Christian! if ever God gave thee a sight, and a sense of the misery and danger of thy natural state, if ever thou hast felt the pangs of a labouring, and distressed conscience, and, after all this, tasted the unspeakable sweetness of the peace and rest that are in Christ, thou wilt rather choose to die ten thousand deaths, than to forsake Christ, and go back again into that sad condition.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 3. *How suitable, and well becoming is a free spirit in believers, to their state of liberty and freedom?* Christ hath made your condition free, O let the temper and frame of your hearts be free also; do all that you do for God with a spirit of freedom; not by constraint, but willingly. Methinks, Christians, the new nature that is in you should stand for a command, and be instead of all arguments that use to work upon the hopes, and fears of other men. See how all creatures work according to the principle of their natures. You need not command a mother to draw forth her breasts to a sucking child; nature itself teaches and prompts to that. You need not bid the sea ebb and flow at the stated hours. O Christian! why should thy heart need any other argument, than its own spiritual inclination, to keep its stated times and seasons of communion with God? Let none of God's commandments be grievous to you: let not thine heart need dragging and forcing to its own benefit and advantage. Whatever you do for God, do it chearfully; and whatever you suffer for God, suffer it chearfully. It was a brave spirit which actuated holy Paul, "I am ready, (saith he), "not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the "name of the Lord Jesus," Acts xxi. 13.

Infer. 4. *Let no man wonder at the enmity and opposition of Satan to the preaching of the gospel:* for by the gospel it is that souls are recovered out of his power, Acts xxvi. 18. 'Tis the express work of ministers "to turn men from darkness to light, "and from the power of Satan unto God." Satan (as one saith) is a great and jealous prince: he will never endure to have liberty proclaimed by the ministers of Christ within his dominions. And, indeed, what is it less, when the gospel is preached in power, but as it were by beat of drum, and sound of trumpet, to proclaim liberty, spiritual, sweet, and everlastaing liberty, to every soul that is made sensible of the bondage of corruption and cruel servitude of Satan, and will now come over to Jesus Christ? And oh what numbers and multitudes of prisoners have broken loose from Satan at one proclamation of Christ, Acts ii. 41. But Satan owes the servants of Christ a spite for this, and will be sure to pay them, if ever they come within his

reach; persecution is the genius of the gospel, and follows it as the shadow doth the body.

Infer. 5. How careful should Christians be to maintain their spiritual liberty in all and every point therefore! "stand fast (saith "Paul) in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and "be not again intangled in the yoke of bondage," Gal. v. 1. And again, "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of "men." 'Tis Christ's prerogative to prescribe the rules of his own house; he hath given no man dominion over your faith, 2 Cor. i. 24. One man is no rule to another, but the word of Christ is a rule to all: follow not the holiest of men one step farther than they follow Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 4. Man is an ambitious creature, naturally affecting dominion; and dominion over the mind rather than over the body. To give law to others, feeds pride in himself: so far as any man brings the word of Christ to warrant his injunctions, so far we are to obey, and no farther: Christ is your Lord and Lawgiver.

Inference 6. *Lastly*, Let this encourage and persuade sinners to come to Christ; for with him is sweet liberty for poor captives. Oh that you did but know what a blessed state Jesus Christ would bring you into! "Come unto me (saith he) ye that "labour and are heavy laden;" and what encouragement doth he give to comers? Why this, "My yoke is easy, and my burden "is light." The devil persuades you, that the ways of obedience and strict godliness are a perfect bondage; but, if ever God regenerate you, you will find his ways, "ways of pleasantness, and "all his paths peace: you will rejoice in the way of his com-"mandments as much as in all riches:" you will find the worst work Christ puts you about, even suffering work, sweeter than all the pleasures that ever you found in sin. O therefore open your hearts at the call of the gospel: Come unto Christ, *then shall you be free indeed.*

SERMON XIX.

The Saints coming home to God, by Reconciliation, and Glorification, opened and applied.

1 PET. iii. 18. *For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*

THE scope of the apostle in this place is to prepare, and fortify Christians for a day of suffering. In order to

their chearful sustaining whereof, he prescribeth two excellent rules of mighty use for all suffering Christians.

First, To get a good conscience within them, ver. 16, 17. *hic murus aheneus esto.*

Secondly, To set the example of Christ's sufferings before them, ver. 18. "For Christ hath once suffered for sinners:" the sufferings of Christ for us, is the great motive engaging Christians to suffer chearfully for him.

www.libtool.com.cn

In the words before us we have,

First, The sufficiency and fulness of Christ's sufferings intimated in that particle [once]; Christ needs to suffer no more, having finished and compleated that whole work at once.

Secondly, The meritorious cause of the sufferings of Christ, and that is sin, *Christ once suffered for sins;* not his own sins, but ours: as it follows in the next clause, which is the third thing here observable, *viz.*

Thirdly, The admirable grace, and unexampled love of Christ to us sinners, *the just for the unjust;* in which words the substitution of Christ in the room and place of sinners, the vicegerence of his death is plainly expressed. Christ died not only *nostro bono*, for our good, but also *nostro loco*, in our stead.

Fourthly, Here is also the final cause, or design and scope of the sufferings of Christ, which was *to bring us to God.*

Fifthly, Here is also the issue of the sufferings of Christ, which was the death of Christ in the flesh, and the quickning of Christ after death by the Spirit. Many excellent observations are lodged in the bosom of this scripture; all which I must pass over in silence at this time, and confine my discourse to the final cause of the sufferings of Christ, namely, *that he might bring us to God:* where the observation will be plainly and briefly this.

Doct. *That the end of Christ's cursed death, and bitter sufferings, was to bring all those for whom he died unto God.*

In the explication and preparation of this point for use, two things must be spoken unto, *viz.*

1. What Christ's bringing us to God imports?

2. What influence the death of Christ hath upon this design of bringing us to God?

First, What Christ's bringing us to God imports? And certainly there be many great and excellent things contained in this expression: more generally it notes our state of reconciliation, and our state of glorification. By reconciliation we are brought nigh to God, Eph. ii. 13. "Ye are made nigh," (*i. e.*) reconciled, "by the blood of Christ," Heb. xii. 22, 23. we are said

"to come to God the Judge of all." By reconciliation we are brought nigh unto God now; by glorification we shall be brought home to God hereafter, 1 Thes. iv. 17. "We shall be ever "with the Lord." But more particularly this phrase, "that "he might bring us to God," imports,

First, That the chief happiness of man consisteth in the enjoyment of God: that the creature hath as necessary dependance upon God for happiness, as the stream hath upon the fountain, or the image in the glass upon the face of him that looks into it. For as the sum of the creatures misery lies in this, *depart from me*; separation from God is the principal part of damnation: so, on the contrary, the chief happiness of the creature consisteth in the enjoyment, and blessed vision of God, 1 John iii. 2. Psal. xvii. 15. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy like-"ness."

Secondly, It implies man's revolt and apostacy from God, Eph. ii. 12. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometime afar off, "are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Those whom Christ bringeth unto God, were before afar off from him, both in state and condition, and in temper and disposition: we were lost creatures, and had no desire to return to God *: The prodigal was said to go into a far country, Luke xv. 30.

Thirdly, Christ's bringing us to God, implies our inability to return to God of ourselves: we must be brought back by Christ, or perish for ever in a state of separation from God: the lost sheep is made the emblem of the lost sinner, Luke xv. 5. The sheep returns not to the fold of itself, but the shepherd seeks it, finds it, and carries it back upon his shoulders. And the apostle plainly tells us, Rom. v. 6. That when *we were without strength (i. e.)* any ability to recover, help, or save ourselves, *in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Fourthly, Christ's bringing us to God, evidently implies this, that God's unsatisfied justice was once the great bar betwixt him and man. Man can have no access to God but by Christ: Christ brings us to God by no other way but the way of satisfaction by his blood: "He hath suffered for sins, the just for "the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Better ten thousand worlds should perish for ever, than God should lose the honour of his justice. This great *obex*, or bar to our enjoyment of God, is effectually removed by the death of Christ;

* Although the faculties of the soul were not extinguished by the fall; yet their inclination to spiritual objects was wholly lost. *Zeanem. on the image of God.*

whereby God's justice is not only fully satisfied, but highly honoured and glorified, Rom. iii. 24. And so the way by which we are brought to God is again opened (to the wonder and joy of all believers) by the blood and sufferings of Christ.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, It shews us the peculiar happiness and privilege of believers above all people in the world: these only are they which shall be brought to God by Jesus Christ in a reconciled state: others, indeed, shall be brought to God as a Judge, to be condemned by him: believers only are brought to God in the Mediator's hand, as a reconciled Father, to be made blessed for ever in the enjoyment of him: every believer is brought singly to God at his death, Luke xvi. 22. And all believers shall be jointly and solemnly presented to God in the great day, Col. i. 22. Jude 24. They shall be all presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Now the privilege of believers in that day will lie in divers things.

First, That they shall be all brought to God together. This will be the general assembly mentioned, Heb. xii. 22. There shall be a collection of all believers, in all ages of the world, into one blessed assembly: they shall come from the *east*, and *west*, and *north*, and *south*, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, Luke xiii. 29. O what a glorious train will be seen following the Redeemer in that day!

Secondly, As all the saints shall be collected into one body; so they shall be all brought, or presented unto God, faultless and without blemish, Jude 24. "A glorious church, without spot "or wrinkle, or any such thing," Eph. v. 27. For this is the general assembly of the spirits of just men that are made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. All sin was perfectly separated from them, when death had separated their souls and bodies.

Thirdly, In this lies the privilege of believers, that as they shall be all brought together, and that in a state of absolute purity, and perfection, so they shall be all brought to God: they shall see his face, in the vision whereof is "fulness of joy, and "at whose right-hand are pleasures for evermore," Psal. xvi. 11. The objective blessedness of the saints consisteth in their fruition of God, Psal. lxxii. 25. To see God in his word and works, is the happiness of the saints on earth; but to see him face to face, will be the fulness of their blessedness in heaven, 1 John iii. 2. This is that intuitive, transforming, and sanctifying vision, of which the scripture frequently speaks, Psal. xvii. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Rev. vii. 17.

Fourthly, To be brought unto God, must needs imply a state of perfect joy, and highest delight. So speaks the apostle, Jude

14. Christ shall present, or bring them to God with exceeding joy. And more fully the joy of this day is expressed, Psal. xlv. 15. "With joy and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall "enter into the king's palace." It will be a day of universal joy, when all the saints are brought home to God in a perfected state. For,

www.libtool.com.cn

1. God the Father will rejoice when Christ brings home that precious number of his elect, whom he redeemed by his blood: he rejoiceth in them now, though imperfect, and under many distasteful corruptions and weaknesses, Zeph. iii. 17. How much more will he rejoice in them when Christ presents them without spot or wrinkle to him, Eph. v. 27.

2. Jesus Christ will exceedingly rejoice; it will be the day of the gladness, and satisfaction of his heart: for now, and not till now, he receives his mystical fulness, Col. i. 24. beholds all the blessed issues of his death, which connot but give him unspeakable contentment, Isa. liii. 11. "He shall see of the travail of "his soul, and shall be satisfied."

3. The day in which believers are brought home to God, will be a day of unspeakable joy to the Holy Spirit of God himself. For unto this, all his sanctifying designs, in this world, had respect: to this day he sealed them: towards this day he stirred up desires, and groanings that cannot be uttered, in their hearts, Eph. iv. 30. Rom. viii. 26. Thus the great and blessed persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, will rejoice in the bringing home of the elect to God. For as it is the greatest joy to a man to see the designs which his heart hath been long projecting, and intently set upon, by an orderly conduct, at last brought to the happy issue he first aimed at; much more will it be so here: the counsel, and hand of each person being deeply concerned in this blessed design.

4. The angels of God will rejoice at the bringing home of believers to him: the spirits of just men made perfect, will be united in one general assembly, with an innumerable company of angels, Heb. ii. 22. Great is the affection and love of angels to redeemed ones: they greatly rejoiced at the incarnation of Christ for them, Luke ii. 13. They greatly delighted to pry into the mystery of their redemption, 1 Pet. i. 12. They were marvellously delighted at their conversion, which was the day of their espousals to Christ, Luke xv. 10. They have been tender and careful over them, and very serviceable to them in this world, Heb. i. 14. and therefore cannot but rejoice exceedingly, to see them all brought home in safety to their father's house.

5. To conclude, Christ's bringing home all believers unto God,

will be matter of unspeakable joy to themselves: for, whatever knowledge and acquaintance they had with God here, whatever sights of faith they had of heaven, and the glory to come, in this world; yet the sight of God and Christ the redeemer, will be an unspeakable surprize to them in that day. This will be the day of relieving all their wants, the day of satisfaction to all their desires; for now they are come where they would be, arrived at the very desires of their souls.

Secondly, In the *last* place, let it be considered, what influence the death of Christ hath upon this design, and you shall find it much every way. In two things especially, the death of Christ hath a blessed causality and influence in this matter, *viz.*

1. It effectually removes all obstacles to it.
2. It purchaseth (as a price) their title to it.

First, The death of Christ removes all obstacles out of the way of his mercy: such were the bars hindering our access to God as nothing but the death of Christ could remove, and thereby open a way for believers to come to God. The guilt of sin barred us from his gracious presence, Rom. i. 2, 3. Hos. xiv. 2. The filth of sin excluded us from God, Hab. i. 23. Heb. xii. 14. The enmity of our nature perfectly stopped up our way to God, Col. i. 21. Rom. viii. 7. by reason hereof fallen man hath no desire to come unto God, Job xxi. 14. The justice of God, like a flaming sword, turning every way, kept all men from access to God. And *Lastly*, Satan, that malicious and armed adversary, lay as a lion in the way to God, 2 Pet. v. 8. Oh with what strong bars were the gates of heaven shut against our souls! The way of God was chained up with such difficulties, as none but Christ was able to remove; and he by death hath effectually removed them all: The way is now open, even the new and the living way, consecrated for us by his blood. The death of Christ effectually removes the guilt of sin, 1 Pet. ii. 24. washes off the filth of sin, 1 John v. 6. takes away the enmity of nature, Col. i. 20, 21. satisfies all the demands of justice, Rom. iii. 25, 26. hath broken all the power of Satan, Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14. and consequently the way to God is effectually and fully opened to believers by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 20.

Secondly, The blood of Christ purchased for believers their right and title to this privilege, Gal. iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," *i. e.* both the relation and inheritance of sons. There was value and

worth enough in the precious blood of Christ, not only to pay all our debts to justice, but, over and above the payment of our debts, to purchase for us this invaluable privilege. We must put this unspeakable mercy of being brought to God, as my text puts it, upon the account, and to the score of the death of Christ: no believer had ever tasted the sweetness of such a mercy, if Christ had not tasted the bitterness of death for him. The use of all you will have in the following deductions of truth.

www.libtool.com.cn

Deduction 1. *Great is the preciousness and worth of souls, that the life of Christ should be given to redeem and recover them to God*: As God laid out his thoughts and counsel, from eternity, upon them, to project the way and method of their salvation; so the Lord Jesus in pursuance of that blessed design, came from the bosom of the Father, and spilt his invaluable blood, to bring them to God. No wise man expends vast sums to bring home trifling commodities: how cheap soever our souls are in our estimation, it is evident by this they are of precious esteem in the eyes of Christ.

Deduction 2. *Redeemed souls must expect no rest, or satisfaction on this side heaven, and the full enjoyment of God.* The life of a believer in this world, is a life of motion and expectation: they are now coming to God, 1 Pet. ii. 4. God, you see, is the centre and rest of their souls, Heb. iv. 9. As the rivers cannot rest till they pour themselves into the bosom of the sea, so neither can renewed souls find rest till they come into the bosom of God *. There are four things which do, and will break the rest, and disturb the souls of believers in this world; afflictions, temptations, corruptions, and absence from God. If the three former causes of disquietness were totally removed, so that a believer were placed in such a condition upon earth, where no affliction should disturb him, no temptation trouble him, no corruption defile or grieve him, yet his very absence from God must still keep him restless and unsatisfied; 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilst we are at home in the body, yet absent from the Lord."

Deduction 3. *What sweet and pleasant thoughts should all believers have of death!* When they die, and never till they die, shall they be fully brought home to God. Death to the saints, is the door by which they enter into the enjoyment of God: the dying Christian is almost at home, yet a few pangs and agonies more, and then he is come to God, in whose presence

* Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are unsatisfied till they rest in thee. *Aug. Confes. lib.* 1. *c.* 1.

is the fulness of joy. "I desire, saith Paul, to depart, and to "be with Christ, which is far better," Phil. i. 23. It should not affright us to be brought to death, the king of terrors, so long as it is the office of death to bring us to God. That dreaming opinion of the soul sleeping after death, is as ungrounded as it is uncomfortable: the same day we loose from this shore, we shall be landed upon the blessed shore, were we shall see and enjoy God for ever. O, if the friends of dead believers did but understand where, and with whom their souls are, whilst they are mourning over their bodies, certainly a few believing thoughts of this would quickly dry up their tears, and fill the house of mourning with voices of praise and thanksgiving!

Deduction 4. *How comfortable and sweet should the converses and communication of Christians be with one another, in this world!* Christ is bringing them all to God, through this vale of tears; they are now in the way to him; all bound for heaven; going home to God, to their everlasting rest in glory: every day, every hour, every duty brings them nearer and nearer to their journey's end; Rom. xiii. 11. "Now, (saith the "apostle), is our salvation nearer than when we believed." O what manner of heavenly communications, and ravishing discourses should believers have with each other, as they walk by the way! O what pleasant and delightful converse should they have with one another about the place and state whither Christ is bringing them, and where they shall shortly be! What ravishing transporting, transforming visions they shall have that day they are brought home to God! How surprizingly glorious to them the sight of Jesus Christ will be, who died for them to bring them unto God! how should such discourses as these, shorten and sweeten their passage through this world; strengthen and encourage the dejected and feeble-minded, and exceedingly honour and adorn their profession! Thus lived the believers of old; Heb. xi. 9, 10. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a "strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, "the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is "God." But, alas! most Christians are either entangled in the cares and troubles, or so ensnared by the delights and pleasures which almost continually divert and take up their thoughts by the way, that there is but little room for any discourses of Christ and heaven, among many of them: but certainly this would be as much your interest as your duty. When the apostle had entertained the Thessalonians with a lovely discourse of their meet-

ing the Lord in the air, and being ever with the Lord, he charges it upon them as their great duty, to comfort one another with those words, 1 Theff. iv. 17, 18.

Deduction 5. *How unreasonable are the dejections of believers, upon the account of those troubles which they meet with in this world!* It is true, afflictions of all kinds do attend believers in their way to God; through many tribulations we must enter into that kingdom. But what then; must we despond and droop under them as other men? Surely no: If afflictions be the way through which you must come to God, then never be discouraged at affliction; troubles and afflictions are of excellent use, under the blessings of the Spirit, to further Christ's great design of bringing you to God. How often would you turn out of that way which leads to God, if he did not hedge up your way with thorns, Hosea ii. 6. Doubtless when you come home to God, you shall find you have been much beholden, (it may be a great deal more), to your troubles than to your comforts, for bringing you thither: however, the sweetness of the end will infinitely more than recompense the sorrows and troubles of the way: nor are they worth to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you, Rom. viii. 18.

Deduction 6. *How much are all believers obliged, in point of interest, to follow Jesus Christ whithersoever he goes!* Thus are the saints described, Rev. xiv. 4. "These are they which follow "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from "among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb." If it be the design of Christ to bring us to God, then certainly it is our duty to follow Christ in all the paths of active and passive obedience through which he now leads us, as ever we expect to be brought home to God at last: "We are made par-"takers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence "stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14. If we have followed him, through many sufferings and troubles, and shall turn away from him at last, we lose all that we have wrought, and suffered in religion, and shall never reach home to God at last. The crown of life belongs only to them who are faithful to the death.

Deduction 7. *Let all that desire, or expect to come unto God hereafter, come to Christ by faith now.* There is no other way to the Father, but by Christ; no other way to Christ but faith. How vain therefore are the hopes and expectations of all unbelievers? Be assured of this great truth, Death shall bring you to God as an avenging Judge, if Christ do not bring you now to God as a reconciled Father: without holiness no man shall see God: the door of hope is shut against all christless persons, John

xiv. 6. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." O what a sweet voice cometh down from heaven to your souls this day, saying, As ever you expect or hope to come to God, and enjoy the blessing that is here, come unto Christ, obey his calls, give up yourselves to his conduct and government, and you shall certainly be brought to God! As sure as you shall now be brought to Jesus Christ by spiritual union, so sure shall you be brought to God in full fruition.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the new and living way to the Father.

And thus I have finished the motives drawn from the titles and benefits of Christ, serving to enforce and quicken the great gospel exhortation of coming to, and effectually applying the Lord Jesus Christ in the way of faith. O that the blessings of the Spirit might follow these calls, and fix these considerations as nails in sure places! But seeing the great hindrance and obstruction to faith is the false opinion and persuasion of most unregenerate men, that they are already in Christ; my next work therefore shall be, in a second use of conviction, to undeceive men in that matter; and that, by shewing them the undoubted certainty of these two things:

First, That there is no coming, ordinarily, to Christ without the application of the law to our consciences, in a way of effectual conviction.

Secondly, Nor by that neither, without the teachings of God, in the way of spiritual illumination. The first of these will be fully confirmed and opened in

* *

SERMON XX.

The great usefulness of the Law or Word of God, in order to the Application of Christ.

ROM. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

THE scope of the apostle in this epistle, and more particularly in this chapter, is to state the due use and excellency of the law, which he doth accordingly.

First, By denying to it a power to justify us, which is the peculiar honour of Christ.

Secondly, By ascribing to it a power to convince us, and so prepare us for Christ.

Neither attributing to it more honour than belongeth to it, nor yet detracting from it that honour and usefulness which God hath given it. It cannot make us righteous, but it can convince us that we are unrighteous; it cannot heal, but it can open and discover the wounds that sin hath given us; which he proves in this place by an argument drawn from his own experience, confirmed also by the general experience of believers, in whose persons and names we must here understand him to speak; "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Wherein three particulars are very observable.

First, The opinion Paul had, and all unregenerate men have of themselves before conversion: *I was alive once.* By *life*, understand here liveliness, chearfulness, and confidence of his good estate and condition: he was full of vain hope, false joy, and presumptuous confidence, a very brisk and jovial man.

Secondly, The sense and opinion he had, and all others will have of themselves, if ever they come under the regenerating work of the Spirit in his ordinary method of working: *I died.* The death he here speaks of, stands opposed to that life before mentioned; and signifies the sorrows, fears, and tremblings that seized upon his soul, when his state and temper were upon the change: the apprehensions he then had of his condition struck him home to the heart, and damped all his carnal mirth: *I died.*

Thirdly, The ground and reason of this wonderful alteration and change of his judgment, and apprehension of his own condition; *the commandment came, and sin revived:* The commandment came, *i. e.* it came home to my conscience, it was fixed with a divine and mighty efficacy upon my heart: the commandment was come before by way of promulgation, and the literal knowledge of it: but it never came, till now, in the spiritual sense, and convincing power to his soul: though he had often read, and heard the law before, yet he never clearly understood the meaning and extent, he never felt the mighty efficacy thereof upon his heart before; it so came at this time, as it never came before. From hence the observations are,

Doct. 1. *That unregenerate persons are generally full of groundless confidence, and chearfulness, though their condition be sad and miserable.*

Doct. 2. *That there is a mighty efficacy in the word or law of God, to kill vain confidence, and quench carnal mirth in the hearts of men, when God sets it home upon their consciences.*

We shall take both these points under consideration, Lord, prove them to the design in hand.

Doct. 1. *That unregenerate persons are generally fraught with groundless confidence, and chearfulness, though their condition be sad and miserable;* Rev. iii. 17. Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: *This is the very life that unregenerate men do live.*

In opening whereof, I shall shew you,

1. What is the life of the unregenerate.
2. What maintains that life.
3. How it appears that this is the life the generality of the world do live.
4. the danger of living such a life as this: and then apply it.

First, What is the life of the unregenerate, and wherein it consists? Now there being, among others, three things in which the life of the unregenerate doth principally consist, *viz.*

Carnal security,
Presumptuous hope, and
False joy,

Of these briefly in their order.

First, There is in unregenerate men a great deal of carnal security; they dread no danger; Luke xi. 21. "When a strong "man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are at peace:" There is generally a great stillness and silence in the consciences of such men: when others, in a better condition, are watching and trembling, they sleep securely; so they live, and so oftimes they die, Psal. lxxiii. 4. "They have no bonds in their death," [Hebrew, no knots], no difficulties that puzzle them. It is true, the consciences of few men are so perfectly stupified, but that, some time or other, they twing and gird them; but it seldom works to that height, or continues with them so long, as to give any considerable interruption to their carnal peace and quietness.

Secondly, The life of the unregenerate consisteth in presumptuous hope: this is the very foundation of their carnal security. So Christ tells the Jews, John viii. 54, 45. "Of whom ye say "that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him." The world is full of hope without a promise, which is but as a spider's web, when a stress comes to be laid upon it, Job xxvii. 8. Unregenerate men are said indeed to be without hope, Ephes. ii. 12. but the meaning is, they are without any solid, well-grounded hope; for in scripture-account, vain hope is no hope, except it be a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. A hope flowing from u-

nion with Christ, Col. i. 27. A hope nourished by experience, Rom. v. 4. A hope for which a man can give a reason, 1 Pet. iii. 15. A hope that puts men upon heart-purifying endeavours, 1 John iii. 3. It is in the account of God a cypher, a vanity, not deserving the name of hope; and yet such a groundless, dead, Christless, irrational, idle hope is that which the unregenerate live upon.

Thirdly, The life of the unregenerate consisteth in false joy, the immediate offspring of ungrounded hope, Mat. xiii. 20. The stony ground receive the word with joy.

There are two sorts of joy upon which the unregenerate live, *viz.*

1. A sensitive joy in things carnal.
2. A delusive joy in things spiritual.

They rejoice in corn, wine, and oil, in their estates and children, in the pleasant fruitions of the creature; yea, and they rejoice also in Christ and the promises, in heaven and in glory: with all which they have just such a kind of communion, as a man hath in a dream with a full feast, and curious music; and just so their joy will vanish when they awake. Now these three, *security*, *hope*, and *joy*, make up the livelihood of the carnal world.

Secondly, Next it concerns us to enquire what are the things that maintain and support this security, hope and joy in the hearts of unregenerate men; and if we consider duly, we shall find church-privileges, natural ignorance, false evidences of the love of God, slight workings of the gospel, self-love, comparing themselves with the more profane, and Satan's policy managing all these in order to their eternal ruin, are so many springs to feed and maintain this life of delusion in the unregenerate.

1. *First*, Church privileges lay the foundation to this strong delusion. Thus the Jews deceived themselves, saying in their hearts, "We have Abraham for our father," Mat. iii. 9. This propt up the vain hopes that Abraham's blood ran in their veins, though Abraham's faith and obedience never wrought in their hearts.

2. *Secondly*, Natural ignorance; this keeps all in peace: they that see not, fear not. There are but two ways to quiet the hearts of men about their spiritual and eternal concernments, *viz. the way of assurance* and faith, or, *the way of ignorance* and self-deceit: by the one we are put beyond danger, by the other beyond fear, though the danger be greater. Satan could never quiet men, if he did not first blind them.

3. *Thirdly*, False evidences of the love of God is another spring feeding this security, vain hope and false joy in the hearts of men; see the power of it to hush and still the conscience,

Mat. vii. 22. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, "have we not prophesied in thy name?" *&c.* The things upon which they built their evidence and confidence, were external things in religion; yet they had a quieting power upon them, as if they had been the best evidences in the world.

4. *Fourthly*, Slight workings of the gospel; such are transient motions of the affections under the word, Heb. vi. 8. the working of their desires about spiritual objects, John vi. 34. Mat. xxv. 8. the external change, and reformation of their ways, Mat. xii. 43. all which serve to nourish the vain hopes of the unregenerate.

Fifthly, Self-love is an apparent reason and ground of security and false hope, Mat. vii. 3. It makes a man to overlook great evils in himself, whilst he is sharp-sighted to discover and censure lesser evils in others: self-love takes away the sight of sin, by bringing it too near the eye.

6. *Sixthly*, Mens comparing themselves with those that are more profane and grosly wicked than themselves, serves notably to quiet and hush the conscience asleep; "God, I thank thee, "(said the Pharisee), I am not as other men, or as this publi-"can." O what a saint did he seem to himself, when he stood by those that were more externally wicked.

7. *Seventhly*, and *lastly*, The policy of Satan to manage all these things to the blinding and ruining of the souls of men, is another great reason they live so securely and pleasantly as they do, in a state of so much danger and misery, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that "believe not."

Thirdly, You have seen what the life of the unregenerate is, and what maintains that life. In the next place, I shall give you evidence that this is the life the generality of the world do live; a life of carnal security, vain hope, and false joy: this will evidently appear, if we consider,

First, The activity and livelinesS of mens spirits in pursuit of the world. O how lively and vigorous are their hearts in the the management of earthly designs! Psal. vi. 4. "Who will "shew us any good?" The world eats up their hearts, time, and strength. Now this could never be, if their eyes were but opened to see the danger, and misery their souls are in. How few designs for the world run in the thoughts of a condemned man? O if God had ever made the light of conviction to shine into their consciences, certainly the temptations would lie the quite contrary way, even in too great a neglect of things of this

life! But this briskness and liveliness plainly shew the great security which is upon most men.

Secondly, The marvellous quietness and stillness that is in the thoughts and consciences of men, about their everlasting concernments, plainly shews this to be the life of the unregenerate! How few scruples, doubts, or fears shall you hear from them? How many years may a man live in carnal families, before he shall hear such a question as this seriously propounded, "What "shall I do to be saved?" There are no questions in their lips, because no fear or sense of danger in their hearts.

Thirdly, The general contentedness, and profest willingness of carnal men to die, give clear evidence that such a life of security, and vain hope is the life they live; "Like sheep they are laid in the grave, Psal. xlix. 14. O how quiet and still are their consciences, when there are but a few breaths more between them and everlasting burnings! Had God opened their eyes to apprehend the consequences of death, and what follows the *pale horse*, Rev. vi. 8. it were impossible but that every unregenerate man should make that bed on which he dies, shake and tremble under him.

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, The low esteem men have for Christ, and the total neglect of, at least the mere trifling with, those duties in which he is to be found, plainly discover this stupid, secure life to be the life that the generality of the world do live: for were men sensible of the disease of sin, there could be no quieting them without "Christ the physician," Phil. iii. 8. All the business they have to do in this world could never keep them from their knees, or make them strangers to their closets: all which, and much more that might be said of like nature, gives too full and clear proof to this sad assertion, that this is the life the unregenerate world generally lives.

Fourthly, In the last place, I would speak a few words to discover the danger of such a life, as hath been described; to which purpose, let the following brief hints be seriously minded.

First, By these things souls are inevitably betrayed into hell, and eternal ruin; this blinding is in order to damning, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; "whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded." Those that are turned over into eternal death, are thus generally hoodwinked and blinded in order thereunto, Isa. vi. 9, 10. "And he said "go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not: "and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this "people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; "lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and

"understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed."

Secondly, As damning is the event of blinding, so nothing makes hell a more terrible surprize to the soul than this doth: By this means the wrath of God is felt before its danger be apprehended; a man is past all hope, before he begins to have any fear: his eternal ruin, like a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, cometh suddenly at an instant, Isa. xxx. 13. and as it damns surely, and surprizingly, so,

Thirdly, Nothing more aggravates a man's damnation than to sink suddenly into it, from amidst so many hopes, and high confidence of safety: For a man to find himself in hell, when he thought and concluded himself within a step of heaven, O what a hell will it be to such men! The higher vain hopes lifted them up, the more dreadful must their fall be, Mat. vii. 22. And as it damns surely, surprizingly, and with highest aggravations, so,

Fourthly, This life of security, and vain hope, frustrates all the means of recovery, and salvation in the only season wherein they can be useful and beneficial to us: By reason of these things the word hath no power to convince mens consciences, nothing can bring them to a sight and sense of their condition: Therefore Christ told the self-confident, and blind Jews, Mat. xxi. 21. "That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God "before them:" And the reason is, because their hearts lie more open, and fair to the strokes of conviction, and compunction for sin than those do, who are blinded by vain hopes, and confidences.

Infer. 1. *Is this the life that the unregenerate world lives? Then it is not to be wondered at, that the preaching of the gospel hath so little success:* "Who hath believed our report? (saith the "prophet) and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii. 1. Ministers study for truths apt to awaken, and convince the consciences of them that hear them, but their words return again to them: They turn to God, and mourn over the matter; we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought: And this security is the cause of all; vain hopes bar fast the doors of mens hearts against all the convictions and persuasions of the word. The greater cause have they to admire the grace of God, who have found, or shall find the convictions of the word sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit; to whose hearts God brings home the commandment, by an effectual application.

Infer. 2. *If this be the life of the unregenerate world; what*

deadly enemies are they that nourish, and strengthen the groundless confidences, and vain hopes of salvation in men? This the scripture calls the healing of the hurt of souls slightly, by crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. vi. 14. The sewing of pillows under their arm-holes, Ezek. xiii. 18. That they may lie soft and easy under the ministry: And this is the doctrine which the people love; but oh, what will the end of these things be! And what an account have those men to give to God for the blood of those souls by them betrayed to the everlasting burnings! Such flattery is the greatest cruelty: Those whom you bless upon earth, will curse you in hell, and the day in which they trusted their souls to your conduct.

Infer. 3. *How great a mercy is it to be awakened out of that general sleep, and security which is fallen upon the world!*

You cannot estimate the value of that mercy, for it is a peculiar mercy. O that ever the Spirit of the Lord should touch thy soul under the ministry of the word, startle, and rouse thy conscience, whilst others are left in the dead sleep of security round about thee! When the Lord dealt with thy soul much after the same manner he did with Paul in the way to Damascus, who not only saw a light shining from heaven, which those that travelled with him saw as well as he, but heard that voice from heaven which did the work upon his heart, though his companions heard it not. Besides, it is not only a peculiar mercy, but it is a leading, introductive mercy, to all other spiritual mercies that follow it to all eternity. If God had not done this for thee, thou hadst never been brought to faith, to Christ, or heaven: from this act of the spirit all other saving acts take their rise. So that you have cause for ever to admire the goodness of God, in in such a favour as this is.

Infer. 4. Lastly, *Hence it follows, that the generality of the world are in the direct way to eternal ruin; and whatever their vain confidences are, they cannot be saved:* "Narrow is the "way, and strait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few "there be that find it." Hear me all you that live this dangerous life of carnal security, and vain hope, whatever your persuasions and confidences are, except you give them up, and get better grounds for your hope, you cannot be saved. For,

First, Such hopes and confidences, as yours, are directly contradictory to the established order of the gospel, which requires repentance, Acts v. 31. Faith, Acts xiii. 39. and regeneration, John iii. 3. in all that shall be saved: And this order shall never be altered for any man's sake.

Secondly, If such as you be saved, all the threatnings in scrip-

ture must be reversed, which lie in full opposition to your vain hopes, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 16. Rom. iii. 8, 9. Either the truth of God, in these threatnings, must fail, or your vain hopes must fail.

Thirdly, If ever such as you be saved, new conditions must be set to all the promises: For there is no condition of any special promise found in any unregenerate person. Compare your hearts with these scriptures, Mat. v. 3, 4, 5, 6. Psal. xxiv. 4. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Gen. xvii. 1, 2.

Fourthly, If ever such a hope as yours bring you to heaven, then the saving hope of God's elect is not rightly described to us in the scriptures. Scripture hope is the effect of regeneration, 1 Pet. i. 3. And purity of heart is the effect of that hope, 1 John iii. 3. Nay,

Fifthly, The very nature of heaven is mistaken in scripture, if such as you be subjects qualified for its enjoyment: For assimilation, or the conformity of the soul to God in holiness, is, in the scripture account, a principal ingredient of that blessedness: By all which, it manifestly appears that the hopes of most men are in vain, and will never bring them to heaven.

SERMON XXI.

ROM. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once: But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

Doct. 2. THAT there is a mighty efficacy in the word or law of God, to kill vain confidence, and quench carnal mirth in the hearts of men, when God sets it home upon their consciences. "The weapons of the word are not carnal, "but mighty through God; to the pulling down of strong "holds, casting down imaginations, and every thing that ex- "alteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into "captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

In the opening of this point I shall,

1. Demonstrate the efficacy of the word or law of God.
2. Shew wherein the efficacy thereof lies.
3. From whence it hath all this mighty power and efficacy.

First, I shall give you some demonstrations of the mighty power, and efficacy that there are in the word or law of God: which will appear with the fullest evidence.

First, From the various *subjects* upon whom it works: The

hearts and consciences of men of all orders and qualities, have been reached, and wounded to the quick, by the two-edged sword of God's law. Some, among the *great* and *honourable* of the earth, (though indeed the fewest of that rank) have been made to stoop, and tremble under the word, Acts xxiv. 16. Mark vi. 20. Sam. xv. 24. The wise and learned of the world have felt its power, and been brought over to embrace the humbling, and self-denying ways of Christ, Acts xvii. 34. Thus Origen, Hierom, Tertullian, Bradwardine, and many more, came into Canaan laden with the Egyptian gold, as one speaks, (*i. e.*) they came into the church of God abundantly enriched, and furnished with the learned arts and sciences, devoting them all to the service of Christ: Yea, and which is as strange, *the most simple, weak, and illiterate*, have been wonderfully changed, and wrought upon by the power of the word: "The testimonies "of the Lord make wise the simple:" Men of weak understandings, in all other matters, have been made wise to salvation by the power of the word, Mat. xi. 25. 1 Cor. i. 27. Nay, the most malicious and obstinate enemies of Christ have been wounded, and converted by the word, 1 Tim. i. 13. Acts xvi. 25. Those that have been under the prejudice of the worst and most *idolatrous education*, have been the subjects of its mighty power, Acts xix. 26. To conclude, men of the most profligate, and debauched lives have been wonderfully changed, and altered by the power of the word, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

Secondly, The mighty efficacy of the law of God appears in the *manner of its operation*; it works suddenly; strikes like a dart through the hearts and consciences of men, Acts ii. 37. A wonderful change is made in a short time: And as it works quickly, and suddenly, so it works irresistibly, with an uncontrouled power upon the spirits of men, 1 Thes. i. 5. Rom. i. 16. Let the soul be armed against conviction with the thickest ignorance, strongest prejudice, or most obstinate resolution, the word of God will wound the breast even of such a man, when God sends it forth in his authority and power.

Thirdly, The wonderful power of the law, or word of God is evidently seen, in the strange effects which are produced by it in the hearts and lives of men. For,

First, It changes and alters the frame and temper of the mind: It moulds a man into a quite contrary temper, Gal. i. 23. "He "which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith, "which once he destroyed:" Thus a tyger is transformed into a lamb, by the power of the word of God.

Secondly, It makes the soul, upon which it works, to forego,

and quit the dearest interest it hath in this world for Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. Riches, honours, self-righteousness, dearest relations, are denied and forsaken: Reproach, poverty, and death itself, are willingly embraced for Christ's sake, when once the efficacy of the word hath been upon the hearts of men, 1 Thes. i. 6. Those that were their companions in sin, are declined, renounced, and cast off with abhorrence, 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. In such things as these the mighty power of the word discovers itself.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, Next, let us see wherein the efficacy of the word, upon the souls of men, principally consisteth: and we find in scripture it exerteth its power, in five distinct acts upon the soul; by all which it strikes at the life, and kills the very heart of vain hopes. For,

First, It hath an awakening efficacy upon secure and sleepy sinners: It rouzes the conscience, and brings a man to a sense, and feeling apprehension, Eph. v. 13, 14. The first effectual touch of the word startles the drowsy conscience. A poor sinner lies in his sins, as Peter did in his chains, fast asleep, though a warrant was signed for his execution the next day: but the Spirit in the word awakens him, as the angel did Peter: And this awakening power of the word is in order, both of time, and nature, antecedent to all its operations, and effects.

Secondly, The law of God hath an enlightening efficacy upon the minds of men: It is eye-salve to the blinded eye, Rev. iii. 18. A light shining in a dark place, 2 Pet. i. 19. A light shining into the very heart of man, 2 Cor iv. 6. When the word comes in power, all things appear with another face: The sins that were hid from our eyes, and the danger which was concealed by the policy of Satan from our souls, now lie clear and open before us, Eph. v. 8.

Thirdly, The word of God hath a convincing efficacy: It sets sin in order before the soul, Psal. l. 21. As an army is drawn up in an exact order, so are the sins of nature and practice, the sins of youth and age, even a great and terrible army is drawn up before the eye of the conscience; the convictions of the word are clear and full, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The very secrets of a sinner's heart are made manifest: his mouth is stopped; his pleas are silenced; his conscience yields to the charge of guilt, and to the equity of the sentence of the law. So that the soul stands mute, and self-condemned, at the bar of conscience: It hath got nothing to say why the wrath of God should not come upon it to the uttermost, Rom. iii. 19.

Fourthly, The law of God hath a soul-wounding, an heart-cutting efficacy: It pierces into the very soul and spirit of man,

Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this, they were pricked at their "hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles; "men and brethren, what shall we do?" A dreadful sound is in the sinner's ears; his soul is in deep distress; he knows not which way to turn for ease; no plaister but the blood of Christ can heal these wounds which the word makes: No outward trouble, affliction, disgrace, or loss, ever touched the quick as the word of God doth.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fifthly, The word hath a heart-turning, a soul-converting efficacy in it: It is a regenerating, as well as convincing word, 1 Pet. i. 32. 1 Thes. i. 9. The law wounds, the gospel cures; the law discovers the evil that is in sin, and the misery that follows it; and the Spirit of God, working in fellowship with the word, effectually turns the heart from sin. And thus we see in what glorious acts the efficacy of the word discovers itself upon the hearts of men; and all these acts lie in order to each other: nor until the soul be awakened, it cannot be enlightned, Eph. v. 14. Till it be enlightned, it cannot be convinced, Eph. v. 13. Conviction being nothing else, but the application of the light that shines in the mind to the conscience of a sinner; till it be convinced, it cannot be wounded for sin, Acts ii. 37. And until it be wounded for sin, it will never be converted from sin, and brought effectually to Jesus Christ. And thus you see what the power of the word is.

Thirdly, In the last place, it will concern us to enquire, whence the word of God hath all this power: And it is most certain, that it is not a power inherent in itself, nor derived from the instrument by which it is managed; but from the Spirit of the Lord, who communicates to it all that power, and efficacy which it hath upon our souls.

1. Its power is not in, or from itself: It works not in a *physical way*, as natural agents do; for then the effect would always follow, except it were miraculously hindered: But this spiritual efficacy is in the word, as the healing virtue was in the waters of Bethesda, John v. 4. "An angel went down at a cer-"tain season into the pool, and troubled the water: Whoso-"ever then first after the troubling of the water stept in, was "made whole of whatsoever disease he had." It is not a power naturally inherent in it at all times, but communicated to it at some special seasons. How often is the word preached, and no man awaked or convinced by it!

2. The power of the word is not communicated to it by the instrument that manageth it, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "Neither is he that "planteth any thing, neither he that watereth." Ministers are

nothing to such an effect and purpose as this is; he doth not mean that they are useless and altogether unnecessary, but insufficient of themselves to produce such mighty effects: It works not as it is the word of man, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Ministers may say of the ordinary, as Peter said of the extraordinary effects of the Spirit, Acts iii. 12. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? "or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" If the effects of the word were in the power, and at the command of him that preacheth it, then the blood of all the souls that perish under our ministry must lie at our door, as was formerly noted.

www.libtool.com.cn

3. If you say, whence then hath the word all this power? Our answer is, It derives it all from the Spirit of God, * 1 Thes. ii. 13. "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because "when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye "received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the "word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that be-"lieve." It is a successful instrument, only, when it is in the hand of the Spirit, without whose influence it never did, nor can convince, convert, or save any soul. Now, the Spirit of God hath a sovereignty over three things in order to the conversion of sinners.

1. Over the word which works.
2. Over the soul wrought upon.
3. Over the time and season of working.

First, The Spirit hath a glorious sovereignty over the word itself, whose instrument it is, to make it successful or not; as it pleaseth him, Isa. lv. 10, 11. "For as the rain cometh down, "and the snow from heaven, *&c.* so shall my word be that go-"eth out of my mouth:" as the clouds, so the word is carried and directed by divine pleasure. It is the Lord that makes them both give down their blessings, or to pass away fruitless and empty: yea, it is from the Spirit that this part of the word works, and not another. Those things upon which ministers bestow greatest labour in their preparation, and from which accordingly they have the greatest expectation; these do nothing, when, mean time, something that dropped occasionally from them, like a chosen shaft, strikes the mark, and doth the work.

Secondly, The Spirit of the Lord hath a glorious sovereignty over the souls wrought upon: it is his peculiar work "to take

* What is commanded by the word, is given by the Spirit. *Aug. Ep.* 157.

"away the ſtony heart out of our fleſh, and to give us an heart "of fleſh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. We may reaſon, exhort, and reprove, but nothing will abide till the Lord ſet it home. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia under Paul's miniſtry: he opens every heart that is effectually opened to receive Chriſt in the word: if the word can get no entrance, if your hearts remain dead under it ſtill, we may ſay concerning ſuch ſouls, as Martha did concerning her brother Lazarus; "Lord, if thou "hadſt been here, my brother had not died." So, Lord, if thou hadſt been in this ſermon, in this prayer, or in that counſel, theſe ſouls had not remained dead under them.

Thirdly, The Spirit hath dominion over the times and ſeaſons of conviction and converſion. Therefore the day in which ſouls are wrought upon is called "the day of his power," Pſal. cx. 3. That ſhall work at one time, which had no efficacy at all at another time; becauſe this, and not that, was the time appointed. And thus you ſee whence the word derives that mighty power it hath.

Now this word of God, when it is ſet home by the Spirit, is mighty to convince, humble, and break the hearts of ſinners, John xvi. 9. "The Spirit when it cometh ſhall convince the "world of ſin." The word ſignifies conviction by ſuch clear demonſtration as compelleth aſſent: it not only convinces men in general that they are ſinners, but it convinceth men particularly of their own ſins, and the aggravations of them. So in the text, *Sin revived*, that is, the Lord revived his ſins, the very circumſtances and aggravations with which they were committed: and ſo it will be with us when the commandment comes; ſins that we had forgotten, committed ſo far back as our youth or childhood; ſins that lay ſlighted in our conſciences, ſhall now be rouzed up as ſo many ſleepy lions to affright and terrify us: for now the ſoul hears the voice of God in the word, as Adam heard it in the cool of the day, and was afraid, and hides itſelf: but all will not do; for the Lord is come in the word: ſin is held up before the eyes of the conſcience in its dreadful aggravations, and fearful conſequences, as committed againſt the holy law, clear light, warnings of conſcience, manifold mercies, God's long-ſuffering, Chriſt's precious blood, many warnings of judgments, the wages and demerit whereof, by the verdict of a man's own conſcience, is death, eternal death, Rom. vi. 23. Rom. i. 32. Rom. ii. 9. Thus the commandment comes, ſin revives, and vain hopes gives up the ghoſt.

Infer. 1. *Is there ſuch a mighty power in the word? then certainly the word is of divine authority.* There cannot be a more

clear, and satisfying proof that it is no human invention, than the common sense that all believers have of the Almighty Power in which it works upon their hearts. So speaks the apostle, 1 Thes. ii. 13. "When ye received the word of God which ye heard "of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in "truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in "you that believe." Can the power of any creature, the word of a mere man, so convince the conscience, so terrify the heart, so discover the very secret thoughts of the soul, as to put a man into such tremblings? No, no, a greater than man must needs be here: none but a God can so open the eyes of the blind, so open the graves of the dead, so quicken and enliven the conscience that was seared, so bind over the soul of a sinner to the judgment to come, so change and alter the frame and temper of a man's Spirit, or so powerfully raise, refresh and comfort a drooping dying soul: certainly the power of God is in all this; and, if there were no more, yet this alone were sufficient to make full proof of the divine authority of the scriptures.

Infer. 2. *Judge from hence what an invaluable mercy the preaching of the word is to the world:* It is a blessing far above our estimation of it: little do we know what a treasure God committeth to us in the ordinances, Acts xiii. 25. "To you is "the word of this salvation sent." It is the very power of God to salvation, Rom. i. 16. And salvation is ordinarily denied to whom the preaching of the word is denied, Rom. x. 14. It is called *the word of life*, Phil. ii. 16. and deserves to be valued by every one of us as our life: the eternal decree of God's election is executed by it upon our souls: as many as he ordained to eternal life shall believe by the preaching of it. Great is the ingratitude of this generation, which so slights, and undervalues this invaluable treasure: which is a sad presage of the most terrible judgment, even in the removing our candlestick out of its place, except we repent.

Infer. 3. *How sore and terrible a judgment lies upon the souls of those men to whom no word of God is made powerful enough to convince and awaken them!* Yet so stands the case with thousands, who constantly sit under the preaching of the word; many arrows are shot at their consciences, but none goes home to the mark, all fall short of the end: the commandment hath come unto them many thousand times, by way of *promulgation*, and ministerial *inculcation*, but yet never came home to their souls by the spirit's effectual *application*. O friends! you have often heard the voice of man, but you never yet heard the voice of God:

your understandings have been *instructed*, but your consciences to this day were never thoroughly *convinced*; "We have "mourned unto you, but ye have not lamented," Mat. xi. 17. "Who hath believed our report? And unto whom is the arm "of the Lord revealed?" Alas! we have laboured in vain, we have spent our strength for nought, our word return unto us empty: but O what a stupendous judgment is here! Heb. vi. 7, 8. "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon "it, and bringth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dres-"sed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth "thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose "end is to be burned." What sore judgment, and sign of God's displeasure would you account it, if your fields were cursed; if you should manure, dress, plough, and sow them; but never reap the fruit of your labour; the increase being still blasted? And yet this were nothing, compared with the blasting of the word to your souls: that which is a savour of life unto life, unto some, becomes the savour of death unto death, to others, 2 Cor. ii. 16. The Lord affect our hearts with the terrible strokes of God upon the souls of men!

Second use of exhortation.

I shall conclude this point with a few words of exhortation to three sorts of men, *viz.*

1. To those that never felt the power of the word,
2. To those that have only felt some slight and common effects thereof,
3. To those unto whose very hearts the commandment is come, in its effectual and saving power.

First, You that never felt any power in the word at all, I beg you in the name of him that made you, and by all the regard and value you have for those precious souls within you, that now at last such considerations as these may find place in your souls, and that you will bethink yourselves.

Consideration 1.

Whose word is that which cannot gain entrance into your hearts? Is it not the word of God which you despise and slight? "Thou castest my word behind thy back," Psal. l. 17. O what an affront and provocation to God is this! You despise not man, but God; the great and terrible God, in whose hand your breath and soul is; this contempt runs higher than you imagine.

Consideration 2.

Consider, that however the word hath no power upon you, the commandment cannot come home to your hearts; yet it doth work, and comes home with power to the hearts of others;

whilst you are hardned, others are melted under it; whilst you sleep, others tremble; whilst your hearts are fast locked up, others are opened. How can you choose but reflect with fear and trembling upon these contrary effects of the word; especially when you consider that the eternal decrees, both of election and reprobation are now executed upon the souls men, by the preaching of the word? Some believe, and others are hardned.

Consideration 3.

That no judgment of God, on this side hell, is greater than a hard heart, and stupid conscience under the word: it were much better that the providence of God should blast thy estate, take away thy children, or destroy thy health, than harden thy heart, and sear thy conscience under the word: so much as thy soul is better than thy body, so much as eternity is more valuable than time, so much is this spiritual judgment more dreadful than all temporal ones. God doth not inflict a more terrible stroke than this upon any man in this world.

O therefore as you love your own souls, and are loth to ruin them to all eternity, attend upon every opportunity that God affords you; for you know not in which of them the Lord may work upon your hearts. Lay aside your prejudices against the word or the weaknesses and infirmities of them that preach it; for the word works not as it is the word of man, as it is thus neat and elegant, but as it is the word of God. Pray for the blessing of God upon the word; for except his word of blessing go forth with it, it can never come home to thy soul. Meditate upon what you hear; for, without meditation, it is not like to have any effectual operation upon you. Search your souls by it, and consider whether that be not your very case and state which it describes: your very danger whereof it gives warning. Take heed lest after you have heard it, the cares of the world choke what you have heard, and cause those budding convictions which begin to put forth, to blast and wither. Carefully attend to all those *items*, and *memorandums* your consciences give you under the word, and conclude that the Lord is then come nigh unto you.

Secondly, Let this be matter of serious consideration, and caution to all such as have only felt some slight, transient, and ineffectual operations of the gospel upon their souls: The Lord hath come nigh to some of our souls; we have felt a strange power in the ordinances, sometimes terrifying, and sometimes transporting our hearts; but, alas! it proves but a morning-dew, or an early cloud, Hos. vi. 4. We rejoice in the word, but it is but for a season, John iii. 25. Gal. iv. 14, 15. They

are vanishing motions, and come to nothing. Look, as in nature there are many *abortives*, as well as perfect children, so it is in religion; yea, where the new creature is perfectly formed in one soul, there be many abortives and miscarriages in others: and there may be three reasons assigned for it, *viz.*

www.libtool.com.cn

First, The subtilty and deep policy of Satan, who never more effectually deceives and destroys the souls of men, than in such a method, and by such an artifice as this: for when men have once felt their consciences terrified under the word, and their hearts at other times ravished with the joys and comforts of it, they now seem to have attained all that is necessary to conversion, and constitutive of the new creature: these things look so well like the regenerating effects of the Spirit, that many are easily deceived by them. The devil beguiles the hearts of the unwary by such false appearances; for it is not every man that can distinguish betwixt the natural, and spiritual motions of the affections under the word: it is very frequently seen that even carnal, and unrenewed hearts have their meltings and transports, as well as spiritual hearts. The subject-matter upon which the word treats, are the weighty things of the world to come: heaven and hell are very awful and affecting things, and an unrenewed heart is apt to thaw and melt at them: now here is the cheat of Satan, to persuade a man that these must needs be spiritual affections, because the objects about which they are conversant are spiritual: whereas it is certain, the object of the affections may be very spiritual and heavenly, and yet the workings of a man's affections about them, may be in a mere natural way.

Secondly, The dampening efficacy of the world is a true and proper cause of these abortions and miscarriages under the word, Luke viii. 12, 13, 14. There are hopeful and promising beginnings and buddings of affections in some persons, especially in their youth; but when once they come to be engaged in the world, how soon are they damp'd and quenched! As the cares of a family grow on, so does the care of salvation wear off. 'Tis not as it was wont to be, what shall I do to be saved? How shall I get interest in Christ? But what shall I eat, and drink, and wherewithal shall I, and mine, be maintained? Thus earth justles out heaven, and the present world drowns all thoughts of that to come. Good had it been for many men, they had never been engaged so deep in the world as they are; their life is but a constant hurry of business, and a perpetual diversion from Christ, and things that are eternal,

Thirdly, and *lastly*, The deceitfulness, and treachery of the heart, which too easily gives way to the designs of Satan, suffers

itself to be imposed upon by him, is not the least cause why so many hopeful beginnings come to nothing, and the effects of the word vanish. Pride, and self-love are very apt to over-rule every little good, and slight, or under-value every evil that is in us; and so quickly choke those convictions that begin to work in our souls.

www.libtool.com.cn

But oh! that such men would consider that the dying away of their convictions, is that which threatens the life of their souls for ever; now is the bud withered, the blossom blasted: and what expectation is there of fruit after this, except the Lord revive them again? The Lord open men's eyes, to discern the danger of such things as these are! Jude 12. Heb. x. 58. Yet I deny not, but there are many stands, and pauses in the work of conversion; it seems to die away, and then revives again; and revive it must, or we are lost. But how many are there who never recover it more! This is a sore judgment of a most terrible consequence to the souls of men.

Thirdly, In the *last* place, let it be a word of counsel, and advice to them, upon whom the word works effectually, and powerfully; to whose hearts the commandment is come home, to revive sin, and kill their vain hopes; and these are of two sorts.

1. Embryo's, under the first workings of the spirit.
2. Compleat births of the spirit, regenerated souls.

First, Embryo's that are under the first workings of the spirit in the word. O let it not seem a misery, or unhappiness to you, that the commandment is come, and sin revived, and your former hopes overthrown. It must be thus, if ever God intend mercy for you. Had you gone on in that dangerous security you were in before, you had certainly been lost for ever: God hath stopt you in that path that leads down to hell, and none that go in there do ever return again, or take hold of the paths of life. O it is better to weep, tremble, and be distressed now, than to mourn without hope for ever. Let it not trouble you that sin hath found you out; you could never have found out the remedy in Christ, if you had not found out the disease and danger, by the coming of the commandment. And I beseech you carefully to observe, whether the effects, and operations of the word upon your hearts be deeper, and more powerful, than they are found to be in such souls as miscarry under it: the commandment comes to them, and shews them this or that more gross and startling sin. Doth it come to you, and shew you not only this, or that particular sin, but all the evils of your heart and life; the corruption of your natures, as well as the transgressions of your lives? If so, it promises

well, and looks hopefully, and comfortably to you. The commandment comes to others, and ſtartles them with the fears of damnation for their ſin: it puts them into a grievous fright at hell, and the everlaſting burnings: but doth it come to thee and diſcover the infinite evil that is in thy ſin, as it is committed againſt the great, holy, righteous, and good God, and ſo melts thy heart into tears for the wrong that thou haſt done him, as well as the danger into which thou haſt brought thyſelf? This is a hopeful work, and may encourage thee. It comes to others, and greatly ſhakes, but never deſtroys and razes the foundation of their vain hopes: if it ſo revive ſin, as to kill all vain hopes in thee, and ſend thee to Chriſt alone, as thy only door of hope, fear not; theſe troubles will prove the greateſt mercies that ever befel thee in this world, if thus they work, and continue to work upon thy ſoul.

Secondly, Others there are upon whom the word hath had its full effect as to converſion. O bleſs God for ever for this mercy; you cannot ſufficiently value it! God hath not only made it a convincing, and wounding, but a converting, and healing word to your ſouls; he hath not only revived your ſins, and killed your vain hopes, but begotten you again to a lively hope; ſee that you be thankful for this mercy. How many have ſate under the ſame word, but never felt ſuch effects of it? As Chriſt ſaid in another caſe, there were many widows in Iſrael in the time of Elijah, but unto none of them was the prophet ſent, ſave unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a certain widow there, Luke iv. 46. So I may ſay, in this caſe, there were many ſouls in the ſame congregation, at the ſame time; but unto none of them was the word ſent with a commiſſion to convince and ſave, but ſuch a one as thyſelf; one as improbable to be wrought upon as any ſoul there. O let this beget thankfulneſs in your ſouls; and let it make you love the word as long as you live: "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them "thou haſt quickened me," Pſal. cxix. 93.

But above all I beſeech you make it appear that the commandment hath come home to your hearts, with power to convince you of the evil of ſin, by your tenderneſs and care to ſhun it as long as you live. If ever you have ſeen the face of ſin, in the glaſs of the law of God; if your hearts have been humbled and broken for it in the days of your trouble and diſtreſs, certainly you will chooſe the worſt affliction rather than ſin: It would be the greateſt folly in the world to return again to iniquity, Pſal. lxxxv. 8. You that have ſeen ſo much of the evil that is in it, and the danger that follows it; you that have had

such inward terrors and fears of spirit about it, when that terrible representation was made you, will be loth to feel those gripes, and distresses of conscience again, for the best enjoyment in this world.

Blessed be God if any word has been brought home to our hearts, which hath been instrumental to bring us to Christ!

* *

SERMON XXII.

The Teachings of God opened, in their Nature and Necessity.

JOHN vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

HOW necessary to our union with Jesus Christ, the application of the law, or coming home of the commandment to the heart of a sinner is, we have heard in the last discourse; and how impossible it is, either for the commandment to come to us, or for us to come to Christ, without illumination, and instruction from above, you shall hear in this.

This scripture hath much of the mind of God in it; and he that is to open it, had need himself to be taught of God. In the foregoing verses, Christ offers himself as the bread of life unto the souls of men: against this doctrine they oppose their carnal reason, ver. 41, 42. Christ strikes at the root of all their cavils and objections in his reply, ver. 43, 44. "Murmur not "among yourselves: no man can come to me, except the Fa-"ther which hath sent me draw him;" *q. d.* you slight me because you do not know me; you do not know me, because you are not taught of God; of these divine teachings, the prophets of old have spoken, and what they foretold is at this day fulfilled in our sight; so many as are taught of God, and no more, come unto me in the way of faith: it is impossible to come without the teachings of God, ver. 44. It is as impossible not to come, or to miscarry in their coming unto me, under the influence of these divine teachings, ver. 45.

The words read, consist of two parts, *viz.*

1. An allegation out of the prophets.
2. The application thereof made by Christ.

First, An allegation out of the prophets: "It is written in "the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." The places in the prophets to which Christ seems here to refer, are, Isa. liv. 13. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" and, Jer. xxxi. 34. "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." These promises contain the great blessings of the new covenant, *viz.* Divine instruction, and heavenly illumination, without which, no man can be brought up to the terms of the new covenant.

Secondly, We have here the application of these testimonies, out of the prophets, made by Christ himself; "Every man therefore "that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

In which words, we have, both the necessity, and the efficacy of these divine teachings; without them no man can come, and under them no man can miscarry. The words being fitly rendred, and the sense obvious,

The notes are,

Doct. 1. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every man that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

Doct. 2. *No man can miss of Christ, or miscarry in the way of faith, that is under the special instructions, and teachings of the Father.*

Doct. 1. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every man that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

Of the necessity of divine teaching, in order to believing, the apostle speaks, in Eph. iv. 20, 21. "But ye have not so learned "Christ, if so be that you have heard him, and been taught by "him, as the truth is in Jesus;" (*i. e.*) Your faith must needs be effectual, both to the reformation of your lives, and your perseverance in the ways of holiness, if it be such a faith as is begotten, and introduced into your hearts by divine teachings *. Now, in the explication of this point, I shall speak distinctly to the following enquiries.

1. How doth God teach men, or what is imported in our being taught of God?

2. What those special lessons are, which all believers do hear, and are taught of God?

* They who believe, by means of the preacher speaking to them outwardly, hear and learn inwardly of the Father; they who believe not, hear outwardly, but not inwardly. *Aug. on Predest. chap.* 8.

3. In what manner doth God teach these things to men, in the day of their conversion to Christ?

4. What influence God's teaching hath upon our believing?

5. Why it is impossible for any man to believe, or come to Christ, without the Father's teachings.

First, How doth God teach men, or what is imported in our being taught of God? To this I will speak, both negatively and positively, for your clearer apprehension of the sense and meaning of the Spirit of God in this phrase.

First, The teaching of God, and our hearing and learning of him, is not to be understood of any extraordinary, visional appearances, or oraculous and immediate voice of God to men: God indeed hath so appeared unto some, Numb. xii. 8. Such voices have been heard from heaven; but now these extraordinary ways are ceased, Heb. i. 1, 2. and we are no more to expect them; we may sooner meet with satanical delusions, than divine illumination, in this way. I remember, the learned Gerson tells us that the devil once appeared to an holy man in prayer, personating Christ, and saying, I am come in person to visit thee, for thou art worthy. But he with both hands shut his eyes, saying, *Nolo hic Christum videre, satis est ipsum in gloria videre; (i. e.)* I will not see Christ here; it is enough for me to see him in glory. We are now to attend only to the voice of the Spirit in the scriptures: this is a more sure word than any voice from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 19.

Secondly, The teachings of God are not to be understood as opposite unto, or exclusive of the teachings of men. Divine teachings do not render ministerial teachings in vain, or useless. Paul was taught of God, Gal. i. 12. and his conversion had something extraordinary in it, yet the ministry of Ananias was used, and honoured in that work, Acts ix. 4, 17. compared. Divine teachings do indeed excel, but not exclude human teachings. I know that scripture, Jer. xxxi. 24. to which Christ here refers, is objected against the necessity of a standing ministry in the church, "They shall teach no more every man his "neighbour, and every man his brother," *&c.* But if those words should be understood absolutely, they would not only overthrow all public ordinances of God's own istitution, 1 Cor. xii. 28. and deprive us of a principal fruit of Christ's ascension, Eph. iv. 11, 12. but, for the same reason, would destroy all private instructions, and fraternal admonitions also. Such a sense would make the prophet to contradict the apostle, and spoil the consent, and harmony of the scriptures: the sense thereof cannot

be negative, but comparative; it shews the excellency of divine, but doth not destroy the usefulness of human teachings, *Subordinata non pugnant.* The teachings of men are made effectual by the teachings of the Spirit; and the Spirit in his teachings will use and honour the ministry of man.

Thirdly, But to speak positively, the teachings of God are nothing else, but that spiritual, and heavenly light, by which the Spirit of God shineth into the hearts of men, to give them "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of "Jesus Christ," as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And though this be the proper work of the Spirit, yet it is called the teachings of the Father, because the Spirit who enlightens us is commissioned, and sent by the Father to do, John xiv. 26. Now these teachings of the Spirit of God, consist in two things, *viz.* in his,

1. Sanctifying impressions.
2. Gracious assistances.

First, In his sanctifying impressions, or regenerating works upon the soul, by virtue whereof it receives marvellous light and insight into spiritual things; and that not only as illumination is the first act of the Spirit in our conversion, Col. iii. 10. but as his whole work of sanctification is illuminative, and instructive to the converted soul, 1 John ii. 27. "The anointing "which you have received of him abideth in you, and ye need "not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teach-"eth you." The meaning is, that sanctification gives the soul experience of those mysterious things, which are contained in the scriptures, and that experience is the most excellent key to unlock, and open those deep scripture-mysteries; no knowledge is so distinct, so clear, so sweet, as that which the heart communicates to the head, John vii. 17. "If any man do his will, "he shall know the doctrine." A man that never read the nature of love in books of philosophy, nor the transports and ecstasies thereof in history, may yet truly describe and express it by the sensible motions of that passion in his own soul; yea, he that hath felt, much better understands, than he that hath only read or heard. O what a light doth spiritual sense, and experience, cast upon a great part of the scriptures! for indeed sanctification is the very copy or transcript of the word of God upon the heart of man; Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will write my law in "their hearts:" so that the scriptures, and the experiences of believers, by this means, answer to each other, as the lines and letters in the press, answer to the impressions made upon the paper; or the figures in the wax, to the engravings in the seal.

When a sanctified man reads David's Psalms, or Paul's epistles, how is he surprized with wonder to find the very workings of his own heart, so exactly decyphered, and fully expressed there! O, saith he, this is my very case; these holy men speak what my heart hath felt.

Secondly, The Spirit of God teacheth us, as by his sanctifying impressions, so by his gracious assistances, which he gives us *prò rè nata*, as our need requires, Mat. x. 19. "It shall be "given you in that same hour what ye shall speak," John xiv. 26. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance:" he assisteth, both the understanding in due apprehensions of truth, and the heart in the spiritual improvements of truth. And so much briefly of the first particular.

Secondly, In the next place, we are to enquire what those special truths are which believers hear, and learn of the Father, when they come to Christ.

And there are divers great, and necessary truths, wherein the Spirit enlightens men in that day. I cannot say they are all taught every believer in the same degree and order; but it is certain they are taught of God such lessons as these are, which they never so understood before.

Lesson 1. *First*, They are taught of God *that there is abundantly more evil in their sinful natures, and actions, than ever they discerned, or understood before:* "the Spirit when he "cometh shall convince the world of sin," John xvi. 8, 9. Men have a general notion of sin before; so had Paul, when a Pharisee: but how vastly different were his apprehensions of sin, from all that ever he had in his natural state, when God brought home the commandment to his very heart! There is a threefold knowledge of sin, *viz. traditional, discussive*, and *intuitive*. The first is in the more rude, and illiterate multitude. The second in more rational and knowing men. The third is only found in those that are enlightened, and taught of God. And there is as great a difference betwixt this intuitive knowledge of sin, whereby God makes a soul to discern the nature, and evil of it, in a spiritual light, and the two former, as there is betwixt the sight of a *painted lion* upon the wall, and the sight of a *living lion* that meets us roaring in the way. The intuitive sight of sin is another thing than men imagine it to be: 'tis such a sight as wounds a man to the very heart, Acts ii. 37. for God doth not only shew a man this, or that particular sin, but, in the day of convictions, he sets all his sins in order before him. Psal. l. 21. yea, the Lord shews him the sinfulness of his nature, as well as practice. Conviction digs to the root, shews, and lays open

that original corruption, from whence the innumerable evils of the life do spring, James i. 14, 15. and, which is yet more, the Lord shews the man, whom he is bringing to Christ, the sinful and miserable estate which he is in by reason of both, John xvi. 9. And now all excuses, pleas, and defences of sin are gone, he shews them "how their iniquities have exceeded," Job xxxvi. 8, 9. exceeded in number, and in aggravation of sinfulness; exceeding many, and exceeding vile; no such sinner in the world as I: can such sins as mine be pardon'd? The greatness of God greatens my sin; the holiness of God makes it beyond measure vile; the goodness of God puts unconceivable weight into my guilt. O can there be mercy for such a wretch as I! If there be, then there will not be a greater example of the riches of free grace in all the world than I am. Thus God teacheth the evil of sin.

Lesson 2. Secondly, *God teacheth the soul, whom he is bringing to Christ, what that wrath, and misery are which hang over it in the threatnings, because of sin.* Scripture-threatnings were formerly slighted; now the soul trembles at them: They once apprehended themselves safe enough, Isa. xxviii. 15. Psal. l. 21. They thought, because they heard no more of their sins, after the commission of them, that therefore they should never hear more; that the effect had been as transient a thing as the act of sin was; or if trouble must follow sin, they should speed no worse than others, the generality of the world being in the same case; and besides, they hoped to find God more merciful, than sowre and precise preachers represented him. But when a light from God enters into the soul, to discover the nature of God, and of sin, then it sees, that whatever wrath is treasured up for sinners, in the dreadful threatnings of the law, is but the just demerit of sin, the recompence that is meet: "The wages "of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. The *penal* evil of damnation is but equal to the *moral* evil of sin: So that in the whole ocean of God's eternal wrath, there is not one drop of injustice; yea, the soul doth not only see the justice of God in its eternal damnation, but the wonderful mercy of God in the suspension thereof so long. O what is it that hath with-held God from damning me all this while! How is it that I am not in hell! Now do the fears and awful apprehensions of eternity seize the soul, and the worst of sensitive creatures is supposed to be in a better condition than such a soul. Never do men tremble at the threatnings of God, nor rightly apprehend the danger of their condition, until sin, and wrath, and the wages of sin be discovered to them by a light from heaven.

Lesson 3. Thirdly, *God teaches the soul whom he brings to Christ, that deliverance from sin, and wrath to come, is the greatest and most important business it hath to do in this world.* Acts xvi. 30. "What must I do to be saved?" *q. d.* O direct me to some effectual way (if there be any) to secure my poor wretched soul from the wrath of God. Sin, and the wrath that follows it, are things that swallow up the souls, and drink up the very spirits of men: Their thoughts never conversed with things of more confessed truth and awful solemnity: these things float not upon their fancies as matters of mere speculation, but settle upon their hearts day and night, as the deepest concernment in all the world: They now know much better than any mere scholar, the deep sense of that text, Mat. xvi. 26. "What is a man "profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own "soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Five things shew how weighty the thoughts and cares of salvation are upon their hearts.

First, Their continual thoughtfulness, and sollicitude about these things; if earthly affairs divert them for a while, yet they are still returning again to this solemn business.

Secondly, Their careful redeeming of time, and saving the very moments thereof to employ about this work: Those that were prodigal of hours, and days before, look upon every moment of time as a precious and valuable thing now.

Thirdly, Their fears, and tremblings, lest they should miscarry, and come short at last, shew how much their hearts are set upon this work.

Fourthly, Their inquisitiveness, and readiness to embrace all the help and assistance that they can get from others, evidently discovers this to be their great design.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, The little notice they take of all other troubles, and afflictions, tells you, their hearts are taken up about greater things. This is the third lesson they are taught of God.

Lesson 4. Fourthly, *The Lord teaches the soul that is coming to Christ, that though it be their duty to strive to the uttermost for salvation; yet all strivings, in their own strength, are insufficient to obtain it.* This work is quite above the power of nature: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of "God that sheweth mercy." The soul is brought to a full conviction of this, by the discovery of the heinous nature of sin, and of the rigour and severity of the law of God. No repentance, nor reformation, can possibly amount unto a just satisfaction, nor are they within the compass and power of our will. It was a saying that Dr. Hill often used to his friends, speaking

about the power of man's will; he would lay his hand upon his breast, and say, "Every man hath something here to confute "the Arminian doctrine:" This fully takes off the soul from all expectations of deliverance that way; it cannot but strive, that is its duty; but to expect deliverance, as the purchase of its own strivings, that would be its sin.

Lesson 5. Fifthly, *The soul that is coming to Christ by faith, is taught of God, that though the case it is in be sad, yet it is not desperate and remediless:* There is a door of hope, a way of escape for poor sinners, how black and fearful soever their own thoughts and apprehensions are: there is usually at this time, a dawning light of hope in the soul that is under the Father's teachings: and this commonly arises from the general, and indefinite encouragements, and promises of the gospel, which though they do not presently secure the soul from danger, yet they prop, and mightily support it against despair: For though they be not certain that deliverance shall be the event of their trouble; yet the possibilities, and much more the probabilities of deliverance are a great stay to the sinking soul: The troubled soul cannot but acknowledge itself to be in a far better case than the damned are, whose hopes are perished from the Lord, and a death-pang of despair hath seized their consciences. And herein the merciful and compassionate nature of God is eminently discovered, in hasting to open the door of hope, almost as soon as the evil of sin is opened. It was not long, after Adam's eyes were opened to see his misery, that God opened Christ, his remedy, in that first promise, Gen. iii. 15. And the same method of grace is still continued to his elect offspring, Gal. iii. 21, 22. Rom. iii. 21, 22. These supporting hopes, the Lord sees necessary to encourage industry in the use of means: it is hope that sets all the world awork: if all hope were cut off, every soul would sit down in a sullen despair, yielding itself for hell.

Lesson 6. Sixthly, *The Lord teaches those that come to Christ, that there is a fulness of saving power in him, whereby any soul, that duly receives him, may be perfectly delivered from all its sin and misery*, Heb. vii. 25. Col. i. 19. Mat. xxviii. 18. This is a great and necessary point, for every believer to learn and hear from the Father; for unless the soul be satisfied of the fulness of Christ's saving power, it will never move forwards towards him: and herein also the goodness of God is most sweetly, and seasonably manifested; for, at this time, it is the great design of Satan, to fill the soul with despairing thoughts of a pardon; but all those black, and heart-sinking thoughts, vanish

before the discovery of Christ's all-sufficiency. Now the sin-sick soul saith with that woman, Mat. ix. 21. "If I may but touch "the hem of his garment, I shall be healed:" How deep soever the guilt and stain of sin be, yet the soul which acknowledges the infinite dignity of the blood of Christ, the offering it up to God in our room, and God's declared satisfaction in it, must needs be satisfied that Christ is "able to save, to the uttermost, "all that come unto God by him;" which is the sixth lesson believers are taught of God.

Lesson 7. Seventhly, *Every man that cometh to Christ is taught of God, that it can never reap any benefit by the blood of Christ, except ye have union with the person of Christ*, 1 John v. 12. Eph. iv. 16. Time was, when men fondly thought nothing was necessary to their salvation, but the death of Christ; but now the Lord shews them that their union with Christ by faith, is as necessary in the place of an *applying cause*, as the death of Christ is, in the place of a *meritorious cause*: The *purchase* of salvation is an act of Christ *without us*, whilst we are yet sinners: the *application* thereof, is by a work wrought *within us*, when we are believers, Col. i. 27. In the purchase, all the elect are redeemed together, by way of price: In the application, they are actually redeemed, each person, by way of power. Look, as the sin of the first Adam could never hurt us, unless he had been our head, by way of generation; so the righteousness of Christ can never benefit us, unless he be our head, by way of regeneration. In teaching this lesson, the Lord, in mercy, unteaches and blots out that dangerous principle, by which the greatest part of the Christianized world do perish, *viz.* that the death of Christ is, in itself, effectual to salvation, though a man be never regenerated, or united to him by saving faith.

Lesson 8. Eighthly, *God teaches the soul, whom he is bringing to Christ, that whatever is necessary to be wrought in us, or done by us, in order to our union with Christ, is to be obtained from him in the way of prayer*, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. And it is observable, that the soul no sooner comes under the effectual teachings of God, but the Spirit of prayer begins to breath in it, Acts ix. 8. "Behold, he prayeth:" Those that were taught to pray by men before, are now taught of the Lord to pray: to pray did I say? yea, and to pray fervently too, as men concerned for their eternal happiness; to pray not only with others, but to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret: for their hearts are as bottles full of new wine, which must vent or break. Now the soul returns upon its God often in the same day; now it can

expreſs its burdens, and wants, in words and groans which the Spirit teacheth: They pray, and will not give over praying, till Chriſt come with complete ſalvation.

Leſſon 9. Ninthly, *All that come to Chriſt, are taught of God, to abandon their former ways, and companions in ſin, as ever they expect to be received unto mercy*, Iſa. lv. 7. 2 Cor. v. 17. Sins that were profitable, and pleaſant, that were as the right hand, and right eye, muſt now be cut off. Companions in ſin, who were once the delight of their lives muſt now be caſt off. Chriſt ſaith to the ſoul concerning theſe, as he ſaid in another caſe, John xviii. 8. "If therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way:" And the ſoul ſaith unto Chriſt, as it is, Pſal. cxix. 115. "Depart from me ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God:" And now pleaſant ſins, and companions in ſin, become the very burden, and ſhame of a man's ſoul: Objects of delight are become objects of pity and compaſſion: No endearments, no union of blood, no earthly intereſts whatſoever, are found ſtrong enough to hold the ſoul any longer from Chriſt: Nothing but the effectual teachings of God, are found ſufficient to diſſolve ſuch bonds of iniquity as theſe.

Leſſon 10. Tenthly, *All that come unto Chriſt are taught of God, that there is ſuch a beauty and excellency in the ways and people of God, as is not to be equalled in the whole world*, Pſal. xvi. 3. When the eyes of ſtrangers to Chriſt begin to be opened, and enlightened in his knowledge, you may ſee what a change of judgment is wrought in them, with reſpect to the people of God: and towards them eſpecially, whom God hath any way made inſtrumental for the good of their ſouls, Cant. v. 9. they then called the ſpouſe of Chriſt, "the faire ſt among women." The convincing holineſs of the bride then began to enamour and affect them, with a deſire of nearer conjunction and communion: *We will ſeek him with thee; with thee*, that haſt *ſo charged us;* that haſt taken ſo much pains for the good of our ſouls: now, and never before, the righteous appeareth more excellent than his neighbour. Change of heart is always accompanied with change of judgment, with reſpect to the people of God: thus the jaylor, Acts xvi. 33. waſhed the apoſtle's ſtripes, to whom he had been ſo cruel before. The godly now ſeem to be the glory of the places where they live; and the glory of any place ſeems to be darkned by their removal; as one ſaid of holy Mr. Barrington, "Methinks the town is not at home, when Mr. Barrington is out of town." They eſteem it a choice mercy to be in their company and acquaintance; Zech. viii. 23. "We will go with you, for we have heard that

"God is with you." No people like the people of God now; as one said, when he heard of two faithful friends, *Utinam tertius essem!* O that I might make the third! Whatever vile or low thoughts they had of the people of God before, to be sure now they are the excellent of the earth, in whom is all their delight: the holiness of the saints might have some interest in their consciences before, but they never had such an interest in their estimations and affections, till this lesson was taught them by the Father.

www.pdfbooksfree.com.cn

Lesson 11. Eleventhly, *All that come to Christ are taught of God, that whatever difficulties they apprehend in religion, yet they must not, upon pain of damnation, be discouraged thereby, or return again to sin,* Luke ix. 62. "No man having put his "hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom "of God." Ploughing-work is hard work; a strong and steady hand is required for it: he that ploughs, must keep on, and make no balks of the hardest and toughest ground he meets with. Religion also is the running of a race, 1 Cor. ix. 24.; there is no standing still, much less turning back, if ever we hope to win the prize.

The devil, indeed, labours every way to discourage and daunt the soul, by representing the insuperable difficulties of religion to it; and young beginners are but too apt to be discouraged, and fall under despondency; but the teachings of the Father are encouraging teachings; they are carried on from strength to strength against all the oppositions they meet with from without them, and the many discouragements they find within them. To this conclusion they are brought by the teaching of God, *We must have Christ, we must get a pardon, we must strive for salvation, let the difficulties, troubles, and sufferings in the way be never so great or many.* As he said, *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam;* it is necessary that I go on, it is not necessary that I live: So saith the soul that is taught of God; it is easier for me to dispense with ease, honour, relations, yea, with life itself, than to part with Christ, and the hopes of eternal life.

Lesson 12. Twelfthly, *They that come to Christ, are taught of God, that whatever guilt and unworthiness they discover in themselves, and whatever fears and doubts are upon their hearts, as to pardon and acceptance; yet, as the case stands, it is their wisdom and great interest, to venture themselves in the way of faith, upon Jesus Christ, whatever the issue thereof be.*

Three great discouragments are usually found upon the hearts of those that come to Christ in the way of faith.

First, The sensible greatness of guilt and sin. How can I go to Christ that am in such a case, that have been so vile a wretch? And here measuring the grace and mercy of Christ, by what it finds in itself, or in other creatures, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. the soul is ready to sink under the weight of its own discouraging, and misgiving thoughts.

www.libtool.com.cn

Secondly, The sense they have of their own weakness, and inability to do what God requires, and must of necessity be done, if ever they be saved. My heart is harder than an adamant, how can I break it? My will is stubborn, and exceeding obstinate, I am no way able to bow it; the frame and temper of my spirit is altogether carnal, and earthly; and it is not in the power of my hand to alter and change it; alas! I cannot subdue any one corruption, nor perform one spiritual duty, nor bear one of those sufferings and burdens, which religion lays upon all that follow Christ: this also proves a great discouragement in the way of faith.

Thirdly, And, which is more than all, the soul that is coming to Jesus Christ, hath no assurance of acceptance with him, if it should adventure itself upon him: it is a great hazard, a great adventure; it is much more probable, if I look to myself, that Christ will shut the door of mercy against me.

But under all these discouragements the soul learns this lesson from God, That, as ungodly as it is, nevertheless it is every way its great duty and concernment to go on in the way of faith, and make that great adventure of itself upon Jesus Christ: and of this the Lord convinceth the soul by two things, *viz.*

1. From the absolute necessity of coming.
2. From the encouraging probabilities of speeding.

First, The soul seeth an absolute necessity of coming: necessity is laid upon it, there is no other way, Acts iv. 12. God hath shut it up by a blessed necessity to this only door of escape, Gal. iii. 23. Damnation lies in the neglect of Christ, Heb. ii. 3. The soul hath no choice in this case; angels, ministers, duties, repentance, reformation cannot save me; Christ, and none but Christ can deliver me from present guilt, and the wrath to come. Why do I dispute, demur, delay, when certain ruin must inevitably follow the neglect or refusal of gospel-offers?

Secondly, The Lord sheweth those that are under his teaching, the probabilities of mercy, for their encouragement in the way of believing. And these probabilities the soul is enabled to gather from the general and free invitations of the gospel, Isa. lv. 1, 7. Rev. xxii. 17. from the conditional promises of the gospel, John vi. 37. Math. xi. 28. Isa. i. 18. from the vast ex-

tent of grace, beyond all the thoughts and hopes of the creatures, Isa. lv. 8, 9. Heb. vii. 25. from the encouraging examples of other sinners, who have found mercy in as bad a condition as they, 1 Tim. i. 13. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3. 2 Cor. vi. 10, 11. from the command of God, which warrants the action, and answers all the objections of unworthiness and presumption in them that come to Christ, 1 John iii. 23. and lastly, from the sensible changes already made upon the temper and frame of the heart. Time was, when I had no sense of sin, nor sorrow for sin; no desire after Christ, nor heart to duties. But it is not so with me now; I now see the evil of sin; so as I never saw it before; my heart is now broken in the sense of that evil; my desires begin to be enflamed after Jesus Christ; I am not at rest, nor where I would be, till I am in secret mourning after the Lord Jesus; surely these are the dawnings of the day of mercy; let me go on in this way. It saith, as the lepers at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. "If I stay here, I perish:" If I go to Christ, I can but perish. Hence believers bear up against all objected discouragements, *certum exitium commutemus incerto;* it is the dictate of wisdom, the vote of reason, to exchange a certain for an uncertain ruin. And thus you have here what those excellent lessons are, which all that come to Christ are taught by the Father.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XXIII.

JOHN vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

IN the former sermon, you have been taught this great truth;

Doct. *That the teachings of God are absolutely necessary to every soul that cometh unto Christ, in the way of faith.*

What the teachings of God import, hath been formerly opened; and what those special lessons are, which all believers hear and learn of the Father, was the last thing discoursed: that which remains to be further cleared about this subject, before I come to the application of the whole, will be to shew you,

1. What are the properties of divine teachings.
2. What influence they have in bringing souls to Christ.

3. Why it is impossible for any man to come to Christ without these teachings of the Father.

First, What are the properties of divine teachings? Concerning the teachings of God, we affirm in general, that, though they exclude not, yet they vastly differ from all human teachings: as the power of God in effecting transcends all human power, so the wisdom of God in teaching, transcends all human wisdom. For,

www.libtool.com.cn

1. God teacheth powerfully; he speaketh to the soul with a strong hand; when the word cometh accompanied with the Spirit, it is "mighty through God, to cast down all imaginations," 2 Cor. x. 4. Now the gospel "comes not in word only, (as "it was wont to do), but in power," 1 Thes. i. 4, 5. a power that makes the soul fall down before it, and acknowledge that God is in that word, 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

2. The teachings of God are sweet teachings. Men never relish the sweetness of a truth, till they learn it from God, Cant. i. 3. "His name is as ointment poured forth." Cant. v. 16. "His mouth is most sweet." O how powerfully and how sweetly doth the voice of God slide into the hearts of poor melting sinners! how jejune, dry, and tasteless are the discourses of men, compared with the teachings of the Father!

3. God teacheth plainly and clearly: He not only opens truths to the understanding, but he openeth the understanding also to perceive them, 2 Cor. iii. 16. In that day the vail is taken away from the heart; a light shineth into the soul; a clear beam from heaven is darted into the mind, Luke xxiv. 45. Divine teachings are fully satisfying; the soul doubts no more, staggers and hesitates no more, but acquiesces in that which God teaches; it is so satisfied, that it can venture all upon the truth of what it hath learned from God; as that martyr said, *I cannot dispute, but I can die for Christ.* See Prov. viii. 8, 9.

Fourthly, The teachings of God are *infallible teachings*. The wisest and holiest of men may mistake, and lead others into the same mistakes with themselves; but it is not so in the teachings of God. If we can be sure that God teacheth us, we may be as sure of the truth of what he teacheth; for his Spirit *guideth us into all truth*, John xvi. 13. and into nothing but truth.

Fifthly, The teachings of God are *abiding teachings*; they make everlasting impressions upon the soul, Psal. cxix. 98. *they are ever with it*: The words of men vanish from us; but the words of God abide by us: what God teacheth, he writeth upon the heart, Jer. xxxi. 33. and that will abide; *litera scripta manet.* 'Tis usual with souls, whose understandings have been opened

by the Lord, many years afterward to say, I shall never forget such a scripture that once convinced, such a promise that once encouraged me.

Sixthly, The teachings of God are *saving teachings;* they make the soul wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. There is a great deal of other knowledge that goes to hell with men: The pavement of hell (as one speaks) is pitched with the skulls of many great *scholars*, but eternal life is in the teachings of God, John xvii. 3. "This is eternal life, to know thee the only true "God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." This is deservedly stiled the light of this life, John viii. 12. "In this light "we shall see light," Psal. xxxvi. 9.

Seventhly, The teachings of God make their own way into the dullest, and weakest capacities, Isa. xxxii. 4. "The heart al- "so of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of "the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly:" Upon this account Christ said, Mat. xi. 25. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord "of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from "the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:" 'Tis admirable to see what clear illuminations some poor illiterate Christians have in the mysteries of Christ and salvation, which others, of great abilities, deep and searching heads, can never discover with all their learning and study.

Eighthly, To conclude, The teachings of God are *transforming teachings*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. they change the soul into the same image: God casts them, whom he teacheth, into the very mould of those truths which they learn from him, Rom. vi. 17. These are the teachings of God, and thus he instructeth those that come to Christ.

Secondly, Next let us see what influence divine teachings have upon souls, in bringing them to Christ; and we shall find a three-fold influence in them.

1. They have an influence upon the external *means*, by which they come to Christ.

2. They have an influence upon the mind, to remove what hindred it from Christ.

3. They have an influence upon the will, to allure and draw it to Christ.

First, They have an influence upon the *means*, by which we come to Christ: the best ordinances are but a dead letter except the Spirit, the teaching and quickening Spirit of God, work in fellowship with them, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The best ministers, like the disciples, cast forth the net, but take nothing, win not one soul to God, till God teach as well as they. Paul is nothing, and A-

pollos nothing, but God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Let the most learned, eloquent, and powerful orator be in the pulpit, yet no man's heart is persuaded, till it hears the voice of God; *Cathedram in coelis habet, qui corda docet.*

Secondly, They have influence upon the *mind*, to remove what hindred it from Christ. Except the minds of men be first untaught those errors, by which they are prejudiced against Christ, they will never be persuaded to come unto him; and nothing but the Father's teachings can unteach those errors, and cure those evils of the mind. The natural mind of man slights the truths of God, until God teach them; and then they tremble with an awful reverence of them. Sin is but a trifle, till God shews us the face of it in the glass of the law, and then it appears *exceeding sinful*, Rom. vii. 13. We think God to be such a one as ourselves, Psal. l. 21. until he discover himself unto us in his infinite greatness, awful holiness, and severe justice; and then we cry, who can stand before this great and dreadful God! We thought it was time enough hereafter, to mind the concernments of another world, until the Lord open our eyes, to see in what danger we stand upon the very brink of eternity; and then nothing alarms us more, than the fears that our time will be finished before the great work of Salvation be finished. We thought ourselves in a converted state before, till God made us to see the necessity of another manner of conversation, upon pain of eternal damnation. We readily caught hold upon the promises before, when we had no right to them; but the teachings of God make the presumptuous sinner let go his hold, that he may take a better and surer hold of them in Christ. We once thought that the death of Christ, in itself, had been enough to secure our salvation; but under the teachings of God, we discern plainly the necessity of a change of heart and state; or else the blood of Christ can never profit us. Thus the teachings of God remove the errors of the mind, by which men are with-held from Christ.

Thirdly, The teachings of God powerfully attract, and allure the will of a sinner to Christ, Hos. ii. 14. But of these drawings of the father I have largely spoken before, and therefore shall say no more of it in this place, but hasten to the last thing propounded, *viz.*

Thirdly, Why it is impossible for any man to come to Christ, without the Father's teachings; and the impossibilities hereof will appear three ways.

1. From the power of sin.
2. From the indisposition of man.

3. From the nature of faith.

By all which, the last point designed to be spoken to from this scripture, will be fully cleared, and the whole prepared for application.

First, the impossibility of coming to Christ without the teachings of the father, will appear from the power of sin, which hath so strong an holdfast upon the hearts, and affections of all unregenerate men, that no human arguments, or persuasions whatsoever, can divorce or separate them; for,

First, Sin is connatural with the soul, 'tis born and bred with a man; Psal. li. 4. Isa. xlviii. 8. It is as natural for fallen man to sin, as it is to breathe.

Secondly, The power of sin hath been strengthening itself from the beginning, by a long continued custom, which gives it the force of a second nature, and makes regeneration and mortification naturally impossible, Jer. xv. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change "his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may he also do good "that is accustomed to do evil."

Thirdly, Sin is the delight of the sinner: "it is a sport to a "fool to do mischief," Prov. x. 23. Carnal men have no other pleasure in this world, but what arises from their lusts; to cut off their corruptions by mortification, were at once to deprive them of all the pleasure of their lives.

Fourthly, Sin being connatural, customary, and delightful, doth therefore bewitch their affections, and inchant their hearts, to that degree of madness and fascination, that they rather chuse damnation by God, than separation from sin: "Their hearts "are fully set in them to do evil," Eccles. viii. 11. they rush into sin, as the "horse rusheth into the battle," Jer. viii. 6. And now, what, think you, can separate a man from his beloved lust, except the powerful and effectual teachings of God? Nothing but a light from heaven can rectify, and reduce the inchanted mind; no power, but that of God, can change and alter the sinful bent, and inclination of the will; 'tis a task above all the power of the creature.

Secondly, The impossibility of coming to Christ, without the Father's teachings, evidently appears from the *indispositness* of man, the subject of this change: "The natural man receives not "the things which are of God," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Three things must be wrought upon man, before he can come to Christ: his blind understanding must be enlightned; his hard and rocky heart must be broken, and melted; his stiff, fixed, and obstinate will must be conquered and subdued: but all these are effects

of a supernatural power. The illumination of the mind is the peculiar work of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Rev. iii. 17. Eph. v. 8. The breaking and melting of the heart is the Lord's own work; 'tis he that giveth repentance, Acts v. 31. 'Tis the Lord that "takes away the heart of stone, and giveth an heart of flesh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'Tis he that poureth out the spirit of contrition upon man, Zech. xii. 10. The changing of the natural bent, and inclination of the will, is the Lord's sole prerogative, Phil. ii. 13. All these things are effectually done in the soul of man, when God teacheth it, and never till then.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, The nature of faith, by which we come to Christ, plainly shews the impossibility of coming without the Father's teaching. Every thing in faith is supernatural; the implantation of the habit of faith is so, Eph. ii. 8. 'Tis not of ourselves, but the gift of God; 'tis not an habit *acquired* by industry, but *infused* by grace, Phil. i. 29. The *light* of faith, by which spiritual things are discerned, is supernatural; Heb xi. 1, 27. It seeth things that are invisible. The *adventures* of faith are supernatural; for "against hope, a man *believeth* in hope, giving "glory to God," Rom. iv. 18. By faith a man goeth unto Christ, against all the dictates, and discouragements of natural sense and reason. The *self-denial* of faith is supernatural; the cutting off the right-hand, and plucking out of right-eye-sins, must needs be so, Mat. v. 29. The *victories* and conquests of faith do all speak it to be supernatural: it overcomes the strongest oppositions from without, Heb. xi. 33, 34. It subdueth and purgeth the most obstinate and deep-rooted corruptions within, Acts xv. 9. It overcometh all the blandishments, and charming allurements of the bewitching world, 1 John v. 4. All which considered, how evident is the conclusion, that none can come to Christ without the Father's teachings? The uses follow.

First use for information.

Infer. 1. *How notoriously false and absurd is that doctrine, which asserteth the possibility of believing without the efficacy of supernatural grace?* The desire of self-sufficiency was the ruin of Adam, and the conceit of self-sufficiency is the ruin of multitudes of his posterity. This doctrine is not only contradictory to the current stream of scripture, Phil. ii. 13. 1 John i. 13. with many other scriptures; but it is also contradictory to the common sense and experience of believers: yet the pride of nature will strive to maintain what scripture and experience plainly contradict and overthrow.

Infer. 2. *Hence we may also inform ourselves, how it cometh to pass that many rational, wise and learned men, miss Christ; whilst*

the simple and illiterate; even babes in natural knowledge, obtain interest in him, and salvation by him. The reason hereof is plainly given us by Christ, in Mat. xiii. 11. "To you it is given to "know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it "is not given." It is the dropping and dews of divine teaching upon one, and not upon another, that dryeth up the green tree, and maketh the dry tree to flourish. Many natural men have very fine brains, searching wits, solid judgments, nimble fancies, tenacious memories; they can search out the mysteries of nature, solve the *phoenomena*, satisfy the enquiries of the most curious; they can measure the earth, discover the motions of the heavens: but after all take up their place in hell, when, in the mean time, *the statutes of the Lord* (by the help of his teachings) *make wise the simple*, Psal. xix. 17. It is no matter how dull and incapable the scholar be, if God undertake to be the teacher. I remember, Austin speaks of one who was commonly reputed a fool, and yet he could not but judge him to be truly godly, and that by two signs of grace which appeared in him; one was, his seriousness when he heard any discourses of Christ: the other was, his indignation manifested against sin. It was truly said by those two Cardinals (who, riding to the council of Constance, overheard a poor shepherd in the fields with tears bewailing his sins) *Surgent indocti et rapient coelum;* The unlearned will rise and take heaven, whilst we with all our learning shall descend into hell.

Infer. 3. *This also informs us of the true reason of the strange and various successes of the gospel upon the souls of men.* Here we see why the ministry of one man becomes fruitful, and another's barren; yea, why the labours of the same man prosper exceedingly at one time, and not at another; these things are according as the teachings of God do accompany our teachings. We often see a weaker and plainer discourse blessed with success, whilst that which is more artificial, neat and laboured, comes to nothing. St. Austin hath a pretty similitude to illustrate this; Suppose, saith he, two *conduits*, the one very plain, the other curiously carved and adorned with images of lions, eagles, *&c.* the water doth not refresh, and nourish, as it cometh from such a curious *conduit*, but as it is water. Where we find most of man, we frequently find least of God. I speak not this to encourage carelessness and laziness, but to provoke the dispensers of the gospel to more earnestness, and frequent prayer for the assistance, and blessing of the Spirit upon their labours, and to make men less fond of their own gifts and abilities: blear-

eyed Leah may bear children, when beautiful Rachel proves barren.

Infer. 4. *Learn hence the transcendent excellency of saving, spiritual knowledge, above that which is merely literal and natural.* One drop of knowledge taught by God, is more excellent, than the whole ocean of human knowledge, and acquired gifts, Phil. iii. 8. John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Let no man therefore be dejected at the want of those gifts, with which unsanctified men are adorned. If God have taught thee the evil of sin, the worth of Christ, the necessity of regeneration, the mystery of faith, the way of communion with God in duties; trouble not thyself because of thine ignorance in natural, or moral things: thou hast that, reader, which will bring thee to heaven; and he is a truly wise man that knows the way of salvation, though he be ignorant and unskilful in other things: thou knowest those things which all the learned doctors, and libraries in the world could never teach thee, but God hath revealed them to thee: others have more *science*, thou hast more *savour* and sweetness: bless God, and be not discouraged.

Second use for examination.

If there be no coming to Christ without the teachings of the Father; then it greatly concerns us to examine our own hearts, whether ever we have been under the saving teachings of God, during the many years we have sat under the preaching of the gospel. Let not the question be mistaken, I do not ask what books you have read, what ministers you have heard, what stock of natural, or speculative knowledge you have acquired; but the question is, whether ever God spake to your hearts, and hath effectually taught you such lessons, as were mentioned in our last discourse? O there is a vast difference betwixt that notional, speculative, and traditional knowledge which man learneth from men, and that spiritual, operative, and transforming knowledge which a man learneth from God. If you ask how the teachings of God may be discerned, from all other mere human teachings; I answer, they may be discerned, and distinguished by these six signs.

Sign 1. *The teachings of God are very humbling to the soul that is taught.* Human knowledge puffeth up, 1 Cor. viii. 1. but the teachings of God do greatly abase the soul, Job xlii. 5. "I "have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine "eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust "and ashes:" the same light which discovers to us the holiness, justice, greatness, and goodness of God, discovereth also the vile-

nesſ, baſeneſs, emptineſs, and total unworthineſs of men; yea, of the beſt and holieſt of men, Iſa. vi. 5.

Sign 2. *The teachings of God are deeply affecting, and impreſſive teachings;* they fully reach the heart of man, Hoſ. ii. 14. "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and "ſpeak comfortably unto her:" or, as it is in the Hebrew, I will ſpeak to her heart. When God ſheweth unto man the evil of ſin, he ſo convinceth the ſoul, that no creature-comforts have any pleaſure, or ſweetneſs in them; and when he ſheweth unto man his righteouſneſs, pardon, and peace in Chriſt, he ſo comforteth, and refreſheth the heart, that no outward afflictions have any weight, or bitterneſs in them: one drop of conſolation from heaven, ſweetens a ſea of trouble upon earth, Pſal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, "thy comforts delight my ſoul."

Sign 3. *The teachings of God are ſanctifying and renewing teachings;* they reform and change the heart, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 23. "If ſo be that you have heard him, and been taught by "him, as the truth is in Jeſus; that ye put off concerning "the former converſation the old man, which is corrupt, ac-"cording to the deceitful luſts; and be renewed in the ſpirit "of your mind," *&c.* See here what holineſs, and purity is the effect of divine teaching! Holineſs, both external and internal, negative and poſitive: holineſs of every kind follows the Father's teachings: all the diſcoveries God makes to us of himſelf in Chriſt have an aſſimilating quality, and change the ſoul into their own likeneſs, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Sign 4. *All God's teachings are practical, producing obedience.* Idle notions and uſeleſs ſpeculations are not learned from God. As God's creating words, ſo his teaching words are with effect: as when he ſaid, "Let there be light, and there was light;" ſo when he ſaith to the ſoul, Be comforted, be humbled; it is effectually comforted, Iſa lxvi. 13. it is humbled, Job xl. 4, 5. As God hath in nature made no creature in vain, ſo he ſpeaks no word in vain: every thing which men hear, or learn from the Father, is for uſe, practice, and benefit to the ſoul.

Sign 5. *All the teachings of God are agreeable with the written word:* The Spirit of God, and the word of God do never jar, John xiv. 26. "He ſhall take of mine, and ſhew it unto you." When God ſpeaketh unto the heart of man, whether in a way of conviction, conſolation, or inſtruction in duty, he always either maketh uſe of the expreſs words of ſcripture, or ſpeaks to the heart in language every way conſentaneous and agreeable to ſcripture: So that the written word becomes the *ſtandard* to

weigh, and try all divine teachings, Isa. viii. 20. "To the law, "and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this "word, it is because there is no light (or morning) in them." Whatever is disagreeing, or jarring with the scripture, must not pass for an inspiration of God, but a deluding sophism, and insinuation of Satan.

www.libtool.com.cn

Sign 6. *The teachings of God are very satisfying teachings to the soul of man:* The understanding faculty, like a *dial*, is enlightened with the beams of divine truth shining upon it: this, no man's teachings can do: Men can only teach *objectively*, by propounding truth to the understanding; but they cannot enlighten the faculty itself, as God doth, 1 John v. 20. He giveth man understanding, as well as instructions, to be understood; he opens the eyes of the understanding, as well as propoundeth the object, Eph. i. 18. And thus we may discern and distinguish the teachings of God, from all other teachings.

3. *Use of exhortation.*

The last use I shall make of this point, shall be a word of *exhortation*, both to them that never were yet effectually taught of God, and to them also that have heard his voice, and are come to Christ.

First, To those that never yet heard the voice of God speaking to their hearts; and truly this is the general case of most men and women, in the professing world: They have heard the sound of the gospel, but it hath been a confused, empty, and ineffectual sound in their ears: we have heard the voice of man, but have never yet heard the voice of God. The gifts and abilities of preachers have, in a notional and mere human way, improved their understandings, and sometimes slightly touched their affections: All this is but the effect of man upon man. O that you would look for something which is beyond all this: satisfy not yourselves with what is merely natural, and human in ordinances; come to the word with higher ends and more spiritual designs, than to get some notions of truth which you had not before, or to judge the gifts and abilities of the speaker: If God speak not to your hearts, all the ordinances in the world can do you no good, 1 Cor. iii. 7. O remember what a solemn and awful thing it is to come to those ordinances, and attend upon that ministration, in and by which the eternal decrees of heaven are to be executed upon your souls, which must be to you the "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death:" Wrestle with God, by prayer, for a blessing upon the ordinances. Say, "Lord, speak thyself to my heart, let me hear thy voice, and "feel thy power in this prayer, or in this sermon: Others have

"heard thy voice, cause me to hear it: It had been much better for me if I had never heard the voice of preachers, except "I hear thy voice in them."

Secondly, Let all those that have heard the voice of God, and are come to Christ in the virtue of his teachings, admire the wonderful condescension of God to them. O that God should speak to thy soul, and be silent to others! There be many thousands living at this day under ordinances, to whom the Lord hath not given an ear to hear, or an heart to obey, Deut. xxix. 4. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom "of heaven, but to them it is not given," Mat. xiii. 11. And I beseech you walk as men and women that have been taught of God. When Satan and your corruptions tempt you to sin, and to walk in the ways of the carnal, and careless world; remember then that scripture, Eph. iv. 20, 21. "But ye have not so "learned Christ, if so be that you have heard him, and have "been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." To conclude, see that you be exceeding humble, and lowly in spirit. Humility qualifies you for divine teachings, Psal. xxv. 9. "The "meek he will teach;" and the more ye are taught of God, the more humble you will still be.

And thus you see, that no man can come to Christ without the *application of the law*, and *the teachings of the Father*; which being considered, may be very useful to convince us, (which indeed is the design of it) that among the multitudes of men and women, living under the ordinances of God, and the general profession of religion, there are but few, very few to be found, who have effectually received the Lord Jesus Christ by saving faith.

And now, reader, I suppose by this time thou art desirous to know by what signs and evidences thy union with Christ by faith may be cleared up, and made evident to thee; and how that great question, whether thou hast yet effectually applied Christ to thy soul, or no, may be clearly decided; which brings me to the third general use of the whole, *viz.*

The examination of our interest in Christ, by

1. The donation of the Spirit, from 1 John iii. 24.
2. The new creation, from 2 Cor. v. 17.
3. The mortification of sin, from Gal. v. 24.
4. The imitation of Christ, from 1 John ii. 6.

Of each of these trials of our interest in Christ I shall speak in their order: And, first, of the donation of the Spirit.

SERMON XXIV.

Of the Manner, and Importance of the SPIRIT's Indwelling.

www.libtool.com.cn

1 JOHN iii. 24. ——*And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

THE apostle in this chapter is engaged in a very trying discourse; his scope is to discriminate the spirits, and states of sincere believers, from merely nominal, and pretended Christians; which he attempts not to do by any thing that is external, but by the internal effects and operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts. His enquiry is not into those things which men profess, or about the duties which they perform, but about the frames, and tempers of their hearts, and the principles by which they are acted in religion. According to this test, he puts believers upon the search and study of their own hearts; calls them to reflect upon the effects and operations of the Spirit of God, wrought within their own souls, assuring them, that these gracious effects, and fruits of the Spirit in their hearts, will be a solid evidence unto them of their union with Jesus Christ, amounting to much more than a general, conjectural ground of hope, under which it is possible there may *subesse falsum*, lurk a dangerous and fatal mistake: But the gracious effects of the Spirit of God within them, are a foundation upon which they may build the certainty, and assurance of their union with Christ: *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* In which words we have three things to consider, *viz.*

1. The thing to be tried, our union with Christ.
2. The trial of it, by the giving of his Spirit to us.
3. The certainty of the trial this way: *Hereby we know.*

First, The thing to be tried; which is indeed the greatest and weightiest matter that can be brought to trial in this world, or in that to come, namely our union with Christ, expressed here by *his abiding in us*; a phrase clearly expressing the difference betwixt those that, by profession and common estimation, pass for Christians among men, tho' they have no other union with Christ, but by an *external adhesion* to him in the external duties of religion, and those whose union with Christ is real, vital and permanent, by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in their

souls. John xv. 5, 6. opens the force, and importance of this phrase, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth "in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: If "a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is "withered." The thing then to be tried, is, whether we stand in Christ as dead branches in a living stock, which are only bound to it by external ligatures, or bonds, that hold them for a while together; or whether our souls have a vital union, and coalition with Christ, by the participation of the living sap of that blessed Root.

Secondly, The trial of this union, which is by the *giving of the Spirit to us*: The Spirit of Christ is the very bond of union betwixt him and our souls. I mean not that the very person of the Spirit dwelleth in us, imparting his *essential properties* to us; it were a rude blasphemy so to speak; but his saving influences are communicated to us in the way of sanctifying operations; as the sun is said to come into the house, when his beams and comforting influence come there. Nor yet must we think that the graces, or influences of the Spirit abide in us in the self-same measure, and manner as they do in Christ; "for God "giveth not the Spirit to him by measure;" in him all fulness dwells. He is anointed with the Spirit above his fellows; but there are measures and proportions of grace differently communicated to believers by the same Spirit; and these communicated graces, and real operations of the Spirit of grace in our hearts, do undoubtedly prove the reality of our union with Christ; as the communication of the self-same vital juice, or sap of the stock, to the branch whereby it lives, and brings forth fruit of the same kind, certainly proves it to be a real part, or a member of the same tree.

Thirdly, Which brings us to the third thing; namely, the certainty of the trial this way, ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν, in this, or by *this we know*: We so know, that we cannot be deceived. To clear this, let us consider two things in grace, *viz.*

1. Somewhat *constitutive*, } of its being.
2. Somewhat *manifestative*, }

There is something in grace which is essential, and *constitutive* of its being; and somewhat that flows from grace, and is *manifestative* of such a being: We cannot immediately, and intuitively discern the essence of grace, as it is in its simple nature. So God only discerns it, who is the author of it; but we may discern it *mediately* and *secondarily*, by the effects and operations of it. Could we see the simple essence of grace, or intui-

tively discern our union with Christ, our knowledge would be *demonstrative, a priori ad posterius*, by seeing effects, as they are lodged in their cause: But we come to know the being of grace, and the reality of our union with Christ, *a posteriori*, as by ascending, in our knowledge, from the effects and operations, to their true cause and being.

www.libtool.com.cn

And, accordingly, God hath furnished us with a power of self-intuition and reflection; whereby we are able to turn in upon our own hearts, and make a judgment upon ourselves, and upon our own acts. The soul hath not only a power to *project*, but a power also to *reflect* upon its own actions, not only to put forth a *direct act* of faith upon Jesus Christ, but to judge and discern that act also, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have "believed:" And this is the way in which believers attain their certainty, and knowledge of their union with Christ: from hence the observation will be.

Doct. *That interest in Christ may be certainly gathered, and concluded from the gift of the Spirit to us:* "No man (saith the "apostle) hath seen God at any time; if we love one another, "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us: Hereby "know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath "given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 12, 13. The being of God is invisible, but the operations of his Spirit in believers, are sensible, and discernable. The soul's union with Christ is a supernatural mystery, yet it is discoverable by the effects thereof, which are very perceptible in and by believers.

Two things require explication, and confirmation in the doctrinal part of this point.

1. What the giving of the Spirit imports and signifies.
2. How it evidences the soul's interest in Jesus Christ.

First, As to the import of this phrase, we are to enquire what is meant by the Spirit, and what by the giving of the Spirit.

Now the Spirit is taken in scripture two ways, *viz.*

Essentially; or personally.

In the first sense it is put for the Godhead, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Justified in the Spirit," *i. e.* By the power of his divine nature, which raised him from the dead. In the second sense it denotes the third person, or subsistence in the glorious and blessed Trinity; and to him this word *Spirit* is attributed, sometimes *properly* in the sense before-mentioned, as denoting his *personality*; at other times *metonymically*, and then it is put for the effects, fruits, graces, and gifts of the Spirit communicated by him unto men, Eph. v. 11. "Be ye filled with the Spirit." Now the fruits or gifts of the Spirit are either,

1. Common and assisting gifts: Or,

2. Special and sanctifying gifts.

In the last sense and signification, it must be taken in this place; for, as to the common, assisting and ministring gifts of the Spirit, they are bestowed promiscuously upon one as well as another; such gifts in an excellent degree and a large measure, are found in the unregenerate, and therefore can never amount to a solid evidence of the soul's union with Christ: but his special sanctifying gifts, being the proper effect and consequent of that union, must needs strongly prove and confirm it. In this sense therefore we are to understand *the Spirit* in this place; and by *giving the Spirit to us*, we are to understand more than the *coming of the Spirit upon us*: The Spirit of God is said to come upon men in a transient way, for their present assistance in some particular service, though in themselves they be unsanctified persons: Thus *the Spirit of God came upon Balaam*, Numb. xxiv. 2. enabling him to prophesy of things to come: And, although those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit be now ceased, yet the Spirit ceaseth not to give his ordinary assistances unto men, both regenerate and unregenerate, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10, 31. compared: But, whatever gifts he gives to others, he is said to *be given, to dwell*, and *to abide* only in believers, 1 Cor. iii. 6. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" An expression denoting both his special propriety in them, and gracious familiarity with them. There is a great difference betwixt the *assisting* and the *indwelling* of the Spirit; the one is *transient*; the other *permanent*. That is a good rule the schoolmen give us, *Illa tantum dicuntur inesse, quae insunt per modum quietis*: those things are only said to be in a man, which are in him by way of rest and permanency, and so the Spirit is in believers: Therefore they are said *to live in the Spirit*, Gal. v. 25. to be *led by the Spirit*, ver. 18. to be in the Spirit, and the Spirit to dwell in them, Rom. viii. 9. And so much of the first thing to be opened, *viz.* What we are to understand by the giving of the Spirit.

Secondly, In the next place we are to enquire and satisfy ourselves, how this giving of the Spirit evidently proves, and strongly concludes, that soul's interest in Christ unto whom he is given: and this will evidently appear by the consideration of these five particulars.

1. The Spirit of God in believers is the very bond by which they are united unto Christ: If therefore we find in ourselves the bond of union, we may warrantably conclude, that we have

union with Jesus Christ: This is evidently held forth in those words of Christ, John xvii. 22, 23. "The glory which thou "gavest me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as "we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be "made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou "hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." It is the glory of Christ's human nature to be united to the Godhead: "This (said Christ) thou gavest me, and the glory thou "gavest me, I have given them," *i. e.* By me they are united unto thee. And how this is done, he sheweth us more particularly, *I in them;* there is Christ in us, *viz. mystically:* And, *thou in me;* there is God in Christ, *viz. hypostatically:* So that in Christ, God and believers meet in a blessed union: It is Christ's glory to be one with God; it is our glory to be one with Christ, and with God by him: But how is this done? Certainly, no other way but by the giving of his Spirit unto us; for so much that phrase, *I in them*, must needs import: Christ is in us by the sanctifying Spirit, which is the bond of our union with him.

Secondly, The scripture every where makes this giving, or indwelling of the spirit, the great mark and trial of our interest in Christ; concluding from the presence of it in us, *positively*, as in the text; and from the absence of it, *negatively*, as in Rom. viii. 9. "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same "is none of his," Jude ver. 19. "Sensual, not having the spi-"rit." This mark therefore agreeing to all believers, and to none but believers, and that always, and at all times, it must needs clearly infer the soul's union with Christ, in whomsoever it is found.

Thirdly, That which is a certain mark of our freedom from the covenant of works, and our title to the privileges of the covenant of grace, must needs also infer our union with Christ, and special interest in him; but the giving, or indwelling of the sanctifying spirit in us, is a certain mark of our freedom from the *first covenant*, under which all Christless persons still stand, and our title to the special privileges of the *second covenant*, in which none but the members are interested; and, consequently, it fully proves our union with the Lord Jesus. This is plain from the *apostle's* reasoning, Gal. iv. 6, 7. "And because ye are "sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your "hearts, crying, Abba Father: Wherefore thou art no more "a servant, but a son; and if a son, then heir of God, through "Christ." The spirit of the first covenant was a servile spirit, a spirit of fear and bondage, and they that were under that covenant were not *sons*, but *servants*; but the spirit of the new

covenant is a free, ingenuous spirit, acting in the strength of God, and those that do so, are the children of God; and children inherit the blessed privileges, and royal immunities contained in that great charter, the covenant of grace: they are *heirs of God*, and the evidence of this their inheritance, by virtue of the second covenant, and of freedom from the servitude, and bondage of the first covenant, is *the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, crying, Abba Father*; So Gal. v. 18. "If ye be led by "the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Fourthly, If the eternal decree of God's electing love be executed, and the virtues and benefits of the death of Christ applied by the Spirit, unto every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a spirit of sanctification; then such a giving of the spirit unto us, must needs be a certain mark and proof of our special interest in Christ; but the decree of God's electing love is executed, and the benefits of the blood of Christ are applied unto every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a Spirit of sanctification. This is plain from 1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God "the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, "and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:" Where you see both God's election executed and the blood of Jesus sprinkled, or applied unto us by the Spirit, which is given to us as a Spirit of sanctification. There is a blessed order of working observed as proper to each person in the Godhead; the Father electeth, the Son redeemeth, the Spirit sanctifieth. The Spirit is the last efficient in the work of our salvation; what the Father decreed, and the Son purchased, that the Spirit applieth; and so puts the last hand to the compleat salvation of believers. And this some divines give as the reason why the sin against the Spirit is unpardonable, because he being the last agent, in order of working, if the heart of a man be filled with enmity against the Spirit, there can be no remedy for such a sin; there is no looking back to the death of Christ, or to the love of God, for remedy. This sin against the Spirit is that *obex infernalis*, the deadly stop and bar to the whole work of salvation; oppositely, where the Spirit is received, obeyed, and dwelleth in the way of sanctification; into that soul the eternal love of God, the inestimable benefits of the blood of Christ run freely, without any interruption; and, consequently, the interest of such a soul in Jesus Christ is beyond all dispute.

Fifthly, The giving of the Spirit to us, or his residing in us, as a sanctifying Spirit, is every where in scripture made the pledge and earnest of eternal salvation, and, consequently, must abundantly confirm, and prove the soul's interest in Christ, Eph.

i. 13, 14. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed "with that holy Spirit of promise; which is the earnest of our "inheritance," *&c.* So, 2 Cor. i. 22. "who hath also sealed "us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." And thus you have the point opened and confirmed. The use of all followeth:

www.libtool.com.cn

Use. Now the only use I make of this point, shall be that which lieth directly, both in the view of the text, and of the design for which it was chosen; namely, by it to try and examine the truth of our interest, and the validity of our claim to Jesus Christ. In pursuance of which design, I shall first lay down some general rules, and then propose some particular trials.

First, I shall lay down some general rules for the due information of our minds in this point, upon which so much depends.

Rule 1. *Though the Spirit of God be given to us, and worketh in us, yet he worketh not as a natural, and necessary, but as a free and arbitrary agent:* He neither assists, nor sanctifies, as the fire burneth, *ad ultimum sui posse*, as much as he can assist or sanctify, but as much as he pleaseth; "dividing to every "man severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 11. Bestowing greater measures of gifts and graces upon some, than upon others; and assisting the same person, more at one season than another: and all this variety of operation floweth from his own good pleasure: His grace is his own, he may give it as he pleaseth.

Rule 2. *There is a great difference in the manner of the Spirit's working before, and after the work of regeneration.* Whilst we are unregenerate, he works upon us, as upon dead creatures that work not at all with him; and what motion there is in our souls, is a counter-motion to the Spirit; but after regeneration it is not so, he then works upon a complying, and willing mind: we work, and he assists, Rom. viii. 26. Our conscience witnesseth, and he beareth witness with it, Rom. viii. 16. It is therefore an error of dangerous consequence to think that sanctified persons are not bound to stir, or strive in the way of duty, without a sensible impulse, or perverting motion of the Spirit, Isa. lxiv. 7.

Rule 3. *Though the Spirit of God be given to believers, and worketh in them, yet believers themselves may do or omit such things as may obstruct the working, and obscure the very being of the Spirit of God in them: ita nos tractat, ut a nobis tractatur:* He dealeth with us in his evidencing, and comforting-work, as we deal with him in point of tenderness and obedience to his dictates: there is a grieving, yea, there is a quenching of the Spirit by the

lusts and corruptions of those hearts in which he dwelleth; and though he will not forsake his habitation, as a spirit of sanctification, yet he may for a time desert it is as a spirit of consolation, Psal. li. 11.

Rule 4. *Those things which discover the indwelling of the Spirit in believers are not so much the matter of their duties, or substance of their actions, as the more secret springs, holy aims, and spiritual manner of their doing, or performing of them.* It is not so much the matter of a prayer, the neat and orderly expressions in which it is uttered, as the inward sense and spiritual design of the soul: it is not the choice of elegant words, whereby our conceptions are cloathed, or the copiousness of the matter with which we are furnished; for even a poor stammering tongue, and broken language, may have more of the Spirit of God in it. This made Luther say, he saw more excellency in the duty of a plain rustic Christian, than in all the triumphs of Cesar and Alexander. The beauty and excellency of spiritua duties is an inward hidden thing.

Rule 5. *All the motions and operations of the Spirit are always harmonious, and suitable to the* written word, Isa. viii. 20. "To the "law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this "word, it is because there is no light in them." The scriptures are by the inspiration of the Spirit, therefore his inspiration into the hearts of believers, must either substantially agree with the scriptures, or the inspiration of the Spirit be self-repugnant, and contradictory to one another. It is very observable, that the works of grace wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, are represented to us in scripture, as a transcript, or copy of the written word, Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will write my law in their "hearts." Now, as a true copy answers the original, word for word, letter for letter, point for point; so do the works of the Spirit in our souls, harmonize with the dictates of the Spirit in the scriptures: whatsoever motion therefore shall be found repugnant thereto, must not be fathered upon the Spirit of God, but laid at the door of its proper parents, the spirit of error and corrupt nature.

Rule 6. *Although the works of the Spirit, in all sanctified persons, do substantially agree, both with the written word, and with one another, (as ten thousand copies, penned from one original, must needs agree within themselves); yet as to the manner of infusion and operation, there are found many circumstantial differences.* The Spirit of God doth not hold one and the same method of working upon all hearts: the work of grace is introduced into some souls with more terror and trouble for sin, than it is in

others: he wrought upon Paul one way, upon Lydia in another way: he holds some much longer under terrors and troubles than he doth others: inveterate and more prophane sinners find stronger troubles for sin, and are held longer under them, than those are, into whose hearts grace is more early and insensibly infused by the Spirit's blessing upon religious education: but as these have less trouble than the other at first, so commonly they have less clearness, and more doubts and fears about the work of the Spirit afterwards.

Rule 7. *There is a great difference found betwixt the sanctifying, and the comforting influences of the Spirit upon believers, in respect of constancy and permanency.* His sanctifying influences abide for ever in the soul, they never depart; but his comforting influences come and go, and abide not long upon the hearts of believers. Sanctification belongs to the being of a Christian, consolation only to his well-being: the first therefore is fixing and abiding, the latter various and inconstant. Sanctification brings us to heaven hereafter, consolation brings heaven into us here: Our safety lies in the former, our cheerfulness only in the latter. There are times and seasons, in the lives of believers, wherein the Spirit of God doth more signally and eminently seal their spirits, and ravish their hearts with joy unspeakable: But what Bernard speaketh is certainly true in the experience of Christians: "* It is a sweet hour, and it is but an hour; "a thing of short continuance: the relish of it is exceeding sweet, "but it is not often that Christians taste it." And so much may suffice for the general rules about the inbeing, and workings of the Spirit in believers, for the better information of our understandings, and prevention of mistakes in this matter: I shall next, according to promise, lay down the particular marks and trials, by which we may discern whether God hath given us his Spirit or no; by which grown Christians, when they are in a due composed frame, may, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, (for which therefore they are bound to pray), discern his indwelling and working in themselves.

Evidence 1. *In whomsoever the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of sanctification, to that man or woman he hath been, more or less, a Spirit of conviction and humiliation.* This is the order which the Spirit constantly observes in adult, or grown converts, John xvi. 8, 9. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because

* *Rara hora, brevis mora; sapit quidem suavissime, sed gustatur rarissime.* Bern.

"they believed not on me." This, you see, is the method he observes all the world over; he shall reprove, or convince the world of sin. Conviction of sin hath the same respect unto sanctification, as the blossoms of trees have to the fruits that follow them: A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*; an imperfect fruit in itself, and in order to a more perfect and noble fruit. Where there are no blossoms, we can expect no fruit; and where we see no conviction of sin, we can expect no conversion to Christ. Hath then the Spirit of God been a Spirit of conviction to thee? Hath he more particularly convinced thee of sin, "because thou hast not believed on him?" *i. e.* hath he shewn thee thy sin and misery, as an unbeliever? Not only terrified and affrighted thy conscience with this or that more notorious act of sin, but fully convinced thee of the state of sin that thou art in by reason of thy unbelief; which holding thee from Christ, must needs also hold thee under the guilt of all thy other sins. This gives, at least, a strong probability that God hath given thee his Spirit, especially, when this conviction remains day and night upon thy soul, so that nothing but Christ can give it rest, and consequently the great enquiry of thy soul is after Christ, and none but Christ.

Evidence 2. *As the Spirit of God hath been a convincing, so he is a quickening Spirit, to all those to whom he is given;* Rom. viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath "made me free from the law of sin and death:" He is the Spirit of life, *(i. e.)* the principle of spiritual life in the souls whom he inhabiteth; for, uniting them to Christ, he unites them to the fountain of life; and this spiritual life, in believers, manifests itself as the natural life doth in vital actions and operations. When the Spirit of God comes into the soul of a man that was dead and senseless under sin, "O (saith he) now I begin to feel "the weight and load of sin, Rom. vii. 24. now I begin to "hunger and thirst after Christ, and his ordinances, 1 Pet. ii. 2. "now I begin to breathe after God in spiritual prayer," Acts ix. 11. Spiritual life hath its spiritual senses, and suitable operations. O think upon this, you that cannot feel any burthen in sin, you that have no hungerings or thirstings after Christ; how can the Spirit of God be in you? I do not deny but there may, at some times, be much deadness and senselessness upon the hearts of Christians, but this is their disease, not their nature; it is but at some times, not always, and when it is so with them, they are burdened with it, and complain of it, as their greatest affliction in this world; their spirits are not easy and at rest, in

such a condition as yours are; their spirits are as a bone out of joint, an arm dislocated, which cannot move any way without pain.

Evidence 3. *Those to whom God giveth his Spirit have a tender sympathy with all the interests and concernments of Christ.* This must needs be so, if the same Spirit which is in Christ dwelleth also in thy heart; if thou be a partaker of his Spirit, then what he loves, thou loveſt, and what he hateth, thou hateſt. This is a very plain caſe; even in nature itſelf, we find that the many members of the ſame natural body being animated by one and the ſame ſpirit of life, "whether one member ſuffer, all the "members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the "members rejoice with it: now ye are the body of Chriſt, "and members in particular," 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. For look, as Chriſt, the head of that body is touched with a tender ſenſe and feeling of the miſeries, and troubles of his people, he is perſecuted, when they are perſecuted, Acts ix. 4. ſo they that have the Spirit of Chriſt in them, cannot be without a deep, and tender ſenſe of the reproach, and diſhonours that are done to Chriſt: this is "as it were a ſword in their bones," Pſal. xlii. 3. If his public worſhip ceaſe, or the aſſemblies of his people are ſcattered; it cannot but go to the hearts of all, in whom the Spirit of Chriſt is: "They will be ſorrowful for "the ſolemn aſſemblies; the reproach of them will be a bur-"den," Zeph. iii. 18. Thoſe that have the Spirit of Chriſt do not more earneſtly long after any one thing in this world, than the advancement of Chriſt's intereſt, by converſion, and reformation in the kingdoms of the earth, Pſal. xlv. 3, 4. Paul could rejoice that Chriſt was preached, though his own afflictions were increaſed, Phil. i. 16, 18. and John could rejoice that Chriſt increaſed, though he himſelf decreaſed; yet therein was his joy fulfilled, John iii. 29. So, certainly, the concernments of Chriſt muſt, and will touch that heart which is the habitation of his Spirit. I cannot deny, but even a good Baruch may be under a temptation to ſeek great things for himſelf, and be too much ſwallowed up in his own concernments, when God is plucking up and breaking down, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. But this is only the influence of a temptation: the true temper and ſpirit of a believer inclines him to ſorrow and mourning, when things are in this ſad poſture: Ezek. ix. 4. "Go through the midſt of "the city, through the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a mark up-"on the foreheads of the men that ſigh, and that cry for all the "abominations that be done in the midſt thereof."

O reader, lay thine hand upon thine heart: Is it thus with

thee? Dost thou sympathize with the affairs and concernments of Christ in the world? or, carest thou not which way things go with the people of God, and gospel of Christ, so long as thine own affairs prosper, and all things are well with thee?

Evidence 4. *Wherever the Spirit of God dwelleth, he doth, in some degree, mortify and subdue the evils and corruptions of the soul in which he resides.* This spirit lusteth against the flesh, Gal. v. 7. and believers, "through the Spirit, do mortify the "deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. This is one special part of his sanctifying work. I do not say he so kills, and subdues sin in believers, as that it shall never trouble, or defile them any more: No, no, that freedom belongs to the perfect state in heaven, but its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season: It lives in believers still, but not upon the provision they willingly make to fulfil the lust of it, Rom. xiii. 27. The design of every true believer, is co-incident with the design of the Spirit, to destroy, and mortify corruption: They long after the extirpation of it, and are daily in the use of all sanctified means and instruments, to subdue and destroy it; the workings of their corruption, are the afflictions of their souls, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver "me from the body of this death?" And there is no one thing that sweetens the thoughts of death to believers (except the sight, and full enjoyment of God) more than their expected deliverance from sin doth.

Evidence 5. *Wherever the Spirit of God dwelleth in the way of sanctification, in all such he is the Spirit of prayer and supplication,* Rom. viii. 26. "Likwise the Spirit also helpeth our in-"firmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we "ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with "groanings which cannot be uttered:" Wherever he is poured out as the Spirit of *grace*, he is also poured out as the Spirit of *supplication*, Zech. xii. 10. His praying, and his sanctifying influences are undivided. There is a threefold assistance that the Spirit gives unto sanctified persons in prayer. He helps them before they pray, by setting an edge upon their desires and affections: He helps them in prayer, by supplying matters of request to them, teaching them what they should ask of God: He assisteth them in the manner of prayer, supplying them with suitable affections, and helping them to be sincere in all their desires to God. It is he that humbles the pride of their hearts, dissolves, and breaks the hardness of their hearts: Out of deadness makes them lively; out of weakness makes them strong.

He assisteth the spirits of believers after prayer, helping them to faith and patience, to believe, and wait for the returns, and answers of their prayers. O reader, reflect upon thy duties, consider what spirituality, sincerity, humility, broken-heartedness, and melting affections after God, are to be found in thy duties: Is it so with thee? Or dost thou hurry over thy duties as an interruption to thy business, and pleasures? Are they an ungrateful task, imposed upon thee by God, and thy own conscience? Are there no hungerings, and thirstings after God in thy soul? Or, if there be any pleasure arising to thee out of prayer, is it not from the ostentation of thy gifts? If it be so, reflect sadly upon the carnal state of thy heart; these things do not speak the Spirit of grace and supplication to be given thee.

Evidence 6. *Wherever the Spirit of grace inhabits, there is an heavenly, spiritual frame of mind accompanying, and evidencing the indwelling of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5, 6. "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit: For, to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." By the mind, understand the musings, reasonings, yea, and the cares, fears, delights and pleasures of the soul, which follow the workings, and meditations of the mind. As these are, so are we; if these be ordinarily, and habitually taken up, and exercised about earthly things, then is the frame, and state of the man carnal, and earthly: The workings of every creature follow the being and nature of it. If God, Christ, heaven, and the world to come, engage the thoughts, and affections of the soul, and the temper of such a soul is spiritual, and the Spirit of God dwelleth there; this is the life of the regenerate, Phil. iii. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven;" and such a frame of heart is *life*, and *peace*: A serene, placid, and most comfortable life. No pleasures upon earth, no gratifications of the senses do relish, and savour, as spiritual things do. Consider, therefore, which way thy heart ordinarily works, especially in thy solitudes, and hours of retirement. These things will be a great evidence for, or against thy soul. David could say, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them: If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee," Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18. Yet it must be acknowledged, for the relief of weaker Christians, that there is a great difference and variety found in this matter, among the people of God: For the strength, steadiness, and constancy of a spiritual mind, result from the depth, and improvement of sanctification: The more grace, still the more

evenness, spirituality, and constancy, there is in the motions of the heart after God. The minds of weak Christians are more easily entangled in earthly vanities, and more frequently diverted by inward corruptions; yet still there is a spiritual *Pondus*, inclination, and bent of their hearts towards God; and the vanity, and corruption which hinders their communion with him, is their greatest grief, and burthen under which they groan in this world.

www.biblioteca.org.ar

Evidence 7. *Those to whom the Spirit of grace is given, are led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 14. "As many as are led by the "Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God:" Sanctified souls give themselves up to the government, and conduct of the Spirit; they obey his voice, beg his direction, follow his motion, deny the sollicitations of the flesh and blood, in obedience to him, Gal. i. 16. And they that do so, they are the sons of God. It is the office of the Spirit to guide us in all truth; and it is our great duty to follow his guidance. Hence it is, that in all enterprises, and undertakings, the people of God so earnestly beg direction, and counsel from him. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteous-"ness, (saith David) make thy way straight before my face," Psal. viii. 5. They dare not, in doubtful cases, lean to their own understandings; yea, in points of duty, and in points of sin, they dare not neglect the one, or commit the other, against the convictions, and persuasions of their own consciences; though troubles, and sufferings be unavoidable in that path of duty, when they have balanced duties with sufferings, in their most serious thoughts, the conclusion and result will still be, it is better to obey God, than man, the dictates of the Spirit, rather than the counsels of flesh and blood.

But, before I leave this point, I reckon myself a debtor unto weak Christians, and shall endeavour to give satisfaction to some special doubts and fears, with which their minds are ordinarily entangled in this matter; for it is a very plain case, that many souls have the presence, and sanctification of the Spirit without the evidence and comfort thereof. Divers things are found in believers, which are so many fountains of fears; and doubts to them. And,

Objection 1. First, I greatly doubt the Spirit of God is not in me (saith a poor Christian) because of the great darkness, and ignorance which clouds my soul; for I read, 1 John ii. 27. that he enlightneth the soul which he inhabiteth. "The anointing which "ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that "any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you "of all things," &c. but, alas, my understanding is weak and

cloudy, I have need to learn of the meanest of God's people: This only I know, that I know nothing as I ought to know.

Sol. Two things are to be regarded in spiritual knowledge; *viz.* the quantity, and the efficacy thereof. Your condition doth not so much depend upon the measures of knowledge; for, haply, you are under many natural disadvantages, and want those helps and means of encreasing knowledge, which others plentifully enjoy. It may be you have wanted the helps of education, or have been encumbred by the necessities and cares of the world, which have allowed you but little leisure for the improvement of your minds: But if that which you do know, be turned into practice and obedience, Col. i. 9, 10. If it have influence upon your hearts, and transform your affections into a spiritual frame and temper, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. If your ignorance humble you, and drive you to God daily for the increase of knowledge, one drop of such knowledge, of Christ, and yourselves as this, is more worth than a sea of human, moral, unsanctified, and speculative knowledge: Tho' you know but little, yet that little being sanctified, is of great value: Though you know but little, time was when ye knew nothing of Jesus Christ, or the state of your own souls. In a word, though you know but little, that little you do know will be still increasing, "like the morning light, which shineth more and more unto the "perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. If thou knowest so much as brings thee to Christ, thou shalt shortly be where thy knowledge shall be as the light at noon-day.

Object. 2. I sometimes find my heart raised, and my affections melted in duties, but I doubt it is in a natural way, and not from the Spirit of God: could I be assured those motions of my heart were from the Spirit of grace, and not merely a natural thing, it would be singular comfort, and satisfaction to me.

Sol. First, Consider, whether this be not the ground of your fear and doubting, because you are fain to take pains in the way of meditation, prayer, and other duties, to bring your hearts to relish and savour the things of God; whereas, it may be, you expect your spiritual enlargements and comforts should flow in upon you spontaneously, and drop from heaven immediately of their own accord, without any pains or industry of yours. Here may be, (and probably is) a great mistake in this matter; for the Spirit of God works in the natural method, wherein affections use to be raised, and makes use of such duties as meditation and prayer, as instruments to do that work by, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. So David was forced to reason with, and chide his own heart, Psal. xlii. 5. Thy comfort and enlarge-

ment may nevertheless be the fruit of the Spirit, because God makes it spring up, and grow upon thy duties.

Secondly, Take this as a sure rule, whatsoever rises from self, always aims at, and terminates in self. This stream cannot be carried higher than the fountain; if therefore thy aim, and end in striving for affections and enlargements in duty, be only to win applause from men, and appear to be what in reality thou art not, this, indeed is the fruit of nature, and a very corrupt and hypocritical nature; but if thy heart be melted, or desire to be melted in the sense of the evil of sin, in order to the farther mortification of it; and, under the apprehensions of the free grace and mercy of God in the pardon of sin, in order to the engaging of thy soul more firmly to him; if these, or such like, be thy ends and designs, or be promoted and furthered by thine enlargements, and spiritual comforts, never reject them as the mere fruits of nature: A carnal root cannot bring forth such fruits as these.

Object. 3. Upon the contrary, spiritual deadness, and indisposedness to duties, and to those especially which are more secret, spiritual, and self-denying than others, is the ground upon which many spiritual souls, who are yet truly gracious, do doubt the indwelling of the Spirit in them. O, saith such a soul, if the Spirit of God be in me, Why is it thus? Could my heart be so dead, so backward, and averse to spiritual duties? No, no; these things would be my meat and my drink, the delights and pleasures of my life.

Sol. First, These things indeed are very sad, and argue thy heart to be out of frame, as the body is, when it cannot relish the most desirable meats, or drinks: But the question will be, how thy soul behaves itself in such a condition as this is? whether this be easy or burdensome to be borne by thee? * and if thou complain under it as a burden; then, what pains thou takest to ease thyself, and get rid of it?

Secondly, Know also, that there is a great difference betwixt spiritual *death*, and spiritual *deadness*; the former is the state of the unregenerate, the latter is the disease and complaint of many thousand regenerate souls: If David had not felt it as well as thee, he would never have cried out nine times in the compass of one Psalm, *Quicken me, quicken me.* Besides,

* He who inclines to that which is good, and is averse to that which is evil; has a desire of pleasing God, though sometimes being seduced by evil concupiscence, through infirmity he may commit that which is displeasing to God. *Dawen.*

Thirdly, Though it be *often*, it is not so *always* with thee: there are seasons wherein the Lord breaks in upon thy heart, enlarges thy affections, and sets thy soul at liberty; to which times thou wilt do well to have an eye, in these dark and cloudy days.

Object. 4. But the Spirit of God is the *comforter* as well as a *sanctifier*: He doth not only enable men to believe, but after they believe, he also seals them, Eph. i. 13. But I walk in darkness, and am a stranger to the sealing and comforting work of the Spirit: How therefore can I imagine the Spirit of God should dwell in me, who go from day to day in the bitterness of my soul, mourning as without the sun?

www.libtool.com.cn

Sol. There is a two-fold sealing, and two-fold comfort: The Spirit sealeth both *objectively* in the work of sanctification, and *formally*, in giving clear evidence of that work. Thou mayst be sealed in the first, whilst thou are not yet sealed in the second sense: If so, thy condition is safe, although it be at present uncomfortable. And, as to comfort, that also is of two sorts, *viz. seminal*, or *actual*: in the root, or in the fruit; *Light is sown for the righteous*, Psal. xcvii. 11. though the harvest, to reap and gather in that joy and comfort, be not yet come. And there are many other ways beside that of joy and comfort, whereby the indwelling of the Spirit may evidence itself in thy soul: If he do not enable thee to rejoice, yet if he enable thee sincerely to mourn for sin; if he do not enlarge thy heart in comfort, yet if he humble and purge thy heart by sorrows; if he deny thee the *assurance of faith*, and yet give thee the *dependance of faith*, thou hast no reason to call in question, or deny the indwelling of the Spirit in thee for that cause.

Object. 5. But the apostle saith, "They that walk in the Spirit, fulfil the lusts of the flesh," Gal. v. 16. but I find myself entangled, and frequently overcome by them: Therefore I doubt the Spirit of God is not in me.

Sol. It is possible the ground of your doubting may be your mistake of the true sense and meaning of that scripture: It is not the apostle's meaning in that place, that sin in believers doth not work, tempt, and oftentimes overcome, and captivate them; for then he would contradict himself in Rom. vii. 23. where he thus complains, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." But two things are meant by that expression, "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

First, That the principle of grace will give a check to sin in

its first motions, and cause it to miscarry in the womb, like an untimely birth, before it comes to its full maturity; it shall never be able to gain the full consent of the will, as it doth in the unregenerate.

Secondly, If, notwithstanding all the opposition grace makes to hinder the birth, or commission of it, it doth yet prevail, and break forth into act; yet such acts of sin, as they are not committed without *regret*, so they are followed with *shame*, *sorrow*, and true *repentance*: And those very surprizals, and captivities of sin at one time, are made cautions and warnings to prevent it at another time. If it be so with thee, thou dost not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

And now, reader, upon the whole, if upon examination of thy heart by these rules, the Lord shall help thee to discern the saving work of the Spirit upon thy soul, and thereby thine interest in Christ, What a happy man or woman art thou! what pleasure will arise to thy soul from such a discovery! Look upon the frame of thine heart *absolutely* as it is in itself at present, or *comparatively*, with what once it was, and others still are, and thou wilt find enough to transport and melt thy heart within thee: Certainly this is the most glorious piece of workmanship that ever God wrought in the world upon any man, Eph. ii. 10. The Spirit of God is come down from heaven, and hath hallowed thy soul to be a temple for himself to dwell in; as he hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will "be their God, and they shall be my people," 2 Cor. vi. 16. Moreover, this gift of the Spirit is a sure pledge and earnest of thy future glory: Time was, when there was no such work upon thy soul: And, considering the frame and temper of it, the total aversation, strong opposition, and rooted enmity that was in it; it is the wonder of wonders, that ever such a work as this should be wrought upon such an heart as thine; that ever the Spirit of God, whose nature is pure and perfect holiness, should chuse such an unclean, polluted, abominable heart to frame an habitation for himself there to dwell in; to say of thy soul (now his spiritual *temple*) as he once said of the material *temple* at *Jerusalem*, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. "The Lord hath "chosen it, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my "rest for ever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it." O what hath God done for thy soul!

Think, reader, and think again: Are there not many thousands in the world of more ingenuous, sweet, and amiable dispositions than thyself, whom yet the Spirit of God passeth by,

and leaveth them as tabernacles for Satan to dwell in? Such a one thou lately wast, and hadst still remained, if God had not wrought for thee, beyond all the expectations and desires of thine own heart. O bless God, that you have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that ye might know the things which are freely given unto you of God.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XXV.

Of the Nature and Necessity of the NEW CREATURE.

2 COR. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

YOU have seen one trial of an interest in Christ, in our last discourse, namely, by the donation of the Spirit. We have here another trial of the same matter, from one of the greatest, and most noble effects of the Spirit upon our souls; namely, his work of renovation, or *new creation*: "If any man "be in Christ, he is a new creature." The *apostle*'s scope in the immediate context, is to dissuade Christians from a carnal, sinful partiality, in their respects to men: Not to despise them after the manner of the world, according to the external differences, but the real internal worth, and excellency that is in men. This the apostle presses by two arguments; one drawn from the end of Christ's death, verse 15. which was to take off from these selfish designs, and carnal ends, by which the whole world is swayed. *Secondly*, From the *new Spirit*, by which believers are actuated: they that are in Christ, are to judge, and measure all things by a new rule: "If any man be "in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away;" *q. d.* we have done with that low, selfish spirit of the world, which was wholly governed by carnal interest; we are now to judge by a new rule, to be actuated from a new principle, aim at a new, and more noble end; "Behold, all things are become "new." In these words we have three general parts, to be distinctly considered, *viz.*

1. The great question to be determined, "If any man be in "Christ?"

2. The rule by which it may be determined; *viz.* "he is a "new creature."

3. This general rule more particularly explained; "Old "things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

First, We have here the great question to be determined, Whether a man be in Christ? A question, upon the determination whereof, we must stand, or fall for ever. By [*being in Christ*] the *apostle* doth not here mean the general profession of Christianity, which gives a man the *reputation* of an interest in him; but by being in Christ, he means an interest in him, by *vital union* with his person, and real participation of his benefits. Now this is the question to be determined, the matter to be tried; than which, nothing can be more solemn, and important in the whole world.

Secondly, The rule by which this great question may be determined, viz. *The new creation*: "If any man be in Christ, "he is a new creature." By this rule all the titles, and claims made to Christ in the professing world, are to be examined. [*If any man*] be he what he will, high, or low, great, or small; learned, or illiterate; young, or old; if he pretend interest in Christ, this is the standard by which he must be tried: if he be in Christ, he is *a new creature*; and if he be not *a new creature*, he is not in Christ, let his endowments, gifts, confidence, and reputation be what they will: [*A new creature*] not new physically, he is the same person he was; but a new creature, that is, a creature renewed by gracious principles, newly infused into him from above, which sway him, and guide him in another manner, and to another end than ever he acted before; and these gracious principles not being educed out of any thing, which was pre-existent in man, but infused *de novo*, from above, are therefore called, in this place, a new creature: This is the rule, by which our claim to Christ must be determined.

Thirdly, This general rule is here more particularly explained; "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become "new." He satisfies not himself to lay down this rule concisely, or express it in general terms, by telling us, the man in Christ must be *a* new creature; but more particularly, he shews us what this new creature is, and what the parts thereof are; *viz.* Both

1. The privative part; "Old things are passed away."

2. The positive part thereof; "All things are become new."

By old things, he means all those carnal principles, self-ends, and fleshly lusts, belonging to the carnal state, or the old man:

all these are *passed away*; "* not simply, and perfectly, but "only in parts at present, and wholly in hope, and expectation "hereafter." So much briefly of the privative part of the new creature, "Old things are passed away." A word or two must be spoken of the *positive* part; "All things are become "new." He means not that the old faculties of the soul are abolished, and new ones created in their room: but as our bodies may be said to be new bodies, by reason of their new endowments, and qualities super-induced, and bestowed upon them in their resurrection; so our souls are now renewed by the infusion of new gracious principles into them, in the work of regeneration. These two parts, *viz.* the *privative* part, the passing away of old things; and the *positive* part, the renewing of all things, do, betwixt them, comprize the whole nature of sanctification, which, in other scriptures, is expressed by equivalent phrases; sometimes by putting off the old, and putting on the new man, Eph. iv. 24. sometimes by dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness, Rom. vi. 11. which is the self-same thing the apostle here intends, by the passing away of old things, and making all things new. And because this is the most excellent, glorious, and admirable work of the Spirit, which is, or can be wrought upon man in this world; therefore the apostle asserts it with an *ecce*, a note of special remark, and observation, "Behold, all things are become new;" *q. d.* Behold and admire this surprizing, marvellous change which God hath made upon men; they are come out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1. Pet. ii. 9. out of the old, as it were, into a new world; "Behold, all things are become new." Hence note,

Doct. *That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace in the soul of any man, is that man's sure, and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

Suitable hereunto are those words of the apostle, Eph. iv. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that "ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth "is in Jesus: That ye put off, concerning the former conversa-"tion, the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful "lusts: and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind: and that "ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righte-"ousness and true holiness." Where we have, in other words of the same importance, the very self-same description of the man that is in Christ, which the apostle gives us in this text. Now,

* *Non simpliciter, et perfecte, sed partim spe.* Estius in loc.

for the opening and stating of this point, it will be necessary that I shew you,

1. Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation.

2. In what respects every soul that is in Christ is renewed, or made a new creature.

libtool.com.cn

3. What are the remarkable properties, and qualities of this new creature.

4. The necessity of this new creation to all that are in Christ.

5. How this new creation evidences our interest in Christ.

6. And then apply the whole in the proper uses of it.

First, Why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation. This must be our first enquiry. And, doubtless, the reason of this appellation is the analogy, proportion, and similitude which is found betwixt the work of regeneration, and God's work in the first creation. And their agreement, and proportion will be found in the following particulars.

First, The same almighty Author who created the world, createth also this work of grace in the soul of man, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath "shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The same powerful word which created the natural, createth also the spiritual light. † It is equally absurd for any man to say, I make my self to repent, or to believe, as it is to say, I made myself to exist, and be.

Secondly, The first thing that God created in the natural world was light, Gen. i. 3. and the first thing which God createth in the new creation, is the light of spiritual knowledge, Col. iii. 10. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed "in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Thirdly, Creation is out of nothing; it requires no pre-existent matter; it doth not bring one thing out of another, but something out of nothing; it gives a being to that which before had no being: So it is also in the new creation, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. "Who "hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people "of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have ob-"tained mercy." The work of grace is not educed out of the power and principles of nature, but it is a pure work of creation.

† *Minus est, te fecisse hominem, quam sanctum, i. e.* We may sooner make ourselves men, than saints.

The Heathen philosophers could neither understand, nor acknowledge the creation of the world, because that notion was repugnant to this maxim of reason, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing can be made. Thus did they *insanire cum ratione*, befool themselves with their own reasonings; and after the same manner some great pretenders to reason among us, voting it an absurdity to affirm, that the work of grace is not virtually, and potentially contained in nature, the new creation in the old.

Fourthly, It was the virtue and efficacy of the Spirit of God, which gave the natural world its being by creation; Gen. i. 2. the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; it hovered over the *chaos*, as the wings of a bird do over her eggs, as the same word is rendered, Deut. xxxii. 11. cherishing, as it were by incubation, that rude mass by a secret quickening influence by which it drew all the creatures into their several forms, and particular natures. So it is in the new creation; a quickening influence must come from the Spirit of God, or else the new creation can never be formed in us; John iii. 8. "So "is every one that is born of the Spirit." And ver. 6. "That "which is born of the Spirit, is spirit."

Fifthly, The word of God was the instrument of the first creation: Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9. "By the word of the Lord were "the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of "his mouth: For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, "and it stood fast." The word of God is also the instrument of the new creation, or work of grace in man; 1 Pet. i. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorrup-"tible; by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth for "ever." So James i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us, with "the word of truth:" *Of his own will*, that was the impulsive cause; with the *word of truth*, that is the instrumental cause. Great respect, and honour, love and delight, is due to the word upon this account, that it is the instrument of our regeneration, or new creation.

Sixthly, The same power which created the world, still under-props and supports it in its being: the world owes its conversation, as well as its existence, to the power of God, without which it could not subsist one moment. Just so it is with the new creation, which entirely depends upon the preserving power which first formed it; Jude ver. 1. "Preserved in Christ "Jesus;" and 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who were kept by the power of "God, through faith, unto salvation." As in a natural way "we live, move, and have our being in God," Acts xvii. 28. so in a spiritual way, we continue believing, repenting, loving,

and delighting in God; without whose continued influence upon our souls, we could do neither.

Seventhly, In a word, God surveyed the first creation with complacence and great delight; he beheld the works of his hands, and approved them as very good, Gen. i. 31. So this also in the second creation; nothing pleaseth and delights God more than the works of grace in the souls of his people. It is not an outward privilege of nature, or gift of providence, which commends any man to God; "Circumcision is nothing, and "uncircumcision is nothing, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. And thus you see upon what grounds the work of regeneration in man, is stiled a new creature; which was the first thing to be opened.

Secondly, Next we must enquire, in what respects every soul that is in Christ, is renewed, or made a new creature: and here we shall find a threefold renovation of every man that is in Christ, *viz.*

1. In his state and condition.
2. In his frame and constitution.
3. In his practice and conversation.

First, He is renewed in his state and condition; for he passeth from death to life, in his justification, 1 John iii. 14. He was condemned by the law, he is now justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ: he was under the curse of the first covenant; he is under the blessing of the new covenant: he was afar off, but is now made nigh unto God: an alien, a stranger once, now of the houshold of God, Eph. ii. 12, 13. O blessed change, from a sad to a sweet and comfortable condition! "There is therefore no condemnation to them "which are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

Secondly, Every man in Christ is renewed in his frame and constitution; all the faculties and affections of his soul are renewed by regeneration: his understanding was dark, but now is light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. his conscience was dead and secure, or full of guilt and horror, but is now become tender, watchful, and full of peace, Heb. ix. 14. his will was rebellious, stubborn and inflexible; but is now made obedient, and complying with the will of God, Psal. cx. 2. his desires did once pant, and spend themselves in the pursuit of vanities, now they are set upon God, Isa. xxvi. 8. his love did fondly dote upon ensnaring earthly objects, now it is swallowed up in the infinite excellencies of God and Christ, Psal. cxix. 97. his joy was once in trifles, and things of nought, now his rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3. his fears once were about noxious

creatures, now God is the object of the fear of reverence, Acts ix. 31. and sin the object of the fear of caution, 2 Cor. vii. 11. his hopes and expectations were only from the world present, but now from that to come, Heb. vi. 19. Thus the soul in its faculties and affections is renewed; which being done, the members and senses of the body must needs be destinated, and employed by it in new services; no more to be the weapons of unrighteousness, but instruments of service to Jesus Christ, Rom. vi. 19. And thus all that are in Christ are renewed in their frame and constitution.

Thirdly, The man in Christ is renewed in his practice and conversation: the manner of operation always follows the nature of beings. Now the regenerate not being what they were, cannot walk and act as once they did; Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. "And you "hath he quickened, who were once dead in trespasses and sins; "wherein ye walked according to the course of this world." They were carried away, like water by the strength of the tide, by the influence of their own corrupt natures, and the customs and examples of the world; but the case is now altered. So in 1 Cor. vi. 11. the apostle shews believers their old companions in sin, and tells them, "Such were some of you, but ye are "washed, but ye are sanctified," *&c. q. d.* the world is now well altered with you, thanks be to the grace of God for it. This wonderful change of practice, which is so universal, and remarkable in all the regenerate, and immediately consequent upon their conversion, sets the world a wondering at them; 1 Pet. iv. 4. Wherein they think it strange, that you run not "with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. "They think it strange:" * The word signifies to stand and gaze, as the hen doth which hath brooded, and hatched partridge eggs, when she seeth the chickens which she hath brought forth, take the wing and fly away from her. Thus do the men of the world stand amazed to see their old companions in sin, whose language once was vain and earthly, it may be, profane and filthy, now to be praying, speaking of God, heaven, and things spiritual, having no more to do with them, as to sin, except by way of reprehension and admonition: this amazes the world, and makes them look with a strange admiring eye upon the people of God.

* Ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται, *i. e.* Then stand amazed, as at the sight of an unseen thing. *Bern. Ils se trouvent tous nouveaux, et comme en un autre monde, i. e.* They find themselves all new, and as in another world.

Thirdly, In the next place let us enquire into the properties and qualities of this new creature, and shew you, as we are able, what they are: yet, reader, expect not here an exact and accurate account of that which is so great a mystery; for if questions may be moved about a silly flie, which may puzzle the greatest philosopher to resolve them; how much more may we conceive this great and marvellous work of God, the most mysterious and admirable of all his works, to surmount the understandings of the most illuminated Christians? O how little do we know of the nature, properties and operations of this new creature! So far as God hath revealed it to our weak understandings, we may speak of it. And,

www.libtool.com.cn

First, The scripture speaks of it as a thing of great difficulty to be conceived by man, John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where "it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not "tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one "that is born of the Spirit." The original of winds is a question of great difficulty in *philosophy*: We hear the voice of the wind, feels its mighty force, and behold its strange effects; but neither know whence it comes, or whither it goes. Ask a man, Do you hear the wind blow? Yes. Do you feel it blow? Yes, very sensibly. Do you see the effects of it, rending and overturning the trees? Yes, very plainly. But can you describe its nature, or declare its original? No, that is a mystery which I do not understand. Why just so it is with him that is born of the Spirit. The holy Spirit of God, whose nature, and operations we understand but little of, comes from heaven, quickens, and influences our souls, beats down, and mortifies our lusts by his almighty Power: These effects of the Spirit in us we experimentally feel, and sensibly discern: But how the Spirit of God, first entred into, and quickened our souls, and produced this new creature in them, we understand little more of it, than how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, Eccles. xi. 5. Therefore is the life of the new creature called a hidden life, Col. iii. 3. The nature of that life is not only hidden totally from all carnal men, but in a very great measure it is an hidden, and unknown life unto spiritual men, though themselves be the subjects of it.

Secondly, But though this life of the new creature be a great mystery, and secret in some respects; yet so far as it is known, and appears unto us, the new creature is the most *beautiful*, and lovely creature that ever God made; for the beauty of the Lord himself is upon it: "The new man is created after God,"

Eph. iv. 24. As the picture is drawn after the man, it is a draught of God himself delineated by the Spirit, that admirable Artist, upon the soul of man. Holiness is the beauty, and glory of God; and in holiness the new creature is created after God's own image, Col. iii. 10. The regenerate soul hereby becomes holy, 1 John iii. 3. not *essentially* holy, as God is, nor yet *efficiently* holy; for the regenerate soul can neither make itself, nor others holy: But the life of the new creature may be said to resemble the life of God in this, that as God lives to himself, so the new creature wholly lives to God; as God loves holiness, and hates the contrary, so doth the new creature; it is in these things formed *after the image of God that created it*. When God creates this creature in the soul of man, we are said then to be "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. So that there can be nothing communicated unto men, which beautifies, and adorns their souls as this new creation doth: Men do not resemble God as they are noble, and as they are rich, but as they are holy: no gift, no endowment of nature imbellishes the soul as this new creature doth: An awful Majesty sits upon the brow of the newcreature, commanding the greatest, and worst of men to do homage to it, Mark vi. 20. Yea, such is the beauty of the new creature, that Christ, its *author*, is also its *admirer*, Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes."

Thirdly, This new creature is created in man, upon the highest design that ever any work of God was wrought: the end of its creation and infusion is high and noble: salvation to the soul in which it is wrought; this is both the *finis operis*, and the *finis operantis*: It is the design, both of the work, and of the workman that wrought it. When we receive the end of our faith, we receive the salvation of our souls; salvation is the end of faith: as death is the end of sin, so life eternal is the end of grace. The new creature doth, by the instinct and steady direction of its own nature, take its course as directly to God, and to heaven, the place of his full enjoyment, as the rivers do to the ocean; it declares itself to be made for God, by its restless workings after him; and as salvation is the end of the new creature, so it is the express design, and end of him that created it. 2 Cor. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self "same thing, is God;" by this workmanship of his upon our souls, he is now polishing, preparing, and "making them meet "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. i. 12.

Fourthly, This new creation is the most necessary work that ever God wrought upon the soul of man: the eternal well-be-

ing of his soul depends upon it; and without it no man shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. and John i. 3, 5. "Except ye be regene-"rate, and born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God." Can you be saved without Christ? You know you cannot. Can you have interest in Christ without the new creature? My text expressly tells you it can never be; for, "If any man be in Christ, "he is a new creature." O reader, whatever slight thoughts of this matter, and with what a careless and unconcerned eye soever thou readest these lines; yet know thou must either be a new creature, or a miserable and damned creature for ever. If civility without the new creature could save thee, why are not the *moral Heathens* saved also? If strictness of life without the new creature could save thee, why did it not save the Scribes and Pharisees also? If an high profession of religion without the new creature can save thee, why did it not save Judas, Hymenaeus and Philetus also? Nothing is more evident than this, that no repentance, obedience, self-denial, prayers, tears, reformations or ordinances, without the new creation, avail any thing to the salvation of thy soul: the very blood of Christ himself without the new creature never did, and never will save any man. Oh how necessary a work is the new creation! "Circumcision a-"vails nothing, and uncircumcision nothing: but a new crea-"ture."

Fifthly, The new creature is a marvellous and wonderful creature: there are many wonders in the first creation, "The "works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have "pleasure therein," Psal. cxi. 2. But there are no wonders in nature, like those in grace. Is it not the greatest wonder that ever was seen in the world (except the incarnation of the Son of God) to see the nature and temper of man so altered and changed as it is by grace? to see *lascivious Corinthians*, and *idolatrous Ephesians* become mortified and heavenly Christians? to see a fierce and cruel *persecutor*, become a glorious *confessor* and sufferer for Christ? Gal. i. 23. to see the carnal mind of man, which was lately fully set in a strong bent to the world, to be wholly taken off from its lusts, and set upon things that are spiritual and heavenly? Certainly it was not a greater miracle to see dead Lazarus come out of his *sepulchre*, than it is to see the dead and carnal mind coming out of its lusts to embrace Jesus Christ; it was not a greater wonder to see the dead and dry bones in the valley to move and come together, than it is to see a dead soul moving after God, and moving to Christ, in the way of faith.

Sixthly, The new creature is an *immortal creature*, a crea-

ture that shall never see death, John iv. 14. it is in the soul of man, a well of water, springing up unto eternal life. I will not adventure to say, it is immortal in its own nature, for it is but a creature, as my text calls it; and we know, that essential interminability is the incommunicable property of God: The new creature hath, both a beginning, and succession; and therefore might, also, have an end, as to any thing in itself, or its own nature: Experience, also, shews us, that it is capable, both of increasing, and decreasing, and may be brought nigh unto death, Rev. iii. 2. The works of the Spirit, in believers, *may be ready to die*; but though its perpetuity flow not out of its own nature, it flows out of God's covenant and promises, which make it an immortal creature: when all other excellencies in man go away, as at death they will, Job iv. 21. this excellency, only, remains: our gifts may leave us, our friends leave us, our estates leave us; but our graces will never leave us: they ascend with the soul, (in which they inhere), into glory, when the stroke of death separates it from the body.

Seventhly, The new creature is an *heavenly creature*: "It "is not born of flesh, nor of blood, or of the will of man, but "of God," John i. 13. its descent and original is heavenly, it is spirit born of spirit, John iii. 6. its center is heaven, and thither are all its tendencies, Psal. lxiii. 8. its proper food, on which it lives, are heavenly things, Psal. iv. 6, 7. It cannot feed, as other creatures do, upon earthly things; the object of all its delight, and love, is in heaven, Psal. lxxiii. 26. "Whom have "I in heaven but thee?" The hopes and expectations of the new creature are all from heaven; it looks for little in this world, but waits for the coming of the Lord. The life of the new creature upon earth, is a life of patient waiting for Christ; his desires, and longings, are after heaven, Phil. i. 23. The flesh, indeed, lingers, and would delay, but the new creature hastens, and would fain be gone, 2 Cor. v. 2. It is not at home whilst it is here; it came from heaven, and cannot be quiet, nor suffer the soul, in which it dwells, to be so, until it comes thither again.

Eightly, The new creature is an active, and laborious creature: no sooner it is born, but it is acting in the soul, Acts ix. 6. *Behold he prayeth!* Activity is its very nature. Gal. v. 25. "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." Nor is it to be admired, that it should be always active, and stirring in the soul, seeing activity in obedience was the very end for which it was created. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ "Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. and he that is acted in

the duties of religion, by this principle of the new creature, or nature, will (so far as that principle acts him) delight to do the will of God; rejoice in the way of his commandments, and find the sweetest pleasure in the paths of duty.

Ninthly, The new creature is a *thriving creature*, growing from strength to strength, 1 Pet. ii. 2. and changing, the soul in which it is subjected, from glory unto glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The vigorous tendencies, and constant strivings, of this new creature, are to attain its just perfection and maturity, Phil. iii. 11. It can endure no stints and limits to its desires, short of perfection; every degree of strength it attains, doth but whet and sharpen his desires after higher degrees: Upon this account, it greatly delights in the ordinances of God, duties of religion, and society of the saints; as they are helps and improvements to it, in order to its great design.

Tenthly, The new creature, is *a creature of wonderful preservations* *: There are many wonders of divine providence, in the preservation of our natural lives, but none like those whereby the life of the new creature is preserved in our souls: There are critical times of temptation and desertion, in which it is ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. the degrees of its strength, and livelinesS, are sometimes sadly abated, and its sweet and comfortable workings intermitted, Rev. ii. 4. the evidences by which its being in us, was wont to be discovered, may be, and often are darkened, 2 Pet. i. 9. and the soul, in which it is, may draw very sad conclusions, about the issue and event; concluding its life not only to be hazarded, but quite extinguished, Psal. li. 10. 11, 12. but though it be ready to die, God wonderfully preserves it from death; it hath as well its reviving, as its fainting seasons. And thus you see, what are the lovely, and eximious properties of the new creature. In the next place,

Fourthly, We will demonstrate the necessity of this new creation, to all that are in Christ, and by him expect to attain salvation; and the necessity of the new creature will appear divers ways.

First, From the positive and express will of God, revealed in scripture, touching this matter: Search the scriptures, and you

* Grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost, but there may be an omission of the act, though not an omission of the habit, the act may be perverted though the faith cannot be subverted, it may be shaken, though not shaken out; its fruits may fall, but its sap lies hid in the root; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved. *Suffrag. Brit.*

shall find God hath laid the whole stress and weight of your eternal happiness, by Jesus Christ, upon this work of the Spirit in your souls. So our Saviour tells Nicodemus, John iii. 5. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, "and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Agreeable whereunto are those words of the apostle, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And whereas some may think, that their birth-right privileges, enjoyment of ordinances, and profession of religion, may commend them to God's acceptance, without this new creation; he shews them how fond, and ungrounded, all such hopes are. Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor "uncircumcision, but a new creature." Christ, and heaven, are the gifts of God, and he is at liberty to bestow them, upon what terms and conditions he pleaseth; and this is the way, the only way, and stated method, in which he will bring men, by Christ, unto glory: Men may rase out the impressions of these things from their own hearts, but they can never alter the settled course and method of salvation: Either we must be new creatures, as the precepts of the word command us, or lost, and damned creatures, as the threatenings of the word plainly tell us.

Secondly, This new creation, is the inchoative part of that great salvation which we expect, through Christ, and therefore, without this, all hopes, and expectations of salvation, must vanish: Salvation, and renovation, are inseparably connected. Our glory in heaven, if we rightly understand its nature, consisteth in two things; namely, our assimilation to God, and our fruition of God: and both these take their beginning, and rise, from our renovation in this world. Here we begin to be changed into his image, in some degree, 2 Cor. iii. 18. for the new man is created *after God*, as was opened above. In the work of Grace, God is said *to begin that good work*, which is to be *finished*, or consummated, in the day of Christ, Phil. i. 6. Now nothing can be more irrational, than to imagine, that ever that design, or work, should be finished, or perfected, which never had a beginning.

Thirdly, So necessary is the new creation, to all that expect salvation by Christ, that, without this, heaven would be no heaven, and the glory thereof no glory to us, by reason of the unsuitableness, and aversion of our carnal minds thereunto; "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. and enmity is exclusive of all complacency and delight: There is a necessity of a suitable and agreeable frame of heart to God, in

order to that complacential rest of our souls in him: And this agreeable temper is wrought by our new creation. 2 Cor. v. 5. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God:" Renovation, you see, is the working, or moulding of a man's spirit into an agreeable temper, or, as it is in Col. i. 12. the making of us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

From all which, it follows, that seeing there can be no complacence, or delight in God, without suitableness, and conformity to him, as is plain, from 1 John iii. 2. as well as from the reason and nature of the thing itself; either God must become, like us, suitable to our sinful, corrupt, and vain hearts, which were but a rude blasphemy once to imagine; or else we must be made agreeable and suitable to God, which is the very thing I am now proving the necessity of.

Fourthly, There is an absolute necessity of the new creature, to all that expect interest in Christ, and the glory to come; since all the characters, marks, and signs of such an interest, are constantly taken from the new creature wrought in us. Look over all the marks and signs of interest in Christ, or salvation by him, which are dispersed through the scriptures, and you shall still find purity of heart, Mat. v. 8. Holiness both in principle, and practice, Heb. xii. 14. Mortification of sin, Rom. viii. 13. Longing for Christ's appearance, 2 Tim. iv. 8. with multitudes more of the same nature, to be constantly made the marks, and signs of our salvation by Christ. So that either we must have a *new bible*, or a *new heart*: For if these scriptures be the true and faithful words of God, no unrenewed creature can see his face; which was the fourth thing to be opened.

Fifthly, The last thing to be opened, is, how the new creation is an infallible proof, and evidence, of the soul's interest in Christ; and this will appear divers ways.

First, Where all the saving graces of the Spirit are, there interest in Christ, must needs be certain; and where the new creature is, there all the saving graces of the Spirit are: For what is the new creature, but the frame, or system of all special saving graces? It is not this, or that particular grace, as faith, or hope, or love to God, which constitutes the new creature; for these are but as so many particular limbs, or branches of it: but the new creature is comprehensive of all the graces of the Spirit. Gal. v. 22, 23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy, "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," *&c.* Any one of the saving, special graces of the Spirit gives proof of our interest in Christ: how much more, then,

the new creature, which is the complex frame, or ſyſtem of all the graces together?

Secondly, To conclude; Where all the cauſes of an intereſt in Chriſt are found, and all the effects and fruits of an intereſt in Chriſt do appear; there, undoubtedly, a real intereſt in Chriſt is found: but wherever you find a new creature, you find all the cauſes, and all the effects of an intereſt in Chriſt: For there you ſhall find,

Firſt, The impulſive cauſe, *viz.* The electing love of God, from which the new creature is inſeparable, 1 Pet. i. 2.; with the new creature, alſo, the meritorious, efficient, and final cauſes of intereſt in Chriſt, and union with him, are ever found, Eph. ii. 10. chap. i. 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, All the effects and fruits of intereſt in Chriſt, are found in the new creature; there are all the fruits of obedience, for we are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. Rom. vii. 4. there is true, ſpiritual oppoſition to ſin. 1 John v. 18. "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, "and that wicked one toucheth him not." There is love to the people of God; 1 John iv. 7. "Every one that loveth, is born "of God." There is a conſcientious reſpect to the duties of both tables; for the new creature is created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, Eph. iv. 24. There is perſeverance in the ways of God, to the very end, and victory over all temptations; for whoſoever is born of God, overcometh the world, 1 John v. 4. It were eaſy to run over all other particular fruits of our union with Chriſt, and ſhew you every one of them in the new creature. And thus much of the doctrinal part of this point.

www.libtool.com.cn

SERMON XXVI.

2 COR. v. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

www.libtool.com.cn

AFTER the explication of the sense of this scripture, we observed,

Doct. *That God's creating of a new supernatural work of grace, in the soul of any man, is that man's sure, and infallible evidence of a saving interest in Jesus Christ.*

You have heard why the regenerating work of the Spirit is called a new creation; in what respect every soul in Christ is renewed; what the eximious properties of this new creature are; the indispensibleness, and necessity thereof, hath been also proved; and how it evidences our interest in Christ, was cleared in the doctrinal part: Which we now come to improve, in the several uses serving for our

1. Information.
2. Conviction.
3. Examination.
4. Exhortation.
5. Consolation.

First use, for information.

Is the new creature the sure and infallible evidence of our saving interest in Christ? From hence then we are informed,

Infer. 1. *How miserable, and deplorable an estate, all unrenewed souls are in;* who can lay no claim to Christ, during that state, and therefore are under an impossibility of salvation. O reader! if this be the state of thy soul, better had it been for thee not to have been God's natural workmanship, as a man, except thou be his spiritual workmanship, also, as a new man. I know the schoolmen determine otherwise, and say, that damnation is rather to be chosen, than annihilation; a miserable being is better than no being: and it is very true, with respect to the glory of God, whose justice shall triumph for ever, in the damnation of the unregenerate; but, with respect to us, 'tis much better never to have been his creatures, in the way of generation, than not to be his new creatures, in the way of *regeneration.* So Christ speaks of Judas, that son of perdition, Mark xiv. 21. "Good had it been for that man, if he had never

been born: For what is a being, without the comfort of it? What is life, without the joy and pleasure of life? A damned being is a being without comfort; no glimpse of light shines into that darkness; they shall, indeed, see, and understand the felicity, light and joy of the saints in glory; but not partake, in the least measure, of the comfort. Luke xiii. 28. "They "shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of "God, but they themselves shut out:" Such a sight is so far from giving any comfort, that it will be the aggravation, and increase of torment, O it is better to have no being at all, than to have a being only to capacitate a man for misery; to desire death, while death flies from him, Rev. iv. 6. The opinion of the Schoolmen will never pass for sound doctrine among the damned. Think on it, reader, and lay it to thine heart, better thou hadst died from the womb, better the knees had prevented thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked, than that thou shouldest live and die a stranger to the new birth, or that thy mother should bring thee forth only to increase, and fill up the number of the damned.

Infer. 2. *And, on the contrary, we may hence learn, what cause regenerate souls have to bless God, for the day wherein they were born.* O what a privileged state doth the new birth bring men into! 'Tis possible, for the present, they understand it not; for many believers are like a great *heir* lying in the *cradle*, that knows not to what an estate, and honour he is born: nevertheless, on the same day, wherein we become new creatures, by regeneration, we have a firm title, and solid claim to all the privileges of the sons of God, John i. 12, 13. God becomes our Father, by a triple title, not only the Father of our *beings*, by nature, which was all the relation we had to him before, but our Father by *adoption*, and by *regeneration*: which is a much sweeter, and more comfortable relation. In that day the image of God is restored, Eph. iv. 24. this is both the health and beauty of the soul. In that day we are begotten again to a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. a hope more worth than ten thousand worlds, in the *troubles of life*, and in the *straits of death*: this is a creature which lives for ever, and will make thy life happy for ever. Some have kept their birth day as a *festival*, a day of rejoicing; but none have more cause to rejoice that ever they were born, than those that are new born.

Infer. 3. *Learn from hence, that the work of grace is wholly supernatural; 'tis a creation, and a creation-work is above the power of the creature.* No power, but that which gave being to the world, can give a being to the new creature: almighty

power goes forth to give being to the new creature. This creature is not born of flesh, or of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13. The nature of this new creature speaks its original to be above the power of nature; the very notion of a new creation spoils the proud boasts of the great asserters of the power, and ability of the will of man. When God, therefore, puts the question, who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou, that thou hast not received? Let thy soul, reader, answer it, with all humility, and thankfulness, 'Tis thou, Lord, thou only, that madest me to differ from another; and what I have received, I have received from thy free grace.

Infer. 4. *If the work of grace be a new creation, let not the parents and friends of the unregenerate utterly despair of the conversion of their relations, how great soever their present discouragements are.* If it had been possible for a man to have seen the rude, and indigested *chaos*, before the Spirit of God moved upon it, would he not have said, can such a beautiful order of beings, such a pleasant variety of creatures, spring out of this dark lump? Surely it would have been very hard for a man to have imagined it. It may be, you see no dispositions, or hopeful inclinations in your friends, towards God, and spiritual things; nay, possibly they are totally opposite, and filled with enmity, against them; they deride, and jeer all serious piety, wherever they behold it: this, indeed, is very sad; but yet remember the work of grace is creation-work: though there be no disposition at all in their wills, no tenderness in their consciences, no light, or knowledge in their minds; yet God, that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: he can say to the dry bones, live; to the proud and stubborn heart, come down and yield thyself to the will of God; and if he command, the work is done. God can make thee yet to rejoice over thy most uncomfortable relations, to say with the father of the prodigal, Luke xv. 24. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he "was lost and is found; and they began to be merry;" difficulties are for men, but not for God: he works, in conversion, by a power which is able to subdue all things unto itself.

Infer. 5. *If none but new creatures be in Christ, how small a remnant, among men, belong to Christ, in this world!* Among the multitude of rational creatures inhabiting this world, how few, how very few, are new creatures? 'Tis the observation of the learned Mr. Brerewood, that if the world be divided into

thirty parts, nineteen parts are heathenish Idolaters: six parts Mahometans; and only five, out of thirty, which may be, in a large sense, called Christians; of which, the far greater part is overspread with Popish darkness: separate from the remainder, the multitudes of prophane, merely civil, and hypocritical professors of religion; and how few will remain for Jesus Christ, in this world? Look over the *cities*, *towns*, and *parishes*, in this populous *kingdom*; and how few shall you find that speak the language, or do the works of new creatures? How few have ever had any awakening convictions on them? And how many of those, that have been convinced, have miscarried, and never come to the new birth? The more cause have they, whom God hath indeed regenerated, to admire the riches of God's distinguishing mercy to them.

www.libtool.com.cn

Infer. 6. *If the change, by grace, be a new creation, how universal, and marvellous a change, doth regeneration make upon men!* The new creation speaks a marvellous, and universal alteration, both upon the state, and tempers of men; they come out of darkness, gross, hellish darkness, into light, a marvellous, and heavenly light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Eph. v. 8. their condition, disposition, and conversation, (as you have heard) is all new; and yet this marvellous change, as great and universal as it is, is not alike evident, and clearly discernible, in all new creatures: and the reasons are,

First, Because the work of grace is wrought in divers methods, and manners, in the people of God. Some are changed from a state of notorious prophaneness, unto serious godliness; there the change is conspicuous, and very evident; all the neighbourhood rings of it: but, in others, it is more insensibly distilled in their tender years, by the blessing of God, upon religious education, and there it is more indiscernible.

Secondly, Though a great change be wrought, yet much natural corruption still remains for their humiliation and daily exercise; and this is a ground of fear and doubtings; they see not how such corruptions are consistent with the new creature.

Thirdly, In some, the new creature shews itself, mostly, in the affectionate part, in desires and breathings after God; and but little in the clearness of their understandings, and strength of their judgments; for want of which, they are entangled, and kept in darkness, most of their days.

Fourthly, Some Christians are more tried, and exercised, by temptation from Satan, than others are; and these clouds darken the work of grace in them.

Fifthly, There is great difference, and variety, found in the

natural tempers and constitutions of the regenerate; some are of a more melancholy, fearful, and suspicious temper, than others are; and are therefore much longer held under doubtings, and trouble of spirit: nevertheless, what differences soever these things make, the change made by grace, is a marvellous change.

Infer. 7. Lastly, *How incongruous are carnal ways, and courses, to the Spirit of Christians! who being new creatures, can never delight, or find pleasure in their former sinful companions and practices.* Alas! those things are now most unsuitable, loathsome, and detestable, how pleasant soever they once were; that which they counted their liberty, would now be reckoned their greatest bondage; that which was their glory, is now their shame; Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had ye, then, in those "things, whereof ye are now ashamed; for the end of those "things is death:" they need not be pressed by others, but will freely confess, of themselves, what fools and mad men, they once were. None can censure their former conversation more severely than themselves do, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14.

Second use, for conviction.

If none be in Christ, but new creatures, and the new creation makes such a change, as hath been described; this may convince us, how many of us deceive ourselves, and run into dangerous and fatal mistakes, in the greatest concernment we have in this world. But, before I urge this use, I desire none may make a perverse and ill use of it; let not the wicked conclude, from hence, that there is no such thing as true religion in the world, or that all who do profess it, are but hypocrites; neither let the godly injure themselves, by that which is designed for their benefit: let none conclude, that seeing there are so many mistakes committed about this new creature, that therefore assurance must needs be impossible, as the Papists affirm it to be. The proper use that should be made of this doctrine, is, to undeceive false pretenders, and to awaken all, to a more deep, and thorough search of their own conditions; which being precautioned, let all men be convinced of the following truths.

First, That the change made by civility, upon such as were lewd and prophane, is, in its whole kind and nature, a different thing from the new creature; the power and efficacy of moral virtue is one thing, the influence of the regenerating Spirit is quite another thing; however some have studied to confound them. The Heathens excelled in moral and homilitical virtues: Plato, Aristides, Seneca, and multitudes more, have outvied many professed Christians, in justice, temperance, patience, &c. yet were perfect strangers to the new creation. A man may be

very strict, and temperate, free from the gross pollutions of the world; and yet a perfect stranger to regeneration, all the while, John iii. 10.

Secondly, That many strong convictions and troubles for sin, may be found, where the new creature is never formed. Conviction, indeed, is an antecedent unto, and preparative for the new creature, as the blossoms of the tree are to the fruit that follow them; but as fruit doth not always follow, where those blossoms and flowers appear; so neither doth the new creature follow all convictions and troubles for sin. Conviction is a common work of the Spirit, both upon the elect and reprobates; but the new creature is formed only in God's elect. Convictions may be blasted, and vanish away, and the man that was under troubles for sin, may return again, with "the dog to his "vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the "mire," 2 Pet. ii. 22. but the new creature never perishes, nor can consist with such a return unto sin.

Thirdly, That excellent gifts and abilities, fitting men for service in the church of God, may be where the new creature is not; for these are promiscuously dispensed, by the Spirit, both to the regenerate and unregenerate: Mat. vii. 22. "Many will "say unto me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied "in thy name?" Gifts are attainable by study, prayer and preaching are reduced to an art; but regeneration is wholly supernatural. Sin, in dominion, is consistent with excellent gifts, but wholly incompatible with the new creature. In a word, these things are so different in nature from the new creature, that they oft-times prove the greatest bars and obstacles in the world, to the regenerating-work of the Spirit. Let no man, therefore, trust to things whereby multitudes deceive and destroy their own souls. Reader, it may cost thee many an aking head to obtain gifts, but thou wilt find an aking heart for sin, if ever God make thee a new creature.

Fourthly, Be convinced, that multitudes of religious duties may be performed by men, in whom the new creature was never formed. Though all new creatures perform the duties of religion, yet all that perform the duties of religion, are not new creatures; regeneration is not the only root from which the duties of religion spring. Isa. lviii. 2. "Yet they seek me daily, and de-"light to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and "forsook not the ordinances of their God, they ask of me the "ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God." These are but weak and slippery foundations for men to build their confidence and hopes upon.

Third use, for examination.

Next, therefore, let me persuade every man to try the state of his own heart, in this matter, and closely consider and weigh this great question; Am I really and indeed a new creature? or, am I an old creature still, in the new creature's dress and habit? Some light may be given for the discovery hereof, from the consideration of the

1. Antecedents,
2. Concomitants, } of the new creation.
3. Consequents,

First, Weigh and consider well, the *antecedents* of the new creature: have those things passed upon your souls, which ordinarily make way for the new creature, in whomsoever the Lord forms it?

1. Hath the Lord opened the eyes of your understanding, in the knowledge of sin, and of Christ? Hath he shewed you both your disease and remedy, by a new light shining from heaven into your souls! Thus the Lord doth, wherever he forms the new creature, Acts xxvi. 18.

2. Hath he brought home the word with mighty power and efficacy upon your hearts, to convince and humble them? This is the method in which the new creature is produced, Rom. vii. 9. 1 Thes. i. 5.

3. Have these convictions over-turned your vain confidences, and brought you to a great concern, and inward distress of soul; making you to cry, *What shall we do to be saved?* These are the ways of the Spirit, in the formation of the new creature, Acts xvi. 29. Acts ii. 37. If no such antecedent works of the Spirit have passed upon your hearts, you have no ground for your confidence, that the new creature is formed in you.

Secondly, Consider the *concomitant* frames, and workings of Spirit, which ordinarily attend the production of the new creature, and judge impartially, betwixt God and your own souls, whether they have been the very frames and workings of your hearts.

1. Have your vain Spirits been composed to the greatest seriousness, and most solemn consideration of things eternal, as the hearts of all those are, whom God regenerates? When the Lord is about this great work, upon the soul of man, whatever vanity, levity, and sinful jollity, was there before, it is banished from the heart, at this time; for now heaven and hell, life and death, are before a man's eyes, and these are the most awful, and solemn things, that ever our thoughts conversed with in this world. Now a man of the most airy, and pleasant consti-

tution, when brought to the ſight and ſenſe of thoſe things, ſaith of "Laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it?" Eccl. ii. 2.

2. A lowly, meek, and humble frame of heart, accompanies the new creation; the ſoul is weary, and heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28. Convictions of ſin have plucked down the pride, and loftineſs of the ſpirit of man, emptied him of his vain conceits; thoſe that were of lofty, proud, and bluſtering humours before, are meekened, and brought down to the very duſt now: it is with them (to ſpeak alluſively) as it was with Jeruſalem, that lofty city, Iſa. xxix. 1, 4. "Wo to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where Da-"vid dwelt; thou ſhalt be brought down, and ſhalt ſpeak out "of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall be low out of the duſt." Ariel ſignifies the *Lion of God*; ſo Jeruſalem, in her proſperity, was; other cities trembled at her voice; but when God brought her down, by humbling judgments, then ſhe whiſpered out of the duſt. So it is in this caſe.

3. A longing, thirſting frame of ſpirit, accompanies the new creation; the deſires of the ſoul are ardent after Chriſt; never did the hireling long for the ſhadow, as the weary ſoul doth for Chriſt, and reſt in him: if no ſuch frames have accompanied that which you take for your new birth, you have the greateſt reaſon in the world to ſuſpect yourſelves under a deluſion.

Thirdly, Weigh well the effects, and *conſequents* of the new creature, and conſider, whether ſuch fruits as theſe are found in your hearts and lives.

1. Wherever the new creature is formed, there a man's courſe and converſation is changed; Eph. iv. 22. "That ye "put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man, "which is corrupt, according to the deceitful luſts; and be "renewed in the ſpirit of your mind:" the new creature cannot but bluſh, and be aſhamed of the old creature's converſation, Rom. vi. 21.

2. The new creature continually oppoſes, and conflicts with the motions of ſin in the heart; Gal. v. 17. "The ſpirit luſt-"eth againſt the fleſh." Grace can no more incorporate with ſin, than oil with water: contraries cannot conſiſt in the ſame ſubject, longer than they are fighting with each other: if there be no conflict with ſin in thy ſoul, or if that conflict be only betwixt the conſcience and affections, light in the one, ſtruggling with luſt in the other; thou wanteſt that fruit which ſhould evidence thee to be a new creature.

3. The mind and affections of the new creature, are ſet upon

heavenly and ſpiritual things, Col. iii. 1, 2. Eph. iv. 23. Rom. viii. 5. If, therefore, thy heart and affections he habitually earthly, and wholly intent upon things below, driving eagerly after the world, as the great buſineſs and end of thy life; deceive not thyſelf, this is not the fruit of the new creature, nor conſiſtent with it.

www.libtool.com.cn

4. The new creature is a praying creature, living by its daily communion with God, which is its livelihood and ſubſiſtence, Zech. xii. 10. Acts ix. 11. If, therefore, thou be a prayerleſs ſoul, or if, in all thy prayers, thou art a ſtranger to communion with God: if there be no brokenneſs of heart for ſin, in thy confeſſions, no melting affections for Chriſt, and holineſs, in thy ſupplications; ſurely Satan doth but baffle, and delude thy overcredulous ſoul, in perſuading thee that thou art a new creature.

Fifthly, The new creature is reſtleſs, after falls into ſin, until it have recovered peace and pardon; it cannot endure itſel in a ſtate of defilement and pollution, Pſal. li. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. It is with the conſcience of a new creature, under ſin, as it is with the eye, when any thing offends it; it cannot leave twinkling, and watering, till it have wept it out: and in the very ſame reſtleſs ſtate it is, under the hiding of God's face, and divine withdrawments, Cant. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. If, therefore, thou canſt ſin, and ſin again, without ſuch a burthenſome ſenſe of ſin, or reſtleſſneſs, or ſollicitude how to recover purity and peace, with the light of God's countenance ſhining, as in days paſt, upon thy ſoul; delude not thyſelf, thou haſt not the ſigns of a new creature in thee.

Fourth uſe, of exhortation.

If the new creation be a ſound evidence of our intereſt in Chriſt, then, hence, let me perſuade all that are in Chriſt, to evidence themſelves to be ſo, by walking as it becomes new creatures.

The new creature is *born from above*, all its tendencies are heaven-ward; accordingly, ſet your affections on things that are above, and let your converſation be in heaven: if you live earthly and ſenſual lives, as others do, you muſt croſs your new nature therein: and can thoſe acts be pleaſant unto you, which are done with ſo much regret? wherein you muſt put a force upon your own ſpirits, and offer a kind of violence to your own hearts. Earthly delights and ſorrows, are ſuitable enough to the unregenerate and ſenſual men in the world, but exceedingly contrary unto that ſpirit by which you are reno-

vated. If ever you will act becoming the principles and nature of new creatures, then seek earthly things with submission, enjoy them with fear and caution, resign them with cheerfulness and readiness; and thus "let your moderation be known unto "all men," Phil. iv. 5. Let your hearts daily meditate, and your tongues discourse about heavenly things; be exceeding tender of sin, strict and punctual in ever duty; and hereby convince the world, that you are men and women of another spirit.

www.libtool.com.cn

Fifth use, for consolation.

Let every new creature be cheerful and thankful: if God hath renewed your natures, and thus altered the frame and temper of your hearts, he hath bestowed the richest mercy upon you that heaven or earth affords. This is a work of the greatest rarity; a new creature may be called, One among a thousand: it is also an everlasting work, never to be destroyed, as all other natural works of God (how excellent soever) must be: it is a work carried on by almighty Power, through unspeakable difficulties and mighty oppositions, Eph. i. 12. The exceeding greatness of God's power goes forth to produce it; and indeed no less is required to enlighten the blind mind, break the rocky heart, and bow the stubborn will of man; and the same almighty power, which at first created it, is necessary to be continued every moment, to preserve and continue it, 1 Pet. i. 5. The new creature is a mercy, which draws a train of innumerable and invaluable mercies after it, Eph. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. iii. 20. When God hath given us a new nature, then he dignifies us with a *new name*, Rev. ii. 17. brings us into a *new covenant*, Jer. xxxi. 33. begets us again to a *new hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3. intitles us to a *new inheritance*, John i. 12, 13. It is the new creature which through Christ makes our persons and duties acceptable with God, Gal. vi. 15. In a word, it is the wonderful work of God, of which we may say, "This is the Lord's "doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." There are unsearchable wonders in its *generation*, in its *operation*, and in its *preservation*. Let all therefore, whom the Lord hath thus renewed, fall down at the feet of God, in an humble admiration of the unsearchable riches of free grace, and never open their mouths to complain under any adverse or bitter providences of God.

SERMON XXVII.

Of the Nature, Principle, and Necessity, of Mortification.

www.libtool.com.cn

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

TWO great trials of our interest in Christ, are finished; we now proceed to a third, namely, *The mortification of sin:* "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh." The scope of the apostle, in this context, is, to heal the unchristian breaches among the Galatians, prevailing, by the instigation of Satan, to the breach of brotherly love. To cure this, he urges four weighty arguments.

First, From the great commandment, to *love one another*; upon which the whole law *(i.e.)* all the duties of the second table, do depend, ver. 15.

Secondly, He powerfully dissuades them, from the consideration of the sad events of their bitter contests, calumnies, and detractions, *viz.* mutual ruin, and destruction, ver. 15.

Thirdly, He dissuades them, from the consideration of the contrariety of these practices, unto the Spirit of God, by whom they all profess themselves to be governed, from ver. 17. to ver. 23.

Fourthly, He powerfully dissuades them from these animosities, from the inconsistency of these, or any other lusts of the flesh, with an interest in Christ: "They that be Christ's, have crucified the flesh," &c. *q. d.* You all profess yourselves to be members of Christ, to be followers of him; but how incongruous are these practices, to such a profession? Is this the fruit of the dove-like Spirit of Christ? Are these the fruits of your faith, and professed mortification? Shall the sheep of Christ snarl, and fight like rabid, and furious beasts of prey? *Tantaene animis caelestibus irae? So much rage in heavenly souls?* O how repugnant are these practices with the study of mortification *, which is the great study and endeavour, of all that are in

* .....*Non secus ac.*
Cum duo conversis inimica, in praelia tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt-- --
Shall Christians one another wound and push,
Like furious bulls, when they together rush?

Christ! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." So much for the order of the words; the words themselves are a *proposition* wherein we have to consider, both

1. The subject.
2. The predicate.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, The *subject* of the proposition, they that are Christ's, *viz.* † "True Christians, real members of Christ; such as truly "belong to Christ, such as have given themselves up to be go-"verned by him," and are, indeed, acted by his Spirit; such, all such persons (for the indefinite is equipollent to an universal) all such, and none but such.

Secondly, The predicate; "They have crucified the flesh, "with the affections and lusts." By flesh, we are here to understand carnal concupiscence, the workings, and motions of corrupt nature; and by the affections, we are to understand, not the natural, but the inordinate affections; for Christ doth not abolish, and destroy, but correct, and regulate the affections of those that are in him: And by crucifying the flesh, we are not to understand the total extinction, or perfect subduing of corrupt nature; but only the deposing of corruption from its regency, and dominion in the soul; its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season; but yet, as death surely, tho' slowly, follows crucifixion, (the life of crucified persons gradually departing from them, with their blood) it is just so in the mortification of sin; and therefore what the apostle, in this place, calls crucifying, he calls, in Rom. viii. 13. mortifying. "If "ye, through the Spirit, do mortify," θανατοῦτε; if ye put to death the deeds of the body: But he chuses, in this place, to call it crucifying, to shew, not only the conformity there is betwixt the death of Christ, and the death of sin, in respect of shame, pain, and lingering slowness; but to denote, also, the principle, means, and instrument of mortification, *viz.* the death, or cross of Jesus Christ, in the virtue whereof, believers do mortify the corruptions, of their flesh; the great arguments, and persuasives to mortification, being drawn from the sufferings of Christ for sin. In a word, he doth not say, They that believe Christ was crucified, for sin, are Christ's; but they, and they only, are his, who *feel*, as well as *profess* the power, and efficacy, of the sufferings of Christ, in the mortification, and sub-

† *Vere Christiani qui ad Christum pertinent, qui se ei dedere regendos.* Pol. Synop.

duing of their lusts, and sinful affections. And so much, briefly, of the parts, and sense of the words.

The observation followeth.

Doct. *That a saving interest in Christ, may be regularly, and strongly inferred, and concluded, from the mortification of the flesh, with its affections, and lusts.*

www.libtool.com.cn

This point is fully confirmed, by those words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. "For if we have been planted together in "the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his "resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with "him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth "we should not serve sin; for he that is dead, is free from sin: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also "live with him."

Mark the force of the apostle's reasoning; if we have been planted into the likeness of his death, *viz.* by the mortification of sin, which resembles, or hath a likeness to the kind and manner of Christ's death (as was noted above) then we shall be, also, in the likeness of his resurrection; and why so, but because this mortification of sin is an undoubted evidence of the union of such a soul with Christ, which is the very ground-work, and principle, of that blessed, and glorious resurrection: And therefore he saith, ver. 11. "Reckon ye, also, yourselves to be dead, "indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ "our Lord;" *q. d.* Reason thus with yourselves, these mortifying influences of the death of Christ, are unquestionable presages of your future blessedness, God never taking this course with any, but those who are in Christ, and are designed to be glorified with him. The death of your sin is as evidential, as any thing in the world can be, of your spiritual life for the present, and of your eternal life with God hereafter. Mortification is the fruit, and evidence of your union, and that union is the firm ground-work, and certain pledge, of your glorification; and so you ought to reckon, or reason the case with yourselves, as the word λογιζεσθε there signifies. Now for the stating, and explicating of this point, I shall, in the doctrinal part, labour to open and confirm these five things.

1. What the mortification, or crucifixion of sin, imports.
2. Why this work of the Spirit is expressed by crucifying.
3. Why all that are in Christ, must be so crucified, or mortified unto sin.
4. What is the true evangelical principle of mortification.
5. How the mortification of sin evinces our interest in Christ.

And then apply the whole.

First, What the mortification, or crucifixion of sin, imports.

And, for clearness sake, I shall speak to it, both *negatively*, and *positively*; shewing you what is not intended, and what is principally aimed at, by the Spirit of God, in this expression.

First, "The ‡ crucifying of the flesh doth not imply the "total abolition of sin, in believers, or the destruction of its "very being and existence in them, for the present; sanctified "souls so put off their corruptions with their dead bodies at "death:" This will be the effect of our future glorification, not of our present sanctification. Sin doth exist in the most mortified believer in the world, Rom. vii. 17. it still acteth, and lusteth in the regenerate soul, Gal. v. 17. yea, notwithstanding its crucifixion in believers, it still may, in respect of single acts, surprize, and captivate them, Psal. lxv. 3. Rom. vii. 23. This, therefore, is not the intention of the Spirit of God, in this expression.

Secondly, Nor doth the crucifixion of sin consist in the suppression of the external acts of sin only; for sin may reign over the souls of men, whilst it doth not break forth into their lives, in gross, and open actions, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Mat. xii. 43. *Morality* in the Heathens (as Tertuallian well observes) did *abscondere, sed non abscindere vitia, hide* them, when it could not *kill* them; Many a man shews a white, and fair hand, who yet hath a very foul, and black heart.

Thirdly, The crucifixion of the flesh doth not consist in the cessation of the external acts of sin; for, in that respect, the lusts of men may die of their own accord, even a kind of natural death. The members of the body are the weapons of unrighteousness, as the apostle calls them; age or sickness, may so blunt, or break those weapons, that the soul cannot use them to such sinful purposes, and services, as it was wont to do, in the vigorous, and healthful season of life; not that there is less sin in the heart, but because there is less strength and activity in the body. Just as it is with an old soldier, who hath as much skill, policy, and delight, as ever in military actions; but age, and hard services have so enfeebled him, that he can no longer follow the camp.

Fourthly, The crucifixion of sin doth not consist in the severe castigation of the body, and penancing it by stripes, fasting, and tiresome pilgrimages. This may pass for mortification among

‡ *Mortificari carnem non est eam ita perimi, ut aut prorsus non sit, aut nulla prava in homine desideria commoveat, quod in corpore mortis hujus non contingit, &c.* Estius in loc.

Papists, but never was any lust of the flesh destroyed by this rigour. Christians, indeed, are bound not to indulge and pamper the body, which is the instrument of sin; nor yet must we think that the spiritual corruptions of the soul feel those stripes which are inflicted upon the body: See Col. ii. 23. it is not the vanity of superstition, but the power of true religion, which crucifies and destroys corruption; it is faith in Christ's blood, not the spilling of our own blood, which gives sin the mortal wound.

Secondly, But if you inquire, what then is implied in the mortification or crucifixion of sin, and wherein it doth consist? I answer,

First, It necessarily implies the soul's implantation into Christ, and union with him; without which it is impossible that any one corruption should be mortified, *they that are* [*Christ's*] *have crucified the flesh:* * The attempts and endeavours of all others are vain and ineffectual: "When we were in the flesh, "(saith the apostle) the motions of sin which were by the law, "did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom. vii. 5. sin was then in its full dominion, no abstinence, rigour, or outward severity; no purposes, promises, or solemn vows could mortify or destroy it; there must be an implantation into Christ, before there can be any effectual crucifixion of sin: What believer almost hath not in the days of his first convictions, tried all external methods and means of mortifying sin, and found all, in experience, to be to as little purpose as the binding of Sampson with green withs or cords? But when he hath once come to act faith upon the death of Christ, then the design of mortification hath prospered, and succeeded to good purpose.

Secondly, Mortification of sin, implies the *agency of the Spirit of God* in that work, without whose assistances, and aids all our endeavours must needs be fruitless: Of this work we may say, as it was said in another case, Zech. iv. 6. "Not by might, "nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." When the *apostle* therefore would shew by what hand this work of mortification is performed, he thus expresseth it, Rom. viii. 13. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye "shall live:" The duty is ours, but the power whereby we

* They mistake the very nature of Christian mortification, who place it in afflicting and using violence to the body; whereas true mortification refers not principally to the body, or inferior part of the soul, but chiefly to the mind and will. *Dav. on Col. p.* 256.

perform it, is God's: The Spirit is the only successful combatant against the lusts that war in our members, Gal. v. 17. it is true, this excludes not, but implies our endeavours; for it is we through the Spirit that mortify the deeds of the body; but yet all our endeavours, without the Spirit's aid and influence avail nothing.

www.libtool.com.cn

Thirdly, The crucifixion of sin necessarily implies *the subversion of its dominion* in the soul: A mortified sin cannot be a reigning sin, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. Two things constitute the dominion of sin, *viz.* the fulness of its power, and the soul's subjection to it. As to the fulness of its power, that rises from the suitableness it hath, and pleasure it gives to the corrupt heart of man: It seems to be as necessary as the right hand, as useful and pleasant as the right eye, Mat. v. 29. but the mortified heart is dead to all pleasures and profits of sin; it hath no delight or pleasure in it; it becomes its burden and daily complaint. Mortification presupposes the illumination of the mind, and conviction of the conscience; by reason whereof, sin cannot deceive and blind the mind, or bewitch and ensnare the will and affections, as it was wont to do, and consequently its dominion over the soul is destroyed and lost.

Fourthly, The crucifying of the flesh implies a *gradual weakning of the power of sin* in the soul. The death of the cross was a slow and lingering death, and the crucified person grew weaker and weaker every hour; so it is in the mortification of sin: The soul is still "cleansing itself from all filthiness of the flesh "and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. And as the body of sin is weakened more and more; so the inward man, or the new creature, is "renewed day by day, 2 Cor. iv. 16. For sanctification is a progressive work of the Spirit: And as holiness increases, and roots itself deeper and deeper in the soul; so the power and interest of sin proportionably abates, and sinks lower and lower, until at length it be swallowed up in victory.

Fifthly, The crucifying of the flesh, notes to us the believers *designed application of all spiritual means*, and sanctified instruments, for the destruction of it: There is nothing in this world which a gracious heart more vehemently desires, and longs for, than the death of sin, and perfect deliverance from it, Rom. vii. 24. the sincerity of which desires doth accordingly manifest itself in the daily application of all God's remedies: such are daily watching against the occasions of sin, Job xxxi. 1. "I have "made a covenant with mine eyes;" more than ordinary vigilancy over their special or proper sin, Psal. xviii. 23. "I kept

"myself from mine iniquity:" Earnest cries to heaven for preventing grace. Psal. xix. 13. "Keep back thy servant also from "presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me:" Deep humblings of soul for sins past, which is an excellent preventive unto future sins, 2 Cor. ii. 11. "in that ye sorrowed "after a godly sort, what carefulness wrought it?" Care to give no furtherance or advantage to the design of sin, by making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, as others do, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Willingness to bear the due reproofs of sin, Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a "kindness:" These, and such like means of mortification, regenerate souls are daily using, and applying, in order to the death of sin. And so much of the first particular, what the mortification of sin, or crucifying of the flesh implies.

Secondly, In the next place, we shall examine the reasons, why this work of the Spirit is expressed under that *trope*, or figurative expression, of *crucifying the flesh*. Now the ground and reason of the use of this expression, is the resemblance which the mortification of sin bears unto the death of the cross: And this appears in five particulars.

First, The death of the cross was a *painful death*, and the mortification of sin is a very painful work, Mat. xxv. 29. it is as the cutting off our right hands, and plucking out our right eyes; it will cost many thousand tears, and groans, prayers, and strong cries to heaven, before one sin will be mortified. Upon the account of the difficulty of this work, and mainly upon this account, the scripture saith, "narrow is the way, and "strait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that "find it," Mat. vii. 14. and that the righteous themselves are *scarcely saved*.

Secondly, The death of the cross was *universally painful*; every member, every sense, every sinew, every *nerve* was the seat and subject of tormenting pain. So is it in the mortification of sin; it is not this, or that particular member, or act; but the whole body of sin that is to be destroyed, Rom. vi. 6. and accordingly the conflict is in every faculty of the soul; for the Spirit of God, by whose hand sin is mortified, doth not combat with this, or that particular lust only, but with sin, as sin; and for that reason with every sin, in every faculty of the soul. So that there are conflicts, and anguish in every part.

Thirdly, The death of the cross was a *slow, and lingering death*; denying unto them that suffered it the favour of a quick dispatch. Just so it is in the death of sin; though the Spirit of

God be mortifying it day by day, † yet this is a truth sealed by the sad experience of all believers in the world, *that sin is long a dying:* And if we ask a reason of this dispensation of God, among others, this seems to be one; corruptions in believers, like the Canaanites in the land of Israel, are left to prove, and to exercise the people of God, to keep us watching and praying, mourning and believing; yea, wondering, and admiring at the riches of pardoning, and preserving mercy all our days.

Fourthly, The death of the cross was a very *opprobrious, and shameful* death; they that died upon the cross were loaded with ignominy; the crimes for which they died were exposed to the public view; after this manner dieth sin, a very shameful, and ignominious death. Every true believer draws up a charge against it in every prayer, aggravates and condemns it in every confession, bewails the evil of it with multitudes of tears and groans, making sin as vile, and odious as they can find words to express it, though not so vile as it is in its own nature. "O my "God (saith Ezra) I am ashamed, and even blush to look up "unto thee," Ezra ix. 6. So Daniel in his confession, Dan. ix. 7. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us "confusion of faces, as at this day." Nor can it grieve any believer in the world, to accuse, condemn, and shame himself for sin, whilst he remembers and considers, that all that shame and confusion of face which he takes to himself, goes to the vindication, glory and honour of his God: As David was content to be more vile still for God, so it pleaseth the heart of a Christian to magnify, and advance the name, and glory of God, by exposing his own shame, in humble, and broken-hearted confessions of sin.

Fifthly, In a word, the death of the cross *was not a natural, but a violent death:* Such also is the death of sin: sin dies not of its own accord, as nature dieth in old men, in whom the *balsamum radicale*, or radical moisture is consumed; for if the Spirit of God did not kill it, it would live to eternity in the souls of men; it is not the everlasting burnings, and all the wrath of God which lies upon the damned for ever, that can destroy sin. Sin, like a *salamander*, can live to eternity in the fire of God's wrath; so that either it must die a violent death

† Mortification of sin is not compleated in one moment, but is a daily conflict. Sin languishes as soon as the work of mortification is begun; in the progress of it, sin wastes and pines away, and in the end, even at our death, it is destroyed. *Origen on Ep. to Rom.*

by the hand of the Spirit, or it never dieth at all. And thus you see, why the mortification of sin is, *tropically*, expressed by the crucifying of the flesh.

Thirdly, Why all that are in Christ must be so crucified, or mortified unto sin: And the necessity of this will appear divers ways.

www.libtool.com.cn

First, From the inconsistency and contrariety that there is betwixt Christ and unmortified lust, Gal. v. 17. "These are "contrary the one to the other." There is a threefold inconsistency betwixt Christ and such corruptions; they are not only contrary to the *holiness of Christ*, 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever a-"bideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen "him, neither known him," *(i. e.)* whosoever is thus ingulphed and plunged into the lust of the flesh, can have no communion with the pure and holy Christ; but there is also an inconsistency betwixt such sin and the *honour of Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from "iniquity:" As Alexander said to a soldier of his name, *recordare nominis Alexandri*, remember thy name is *Alexander*, and do no nothing unworthy of that name. And unmortified lusts are also contrary to the *dominion*, and government of *Christ*, Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come after me, let him deny "himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me:" These are the self-denying terms upon which all men are admitted into Christ's service: And without mortification and self-denial, he allows no man to call him Lord and Master.

Secondly, The necessity of mortification appears, from the necessity of conformity betwixt Christ the head, and all the members of his mystical body; for how incongruous and uncomely would it be to see a holy, heavenly Christ, leading a company of unclean, carnal, and sensual members? Matth. xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am "meek and lowly," *q. d.* it would be monstrous to the world, to behold a company of *lions* and *wolves* following a meek and harmless *lamb*: Men of raging, and unmortified lusts, professing and owning me for their head of government: And again, 1 John ii. 6. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also "so to walk, even as he walked," *q. d.* either imitate Christ in your *practice*, or never make pretensions to Christ in your *profession*: This was what the apostle complained of, Phil. iii. 18. for "many walk of whom I have told you often, and now "tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross "of Christ:" Men cannot study to put a greater dishonour and

reproach upon Christ, than by making his name and profession a cloke and cover to their filthy lusts.

Thirdly, The necessity of crucifying the flesh, appears from the method of salvation, as it is stated in the gospel. God every where requires the practice of mortification, under pain of damnation. Mat. xviii. 8. "Wherefore if thy hand, or thy foot, "offend thee; cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt," or maimed, rather than, "having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." The gospel legitimates no hopes of salvation, but such as are accompanied with serious endeavours of mortification. 1 John iii. 3. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 'Twas one special end of Christ's coming into the world, "to save his people from their sins," Mat. i. 21. nor will he be, a saviour unto any who remain under the dominion of their own lusts.

Fourthly, The whole stream, and current of the gospel, puts us under the necessity of mortification; gospel-precepts have respect unto this, Col. iii. 5. "Mortify your members, therefore, "which are upon the earth." 1 Pet. i. 15. "Be ye holy, for I "am holy." Gospel presidents have respect unto this, Heb. xii. 1. "Wherefore seeing we, also, are compassed about with so great "a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the "sin which doth so easily beset us," *&c.* Gospel threatenings are written for this end, and do all press mortification in a thundering dialect. Rom. viii. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall "die." Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men." The *promises* of the gospel are written designedly to promote it, 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." But in vain are all these precepts, presidents, threatenings, and promises written in the scripture, except mortification, be the daily study, and practice of professors.

Fifthly, Mortification is the very scope and aim of our regeneration, and the infusion of the principles of grace. "If we live "in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit," Gal. v. 25. In vain were the habits of grace planted, if the fruits of holiness, and mortification, be not produced; yea, mortification is not only the design, and aim, but it is a special part, even the one half of our sanctification.

Sixthly, If mortification be not the daily practice, and endeavour of believers, then the way to heaven, no way answers to

Christ's description of it in the gospel. He tells us, Mat. vii. 13. 14. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto "life, and few there be that find it." Well, then, either Christ must be mistaken in the account he gave of the way to glory, or else all unmortified persons are out of the way: for what makes the way of salvation narrow, but the difficulties, and severities of mortification?

Seventhly, In a word, he that denies the necessity of mortification, confounds all discriminating marks betwixt saints, and sinners; pulls down the pale of distinction, and lets the world into the church, and the church into the world: 'Tis a great design of the gospel, to preserve the boundaries betwixt the one and the other, Rom. ii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 13. But if men may be Christians without mortification, we may as well go into the *taverns*, *ale-houses*, or *brothel-houses*, among the roaring, or sottish crew of sinners, and say, here are those that are redeemed by the blood of Christ; here are his disciples, and followers; as go to seek them in the purest churches, or most strictly religious families: by all which the necessity of mortification, unto all that are in Christ, is abundantly evidenced.

Fourthly, In the next place, we are to enquire into the true *principle* of mortification; 'tis true, there are many ways attempted, by men, for the mortification of sin, and many rules laid down, to guide men in that great work; some of which are very trifling, and impertinent things: such are those prescribed by *Popish Votaries*. But I shall lay down this as a sure conclusion, that *the sanctifying Spirit is the only effectual principle of mortification;* and, without him, no resolutions, vows, abstinences, castigations of the body, or any other external endeavours, can ever avail, to the mortification of one sin. The *moral Heathens* have prescribed many pretty rules, and helps, for the suppression of vice: Aristides, Seneca, and Cato, were renowned, among them, upon this account: formal Christians, have, also, gone far in the reformation of their lives, but could never attain true mortification; formality pares off the excrescences of vice, but never kills the root of it; it usually recovers itself again, and their souls, like a body not well purged, relapses into a worse condition than before, Mat. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

This work of mortification, is peculiar to the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 17. and the Spirit becomes a principle of mortification in believers two ways, namely,

1. By the implantation of contrary habits.

2. By assisting those implanted habits, in all the times of need.

First, The Spirit of God implants habits of a contrary nature, which are destructive to sin, and are purgative of corruption, 1 John v. 4. Acts xv. 9. Grace is, to corruption, what water is to fire; betwixt which, there is both a *formal* and *effective opposition*; a contrariety, both in nature, and operation, Gal. v. 17. There is a threefold, remarkable advantage, given us by grace, for the destruction, and mortification of sin. For,

First, Grace gives the mind, and heart of man, a contrary bent, and inclination; by reason whereof, spiritual, and heavenly things, become connatural, to the regenerate soul. Rom. vii. 22. "For I delight in the law of God, after the inner-man." Sanctification is, in the soul, as a living spring running with a kind of *central force* heaven-ward, John iv. 14.

Secondly, Holy principles destroy the interest that sin once had in the love, and delight of the soul; the sanctified soul cannot take pleasure in sin, or find delight in that which grieves God, as it was wont to do; but that which was the object of delight, hereby becomes the object of grief, and hatred. Rom. vii. 15. *What I hate, that I do.*

Thirdly, From both these follow a third advantage for the mortification of sin, in as much as sin being contrary to the new nature, and the object of grief, and hatred, cannot possibly be committed without reluctancy, and very sensible regret of mind; and actions done with regret, are neither done frequently, nor easily. The case of a regenerate soul, under the surprizals, and particular victories of temptation, being like that of a captive in war, who marches, not with delight, but by constraint, among his enemies *. So the apostle expresseth himself, Rom. vii. 23. "But I see another law, in my members, warring against the law "of my mind; and bringing me into captivity unto the law of "sin, which is in my members." Thus the Spirit of God promotes the design of mortification, by the implantation of contrary habits.

Secondly, By assisting those gracious habits, in all the times of need, which he doth many ways; sometimes notably awakening, and rouzing grace, out of the dull, and sleepy habit, and drawing forth the activity, and power of it, into actual, and successful resistances of temptations. As Gen. xxxix. 9.

* Αιχμαλωτίζω, *i. e.* When one is so taken that he can neither struggle, nor resist him by whom he is taken captive.

"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Holy fear awakens first and raises all the powers of grace in the soul, to make a vigorous resistance of temptation: the Spirit, also strengthens weak grace, in the soul. 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My "grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in "weakness:" And, by reason of grace, thus implanted, and thus assisted, "he that is born of God, keepeth himself, and "the wicked one toucheth him not."

Fifthly, The last query, to be satisfied, is, how mortification of sin solidly evinceth the soul's interest in Christ; and this it doth divers ways, affording the mortified soul many sound evidences thereof. As,

Evidence. 1. Whatsoever evidences the indwelling of the holy Spirit of God in us, must needs be evidential of a saving interest in Christ, as hath been fully proved before; but the mortification of sin doth plainly evidence the indwelling of the Spirit of God; for, as we proved but now, it can proceed from no other principle. There is as strong, and inseparable a connexion betwixt mortification, and the spirit, as betwixt the effect, and its proper cause; and the self-same connexion betwixt the inbeing of the Spirit, and union with Christ: So that to reason from mortification, to the inhabitation of the Spirit, and from the inhabitation of the Spirit to our union with Christ, is a strong scriptural way of reasoning.

Evidence 2. That which proves a soul to be under the *covenant of grace*, evidently proves its interest in Christ; for Christ is the head of that *covenant*, and none, but sound believers, are under the blessings, and promises of it: but mortification of sin is a sound evidence of the soul's being under the covenant of grace, as is plain, from those words of the apostle, Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, "that ye should obey it in the lust thereof; neither yield ye "your members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; "but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from "the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness "unto God: for sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye "are not under the law, but under grace." Where the apostle presseth believers unto mortification by this encouragement, that it will be a good evidence unto them of a new covenant-interest; for all legal duties, and endeavours, can never mortify sin: 'tis the Spirit, in the new covenant, which produces this. Whoever, therefore, hath his corruptions mortified, hath his interest in the covenant, and consequently in Christ, so far cleared unto him.