

S E R M O N S

BY THE LATE

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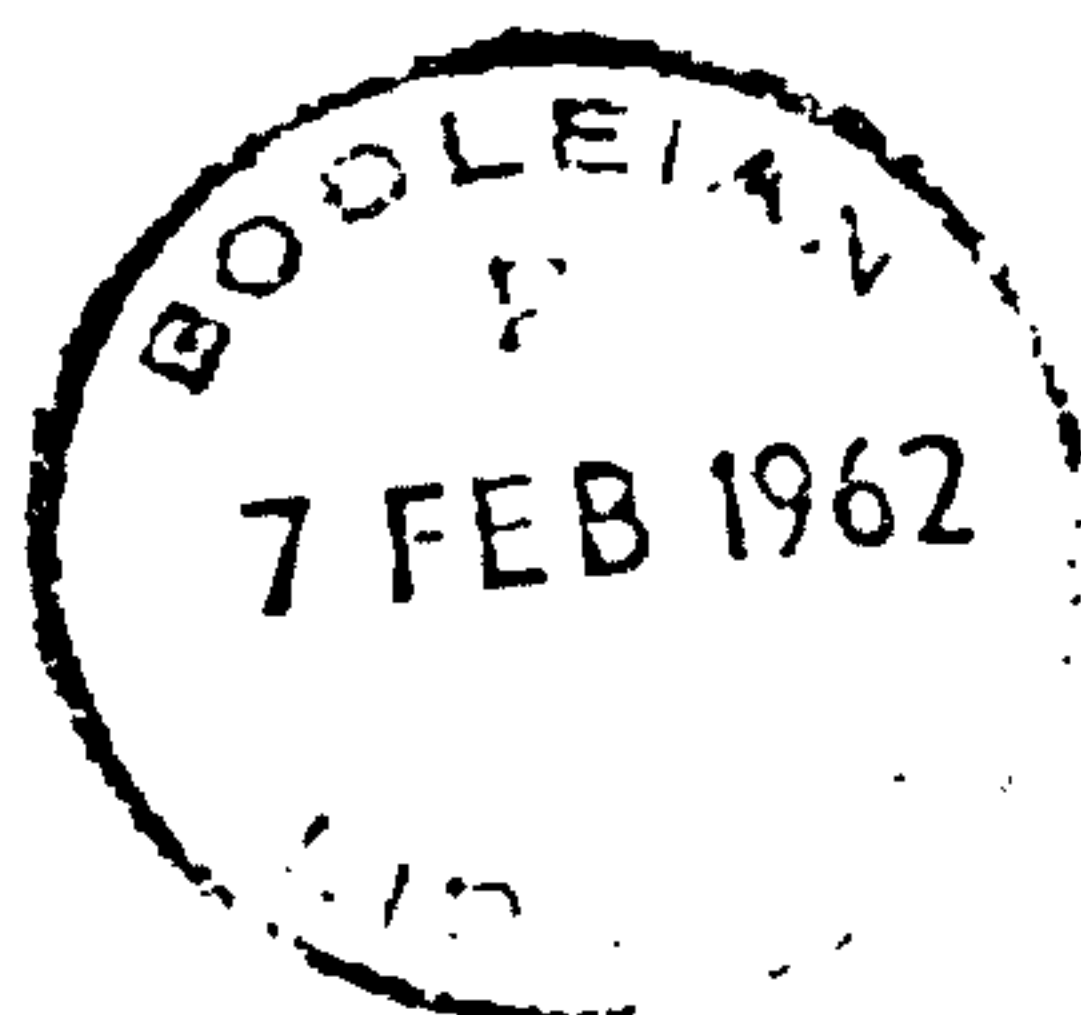
On the following SUBJECTS :

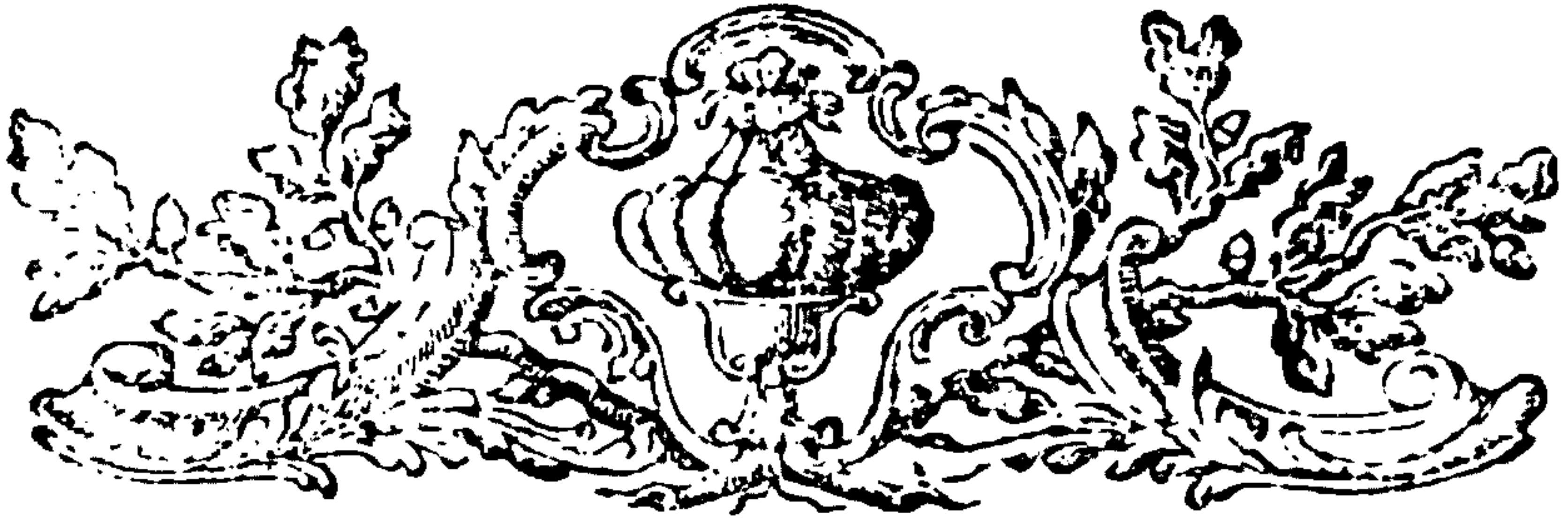
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GLASGOW :

PREACHED and PRINTED in the YEAR

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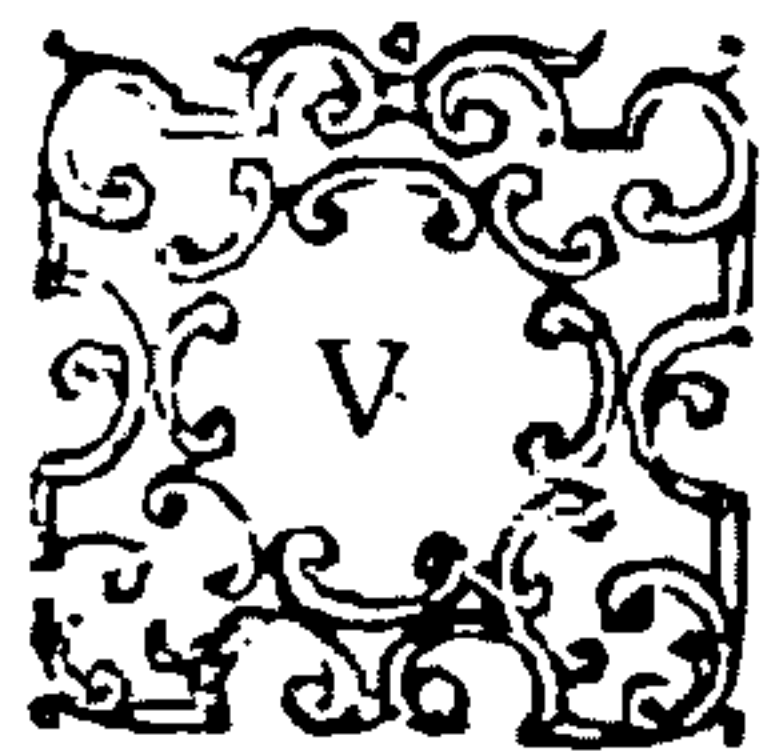


S E R M O N I.

Walking with GOD.

GENESIS v. 24.

*And Enoch walked with GOD, and he was not, for
GOD took him.*



VARIOUS are the pleas and arguments, which men of corrupt minds frequently urge against yielding obedience to the just and holy commands of GOD.

But, perhaps, one of the most common objections that they make is this, that our LORD's commands are not practicable, because contrary to flesh and blood; and consequently, that he is "an hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not sowed." These we find were the sentiments entertained by that wicked and slothful servant mentioned in the xxvth of *St. Matthew*; and are undoubtedly the same with

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many

many which are maintained in the present wicked and adulterous generation. The Holy Ghost foreseeing this, hath taken care to inspire holy men of old, to record the examples of many holy men and women; who, even under the Old Testament dispensation, were enabled cheerfully to take CHRIST'S yoke upon them, and counted his service perfect freedom. The large catalogue of saints, confessors, and martyrs, drawn up in the xith chapter to the *Hebrews*, abundantly evidences the truth of this observation. What a great cloud of witnesses have we there presented to our view? All eminent for their faith, but some shining with a greater degree of lustre than do others. The proto-martyr *Abel*, leads the van. And next to him, we find *Enoch* mentioned, not only because he was next in order of time, but also on account of his exalted piety. He is spoken of in the words of the text in a very extraordinary manner. We have here a short but very full and glorious account, both of his behaviour in this world, and the triumphant manner of his entering into the next. The former is contained in these words, "And *Enoch* walked with God." The latter in these, "and he was not: for God took him." He was not; i. e. He was not found, he was not taken away in the common manner, he did not see death; for *Heb.* xi. 5. GOD had translated him. Who this *Enoch* was, does not appear so plainly. To me, he seems to have been a person of public character. I suppose, like *Noah*, a preacher of righteousness. And, if we may credit the Apostle *Jude*, he was a flaming preacher. For he

he quotes one of his prophecies, wherein he saith, "Behold the LORD cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." But whether a public or private person, he has a noble testimony given him in the lively oracles. The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* saith, that before his translation he had this testimony, "that he pleased God;" and his being translated, was a proof of it beyond all doubt. And I would observe, that it was wonderful wisdom in GOD to translate *Enoch* and *Elijah* under the Old Testament dispensation, that hereafter when it should be asserted, that the LORD JESUS was carried into heaven, it might not seem a thing altogether incredible to the *Jews*; since they themselves confessed, that two of their own prophets had been translated several hundred years before. But it is not my design to detain you any longer, by enlarging, or making observations on *Enoch's* short but comprehensive character. The thing I have in view, being to give a discourse, as the LORD shall enable, upon a weighty and very important subject; I mean, *walking with GOD*. "And *Enoch* walked with GOD." If so much as this can be truly said of you and me after our decease, we shall not have any reason to complain, that we have lived in vain.

In handling my intended subject, I shall,

First, Endeavour to shew, what is implied in these words, *walked with God*.

Secondly, I shall prescribe some means, upon the due observance of which, believers may keep up and maintain their *walk with God*. And,

Thirdly, Offer some motives to stir us up, if we never walked with God before, to come and walk with God now. The whole shall be closed with a word or two of application.

First, I am to shew what is implied in these words, “walked with God;” or in other words, what we are to understand by *walking with God*.

And *First*, *Walking with God*, implies, that the prevailing power of the enmity of a person’s heart, be taken away by the blessed Spirit of God. Perhaps it may seem a hard saying to some, but our own experience daily proves, what the scriptures in many places assert, that the carnal mind, the mind of the unconverted, natural man, nay, the mind of the regenerate, so far as any part of him remains unrenewed, is enmity, not only an enemy, but “enmity itself against God; so that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.” Indeed one may well wonder that any creature, especially that lovely creature man, made after his Maker’s own image, should ever have any enmity, much less a prevailing enmity against that very God in whom he lives, and moves, and hath his being. But alas! so it is. Our first parents contracted it when they fell from God by eating the forbidden fruit, and the bitter and malignant contagion of it, hath descended to, and quite overspread

spread their whole posterity. This enmity discovered itself, in *Adam's* endeavouring to hide himself in the trees of the garden. When he heard the voice of the LORD GOD, instead of running with an open heart, saying, Here am I; alas! he now wanted no communion with God; and still more discovered his lately-contracted enmity, by the excuse he made to the Most High. "The woman, or this woman, thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." By saying thus, he in effect lays all the fault upon GOD; as though he had said, if thou hadst not given me this woman, I had not sinned against thee, so thou mayst thank thyself for my transgression. In the same manner this enmity works in the hearts of *Adam's* children. They now and again find something rising against God, and saying even unto GOD, what doest thou? "It seems any meaner competitor (says the learned Doctor *Quen* in his excellent treatise on indwelling sin) than GOD himself." Its command is like that of the *Assyrians* in respect to *Ahab*, Shoot only at the King. And it strikes against every thing that has the appearance of real piety, as the *Assyrians* shot at *Jehosaphat* in *Ahab's* cleathes. But the opposition ceases when it finds that it is only an appearance, as the *Assyrians* left off shooting at *Jehosaphat*, when they perceived it was not *Ahab* they were shooting at. This enmity discovered itself in accused *Cain*; he hated and slew his brother *Abel*, because *Abel* loved, and was peculiarly favoured by his God. And the same enmity rules and prevails in every man that is naturally

naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*. Hence that averfeness to prayer and holy duties, which we find in children, and very often in grown persons, who have notwithstanding been blessed with a religious education. And all that open sin and wickedness, which like a deluge has overflowed the world, are only so many streams running from this dreadful, contagious fountain; I mean the enmity of man's desperately wicked and deceitful heart. He that cannot set his seal to this, knows nothing yet, in a saving manner, of the holy scriptures, or of the power of God. And all that do know this, will readily acknowledge, that before a person can be said to walk with God, the prevailing power of this heart-enmity must be destroyed. For persons do not use to walk and keep company together, who entertain an irreconcilable enmity and hatred against one another. Observe me, I say, the prevailing power of this enmity must be taken away. For the inbeing of it will never be totally removed, till we bow down our heads and give up the ghost. The apostle *Paul*, no doubt, speaks of himself, and that too not when he was a pharisee, but a real christian; when he complains, "that when he would do good, evil was present with him;" not having dominion over him, but opposing and resisting his good intentions and actions, "so that he could not do the things which he would," in that perfection which the new man desired. This is what he calls sin dwelling in him. "And this is that *περιουσια σαρκος*, which, to use the words of the ninth article of your church,) some do expound the wisdom,

" some

“ some sensuality, some the affectation, some the
 “ desire of the flesh, which doth remain, yea, in
 “ them that are regenerated.” But as for its pre-
 vailing power, it is destroyed in every soul that is
 truly born of GOD, and gradually more and more
 weakened as the believer grows in grace, and the
 spirit of GOD gains a greater and greater ascendan-
 cy in the heart.

But *Secondly*, Walking with GOD not only im-
 plies, that the prevailing power of the enmity of a
 man’s heart be taken away, but also that a person is
 actually reconciled to GOD the Father, in and thro’
 the all-sufficient righteousness and atonement of his
 dear Son. “ Can two walk together, (says *Solo-*
 “ *mon*), unless they are agreed?” JESUS is our
 peace, as well as our peace-maker. When we are
 justified by faith in CHRIST, then, but not till
 then, we have peace with GOD; and consequently
 cannot be said till then, to walk with him. Walk-
 ing with a person, being a sign and token that we
 are friends to that person, or at least, though we
 have been at variance, yet that now we are recon-
 ciled and become friends again. This is the great
 errand that gospel ministers are sent out upon. To
 us is committed the ministry of reconciliation: As
 ambassadors for GOD, we are to beseech sinners, in
 CHRIST’S stead, to be reconciled unto GOD; and
 when they comply with the gracious invitation, and
 are actually by faith brought into a state of reconci-
 liation with GOD, then, and not till then, may they
 be said so much as to begin to walk with GOD.

Further, *Thirdly*, Walking with GOD implies, a settled, abiding communion and fellowship with GOD, or what in scripture is called, “The holy Ghost dwelling in us.” This is what our LORD promised when he told his disciples, that “the Holy Spirit should be in, and with them;” not to be like a wayfaring-man, to stay only for a night, but to reside and make his abode in their hearts. This I am apt to believe is what the Apostle *John* would have us understand, when he talks of a person abiding in him, in CHRIST, “and walking as he himself also walked.” And this is what is particularly meant in the words of our text. “And *Enoch* walked with GOD” i. e. He kept up and maintained a holy, settled, habitual, though undoubtedly not altogether uninterrupted communion and fellowship with GOD, in and through CHRIST JESUS. So that to sum up what has been said on this part of the first general head, *walking with GOD* consists especially in the fixed habitual bent of the will for GOD, in an habitual dependence upon his power and promise, in an habitual voluntary dedication of our all to his glory, in an habitual eying of his precept in all we do, and in an habitual complacence in his pleasure in all we suffer.

Fourthly, *Walking with GOD* implies, our making progress or advances in the divine life. *Walking*, in the very first idea of the word, seems to suppose a progressive motion. A person that walks, though he move slowly, yet he goes forwards and does not continue in one place. And so it is with those that walk with GOD. They go on, as the Psalmist

Psalmist says, "from strength to strength;" or, in the language of the Apostle *Paul*, "they pass from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the LORD." Indeed in one sense, the divine life admits of neither increase nor decrease. When a soul is born of GOD, to all intents and purposes he is a child of GOD, and, though he should live to the age of *Methuselah*, yet he would then be only a child of GOD, after all. But in another sense, the divine life admits of decays and additions. Hence it is, that we find the people of GOD charged with backslidings, and losing their first love. And hence it is, that we hear of babes, young men and fathers in CHRIST; and upon this account it is that the Apostle exhorts *Timothy*, "to let his progress be made known to all men." And what is here required of *Timothy* in particular; by *St Peter*, is enjoined all christians in general, "But grow in grace, (says he) and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST." For the new creature increases in spiritual stature; and though a person can be but a new creature, yet there are some that are more conformed to the divine image than others, and will, after death, be admitted to a greater degree of blessedness. For want of observing this distinction, even some gracious souls that have better hearts than heads, (as well as men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith) have unawares run into downright *Antinomian* principles, denying all growth of grace in a believer, or any marks of grace to be laid down in the scriptures of truth. From such principles, and

more especially from practices naturally consequent on such principles, may the LORD of all Lords deliver us!

From what then has been said, we may now know what is implied in the words, “walked with GOD,” viz. Our having the prevailing enmity of our hearts taken away by the power of the Spirit of GOD; our being actually reconciled and united to him by faith in JESUS CHRIST; our having and keeping up a settled communion and fellowship with him; and our making a daily progress in this fellowship, so as to be conformed to the divine image more and more.

How this is done, or, in other words, by what means believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD, comes to be considered under our second general head.

And, *First*, Believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD, by reading of his holy word. “Search the scriptures,” says our blessed LORD, “for these are they that testify of me.” And the royal psalmist tells us, “that GOD’s word was as “light unto his feet, and a lanthorn unto his paths;” and he makes it one property of a good man, “that “his delight is in the law of the LORD, and that “he exercises himself therein day and night.” “Give thyself to reading,” (says *Paul* to *Timothy*); “And this book of the law, (says GOD to *Joshua*) “shall not go out of thy mouth.” For whatsoever was written in afore time, was written for our learning. And the word of GOD is profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, and

and every way sufficient to make every true child of God thoroughly furnished to every good work. If we once get above our Bibles, and cease making the written word of God our sole rule, both as to faith and practice, we shall soon lie open to all manner of delusion, and be in great danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Our blessed LORD, though he had the Spirit of God without measure, yet always was governed by, and fought the devil with, "It is written." This the apostle calls the "Sword of the Spirit." We may say of it as *David* said of *Goliath's* sword, "None like this." The scriptures are called the lively oracles of God: not only because they are generally made use of to beget in us a new life, but also to keep up and encrease it in the soul. The Apostle *Peter*, in his second epistle, prefers it even to seeing CHRIST transfigured upon the mount. For after he had said, chap. i. 18. "That the voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount;" he adds, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:" i. e. Till we shake off these bodies, and see JESUS face to face. Till then, we must see and converse with him through the glass of his word. We must make his testimonies our counsellors, and daily, with *Mary*, sit at JESUS' feet, by faith hearing his word. We shall then by happy experience find, that they

are spirit and life, meat indeed, and drink indeed to our souls.

Secondly, Believers keep up and maintain their walk with GOD by secret prayer. The spirit of grace is always accompanied with the spirit of supplication. It is the very breath of the new creature, the fan of the divine life, whereby the spark of holy fire kindled in the soul by GOD, is not only kept in, but raised into a flame. A neglect of secret prayer has been frequently an inlet to many spiritual diseases, and has been attended with fatal consequences. *Origen* observed, “ That the day he offered incense to an idol, he went out of his closet without making use of secret prayer.” It is one of the most noble parts of the believer’s spiritual armour. “ Praying always, says the Apostle, “ with all manner of supplication.” “ Watch and “ pray, says our LORD, that ye enter not into “ temptation.” And he spake a parable, that his disciples should pray, and not faint. Not that our LORD would have us always upon our knees, or in our closets, to the neglect of our other relative duties. But he means, that our souls should be kept in a praying-frame, so that we might be able to say, as a good man in *Scotland* once said to his friends on his death-bed, “ Could these curtains, “ or could these walls speak, they would tell you “ what sweet communion I have had with my GOD “ here.” O prayer, prayer! It brings and keeps GOD and man together. It raises man up to GOD, and brings GOD down to man. If you would therefore, O believers, keep up your walk with
GOD ;

GOD ; pray, pray without ceasing. Be much in secret, set prayer. And when you are about the common business of life, be much in ejaculatory prayer, and send, from time to time, short letters post to heaven upon the wings of faith. They will reach the very heart of God, and return to you again loaded with spiritual blessings.

Thirdly, Holy and frequent meditation is another blessed means of keeping up a believer's walk with God. "Prayer, reading, temptation, and meditation," says *Luther*, "make a minister." And they also make, and perfect a christian. Meditation to the soul, is the same as digestion to the body. Holy *David* found it so, and therefore he was frequently employed in meditation, even in the night season. We read also of *Isaac's* going out into the fields to meditate in the evening ; or, as it is in the margin, to pray. For meditation is a kind of silent prayer, whereby the soul is frequently, as it were, carried out of itself to God, and in a degree made like unto those blessed Spirits, who by a kind of immediate intuition always behold the face of our heavenly Father. None but those happy souls that have been accustomed to this divine employ, can tell what a blessed promoter of the divine life, meditation is. "Whilst I was musing, says *David*, "the fire kindled." And whilst the believer is musing on the works and word of God ; especially that work of works, that wonder of wonders, that mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world : he frequently feels the fire of divine love kindle, so
that

that he is obliged to speak with his tongue, and tell of the loving kindness of the LORD to his soul. Be frequent therefore in meditation, all ye that desire to keep up and maintain a close and uniform walk with the Most-High God.

Fourthly, Believers keep up their walk with GOD, by watching and noting his providential dealings with them. If we believe the scriptures, we must believe what our LORD hath declared therein, “ That the very hairs of his disciples heads are all numbered ; and that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, (either to pick up a grain of corn, or when shot by a fowler) without the knowledge of our heavenly Father.” Every cross has a call in it, and every particular dispensation of divine providence, has some particular end to answer in those to whom it is sent. If it be of an afflictive nature, GOD does thereby say, “ My son, keep thyself from idols ;” if prosperous, he does it as it were by a small, still voice, say, “ My son, give me thy heart.” If believers, therefore, would keep up their walk with GOD, they must from time to time hear what the LORD has to say concerning them in the voice of his providence. Thus we find *Abraham’s* servant, when he went to fetch a wife for his master *Isaac*, eyed and watched the providence of GOD, and by that means found out the person that was dignified for his master’s wife. “ For a little hint from Providence,” says pious Bishop *Hall*, “ is enough for faith to feed upon.” And as I believe it will be one part of our happiness in heaven, to take a view of, and look back upon, the

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various links of the golden chain which drew us there; so those that enjoy most of heaven below, I believe, will be most minute in remarking God's various dealings with them, in respect to his providential dispensations here on earth.

Fifthly, In order to walk closely with God, his children must not only watch the motions of God's providence without them, but the motions also of his blessed Spirit in their hearts. "As many as are the sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God," and give up themselves to be guided by the Holy Ghost, as a little child gives its hand to be led by a nurse or parent. It is no doubt in this sense, that we are to be converted, and become like little children. And though it is the quintessence of enthusiasm, 'to pretend to be guided by the Spirit without the written word; yet it is every christian's bounden duty to be guided by the Spirit in conjunction with the written word of God. Watch, therefore, I pray you, O believers, the motions of God's blessed Spirit in your souls, and always try the suggestions or impressions that you may at any time feel, by the unerring rule of God's most holy word: and if they are not found to be agreeable to that, reject them as diabolical and delusive. By observing this caution, you will steer a middle course between the two dangerous extremes many of this generation are in danger of running into; I mean, *enthusiasm*, on the one hand, and *deism*, and *down-right infidelity*, on the other.

Sixthly, They that would maintain a holy walk with God, must walk with him in ordinances as well

well as providences, &c. It is, therefore, recorded of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that “ They walked in
 “ all GOD’s ordinances as well as commandments,
 “ blameless.” And all rightly informed christians,
 will look upon ordinances, not as beggarly elements,
 but as to many conduit-pipes, whereby the infinite-
 ly condescending *Jehovah* conveys his grace to their
 souls. They will look upon them as childrens bread,
 and as their highest privileges. Consequently they
 will be glad when they hear others say, “ Come,
 “ let us go up to the house of the LORD.” They
 will delight to visit the place where GOD’s honour
 dwelleth, and be very eager to embrace all oppor-
 tunities to shew forth the LORD CHRIST’S death
 till he come.

Seventhly and *lastly*, If you walk with GOD, you
 will associate and keep company with those that do
 walk with him. “ My delight, says holy *David*,
 “ is in them that do excel” in virtue. They were
 in his sight, the excellent ones of the earth. And
 the primitive christians, no doubt, kept up their
 vigour and first love, by continuing in fellowship
 one with another. The Apostle *Paul* knew this full
 well, and therefore exhorts the christians to see to
 it, that they did not forsake the assembling them-
 selves together. For how can one be warm alone?
 And has not the wisest of men told us, that, “ as
 “ iron sharpeth iron, so doth the countenance of a
 “ man his friend?” If we look, therefore, into
 church-history, or make a just observation of our
 own times, I believe we shall find, that as the pow-
 er of GOD prevails, christian societies, and fellow-
 ship

ship meetings prevail proportionably. And as one decays, the other has insensibly decayed and dwindled away at the same time. So necessary is it for those that would walk with God, and keep up the life of religion, to meet together as they have opportunity, in order to provoke one another to love and good works.

Proceed we now to the 'Third general thing proposed, 'To offer some motives to excite all to come and walk with God.

And *First*, Walking with God, is a very honourable thing. This generally is a prevailing motive to persons of all ranks, to stir them up to any important undertaking. O that it may have its due weight and influence with you, in respect to the matter now before us! I suppose you would all think it a very high honour to be admitted into an earthly prince's privy-council, to be trusted with his secrets, and to have his ear at all times, and at all seasons. It seems *Haman* thought it so, when he boasted, *Esth.* v. 11, that besides his being "advanced above the princes and servants of the king; yea, moreover, *Esther* the Queen did let no man come in with the King unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the King." And when afterwards a question was put to this same *Haman*, chap. vi. 6. "What shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour?" he answered, ver. 8. "Let the royal apparel be brought which the King used to wear, and the horse that
the

the King rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head; and let his apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the King delights to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, 'Thus shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour.' This was all then, it seems, that an ambitious *Haman* could ask, and the most valuable thing that he thought *Ahasuerus*, the greatest monarch upon earth, could give. But alas, what is this honour in comparison of that which the meanest of those enjoy, that walk with GOD! Think ye it a small thing, Sirs, to have the secret of the LORD of Lords with you, and to be called the friends of GOD? and such honour have all GOD's saints. "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him:" and "Henceforth, says the blessed JESUS, call I you no longer servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not the will of his master." Whatever you may think of it, holy *David* was so sensible of the honour, attending a walk with GOD, that he declares, "he had rather be a door-keeper in his house, than to dwell even in the tents of ungodliness." O that all were like-minded with him!

But, *Secondly*, As it is an honourable, so it is a pleasing thing to walk with GOD. The wisest of men has told us, that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace." And I remember pious Mr. *Henry*, when he was just about to expire, said to a friend, "You have heard
" many

“ many mens dying words, and these are mine :
 “ A life spent in communion with GOD, is the
 “ pleasantest life in the world.” I am sure I can
 set to my seal that this is true. Indeed, I have been
 listed under JESUS’s banner only for a few years ;
 but I have enjoyed more solid pleasure in one mo-
 ment’s communion with my GOD, than I should
 or could have enjoyed in the ways of sin, though I
 had continued to have went on in them for thou-
 sands of years. And may I not appeal to all you
 that fear and walk with GOD, for the truth of this ?
 has not one day in the LORD’s courts, been to you
 better than a thousand ? In keeping GOD’s com-
 mandments, have you not found a present and ve-
 ry great reward ? Has not his word been sweeter
 to you than the honey, or the honey-comb ? O what
 have you felt, when, *Jacob*-like, you have been
 wrestling with your GOD ? Has not JESUS often
 met you when meditating in the fields, and been
 made known to you over and over again in breaking
 of bread ? Has not the Holy Ghost frequently shed
 the divine love abroad in your hearts abundantly,
 and filled you with joy unpeakable, even joy that
 is full of glory ? I know you will answer all these
 questions in the affirmative, and freely acknowledge
 the yoke of CHRIST to be easy, and his burden
 light ; or (to use the words of one of our collects)
 “ That his service is perfect freedom.” And what
 need we then any further motive to excite us to
 walk with GOD ?

But methinks I hear some among you say, “ How
 “ can these things be ? For, if walking with GOD,
 “ as

“ as you say, is such an honourable and pleasant
 “ thing, whence is it, that the name of the people
 “ of this way is cast out as evil, and every where
 “ spoken against? How comes it to pass that they
 “ are frequently afflicted, tempted, destitute, and
 “ tormented? Is this the honour, this the pleasure
 “ that you speak of?” I answer, Yes. Stop a
 while; be not over hasty. Judge not according to
 appearance, but judge righteous judgment, and all
 will be well. It is true, we acknowledge the “ people
 “ of this way,” as you, and *Paul* before you, when
 a persecutor, called them, have their names cast out
 as evil, and are a sect every where spoken against.
 But by whom? Even by the enemies of the most
 high GOD. And do you think it a disgrace to be
 spoken evil of by them? Blessed be GOD, we have
 not so learnt CHRIST. Our royal Master has pro-
 nounced those “ blessed, who are persecuted, and
 “ have all manner of evil spoken against them falsely.”
 He has commanded them “ to rejoice and be exceed-
 ing glad.” For it is the privilege of their discipleship,
 and that their reward will be great in heaven. He
 himself was thus treated. And can there be a greater
 honour put upon a creature, than to be conformed
 to the ever-blessed Son of GOD? And further, it
 is equally true, that the people of this way are fre-
 quently afflicted, tempted, destitute, and tormented.
 But what of all this? Does this destroy the pleasure
 of walking with GOD? No, in no wise; for those
 that walk with GOD, are enabled, through CHRIST
 strengthening them, to joy even in tribulation, and
 to rejoice when they fall into divers temptations.

And

And I believe I may appeal to the experience of all true and close walkers with GOD, Whether or not their suffering times, have not frequently been their sweetest times, and that they enjoyed most of GOD, when most calt out and despised by men? This we find was the case of CHRIST'S primitive servants, when threatened by the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, and commanded to preach no more in the name of JESUS; they rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the sake of JESUS. *Paul* and *Silas* sang praises even in a dungeon; and the face of *Stephen*, that glorious proto-martyr of the christian church, shone like the face of an angel. And JESUS is the same now, as he was then, and takes care so to sweeten sufferings and afflictions with his love, that his disciples find, by happy experience, that as afflictions abound, consolations do much more abound. And therefore these objections, instead of destroying, do only more enforce the motives before urged to excite you to walk with GOD.

But supposing the objections were just, and walkers with GOD were as despicable and unhappy as you would represent them to be; yet I have a third motive to offer, which, if weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, will over-weigh all objections, viz. That there is a heaven at the end of this walk. For, to use the words of pious Bishop *Beveridge*, "Though
 " the way be narrow, yet it is not long; and though
 " the gate be strait, yet it opens into everlasting life." *Enoch* found it so. He walked with GOD on earth, and GOD took him to sit down with him for ever in the kingdom of heaven. Not that we are

to expect to be taken away as he was : no ; I suppose we shall all die the common death of all men. But after death, the spirits of those who have walked with GOD, shall return to GOD that gave them ; and at the morning of the resurrection, soul and body shall be for ever with the LORD. Their bodies shall be fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious body, and their souls filled with all the fulness of GOD. They shall sit on thrones ; they shall judge angels. They shall be enabled to sustain an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, even that glory which JESUS CHRIST enjoyed with the Father before the world began. *O gloriam quantam et qualem,* says the learned and pious *Arndt*, just before he bowed down his head, and gave up the ghost. The very thought of it is enough to make us " wish to " leap our seventy years," as good *Dr. Watts* expresses himself, and to make us break out into the earnest language of the royal Psalmist, " My soul is athirst for GOD, yea for the living GOD. When shall I come to appear in the immediate presence of my GOD ? " I wonder not that a sense of this, when under a more than ordinary irradiation and influx of divine life and love, causes some persons even to faint away, and for a time lose the power of their senses. A less sight than this, even a sight of *Solomon's* glory, made *Sheba's* queen astonished ; and a still lesser sight than that, even a sight of *Joseph's* waggons, made holy *Jacob* to faint, and for a while, as it were, die away. *Daniel*, when admitted to a distant view of this excellent glory, fell down at the feet of the angel as one dead. And if a distant
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view of this glory be so excellent, what must the actual possession of it be? If the first fruits are so glorious, how infinitely must the harvest exceed in glory?

And now what shall I, or indeed what can I well say more, to excite you, even you that are yet strangers to CHRIST, to come and walk with GOD? If you love honour, pleasure, and a crown of glory, come, seek it where alone it can be found. Come, put ye on the LORD JESUS. Come, haste ye away and walk with GOD, and make no longer provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof. Stop, stop, O sinner! turn ye, turn ye, O ye unconverted men! for the end of that way you are now walking in, however right it may seem in your blinded eyes, will be death, even eternal destruction both of body and soul. Make no long tarrying, I say: at your peril, I charge you, step not one step further on in your present walk. For how knowest thou, O man, but the next step thou takest may be into hell? Death may seize thee, judgment find thee, and then the great gulph will be fixed between thee and endless glory, for ever and ever. O think of these things, all ye that are unwilling to come and walk with GOD. Lay them to heart. Shew yourselves men, and in the strength of JESUS say, Farewel lust of the eye, and pride of life! Farewel carnal acquaintance, and enemies of the cross, I will no more walk and be intimate with you! Welcome JESUS, welcome thy word, welcome thy ordinances, welcome thy Spirit, welcome thy people, I will henceforth walk with you. O that there may be in you such a mind!

GOD

GOD will set his almighty fiat to it, and seal it with the broad seal of heaven, even the signet of his Holy Spirit. Yes, he will, though you have been walking with, and following after, the devices and desires of your desperately wicked hearts, ever since you have been born. “I the high and lofty one,” says the great Jehovah, “that inhabiteth eternity, will dwell with the humble and contrite heart, even with the man that trembleth at my word.” The blood, even the precious blood of **JESUS CHRIST**, if you come to the Father in and through him, shall cleanse you from all sin.

But the text leads me to speak to you that are faints, as well as to you that are open or uncovered sinners. I need not tell you that walking with **GOD** is not only honourable, but pleasant and profitable also: for ye know it by happy experience, and will find it more and more so every day. Only give me leave to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and to beseech you by the mercies of **GOD** in **CHRIST JESUS**, to take heed to yourselves, and walk closer with our **GOD**, than you have in days past: for the nearer you walk with **GOD**, the more you will enjoy of Him whose presence is life, and be the better prepared for being placed at his right-hand, where are pleasures for evermore. O do not follow **JESUS** afar off! O be not so formal, so dead and stupid in your attendance on holy ordinance! Do not so shamefully forsake the assembling yourselves together, or be so niggardly, and so indifferent about the things of **GOD**. Remember what **JESUS** says of the church of *Lamitaca*, “Because thou art nei-
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ther hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Think of the love of JESUS, and let that love constrain you to keep near unto him; and though you die for him, do not deny him, do not keep at a distance from him in any wise.

One word to my brethren in the ministry that are here present, and I have done. You see, my brethren, my heart is full; I could almost say it is too big to speak, and yet too big to be silent, without dropping a word to you. For does not the text speak in a particular manner to those who have the honour of being stiled the ambassadors of CHRIST, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD? I observed at the beginning of this discourse, that *Enoch* in all probability was a public person, and a flaming preacher. Though he be dead, does he not yet speak to us, to quicken our zeal, and make us more active in the service of our glorious and ever-blessed Master? How did *Enoch* preach? How did *Enoch* walk with GOD, though he lived in a wicked and adulterous generation? Let us then follow him, as he followed JESUS CHRIST, and ere long, where he is, there shall we be also. He is now entered into his rest: yet a little while, and we shall enter into ours, and that too much sooner than he did. He sojourned here below three hundred years; but blessed be GOD, the days of man are now shortened, and in a few days our work will be over. The Judge is before the door: he that cometh will come, and will not tarry: his reward is with him. And we shall all (if we are zealous for the LORD of Hosts) ere long shine as the stars in the firmament, in the kingdom

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dom of our heavenly Father, for ever and ever. To Him, the blessed JESUS, and eternal Spirit, be all honour and glory, now, and to all eternity. *Amen, and Amen.*

S E R M O N II.

The Care of the Soul urged as the one thing needful.

L U K E X. 42.

But one thing is needful.

IT was the amiable character of our blessed Redeemer, that "he went about doing good." This great motive, which animated all his actions, brought him to the house of his friend *Lazarus*, at *Bethany*, and directed his behaviour there. Though it was a season of recess from public labour, our LORD brought the sentiments and the pious cares of a preacher of righteousness into the parlour of a friend; and there his doctrine dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew, on the little happy circle that were then surrounding him. *Mary*, the sister of *Lazarus*, with great delight made one amongst them; she seated herself at the feet of JESUS,

sus, in the posture of an humble disciple ; and we have a great deal of reason to believe, that *Martha*, his other sister, would gladly have been with her there ; but domestic cares pressed hard upon her, and “ she was cumbered with much serving,” being, perhaps, too solicitous to prepare a sumptuous entertainment for her heavenly master and the train that attended him. Happy are they, who in a crowd of business do not lose something of the spirituality of their minds, and of the composure and sweetness of their tempers. This good woman comes to our LORD with too impatient a complaint ; insinuating some little reflection, not only on *Mary*, but on himself too. “ LORD, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.” Our LORD, willing to take all opportunities of suggesting useful thoughts, answers her in these words, of which the text is a part, “ *Martha, Martha*, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful ; and *Mary* has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Alas, *Martha* ! the concerns of the soul are of so much greater importance than those of the body, that I cannot blame your sister on this occasion : I rather recommend her to your imitation, and caution you, and all my other friends, to be much on your guard, that in the midst of your worldly cares, you do not lose sight of what much better deserves your attention.

I shall consider these words, “ One thing is needful,” as a kind of aphorism, or wise and weighty sentence, which dropped from the mouth of our

blessed Redeemer, and is evidently worthy of our most serious regard. I shall,

I. Consider what we are to understand by “The one thing” here spoken of.

II. Shew you what is intended, when it is said to be the one thing *needful*.

III. I will shew how justly it may be so represented, or prove that it is, indeed, the one thing needful. And then conclude with some reflections.

My friends, the words which are now before us, are to this day, as true, as they were seventeen hundred years ago. Set your hearts to attend them. O that you may, by divine grace, be awakened to hear them with a due regard, and be so impressed with the plain and serious things which are now to be spoken, as you probably would, if I were speaking by your dying beds, and you had the near and lively view of eternity!

First, I am to consider, what we are to understand by the “one thing needful.”

Now in a few words, it is the “*Care of the soul*,” opposed, as you see in the text, to the care, the excessive care of the body; to which *Martha* was gently admonished by our LORD. This is a general answer, and it comprehends a variety of important particulars, which is the business of our ministry often to open to you at large: The care of the
soul,

soul, implies a readiness to hear the words of CHRIST, to seat ourselves with *Mary* at his feet, and to receive both the law and the gospel from his mouth. It supposes, that we learn from this divine teacher the worth of our souls, their danger, and their remedy; and that we become above all things solicitous about their eternal salvation. That, heartily repenting of all our sins, and cordially believing the everlasting gospel, we receive the LORD JESUS CHRIST for righteousness and life, resting our souls on the value of his atonement, and the efficacy of his grace. It imports, the sincere dedication of ourselves to the service of GOD, and a faithful adherence to it, notwithstanding all oppositions arising from inward corruptions, or outward temptations; and a resolute perseverance in the way of gospel dependence, 'till we receive the end of our faith in our complete salvation. This is the "one thing needful," represented indeed in various scriptures by various names. Sometimes it is called "Regeneration," or "the new creature," because it is the blessed work of GOD's efficacious grace. Sometimes the "Fear of GOD," and sometimes "his love, and the keeping his commandments;" and very frequently in the new testament it is called "faith," or "receiving CHRIST, and believing on him," which therefore is represented as the "great work of GOD," *John* vi. 29. the great thing which GOD in his glorious gospel requires, as well as by his spirit produces in us: each of these, if rightly understood and explained, comprehends all that I have said on this head. On the whole, we may say, that, as

the body is one, though it has many members, and the soul is one, though it has many faculties, so in the present case, this real vital religion is “one thing,” one sacred principle of divine life, bringing us to attend to the care of our souls, as of our greatest treasure. It is one thing, notwithstanding all the variety of views in which it may be considered, and of characters under which it may be described. I proceed,

Secondly, To consider what may be intended in the representation which is here made of it, as the “one thing *needful*.”

Now I think it naturally includes these three particulars: it is a matter of universal concern; of the highest importance; and of so comprehensive a nature, that every thing which is truly worthy of our regard, may be considered as included in, or subservient to it. Let me a little illustrate each of these particulars.

1. The care of the soul may be called the “one thing needful,” as it is matter of universal concern.

Our LORD, you see, speaks of it as needful in the general. He says not, for this or that particular person; or for those of such an age, station, or circumstance in life, but needful for all. And indeed, when discoursing on such a subject, one might properly introduce it with those solemn words of the psalmist, “Give ear, all ye people, hear, all ye inhabitants of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor, together,” *Psalms* xlix. 1, 2. For it is
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the concern of all, from the king that sits upon the throne, to the servant that grindeth at the mill, or the beggar that lieth upon the dunghill. It is needful for us that are *ministers*, for our own salvation is concerned: and woe, insupportable woe will be to our souls, if we think it enough to recommend it to others, and to talk of it in a warm, or an awful manner, in public assemblies, or in our private converse, while it does not penetrate our hearts, as our own greatest care. Our case will then be like that of the *Israelitish* lord in *Samaria*, 2 Kings vii. 2. who was employed to distribute the corn when the siege was raised; though we see it with our eyes, and dispense it with our hands, we shall ourselves die miserably, without tasting the blessings we impart. It is needful to all you that are our *bearers*, without the exception of one single person. It is needful to you that are *rich*, though it may on some accounts be peculiarly difficult for you; even as difficult, comparatively speaking, as for a "camel to go through the eye of a needle," *Mat.* xix. 24. yet if it be neglected, you are poor in the midst of all your wealth, and miserable in all your abundance; a wretch starving for hunger, in a magnificent palace and a rich dress, would be less the object of compassion than you. It is needful for you that are *poor*; though you are distressed with so many anxious cares, "what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed," *Mat.* vi. 31. The nature that makes you capable of such anxieties as these, argues your much greater concern in the "bread which endures to

eternal life," John vi. 27 than in that by which this mortal body must be supported. It is needful for you that are *advanced in years*; though your strength be impaired so that the "grasshopper is a burthen," *Ecccl* xii. 3. and though you have by your long continuance in sin rendered this great work so hard, that were it less important, one would in pity let you alone without reminding you of it: yet, late as it is, it must be done, or your heavy heads will be brought down to the grave with wrath, and sink under a curse aggravated by every year and by every day of your lives. It is needful to you that are *young*, though solicited by so many gay vanities, to neglect it, though it may be represented as an unreasonable care at present, yet I repeat it, it is needful to you; immediately needful, unless you who walk so frequently over the dust of your brethren and companions, that died in the bloom and vigour of their days, have made some secret covenant with the grave for yourselves, and found out some wonderful method, hitherto unknown, of securing this precarious life, and of answering for days and months to come, while others cannot answer for one single moment.

2. The care of the soul is "a matter of the highest importance;" beyond any thing which can be brought into comparison with it.

As *Solomon* says of wisdom, that "it is more precious than rubies, and that all things which can be desired are not to be compared with her," *Prov.* iii. 15. So I may properly say of this great and most important branch of wisdom; whatever can
be

be laid in the balance with it, will be found altogether lighter than vanity. This is strongly implied when it is said in the text, "one thing is needful;" one thing, and *one thing alone* is so. Just as the blessed God is said to be "only wife," *1 Tim. i. 17.* and "only holy," *Rev. xv. 4* because the wisdom and holiness of angels and men is as nothing, when compared with his. What seems most great and most important in life, what kings and senates, what the wisest and greatest of this world are employing their time, their councils, their pens, their labours upon, are trifles, when compared with this one thing. A man may subsist, he may in some considerable measure be happy, without learning, without riches, without titles, without health, without liberty, without friends, nay, though "the life be more than meat, and the body than raiment," *Matth. vi. 25.* yet may he be happy, unspeakably happy, without the body itself. But he cannot be so, in the neglect of the one thing needful. I must therefore bespeak your regard to it in the words of *Moses*, "it is not a light thing, but it is your life," *Deut. xxxii. 47.*

3. The care of the soul is of so comprehensive a nature, that "every thing truly worthy of our regard may be considered as included in it, or subservient to it.

As *David* observes, that "the commandments of God is exceeding broad," *Psalms cxix. 96.* so we may say of this one thing needful; or as *Solomon* very justly and emphatically expresses it, "to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole

duty of man," *Ecccl.* xii. 13. his whole duty and his whole interest ; and every thing which is wise and rational does in its proper place and connection make a part of it. We should judge very ill concerning the nature of this care, if we imagined, that it consisted merely in acts of devotion, or religious contemplation ; it comprehends all the lovely and harmonious band of social and humane virtues. It requires a care of society, a care of our bodies, and of our temporal concerns ; but then all is to be regulated, directed, and animated by proper regards to GOD, CHRIST, and immortality. Our food and our rest, our trades and our labours, are to be attended to, and all the offices of humanity performed in obedience to the will of GOD, for the glory of CHRIST, and in a view to improving the mind in a growing meetness for a state of compleat perfection. Name any thing which has no reference at all to this, and you name a worthless trifle, however it may be gilded to allure the eye, or however it may be sweetened to gratify the taste. Name a thing, which, instead of thus improving the soul, has a tendency to debase and pollute, to enslave and endanger it, and you name what is most unprofitable and mischievous, be the wages of iniquity ever so great ; most foul and deformed, be it in the eyes of men ever so honourable, or in their customs ever so fashionable. Thus I have endeavoured to shew you what we may suppose implied in this expression of " one thing being needful." I am now,

Thirdly, To shew you with how much propriety the care of the soul may be represented under this character,

character, as the one thing needful, or as a matter of universal and most serious concern, to which every thing else is to be considered as subservient, if at all worthy of our care and pursuit.

There let me appeal to the sentiments of those who must be allowed most capable of judging, and to the evident reason of the case itself, as it must appear to every unprejudiced mind.

1. Let me argue "from the opinions of those who must be allowed most capable of judging in such an affair," and we shall quickly see that the care of the soul appears to them, the one thing needful.

Is the judgment of the blessed GOD "according to truth," how evidently and how solemnly is that judgment declared? I will not say merely in this or the other particular passage of his word, but in the whole series of his revelations to the children of men, and the whole tenor of his addresses to them. Is not this the language of all, from the early days of *Job* and *Moses* to the conclusion of the canon of scripture. *Job* xxviii. 21, 23, 28. "If wisdom be hid from the eyes of all the living, surely GOD understandeth the way thereof, he knoweth the place thereof;" and if he does, it is plainly pointed out, for "unto man he still saith, behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding" By *Moses* he declared to the *Israelites*, that "to do the commandments of the LORD would be their wisdom and their understanding in the sight of the nations, who should hear his statutes, and say, surely this is a wise and an un-

derstanding people," *Deut: iv. 6.* When he had raised up one man on the throne of *Israel*, with the character of the wisest that ever lived upon the face of the earth, he chose to make him eminently a teacher of this great truth. And though now all that he spoke on the curious and less concerning subjects of natural philosophy is lost, "though he spoke of trees from the cedar to the hyssop, and of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes," *1 Kings iv. 33.* that saying is preserved in which he testifies, that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," *Prov. i. 7, 9, 10.* and those *Proverbs*, in almost every line of which, they who neglect GOD and their own souls, are spoken of as fools, as if that were the most proper signification of the word, while the religious alone are honoured with the title of wise. But in this respect, as attesting this truth in the name of GOD and in his own, "a greater than *Solomon* is here."

For if we inquire what it was that our LORD JESUS CHRIST judged to be the one thing needful, the words of the text contain as full an answer as can be imagined; and the sense of them is repeated in a very lively and emphatical manner, in that remarkable passage wherein our LORD not only declares his own judgment, but seems to appeal to the consciences of all, as obliged by their own secret convictions to subscribe to the truth of it. "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *Matth. xvi 26.* If it were once lost, what would he not be willing to give

give to redeem it? But it depends not on the words of CHRIST alone. Let his actions, his sufferings, his blood, his death, speak what a value he set on the souls of men. Is it to be imagined, that he would have relinquished heaven, have dwelt upon earth, have laboured by night and by day, and at last have expired on the cross, for a matter of light importance? Or can we think that he, in whom "dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," *Coloss. ii. 3, 9.* was mistaken in judgment so deliberately formed, and so solemnly declared?

If after this, there were room to mention human judgment and testimonies, how easy would it be to produce a cloud of witnesses in such a cause, and to shew that the wisest and best of men in all ages of the world have agreed in this point, that amidst all the diversities of opinion and profession, which succeeding generations have produced, this has been the unanimous judgment, this the common and most solicitous care of those whose characters are most truly valuable, to secure the salvation of their own souls, and to promote the salvation of others.

And let me beseech you seriously to reflect, what are the characters of those who have taken the liberty, most boldly and freely to declare their judgment on the contrary side? The number of such is comparatively few; and when you compare what you have observed of their temper and conduct, I will not say with what you read of holy men of old, but with what you have yourselves seen in the faithful, active, and zealous servants of CHRIST, in
these.

these latter ages, with whom you have conversed ; do you on the whole find, that the rejecters and deriders of the gospel, are in other respects so much more prudent and judicious, so much wiser for themselves, and for others, that are influenced by them, as that you can be in reason obliged to pay any great deference to the authority of a few such names as these, in opposition to those to whom they are here opposed ?

But you will say, and you will say it too truly, Though but a few may venture in words to declare for the neglect of the soul and its eternal interest, that the greater part of mankind do it in their actions. But are the greater part of mankind so wise, and so good, as implicitly to be followed in matters of the highest importance ? And do not multitudes of these, declare themselves on the other side, in their most serious moments ? When the intoxications of worldly business and pleasures are over, and some languishing sickness forces men to solitude and retirement ; what have you generally observed to be the effect of such a circumstance ? Have they not then declared themselves convinced of the truth we are now labouring to establish ? Nay, do we not sometimes see, that a distemper which seizes the mind with violence, yet does not utterly destroy its reasoning faculties, fixes this conviction on the soul in a few hours, nay, sometimes in a few moments ? Have you never seen a gay, thoughtless creature, surprized in the giddy round of pleasures and amusements, and presently brought not only to seriousness, but terror and trembling, by the near views

views of death? have you never seen the man of business and care interrupted, like the rich fool in the parable, in the midst of his schemes for the present world? And have you not heard one and the other of them owning the vanity of those pleasures and cares, which but a few days ago were every thing to them? Confessing that religion was the one thing needful, and recommending it to others with an earnestness, as they hoped thereby to atone for their own former neglect? We that are ministers, frequently are witnesses to such things as these, and I believe few of our hearers are intire strangers to them.

Once more, what if to the testimony of the dying, we could add that of the dead? What if GOD were to turn aside the vail between us and the invisible world, and permit the most careless sinner in the assembly to converse for a few moments with the inhabitants of it? If you were to apply yourself to a happy Spirit, that trod the most thorny road to paradise, or passed through the most fiery trial, and ask him, "was it worth your while to labour so much, and to endure so much for what you now possess?" Surely if the blessed in heaven were capable of indignation, it would move them to hear that it should be made a question. And, on the other hand, if you could enquire of one tormented in that flame below, though he might once be "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day," *Luke xvi. 19.* if you could ask him, "whether his former enjoyments were an equivalent for his present sufferings and despair?" What answer

swer do you suppose he would return? Perhaps an answer of so much horror and rage, as you would not be able so much as to endure. Or if the malignity of his nature should prevent him from returning any answer at all, surely there would be a language even in that silence, a language in the darkness, and flames, and groans of that infernal prison, which would speak to your very soul what the word of **GOD** is with equal certainty, though less forcible conviction, speaking to your ear, that "one thing is needful." You see it is so in the judgment of **GOD** the Father, and the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, of the wisest and best of men, of many, who seemed to judge most differently of it; when they come to more deliberate and serious thought, and not only of the dying, but of the dead too, of those who have experimentally known both worlds, and most surely know what is to be preferred. But I will not rest the whole argument here; therefore,

2. I appeal to the evident reason of the case itself, as it must appear to every unprejudiced mind, that the care of the soul is indeed the one thing needful.

I still consider myself as speaking not to atheists, or to deists, but to those who not only believe the existence and providence of **GOD**, and a future state of happiness and misery, but likewise who credit the truth of the christian revelation, as many undoubtedly do, who live in a total neglect of **GOD**, and their own souls. Now on these principles, a little reflection may be sufficient to convince you, that it is needful to the present repose of your own
mind;

mind ; needful, if ever you would secure eternal happiness, and avoid eternal misery, which will be aggravated, rather than alleviated by all your present enjoyments.

1. The care of the soul is the one thing needful, because, “ without it you cannot secure the peace of your own mind, nor avoid the upbraidings of your conscience.”

That noble faculty is indeed the vicegerent of God in the soul. It is sensible of the dignity and worth of an immortal spirit, and will sometimes cry out of the violence that is offered to it, and cry so loud, as to compel the sinner to hear, whether he will or not. Do you not sometimes find it yourselves ? when you labour most to forget the concerns of your soul, do they not sometimes force themselves on your remembrance ? You are afraid of the reflections of your own mind, but with all your artifice and all your resolution can you intirely avoid them ? Does not conscience follow you to your beds, even if denied the opportunity of meeting you in your closets, and, though with an unwelcome voice, there warn you, “ that your soul is neglected, and will quickly be lost : ” Does it not follow you to your shops and your fields, when you are busiest there ? Nay, I will add, does it not sometimes follow you to the feast, to the club, to the dance, and perhaps, amidst all resistance, to the theatre too ? Does it not sometimes mingle your sweetest draughts with wormwood, and your gayest scenes with horror ? So that you are like a tradesman, who, suspecting his affairs to be in a bad posture,

sture, lays by his books and his papers, yet sometimes they will come accidentally in his way. He hardly dares to look abroad for fear of meeting a creditor or an arrest: and if he labours to forget his cares and his dangers, in a course of luxury at home, the remembrance is sometimes awakened, and the alarm encreased, by those very extravagancies in which he is attempting to lose it. Such probably is the case of your minds, and it is a very painful state; and while things are thus within, external circumstances can no more make you happy, than a fine dress could relieve you under a violent fit of the stone. Whereas, if this great affair were secured, you might delight in reflection, as much as you now dread it; and conscience, of your bitterest enemy, would become a delightful friend, and the testimony of it your greatest rejoicing.

2. The care of the soul is the one thing needful, “because without this your eternal happiness will be lost.”

A crown of everlasting glory is not surely such a trifle as to be thrown away on a careless creature, that will not in good earnest pursue it. God doth not ordinarily deal thus, even with the bounties of his common providence, which are comparatively of little value. As to these, the hand of the diligent generally makes rich, and he would be thought distracted, rather than prudent, who should expect to get an estate merely by wishing for it, or without some resolute and continued application to a proper course of action for that purpose. Now, that we may not foolishly dream of obtaining heaven,

ven, in the midst of a course of indolence and sloth, we are expressly told in the word of GOD, that "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force," *Matth. xi. 12.* and are therefore exhorted to "strive," with the greatest intenseness, and eagerness of mind, as the word properly signifies, "to enter in at the strait gate," for this great and important reason, "because many shall another day seek to enter in, and shall not be able," *Luke xiii. 24.* Nay, when our LORD makes the most gracious promises to the humble petitioner, he does it in such a manner as to exclude the hopes of those who are careless and indifferent. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," *Matth. vii. 7.* If, therefore, you do not ask, seek, and knock, the door of mercy will not be opened, and eternal happiness will be lost. Not that heaven is to be obtained by our own good works: no, no; for having done all, we must account ourselves unprofitable servants.

And surely if I could say no more as to the fatal consequences of your neglect, than this, that eternal happiness will be lost, I should say enough to impress every mind, that considers what ETERNITY means. To fall into a state of everlasting forgetfulness, might indeed appear a refuge to a mind filled with the apprehension of future misery. But O how dreadful a refuge is it! Surely it is such a refuge, as a vast precipice, (from which a man falling would be dashed to pieces in a moment) might appear to a person, pursued by the officers of justice,
that

that he might be brought out to a painful and lingering execution. If an extravagant youth would have reason to look round with anguish, on some fair and ample paternal inheritance, which he had sold or forfeited merely for the riot of a few days: How much more melancholy would it be for a rational mind to think that its eternal happiness is lost for any earthly consideration whatever? Tormenting thought! “Had I attended to that one thing which I have neglected, I might have been, through the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, great and happy beyond expression, beyond conception: not merely for the little span of ten thousand thousand ages, but for ever. A line reaching even to the remotest star would not have been able to contain the number of ages, nor would millions of years have been sufficient to figure them down; this is eternity, but I have lost it, and am now on the verge of being. This lamp, which might have outlasted those of the firmament, will presently be extinguished, and I blotted out from amongst the works of GOD, and cut off from all the bounties of his hand.” Would not this be a very miserable case, if this were all? And would it not be sufficient to prove this to be the better part, which, as our LORD observes, can “never be taken away?” But GOD forbid that we should be so unfaithful to him, and to the souls of men, as to rest in such a representation alone. I therefore add once more,

3. The care of the soul is the one thing needful, because “without it, you cannot avoid a state of “eternal misery, which will be aggravated, rather
“ than

“than alleviated by all your present enjoyments.”

Nothing can be more evident from the word of the **GOD** of truth. It there plainly appears to be a determined case, which leaves no room for a more favourable conjecture or hope. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget **GOD**,” *Pfalm ix. 17.* “They all go away into everlasting punishment, *Matth. xxv. 46.* into a state where they shall in vain seek death, and death shall flee from them. Oh! brethren, it is a certain, but an awful truth, that your souls will be thinking and immortal beings, even in spite of themselves. They may indeed torment, but they cannot destroy themselves. They can no more suspend their power of thought and perception, than a mirror its property of reflecting rays that fall on its surface. Do you suspect the contrary? Make the trial immediately. Command your minds to cease from thinking but for one quarter of an hour, or for half that time, and exclude every idea and every reflexion. Can you succeed in that attempt? Or rather, does not thought press in with a more sensible violence on that resistance; as an anxious desire to sleep, makes us so much the more wakeful. Thus thought will follow you beyond the grave, thus will it, as an unwelcome guest, force itself upon you, when it can serve only to perplex and distress the mind. It will for ever upbraid you, that notwithstanding all the kind exhortations of **GOD** and man, notwithstanding all the keen remonstrances of conscience, and the pleadings of the blood of **CHRIST**, you have gone on in your folly, till heaven is lost, and dam-
nation

nation incurred ; and all, for what ? for a shadow and a dream.

Oh think not, sinners, that the remembrance of your past pleasures, and of your success in your other cares, whilst that of the one thing needful was forgotten, think not that this will ease your minds. It will rather torment them the more. “ Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.” Bitter remembrance ! Well might the heathen poets represent the unhappy spirits in the shades below, as eagerly catching at the water of forgetfulness, yet unable to reach it. Your present comforts will only serve to give you a livelier sense of your misery, as having tasted such degrees of enjoyment ; and to inflame the reckoning, as you have misimproved those talents lodged in your hands for better purposes. Surely, if these things were believed, and seriously considered, the sinner would have no more heart to rejoice in his present prosperity, than a man would have to amuse himself with the curiosities of a fine garden, through which he was led to be broken upon the rack.

But I will enlarge no farther on these things. Would to GOD that the unaccountable stupidity of mens minds, and their fatal attachment to the pleasures and cares of the present life, did not make it necessary to insist on them so frequently and so copiously !

I now proceed to the reflections which naturally arise from hence, and shall only mention two.

1. How much reason have we to lament the folly of mankind in neglecting the one thing needful.

If

If religion be indeed the truest wisdom, then surely we have the justest reason to say with *Solomon*, "that folly and madness is in men's hearts," *Eccles.* ix. 3. Is it the one thing needful? Look on the conduct of the generality of mankind, and you would imagine they thought it the one thing needless: the vainest dream, and the idlest amusement of the mind. God is admonishing them by ordinances, and providences, sometimes by such as are most awful, to lay it to heart; he speaks once, yea twice, (yea a multitude of times) but man regards not, *Job xxxiii.* 14. They profess perhaps to believe all that I have been saying, but act as if the contrary were self-evident; they will risk their souls and eternity for a thing of nought, for that, for the sake of which they would not risk so much as a hand, or a finger, or a joint, no, nor perhaps a toy that adorns it. Surely this is the wonder of angels, and perhaps of devils too, unless the observation of so many ages may have rendered it familiar to both. And can we, my christian brethren, behold such a scene with indifference? If some epidemical madness had seized our country, or the places where we live, so that as we went from one place to another, we every where met with lunatics, and saw amongst the rest, some perhaps of the finest genius, in the most eminent stations in life, amusing themselves with straws and bubbles, or wounding themselves and others; surely were we ever so secure from the danger of infection or assault, the sight would cut us to the heart. A good-natured man would hardly be able to go a-

broad,

brood, or even be desirous to live, if it must be amongst so many sad spectacles. Yet these poor creatures might, notwithstanding this, be the children of God, and the higher their frenzy rose, the nearer might their complete happiness be. But alas! the greater part of mankind are seized with a worse kind of madness, in which they are ruining their souls: and can we behold it with indifference? The LORD awaken our compassion, our prayers, and our endeavours, in dependence on divine grace, that we may be instrumental in bringing them to their mind, and making them wise indeed, that is, wise to salvation!

2. How necessary is it that we should seriously enquire, how this one thing needful is regarded by us!

Let me entreat you to remember your own concern in it, and enquire—Have I thought seriously of it? Have I seen the importance of it? Has it lain with a due and abiding weight on my mind? Has it brought me to CHRIST, that I might lay the fires of these great eternal interests on him? And am I acting in the main of my life, as one that has these convictions? Am I willing, in fact, to give up other things, my interests, my pleasures, my passions to this? Am I conversing with GOD and with man, as one that believes these things; as one that has deliberately chosen the better part, and is determined to abide by that choice?

Observe the answer which conscience returns to these enquiries, and you will know your own part
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in that more particular application, with which I shall conclude.

1. Let me address those that are entirely unconcerned about the one thing needful.

Brethren, I have been stating the case at large, and now I appeal to your consciences, are these things so, or are they not? God and your own hearts best know for what the care of your soul is neglected; but be it what it will, the difference between one grain of sand and another, is not great, when it comes to be weighed against a talent of gold. Whatever it is, you had need to examine it carefully. You had need to view that commodity on all sides, of which you do in effect say, For this will I sell my soul; for this will I give up heaven, and venture hell, be heaven and hell whatever they may. In the name of God, brethren, is this the part of a man, of a rational creature? To go on with your eyes open towards a pit of eternal ruin, because there are a few gay flowers in the way: or what if you shut your eyes, will that prevent your fall? It signifies little to say, I will not think of these things, I will not consider them: God has said, "in the last days they shall consider it perfectly," *Jer. xxiii 20*. The revels of a drunken malefactor will not prevent or respite his execution. Pardon my plainness; if it were a fable or a tale, I would endeavour to amuse you with words, but I cannot do it where your souls are at stake.

2. I would apply to those who are, in some sense, convinced of the importance of their souls, and yet

are inclined to defer that care of them a little longer, which, in the general, they see to be necessary.

I know you that are young, are under peculiar temptations to do this; though it is strange that the death of so many of your companions, should not be an answer to some of the most specious and dangerous of those temptations. Methinks, if there were the least degree of uncertainty, the importance is too weighty to put matters to the venture. But here the uncertainty is great and apparent. You must surely know, that there are critical seasons of life for managing the concerns of it, which are of such a nature, that if once lost, they may never return: here is a critical season: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," *2 Cor. vi. 2.* "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," *Heb. iii. 7, 8.* This language may not be spoken to-morrow. Talk not of a more convenient season; none can be more convenient; and that to which you would probably refer it, is least of all so, a dying time. You would not chuse then to have any important business in hand; and will you of choice refer the greatest business of all to that languishing, hurrying, amazing hour? If a friend were then to come to you with the balance of an intricate account, or a view of a title to an estate, you would shake your fainting head, and lift up your pale trembling hand, and say, perhaps, with a feeble voice, "Alas, is this a time for these things?" And is it a time for so much greater things than these? I wish you knew, and would consider, into
what

what a strait, we that are ministers are sometimes brought, when we are called to the dying beds of those who have spent their lives in the neglect of the one thing needful. On the one hand, we fear, lest if we palliate matters, and speak smooth things, we shall betray and ruin their souls: and on the other, that if we use a becoming plainness and seriousness, in warning them of their danger, we shall quite overwhelm them, and hasten the dying moment, which is advancing by such swift steps. O let me entreat you for our sakes, and much more for your own, that you do not drive us to such sad extremities; but if you are convinced, as I hope some of you may now be, that the care of the soul is that needful thing we have represented, let the conviction work, let it drive you immediately to the throne of grace; from thence you may derive that wisdom and strength, which will direct you in all the intricacies which entangle you, and animate you in the midst of difficulty and discouragement.

3. I would in the last place address myself to those happy souls, who have in good earnest attended to the one thing needful.

I hope, that when you see how commonly it is neglected, neglected indeed, by many, whose natural capacities, improvements, and circumstances in life, appear to you superior to your own; you will humbly acknowledge, that it was distinguishing grace which brought you into this happy state, and formed you to this most necessary care. Bless the LORD, therefore, who hath given you that counsel, in virtue of which you can say, "He is your portion."

Rejoice in the thought, that the great concern is secured : as it is natural for us to do, when some important affair is dispatched, which has long lain before us, and which we have been inclined to put off from one day to another, but have at length strenuously and successfully attended. Remember still to endeavour to continue acting on these great principles, which at first determined your choice ; and seriously consider, that those who desire their life may at last be given them for a prey, must continue on their guard, in all stages of their journey thro' a wilderness, where daily dangers are still surrounding them. Being enabled to secure the great concern, make yourselves easy as to others of smaller importance : You have chosen the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; other things, therefore, shall be added unto you : and if any which you desire should not be added, comfort yourselves with this thought, that you have the good part, which can never be taken away. And, not to enlarge on these obvious hints, which must so often occur, be very solicitous that others may be brought to a care about the one thing needful. If it be needful for you, it is so for your children, your friends, your servants. Let them, therefore, see your concern in this respect for them, as well as for yourselves. Let parents especially attend to this exhortation, whose care for their offspring often exceeds in other respects, and fails in this. Remember that your children may never live to enjoy the effects of your labour and concern to get them estates and portions : the charges of their funerals may, perhaps, be all their

their share of what you are so anxiously careful to lay up for them. And O think what a sword would pierce through your very heart, if you should stand by the corpse of a beloved child with this reflection: "This poor creature has done with life, before it learnt its great business in it; and is gone to eternity, which I have seldom been warning it to prepare for, and which, perhaps, it learned of me to forget."

On the whole, may this grand care be awakened in those by whom it has been hitherto neglected: may it be revived in each of our minds. And that you may be encouraged to pursue it with greater cheerfulness, let me conclude with this comfortable thought, that in proportion to the necessity of the case, through the merits of CHRIST JESUS, is the provision which divine grace has made for our assistance. If you are disposed to sit down at CHRIST'S feet, he will teach you by his word and Spirit. If you commit this precious jewel, which is your eternal all, into his hand, he will preserve it unto that day, and will then produce it richly adorned, and gloriously improved to his own honour, and to your everlasting joy.

Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

S E R M O N III.

The Benefits of an Early Piety.

Preached at *Bow Church, London*, before the Religious Societies.

E C C L E S. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.

THE amiableness of religion in itself, and the innumerable advantages that flow from it to society in general, as well as to each sincere professor in particular, cannot but recommend it to the choice of every considerate person, and make, even wicked men, as they wish to die the death, so in their more sober intervals, to envy the life of the righteous. And, indeed, we must do the world so much justice, as to confess, that the question about religion does
not

not usually arise from a dispute whether it be necessary or not (for most men see the necessity of doing something for the salvation of their souls;) but when is the best time to set about it. Persons are convinced by universal experience, that the first essays or endeavours towards the attainment of religion, are attended with some difficulty and trouble, and therefore they would willingly defer the beginning of such a seemingly ungrateful work, as long as they can. The wanton prodigal, who is spending his substance in riotous living, cries, a little more pleasure, a little more sensuality, and then I will be sober in earnest. The covetous worldling, that employs all his care and pains in "heaping up riches, though he cannot tell who shall gather them," does not flatter himself that this will do always; but hopes with the rich fool in the gospel, to lay up goods for a few more years on earth, and then he will begin to lay up treasures in heaven. And, in short, thus it is that most people are convinced of the necessity of being religious some time or another; but then, like *Felix*, they put off the acting suitably to their convictions, 'till, what they imagine, a more convenient season: whereas, would we be so humble as to be guided by the experience and counsel of the wisest men, we should learn that youth is the fittest season for religion; "Remember now thy Creator, (says *Solomon*) in the days of thy youth." By the word *remember*, we are not to understand a bare speculative remembrance, or calling to mind, (for that, like a dead faith, will profit us nothing,) but such a remembrance as will constrain us to obedience,

and oblige us out of gratitude, to perform all that the LORD our GOD shall require of us. For as the forgetting GOD in scripture language, implies a total neglect of our duty, in like manner remembering him signifies a perfect performance of it: so that, when *Solomon* says, “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,” it is the same as if he had said, keep GOD’s commandments; or, in other words, be religious in the days of thy youth, thereby implying, that youth is the most proper season for it.

I shall in the following discourse,

First, Endeavour to make good the wise man’s proposition, implied in the words of the text, and to shew that youth is the fittest season for religion.

Secondly, By way of motive, I shall consider the many unpeakable advantages that will arise from, “Remembering our Creator in the days of our youth.” And,

Thirdly, I shall conclude with a word or two of exhortation to the younger part of this audience.

First, I am to make good the wise man’s proposition, implied in the words of the text, and to shew that youth is the fittest season for religion: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” But to proceed more clearly in this argument, it may not be improper, first, to explain what I mean by the word *religion*. By this term, then,
I would

I would not be understood to mean a bare outward profession or naming the name of CHRIST; for we are told, that many who have even prophesied in his name, and in his name cast out devils, shall notwithstanding be rejected by him at the last day: nor would I understand by it, barely being admitted into CHRIST'S church by baptism; for then *Simon Magus*, *Arius*, and the heresiarchs of old, might pass for religious persons; for these were baptized: nor yet the receiving the other seal of the covenant, for then *Judas* himself might be canonized for a saint; nor indeed do I mean any or all of these together, considered by themselves; but a thorough, real, inward change of nature, wrought in us by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, conveyed to and nourished in our hearts, by a constant use of all the means of grace, evidenced by a good life, and bringing forth the fruits of the spirit.

The attaining this real, inward religion, is a work of so great difficulty, that *Nicodemus*, a learned doctor and teacher in *Israel*, thought it altogether impossible, and therefore ignorantly asked our blessed LORD, "How this thing could be?" And, truly, to rectify a disordered nature, to mortify our corrupt passions, to turn darkness to light, to put off the old man, and put on the new, and thereby to have the image of GOD reinstamped upon the soul, or, in one word, "to be born again," however light some may make of it, must, after all our endeavours, be owned by man to be impossible. It is true, indeed, CHRIST'S yoke is said to be an easy or a gracious yoke, and his burthen light; but

then it is to those only to whom grace has been given to bear and draw in it. For, as the wise son of *Sirach* observes, “ At first wisdom walked with
 “ her children in crooked ways, and brings them
 “ into fear ; and torments them with her discipline,
 “ and does not turn to comfort and rejoice them,
 “ ’till she has tried them and proved their judg-
 “ ment.” No ; we must not flatter ourselves that we shall walk in wisdom’s pleasant ways, unless we first submit to a great many difficulties. The spiritual birth is attended with its pangs, as well as the natural : for they that have experienced it, (and they only are the proper judges,) can acquaint you, that in all things that are dear to corrupt nature, we must deny ourselves, lest, after all, when we come to the birth, we should want strength to bring forth.

But if these things are so ; if there are difficulties and pangs attending our being born again ; if we must deny ourselves, what season more proper than that of youth ? When, if ever, our bodies are robust and vigorous, and our minds active and courageous ; and, consequently, we are then best qualified to endure hardness, as good soldiers of JESUS-CHRIST.

We find, in secular matters, people commonly observe this method, and send their children abroad among the toils and fatigues of business, in their younger years, as well knowing they are then fittest to undergo them. And why do they not act with the same consistency in the grand affair of religion ? Because, as our Saviour has told us, “ The children
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of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

But, *Secondly*, If pure and undefiled religion consists in the renewal of our corrupted natures, then it is not only a work of difficulty, but, the perfection of it, of time.

And if this be the case, then it highly concerns every one to set about it betimes, and to "work their work while it is day, before the night cometh, when no man can work."

Could we, indeed, live to the age of *Methuselah*, and had but little business to employ ourselves in, we might then be more excusable, if we made no other use of this world, than what too many do, take our pastime therein: but since our lives are so very short, and we are called to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, we have no room left for trifling, lest we should be snatched away while our lamps are untrimmed, and we are entirely unprepared to meet the Bridegroom.

Did we know a friend or neighbour, who had a long journey of the utmost importance to make, and yet should stand all the day idle, neglecting to set out till the sun was about to go down, we could not but pity and condemn his egregious folly. And yet it is to be feared most men are just such fools; they have a long journey to take, nay, a journey to eternity, a journey of infinite importance, and which they are obliged to dispatch before the sun of their natural life be gone down; and yet they loiter away the time allotted them to perform their journey in, till sickness or death surprizes them; and

then they cry out, "What shall we do to inherit eternal life?" But leaving such to the mercies of GOD in CHRIST, who can call at the eleventh hour, I pass on to

The Second general thing proposed, To shew the advantages that will arise from remembering our Creator in the days of our youth; which may serve as so many motives to excite and quicken all persons immediately to set about it.

And the first benefit resulting from thence is, that it will bring most honour and glory to GOD. This, I suppose, every serious person will grant, ought to be the point in which our actions should centre; for to this end were we born, and to this end were we redeemed by the precious blood of JESUS CHRIST, that we should promote GOD's eternal glory. And as the glory of GOD is most advanced by paying obedience to his precepts, they that begin to seek to walk in his ways, act most to his glory. The common objection against the divine laws in general, and the doctrines of the gospel in particular, is, that they are not practicable; that they are contrary to flesh and blood; and that all those precepts concerning self-denial, renunciation of and deadness to the world, are but so many arbitrary restraints imposed upon human nature: But when we see mere striplings not only practising, but delighting in such religious duties, and in the days of their youth, when, if ever, they have a relish for sensual pleasures, subduing and despising
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the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; this, this is pleasing to God; this vindicates his injured honour; this shews that his service is perfect freedom, "that his yoke is easy, and his burden light."

But, *Secondly*, as an early piety redounds most to the honour of God, so it will bring most honour to ourselves: for those that honour God, God will honour. We find it, therefore, remarked to the praise of *Obadiah*, that he served the LORD from his youth: of *Samuel*, that he stood, when young, before God in a linen ephod: of *Timothy*, that from a child he had known the holy scriptures: of *St. John*, that he was the youngest and most beloved disciple: and of our blessed LORD himself, that at twelve years old he went up to the temple, and sat among the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions.

Nor, *Thirdly*, will an early piety afford us less comfort than honour, not only because it renders religion habitual to us, but also because it gives us a well-grounded assurance of the sincerity of our profession. Was there no other argument against a death-bed repentance, but the unsatisfactoriness and anxiety of such a state, that should be sufficient to deter all thinking persons from deferring the most important business of their life to such a dreadful period of it. For supposing a man to be sincere in his profession of repentance on a death-bed (which, in most cases, is very much to be doubted) yet, he is often afraid lest his convictions and remorse proceed not from a true sorrow for sin, but a servile fear

fear of punishment. But one, who is a young faint, need fear no such perplexity; he knows that he loves GOD for his own sake, and is not driven to him by a dread of impending evil; he does not decline the gratifications of sense, because he can no longer “hear the voice of singing men and singing women;” but willingly takes up his cross, and follows his blessed Master in his youth, and therefore has reason to expect greater confidence of his sincerity towards GOD. But farther, as an early piety assures the heart of its sincerity, so, likewise, it brings its present reward with it, as it renders religion and all its duties habitual and easy. A young faint, was you to ask him, would joyfully tell you the unspeakable comfort of beginning to be religious betimes: as for his part, he knows not what men mean by talking of mortification, self-denial, and retirement, as hard and rigorous duties; for he has so accustomed himself to them, that, by the grace of GOD, they are now become even natural, and he takes infinitely more pleasure in practising the severest precepts of the gospel, than a luxurious *Dives* in a bed of state, or an ambitious *Haman* at a royal banquet. And O how happy must that youth be, whose duty is become a second nature, and to whom these things, which seem terrible to others, are grown both easy and delightful!

But the greatest advantage of an early piety is still behind, *Fourthly*, It lays in the best provision of comfort and support against such times as we shall stand next in need thereof, viz. all times of our tribulation,

bulation, and in particular, against the time of old age, the hour of death, and the day of judgment.

This is the argument the wise man makes use of in the words immediately following the text: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, wherein thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Observe, the time of old age, is an evil time, years wherein there is no pleasure: and ask those that are grown old, and they will inform you so. Cordials surely, then, must be exceeding proper to support our drooping spirits: and O what cordial comparable to the recollection of early piety, depending wholly on the righteousness of CHRIST? When the eyes, like *Isaac's*, are grown dim with age; when "the keepers of the house, the hands, shall tremble," as the wise man goes on to describe the infirmities of old age; when "the strong men bow themselves," or the legs grow feeble; and the "grinders," the teeth, shall cease to do their proper office, because they are few; for a person then to hear the precepts of the gospel read over to him, and to be able to lay his hand on his heart, and to say sincerely, notwithstanding a consciousness of numberless short-comings, "All these have I endeavoured, through grace, to keep from my youth:" this must give him, through CHRIST who worketh all, comfort that I want words to express and thoughts to conceive. But, supposing it was possible for us to escape the inconveniences of old age, yet still death is a debt, since the fall, we all must pay; and,

and, what is worse, it generally comes attended with such dreadful circumstances, that it will make even a *Felix* to tremble. But as for the godly, that have been enabled to serve the LORD from their youth, it is not usually so with them; no, they have faith given them to look upon death, not as a king of terrors, but as a welcome messenger, that is come to conduct them to their wished-for home. All the days of their appointed time have they waited, and it has been the business of their whole lives to study to prepare themselves for the coming of their great change; and, therefore, they rejoice to hear that they are called to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. Thus dies the early pious, whose "path has been as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But follow him beyond the grave, and see with what an holy triumph he enters into his Master's joy; with what an humble boldness he stands at the dreadful tribunal of JESUS CHRIST; and can you then forbear to cry out, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end, and future state, be like his?"

Need I then, after having shewn so many advantages to arise from an early piety, use any more arguments to persuade the younger part of this audience, to whom, in the *Third* and last place, I address myself, to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth?"

What! will not all the arguments I have mentioned, prevail with them to leave their husks, and return home to eat of the fatted calf? What! will they

they thus requite our Saviour's love? 'That be far from them! Did he come down and shed his precious blood to deliver them from the power of sin; and will they spend their youthful strength and vigour in the service of it, and then think to serve CHRIST, when they can follow their lusts no longer? Is it fit, that many, who are endowed with excellent gifts, and are thereby qualified to be supports and ornaments of our sinking church, should, notwithstanding, forget the God who gave them, and employ them in things that will not profit? O why will they not arise, and, like so many *Phineas's*, be zealous for the Lord of Hosts? Doubtless, when death overtakes them, they will wish they had: and what hinders them, but that they begin now? Think you that any one yet ever repented that he began to be religious too soon? But how many, on the contrary, have repented that they began when almost too late? May we not well imagine, that young *Samuel* now rejoices that he waited so soon at the tabernacle of the LORD? Or young *Timothy*, that from a child he knew the holy scriptures? And if you wish to be partakers of their joy, let me persuade you to be partakers of their piety.

I could still go on to fill my mouth with arguments; but the circumstances and piety of those amongst whom I am now preaching "the kingdom of God," remind me to change my style; and, instead of urging any more dissuatives from sin, to fill up what is behind of this discourse, with encouragements to persevere in holiness.

Blessed,

Blessed, for ever blessed be the **GOD** and the **Father** of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, I am not speaking to persons inflamed with youthful lusts, but to a multitude of young professors, who by frequently assembling together, and forming themselves into religious societies, are, I hope on good ground, in a ready way to be of the number of those “young men, who have overcome the wicked-one.”

Believe me, it gladdens my very soul, to see so many of your faces set heaven-wards, and the visible happy effects of your uniting together, cannot but rejoice the hearts of all sincere christians, and oblige them to wish you good luck in the name of the **LORD**. The many souls who are nourished weekly with the spiritual body and blood of **JESUS CHRIST**, by your means; the weekly and monthly lectures that are preached by your contributions; the daily incense of thanksgiving and prayer which is publicly sent up to the throne of grace by your subscriptions; the many children which are trained up “in the nurture and admonition of the **LORD**,” by your charities; and, lastly, the commendable and pious zeal you exert in promoting and encouraging divine psalmody, are such plain and apparent proofs of the benefits of your religious societies, that they call for a public acknowledgment of praise and thanksgiving to our blessed Master, who has not only put into your hearts such good designs, but enabled you also to bring the same to good effect.

It is true it has been objected, “That young
 “men’s forming themselves into religious societies,
 “has a tendency to make them spiritually proud,
 “and

“ and to ‘ think more highly of themselves than they ought to think.” And, perhaps, the imprudent, imperious behaviour of some novices in religion, who, “ though they went out from you, were not of you,” may have given too much occasion for such an aspersion.

But you, brethren, have not so learned CHRIST. Far, far be it from you to look upon yourselves, as righteous, and despise others, because you often assemble yourselves together. No; this, instead of creating pride, ought to beget an holy fear in your hearts, lest your practice should not correspond with your profession, and that, after you have benefited and edified others, you yourselves should become cast-aways.

Worldly-mindedness, my brethren, is another rock against which we are in danger of splitting. For, if other sins have slain their thousands of professing christians, this has slain its ten thousands. I need not appeal to past ages; your own experience, no doubt, has furnished you with many unhappy instances of young men, who, “ after (as one would have imagined) they had escaped the pollutions which are in the world through lust,” and “ had tasted the good word of life,” and endured for a season, whilst under the tuition and inspection of others: yet, when they have come to be their own masters, through a want of faith, and through too great an earnestness in “ labouring for the meat which perisheth,” have cast off their first love, been again entangled with the world, and “ returned like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow that
was

was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." You would, therefore, do well, my brethren, frequently to remind each other of this dangerous snare, and to exhort one another to begin, pursue, and end your christian warfare, in a thorough renunciation of the world, and worldly tempers; so that, when you are obliged by Providence to provide for yourselves, and those of your respective households, you may continue to walk by faith, and still "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" not doubting, but all other things, upon your honest industry and endeavours, shall be added unto you.

And now, what shall I say more? To speak unto you, fathers, who have been in CHRIST so many years before me, and know the malignity of worldly-mindedness, and pride in the spiritual life, would be altogether needless. To you, therefore, O young men, (for whom I am distressed, for whom I fear as well as for myself) do I once more address myself, in the words of the beloved disciple, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but receive a full reward." Be ever mindful, then, of the words that have been spoken to us by the apostles of the LORD and Saviour. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Beware, lest ye also being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. Be not high-minded, but fear. But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For GOD is not unrighteous, to forget -

get -

get your works and labours of love. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." It is true, we have many difficulties to encounter, many powerful enemies to overcome, ere we can get possession of the promised land. We have an artful devil, an ensnaring world, and above all, the treachery of our own hearts, to withstand and strive against. "For strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto eternal life." But wherefore should we fear, since he that is with us is far more powerful, than all who are against us? Have we not already experienced his almighty power, in enabling us to conquer some difficulties which seemed as insurmountable then, as those we struggle with now? And cannot he, who delivered us out of the paws of those bears and lions, preserve us also from being hurt by the strongest *Goliath*?

"Be stedfast, therefore, my brethren, be immovable." Be not "ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation." Fear not man; fear not the contempt and revilings which you must meet with in the way of duty; for one of you shall chase a thousand; and two of you put ten thousand of your enemies to flight. And if you will be contented, through grace, to suffer for a short time here; I speak the truth in CHRIST, I lie not; then may ye hope, according to the blessed word of promise, that ye shall be exalted to sit down with the Son of Man, when he shall come in
the

the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, to judgment hereafter. May Almighty God give every one of us such a measure of his grace, that we may not be of the number of those that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe and endure unto the end, to the saving of our souls, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Which God, &c.

S E R M O N IV.

CHRIST the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.

I C O R. i. 30.

But of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

OF all the verses in the book of GOD, this which I have now read to you, is, I believe, one of the most comprehensive: What glad tidings does it bring to believers! what precious privileges are they herein invested with! how are they here led to the fountain of them all, I mean, the love, the everlasting love of GOD the Father! "Of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Without referring you to the context, I shall from the words,

First,

First, Point out to you the fountain, from which all those blessings flow, that the elect of GOD partake of in JESUS CHRIST, “who of GOD is made unto us” And,

Secondly, I shall consider what these blessings are, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

First, I would point out to you the fountain from which all those blessings flow, that the elect of GOD partake of in JESUS, “who of GOD is made unto us,” the Father, he it is who is spoken of here. Not as though JESUS CHRIST was not GOD alio; but GOD the Father is the fountain of the Deity; and, if we consider JESUS CHRIST acting as Mediator, GOD the Father is greater than he; there was an eternal contract between the Father and the Son: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, and I have sworn unto *David* my servant;” now *David* was a type of CHRIST, with whom the Father made a covenant, that if he would obey and suffer, and make himself a sacrifice for sin, he should “see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD should prosper in his hands.” This compact our LORD refers to, in that glorious prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of *John*; and therefore he prays for, or rather demands with a full assurance, all that were given him by the Father: “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” For this same reason the apostle breaks out into praises of
 GOD,

GOD, even the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; for he loved the elect with an everlasting love, or, as our LORD expresses it, “before the foundation of the world;” and therefore, to shew them to whom they were beholden for their salvation, our LORD, in the 25th of *Matthew*, represents himself, saying, “Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And thus, in reply to the mother of *Zebedee*’s children, he says, “It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared, of the Father.” The apostle therefore, when here speaking of the christian’s privileges, lest they should sacrifice to their own drag, or think their salvation was owing to their own faithfulness, or improvement of their own free-will, reminds them to look back on the everlasting love of GOD the Father; “who of GOD is made unto us, &c.”

Would to GOD, this point of doctrine was considered more, and people were more studious of the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son! we should not then have so much disputing against the doctrine of election, or hear it condemned (even by good men) as a doctrine of devils. For my own part, I cannot see how true humbleness of mind can be attained without a knowledge of it; and though I will not say, that every one who denies election is a bad man, yet I will say, with that sweet singer, *Mr. Trail*, it is a very bad sign: such a one, whoever he be, I think cannot truly know
 D himself:

himself: for, if we deny election, we must, partly at least, glory in ourselves; but our redemption is so ordered, that no flesh should glory in the divine presence; and hence it is, that the pride of man opposes this doctrine, because according to this doctrine, and no other, "he that glories, must glory only in the LORD." But what shall I say? Election is a mystery that shines with such resplendent brightness, that, to make use of the words of one who has drank deeply of electing love, it dazzles the weak eyes even of some of GOD's dear children; however, though they know it not, all the blessings they receive, all the privileges they do or will enjoy, through JESUS CHRIST, flow from the everlasting love of GOD the Father: "But of him are you in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Secondly, I come to shew what these blessings are, which are here, through CHRIST, made over to the elect. And

1. *First*, CHRIST is made to them *wisdom*; but wherein does true wisdom consist? Was I to ask some of you, perhaps you would say, in indulging the lust of the flesh, and saying to your souls, eat, drink, and be merry; but this is only the wisdom of brutes; they have as good a gust and relish for sensual pleasures, as the greatest epicure on earth. Others would tell me, true wisdom consisted in adding house to house, and field to field, and calling

ling lands after their own names ; but this cannot be true wisdom ; for riches often take to themselves wings, and fly away, like an eagle towards heaven. Even wisdom itself assures us, “ that a man’s life doth not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses ;” vanity, vanity, all these things are vanity ; for, if riches leave not the owner, the owners must soon leave them ; “ for rich men must also die, and leave their riches for others ;” their riches cannot procure them redemption from the grave, whither we are all hastening apace.

But perhaps you despise riches and pleasure, and therefore place wisdom in the knowledge of books : but it is possible for you to tell the numbers of the stars, and call them all by their names, and yet be mere fools ; learned men are not always wise ; nay, our common learning, so much cried up, makes men only so many accomplished fools ; to keep you therefore no longer in suspense, and withal to humble you, I will send you to an heathen school, to learn what true wisdom is : “ Know thyself,” was a saying of one of the wise men of *Greece* ; this is certainly true wisdom, and this is that wisdom spoken of in the text, and which **JESUS CHRIST** is made to all elect sinners ; they are made to know themselves, so as not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Before they were darkness, now they are light in the **LORD** ; and in that light they see their own darkness ; they now bewail themselves as fallen creatures by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, sons and heirs of hell, and

children of wrath ; they now see that all their righteousnesses are but as filthy rags ; that there is no health in their souls ; that they are poor and miserable, blind and naked ; and that there is no name given under heaven, whereby they can be saved, but that of **JESUS CHRIST**. They see the necessity of closing with a Saviour ; and behold the wisdom of **GOD** in appointing him to be a Saviour ; they are also made willing to accept of salvation upon our **LORD**'s own terms, and to receive him as their all in all : thus **CHRIST** is made to them wisdom.

2. *Secondly, Righteousness.* “ Who of **GOD** is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness ;” **CHRIST**'s whole personal righteousness is made over to, and accounted theirs. Being enabled to lay hold on **CHRIST** by faith, **GOD** the Father blots out their transgressions, as with a thick cloud ; their sins, and their iniquities he remembers no more ; they are made the righteousness of **GOD** in **CHRIST JESUS**, “ who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” In one sense, **GOD** now sees no sin in them ; the whole covenant of works is fulfilled in them ; they are actually justified, acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in the sight of **GOD** ; they are perfectly accepted in the beloved ; they are compleat in him ; the flaming sword of **GOD**'s wrath, which before moved every way, is now removed, and free access given to the tree of life ; they are enabled to reach out the arm of faith, and pluck, and live for evermore. Hence it

it is that the apostle, under a sense of this blessed privilege, breaks out into this triumphant language ; “ It is CHRIST that justifies, who is he that condemns ? ” Does sin condemn ? CHRIST’s righteousness delivers believers from the guilt of it : CHRIST is their Saviour, and is become a propitiation for their sins : who therefore shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD’s elect ? Does the law condemn ? By having CHRIST’s righteousness imputed to them, they are dead to the law, as a covenant of works ; CHRIST has fulfilled it for them ; and in their stead. Does death threaten them ? they need not fear : the sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law ; but GOD has given them the victory, by imputing to them the righteousness of the LORD JESUS.

And what a privilege is here ! Well might the angels at the birth of CHRIST, say to the humble shepherds, “ Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy ; ” unto you that believe in CHRIST, “ a Saviour is born. ” And well may angels rejoice at the conversion of poor sinners : for the LORD is their righteousness ; they have peace with GOD, through faith in CHRIST’s blood, and shall never enter into condemnation. O believers ! (for this discourse is intended in a special manner for you) lift up your heads ; “ Rejoice in the LORD always ; again I say, rejoice. ” CHRIST is made to you of GOD righteousness, what then should you fear ? you are made the righteousness of GOD in him, you may be called, “ The LORD our righteousness.”

ness." Of what then should you be afraid? what shall separate you henceforward from the love of CHRIST? "shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, I am persuaded, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD," who of GOD is made unto you righteousness.

This is a glorious privilege, but this is only the beginning of the happiness of believers : For,

3. *Thirdly*, CHRIST is not only made to them righteousness, but *sanctification* ; by sanctification, I do not mean a bare hypocritical attendance on outward ordinances, though rightly-informed christians will think it their duty and privilege constantly to attend on all outward ordinances. Nor do I mean by sanctification, a bare outward reformation, and a few transient convictions, or a little legal sorrow ; for all this an un sanctified man may have ; but, by sanctification, I mean a total renovation of the whole man ; by the righteousness of CHRIST, believers become legally, by sanctification they are made spiritually, alive ; by one they are entitled to, by the other they are made meet for, glory. They are sanctified, therefore, throughout, in spirit, soul and body.

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Their understandings, which were before dark, now become light in the LORD ; and their wills, before contrary to, now become one with, the will of GOD : their affections are now set on things above ; their memory is now filled with divine things ; their natural consciences are now enlightened ; their members, which were before instruments of uncleanness, and of iniquity unto iniquity, are now instruments of righteousness and true holiness ; in short, they are new creatures ; “ old things are passed away, all things are become new,” in their hearts ; sin has now no longer dominion over them ; they are freed from the power, though not the indwelling and being, of it ; they are holy both in heart and life, in all manner of conversation ; they are made partakers of a divine nature ; and from JESUS CHRIST, they receive grace for grace ; and every grace that is in CHRIST, is copied and transcribed into their souls ; they are transformed into his likeness ; he is formed within them ; they dwell in him, and he in them ; they are led by the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits thereof ; they know that CHRIST is their *Emmanuel*, GOD with and in them ; they are living temples of the Holy Ghost. And therefore, being a holy habitation unto the LORD, the whole trinity dwells and walks in them ; even here, they sit together with CHRIST in heavenly places, and are vitally united to him, their head, by a living faith ; their Redeemer, their Maker, is their husband ; they are flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone ; they talk, they walk with him, as a man talketh and

walketh with his friend ; in short, they are one with CHRIST, even as JESUS CHRIST and the Father are one.

This is Christ made to believers sanctification. And O what a privilege is this ! to be changed from beasts into saints, and from a devilish, to be made partakers of a divine nature ; to be translated from the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of GOD'S dear Son ! to put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which is created after GOD, in righteousness and true holiness. O what an unspcakable blessing is this ! I almost stand amazed at the contemplation thereof. Well might the apostle exhort believers to rejoice in the LORD ; indeed they have reason always to rejoice, yea, to rejoice on a dying bed ; for the kingdom of GOD is in them ; they are changed from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the LORD : well may this be a mystery to the natural, for it is a mystery even to the spiritual man himself, a mystery which he cannot fathom. Does it not often dazzle your eyes, O ye children of GOD, to look at your own brightness, when the candle of the LORD shines out, and your Redeemer lifts up the light of his blessed countenance upon your souls ? Are not you astonished, when you feel the love of GOD shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost, and GOD holds out the golden sceptre of his mercy, and bids you ask what you will and it shall be given you ? Does not that peace of GOD, which keeps and rules your hearts, surpass the utmost limits of your understandings ?

and

and is not the joy you feel unspeakable? is it not full of glory? I am persuaded it is; and in your secret communion, when the LORD'S love flows in upon your souls, you are as it were swallowed up in, or, to use the apostle's phrase, "filled with all the fulness of GOD." Are not you ready to cry out with *Solomon*, "And will the LORD, indeed, dwell thus with men!" How is it that we should be thus thy sons and daughter, O LORD GOD Almighty!

If you are children of GOD, and know what it is to have fellowship with the Father and the Son; if you walk by faith, and not by sight; I am assured this is frequently the language of your hearts.

But look forward, and see an unbounded prospect of eternal happiness lying before thee, O believer! what thou hast already received, are only the first-fruits, like the cluster of grapes brought out of the land of *Canaan*; only an earnest and pledge of yet infinitely better things to come: the harvest is to follow; thy grace is hereafter to be swallowed up in glory. Thy great *Jesua*, and merciful high Priest, shall administer an abundant entrance to thee into the land of promise, that rest which awaits the children of GOD: For CHRIST is not only made to believers, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, but also *redemption*.

But, before we enter upon the explanation and contemplation of this privilege,

Thirdly, Learn hence the great mistake of those writers, and clergy, who, notwithstanding they talk of sanctification and inward holiness (as indeed sometimes they do, though in a very loose and superficial manner) yet they generally make it the *cause*, whereas they should consider it as the *effect*, of our justification. “Of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, who of GOD is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, (and then) sanctification.” For CHRIST’S righteousness, or that which CHRIST has done in our stead without us, is the sole cause of our acceptance in the sight of GOD, and of all our holiness wrought in us: to this, and not to the light within, or any thing wrought within, should poor sinners seek for justification in the sight of GOD: for the sake of CHRIST’S righteousness alone, and not any thing wrought in us, does GOD look favourably upon us; our sanctification at best, in this life, is not complete: though we are delivered from the power, we are not freed from the in-being of sin; but not only the dominion, but the in-being of sin, is forbidden by the perfect law of GOD: for it is not said, thou shalt not give way to lust, but, “thou shalt not lust.” So that whilst the principle of lust remains in the least degree in our hearts, though we are otherwise never so holy, yet we cannot, on account of that, hope for acceptance with GOD. We must first, therefore, look for a righteousness without us, even the righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: for this reason the apostle mentions it, and puts it before sanctification in the words of the text.

text. And whosoever teacheth any other doctrine doth not preach the truth as it is in JESUS.

Secondly, From hence also, the Antinomians and formal hypocrites may be confuted, who talk of CHRIST without, but know nothing, experimentally, of a work of sanctification wrought within them. Whatever they may pretend to, since CHRIST is not in them, the LORD is not their righteousness, and they have no well-grounded hope of glory: for though sanctification is not the cause, yet it is the effect of our acceptance with GOD; “Who of GOD is made unto us righteousness and sanctification.” He therefore, that is really in CHRIST, is a new creature; it is not going back to a covenant of works; to look into your hearts, and, seeing that they are changed and renewed, from thence form a comfortable and well-grounded assurance of the safety of our states: no, but this is what we are directed to in scripture; by our bringing forth the fruits, we are to judge whether or no we ever did truly partake of the Spirit of GOD. “We know, (says *John*) that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” And however we may talk of CHRIST’s righteousness, and exclaim against legal preachers; yet, if we are not holy in heart and life, if we are not sanctified and renewed by the Spirit in our minds, we are self-deceivers, we are only formal hypocrites: for we must not put asunder what GOD has joined together; we must keep the medium between the two extremes; not insist so much on the one hand upon CHRIST without,

as to exclude CHRIST within, as an evidence of our being his, and as a preparation for future happiness; nor, on the other hand, so depend on inherent righteousness or holiness wrought in us, as to exclude the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST without us. But

4. *Fourthly*, Let us now go on, and take a view of the other link, or rather the end, of the believer's golden chain of privileges, *redemption*. But we must look very high; for the top of it, like *Jacob's ladder*, reaches heaven, where all believers will ascend, and be placed at the right-hand of GOD. "Who of GOD is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and *redemption*."

This is a golden chain indeed! and, what is best of all, not one link can ever be broken asunder from another. Was there no other text in the book of GOD, this single one sufficiently proves the final perseverance of true believers: for never did GOD yet justify a man, whom he did not sanctify; nor sanctify one, whom he did not completely redeem and glorify; no; as for GOD, his way, his work, is perfect; he always carried on and finished the work he begun; thus it was in the first, so it is in the new creation; when GOD says, "Let there be light," there is light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day, when believers enter into their eternal rest, as GOD entered into his. Those whom GOD has justified, he has in effect glorified: for as a man's worthiness was not the cause of GOD's giving

giving him CHRIST's righteousness, so neither shall his unworthiness be a cause of his taking it away; GOD's gifts and callings are without repentance; and I cannot think, they are clear in the notion of CHRIST's righteousness, who deny the final perseverance of the saints; I fear, they understand justification in that low sense, which I understood it in a few years ago, as implying no more than remission of sins: but it not only signifies remission of sins past, but also a *fœderal right* to all good things to come. If GOD has given us his only Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Therefore, the apostle, after he says, "Who of GOD is made unto us righteousness," does not say, perhaps he may be made to us sanctification and redemption; but, "he is made." for there is an eternal, indissoluble connection between these blessed privileges. As the obedience of CHRIST is imputed to believers, so his perseverance in that obedience is to be imputed to them also: and it argues great ignorance of the covenant of grace and redemption, to object against it.

By the word *redemption*, we are to understand, not only a complete deliverance from all evil, but also a full enjoyment of all good both in body and soul: I say, both in body and soul: for the LORD is also for the body; the bodies of the saints in this life are temples of the Holy Ghost; GOD makes a covenant with the dust of believers; after death, though worms destroy them, yet, even in their flesh shall they see GOD. I fear, indeed, there are
some

some *Sadducees* in our days, or at least heretics, who say, either, that there is no resurrection of the body, or that the resurrection is past already, namely, in our regeneration: Hence it is, that our LORD's coming in the flesh at the day of judgment, is denied; and consequently, we must throw aside the sacrament of the LORD's supper. For why should we remember the LORD's death until he comes to judgment, when he is already come to judge our hearts, and will not come a second time? but all this is only the reasoning of unlearned, unstable men, who certainly know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. That we must follow our LORD in the regeneration, be partakers of a new birth, and that CHRIST must come into our hearts, we freely confess; and we hope, when speaking of these things, we speak no more than what we know and feel: but then it is plain, that JESUS CHRIST will come, hereafter, to judgment, and that he ascended into heaven with the body which he had here on earth; for says he, after his resurrection, "Handle me, and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have." And it is plain, that CHRIST's resurrection was an earnest of ours: for says the apostle, "CHRIST is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep;" and as in *Adam* all die, and are subject to mortality; so that all that are in CHRIST, the second *Adam*, who represented believers as their federal head, shall certainly be made alive, or rise again with their bodies at the last day.

Here

Here then, O believers! is one, though the lowest, degree of that redemption which you are to be partakers of hereafter; I mean, the redemption of your bodies: for this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. Your bodies, as well as souls, were given to JESUS CHRIST by the Father; they have been companions in watching, and fasting, and praying: your bodies therefore, as well as souls, shall JESUS CHRIST raise up at the last day. Fear not, therefore, O believers, to look into the grave; for to you it is no other than a consecrated dormitory, where your bodies shall sleep quietly until the morning of the resurrection; when the voice of the archangel shall sound, and the trump of God give the general alarm, "Arise ye dead, and come to judgment;" earth, air, fire, water, shall give up your scattered atoms, and both in body and soul shall you be ever with the LORD. I doubt not, but many of you are groaning under crazy bodies, and complain often that the mortal body weighs down the immortal soul; at least this is my case; but let us have a little patience, and we shall be delivered from our earthly prisons; ere long, these tabernacles of clay shall be dissolved, and we shall be clothed with our house which is from heaven; hereafter, our bodies shall be spiritualized, and shall be so far from hindering our souls through weaknesses, that they shall become strong; so strong, as to bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; others again may have deformed bodies, emaciated also with sickness, and worn out with labour and age;

age; but wait a little, until your blessed change by death comes; then your bodies shall be renewed and made glorious, like unto CHRIST's glorious body: of which we may form some faint idea, from the account given us of our LORD's transfiguration on the mount, when it is said, "His raiment became bright and glistering, and his face brighter than the sun." Well then may a believer break out in the apostle's triumphant language, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!"

But what is the redemption of the body, in comparison of the redemption of the better part, our souls? I must, therefore, say to you believers, as the angel said to *John*, "Come up higher," and let us take as clear a view as we can, at such a distance, of the redemption CHRIST has purchased for, and will shortly put you in actual possession of. Already you are justified, already you are sanctified, and thereby freed from the guilt and dominion of sin: but, as I have observed, the being and indwelling of sin yet remains in you; GOD sees it proper to leave some *Amalekites* in the land, to keep his *Israel* in action. The most perfect christian, I am persuaded, must agree, according to one of our articles, "That
 " the corruption of nature remains even in the re-
 " generate; that the flesh lusteth always against the
 " spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." So that believers cannot do things for GOD with that perfection they desire; this grieves their righteous souls day by day, and, with the holy apostle, makes them cry out, "Who shall deliver us from the body of
 this

this death!" I thank GOD, our LORD JESUS CHRIST will, but not compleatly before the day of our dissolution; then will the very being of sin be destroyed, and an eternal stop put to inbred, indwelling corruption. And is not this a great redemption? I am sure believers esteem it so: for there is nothing grieves the heart of a child of GOD so much, as the remains of indwelling sin. Again, believers are often in heaviness through manifold temptations; GOD sees that it is needful and good for them so to be; and though they may be highly favoured, and wrapt up in communion with GOD, even to the third heavens; yet a messenger of Satan is often sent to buffet them, lest they should be puffed up with the abundance of revelations. But be not weary, be not faint in your mind: the time of your compleat redemption draweth nigh. In heaven the wicked one shall cease from troubling you, and your weary souls shall enjoy an everlasting rest; his fiery darts cannot reach those blefsful regions: Satan will never come any more to appear with, disturb, or accuse the sons of GOD, when once the LORD JESUS CHRIST shuts the door. Your righteous souls are now grieved, day by day, at the ungodly conversation of the wicked; tares now grow up among the wheat; wolves come in sheeps clothing: but the redemption spoken of in the text, will free your souls from all anxiety on these accounts; hereafter you shall enjoy a perfect communion of saints; nothing that is unholy or un sanctified shall enter into the Holy of holies, which is prepared for you above: this, and all manner of evil whatsoever, you shall be delivered from,

when

when your redemption is hereafter made compleat in heaven; not only so, but you shall enter into the full enjoyment of all good. It is true, all saints will not have the same degree of happiness, but all will be as happy as their hearts can desire. Believers, you shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and all the spirits of just men made perfect; and, to sum up all your happiness in one word, you shall see GOD the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, by seeing GOD be more and more like unto him, and pass from glory to glory, even to all eternity.

But I must stop: the glories of the upper world croud in so fast upon my soul, that I am lost in the contemplation of them. Brethren, the redemption spoken of is unutterable; we cannot here find it out; eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of the most holy men living, to conceive how great it is. Was I to entertain you whole ages with an account of it, when you come to heaven, you must say, with the Queen of *Sheba*, "Not half, no, not one thousandth part was told us." All we can do here, is to go upon mount *Pisgab*, and by the eye of faith, take a distant view of the promised land: We may see it, as *Abraham* did CHRIST, afar off, and rejoice in it; but here we only know in part. Blessed be GOD, there is a time coming, when we shall know GOD, even as we are known, and GOD be all in all. LORD JESUS, accomplish the number of thine elect! LORD JESUS, hasten thy kingdom!

And

And now, where are the scoffers of these last days, who count the lives of christians to be madness, and their end to be without honour? Unhappy men! you know not what you do. Were your eyes open, and had you senses to discern spiritual things, you would not speak all manner of evil against the children of GOD, but you would esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, and envy their happiness: your souls would hunger and thirst after it: you also would become fools for CHRIST's sake. You boast of wisdom; so did the philosophers of *Corinth*: but your wisdom is the foolishness of folly in the sight of GOD. What will your wisdom avail you, if it does not make you wise unto salvation? Can you, with all your wisdom, propose a more consistent scheme to build your hopes of salvation on, than what has been now laid before you? Can you, with all the strength of natural reason, find out a better way of acceptance with GOD, than by the righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is it right to think your own works can in any measure deserve or procure it? If not, Why will you not believe in him? Why will you not submit to his righteousness? Can you deny that you are fallen creatures? Do not you find that you are full of disorders, and that these disorders make you unhappy? Do not you find that you cannot change your own hearts? Have you not resolved many and many a time, and have not your corruptions yet dominion over you? Are you not bond-slaves to your lusts, and led captive by the devil at his will? Why then will you not come to CHRIST for sanctification? Do you not desire to die

die the death of the righteous, and that your future state may be like theirs? I am persuaded you cannot bear the thoughts of being annihilated, much less of being miserable for ever. Whatever you may pretend, if you speak truth, you must confess, that conscience breaks in upon you in your more sober intervals whether you will or not, and even constrains you to believe, that hell is no painted fire. And why then will you not come to CHRIST? He alone can procure you everlasting redemption. Haste, haste away to him, poor beguiled sinners. You lack wisdom; ask it of CHRIST. Who knows but he may give it you? He is able: for he has the wisdom of the Father; he is that wisdom which was from everlasting. You have no righteousness; away, therefore, to CHRIST: "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." You are unholy; flee to the LORD JESUS: He is full of grace and truth; and of his fulness all may receive that believe in him. You are afraid to die; let this drive you to CHRIST: He has the keys of death and hell; in him is plenteous redemption; he alone can open the door which leads to everlasting life. Let not, therefore, the deceived reasoner boast any longer of his pretended reason. Whatever you may think, it is the most unreasonable thing in the world, not to believe on JESUS CHRIST, whom God hath sent. Why, why will you die? why will you not come unto him, that you may have life? "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come unto the waters of life and drink freely: come, buy without money and without price." Were these blessed

privileges.

privileges in the text to be purchased with money, you might say, We are poor, and cannot buy: or, were they to be conferred only on sinners of such a rank or degree, then you might say, How can such sinners as we expect to be so highly favoured? But they are to be freely given of GOD to the worst of sinners. "To us," says the Apostle; to me a persecutor, to you *Corinthians*, who were "unclean, drunkards, covetous persons, idolaters." Therefore, each poor sinner may say then, Why not unto me? Has CHRIST but one blessing? What if he has blessed millions already, by turning them away from their iniquities; yet, he still continues the same: he lives for ever to make intercession, and therefore will bless you, even you also. I heugh, *Esau*-like, you have been prophane, and hitherto despised your heavenly Father's birth right; even now, if you believe, "CHRIST will be made to you of GOD, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

But I must turn again to believers, for whose instruction, as I observed before, this discourse was particularly intended. You see, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, what great blessings are treasured up for you in JESUS CHRIST your head, and what you are entitled to by believing on his name. Take heed, therefore, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Think often how highly you are favoured; and remember, you have not chosen CHRIST, but CHRIST hath chosen you. Put on (as the elect of GOD)

humbleness

humbleness of mind, and glory, but let it be only in the LORD: for you have nothing but what you have received of GOD. By nature ye were as foolish, as legal, as unholy, and in as damnable a condition as others. Be pitiful, therefore, be courteous; and, as sanctification is a progressive work, beware of thinking you have already attained. Let him that is holy, be holy still; knowing, that he who is most pure in heart, shall hereafter enjoy the clearest vision of GOD. Let indwelling sin be your daily burden; and not only bewail and lament, but see that you subdue it daily by the power of divine grace; and look up to JESUS continually to be the finisher, as well as author of your faith. Build not on your own faithfulness, but on GOD's unchangeableness. Take heed of thinking you stand by the power of your own free will. The everlasting love of GOD the Father, must be your only hope and consolation: let this support you under all trials. Remember that GOD's gifts and callings are without repentance; that CHRIST having once loved you, will love you to the end. Let this constrain you to obedience, and make you long and look for that blessed time, when he shall not only be your wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, but also compleat and everlasting redemption.

Glory be to GOD in the highest!

S E R M O N V.

The Gospel Supper.

LUKE xiv. 22, 23, 24.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.

THOUGH here is a large and solemn assembly, yet I suppose you are all convinced, that you are not to live in this world always. May I not take it for granted, that even the most prophane amongst you, do in your hearts believe, what the sacred oracles have most clearly revealed, “ That as it is appointed for all men once to die, so after death

death

death comes the judgment?" Yes, I know you believe, that nothing is more certain, than that we are to "appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, to be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil." And, however hard the saying may seem to you at the first hearing, yet I cannot help informing you, that I am thoroughly persuaded, as many will be driven from that judgment-seat, with a "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire," for pursuing things in themselves lawful, out of a wrong principle, and in too intense a degree; as for drunkenness, adultery, fornication, or any other gross enormity whatsoever. Bad as the world is, blessed be GOD, there are great numbers yet left amongst us, who either through the restraints of a religious education, or self-love, and outward reputation, abstain from gross sin themselves, and look with detestation and abhorrence upon others, who indulge themselves in it. But then, through an over-eager pursuit after the things of sense and time, their souls are insensibly lulled into a spiritual slumber, and by degrees become as dead to GOD, and as deaf to all the gracious invitations of the gospel, as the most abandoned prodigals. It is remarkable, therefore, that our Saviour, knowing how desperately wicked and treacherous the heart of man was, in this, as well as other respects, after he had cautioned his disciples, and us in them, to "take heed that their hearts were not at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness," immediately adds, "and the cares (the immoderate anxious

xious cares) of this life." For they are of a distracting, intoxicating nature, and soon overcharge and weigh down the hearts of the children of men. To prevent or remedy this evil, our LORD, during the time of his tabernacling here below, spake many parables, but not one more pertinent, not one, in which the freeness of the gospel-call, and the frivolous pretences men frame to excuse themselves from embracing it, and the dreadful doom they incur by so doing, are more displayed, or set off in livelier colours, than that to which the words of the text refer. "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled: For I say unto you, that none of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper."

In order to have a clear view of the occasion, scope, and contents of the parable, to which these words belong, it is necessary for us to look back to the very beginning of this chapter. "And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread, on the sabbath day, that they watched him." The person here spoken of, as going into this Pharisee's house, is our blessed Saviour. For as he came eating and drinking, agreeable to his character, he was free, courteous and affable to all; and therefore though it was on the sabbath-day, he accepted an invitation, and went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread, notwithstanding he knew the Pharisees were his professed enemies, and that they watched him, hoping to find some occasion to upbraid him, either

for his discourse or behaviour. If the Pharisee into whose house our LORD went, was one of this stamp, his invitation bespeaks him to be a very ill man, and may serve to teach us, that much rancour and heart-enmity against JESUS CHRIST, may be concealed and cloaked under a great and blazing profession of religion. However, our Saviour was more than a match for all his enemies, and by accepting this invitation, hath warranted his ministers and disciples, to comply with the like invitations, and converse freely about the things of GOD, tho' those who invite them, may not have real religion at heart. For how knowest thou, O man, but thou mayest drop something, that may benefit their souls, and make them religious indeed? And supposing they should watch thee, watch thou unto prayer, whilst thou art in their company, and that same JESUS, who went into this Pharisee's house, and was so faithful and edifying in his conversation when there, will enable thee to go and do likewise.

That our LORD's conversation was not trifling, but such as tended to the use of edifying, and that he behaved among the guests as a faithful physician, rather than as a careless indifferent companion, is evident from the 7th verse of this chapter, where we are told, that "he marked how they chose the chief rooms;" or, to speak in our common way, were desirous of sitting at the upper end of the table. And whether we think of it or not, the LORD JESUS takes notice of our behaviour, even when we are going to sit down only at our common meals. Would to GOD, all that make a profession

fession of real christianity, considered this well: Religion then would not be so much confined to church, or meeting, but be brought home to our private houses, and many needless unchristian compliments be prevented. For (with grief I speak it) is it not too true, that abundance of professors love, and are too fond of the uppermost places in houses, as well as synagogues? This was what our LORD blamed in the guests where he now was. He marked, he took notice, he looked before he spake (as we should always do, if we would speak to the purpose) how they chose out the chief rooms. Therefore, though they were rich in this world's goods, and were none of his guests, yet unwilling to suffer the least sin upon them, or lose any opportunity of giving instruction, he gave them a lecture upon humility, saying unto them, or directing his discourse to all in general, though probably he spake to one in particular, who sat near him, and whom, it may be, he took notice of, as more than ordinarily solicitous in choosing a chief room, or couch, on which they lay at meals, after the custom of the *Romans*; "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding (which seems to intimate that this was a wedding-feast) sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than you be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have

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worship

worship (or respect) in the presence of them who sit at meat with thee." O glorious example of faithfulness and love to souls! How ought ministers especially, to copy after their blessed Master, and, with simplicity and godly sincerity, mildly and opportunely rebuke the faults of the company they are in, though superior to them in outward circumstances? What rightly informed person, after reading this passage, can think they teach right and agreeable to the word of GOD in this respect, who say, we must not, at least need not, reprove natural men? Surely such doctrine cometh not from above! For are we not commanded, in any wise, to reprove our neighbour (whether he be a child of GOD or no) and not to suffer sin upon him? Is it not more than probable, that all these guests were natural men? And yet our LORD reproved them. Help us then, O Saviour, in this and every other instance of thy moral conduct, to walk as thou hast set us an example!

Neither did our LORD stop here; but observing that none but the rich, the mighty, and the noble, were called to the feast, he took occasion also from thence, to give even his host (for the best return we make our friends for their kindness, is to be faithful to their souls) one of the chief Pharisees, a wholesome piece of advice. "Then said he also to him that bade him, when thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the

the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompence thee : For thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just !” Thus did our LORD entertain the company. Words spoken in such due season, how good are they ! Would CHRIST’s followers thus exert themselves, and, when in company, begin some useful discourse for their great master, they know not what good they might do, and how many might be influenced, by their good example, to second them in it.

An instance of this we have in the 14th verse : “ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of GOD.” Happy they who shall be recompenced at that resurrection of the just, which thou hast been speaking of. A very pertinent saying this ! every way suitable to persons sitting down to eat bread on earth, which we should never do, without talking of, and longing for that time, when we shall sit down and eat bread in the kingdom of heaven. This opened to our LORD a fresh topic of conversation, and occasioned the parable, which is to be the more immediate subject of your present meditation. As though he had said to the person that spoke last, Thou sayest right : blessed are they indeed, who shall sit down to eat bread in the kingdom of GOD : But alas ! most men, especially you Pharisees, act as if you did not believe this ; and therefore he said unto him, “ A certain man made a great supper, and bade many ;” by the certain man making a great supper, we are to understand God the Father, who

has made provision for perishing souls, by the obedience and death of his beloved Son CHRIST JESUS. This provision is here represented under the character of a supper, because the *Cæna* or supper, among the ancients, was their grand meal: Men could never have made such provision for themselves, or angels for them. No, our salvation is all from GOD, from the beginning to the end. He made it, and not we ourselves; and it is wholly owing to the divine wisdom, and not our own, that we are become God's people, and the sheep of his pasture. This provision for perishing souls, may be justly called *great*, because there is rich and ample provision made in the gospel for a great many souls. For however CHRIST's flock may be but a little flock, when asunder, yet when they come all together, they will be a multitude which no man can number. And it is especially called *great*, because it was purchased at so great a price, the price of CHRIST's most precious blood. And therefore, when the apostle would exhort the christians to glorify GOD in their souls and bodies, he makes use of this glorious motive, "That they were bought with a price." He does not say what price, but barely a *price*, emphatically so called: as though all the prices in the world were nothing (as indeed they are not) when compared to this price of CHRIST's most precious blood.

For these reasons, JESUS said in the parable, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are

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now ready." He bade many; the eternal God took the *Jews* for his peculiar people, under the *Mosaic* dispensation; and by types, shadows, and prophecies of the Old Testament, invited them to partake of the glorious privileges of the gospel. "But at supper-time," in the fulness of time, which God the Father hath decreed from eternity, in the evening of the world (for which reason the gospel times are called the last times) "he sent his servant," CHRIST his Son, here called his servant, because acting as Mediator he was inferior to the Father; therefore says the prophet *Isaiab*, "Behold my servant whom I have chosen:" "to say to them that were bidden," to the professing *Jews*, called by St. *John*, "his own," that is, his peculiar professing people—with this message, "Come;" repent and believe the gospel. Nothing is required on man's part, but to come, or accept of the gospel offer. It is not according to the old covenant, "Do and live;" but only "come, believe, and thou shalt be saved." All things are ready. Nothing is wanting on God's part. "All things are now ready." There seems to be a particular emphasis to be put upon now, implying, this was an especial season of grace, and God was now exerting his last efforts, to save lost man. Well then, if the great God be at so great an expence, to make so great a supper, for perishing creatures, and send so great a person as his own Son, in the form of a servant, to invite them to come to it; one would imagine, that all who heard these glad tidings, should readily say, LORD, lo we come. But in-

stead of this, we are told, “ They all, (the greatest part of the *Jews*) with one consent began to make excuse.” Conscience told them they ought to come, and in all probability they had some faint desire to come; and they had nothing, as we hear of, to object either against the person who prepared the supper, or the person that invited them, or the entertainment itself; neither do we hear that they treated either with contempt, as is the custom of too many in the days wherein we live. In all probability, they acknowledged all was very good, and that it was kind in that certain man, to send them such an invitation. But being very busy, and as they thought lawfully engaged, they began to make excuse.

But the excuses they made, rendered their refusal inexcusable. “ The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it :” Thou fool, buy a piece of ground, and then go see it! A prudent man would have gone and seen the ground first, and bought it afterwards. Why must he *needs* go? At least, why must he needs go *now*? The land was his own, could he not therefore have accepted the invitation to-day, and gone and seen his estate, or plantation, on the morrow? As he had bought it, he need not fear losing his bargain, by another buying it from him. But notwithstanding all this, there is a needs must for his going, and therefore says he, “ I pray thee, have me excused,” and improve thy interest with thy master in my behalf. This was a bad excuse.

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The second was rather worse. For what says the evangelist, verse 19? "And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them:" One, it seems, had been buying an estate; another, cattle, to stock an estate already bought; and both equally foolish in making their bargains. For this second had bought five yoke of oxen, which must needs cost him a considerable sum, perhaps all he had in the world, and now he must go and prove them. A wise dealer would have proved the oxen first, and bought them afterwards: But our Saviour speaks this, to shew us, that we will trust one another, nay I may add, the devil himself, more than we will trust God.

The excuse which the third makes, is worst of all. "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Had he said, I will not come, he had spoken the real sentiments of his heart: for it is not so much men's impotency, as their want of a will, and inclination that keeps them from the gospel-feast. But why cannot he come? He has "married a wife." Has he so? Why then, by all means he should come. For the supper to which he was invited, as it should seem, was a wedding-supper, and would have saved him the trouble of a nuptial entertainment. It was a great supper, and consequently there was provision enough for him, and his bride too. And it was made by a great man, who sent out his servant to bid many, so that he need not have doubted of meeting with a hearty welcome, though he should bring his wife with him. Or supposing his wife was unwilling to come, yet

as the husband is the head of the wife, he ought to have laid his commands on her, to accompany him. For we cannot do better for our yoke-fellows, than to bring them to the gospel-faith. — Or, supposing after all, she would not be prevailed upon, he ought to have gone without her: for “those that have wives, must be as though they had none;” and we must not let carnal affection get such an ascendancy over us, as to be kept thereby from spiritual entertainments. *Adam* paid dear for hearkening to the voice of his wife: and sometimes, unless we forsake wives, as well as houses and lands, we cannot be the LORD’s disciples.

This then was the reception the servant met with, and such were the excuses and answers that were sent back. — And what was the consequence? “So that servant came (no doubt with a sorrowful heart) and shewed his LORD these things.” — However little it be thought of, yet ministers must shew the LORD, what success their ministry meets with. We must shew it to our LORD hereafter, before the general assembly of the whole world. — But how dreadful is it, when ministers are obliged to go upon their knees, crying, “O! my leanness, my lean-ness!” and *Elias*-like, to intercede as it were against those, to whom they would not only have imparted the gospel, but even their own lives. — It is a heart-breaking consideration. — But thus it must be; “The servant came and shewed the LORD these things;” so must we. — Well, and what says the LORD? We are told, verse 21, that “the master of the house was angry.” — Not with the ser-
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vant: for though *Israel* be not gathered, yet shall **CHRIST** be glorious; and faithful ministers shall be rewarded, whether people obey the gospel or not. "We are a sweet favour unto God, whether the word be a favour of life unto life, or a favour of death unto death." The master of the house therefore was angry, not with the servant, but with these worldly minded, pleasure-taking refusers of his gracious invitation; who, in all probability, went to see and stock their estates, and attend upon their boies, not doubting, but their excuses would be taken, because they were lawfully employed. And, indeed, in one sense, their excuses were accepted. For I do not hear that they were invited any more. God took them at their word, though they would not take him at his. They begged to be excused, and they were excused, as we shall see in the sequel of this parable. Let us not therefore harden our hearts, as in the day of provocation; "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." But must the least want guests? No, if they cannot, or will not come, others shall, and will. The master of the house therefore being angry, sent the servant upon a second errand. "Go out quickly into the streets, and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Every word bespeaks a spirit of repentment and importunity. Go out quickly, make no delay, avoid no attempt or danger, into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither, not only call them, but bring them in; for the master here, to encourage the servant,

assures him of success) the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. This was fulfilled, when JESUS CHRIST, after the gospel was rejected by the *Jews*, went and invited the *Gentiles*, and when the publicans and harlots took the kingdom of God by a holy violence, whilst the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees rejected the kingdom of GOD against themselves. This was also a home reproof to the rich Pharisee, at whose house the LORD JESUS was, as well as a cutting lesson to the other guests. For our Saviour would hereby shew them, that GOD took a quite different method from his host, and was not above receiving the poor, and halt, and blind, and maimed, to the gospel-supper, though he had called none such to sit down at his table. Whether the guests resented it or not, we are not told. But if they were not quite blind, both host and guests might easily see that the parable was spoken against them. But to proceed,

The servant again returns, but with a more pleasing answer than before, “ Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.” The words bespeak the servant to be full of joy at the thoughts of the success he had met with. None can tell, but those who experience it, what comfort ministers have in seeing their labours blest. “ Now I live, (says the apostle) if you stand fast in the LORD. Ye are our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the LORD JESUS.” “ Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded. The poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind, have been called, and have obeyed the summons, and I have brought
them

them with me ; yet, LORD, thy house, and thy supper is so great, there is room for more. Hereby he insinuated that he wanted to be employed again, in calling more souls ; and the more we do, the more may we do for GOD : “ To him that hath, shall be given ;” and present success is a great encouragement to future diligence. Such hints are pleasing to our Saviour. He delights to see his ministers ready for new work, and waiting for fresh orders. “ The Lord, therefore, we are told, ver. 23, said unto his servant, (the same servant,) Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled ; 24. For I say unto you, that none of those who are bidden, shall taste of my supper.” O cutting words to those that sat at meat, if they had hearts to make the application ! But glad tidings of great joy to the publicans, harlots, and Gentiles, who were rejected by the proud Pharisees, as aliens to the commonwealth of *Israel*, and strangers to the covenant of promise ! This was fulfilled, when our LORD sent the apostles, not only into the streets and lanes of the city, and places bordering upon *Jerusalem* and *Judea* ; but when he gave them a commission to go out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, *Gentile* as well as *Jew* ; and not only gave them a command, but blessed their labours with such success, that three thousand were converted in one day. And I am not without hopes that it will be still further fulfilled, by the calling of some of you home this day : For however this parable was spoken originally to
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the *Jews*, and upon a particular occasion, as at a feast, yet it is applicable to us, and to our children, and to as many as are afar off; yea, to as many as the LORD our GOD shall call. It gives a sanction, methinks, to preaching in the fields, and other places besides the synagogues; and points out the reception the gospel meets with in these days, in such a lively manner, that one would think it had a particular reference to the present age. For is it not too, too plain, that the gospel-offers, and gospel-grace, have been slighted, and made light of, by many professors of this generation? We have been in the churches, telling them, again and again, that GOD has made a great supper (and has invited many, even them) and sent us by his providence and his spirit, “to say unto them that were Lidden, Come, for all things are now ready. Believe on the LORD Jesus, and you shall be saved.” But the generality of the laity have made light of it, they have given us the hearing, but are too busy in their farms and their merchandizes, their marrying and giving in marriage, to come and be blessed in the LORD of life. We have told them, again and again, that we do not want them to hide themselves from the world, but to reach them how they may live in, and yet not be of it. But all will not do. Many of the clergy also (like the letter-learned Scribes and Pharisees in our Saviour’s time) reject the kingdom of GOD against themselves, and deny us the use of the pulpits, for no other reason but because we preach the doctrine of justification in the sight of GOD by faith alone, and invite sinners to

come

come and taste of the gospel-feast freely, without money and without price.

Whatever they may think, we are persuaded, the great master of the house is angry with them, for being angry with us without a cause. He therefore now, by his providence, bids us "Go out quickly into the streets, and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind," or call in the publicans and harlots, the common cursers and swearers, and sabbath-breakers, and adulterers, who, perhaps, never entered a church door, or heard that JESUS CHRIST died for such sinners as they are. We, through grace, have obeyed the command, we have gone out, though expected to so much contempt for so doing, and, blessed be GOD, our labour has not been in vain in the LORD. For many have been made willing in the day of GOD's power: and we would speak it with humility, we can go cheerfully to our Saviour, and say, "It is done, LORD, as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." He is therefore pleased, in spite of all opposition from men or devils, to continue and renew, and enlarge our commission; he hath sent us literally into the highways and hedges; and, I trust, has given us a commission to compel sinners to come: For, could we speak with the tongues of men and angels, yet if the LORD did not attend the word with his power, and sweetly incline men's wills to comply with the gospel-call, we should be as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. But this we believe our Saviour will do, for his house must be filled: every soul for whom

whom he has shed his blood, shall finally be saved, “and all that the Father hath given him, shall come unto him, and whosoever cometh unto him he will in no^wise cast out.” This comforted our LORD, when his gospel was rejected by the *Jews*. As though he had said, Well, though you despise the offers of my grace, yet I shall not shed my blood in vain; for all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me.

Supported by this consideration, I am not ashamed to come out this day into the highways and hedges, and to confess that my business is to call the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, self-condemned, helpless sinners, to the marriage-feast of the supper of the Lamb. My cry is, Come, believe on the LORD JESUS; throw yourselves at the footstool of his mercy, and you shall be saved; for all things are now ready. GOD the Father is ready, GOD the Son is ready, GOD the Holy Ghost is ready; the blessed angels above are ready, and the blessed saints below are ready, to welcome you to the gospel-feast. A perfect and everlasting righteousness is now wrought out by JESUS CHRIST. GOD, now, upon honourable terms, can acquit the guilty. GOD can now be just, and yet justify the ungodly. “For he hath made CHRIST to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.” The fatted calf is now killed, and “CHRIST, our passover, is sacrificed for us.” Come, sinners, and feed upon him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving. For JESUS CHRIST’S sake, do not with one consent
begin

begin to make excuse. Do not let a piece of ground, five yoke of oxen, or even a wife, keep you from this great supper. These you may enjoy, as the gifts of GOD, and make use of them for the Mediator's glory, and yet be present at the gospel-feast. True and undefiled religion does not take away, but rather greatly enhances the comforts of life; and our LORD did not pray that we should be taken out of the world, but "that we should be delivered from the evil of it." O then that you would all, with one consent, say, Lo! we come. Assure yourselves there is provision enough. For it is a great supper. In our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. And though a great GOD makes the supper, yet he is as good and condescending as he is great. Though he be the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, yet he will dwell with the humble and contrite heart, even with the man that trembleth at his word. Neither can you complain for want of room; "for yet there is room. In our Father's house are many mansions." If it was not so, our Saviour would have told us. The grace of CHRIST is as rich, as free, and as powerful as ever. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:" He is full of grace and truth, and out of his fulness, all that come to him may receive grace for grace. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should believe and live. Come then, all ye halt, poor, maimed, and blind sinners; take comfort, the LORD JESUS has sent his servant to call you. It is now supper-time, and

a day of uncommon grace. The day may be far spent. Haste, therefore, and away to the supper of the Lamb. If you do not come, I know the master will be angry. And who can stand before him when he is angry? "Harden not therefore your hearts, as in the day of provocation, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Do not provoke the LORD to say, "None of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper." O wonderful words! Much more is implied in them than is expressed. It is the same with that in the psalms, "I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest." And if you do not enter into GOD's rest, nor taste of CHRIST's supper, you must lift up your eyes in torments, where you will have no rest, and must sup with the damned devils for ever more.

Knowing therefore the terrors of the LORD, we persuade you to haste away, and make no more frivolous excuses. For there is no excuse against believing. Perhaps you say, You call to the halt, and maimed, and blind, and poor. But if we are halt, and maimed, how can we come? If we are blind, how can we see our way? If we are poor, how can we expect admission to so great a table? Ah! Happy are ye, if you are sensible, that you are halt and maimed. For if you feel yourselves so, and are lamenting it, who knows but whilst I am speaking, GOD may send his Spirit with the word, and fetch you home? Though you are blind, JESUS has eye-salve to anoint you. Though you are poor, yet you are welcome to this rich feast. It cost JESUS CHRIST a great price, but you shall have

have it gratis. For such as you was it designed. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Rich, self-righteous, self-sufficient sinners, I know, will scorn both the feast and its great provider. They have done so already, therefore the LORD has sent us into the highways and hedges, to bring such poor souls as you are in. Venture then, my dear friends, and honour GOD, by taking him at his word. Come to the marriage-feast. Believe me, you will there partake of most delicious fare.

Tell me, ye that have been made to taste that the LORD is gracious, will you not recommend this feast to all? Are you not, whilst I am speaking, ready to cry out, Come all ye that are without, come ye, obey the call, for we have sat under the Redeemer's shadow with great delight, and his fruit has been pleasant to our taste. Whilst I am speaking, does not the fire kindle, do not your hearts burn with a desire that others may come and be blessed too? If you are christians indeed, I know you will be thus minded, and the language of your hearts will be, LORD, whilst he is calling, let thy Spirit compel them to come in. O that the LORD may say, *Amen!* And why should we doubt? Surely our Saviour will not let me complain this day that I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought. Methinks I see many desiring to come. O how shall I compel you to come forwards? I will not use fire or sword, as the *Papists* do, by terribly perverting this text of scripture. But I will tell you of the love of GOD, the love of GOD in

CHRIST

CHRIST, and surely that must compel you, that must constrain you, whether you will or not. Sinners, my heart is enlarged towards you. I could fill my mouth with arguments. Consider the greatness of the **GOD** who makes the supper. Consider the greatness of the price, wherewith it was purchased. Consider the greatness of the provision made for you. What would you have more? Consider **GOD**'s infinite condescension, in calling you now, when you might have been in hell, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And that you might be without excuse, he has sent his servant into the highways and hedges to invite you there. O that you tasted what I do now! I am sure you would not want arguments to induce you to come in: No, you would fly to the gospel-feast, as doves to the windows.

But, poor souls! many of you, perhaps, are not hungry. You do not feel yourselves halt, or maimed, or blind, and therefore you have no relish for this spiritual entertainment. Well, be not angry with me for calling you; be not offended if I weep over you, because you know not the day of your visitation: If I must appear in judgment as a swift witness against you, I must. But that thought chills my blood! I cannot bear it; I feel that I could lay down my life for you. But I am not willing to go without you. What say you, my dear friends? I would put the question to you once more, Will you taste of **CHRIST**'s supper, or will you not? You shall all be welcome. There is milk at this feast for babes, as well as meat for strong.

strong men, and for persons of riper years. There is room and provision for high and low, rich and poor, one with another ; and our Saviour will thank you for coming. Amazing condescension ! Astonishing love ! The thought of it quite overcomes me. Help me, help me, O believers, to bless and praise him.

And O ! that his love may excite us to come afresh to him, as though we had never come before ! For, though we have been often feasted, yet our souls will starve, unless we renew our acts of faith, and throw ourselves, as lost, undone sinners, continually at the feet of CHRIST. Feeding upon past experiences will not satisfy our souls, any more than what we did eat yesterday will sustain our bodies to-day. No, believers must look for fresh influences of divine grace, and beg of the LORD to water them every moment. The parable therefore speaks to saints as well as sinners. Come ye to the marriage-feast ; you are as welcome now as ever. And may GOD set your souls a longing for that time when we shall sit down and eat bread in the kingdom of heaven ! There we shall have full draughts of divine love, and enjoy the glorious Emmanuel for ever more. Even so, LORD JESUS, Amen.

S E R M O N VI.

The Pharisee and Publican.

L U K E xviii. 14.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other : For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

THOUGH there be some who dare to deny the LORD JESUS, and disbelieve the revelation he has been pleased to give us, and thereby bring upon themselves swift destruction ; yet I would charitably hope there are but few if any such among you, to whom I am now to preach the kingdom of GOD. Was I to ask you, how you expect to be justified in the sight of an offended GOD ? I suppose you would answer, only for the sake of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. But, was I to come more home to your consciences, I fear that most would
make

make the LORD JESUS but in part their Saviour, and go about, as it were, to establish a righteousness of their own. And this is not thinking contrary to the rules of christian charity: for we are all self-righteous by nature; it is as natural for us to turn to a covenant of works, as for the sparks to fly upwards. We have had so many legal and so few free-grace preachers, for these many years, that most professors now seem to be settled upon their lees, and rather deserve the title of *Pharisees* than christians.

Thus it was with the generality of the people during the time of our LORD'S public ministration: and therefore, in almost all his discourses, he preached the gospel to poor sinners, and denounced terrible woes against proud self-justiciaries. The parable, to which the words of the text belong, looks both these ways: For the evangelist informs us (ver. 9.) that our LORD "spake it unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." And a notable parable it is; a parable worthy of your most serious attention. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," what JESUS CHRIST speaks to all visible professors in it.

Ver. 10. "Two men went up to the temple to pray (and never two men of more opposite characters) the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican." The Pharisees were the strictest sect among the *Jews*. "I was of the strictest sect, of the Pharisees," says *Paul*. They prayed often; not only so, but they made long prayers; and, that they might appear extraordinary devout, they would pray at the corners
of

of the streets where two ways met, that people going or coming, both ways, might see them. "They made broad (as our LORD informs us) the borders of their phylacteries," they had pieces of parchment sown to their long robes, on which some parts of the Scripture were written, that people might from thence infer, that they were lovers of the law of GOD. They were so very punctual and exact in outward purifications, that they washed at their going out and coming in. They held the washing of pots, brazen vessels and tables, and many other such-like things they did. They were very zealous for the traditions of the fathers, and for the observation of the rites and ceremonies of the church, notwithstanding they frequently made void the law of GOD by their traditions. And they were so exceedingly exact in the outward observation of the sabbath, that they condemned our LORD for making a little clay with his spittle; and called him a sinner, and said, he was not of GOD, because he had given sight to a man born blind, on the sabbath-day. For these reasons they were had in high veneration among the people, who were sadly misled by these blind guides: they had the uppermost places in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places (which they loved dearly) and were called of men, *Rabbi*; in short, they had such a reputation for piety, that it became a proverb among the *Jews*, that if there were but two men saved, the one of them must be a Pharisee.

As for the Publicans, it was not so with them. It seems they were sometimes *Jews*, or at least pro-
felytes

feltytes of the gate ; for we find one here coming up to the temple ; but for the generality, I am apt to think they were *Gentiles* ; for they were gatherers of the *Roman* taxes, and used to amass much wealth (as appears by the confession of *Zaccheus*, one of the chief of them) by wronging men with false accusations. They were so universally infamous, that our LORD himself tells his disciples, “ the excommunicated man should be to them as a heathen man, or a Publican.” And the Pharisees thought it a sufficient impeachment of our LORD’s character, that he was a friend to Publicans and sinners, and went to sit down with them at meat.

But, however they disagreed in other things, they agreed in this, that public worship is a duty incumbent upon all : for they both came up to the temple. The very heathens were observers of temple worship. We have very early notice of men’s sacrificing to, and calling upon the name of the LORD, in the Old Testament ; and I find it nowhere contradicted in the New. Our LORD, and his apostles, went up to the temple ; and we are commanded by the apostle, “ not to forsake the assembling ourselves together,” as the manner of too many is in our days ; and such too, as would have us think well of them, though they seldom or never tread the courts of the LORD’s house. But, though our devotions begin in our closets, they must not end there. And, if people never shew their devotions abroad, I must suspect they have little or none at home. “ Two men went up to the temple.” And what went they thither for ? Not (as multitudes
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amongst us do) to make the house of GOD a house of merchandize, or turn it into a den of thieves; much less to ridicule the preacher or disturb the congregation; no, they came to the temple, says our LORD, "to pray." Thither should the tribes of GOD's spiritual *Israel* go up, to talk with, and pour out their hearts before the mighty GOD of *Jacob*.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray." I fear one of them forgot his errand. I have often been at a loss what to call the *Pharisee's* address; it certainly does not deserve the name of a prayer: he may rather be said to come to the temple to *boast*, than to pray; for I do not find one word of confession of his original guilt; not one single petition for pardon of his past actual sins, or for grace to help and assist him for the time to come: he only brings to GOD, as it were, a reckoning of his performances; and does that, which no flesh can justly do, I mean, glory in his presence.

Ver. 11. "The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself; GOD, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican."

Our LORD first takes notice of his posture; "the Pharisee *stood*," he is not to be condemned for that; for standing as well as kneeling, is a proper posture for prayer. "When you stand praying," says our LORD; though sometimes our LORD kneeled, nay, lay flat on his face upon the ground; his apostles also kneeled, as we read in the *Acts*, which has made me wonder at some, who are so bigotted to standing in family, as well as public prayer, that they will
not

not kneel, notwithstanding all kneel that are around them. I fear there is something of the Pharisee in this conduct. Kneeling and standing are indifferent, if the knee of the soul be bent, and the heart upright towards God. We should study not to be particular in indifferent things, lest we offend weak minds. What the Pharisee is remarked for, is his "standing by himself:" for the words may be rendered, he stood by himself, upon some eminent place, at the upper part of the temple, near the Holy of holies, that the congregation might see what a devout man he was: or it may be understood as we read it, he prayed by himself, or of himself, out of his own heart; he did not pray by form; it was an extempore prayer: for there are many Pharisees that pray and preach too, extempore. I do not see how these may not be acquired, as well as other arts and sciences. A man with a good elocution, ready turn of thought, and good memory, may repeat his own or other men's sermons, and, by the help of a *Wilkins* or *Henry*, may pray seemingly excellently well, and yet not have the least grain of true grace in his heart; I speak this, not to cry down extempore prayer, or to discourage those dear souls who really pray by the spirit; I only would hereby give a word of reproof to those who are so bigotted to extempore prayer, that they condemn, at least judge, all that use forms, as though not so holy and heavenly, as others who pray without them. Alas! this is wrong. Not every one that prays extempore is a spiritual, nor every one that prays with a form, a formal man. Let us not judge one ano-

ther ; let not him that uses a form, judge him that prays extempore, on that account ; and let not him that prays extempore, despise him who uses a form.

“ The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus by himself.” Which may signify also praying inwardly in his heart ; for there is a way (and that an excellent one too) of praying when we cannot speak ; thus *Anna* prayed, when she spoke not aloud, only her lips moved. Thus *God* says to *Moses*, “ Why criest thou ?” when, it is plain, he did not speak a word. This is what the apostle means by the “ spirit making intercession (for believers) with groanings which cannot be uttered.” For there are times when the soul is too big to speak ; when *God* fills it as it were, and overshadows it with his presence, so that it can only fall down, worship, adore, and and lye in the dust before the *LORD*. Again, there is a time when the soul is benumbed, barren and dry, and the believer has not a word to say to his heavenly Father ; and then the heart only can speak. And I mention this for the encouragement of weak christians, who think they never are accepted but when they have a flow of words, and fancy they do not please *God* at the bottom, for no other reason but because they do not please themselves. Such would do well to consider, that *God* knows the language of the heart, and the mind of the spirit ; and that we make use of words, not to inform *God*, but to affect ourselves. Whenever therefore any of you find yourselves in such a frame, be not discouraged : offer yourselves up in silence before *God*, as clay in the hands of the potter, for him

to write and stamp his own divine image upon your souls. But I believe the Pharisee knew nothing of this way of prayer : he was self-righteous, a stranger to the divine life ; and therefore either of the former explanations may be best put upon these words.

“ He stood, and prayed thus with himself ; GOD, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioner, unjust, adulterer, or even as this Publican.” Here is some appearance of devotion, but it is only in appearance. To thank GOD that we are not extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and as wicked in our practices as other men are, is certainly meet, right, and our bounden duty : for whatever degrees of goodness there may be in us, more than in others, it is owing to GOD’s restraining, preventing, and assisting grace. We are all equally conceived and born in sin ; all are fallen short of the glory of GOD, and liable to all the curses and maledictions of the law ; so that “ he who glorieth, must glory only in the LORD.” For none of us have any thing which we did not receive ; and whatever we have received, we did not in the least merit it, nor could we lay the least claim to it on any account whatever : we are wholly indebted to free grace for all. Had the Pharisee thought thus when he said, “ GOD, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,” it would have been an excellent introduction to his prayer : but he was a free-willer, as well as self-righteous (for he that is one must be the other) and thought by his own power and strength, he had kept himself from these vices. And yet I do not see what reason he had to trust in himself that he was righteous, mere-

ly because he was not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer; for all this while he might be, as he certainly was (as is also every self-righteous person) as proud as the devil. But he not only boasts, but lies before God (as all self-justificaries will be found liars here or hereafter.) He thanks God that he was not unjust: but is it not an act of the highest injustice to rob God of his prerogative? is it not an act of injustice to judge our neighbour? and yet of both these crimes this self-righteous vaunter is guilty. "Even as this Publican!" He seems to speak with the utmost disdain; this Publican! Perhaps he pointed at the poor man, that others might treat him with the like contempt. Thou proud, confident boaster, what hadst thou to do with that poor Publican? supposing other Publicans were unjust, and extortioners, did it therefore follow that he must be so? or, if he had been such a sinner, how knowest thou but he has repented of those sins? His coming up to the temple to pray, is one good sign of a reformation at least. Thou art therefore inexcusable, O Pharisee, who thus judgest the Publican: for thou that judgest him to be unjust, art, in the very act of judging, unjust thyself: thy sacrifice is only the sacrifice of a fool.

We have seen what the Pharisee's negative goodness comes to; I think, nothing at all. Let us see how far his positive goodness extends; for, if we are truly religious, we shall not only eschew evil, but also do good: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

The Pharisee is not here condemned for his fasting,

ing, for fasting is a christian duty; "when you fast," says our LORD, thereby taking it for granted that his disciples would fast. "And when the bridegroom shall be taken away, then shall they fast in those days." "In fasting often," says the apostle. And all that would not be cast-aways, will take care, as their privilege, without legal constraint, to "keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection." The Pharisee is only condemned for making a righteousness of his fasting, and thinking that GOD would accept him, or that he was any better than his neighbours, merely on account of his fasting: this is what he was blamed for. The Pharisee was not to be discommended for fasting twice in a week; I wish some christians would imitate him more in this: but to depend on fasting in the least, for his justification in the sight of GOD, was really abominable. "I give tithes of all that I possess." He might as well have said, I pay tithes. But self-righteous people (whatever they may say to the contrary) think they give something to GOD. "I give tithes of all that I possess?" I make conscience of giving tithes, not only of all that the law requires, but of my mint, annise, and cummin, of all things whatsoever I possess; this was well; but to boast of such things, or of fasting, is pharisaical and devilish. Now then let us sum up all the righteousness of this boasting Pharisee, and see what little reason he had to trust in himself, that he was righteous, or to despise others. He is not unjust (but we have only his bare word for that, I think I have proved the contrary;) he is no adulterer, no extortioner; he

fasts twice in the week, and gives tithes of all that he possesses ; and all this he might do, and a great deal more, and yet be a child of the devil : for here is no mention made of his loving the LORD his GOD with all his heart, which was the “ first and great commandment of the law ;” here is not a single syllable of inward religion ; and he was not a true *Jew*, who was only one outwardly. It is only an outside piety at the best ; inwardly he is full of pride self-justification, free-will and great uncharitableness.

Were not the Pharisees, do you think, highly offended at this character ? for they might easily know it was spoken against them. And though, perhaps, some of you may be offended at me, yet, out of love, I must tell you, I fear this parable is spoken against many of you : for are there not many of you, who go up to the temple to pray, with no better spirit than this Pharisee did ? And because you fast, it may be in the *Lent*, or every *Friday*, and because you do no body any harm, receive the sacrament, pay tithes, and give an alms now and then ; you think that you are safe, and trust in yourselves that you are righteous, and inwardly despise those, who do not come up to you in these outward duties ? This, I am persuaded, is the case of many of you, though, alas ! it is a desperate one, as I shall endeavour to shew at the close of this discourse.

Let us now take a view of the Publican, ver. 13. “ And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, GOD be merciful to me a sinner.”

“The Publican standing afar off:” Perhaps in the outward court of the temple, conscious to himself that he was not worthy to approach the Holy of holies; so conscious and so weighed down with a sense of his own unworthiness, that he would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, which he knew was GOD’S throne. Poor heart! what did he feel at this time! none but returning Publicans, like himself, can tell. Methinks I see him standing afar off, penitive, oppressed, and even overwhelmed with sorrow; sometimes he attempts to look up; but then, thinks he, the heavens are unclean in GOD’S sight, and the very angels are charged with folly; how then shall such a wretch as I dare to lift up my guilty head! And to shew that his heart was full of holy self-resentment, and that he sorrowed after a godly sort, he smote upon his breast; the word in the original implies, that he *struck hard* upon his breast: he will lay the blame upon none but his own wicked heart. He will not, like unhumiliated *Adam*, tacitly lay the fault of his vileness upon GOD, and say, ‘The passions which thou gavest me, they deceived me, and I sinned: he is too penitent thus to reproach his Maker; he smites upon his breast, his treacherous, ungrateful, desperately wicked breast; a breast now ready to burst: and at length, out of the abundance of his heart, I doubt not, with many tears, he at last cries out, “GOD be merciful to me a sinner.” Not, GOD be merciful to yonder proud Pharisee: he found enough in himself to vent his resentment against, without looking abroad upon others. Not, GOD be merciful to me a sinner; for

he knew "all his righteousnesses were but filthy rags." Not, **GOD** be merciful to such or such a one; but, **GOD** be merciful to me, even to me a sinner, a sinner by birth, a sinner in thought, word, and deed; a sinner as to my person, a sinner as to all my performances; a sinner in whom is no health, in whom dwelleth no good thing; a sinner, poor, miserable, blind and naked, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; a self-accused, self-condemned sinner. What think you? would this Publican have been offended if any minister had told him that he deserved to be damned? would he have been angry, if any one had told him, that by nature he was half a devil and half a beast? No: he would have confessed a thousand hells to have been his due, and that he was an earthly, devilish sinner. He felt now what a dreadful thing it was to depart from the living **GOD**: he felt that he was inexcusable every way; that he could in nowise, upon account of any thing in himself, be justified in the sight of **GOD**; and therefore lays himself at the feet of sovereign mercy, "**GOD** be merciful to me a sinner." Here is no confidence in the flesh, no plea fetched from fasting, paying tithes or the performance of any other duty; here is no boasting that he was not an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer. Perhaps he had been guilty of all these crimes, at least he knew he would have been guilty of all these, had he been left to follow the devices and desires of his own heart; and therefore, with a broken and contrite spirit, he cries out, "**GOD** be merciful to me a sinner."

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This man came up to the temple to pray, and he prayed indeed. And a broken and contrite heart **GOD** will not despise. "I tell you," says our **LORD** I who lay in the bosom of the Father from all eternity; I who am **GOD**, and therefore know all things; I who can neither deceive, nor be deceived, whose judgment is according to right; I tell you, whatever you may think of it, or think of me for telling you so, "this man, " this Publican, this despised, sinful, but broken-hearted man, " went down to his house justified (acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in the sight of **GOD**) rather than the other."

Let Pharisees take heed that they do not pervert this text: for when it is said, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other," our **LORD** does not mean that both were justified, and that the Publican had rather more justification than the Pharisee: but it implies, either that the Publican was actually justified, but the Pharisee was not; or, that the Publican was in a better way to receive justification, than the Pharisee; according to our **LORD**'s saying, "The Publicans and Harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you." That the Pharisee was not justified is certain, for "God reproveth the proud;" and that the Publican was at this time actually justified (and perhaps went home with a sense of it in his heart) we have great reason to infer from the latter part of the text, "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The parable therefore now speaks to all who hear me this day: for that our **LORD** intended it for our

learning, is evident, from his making such a general application ; “ For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted ”

The parable of the Publican and Pharisee, is but as it were a glass, wherein we may see the different disposition of all mankind ; for all mankind may be divided into two general classes. Either they trust wholly in themselves, or in part, that they are righteous, and then they are Pharisees ; or they have no confidence in flesh, are self-condemned sinners, and then they come under the character of the Publican just now described. And we may add also, that the different reception these men met with, points out to us in lively colours, the different treatment the self-justiciary and self-condemned criminal will meet with at the terrible day of judgment : “ Every one that exalts himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

“ Every one,” without exception, young or old, high or low, rich or poor (for GOD is no respecter of persons) “ every one,” whosoever he be, that exalteth himself, and not free grace ; every one that trusteth in himself that he is righteous, that relies in his duties, or thinks to join them with the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, for justification in the sight of GOD, though he be no adulterer, no extortioner, though he be not outwardly unjust, nay, though he fast twice in the week, and gives tithes of all that he possesses ; yet shall he be abased in the sight of all good men who knew him here, and before men and angels, and GOD himself, when JESUS CHRIST

CHRIST comes to appear in judgment hereafter. How low, none but the almighty GOD can tell. He shall be abased to live with devils, and make his abode in the lowest hell for evermore.

Hear this, all ye self-justiciaries, tremble, and behold your doom! a dreadful doom, more dreadful than words can express, or thought conceive! If you refuse to humble yourselves, after hearing this parable, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that GOD shall visit you with all his storms, and pour all the vials of his wrath upon your rebellious heads; you exalted yourselves here, and GOD shall abase you hereafter; you are as proud as the devil, and with devils shall you dwell to all eternity. “Be not deceived, GOD is not mocked;” he sees your hearts, he knows all things. And, notwithstanding you may come up to the temple to pray, your prayers are turned into sin, and you go down to your houses unjustified, if you are self-justiciaries; and do you know what it is to be unjustified? why, if you are unjustified, the wrath of GOD abideth upon you; you are in your blood; all the curses of the law belong to you: cursed are you when you go out, cursed are you when you come in; cursed are your thoughts, cursed are your words, cursed are your deeds; every thing you do, say, or think, from morning to night, is only one continued series of sin. However highly you may be esteemed in the sight of men, however you may be honoured with the uppermost seats in the synagogues, in the church militant, you will have no place in the church triumphant. “Humble
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ble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of **GOD** :” pull down every self-righteous thought, and every proud imagination, that now exalteth itself against the perfect, personal, imputed righteousness of the dear **LORD JESUS** : “ For he (and he alone) that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

He that humbleth himself, whatever he be : if, instead of fasting twice in the week, he has been drunk twice in the week ; if, instead of giving tithes of all that he possesses, he has cheated the minister of his tithes, and the king of his taxes ; notwithstanding he be unjust, an extortioner, an adulterer, nay, notwithstanding the sins of all mankind center and unite in him ; yet, if through grace, like the Publican, he is enabled to humble himself, he shall be exalted ; not in a temporal manner ; for christians must rather expect to be abased, and to have their names cast out as evil, and to lay down their lives for **CHRIST JESUS** in this world : but he shall be exalted in a spiritual sense ; he shall be freely justified from all his sins by the blood of **JESUS** ; he shall have peace with **GOD**, a peace which passeth all understanding ; not only peace, but joy in believing ; he shall be translated from the kingdom of Satan, to the kingdom of **GOD**'s dear Son : he shall dwell in **CHRIST**, and **CHRIST** in him : he shall be one with **CHRIST**, and **CHRIST** one with him : he shall drink of divine pleasures, as out of a river : he shall be sanctified throughout in spirit, soul and body ; in one word, he shall be filled with all the fulness of **GOD**. Thus shall the man that humbleth himself be exalt-
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ed here ; but O, how high shall he be exalted hereafter ! as high as the highest heavens, even to the right-hand of God : there he shall sit, happy both in soul and body, and judge angels ; high, out of the reach of all sin and trouble, eternally secure from all danger of falling. O sinners, did you but know how highly God intends to exalt those who humble themselves, and believe in Jesus, surely you would humble yourselves, at least beg of God to humble you ; for it is he that must strike the rock of your hearts, and cause floods of contrite tears to flow therefrom. O that God would give this sermon such a commission, as he once gave to the rod of *Moses* ! I would strike you through and through with the rod of his word, until each of you was brought to cry out with the poor Publican, “ God be merciful to me a sinner.” What pleasant language would this be in the ears of the LORD of Sabbaoth !

Are there no poor sinners among you ? what, are you all Pharisees ? Surely, you cannot bear the thoughts of returning home unjustified ; can you ? what if a fit of the apoplexy should seize you, and your souls be hurried away before the awful Judge of quick and dead ? what will you do without CHRIST'S righteousness ? if you go out of the world unjustified, you must remain so for ever. O that you would humble yourselves ! then would the LORD exalt you ; it may be, that, whilst I am speaking, the LORD might justify you freely by his grace. I observed, that perhaps the Publican had a sense of his justification before he went from the
temple,

temple, and knew that his pardon was sealed in heaven: and who knows but you may be thus exalted before you go home, if you humble yourselves? O what peace, love and joy, would you then feel in your hearts! you would have a heaven upon earth. O that I could hear any of you say (as I once heard a poor sinner, under my preaching, cry out) *He is come, He is come!* How would you then, like him, extol a precious, a free-hearted CHRIST! how would you magnify him for being such a friend to Publicans and sinners? greater love can no man shew, than to lay down his life for a friend; but CHRIST laid down his life for his enemies, even for you, if you are enabled to humble yourselves, as the Publican did. Sinners, I know not how to leave off talking with you; I would fill my mouth with arguments, I would plead with you. “Come, let us reason together;” though your sins be as scarlet, yet, if you humble yourselves, they shall be as white as snow. One act of true faith in CHRIST, justifies you for ever and ever; he has not promised you what he cannot perform; he is able to exalt you: for GOD hath exalted, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow; nay, GOD hath exalted him to be not only a Prince, but a Saviour. May he be a Saviour to you! and then I shall have reason to rejoice, in the day of judgment, that I have not preached in vain, nor laboured in vain.

S E R M O N VII.

The Conversion of Zaccheus.

L U K E. xix. 9, 10.

And JESUS said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he also is the Son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

SALVATION, every where through the whole scripture, is said to be the free gift of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Not only free, because GOD is a sovereign agent, and therefore may withhold it from, or confer it on, whom he pleaseth; but free, because there is nothing to be found in man, that can any way induce GOD to be merciful unto him. The righteousness of JESUS CHRIST is the sole cause of our finding favour in GOD's sight: this righteousness apprehended by faith (which is
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also the gift of GOD) makes it our own; and this faith, if true, will work by love.

These are parts of those glad tidings which are published in the gospel; and of the certainty of them, next to the express word of GOD, the experience of all such as have been saved, is the best, and, as I take it, the most undoubted proof. That GOD might teach us every way, he has been pleased to leave upon record many instances of the power of his grace exerted in the salvation of several persons, that we, hearing how he dealt with them, might from thence infer the manner we must expect to be dealt with ourselves, and learn in what way we must look for salvation, if we truly desire to be made partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

The conversion of the person referred to in the text, I think, will be of no small service to us in this matter, if rightly improved. I would hope, most of you know who the person is, to whom the LORD JESUS speaks; it is the publican *Zacchæus*, to whose house the blessed JESUS said, salvation came, and whom he pronounces a son of *Abraham*.

It is my design (GOD helping) to make some remarks upon his conversion recorded at large in the preceding verses, and then to enforce the latter part of the text, as an encouragement to poor undone sinners to come to JESUS CHRIST. "For the Son of man is come, to seek and to save that which was lost."

The evangelist *Luke* introduces the account of this man's conversion thus, verse 1. "And JESUS entered and passed through *Jericho*." The holy JESUS
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made it his business to go about doing good. As the sun in the firmament is continually spreading his benign, quickening, and cheering influences over the natural; so the Son of righteousness arose with healing under his wings, and was daily and hourly diffusing his gracious influences over the moral world. The preceding chapter acquaints us of a notable miracle wrought by the holy JESUS, on poor blind *Bartimeus*; and in this, a greater presents itself to our consideration. The evangelist would have us take particular notice of it; for he introduces it with the word “behold:” “and behold, there was a man named *Zaccheus*, who was the chief among the *Publicans*, and he was rich.”

Well might the evangelist usher in the relation of this man’s conversion with the word “behold!” For, according to human judgment, how many unsurmountable obstacles lay in the way of it! Surely no one will say there was any fitness in *Zaccheus* for salvation; for we are told that he was a *Publican*, and therefore in all probability a notorious sinner. The *Publicans* were gatherers of the *Roman* taxes; they were infamous for their abominable extortion; their very name therefore became so odious, that we find the *Pharisees* often reproached our LORD, as very wicked, because he was a friend unto and sat down to meat with them. *Zaccheus* then, being a *Publican*, was no doubt a sinner; and, being chief among the *Publicans*, consequently was chief among sinners. Nay, “he was rich.” One inspired apostle has told us, that “not many mighty, not many noble

ble are called." Another faith, "GOD has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith." And he who was the Maker and Redeemer of the apostles, assures us, "that it is easier for a camel, (or cable-rope) to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of GOD." Let not therefore the rich glory in the multitude of their riches.

But rich as he was, we are told, verse 3. that "he sought to see JESUS." A wonder indeed! The common people heard our LORD gladly, and the poor received the gospel. The multitude, the *οχλος*, the mob, the people that knew not the law, as the proud high-priests called them, used to follow him on foot into the country, and sometimes staid with him three days together to hear him preach: But did the rich believe or attend on him? No. Our LORD preached up the doctrine of the cross; he preached too searching for them, and therefore they counted him their enemy, persecuted and spoke all manner of evil against him falsely. Let not the ministers of CHRIST marvel, if they meet with the like treatment from the rich men of this wicked and adulterous generation. I should think it no scandal (supposing it true) to hear it affirmed, that none but the poor attended my ministry. Their souls are as precious to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the souls of the greatest men. They were the poor that attended him in the days of his flesh: these are they whom he hath chosen to be rich in faith, and to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Were the rich in this world's goods generally to speak well of me, wo be unto me; I should think it a dreadful
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sign that I was only a wolf in sheep's clothing, that I spoke peace, peace, when there was no peace, and prophesied smoother things than the gospel would allow of. Hear ye this, O ye rich. Let who will dare to do it, GOD forbid that I should despise the poor; in doing so, I should reproach my Maker. The poor are dear to my soul; I rejoice to see them fly to the doctrine of CHRIST, like the doves to their windows. I only pray, that the poor who attend, may be evangelized, and turned into the spirit of the gospel: if so, "Blessed are ye; for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

But we must return to *Zaccheus*. "He sought to see JESUS." That is good news. I heartily wish I could say, it was out of a good principle: but, without speaking contrary to that charity which hopes and believeth all things for the best, we may say, that the same principle drew him after CHRIST, which now draws multitudes (to speak plainly, it may be multitudes of you) to hear a particular preacher, even curiosity: for we are told, that he came not to hear his doctrine, but to view his person, or, to use the words of the evangelist, "to see who he was." Our LORD's fame was now spread abroad through all *Jerusalem*, and all the country round about: some said he was a good man; others, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." And therefore curiosity drew out this rich Publican *Zaccheus*, to see who this person was, of whom he had heard such various accounts. But it seems he could not conveniently get a sight of him for the press, and because he was little of stature. Alas! how many are kept

kept

kept from seeing CHRIST in glory, by reason of the press! I mean, how many are ashamed of being singularly good, and therefore follow a multitude to do evil, because they have a press or throng of polite acquaintance! And, for fear of being set at nought by those with whom they used to sit at meat, they deny the LORD of glory, and are ashamed to confess him before men. This base, this servile fear of man, is the bane of true christianity; it brings a dreadful snare upon the soul, and is the ruin of ten thousands: for I am fully persuaded, numbers are rationally convicted of gospel-truths; but, not being able to brook contempt, they will not prosecute their convictions, nor reduce them to practice. Happy those, who in this respect, like *Zaccheus*, are resolved to overcome all impediments that lie in their way to a sight of CHRIST: for, finding he could not see CHRIST because of the press and the littleness of his natural stature, he did not smite upon his breast, and depart, saying, "It is in vain to seek after a sight of him any longer, I can never attain unto it." No, finding he could not see CHRIST, if he continued in the midst of, "he ran before the multitude, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, to see him; for he was to pass that way."

There is no seeing CHRIST in Glory, unless we run before the multitude, and are willing to be in the number of those despised few, who take the kingdom of God by violence. The broad way, in which so many go, can never be that strait and narrow way which leads to life. Our LORD's flock was, and always will be,
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comparatively a little one: and unless we dare to run before the multitude in a holy singularity, and can rejoice in being accounted fools for CHRIST's sake, we shall never see JESUS with comfort, when he appears in glory. From mentioning the sycamore-tree, and considering the difficulty with which *Zaccheus* must climb it, we may farther learn, that those who would see CHRIST, must undergo other difficulties and hardships, both to contempt. *Zaccheus*, without doubt, went through both. Did not many, think you, laugh at him as he ran along and in the language of *Michal*, *Saul's* daughter, cry out, "How glorious did the rich *Zaccheus* look to-day, when, forgetting the greatness of his station, he ran before a pitiful, giddy mob, and climbed up a sycamore tree, to see an enthusiastic preacher!" But *Zaccheus* cares not for all that; his curiosity was strong: if he could but see who JESUS was, he did not value what scoffers said of him. Thus, and much more will it be with all those who have an effectual desire to see JESUS in heaven: they will go on from strength to strength, break through every difficulty lying in their way, and care not what men or devils say of or do unto them. May the LORD make us all thus minded, for his dear Son's sake!

At length, after taking much pains, and going (as we may well suppose) through much contempt, *Zaccheus* has climbed the tree; and there he sits, as he thinks, hid in the leaves of it, and watching when he should see JESUS pass by: "For he was to pass by that way."

But sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth! Praise,
magnify,

magnify, and adore sovereign, electing, free, preventing love; JESUS the everlasting God, the Prince of peace, who saw *Nathanael* under the fig-tree, and *Zaccheus* from eternity, now sees him in the sycamore-tree, and calls him in time.

Verse 5. "And when JESUS came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, *Zaccheus*, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house." Amazing love! Well might *Luke* usher in the account with "be bold!" It is worthy of our highest admiration. When *Zaccheus* thought of no such thing, nay, thought that CHRIST JESUS did not know him; behold, CHRIST does what we never hear he did before or after, I mean, invite himself to the house of *Zaccheus*, saying, "*Zaccheus*, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house." Not, pray let me abide, but I must abide this day at thy house. He also calls him by name, as though he was well acquainted with him: and indeed well he might; for his name was written in the book of life, he was one of those whom the Father had given him from all eternity: therefore he must abide at his house that day. "For whom he did predestinate, them he also called."

Here then, as through a glass, we may see the doctrine of free grace evidently exemplified before us. Here was no fitness in *Zaccheus*. He was a Publican, chief among the Publicans; not only so, but rich, and came to see CHRIST only out of curiosity: but sovereign grace triumphs over all. And if we do GOD justice, and are effectually wrought upon,

upon, we must acknowledge there was no more fitness in us than in *Zaccheus*; and, had not CHRIST prevented us by his call, we had remained dead in trespasses and sins, and alienated from the divine life, even as others. “JESUS looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, *Zaccheus*, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house.”

With what different emotions of heart may we suppose *Zaccheus* received this invitation? Think you not that he was surprised to hear JESUS CHRIST call him by name, and not only so, but invite himself to his house? Surely, thinks *Zaccheus*, I dream: it cannot be; how should he know me? I never saw him before: besides, I shall undergo much contempt, if I receive him under my roof. Thus, I say, we may suppose *Zaccheus* thought within himself. But what saith the scripture? “I will make a willing people in the day of my power.” With this outward call, there went an efficacious power from GOD, which sweetly over-ruled his natural will: and therefore, verse 6. “He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully;” not only into his house, but also into his heart.

Thus it is the great GOD brings home his children. He calls them by name, by his word or providence; he speaks to them also by his spirit. Hereby they are enabled to open their hearts, and are made willing to receive the King of glory. For *Zaccheus*'s sake, let us not entirely condemn people that come under the word, out of no better principle than curiosity. Who knows but GOD may call them? It is good to be where the LORD is passing
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by. May all who are now present out of this principle, hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to their souls, and so hear that they may live ! Not that men ought therefore to take encouragement to come out of curiosity. For perhaps a thousand more, at other times, came to see CHRIST out of curiosity, as well as *Zaccheus*, who were not effectually called by his grace. I only mention this for the encouragement of my own soul, and the consolation of God's children, who are apt to be angry with those who do not attend on the word out of love to God : but let them alone. Brethren, pray for them. How do you know but JESUS CHRIST may speak to their hearts ? A few words from CHRIST, applied by his spirit, will save their souls. “ *Zaccheus*, says CHRIST, make haste and come down. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”

I have observed, in holy scripture, how particularly it is remarked, that persons rejoiced upon believing in CHRIST. Thus the converted Eunuch went on his way, rejoicing ; thus the Jaylor rejoiced with his whole house ; thus *Zaccheus* received CHRIST joyfully. And well may those rejoice who receive JESUS CHRIST ; for with him they receive righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption. Many have brought up an ill report upon our good land, and would fain persuade people that religion will make them melancholy mad. So far from it, that joy is one ingredient of the kingdom of God in the heart of a believer ; “ The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” To rejoice in the LORD, is a gospel duty. “ Rejoice in the
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the LORD always, and again I say, rejoice." And who can be so joyful, as those who know that their pardon is sealed before they go hence and are no more seen? The godly may, but I cannot see how any ungodly man can, rejoice: they cannot be truly cheerful. What if wicked men may sometimes have laughter amongst them? It is only the laughter of fools; in the midst of it there is heaviness: At the best, it is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot; it makes a blaze, but soon goes out. But, as for the godly, it is not so with them; their joy is solid and lasting. As it is a joy that a stranger intermeddleth not with, so it is a joy that no man taketh from them: it is a joy in GOD, a "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

It should seem that *Zaccheus* was under foul-distress but a little while; perhaps (says *Guthrie*, in his book intituled, *The Trial concerning a saving Interest in Christ*) not above a quarter of an hour. I add, perhaps not so long: for, as one observes, sometimes the LORD JESUS delights to deliver speedily. GOD is a sovereign agent, and works upon his children in their effectual calling, according to the counsel of his eternal will. It is with the spiritual, as natural birth: all women have not the like pangs; all christians have not the like degree of conviction. But all agree in this, that all have JESUS CHRIST, formed in their hearts: and those who have not so many trials at first, may be visited with the greater conflicts hereafter; though they never come into bondage again, after they have once received the spirit of adoption. "We have not, (says *Paul*) re-

ceived the spirit of bondage again unto fear." We know not what *Zaccheus* underwent before he died: however, this one thing I know, he now believed in CHRIST, and was justified, or acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in GOD's sight, though a Publican, chief among the Publicans, not many moments before. And thus it is with all, that, like *Zaccheus*, receive JESUS CHRIST by faith into their hearts: the very moment they find rest in him, they are freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of *Moses*; "for by grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of GOD."

Say not within yourselves, this is a licentious Antinomian doctrine; for this faith, if true, will work by love, and be productive of the fruits of holiness. See an instance in this convert *Zaccheus*: no sooner had he received JESUS CHRIST by faith into his heart, but he evidences it by his works; for, ver. 8. we are told, "*Zaccheus* stood forth, and said unto the LORD, Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give unto the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold."

Having believed on JESUS in his heart, he now makes confession of him with his mouth to salvation. "*Zaccheus* stood forth:" he was not ashamed, but stood forth before his brother Publicans; for true faith casts out all servile, sinful fear of man; "and said, Behold, LORD." It is remarkable, how readily people in scripture have owned the divinity of CHRIST immediately upon their conversion. Thus
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the woman at *Jacob's* well; "Is not this the CHRIST?" Thus the man born blind; "LORD, I believe; and worshipped him." Thus *Zaccheus*, "Behold, LORD." An incontestable proof this to me, that those who deny our LORD's divinity, never effectually felt his power: if they had, they would not speak so lightly of him; they would scorn to deny his eternal power and Godhead. "*Zaccheus* stood forth, and said, Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." Noble fruits of a true living faith in the LORD JESUS! Every word calls for our notice. Not some small, not the tenth part, but the *half*. Of what? My goods; things that were valuable. *My* goods, his own, not another's. I give: not, I will give when I die, when I can keep them no longer; but, I give now, even now. *Zaccheus* would be his own executor. For whilst we have time we should do good. But to whom would he give half of his goods? Not to the rich, not to those who were already clothed in purple and fine linen, of whom he might be recompensed again; but to the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, from which he could expect no recompence till the resurrection of the dead. "I give to the poor." But knowing that he must be just before he could be charitable, and conscious to himself that in his public administrations he had wronged many persons, he adds, "And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." Hear ye this, all ye that make no conscience of

cheating the king of his taxes, or of buying or selling run goods. If ever God gives you true faith, you will never rest, till, like *Zaccheus*, you have made restitution to the outmost of your power. I suppose, before his conversion, he thought it no harm to cheat thus, no more than you may do now, and pleased himself frequently, to be sure, that he got rich by doing so: but now he is grieved for it at his heart; he confesses his injustice before men, and promises to make ample restitution. Go ye cheating Publicans, learn of *Zaccheus*; go away and do likewise. If you do not make restitution here, the LORD JESUS shall make you confess your sins before men and angels, and condemn you for it, when he comes in the glory of his Father to judgment hereafter.

After all this, with good reason might our LORD say unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house; inasmuch as he also is the Son of *Abraham*;" not so much by a natural as by a spiritual birth. He was made partaker of like precious faith with *Abraham*: like *Abraham* he believed on the LORD, and it was accounted to him for righteousness: his faith, like *Abraham's*, worked by love; and I doubt not, but he has been long since sitting in *Abraham's* harbour.

And now, are you not ashamed of yourselves, who speak against the doctrines of grace, especially that doctrine of being justified by faith alone, as though it led to licentiousness? What can be more unjust than such a charge? Is not the instance of *Zaccheus*, a sufficient proof to the contrary?

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Have I strained it to serve my own turn? **GOD** forbid. To the best of my knowledge I have spoken the truth in sincerity, and the truth as it is in **JESUS**. I do affirm that we are saved by grace, and that we are justified by faith alone: but I do also affirm, that faith must be evidenced by good works, where there is an opportunity of performing them.

What therefore has been said of *Zaccheus*, may serve as a rule, whereby all may judge whether they have faith or not. You say you have faith; but how do you prove it? Did you ever hear the **LORD JESUS** call you by name? Were you ever made to obey that call? Did you ever, like *Zaccheus*, receive **JESUS CHRIST** joyfully into your hearts? Are you influenced by the faith you say you have, to stand up and confess the **LORD JESUS** before men? Were you ever made willing to own, and humble yourselves for, your past offences? Does your faith work by love, so that you conscientiously lay up, according as **GOD** has prospered you, for the support of the poor? Do you give alms of all things that you possess? And have you made due restitution to those you have wronged? If so, happy are ye; salvation is come to your souls, you are sons, you are daughters of, you shall shortly be everlastingly blessed with, faithful *Abraham*. But, if you are not thus minded, do not deceive your own souls. Though you may talk of justification by faith, like angels, it will do you no good; it will only increase your damnation. You hold the truth, but it is in unrighteousness: your faith being without works, is dead: you have the devil, not *Abraham*, for your

father. Unless you get a faith of the heart, a faith working by love, with devils and damned spirits shall you dwell for evermore.

But it is time now to enforce the latter part of the text; "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." These words are spoken by our Saviour in answer to some self-righteous Pharisees, who, instead of rejoicing with the angels in heaven, at the conversion of such a sinner, murmured, "That he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner." To vindicate his conduct, he tells them, that this was an act agreeable to the design of his coming: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He might have said, the Son of God. But O the wonderful condescension of our Redeemer! He delights to style himself the Son of man. He came not only to save, but *to seek* and to save that which was lost. He came to *Jericho* to seek and to save *Zaccheus*; for otherwise *Zaccheus* would never have been saved by him. But from whence came he? even from heaven, his dwelling place, to this lower earth, this vale of tears, to seek and to save that which was lost; or all that feel themselves lost, and are willing, like *Zaccheus*, to receive him into their hearts to save them; with how great a salvation? even from the guilt, and also from the power of their sins; to make them heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself, and partakers of that glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Thus will the Son of man save that which is lost. He was made the Son of man, on purpose that he

might

might save them. He had no other end but this in leaving his Father's throne, in obeying the moral law, and hanging upon the cross: all that was done and suffered, merely to satisfy, and procure a righteousness for poor, lost, undone sinners, and that too without respect of persons. "That which was lost;" all of every nation and language, that feel, bewail, and are truly desirous of being delivered from their lost state, did the Son of man come down to seek and to save: for he is mighty, not only so, but willing, to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. He will in no ways cast them out: for he is the same to-day, as he was yesterday. He comes now to sinners, as well as formerly; and, I hope, hath sent me out this day to seek, and, under him, to bring home some of you, the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*.

What say you? Shall I go home rejoicing, saying, That many like sheep have went astray, but they have now believed on JESUS CHRIST, and so returned home to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls? If the LORD would be pleased thus to prosper my handy-work, I care not how many legalists and self-righteous Pharisees murmur against me, for offering salvation to the worst of sinners: for I know the Son of man came to seek and to save them; and the LORD JESUS will now be a guest to the worst Publican, the vilest sinner that is amongst you, if he does but believe on him. Make haste then, O sinners, make haste, and come by faith to CHRIST. Then, this day, even this hour, nay, this moment, if you believe, JESUS CHRIST shall

come and make his eternal abode in your hearts. Which of you is made willing to receive the King of glory? Which of you obeys the call, as *Zaccheus* did? Alas! why do you stand still? How know you whether JESUS CHRIST may ever call you again? Come then, poor, guilty sinners; come away, poor, lost, undone Publicans: make haste, I say, and come away to JESUS CHRIST. The LORD condescends to invite himself to come under the filthy roofs of the houses of your souls. Do not be afraid of entertaining him; he will fill you with all peace and joy in believing. Do not be ashamed to run before the multitude, and to have all manner of evil spoke against you falsely for his sake: one sight of CHRIST will make amends for all. *Zaccheus* was laughed at; and all that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, shall suffer persecution. But what of that? *Zaccheus* is now crowned in glory; as you also shall shortly be, if you believe on, and are reproached for CHRIST's sake. Do not, therefore, put me off with frivolous excuses: there's no excuse can be given for your not coming to CHRIST. You are lost, undone, without him; and if he is not glorified in your salvation, he will be glorified in your destruction; if he does not come and make his abode in your hearts, you must take up an eternal abode with the devil and his angels. O that the LORD would be pleased to pass by some of you at this time! O that he may call you by his Spirit, and make you a willing people in this day of his power! For I know my calling will not do, unless he, by his efficacious grace, compel

compel you to come in. O that you once felt what it is to receive **JESUS CHRIST** into your hearts! You would soon, like *Zaccheus*, give him every thing. You do not love **CHRIST**, because you do not know him; you do not come to him, because you do not feel your want of him: you are whole, and not broken hearted; you are not sick, at least not sensible of your sickness; and, therefore, no wonder you do not apply to **JESUS CHRIST**, that great, that almighty physician. You do not feel yourselves lost, and therefore do not seek to be found in **CHRIST**. O that **GOD** would wound you with the sword of his Spirit, and cause his arrows of conviction to stick deep in your hearts! O that he would dart a ray of divine light into your souls! For if you do not feel yourselves lost without **CHRIST**, you are of all men most miserable: your souls are dead; you are not only an image of hell, but in some degree hell itself: you carry hell about with you, and you know it not. O that I could see some of you sensible of this, and hear you cry out, "LORD, break this hard heart; LORD, deliver me from the body of this death; draw me, LORD, make me willing to come after thee; I am lost; LORD, save me, or I perish!" Was this your case, how soon would the LORD stretch forth his almighty hand, and say, Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid? What a wonderful calm would then possess your troubled souls! Your fellowship would then be with the Father and the Son: your life would be hid with **CHRIST** in **GOD**.

Some of you, I hope, have experienced this, and can say, I was lost, but I am found; I was dead, but am alive again: the Son of man came and fought me in the day of his power, and saved my sinful soul. And do you repent that you came to CHRIST? Has he not been a good master? Is not his presence sweet to your souls? Has he not been faithful to his promise? And have you not found, that even in doing and suffering for him, there is an exceeding present great reward? I am persuaded you will answer, Yes. O then, ye saints, recommend and talk of the love of CHRIST to others, and tell them, O tell them what great things the LORD has done for you! This may encourage others to come unto him. And who knows but the LORD may make you fishers of men? The story of *Zaccheus* was left on record for this purpose. No truly convicted soul, after such an instance of divine grace has been laid before him, need despair of mercy. What if you are Publicans? Was not *Zaccheus* a Publican? What if you are chief among the Publicans? Was not *Zaccheus* likewise? What if you are rich? Was not *Zaccheus* rich also? And yet almighty grace made him more than conqueror over all these hindrances. All things are possible to JESUS CHRIST; nothing is too hard for him: he is the LORD almighty. Our mountains of sins must all fall before this great *Zerubbabel*. On him GOD the Father has laid the iniquities of all that shall believe on him; and in his own body he bare them on the tree. There, there, by faith, O mourners in *Sion*, may you see your Saviour hanging with arms stretched

stretched out, and hear him, as it were, thus speaking to your souls; “ Behold how I have loved you! “ Behold my hands and my feet! Look, look into “ my wounded side, and see a heart flaming with “ love: love stronger than death. Come into my “ arms, O sinners, come wash your spotted souls “ in my heart’s blood. See here is a fountain “ opened for all sin and all uncleanness! See, O “ guilty souls, how the wrath of God is now a- “ biding upon you: come, haste away, and hide “ yourselves in the clefts of my wounds; for I am “ wounded for your transgressions; I am dying “ that you may live for evermore. Behold, as “ *Moses* lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so “ am I here lifted up upon a tree. See how I am “ become a curse for you: the chastisement of your “ peace is upon me. I am thus scourged, thus “ wounded, thus crucified, that you by my stripes “ may be healed. O look unto me, all ye trem- “ bling sinners, even to the ends of the earth! “ Look unto me by faith, and you shall be saved: “ for I came thus to be obedient even unto death, “ that I might save that which was lost.”

And what say you to this, O sinners? Suppose you saw the King of glory dying, and thus speaking to you; would you believe on him? No, you would not, unless you believe on him now: for though he is dead, he yet speaketh all this in the scripture; nay, in effect, says all this in the words of the text, “ The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.” Do not therefore any longer crucify the LORD of glory. Bring those re-
bels,

bels, your sins, which will not have him to reign over them, bring them out to him: though you cannot slay them yourselves, yet he will slay them for you. The power of his death and resurrection is as great now as formerly. Make haste therefore, make haste, O ye publicans and sinners, and give the dear LORD JESUS your hearts, your whole hearts. If you refuse to hearken to this call of the LORD, remember your damnation will be just: I am free from the blood of you all: you must acquit my Master and me at the terrible day of judgment. O that you may know the things that belong to your everlasting peace, before they are eternally hid from your eyes! Let all that love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity say, *Amen.*



SER-

S E R M O N VIII.

The Resurrection of *Lazarus*.

J O H N xi. 43, 44.

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead, came forth, bound hand foot with grave-cloaths : and his face was bound about with a napkin. JESUS saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

WHEN JESUS CHRIST, the eternal Word, was pleased to make all things by the word of his power, his last works were the best. When he looked back upon, and beheld the first products of his almighty power, he pronounced them "good ;" but when that last, that lovely creature man, was formed, he pronounced them "very good." So, the same JESUS, when he came to tabernacle

bernacle among us, and to begin and carry on a new and second creation, though all his works were miracles of wonder, and manifested forth the glory of his eternal Godhead, yet the nearer he came to the end of his public ministrations, the greater and more noble did the miracles which he wrought appear. The resurrection of *Lazarus*, that is to be the subject of the following discourse, I think, is a sufficient proof of this. To an eye of sense, it seems to be one of the greatest, if not the very greatest miracle of all which our blessed LORD performed. When our Saviour bid *John's* disciples go and tell their Master what things they had seen and heard, he commands them to inform him, that by his divine power "the dead were raised;" alluding no doubt to the Ruler's daughter, who was raised immediately after her decease; and the Widow's son, who at the command of JESUS, rose out of his coffin, as they were carrying his corpse to the burial. These were pregnant proofs, that JESUS was indeed the Messiah that was to come into the world. But his raising of *Lazarus* from the dead, after he had lain four days dead, and saw corruption, is still, if possible, a greater miracle; and consequently a stronger proof of his being the Anointed, the CHRIST of GOD. The evangelist *John* is very particular in giving us an account of this miracle; even so particular, as to spend a whole chapter in relating the circumstances which preceded, attended, and followed after it. And as he was undoubtedly directed herein by the all wise, unerring Spirit of GOD, does it not point out unto us, that this

miracle,

miracle, with all its respective circumstances, calls for our particular and most serious meditation? It appears to me in this light; and therefore, as the LORD shall be pleased to assist, I shall go back to the beginning of this chapter, follow the evangelist step by step, and consider the particulars of this wonderful miracle, make some practical observations as I go along, and conclude with some suitable instructions and exhortations, which will naturally arise from the body of the discourse.

The evangelist in the first verse, makes mention of the sickness of *Lazarus*. “Now, a certain man was sick, named *Lazarus* of *Bethany*, the town of *Mary*, and her sister *Martha*.” Some think these sisters were very wealthy, so as to own good part of the town, or, as the original word seems to imply, the village. But then it is probable the evangelist would have said the town of *Lazarus*, estates usually descending, as with us, in the male line: it means therefore no more, than that *Martha* and *Mary* lived in *Bethany*. The Holy Ghost pointing out to us hereby, that nothing makes a town so worthy of a gracious soul’s remark or esteem, as its having many of GOD’s dear children for its inhabitants. *Bethany*, though a little place, is more famous because it was the town of *Martha* and *Mary*, than if *Alexander* had fought in it one of his greatest battles. Both these women loved JESUS in sincerity, and were as good as they were great. But *Mary*, though the younger sister, seems to be the most eminent: for the evangelist in the second verse, speaks of her in a very distinguishing manner. “It
was

was that *Mary*, (that never-to-be-forgotten *Mary*) which anointed the LORD with ointment (expensive as it was) and wiped his feet, (after she had washed them with tears of love) with her hair," even the hair of her head. What notice is taken of this action! With what an eulogy, and in what a high strain of commendation is it here spoken of? And such are the honours of all GOD's saints. Though all our good works are not recorded as *Mary's* are, yet GOD is not unmindful, that he should forget our works of faith, and labours which have proceeded of love. Every tear we shed, every sigh we fetch, every alms we give, though it be only a cup of cold water, are all recorded in the Lamb's book of remembrance, and shall be produced to our eternal honour, and rewarded with a reward of grace, though not of debt, at the great and terrible day of the LORD. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, naked, and ye clothed me, sick and in prison, and ye came unto me." What reason have we then to be "steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as we are assured, that our labours will not be in vain or forgotten by the LORD?" It was that *Mary* that anointed the LORD with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair. And what follows? "Whose brother *Lazarus* was sick." So that being related to CHRIST, or his disciples, will not exempt persons from sickness. In this life, time and chance happen to all, only with this material difference, those afflictions which harden the obstinately impenitent, soften and purify

purify the heart of a true believer. “ My son, therefore despise not the chastening of the LORD (on one hand), nor faint when thou art rebuked of him (on the other) : for whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

JESUS loved *Lazarus*, and yet *Lazarus* was sick. And what do his sisters do for him now he is sick? No doubt they applied to a physician, for it is tempting GOD to neglect making use of means for the recovery of our health, when it is impaired. But then they were not guilty of *Asa's* crime, “ who sought to the physicians, but not to the LORD.” No; they knew the most skilful prescriptions would be of no effect, unless attended with a blessing from JESUS the Great and Almighty Physician; and therefore his sisters sent unto him, probably at the beginning of their brother's illness. How unlike is their conduct, to that of the generality of people, especially the rich and the great! How unfashionable is it now-a-days for persons to send to JESUS in behalf of their sick relations! It is so very uncustomary, that in some places, if a minister be sent for to a sick person, it is a sad symptom that the patient is almost past hopes of recovery. Thus did not *Martha* and her sister *Mary*; they sent unto JESUS, though he was now beyond *Jordan*, (chap. x. 40.) where he abode, or chiefly resided, for some time. Hence it was that they knew where to send to him. But what kind of message did they send? A very humble and suitable one. “ LORD, Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.” They might
have

have said, LORD, he who loveth thee is sick. But they knew, that our love was not worth mentioning, and that we love JESUS only because he first loved us. Besides, here is no prescribing to our LORD what he should do, or what means he should make use of. They do not so much as say, We pray thee to come, or only speak the word, and our sick brother shall be restored. They simply tell JESUS the case, knowing it was sufficient barely to lay it before an infinitely compassionate Redeemer, and leave it to him to act according to his own sovereign good-will and pleasure. “LORD, Behold he whom thou lovest is sick.” Oh how sweet is it when the soul is brought to this! And with what a holy confidence may we pray to, and intercede with the holy JESUS, when we have reason to hope, that those we pray and intercede for, are lovers of, and are beloved of him! For his eyes are in a peculiar manner over the righteous, and his ears always open to their prayers. This was their message, and it soon reached JESUS CHRIST. And how does he receive it? We are told, verse 4. “When JESUS heard that, (that he whom he loved was sick) He said, this sickness is not unto death, but unto the glory of GOD, that the Son of GOD may be glorified thereby.” To whom these words were spoken is not certain. In all probability, JESUS spake them to the persons that delivered *Martha's* and *Mary's* message. And if so, it was no doubt a comfortable answer for the present, though it must afterwards puzzle them as well as the disciples how to explain it, when they found that *Lazarus* was actually dead.

“ This

“ This sickness is not unto death,” not unto an abiding death, because he intended to raise him again, soon after his decease. It is like that expression of our LORD in *St. Mark*, “ The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth ;” which must not be understood in a literal, but metaphorical sense. And this and such-like instances, ought to teach us to weigh carefully our blessed LORD’s words, and to wait for an explication of them, by subsequent providences ; otherwise we shall be in danger of misapplying them, and thereby bring our souls into unspeakable bondage. “ This sickness is not unto death, but unto the glory of GOD, that the Son of GOD may be glorified thereby.” This is the end both of the afflictions and the deaths of GOD’s people. By all that happens to them he will be glorified one way or another, and cause every thing to work together for their good. And who then but would be content to be sick, or willing to submit to death itself, if so be the Son of GOD may be glorified thereby ? This answer, no doubt, proceeded from love. For we are told,

Verse 5. That “ JESUS loved *Martha* and her sister, and *Lazarus*.” Oh happy family ! Three in it beloved of JESUS, with a peculiar, everlasting love. “ Very often it so happens, (to use the words of the pious Bishop *Beveridge*) that there is “ but one in a city, and two in a country of this “ stamp ” But here are two sisters and a brother, all lovers of, and beloved by the glorious JESUS. What shall we say to these things ? Why, that our Saviour’s grace is free and sovereign, and he may do

do what he will with his own. They who are thus so highly favoured as to have so many converted in one house, ought to be doubly thankful! Such a blessing have not all his saints. No; many, very many, go mourning over their perverse and graceless relations all their lives long; and find, even to their dying day, that their greatest foes are those of their own household. Surely these three relations lived a heaven upon earth. For what can they want, what could make them miserable, who are assured of JESUS's love? But surely if JESUS loves this dear little family, the next news one might think we should hear, would be, that he went immediately and healed *Lazarus*; or at least cured him at a distance. But instead of that, we are told, verse 6. "When he had heard that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was." A strange way this, in the eye of natural reason, of expressing love; but not so strange in the eye of faith: for the LORD JESUS very often sheweth his love, by deferring to give immediate answers to our prayers. Hereby he tries our faith and patience, and exercises all our passive graces. We have a proof of this in the *Syrophœnician* woman, upon whom the blessed JESUS frowned, and spake roughly to at first, only that he might afterwards turn unto her and say, "O woman, great is thy faith." Let not those then who believe, make too much haste; or immediately in their hearts re-pine against the LORD, because he may not answer their requests, in their own time and way. GOD's time and way is best. And we shall find it
to

to be so in the end. *Martha* and *Mary* experienced the truth of this, though undoubtedly our LORD's seeming delay, to come and heal their brother, cost them great searchings of heart. But will the LORD JESUS forget his dear *Lazarus*, whom his soul loveth? "Can a woman forget her sucking child?" Indeed she may; but the LORD never faileth those that fear him. Neither is he slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: for his very delays are answers. The vision is for an appointed time; in the end it will speak and not lie.

Though our LORD abode two days where he was, to try the faith of these sisters, yet after this, he said unto his disciples, verse 7 "Let us go into *Judea* again." With what a holy familiarity does JESUS converse with his dear children! Our Saviour seems to speak to his disciples, as though he was only their brother, and as it were upon a level with them; "Let us go into *Judea* again." How gently, according to what was predicted of him, does he lead those that are with young! JESUS very well knew the weakness of his disciples, and also what a dangerous place *Judea* was: how gradually therefore does he make known unto them, his design of going thither! And how does he admit his disciples to expostulate with him on this account! "Master, say they, the *Jews* of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" They were amazed at our Lord's boldness, and were ready to call it presumption; as we generally are prone to censure and condemn other zealous and enterprising persons, as carrying matters too far; it
may

may be for no other reason, if we examine the bottom of our hearts, but because they go before, and excel ourselves. The disciples, no doubt, thought that they spoke out of love to their LORD, and assuredly they did; but what a deal of felt love was there mixed and blended with it? They seem much concerned for their Master, but they were more concerned for themselves. However JESUS overlooks their weakness, and mildly replies, verse 9, and 10. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world; but if any man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." As though our LORD had said, My dear disciples, I thank you for your care and concern for me. *Judea* is a dangerous place, and what you say of the treatment I met with from its inhabitants, is just and true: but be not afraid of going there upon my account. For as a man walketh safely twelve hours of the day, because he walketh in the light: so long as the time appointed by my Father for my public administration lasts, I shall be as secure from the hands of my enemies, as a man that walks in broad day is secure from falling. But as a man stumbleth if he walketh in the night, so when the night of my passion cometh, then, but not till then, shall I be given up into the hands of my spiteful foes. Oh what comfort have these words, by the blessing of GOD, frequently brought to my soul! How may all CHRIST's ministers strengthen themselves with this consideration, that so long as GOD hath work for them to do, they are immortal!

immortal! And if after our work is over, our Lord should call us to lay down our lives for the brethren, and to seal the truth of our doctrine with our blood, it would certainly be the highest honour that can be put upon us. “To you it is given not only to believe, but also to suffer,” says the apostle to the *Philippians*.

“These things (the evangelist tells us, ver. 11.) said Jesus, and after that, (to satisfy them that he was not going into *Judea* without a proper call) he saith unto them, Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth.” Our friend. Amazing! For what is a friend? As one’s own soul. How dear then, and near are true believers to the most adorable Jesus! “Our friend *Lazarus*.” Still more amazing! Here is condescension, here is unparalleled familiarity indeed. And what of him? “He sleepeth.” A figurative way of expression. For what is death to the lovers of JESUS CHRIST, but a sleep, and a refreshing one too? Thus it is said of *Stephen* when he died, that “he fell asleep.” CHRIST indeed died, but believers only sleep. And “those that sleep in Jesus, (says the scripture) will God bring with him.” “Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth.” For though he be dead, I shall raise him from the grave so soon, that his dying will be only like a person’s taking a short sleep. “Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” By this time, one would imagine, our Lord’s disciples should have understood him: But how unwilling are we to believe any thing that we do not like. “Then said his disciples, LORD, if he sleep he shall

shall do well." Oh fearful, and slow of heart to believe! How vain would they excuse themselves from going into *Judea*, for fear of a few stones! By this way of talking, how do they in effect impeach their blessed Master's conduct, and under a pretence of preserving his person, toster, and as it were plead for their own (though perhaps undiscerned) cowardice and unbelief? The charity, which hopeth and believeth all things for the best, teacheth us to judge thus favourably of them. For, "Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep." The great and compassionate High-priest knowing and remembering they were but dust, throws a veil of love over their infirmity; and at length, ver. 14. "saith unto them plainly (for if we wait on Jesus, we shall know his will plainly, one way or another) *Lazarus* is dead." And even then, lest they should be swallowed up with over much sorrow, he immediately adds, ver. 15. "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe," or have more faith, or have that faith which you already possess increased and confirmed. A plain proof that, if Jesus's delays to answer prayer, are only to strengthen our faith.

"Nevertheless, I go over Jordan, let us go unto him." This was a sufficient hint, if they knew how to improve it, that he intended to do something extraordinary, though he would not tell them directly what he intended. For the LORD JESUS will keep those whom he loves, at his foot, and dependant on him. "Let us go unto him." He

still

Bill speaks as though they were his equals. Oh that Christians in general, Oh that ministers in particular, would learn of him their great exemplar, to condescend to men of low degree! Well, the secret is now out. JESUS has said unto them plainly, *Lazarus* is dead. And what reception does this melancholy news meet with? What great condolence, especially from *Thomas*; for verse 16 “Then said *Thomas*, who is called *Didymus*, unto his fellow disciples, let us also go and die with him;” i. e. according to some, with *Lazarus*, with whom, it may be, *Thomas* had contracted an intimate acquaintance. But granting it was so; shall I commend him for this passionate expression? I commend him not. Surely he spake unadvisedly with his lips; “Let us also go and die with him.” As though there was no comfort henceforward to be expected in the world, now his friend *Lazarus* was gone. This was a great fault, and yet a fault that many of God’s children run into daily, by mourning for their deceased relations overmuch, like persons that have no hope. But this infirmity ought not to be indulged. For if our friends and dear relatives are dead, JESUS, that friend of sinners, is not dead. He will be better to us than seven sons, and will abundantly supply the place of all creature-comforts. But I am more inclined to think that the word *him*, refers to JESUS his dear Master; and if so, he is so far from being blamed, that he spake like a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST. Let us also go, that we may die with him. If our dear Master will go into *Judea*, and hazard his precious life,

let us not any longer make such frivolous excuses, but let us manfully accompany him; and if the *Jews* should not only be permitted to stone, but also to kill him, let us also go and die with him, we cannot die in a better cause. This was a speech worthy of a christian hero, and *Thomas* herein hath set us an example, that we should follow his steps, by exciting and provoking one another closely to adhere to the blessed *JESUS*, especially when his cause and interest is in any immediate danger. This exhortation, it seems, had a proper effect. They all went, and as far as we know, cheerfully accompanied their glorious Master.

How their thoughts were exercised on the road, we are not told. But I am apt to believe they were a little discouraged when they came to *Bethany*. For “When *JESUS* came, he found that *Lazarus* had lien in the grave for four days already” And what would it avail them, to come so many miles only to see a dead man’s tomb? But how wisely were all things ordered by the blessed *JESUS*, to manifest his glory in the most extraordinary manner, that not only his disciples might have their faith confirmed, but many also of the *Jews* might believe on him. This *Bethany*, it seems, verse 13. “was nigh unto *Jerusalem*, about fifteen furlongs off;” or about two miles; and *Martha* and *Mary*, being what we may call people of fashion, and devout likewise; many of the devout, and we may suppose many of the wealthy *Jews* came from the metropolis, as well as other adjacent places, verse 19. to *Martha* and *Mary*; not to pay an idle, trifling, but

a serious, profitable visit, “to comfort them concerning their brother.” This was kind and neighbourly. To weep with those that weep, and to visit the afflicted in their distresses, is one essential branch of true and undefiled religion. And O how sweet is it when we visit surviving friends, that we have reason to think that their departed relations died in the LORD! And we can therefore give them comfort concerning them: For “blessed are the dead, that die in the LORD, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.” This and such-like arguments, no doubt, these visitors made use of, to comfort *Mirthe* and *Mary*. And indeed they stood in much need of consolation. For we have reason to suppose, from our LORD’s answer, “This sickness is not unto death, but the glory of God;” that they had entertained thoughts of the recovery of their brother. But who can tell what these two holy souls must feel, when they found their brother did not recover, but was dead, laid out, and now stinking in the silent grave! What hard thoughts, without judging them, may we suppose they entertained concerning Jesus! Think ye not that they were ready to cry out in the language of the prophet, “Thou hast deceived us, and we are deceived?” But man’s extremity is Jesus’s opportunity. In the multitude of the sorrows that they had in their hearts, the news of CHRIST’s coming refreshes their souls. Somebody or another, commendably officious, privately informs *Mirthe* of it. “Who, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come (without making any apology to the com-

pany for her rudeness) went and met him : But *Mary* sat still in the house." But why so, *Mary* ? I thought thou hadst been most forward to attend on *JESUS*, and thy sister *Martha* more prone to be cumbered about the many things of this life. Why sittest thou still ? It may be the news was brought only privately to *Martha* (for it is plain from verse 31st, that the *Jews* who were in the house knew not of it ;) and *Martha* knowing how our *LORD* had chid her once, was resolved he should have no reason on the same account to chide her any more ; therefore when the news was brought, she would not so much as stay to inform her sister, but went out to see whether it were true or not, and if so, as the eldest sister, she would invite the blessed *JESUS* in. How happy is it, when *CHRIST*'s reproofs, for past neglects, excite our future zeal to come out and meet him ! Such reproofs are an excellent oil. Or, it may be, the news reached *Mary*'s ears, as well as *Martha*'s, but being overcome with sorrow, she thought it too good news to be true, and therefore sat still in the house. O how careful ought believers to be, to cherish and maintain, even in the midst of tribulation, a holy confidence and joy in *GOD* ! For the joy of the *LORD* is a believer's strength. Whereas giving way to melancholy and unbelief, raises gloom and vapours in the mind, clouds the understanding, clogs us in the way of duty, and gives the enemy, who loves to fish in troubled waters, a very great advantage over us.

Mary, perhaps, through the prevalence of this, and being also naturally of a sedentary disposition,
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“sat still in the house,” while her sister *Marta* got the part of her, and went out to meet *JESUS*. And how does she accost him? Why, in a language bespeaking the distress of a burdened and disordered mind. For she said unto *JESUS*, verse 21, “*LORD*, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Here is a mixture of faith and unbelief. Faith made her say, “*LORD*, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” But unbelief made her confine *CHRIST*’s power to his bodily presence. Besides, here was a tacit accusation of the blessed *JESUS* of unkindness, for not coming when they sent unto him the message, “*LORD*, he whom thou lovest is sick.” Once she charged *JESUS* with want of care; “*LORD*, carest thou not that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” Now she taxes him with want of kindness. “If thou hadst been here;” as much as to say, if thou hadst been so kind as to have come when we sent for thee, “my brother had not died;” and by saying thus, she does as it were lay her brother’s death to *JESUS CHRIST*. O how apt are even those whom *JESUS* loves in a peculiar manner, to charge him foolishly! How often does the enmity of our desperately wicked hearts rise against *CHRIST*, when we are under the afflicting hand of his providence! Are not the very best of us frequently tempted, in such circumstances, to say within ourselves at least, Why does *GOD* thus cruelly deal with us? Why did not he keep off this stroke, seeing it was in his power to have prevented it? How should we be ashamed and confounded before him

upon this account? How should we pray and labour to be delivered from this remaining enmity of the heart, and long for that time, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and we shall never feel one single rising of heart, against a good and gracious, and all-wise and glorious Redeemer, any more? However, to do *Martha* justice, she pretty well recovers herself, ver. 22. “But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee.” Whether these words imply an actual belief of our LORD’s divinity, is not certain. To me they do; because we shall presently find, that she did believe our LORD was the Son of God, and the Messiah which was to come into the world. Therefore when she said, she knew that whatsoever he asked of God, God would give it to him, she may be understood as referring to God the Father, under whom the LORD JESUS acted as Mediator, though equal to him in respect to his eternal glory and godhead. This mystery we may well suppose her acquainted with, because Jesus had been frequently preaching at her house, and consequently, had opened that mystery unto her. O what a blessed thing must it be to have such a Mediator! such an high-priest and intercessor at the Father’s right-hand, that whatever he asks the Father in our behalf, he will give unto us! Jesus takes this kindly at *Martha*’s hand, and passes over her infirmity. For if the LORD was exact to mark every thing that we say or do amiss, alas! who could abide? He only calmly says unto her, verse 23. “Thy brother shall rise again.”

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Glad tidings these of great joy. This should comfort us concerning our deceased, pious relations, that ere long they shall rise again, and soul and body be for ever with the LORD. Howbeit JESUS spake here of an immediate resurrection, though he did not speak plainly: For CHRIST loves to exercise the wish and patience of his disciples, and frequently leaves them to find out his meaning by degrees. It is best for us in our present state, that it should be so. In heaven it will be otherwise. "Thy brother, (says CHRIST to *Martine*) shall rise again." She might have immediately replied, When, LORD? But she fetches a circuit as it were, and labours to find out the mind of JESUS by degrees. "I know, says she, that he shall rise again at the resurrection of the last day." These words seem to imply, that she had some distant thought of our LORD's design to raise her brother now, and that she spoke thus only to draw our Saviour to speak, and tell her plainly whether he meant to do so or not. Those who are acquainted with JESUS, are taught an holy art by the blessed Spirit, in dealing with their blessed Master. "I know, says she, he shall rise again at the resurrection of the last day," (a notable proof this, by the way, that the pious Jews believed the resurrection of the body). It is just the same as though she had said, LORD, dost thou mean that my brother shall rise again before that time? Our Saviour wisely keeps off from giving her a direct answer, but chooses rather to preach to her heart. "JESUS said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: He

that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." On this *Martha's* faith, if in exercise, might take hold. O glorious words! How encouraging to you poor sinners lying in your blood! Though you are dead in trespasses and sins, and might justly be condemned to die the second death, yet if you believe on the LORD JESUS you shall live. He adds, "And whosoever believeth in me shall never die;" never die as to their souls, never die eternally, and consequently never finally fall away from God. This is an encouraging soul-comforting declaration for you, O believers, who are thus kept, as it were, in a garrison, by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto salvation! "Believest thou this?" says CHRIST to *Martha*, verse 26. What avail all the many great and precious promises of the gospel, unless they are applied and brought home in particular to each of our souls? The word does not profit unless it is mixed with faith. We therefore do well, when we are reading CHRIST's words, to put this question to ourselves; O my soul, believest thou this? And well would it be for us, if upon putting this question to ourselves, we could with the same holy confidence, and in the same delightful frame, say with *Martha*, verse 27. "Yes, LORD: I believe that thou art the CHRIST, the Son of God, which should come into the world." This I think is a direct confession of our LORD's divinity. How full was her heart when she spoke these words! I am persuaded it burnt within her. What a divine warmth had she contracted by talking with JESUS! How does she long
that

that her sister might share in her holy joy! For when she had so said, verse 28. "she went away;" full of love, no doubt, and called *Mary* her sister, as all will labour to call their near relations, who have felt the LORD JESUS to be the resurrection and the life themselves. But *Martha* took care, in the midst of her zeal (as we should always do) to behave with prudence; and therefore "she called her sister secretly, saying, The master is come, and calleth for thee." The master is come. She need say no more; *Mary* knew very well whom she meant. For holy souls easily understand one another when talking of their master JESUS. The divine *Herbert* used to delight (when speaking of JESUS) to say, "My Master;" perhaps he learned it of *Martha*, who said here, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." But what is this thou sayest, *Martha*? The Master is come, and calleth for thee? Surely a woman of thy exalted piety will not tell a deliberate lie, and in order to induce thy sister to come to JESUS, acquaint her that JESUS called her, when indeed he did not. Thou needest not put thyself to such an expence, or do so much evil, that good may come of it. Only mention JESUS to *Mary*, and let her know for a certainty that the Master is indeed come, and I am persuaded she will sit no longer. *Martha* no doubt knew, and therefore I cannot judge her as some do, as though in her haste she said what was not true. For JESUS might bid her to call her sister, though it be not directly mentioned in this chapter. And it is very probable, that our LORD did enquire after *Mary*, because

because she used to take such great delight in sitting at his feet, and hearing the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. “The Master is come (saith *Martha* to her sister) and calleth for thee.” And so fly I to all poor sinners. JESUS, your LORD and Master, your Prince and Saviour, is come, come unto this lower world, and is come this day in his word, and by me, who am less than the least of all his servants, and calleth for you. O that he may also come in the demonstration of the Spirit, and by his mighty power bow your stubborn hearts and wills to obey the call, as holy *Mary* did.

For we are told, verse 29. “When she heard that, she rose quickly, and came to JESUS.” Sinners, when will you do so? Or why do you not do so? How know you whether JESUS will call for you any more, before he calls you by death to judgment? Linger, O linger no longer. Fly, fly for your lives. Arise quickly, and with *Mary* come to JESUS. She obeyed the call so very speedily, that her haste was taken notice of by her visitors. “The *Jews* then, who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw *Mary* that she rose up hastily (without any ceremony at all) and went out, followed her, saying, she goeth to the grave, to weep there.” How wisely does our LORD permit and order all this, to bring the *Jews* out to behold the wonderful miracle that he was about to perform! Little did *Mary* and the *Jews* think for what end they were thus providentially led out. But when JESUS hath work to be done, he will
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bring souls to the place where he intends to call them, in spite of men or devils. But how does *Mary* behave when she comes to *Jesus*? We may be assured, not without great humanity. No wonder then we are told, verse 32. that “when she saw him, she immediately fell down at his feet (a place *Mary* had been used to, and in an agony of grief, says, as her sister had done before her) *LORD*, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” Poor *Mary*! Her concern was great indeed. Tho’ she was a holy woman, she could not well bear the loss of her brother. She knew very well, that the world would miss him, and no doubt he had been a kind and tender brother to her. But I am afraid she was finally overcome with overmuch sorrow. However, had we been there, she might have affected us. It seems to have affected the visitors, especially the blessed *Jesus*. He, instead of blaming her, for her tacitly accusing him of unkindness, and for not coming to her brother’s relief, pities and sympathizes both with *Mary* and her weeping friends! “When *Jesus* saw her weep, and the *Jews* also weeping, he groaned in his Spirit, and was troubled.” Troubled: Not with any mortal perturbation we may be assured: nothing of that nature could possibly be in his sinless soul. And therefore, some have judiciously enough compared the trouble our *LORD* now felt, to some crystal water shaken in a glass or bottle; you may shake it, but there will be no sediment: it will be crystal water still. “He groaned in his Spirit.” I do not see why this may not be understood of his praying in the Spirit.

which maketh intercession for the saints, with *ἀλαλητος, σφραγις, ἁγιος*, “groanings that cannot be uttered.” Methinks I see the immaculate Lamb of God, secretly, but powerfully agonizing with his Father; his heart is big with sympathy! At length, out of the fulness of it, he said, verse 34. “Where have ye laid him? They (I suppose *Mary* and *Martha*) say unto him, LORD, come and see.” He came, he saw, “He wept,” ver. 35. It is put in a verse by itself, that we might pause a while, and ask why JESUS wept?

He wept, to shew us, that it was no sin to shed a tear of love and resignation at the grave of a deceased friend; he wept, to see what havock sin had made in the world, and how it had reduced man, who was originally little lower than the angels, (by making him subject to death) to a level with the beasts that perish: but above all, he wept at the foresight of the people’s unbelief; he wept, to think how many then present, would not only not believe on, but would be hardened, and have their prejudices encreased more and more against him, though he should raise *Lazarus* from the dead before their eyes. Well then may ministers be excused, who, whilst they are preaching, now and then drop a few tears, at the consideration of their sermons being, through the perverseness and unbelief of many of their audience, a favour of death unto death, instead of a favour of life unto life. Upon a like occasion JESUS wept. What an affecting sight was here! Let us for a while suppose ourselves placed amidst these holy mourners; let us imagine

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gine that we see the sepulchre just before us, and the *Jews*, and *Mary*, and the blessed *JESUS* weeping round it. Surely, the most obdurate of us all must drop a tear, or at least be affected with the sight; we find that it affected those who were really by standers; for then said the *Jews*, verse 36. "Behold, how he loved him." And did they say, Behold, how he loved him, when *JESUS* only shed a few tears over the grave of his departed *Lazarus*? Come then, O sinners, and view *CHRIST* dying and pouring out his precious heart's blood for you upon an accursed tree, and then surely you must needs cry out, Behold, how he loved us!

But alas, though all were affected, yet, it seems, all were not well affected at seeing *JESUS* weep! For we are told, ver. 37. that some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" One would imagine, that Satan himself could scarce have uttered a more perverse speech: every word is full of spite and rancour. Could not this man, this fellow, this deceiver, who pretends to say, that he opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man, whom he seems to love so, should not have died? Is not this a sufficient proof that he is a cheat? Have we caught him at last? Is it likely that he really helped others, when he could not help his own friend?——O how patient ought the servants of our *LORD* to be! And how may they expect to be censured, and have their good deeds questioned, and lessened, when their blessed Master has been thus treated before them! However,

However, JESUS will do good, notwithstanding all these slights put upon him; and therefore, again groaning in himself, "he cometh to the grave; it was a cave, (or vault, as is customary in great families) and a stone lay upon it; JESUS said, ver. 30. "Take ye away the stone." How gradually does our LORD proceed, in order to engage the people's attention the more! Methinks I see them all eye, all ear, and eagerly waiting to see the issue of this affair. But *Martia* now returning with the rest of the company, seems to have lost that good frame which she was in when she went to call her sister; "She saith unto him, (ver. 31.) LORD, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *either* dead or buried four days." O the dismal effects of carnal reasoning! How naturally do we fall into doubts and fears, when we have not our eye simply directed to the blessed JESUS! *Martia*, instead of looking up to him, looks down into the grave, and poring upon her brother's stinking corpse, falls into a fit of unbelief: "By this time he stinketh;" and, therefore, a sight of him will only be offensive. Perhaps she might think our LORD only wanted to take a view of her brother *Lazarus*; JESUS, therefore, to give her yet a further hint, that he intended to do something extraordinary, saith unto her, ver. 40. "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Our LORD speaks here with some degree of warmth: for nothing displeases him more than the unbelief of his own disciples. "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

When

When CHRIST first spoke these words unto her, we are not told; it might be, this was part of their conversation upon another occasion some time before: however, he checks her openly for her unbelief now: for those whom JESUS loves, must expect to be rebuked sharply by him, whenever they dishonour him by unbelief. The reproof is taken.

Without making any more objections, “ They took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.” And now behold with what solemnity the holy JESUS prepares himself to execute his gracious design! “ And JESUS lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” Who can express with what fervor and intenseness of spirit, our glorious High-priest uttered these words! They are a thanksgiving arising from an assurance that his Father had heard him: for CHRIST, as Mediator, was inferior to the Father. “ I knew that thou hearest me always (and so may every believer in his degree say too); but because of the people which stand by, I said it.”—said what? We do not hear that JESUS said any thing by way of prayer before; and that is true, if we mean vocally, but mentally he did say something, even when he groined in the spirit once and again, and was troubled. There is a way of praying, even when we do not, and cannot speak. “ Why cryest thou,” said GOD to *Moses*; though we do not hear that he spoke one single word: but he cried in his heart.

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And I observe this for the comfort of some weak, but real christians, who think they never pray, unless they can have a great flow of words; but this is a great mistake: for we often pray best, when we speak least. There are times when the heart is too big to speak: and the spirit itself maketh intercession for the saints, and that too according to the will of God, with groanings that cannot be uttered. Such was *Hannah's* prayer for a son, "She spake not, only her lips moved:" and such was our LORD's way of praying at this time. And perhaps the soul is never in a better frame, than when in a holy stillness, and unspeakable serenity, it can put itself as a blank in JESUS's hand, for him to stamp on it just what he pleases.

And now the hour of our Saviour's performing this long-expected miracle is come. Ver. 41. "When he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus*, come forth." With the word there went an irresistible power: he spake, and it was done: he cried, and behold, "He that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths; and his face was bound about with a napkin." What a sight was here! Methinks I see surprise sit upon each spectator's face: as the body rises, their wonder rises too. See how they gaze! See how their looks bespeak the language of astonished hearts; and all with a kind of silent, but expressive oratory, ready to say, What manner of man is this? Surely this is the Messiah that was to come into the world. How did the hearts of *Martha* and *Mary*, as we may very well suppose, leap for joy!

How

How were they ashamed of themselves, for charging JESUS foolishly, and taxing him with unkindness, for not coming to prevent their brother's dying ! It is true, CHRIST suffered him to die, but behold he is now alive again ! JESUS never denies us one thing, but he intends to give us something better in the stead of it. Think you not that *Martha* and *Mary* were now the most officious to obey our blessed LORD's command, "Loose him, and let him go !" That same power that raised *Lazarus* from the dead, might have also taken the grave cloaths from him : but JESUS CHRIST never did, and never will work a needless miracle. Others could unloose his grave-cloaths, but JESUS alone could unloose the bands of death.

And now, perhaps, some may be ready to ask, What news hath *Lazarus* brought from the other world ! But stop, O man, thy vain curiosity ! It is forbidden, and therefore useless knowledge. The scriptures are silent concerning it. Why should we desire to be wise above what is written ? It becomes us rather to be wholly employed in adoring the gracious hand of that mighty Redeemer who raised him from the dead, and to see (now we have heard the history) what improvement we can make of such a remarkable and instructive transaction.

Would to GOD that my preaching upon the resurrection of *Lazarus* to-day, may have the same blessed effects upon you, as the sight of it had upon some of the standers-by : For we are told, ver. 45. "Then many of the *Jews* who came to *Mary*, and had seen the things which JESUS did, believed on him."

him." A profitable visit this! The best, no doubt, that they ever paid in their lives. And this was in answer to our Saviour's prayer, "But because of the people who stand by, I said, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me." One would imagine, that all who saw this miracle, were induced thereby, really to believe on him: But alas! I could almost say, that I can tell you of a greater miracle than raising *Lazarus* from the dead. And what is that? Why, that some of these very persons who were on the spot, instead of believing on him, "went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done." ver. 46. It was so far from convincing them, that it only excited their envy, stirred up the whole hell of their self-righteous hearts, and made them, from that day forward, "take counsel together," to execute what they had long before designed, to put the innocent Jesus to death. See how busy they are, ver. 47. "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles." Envy itself, it seems, could not deny that. And need they say then, "What do we," or what should we do? Believe in, to be sure, and submit to him; take up the cross, and follow him. No; on the contrary, say they, ver. 48. "If we let him thus alone, (which they would not have done so long, had not God put a hook in the Leviathan's jaws) all men will believe on him." And suppose they did? Then all men would be blessed indeed, and have a title to true happiness. No, say they, "then the Romans shall come and take

take away both our place and nation." But were not the *Romans* come already? Were they not at this time tributaries to *Cæsar*? But they were afraid of the church as well as the state: "They will come and take away our place," our place of worship: and consequently, they look upon **JESUS CHRIST** and his proceedings, and adherents, as dangerous both to church and state.

This hath been always the method of Pharisees and high-priests, when they have been taking counsel against the **LORD JESUS**, and his dear anointed ones. But they need not have been afraid on this account: for our Saviour's kingdom neither was, nor is of this world; and the only way to have preserved their place and nation, was to have countenanced, and as much as in them lay, caused all to believe on **JESUS**. How miserably were they out in their politics! The death of **JESUS**, which they thought would save, was the grand cause of the utter destruction both of their place and nation: And so will all politics formed against **CHRIST** and his gospel end at last in the destruction of those who contrived them.

O the desperate wickedness and treachery of man's deceitful heart! Where are the scribes, where are the infidels, where are the letter-learned disputers of this world, who are daily calling for a repetition of miracles, in order to confirm and evidence the truth of the christian religion? Surely if they believe not *Moses* and the prophets, neither would they believe, though one rose from the dead. Here was one raised from the dead before many witnesses, and yet

yet all those witnesses did by no means believe on JESUS. For divine faith is not wrought in the heart by moral persuasion (though moral persuasion is very often made use of as a means to convey it); faith is the peculiar gift of GOD: no one can come to JESUS unless the Father draw him: and, therefore, that I may draw near the close of this discourse, let me shut up all with a word of exhortation.

Come, ye dead, Christless, unconverted sinners, come and see the place where they laid the body of the deceased *Lazarus*; behold him laid out, bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths, locked up and stinking in a dark cave, with a great stone placed on the top of it! View him again and again; go nearer to him; be not afraid; smell him, ah! how he stinketh. Stop there now, pause a while; and whilst thou art gazing upon the corpse of *Lazarus*, give me leave to tell thee with great plainness, but greater love, that this dead, bound, entombed, stinking carcase, is but a faint representation of thy poor soul in its natural state: for, whether thou believest it or not, thy spirit which thou bearest about with thee, sepulchred in flesh and blood, is as literally dead to GOD, and as truly dead in trespasses and sins, as the body of *Lazarus* was in the cave. Was he bound hand and foot with grave-cloaths? So art thou bound hand and foot with thy corruptions: and as a stone was laid on the sepulchre, so is there a stone of unbelief upon thy stupid heart. Perhaps thou hast lain in this state, not only four days, but many years, stinking in
GOD'S

God's nostrils. And, what is still more affecting, thou art as unable to raise thyself out of this loathsome, dead state, to a life of righteousness and true holiness, as ever *Lazarus* was to raise himself from the cave in which he lay so long. Thou mayest try the power of thy own boasted free-will, and the force and energy of moral persuasion and rational arguments (which, without all doubt, have their proper place in religion); but all thy efforts, exerted with never so much vigour, will prove quite fruitless and abortive, till that same JESUS, who said, "Take away the stone," and cried, "*Lazarus*, come forth," comes by his mighty power, removes the stone of unbelief, speaks life to thy dead soul, looses thee from the fetters of sins and corruption, and by the influences of his blessed Spirit, enables thee to arise, and to walk in the way of his holy commandments. And O that he would now rend the heavens, and come down amongst you! O that there may be a stirring among the dry bones this day! O that whilst I am speaking, and saying, "Dead sinners, come forth," a power, an almighty power might accompany the word, and cause you to emerge into new life!

If the LORD should vouchsafe me such a mercy, and but one single soul in this great congregation, should arise and shake himself from the dust of his natural state; according to the present frame of my heart, I should not care if preaching this sermon here in the fields, was an occasion of hastening my death, as raising *Lazarus* hastened the death of my blessed Master. For methinks death, in some respects, is
more

more tolerable, than to see poor sinners day by day lying sepulchred, dead and stinking in sin. O that you saw how loathsome you are in the sight of **GOD**, whilst you continue in your natural state! I believe you would not so contentedly hug your chains, and refuse to be set at liberty.

Methinks I see some of you affected at this part of my discourse. What say you? Are there not some ready to complain, alas! we have some relations present, who are so notoriously wicked, that they not only hug their chains, but make a mock of sin, and think not only in the sight of **GOD**, but man. Dear souls! you are ready to urge this, as a reason why **JESUS** will not raise them; and think it hard, perhaps, that **JESUS** does not come, in answer to your repeated groans and prayers, to convert and save them. But what **JESUS** said unto *Martha*, I say unto you, "Believe, and you shall see the glory of **GOD**." Think it not a thing incredible, that **GOD** should raise their dead souls. Think not hard of **JESUS** for delaying an answer to your prayers: assure yourselves he heareth you always. And who knows, but this day **JESUS** may visit some of your dear relations hearts, upon whose account you have travelled in birth till **CHRIST** be formed in them? You have already sympathized with *Martha* and *Mary*, in their doubts and fears; who knows but you may also be partakers of that joy which their souls experienced, when they received their risen brother into their longing arms.

O **Christie's** souls, you do not know what grief your continuance in sin occasions to your godly relations!

lations! You do not know how you grieve the heart of JESUS. I beseech you give him no fresh cause to weep over you upon account of your unbelief: let him not again groan in his spirit and be troubled. Behold how he has loved you, even so as to lay down his life for you. What could he do more? I pray you, therefore, dead sinners, come forth; arise and sup with JESUS. This was an honour conferred on *Lazarus*, and the same honour awaits you: Not that you shall sit down with him personally in this life, as *Lazarus* did; but you shall sit down with him at the table of his ordinances, especially at the table of the Lord's-supper, and ere long sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven.

Happy, thrice happy ye, who are already raised from spiritual death, and have an earnest of an infinitely better and more glorious resurrection in your hearts. You know a little, how delightful it must have been to *Martha* and *Mary* and *Lazarus*, to sit down with the blessed JESUS here below; but how infinitely more delightful will it be, to sit down, not only with *Mary* and *Martha*, but with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and all your other dear brethren and sisters, in the kingdom of heaven. Do you not long for that time, when JESUS shall say unto you, "Come up hither?" Well! blessed be GOD, yet a little while, and that same JESUS, who cried with a loud voice, "*Lazarus*, come forth;" shall with the same voice, and with the same power, speak unto all that are in their graves, and they shall come forth. That all who

hear me this day may be then enabled to lift up their heads and rejoice, that the day of their compleat redemption is indeed fully come, may JESUS CHRIST grant, for his infinite mercy's sake. *Amen, and Amen.*

S E R M O N IX.

Satan's Devices.

2 C O R. ii. 11.

Lest Satan should get an advantage over us ; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

THE occasion of these words was as follows :
 In the church of *Corinth* there was an unhappy person, who had committed such incest, as was not so much as named among the *Gentiles*, in taking his father's wife ; but either on account of his wealth, power, or some such reasons, like many notorious offenders now-a-days, he had not been exposed to the censures of the church. *St. Paul*, therefore, in his first epistle, severely chides them for this neglect of discipline, and commands them, " in the name of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, when they were gathered together, to deliver such a one, whoever he was, to Satan, for the destruction of the
 I 2 flesh,

flesh, that his Spirit might be saved in the day of the LORD ;” that is, they should solemnly excommunicate him ; which was then commonly attended with some bodily disease. The *Corinthians*, being obedient to the Apostle, as dear children, no sooner received this reproof, but they submitted to it, and cast the offending party out of the church. But whilst they were endeavouring to amend one fault, they unhappily ran into another ; and as they formerly had been too mild and remiss, so now they behaved towards him with too much severity and resentment. The Apostle, therefore, in this chapter, reproves this, and tells them, that “ sufficient to the offender’s shame, was the punishment which had been inflicted of many :” that he had now suffered enough ; and that, therefore, lest he should be tempted to say with *Cain*, “ My punishment is greater than I can bear ;” or to use the Apostle’s own words, “ Lest he should be swallowed up with over much sorrow ;” they ought, now he had given proof of his repentance, to forgive him, to confirm their love towards him, and so restore him in the spirit of meekness ; “ Lest Satan, (to whose buffetings he was now given, by tempting him to despair) should get an advantage over us :” and so, by representing you as merciless and cruel, cause that holy name to be blasphemed, by which you are called ; “ for we are not ignorant of his devices :” we know very well how many subtle ways he has to draw aside and beguile unguarded unthinking men.

Thus

Thus then, stand the words in relation to the context; but as Satan has many devices, and as his quiver is full of other poisonous darts, besides those which he shoots at us to drive us to despair, I shall, in the following discourse,

First, Briefly observe who we are to understand by Satan. And,

Secondly, Point out to you, what are the chief devices he generally makes use of, to draw off converts from CHRIST, and also prescribe some remedies against them.

First, Who are we to understand by Satan?

The word *Satan*, in its original signification, means an adversary; and in its general acceptation, is made use of, to point out to us the chief of the devils, who, for striving to be as GOD, was cast down from heaven, and is now permitted, “with the rest of his spiritual wickednesses in high places, to walk up and down, seeking whom he may devour.” We hear of him immediately after the creation, when in the shape of a serpent, he lay in wait to deceive our first parents. He is called Satan, in the book of *Job*, where we are told, that “when the sons of GOD came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan also came amongst them.” As the scripture also speaketh in the book of *Chronicles*; “and Satan moved *David* to number the people.” In the New Testament he goes under different denominations;

nominations ; sometimes he is 'called the *evil One*, because he is evil in himself, and tempts us to evil. Sometimes, "the Prince of the power of the air ;" and, "the Spirit that now ruleth in the children of disobedience ;" because he resides chiefly in the air, and through the whole world : and all that are not born of GOD, are said to lie in him.

He is an enemy to GOD and goodness ; he is a hater of all truth : Why else did he slander GOD in paradise ? Why did he tell *Eve*, "You shall not surely die ?" And why did he promise to give all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, to JESUS CHRIST, if he would fall down and worship him ?

He is full of malice, envy, and revenge : For what other motives could induce him to molest innocent man in paradise ? And why is he still so restless in his attempts to destroy us, who have done him no wrong ?

He is a being of great *power*, as appears in his being able to act on the imagination of our blessed LORD, so as to represent to him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, in a moment of time. As also in carrying his sacred body through the air up to a pinnacle of the temple ; and his driving a herd of swine so furiously into the deep. Nay, so great is his might, that, I doubt not, was GOD to let him use his full strength, but he could

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turn the earth upside down, or pull the sun from its orb.

But what he is most remarkable for is, his *subtlety*: for not having power given him from above, to take us by force, he is obliged to wait for opportunities to betray us, and to catch us by guile. He, therefore, made use of the serpent, which was subtle above all the beasts of the field, in order to tempt our first parents; and accordingly he is said, in the New Testament, “To lie in wait to deceive;” and, in the words of the text, the Apostle says, “We are not ignorant of his devices;” thereby implying, that we are more in danger of being seduced by his policy, than over-borne by his power.

From this short description of Satan, we may easily judge whose children they are, who love to make a lie, who speak evil of, and slander their neighbour, and whose hearts are full of pride, subtlety, malice, envy, revenge, and all uncharitableness. Surely they have Satan for their father: for the tempers of Satan they know, and the works of Satan they do. But were they to see either themselves, or Satan as he is, they could not but be terrified at their own likenesses, and abhor themselves in dust and ashes.

But, the justice of God in suffering us to be tempted, is vindicated from the following considerations: That we are here in a state of disorder; That he has promised not to suffer us to be tempted a-

bove what we are able to bear ; and not only so, but to him that overcometh he will give a crown of life.

The holy angels themselves, it should seem, were once put to a trial whether they would be faithful or not. The first *Adam* was tempted, even in paradise. And **JESUS CHRIST**, the second *Adam*, though he was a son, yet was carried, as our representative, by the Holy Spirit, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And there is not one single saint in paradise, amongst the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, and the spirits of just men made perfect, who, when on earth, was not assaulted by the fiery darts of that wicked one, the devil.

What then has been the common lot of all **GOD'S** children, and of the angels, nay, of the eternal Son of **GOD** himself, we must not think to be exempted from : No, it is sufficient if we are made perfect through temptations, as they were. And, therefore, since we cannot but be tempted, unless we could unmake human nature, instead of repining at our condition, we should rather be enquiring, at what time of our lives Satan most violently assaults us ? And what those devices are, which he commonly makes use of, in order to “ get an advantage over us ? ”

As to the first question, what time of life ? I answer,

swer, we must expect to be tempted by him, in some degree or other, all our lives long.—For this life being a continual warfare, we must never expect to have rest from our spiritual adversary the devil, or to say, our combat with him is finished, 'till, with our blessed Master, we bow down our heads, and give up the ghost.

But since the time of our conversion, or first entering upon the spiritual life, is the most critical time at which he, for the most part, violently be-fets us, as well knowing, if he can prevent our setting out, he can lead us captive at his will; and since the wise son of *Sirach* particularly warns us, when we are going to serve the LORD, to prepare our souls for temptation, I shall, in answer to the other question, pass on to the

Second general thing proposed; and point out those devices, which Satan generally makes use of at our first conversion, in order to get an advantage over us.

But let me observe to you, that whatsoever shall be delivered in the following discourse is only designed for such as have actually entered upon the divine life; and not for carnal almost Christians, who have the form of godliness, but never yet felt the power of it in their hearts. This being pre-mised, The

First device I shall mention, which Satan makes use of, is, *to drive us to despair.*

When God the Father awakens a sinner by the terrors of the law, and by his Holy Spirit convinceth him of sin, in order to lead him to CHRIST, and shew him the necessity of a Redeemer; then Satan generally strikes in, and aggravates those convictions to such a degree, as to make the sinner doubt of finding mercy through the Mediator.

Thus, in all his temptations of the Holy JESUS, he chiefly aimed to make him question, whether he was the Son of GOD? "If thou be the Son of GOD," do so and so. With many such desponding thoughts, no doubt, he filled the heart of the great *St. Paul*, when he continued three days, neither eating bread nor drinking water; and therefore he speaks by experience, when he says, in the words of the text, "We are not ignorant of his devices," that he would endeavour to drive the incestuous person to despair.

But let not any of you be influenced by him, to despair of finding mercy. For it is not the greatness or number of our crimes, but impenitence and unbelief, that will prove our ruin: No, were our sins more in number than the hairs of our head, or of a deeper die than the brightest scarlet; yet the merits of the death of JESUS CHRIST are infinitely greater, and faith in his blood shall make them white as snow.

Answer

Answer always, therefore, his despairing suggestions, as your blessed LORD did, with an "It is written." Tell him, you know that your Redeemer liveth, ever to make intercession for you; that the LORD hath received from him double for all your crimes: And though you have sinned much, that is no reason why you should despair, but only why you should love much, having so much forgiven. A

Second device that Satan generally makes use of, to get an advantage over young converts, is, to tempt them to *presume*, or to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think.

When a person has for some little time tasted the good word of life, and felt the powers of the world to come, he is commonly (as indeed well he may) most highly transported with that sudden change he finds in himself. But then, Satan will not be wanting, at such a time, to puff him up with a high conceit of his own attainments, as if he was some great person; and will tempt him to set at nought his brethren, as though he was holier than they.

Take heed therefore, and let us beware of this device of our spiritual adversary; for as before honour is humility, so a haughty spirit generally goes before a fall; and GOD is obliged, when under such circumstances, to send us some humbling visitation, or permit us to fall, as he did *Peter*, into

some grievous sin, that we may learn not to be too high minded.

To check therefore all suggestions to spiritual pride, let us consider, that we did not apprehend CHRIST, but were apprehended of him. That we have nothing but what we have received. That the free grace of GOD has alone made the difference between us and others; and, was GOD to leave us to the deceitfulness of our own hearts but one moment, we should become weak and wicked, like other men. We should farther consider, that being proud of grace, is the most ready way to lose it. "For GOD resisteth the proud, and giveth more grace only to the humble." And were we endowed with the perfections of the seraphim; yet if we were proud of those perfections, they would render us more accomplished devils. Above all, we should pray earnestly to Almighty GOD, that we may learn of JESUS CHRIST, to be lowly in heart. That his grace, through the subtlety and deceivableness of Satan, may not be our poison. But that we may always think soberly of ourselves, as we ought to think. A

Third device I shall mention, which Satan generally makes use of, "to get an advantage over us," is to tempt us to *uneasiness*, and to have *hard thoughts of GOD*, when we are dead and barren in prayer.

Though this is a term not understood by the natural

tural man, yet, whosoever there are amongst you, who have passed through the pangs of the *new birth*, they know full well what I mean, when I talk of deadness and dryness in prayer. And, I doubt not, but many of you, amongst whom I am now preaching the kingdom of GOD, are at this very time labouring under it.

For, when persons are first awakened to the divine life, because grace is weak and nature strong, GOD is often pleased to vouchsafe them some extraordinary illuminations of his Holy Spirit; but when they are grown to be more perfect men in CHRIST, then he frequently seems to leave them to themselves; and not only so, but permits a horrible deadness and dread to overwhelm them; at which times Satan will not be wanting to vex and tempt them to impatience, to the great discomfort of their souls.

But be not afraid; for this is no more than your blessed Redeemer, that spotless Lamb of GOD, has undergone before you: witness his bitter agony in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. When he sweat great drops of blood, falling on the ground; when the sense of the Divinity was drawn from him; and Satan, in all probability, was permitted to set all his terrors in array before him.

Rejoice, therefore, my brethren, when you fall into the like circumstances; as knowing, that you
are

are therein partakers of the sufferings of **JESUS CHRIST**. Consider, that it is necessary such inward trials should come, to wean us from the immoderate love of sensible devotion, and teach us to follow **CHRIST**, not merely for his loaves, but out of a principle of love and obedience. In patience, therefore, possess your souls, and be not terrified by Satan's suggestions. Still persevere in seeking **JESUS** in the use of means, though it be sorrowing; and though through barrenness of soul, you may go mourning all the day long. Consider that the spouse is with you, though behind the curtain; as he was with *Mary*, at the sepulchre, though she knew it not. That he was withdrawn but for a little while, to make his next visit more welcome. That though he may now seem to frown and look back on you, as he did on the *Syrophenician* woman; yet if you, like her, or blind *Bartimeus*, cry out so much the more earnestly, " **JESUS**, thou Son of *David* have mercy on us;" he will be made known unto you again, either in the temple, by breaking of bread, or some other way.

But amongst all the devices that Satan makes use of, " to get an advantage over us," there is none in which he is more successful, or by which he grieves the children of **GOD** worse, than a

Fourth device I am going to mention, his troubling you with *blasphemous, profane, unbelieving thoughts*; and sometimes to such a degree, that they are as tormenting as the rack.

Some

Some indeed are apt to impute all such evil thoughts to a disorder of body. But those who know any thing of the spiritual life, can inform you, with greater certainty, that for the generality, they proceed from that wicked one, the devil; who, no doubt, has power given him from above, as well now as formerly, to disorder the body, as he did *Job's*, that he may, with the more secrecy and success, work upon, ruse and torment the soul.

You that have felt his fiery darts, can subscribe to the truth of this, and by fatal experience can tell, how often he has bid you, “curse GOD and die,” and darted into your thoughts a thousand blasphemous suggestions, even in your most secret and solemn retirements; the bare looking back on which makes your very hearts to tremble.

I appeal to your own consciences; Have not some of you, when you have been lifting up holy hands in prayer, been pestered with such a crowd of the most horrid insinuations, that you have been often tempted to rise off from your knees, and been made to believe your prayers were an abomination to the LORD? Nay, when, with the rest of your christian brethren, you have crowded round the holy table, and taken the sacred symbols of CHRIST'S most blessed body and blood into your hands, instead of remembering the death of your Saviour, have you not been employed in driving out evil thoughts, as *Abraham* was in driving away the birds, that came

to devour his sacrifice ; and thereby have been terrified, lest you have eat and drunk your own damnation ?

But marvel not, as though some strange thing happened unto you ; for this has been the common lot of all God's children. We read, even in *Job's* time, " That when the sons of God came to appear before their Maker, (at public worship) Satan also came amongst them," to disturb their devotions.

And think not that God is angry with you for these distracting, though ever so blasphemous thoughts : No, he knows it is not you, but Satan working in you ; and therefore, notwithstanding he may be displeas'd with, and certainly will punish him ; yet he will both pity and reward you. And though it be difficult to make persons in your circumstances to believe so ; yet I doubt not but you are more acceptable to God, when performing your holy duties in the midst of such involuntary distractions, than when you are wrapped up by devotion, as it were, into the third heavens ; for you are then suffering, as well as doing the will of God at the same time ; and, like *Nehemiah's* servants at the building of the temple, are holding a trowel in one hand, and a sword in the other. Be not driven from the use of any ordinance whatever, on account of those abominable suggestions ; for then you let Satan get his desired advantage over you ; it being his chief design, by these thoughts, to
make

make you fall out with the means of grace; and to tempt you to believe, you do not please GOD, for no other reason, than because you do not please yourselves. Rather persevere in the use of the holy communion especially, and all other means whatever; and when these temptations have wrought that resignation in you, for which they were permitted, GOD will visit you with fresh tokens of his love, as he met *Abraham*, when he returned from the slaughter of the five kings; and will send an angel from heaven, as he did to his Son, on purpose to strengthen you.

Hitherto we have only observed such devices as Satan makes use of immediately by himself; but there is a

Fifth I shall mention, which is not the least, tempting us by our *carnal friends and relations*.

This is one of the most common, as well as most artful devices he makes use of, to draw young converts from GOD; for when he cannot prevail over them by himself, he will try what he can do by the influence and mediation of others.

Thus he tempted *Eve*, that she might tempt *Adam*. Thus he stirred up *Job's* wife, to bid him "Curse GOD and die." And thus he made use of *Peter's* tongue, to persuade our blessed LORD "to spare himself," and thereby decline those sufferings, by which alone we could be preserved from
suffering

suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And thus, in these last days, he often stirs up our most powerful friends and dearest intimates, to dissuade us from going in that narrow way, which alone leadeth unto life eternal.

But our blessed LORD has furnished us with a sufficient answer to all such suggestions. "Get you behind me my adversaries;" for otherwise they will be an offence unto you; and the only reason why they give such advice is, because they "favour not the things that be of GOD, but the things that be of men."

Whoever, therefore, among you are resolved to serve the LORD, prepare your souls for many such temptations as these; for it is necessary that such offences should come, to try your sincerity, to teach us to cease from man, and to see if we will forsake all to follow CHRIST.

Indeed our modernisers of christianity would persuade us, that the gospel was calculated only for about two hundred years; and that now there is no need of hating father and mother, or of being persecuted for the sake of CHRIST and his gospel.

But such persons err, not knowing the scriptures, and the power of godliness in their hearts; for whosoever receives the love of GOD in the truth of it, will find, that CHRIST came to send not peace, but a sword upon earth, as much now as ever.

That

That the father-in-law shall be against the daughter in-law, in these latter, as well as in the primitive times; and that if we will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, we must as then, so now, from carnal friends and relations, suffer persecution. But the devil hath a

Sixth device, which is as dangerous as any of the former, by *not tempting us at all*, or rather, by *withdrawing himself for a while*, in order to come upon us at an hour when we think not of it.

Thus it is said, that he left JESUS CHRIST only for a season: and our blessed LORD has bid us to watch and pray always, that we enter not into temptation; thereby implying, that Satan, whether we think of it or not, is always seeking how he may devour us.

If we would therefore behave like good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, we must be always upon our guard, and never pretend to lay down our spiritual weapons of prayer and watching, till our warfare is accomplished by death; for if we do, our spiritual Amalek will quickly prevail against us. What if he has left us? it is only for a season; yet a little while, and, like a roaring lion, with double fury, he will break out upon us again. So great a coward as the devil is, he seldom leaves us at the first onset. As he followed our blessed LORD with one temptation after another, so will he treat his servants. And the reason why he does not renew his attacks,

attacks, is sometimes, because **GOD** knows we are yet weak and unable to bear them, sometimes, because our grand adversary thinks to beset us at a more convenient season.

Watch carefully therefore over thy heart, O christian; and whenever thou perceivest thyself to be falling into a spiritual slumber, say to it, as **CHRIST** to his disciples, “ Arise (my soul) why sleepest thou?” Awake, awake: put on strength, watch and pray, or otherwise the *Philistines* will be upon thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. Alas! Is this life a time to lie down and slumber in? Arise, and call upon thy **GOD**; thy spiritual enemy is not dead, but lurketh in some secret place, seeking a convenient opportunity how he may betray thee. If thou cease to strive with him, thou cease to be a friend of **GOD**; thou cease to go in that narrow way which leadeth unto life.

Thus have I endeavoured to point out to you some of those devices, that Satan generally makes use of “ to get an advantage over us;” many others there are, no doubt, which he often uses.

But these, on account of my youth and want of experience, I cannot yet apprise you of; they who have been lifted for many years in their master's service, and fought under his banner against our spiritual Amalek, are able to discover more of his artifices; and, being tempted in all things, like unto their brethren,

brethren, can, in all things, advise and succour those that are tempted.

In the mean while, let me exhort my young fellow-soldiers, who, like myself, are but just entering the field, and for whose sake this was written, not to be discouraged at the fiery trial wherewith they must be tried, if they would be found faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST. You see, my dearly beloved brethren, by what has been delivered, that our way through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly *Canaan*, is beset with thorns, and that there are sons of Anak to be grappled with, ere you can possess the promised land. But let not these, like so many false spies, discourage you from going up to fight the LORD's battles, but say with *Caleb* and *Joshua*, "Nay, but we will go up, for we are able to conquer them." JESUS CHRIST, that great captain of our salvation, has in our stead, and as our representative, baffled the great enemy of mankind, and we have nothing to do, but manfully to fight under his banner, and to go on from conquering to conquer. Our glory does not consist in being exempted from, but in enduring temptations. "Blessed is the man, (says the apostle) that endureth temptation;" and again, "Brethren, count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations:" And in that perfect form our blessed LORD has prescribed to us, we are taught to pray, not so much to be delivered from all temptation, as "from the evil" of it. Whilst we are on this side eternity, it must needs be that temptations come; and,

and, no doubt, "Satan has desired to have all of us, to sift us as wheat." But wherefore should we fear? For he that is for us, is by far more powerful, than all that are against us. **JESUS CHRIST**, our great High-priest, is exalted to the right hand of God, and there sitteth to make intercession for us, that our faith fail not.

Since then **CHRIST** is praying, whom should we fear? And since he has promised to make us more than conquerors, of whom should we be afraid? No, though an host of devils are set in array against us, let us not be afraid: though there should rise up the hottest persecution against us, yet let us put our trust in **GOD**. What though Satan, and the rest of his apostate spirits, are powerful, when compared with us; yet, if put in competition with the **Almighty**, they are as weak as the meanest worms. **GOD** has them all reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. So far as he permits them, they shall go, but no farther; and where he pleases, there shall their proud malicious designs be stayed. We read in the gospel, that though a legion of them possessed one man, yet they could not destroy him; nor could they so much as enter into a swine, without first having leave given them from above. It is true, we often find they foil us, when we are assaulted by them; but let us be strong, and very courageous; for, though they bruise our heels, we shall, at length, bruise their heads. Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come; and then we shall see all our
spiritual

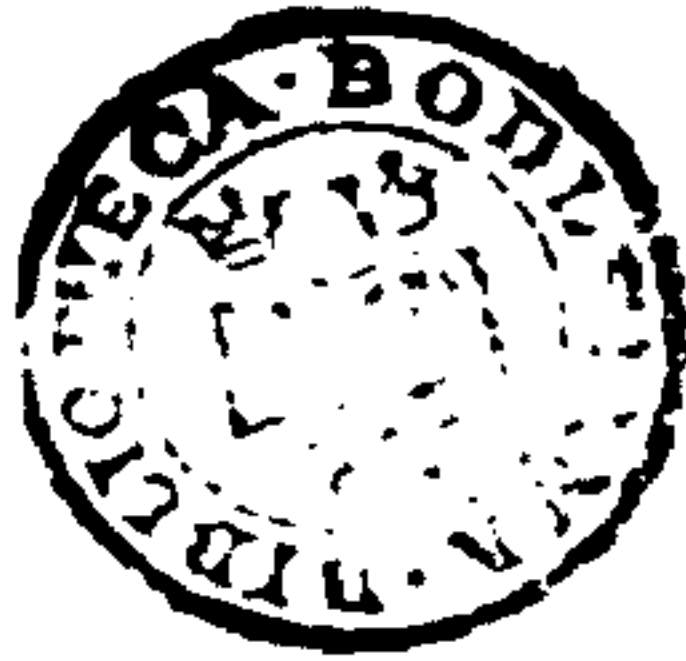
spiritual enemies put under our feet. What if they do come out against us, like so many great Goliaths ; yet, if we can go forth, as the stripling *David*, in the name and strength of the LORD of hosts, we may say, O Satan, where is thy power ? O fallen spirits, where is your victory ?

Once more therefore, and to conclude ; let us be strong, and very couragious, and let us put on the whole armour of GOD, that we may be able to stand against the fiery darts of the wicked one. Let us renounce ourselves, and the world, and then we shall take away the armour in which he trusteth, and he will find nothing in us for his temptations to work upon. We shall then prevent his malicious designs ; and being willing to suffer ourselves, shall need less sufferings to be sent us from above. Let us have our loins girt about with truth ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation ; “ praying always with all manner of supplication.” Above all things, “ Let us take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of GOD,” and “ the shield of faith,” looking always to JESUS, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of GOD.

To which happy place, may GOD of his infinite mercy translate us all, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, three persons, and one eternal God, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.



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S E R M O N X.

Blind Bartimeus.

M A R K. X. 52.

And JESUS said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed JESUS in the way.

WHEN the apostle *Peter* was recommending *JESUS* of *Nazareth*, in one of his sermons to the *Jews*, he gave him a short, but withal a glorious and exalted character, “That he went about doing good.” He went about, he sought occasions of doing good; it was his meat and drink to do the works of him that sent him, whilst the day of his public administration lasted. Justly was he stilled by the prophet, the sun of righteousness. For, as the sun in the natural firmament diffuses his quickening

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quickenings and revivings beams through the universe, so, wherever this sun of righteousness, the blessed JESUS arose, he arose with healing under his wings. He was indeed a prophet like unto *Moses*, and proved that he was the Messiah which was to come into the world, by the miracles which he wrought; though with this material difference, the miracles of *Moses*, agreeable to the Old Testament dispensation, were miracles of judgment; the miracles of JESUS, who came to bear our sicknesses and heal our infirmities, were miracles of mercy, and were wrought, not only for the cure of people's bodies, but also for the conversion of their precious and immortal souls. Sometimes, one and the same person was the subject of both these mercies. A glorious proof of this, we have in the miraculous cure wrought upon a poor blind beggar, named *Bartimeus*, who is to be the subject of the following discourse, and to whom the words of the text refer. "JESUS said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed JESUS in the way."

My design is, *First*, to make some observation on the matter of fact, as recorded by the evangelists. And then,

Secondly, To point out the improvement that may be made thereof. May JESUS so bless this following discourse, that every spiritually blind hearer may receive his sight, and, after the example of *Bartimeus*, "follow JESUS in the way!"

If we would take a view of the whole story, we must go back to the 46th verse of this chapter. "And they (our LORD and his disciples, who, we find by the context, had been conversing together) came to *Jericho*," a place devoted by *Joshua* to the curse of GOD; and yet, even this place yields converts to JESUS; *Zaccheus* had been called there formerly; and *Bartimeus*, as we shall hear by and-by, in all probability, was called now. For some good may come even out of *Nazareth*. CHRIST himself was born there, and his sovereign grace can reach and overcome the worst of people, in the very worst of places. JESUS came to *Jericho*. Let not his ministers, if providence point out their way, shun going to seemingly the most unlikely places to do good, some chosen vessels may be therein. JESUS and his disciples came to *Jericho*. They were *itinerants*; and, as I have frequently observed, seldom stayed long in a place; not that this is any argument against the stated settlement of particular pastors over particular parishes. But however, our LORD's practice, in this respect, gives a kind of a sanction to itinerant preaching, when persons are properly called to, and qualified for, such an employ. And I believe we may venture to affirm (though we would by no means prescribe or dictate to the Holy One of *Israel*) that, whenever there shall be a general revival of religion in any country, itinerant preaching will be more in vogue. And it is to be feared, that those who condemn it now, merely on account of the meanness of its appearances, would have joined with the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, in

condemning even the Son of God himself, for such a practice.

“ And as he went out of *Jericho* with his disciples, and a great number of people ;” *υγλυκιαις* a great number of mob, or rabble, as the High-priests of that generation termed them : for these were the constant followers of *JESUS* of *Nazareth* ; it was the poor that received his gospel, the common people heard him gladly, and followed him from place to place. Not that all who followed him were his true disciples. No, some followed him only for his loaves, others out of curiosity ; though some undoubtedly followed to hear, and be edified by the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. *JESUS* knew this, and was also sensible how displeasing this crowding after him was to some of the rulers of the *Jewish* church, who, upon every occasion, were ready to say, “ Have any of the Scribes and Pharisees believed on him ? ” But, notwithstanding, I do not hear of our blessed *LORD*’s sending them home but once ; and that was, after they had been with him three days, and had nothing left to eat, he saw they were as sheep having no shepherd, and therefore had compassion on them, and taught them. A sufficient warrant this for gospel-ministers to preach to poor souls that follow to hear the word, what ever principle their coming may proceed from. At the same time, they should caution people against thinking themselves christians, because they follow *CHRIST*’s ministers. This our *LORD* frequently did. For there are many that followed *JESUS*, and now follow his ministers, and hear them gladly ;
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nay, perhaps do many things, as *Herod* did, who, it is to be feared, will never follow them into the kingdom of heaven. Much people followed *JESUS* out of *Jericho*, but how many of them were offended in him; and afterwards, it may be, cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him." Who would depend on popularity? It is like the morning cloud, or early dew, that passeth away. But what a press, and seemingly continued hurry of business did the blessed *JESUS* live in! he could not be hid; go where he would, much people followed him. He had scarce time to eat bread. Happy is it for such who are called to act in a public station in the church, and to be more abundant in labours, that their *JESUS* has trodden in this dangerous path before them. Popularity is a fiery furnace, and no one, but he who kept the three children amid *Neuchadnezzar's* flames, can preserve popular ministers from being hurt by it. But we can do all things through *CHRIST* strengthening us. And I have often thought, that there is one consideration sufficient to extinguish, or moderate at least, any excess of joy and self-complacence, which the most popular preacher may feel, when followed even by the greatest multitudes; and that is this, "How many of these hearers will go away, without receiving any saving benefit by my preaching; nay, how many, it may be, will only have their damnation increased by it!" As we find many will say at the great day, "hast thou not taught in our streets?" to whom *JESUS* shall answer, "Verily, I know you not."

But to proceed, "As our *LORD* went out of *Jericho*

richo with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind *Bartimeus*, (the son of *Timeus*) sat by the highway-side begging." It should seem that he was a noted, though by no means what we commonly call, a sturdy beggar; having no other way, as he had lost his sight, to get his bread; his case was still the more pitiable, if he was, as some think the name imports, the blind son of a blind father. It may be, he begged for his father and himself too; and if so, then this may give us light into that passage of *Matthew* xx. 22. where we are told, that "two men spake to *JESUS*." It might be father and son, though only one is mentioned here, because he only followed *JESUS* in the way. Thus that holy, judicious, and practical expositor of holy writ, *Mr. Henry*. But however this be, he is not blamed for begging, neither should we discommend others for so doing, when Providence calls to it. It was the unjust steward that said, "To beg I am ashamed." It is our pride that often makes us unwilling to be beholden; *JESUS* was not thus minded, he lived, as it were, upon alms; the women that followed him, ministered to him of their substance. *Bartimeus*, not being able to dig, begs for his living; and, in order to make a better trade of it, sat by the highway-side, in all probability, without, or near the gate of the city where people must necessarily pass in and out. But though he had lost his sight, he had his hearing perfect; and it should comfort us, if we have lost one sense, that we have the use of another, and that we are not deprived of the benefit of all. Happy was it for *Bartimeus* that he could hear, though not see.

see. For in all probability, upon hearing the noise and clamour of the much people that followed after our LORD, his curiosity set him upon enquiring into the cause of it, and some one or another told him, "that JESUS of *Nazareth* was passing by;" JESUS of *Nazareth*, called so, because he was bred there, or out of contempt; *Nazareth* being either a very mean, or very wicked place, or both, which made guileless *Nathaniel* say, "Can any good come out of *Nazareth*?" And what does *Bartimeus* do when he hears of JESUS? We are told, ver. 47; "And when he heard that it was JESUS of *Nazareth*, he began to cry out." This plainly denotes, that though the eyes of his body were shut, yet the eyes of his mind were, in some degree, opened, so that he saw, perhaps, more than most of the multitude that followed after JESUS; for, as soon as he heard of him, he began to cry out; which he would not have done, had he not heard of him before, and believed also, that he was both able and willing to restore sight to the blind. "He began to cry out." This implies, that he had a deep sense of his own misery, and the need which he had of a cure; his prayers did not freeze as they went out of his lips; he began to cry out, that JESUS might hear him, notwithstanding the noise of the throng; and he began to cry out, as soon as he heard he was passing by, not knowing whether he might ever enjoy such an opportunity any more. "He began to cry out, JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me." The people called him JESUS of *Nazareth*. *Bartimeus* stiles him, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*."

Thereby evidencing, that he believed him to be the Messiah who was to come into the world, unto whom the LORD GOD was to give the throne of his father *David*, and of whose kingdom there was to be no end. “JESUS, thou Son of *David* ;” or, as it is in the parallel place of *St. Matthew* xx. 30. “O LORD, thou son of *David* ;” of whom it hath been long foretold, *Isaiah* xxxv. that when he should come, “the eyes of the blind should be opened.” “Have mercy upon me,” the natural language of a soul brought to lie down at the feet of a sovereign GOD. Here is no laying claim to a cure by way of merit ; no proud, self-righteous, GOD, I thank thee that I am not as other men are : no bringing in a reckoning of performances, nor any doubting of JESUS’s power or willingness to heal him, but out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh, and, in the language of the poor, broken-hearted publican, he cries out, “JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me.” JESUS, thou friend of sinners, thou Saviour, who, though thou be the true GOD, wast pleased to become the Son of *David*, and to be made man, that thou mightest seek and save those that were lost, have mercy upon me ; let thy bowels yearn towards a poor, miserable, blind beggar !

One would have thought that such a moving petition as this would have melted the whole multitude, that heard his piteous cry, into compassion, and induced some at least to turn suitors in his behalf, or help to carry him to the blessed JESUS. But instead of that, we are told, ver. 48, that “many charged him.” The word in the original seems to imply

imply a charge, attended with threatenings, and spoken in an angry manner. They charged him “to hold his peace;” and it may be, threaten’d to beat him if he did not. They looked upon him beneath the notice of *JESUS of Nazareth*, and were ready enough to ask, whether he thought *JESUS CHRIST* had nothing else to do but to wait upon him. This was, no doubt, very discouraging to blind *Bartimeus*. For opposition comes closest when it proceeds from those who are esteemed followers of the Lamb. The spouse complains as of something peculiarly afflicting, that her own mother’s children were angry with her. But opposition only serves to whet the edge of true devotion, and therefore *Bartimeus*, instead of being silenced by their charges and threatenings, “cried out the more a great deal, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me.” Still he breaks out into the same humble language, and, if *JESUS*, the Son of *David*, will have mercy on him, he cares not much what some of his peevish followers said of, or did unto him. This was not a vain repetition, but a devout reiteration of his request. We may sometimes repeat the same words, and yet not be guilty of that *βαττολογία*, or vain speaking, which our *LORD* condemns. For our *LORD* himself prayed in his agony, and said twice the same words; “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Thus *Bartimeus*, “*JESUS*, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me.” And how does the Son of *David* treat him? does he join issue with the multitude, and charge him to hold his peace? or does he go on, thinking him beneath his notice? no; for says *St. Mark*, ver. 49. “And *JESUS* stood still,”

still," though he was on a journey, and it may be in haste (for it is not losing time to stop now and then on a journey to do a good office by the way) "and commanded him to be called:" why so? to teach us to be condescending and kind even to poor, if real beggars, and tacitly to reprove the blind, misguided zeal of those who had charged him to hold his peace. By this also our LORD prepares the multitude the better to take the more notice of the blind man's faith, and of his own mercy and power exerted in the healing of him. For there are times and seasons when we are called to perform acts of charity in the most public manner, and that too very consistently with the injunction of our Saviour, "not to let our right hand know what our left hand doth." For there is a great deal of difference between giving alms, and exercising acts of charity, that are seen of men, and doing them, that they may be seen; the one is always sinful, the other often becomes our duty. JESUS commanded *Bartimeus* to be called, "and they called him." Who called him? it may be, those who a little before charged him to hold his peace. For it often happens, that our opposers and discouragers, afterwards become our friends. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes his enemies be at peace with him." And it is to be wished, that all who have charged poor souls, that are crying after JESUS, to hold their peace, and to spare themselves, and not be righteous over-much, would imitate the people here, and encourage those they once persecuted and maligned. "They call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee."

thee." The words, and manner of speaking them, implies haste, and a kind of solicitude for the blind man's relief. O! that we might hereby learn to be patient, and long-suffering, towards opposers. For it may be, that many may oppose awakened souls, not out of enmity, but through prejudice and misinformation, through ignorance and unbelief, and a real, though perhaps false, persuasion, that their relations are going in a wrong way. By and by they may be convinced, that CHRIST is indeed calling them, and then they may become real and open friends to the cause and work of GOD; if not, it is our duty to behave with meekness towards all, and not to render railing for railing, but contrary-wise blessing, knowing that we are thereunto called, that we may inherit a blessing; JESUS did not break out into harsh language against these opposers, neither did *Bartimeus*. "Our LORD stood still, and commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee; and he, casting away his garment, rose and came to JESUS." Had *Bartimeus* not been in earnest when he cried, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy upon me," he might have said, why do you mock me? why bid ye me arise; rise indeed I can, but after I am risen, how can I, being blind, find my way unto him? If he will come to me, it is well; if not, all your calling availeth nothing, it being impossible for me to find my way. Thus thousands now-a-days object to evangelical preachers, saying, Why do you bid us come to, and believe on JESUS CHRIST, when you tell us it is impossible

of ourselves to turn to GOD, or to do good works; and that no one can come unto him, unless the Father draw him. Is not this like the people's calling upon *Bartimeus*, to arise and come to JESUS, when he could not possibly see his way before him? true, it is so; and would to GOD that all who make this objection, would imitate *Bartimeus*, and put forth the strength they have! What if we do call you to come, and to believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that you may be saved? does this imply, that you have a power in yourselves to do so? no, in no wise, no more than JESUS, saying unto *Lazarus's* dead and stinking carcase, "Come forth," implied, that *Lazarus* had a power to raise himself from the grave. We call to you, being commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, hoping and praying, that CHRIST's power may accompany the word, and make it effectual to the quickening and raising of your dead souls. We also call to you to believe, upon the same account as JESUS said unto the lawyer, "do this, and thou shalt live;" that you seeing your utter inability to come, might thereby be convinced of your unbelief, and be led to ask for faith of him, whose gift it is, and who is therefore in scripture emphatically stiled the *Author*, as well as *Finisher*, of our faith. Add to this, that it is your duty to wait at the pool, or to make use of the strength you have, in the earnest and steady performance of all commanded duty. For though you cannot do what is spiritually good, because you want spiritual principles of action, yet ye may do what is morally and materially good, inasmuch as ye are reasonable creatures;

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tures; and though doing your duty as you can, no ways deserves mercy, or entitles you to it, yet it is the way in which you are required to walk, and the way in which GOD is usually found. While you are attempting to stretch out your withered arm, peradventure it may be restored; and who knows but JESUS may work faith in you, by his almighty power?

Bartimeus has set before such objectors an example; O that they would once submit to be taught by a poor blind beggar! For he, casting away his garment, rose, and blind as he was, came to JESUS; "casting away his garment." This seems to be a large coat or cloak, that he wore to screen himself from the rain and the cold; undoubtedly, it was the most necessary and valuable vestment he had, and one would have thought, that he should have taken this along with him; but he knew very well, that if he did so, it might hang about his heels, and thereby his reaching JESUS be retarded at least, if not prevented entirely. Valuable therefore as it was to him, he cast it away. The word implies, that he threw it from off his shoulders, with great precipitancy and resolution, knowing that if he got a cure, which he now hoped for, by CHRIST'S calling him, he should never want his garment again. And thus will all do that are in earnest about coming to JESUS here, or seeing and enjoying him in his kingdom eternally hereafter. They will cut off a right-hand, they will pluck out a right-eye, they will leave father and mother, husband and wife, yea, and their own lives also, rather than not be his disciples.

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The apostle *Paul*, therefore, exhorts christians, to “lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset them,” or hang about their heels, as the word in the original imports; alluding to the custom of the *Romans*, who wore long garments. Such a one was this, which *Bartimeus* had wrapped round him. But he, to shew that he sincerely desired to recover his sight, casting it away, arose and came to *JESUS*. And what treatment did *JESUS* give him? did he say, come not nigh me, thou impudent noisy beggar? No, “he answered and said unto him, What wilt thou, that I should do unto thee?” an odd question this, seemingly. For did not our *LORD* know what he wanted? yes, he did; but the *LORD JESUS* dealt with him, as he deals with us. He will make us acknowledge our wants ourselves, that we thereby may confess our dependance on him, and be made more sensible of the need we stand in, of his divine assistance. The blind man immediately replies, “*LORD*, (thereby intimating his belief of *CHRIST*’s divinity) that I might receive my sight.” Methinks, I see the poor creature listening to the voice of our Saviour, and with looks and gestures bespeaking the inward earnestness of his soul, he cries out, “*LORD*, that I may receive my sight.” As though he had said, I believe thou art that Messiah who was to come into the world. I have heard of thy fame, O *JESUS*! and hearing the long-wished-for glad-tidings of thy coming this way, I cry unto thee, asking not for silver and gold, but what thou, thou alone canst give me, *LORD*, that I might receive my sight. No sooner does

does he ask, but he receives. For, verse 52, "JESUS said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole; and immediately he received his sight." With the word there went a power; and he that spake light out of darknes, saying, "Let there be light, and there was light," commanded light into this poor blind beggar's eyes, and behold there was light. The miracle was instantaneous; *immediately* he received his sight." And next to a miracle it was, that by breaking into open light all at once, he was not struck blind again: but he that gave the sight, preserved it when given. O! happy *Bartimeus*! thy eyes are now opened, and the very first object thou dost behold, is the ever-loving, altogether-lovely JESUS. Methinks I see thee transported with wonder and admiration, and all the disciples, and the multitude, gazing around thee! And now, having received thy sight, why dost thou not obey thy LORD's command, and go thy way? why dost thou not haste to fetch thy garment, that thou just now in a hurry cast away? No, no! with his bodily eyes, I believe he also received a fresh addition of spiritual sight, and though others saw no form or comeliness in the blessed JESUS, that they should desire him; yet he by an eye of faith discovered such transcendent excellencies in his royal person, and felt at the same time such a divine attraction towards his all-bountiful Benefactor, that instead of going his way to fetch his garment, "he followed JESUS in the way;" and by his actions, says with faithful, honest-hearted *Ruth*, "entreat me not to leave thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge;

lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God, my God." He followed JESUS in the way; the narrow way, the way of the cross; and I doubt not but long since he has followed him to his crown, and is at this time sitting with him at the right hand of his Father.

And now, my dear hearers, how find you your hearts affected at the relation of this notable miracle which JESUS wrought? are you not ready to break out into the language of the song of *Moses*, and to say, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, continually doing wonders!" Marvelous are thy works, O JESUS, and that our souls know right well! But we must not stop here, in admiring what the LORD did for *Bartimeus*; this, no doubt, as well as other parts of Scripture, was written for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come; consequently, as was proposed in the

Second place, we should see what spiritual improvement can be made out of this history, upon which we have already been making some remarks.

A natural man, indeed, goes no further than the outward court of the Scripture, and reads this, and the other miracles of our blessed Saviour, just in the same manner as he reads *Homer's* battles, or the exploits of *Alexander*. But God forbid, that we should rest in only hearing this matter of fact. For I tell thee, O man, I tell thee, O woman, whoever thou art, that sittest this day under a preached gospel, that if thou art in a natural state, thou art as blind in thy soul, as *Bartimeus* was in his body; a blind child of a blind father, even of thy

thy father *Adam*, who lost his sight when he lost his innocence, and entailed his blindness, justly inflicted, upon thee, and me, and his whole posterity. Some think indeed, that they see; but alas! such talk only like men in their sleep, like persons beside themselves; the scriptures every where represent fallen man, not only as spiritually blind, but dead also; and we no more know, by nature, savingly the way of salvation by JESUS CHRIST, than *Bartimeus*, when he was blind, knew the colours of the rainbow. This, I trust, some of you begin to feel, I see you concerned, I see you weeping, and, was I to ask some of you, what you want to have done unto you? I know your answer would be, that we may receive our sight. And GOD forbid, that I should charge you to hold your peace, as though JESUS would not regard you! no, your being made sensible of your natural blindness, and crying thus earnestly after JESUS, is a sign at least, that you are awakened by his holy Spirit (though it is possible, that you may cry with an exceeding bitter cry, as *Esau* did, and be lost at last); however, christian charity induces me to believe and hope the best; I will therefore, in the language of those who afterwards encouraged *Bartimeus*, say unto you, Arise, take comfort; for, I trust; JESUS is calling you; follow therefore the example of *Bartimeus*, cast away your garment; lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset you, arise, and come to JESUS. He commands me, by his written word, to call to you, and say, "Come unto him, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and he will re-
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fresh you, he will give you rest." Be not afraid, ye seek JESUS of *Nazareth*; behold, he comes forth to meet you; ye are now on the highway side, and JESUS, I trust, is passing by; I feel his presence, I hope many of you feel it too; O then, cry mightily to him, who is mighty and willing to save you; lay yourselves at the feet of sovereign grace, say unto him, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on me," in the same frame as *Bartimeus* did, and JESUS will answer you, he will not cast out your prayer; according to your faith, so shall it be done unto you. Blind as you are, you shall, notwithstanding, receive your sight; Satan, indeed, and unbelief, will suggest many objections to you, your carnal relations will also join issue with them, and charge you to hold your peace; one will tell you, that your blindness is too inveterate to be cured; another, that it is too late; a third, that though JESUS can, yet he would not have mercy upon such poor-blind, despicable beggars, as ye are; but, the more they charge you to hold your peace, do you cry out so much the more a great deal, "JESUS, thou Son of *David*, have mercy on us." JESUS, thou Saviour, thou friend of sinners, thou Son of *David*, and therefore a Son of man! gracious words! endearing appellations! be encouraged by them, to draw nigh unto him. Though *David's* LORD, yet he is become *David's* Son, after the flesh, that ye through him may be made the sons of GOD: no matter what thou art, O woman, what thou art, O man; though thou art literally a poor beggar, think not thy condition too mean for JESUS to take notice

tice of; he came into the highways and hedges, to call such poor beggars in; or, if you are rich, think not yourselves too high to stoop to JESUS; for he is the King of kings; and you never will be truly rich, until you are made rich in JESUS; fear not being despised, or losing a little worldly honour: one sight of JESUS will make amends for all: you will find something so inviting, so attracting, so satisfying, in the altogether lovely Lamb of GOD, that every sublunary enjoyment will sicken, and die, and vanish before you; and you will no more desire your former vain and trifling amusements, than *Bartimeus*, after he had received his sight, desired to go back again and fetch his garment. O that there may be many such blind beggars among you this day!

Here is a great multitude of people following me, a poor worm, this day. I rejoice to see the fields thus white, ready unto harvest, and to spread the gospel-net amidst so many; but alas! I shall return home with a heavy heart, unless some of you will arise and come to my JESUS; I desire to preach HIM, and not myself; rest not in hearing and following me. Behold, believe on, and follow the Lamb of GOD, who came to take away the sins of the world. Indeed, I do not despair of any of you, neither am I discouraged, on account of my preaching in the high-ways and hedges; JESUS called *Zaccheus*; JESUS called *Bartimeus*, as he passed through *Jericho*; that cursed, that devoted place; and why may he not call some of you, out of these despised fields? is his arm shortened, that he cannot

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not save? is he not as mighty now, and as willing to save, even to the uttermost, all that come to the Father through him, as he was seventeen hundred years ago? assuredly he is; he hath said, and he also will do it, “Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” In no wise, or by no means. O encouraging words! sinners, believe ye this? arise then, be of good comfort, for JESUS is indeed calling you. Some of you, I trust, have obeyed this invitation, and have had a sight of him long ago; I know then, you will bless and love him; and if he should say unto you, as he did unto *Bartimeus*, go you your way; your answer would be, we love our Master, and will not go from him. But suffer ye the word of exhortation:

Suffer me to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, shew that you have indeed seen him, and that you do indeed love him, by following him in the way; I mean, in the way of the cross, the way of his ordinances, and in the way of his holy commandments; for alas! the love of many waxeth cold, and few there are that follow JESUS rightly in the way; few there are that cast away their garments so heartily as they should; some idol or another hangs about us, and hinders us in running the race that is set before us. Awake therefore, ye sleepy, though, it may be, wise virgins. Awake, awake, put on strength; shake yourselves from the dust; arise and follow JESUS more closely in the way, than ever you did yet. Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. Provide right paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out

of the way, but rather be ye healed. For though the way be narrow, yet it is not long; “ though the gate be straight, (to use the words of pious bishop *Beveridge*), yet it opens into everlasting life.” O that ye may get a fresh sight of him again this day. That should be like oil to the wheels of your graces, and make your souls like the chariots of *Amnadab*. It is only owing to your losing sight of him, that you go so heavily from day to day. A sight of JESUS, like the sun rising in the morning, dispels the darkness and gloominess that lies upon the soul. Take therefore a fresh view of him, O believers, and never rest until you are translated to see him as he is, and to live with him for evermore, in the kingdom of heaven. Even so, LORD JESUS, *Amen* and *Amen*!

S E R M O N XI.

The wise and foolish Virgins.

M A T T H E W XXV. 13.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh.

THE apostle *Paul*, in his epistle to the *Hebrews*, informs us, “That it is appointed for all men once to die; and after that is the judgment.” And I think, if any consideration be sufficient to awaken a sleeping drowsy world, it must be this, That there will be a day wherein these heavens shall be wrapt up like a scroll, this element melt with fervent heat, the earth and all things therein be burnt up, and every soul, of every nation and language, summoned to appear before the dreadful tribunal of the righteous Judge of quick and dead, to receive rewards and punishments, according to the
deeds

deeds done in their bodies. The great apostle just mentioned, when brought before *Felix*, could think of no better means to convert that sinful man, than to reason of temperance, righteousness, and more especially of a judgment to come. The first might in some measure affect, but, I am persuaded, it was the last consideration, a judgment to come, that made him to tremble: and so bad as the world is now grown, yet there are few have their consciences so far seared, as to deny that there will be a reckoning hereafter. The promiscuous dispensations of Providence in this life, wherein we see good men afflicted, destitute, tormented, and the wicked permitted triumphantly to ride over their heads, has been always looked upon as an indisputable argument, by the generality of men, that there will be a day in which God will judge the world in righteousness, and administer equity unto his people. Some indeed are so bold as to deny it, while they are engaged in the pursuit of the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But follow them to their death-beds, ask them, when their souls are ready to launch into eternity, what they then think of a judgment to come? and they will tell you, they dare not give their consciences the lie any longer. They feel a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation in their hearts. Since then these things are so, does it not highly concern each of us, my brethren, before we come on a bed of sickness, seriously to examine how the account stands between God and our souls, and how it will fare with us in that day? As for the openly prophane, the drunkard,

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kard, the whoremonger, the adulterer, and such-like, there is no doubt of what will become of them; without repentance they shall never enter into the kingdom of GOD and his CHRIST: no; their damnation slumbereth not; a burning fiery *Tophet*, kindled by the fury of GOD's eternal wrath, is prepared for their reception, wherein they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Nor is there the least doubt of the state of true believers. For tho' they are despised and rejected of natural men, yet being born again of GOD, they are heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST. They have the earnest of the promised inheritance in their hearts, and are assured, that a new and living way is made open for them, into the Holy of holies, by the blood of JESUS CHRIST, into which an abundant entrance shall be administered to them at the great day of account. The only question is, what will become of the *almost Christian*, one that is content to go, as he thinks, in the middle way to heaven, without being prophane on the one hand, or, as he falsely imagines, righteous over-much on the other? Many there are in every congregation, and consequently some here present, of this stamp. And what is worst of all, it is more easy to convince the most notorious publicans and sinners of their being out of a state of salvation, than any of these. Notwithstanding, if a JESUS CHRIST may be our judge, they shall as certainly be rejected and disowned by him at the last day. as though they lived in open defiance of all his laws. For what says our LORD in the parable of which the words of the text are a

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conclusion, and which I intend to make the subject of my present discourse? “Then,” at the day of judgment, which he had been discoursing of in the foregoing, and prosecutes in this chapter, “shall the King of heaven, (the state of professors in the gospel-church) be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” In which words, is a manifest allusion to a custom prevailing in our LORD’s time among the *Jews*, at their marriage solemnities, which were generally at night, and at which it was customary for the persons of the bride-chamber to go out in procession, with many lights, to meet the bridegroom. By the *bridegroom*, you are here to understand JESUS CHRIST. The church, i. e. true believers, are his *spouse*; he is united to them by one spirit, even in this life; but the solemnizing of these sacred nuptials, is reserved till the day of judgment, when he shall come to take them home to himself, and present them before men and angels, as his purchase, to his Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. By the ten virgins we are to understand, the professors of christianity in general. All are called virgins, because all are called to be fairs. Whosoever names the name of CHRIST, is obliged by that very profession to depart from all iniquity. But the pure and chaste in heart, are the only persons that will be so blessed as to see GOD. As CHRIST was born of a virgin, so he can dwell in none but virgin souls, made pure and holy by the cohabitation of his holy Spirit. What says the apostle? “All are not *Israelites* that are

of *Israel*," all are not christians that are called after the name of CHRIST : No, says our LORD, in the 2d verse, " Five of these virgins were wise," true believers, " and five were foolish," formal hypocrites. But why are five said to be wise, and the other five foolish ? Hear what our LORD says in the following verses ; " They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." They that were foolish took their lamps of an outward profession. They would go to church, say over several manuals of prayers, come perhaps into a field to hear a sermon, give at a collection, and receive the sacrament constantly, nay, oftener than once a month. But then here lay the mistake ; they had no oil in their lamps, no principle of grace, no living faith in their hearts, without which, though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burnt, it would profit us nothing. In short, they were exact, nay, perhaps superstitious bigots as to the form, but all the while they were strangers to, and, in effect, denied the power of godliness in their hearts. They would go to church, but at the same time, think it no harm to go to a ball or an assembly, notwithstanding they promised at their baptism, to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. They were so exceedingly fearful of being righteous overmuch, that they would even persecute those that were truly devout, if they attempted to go a step farther than themselves. In one word, they never effectually felt the power of the world to come.

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They thought they might be christians without so much inward feeling, and therefore, notwithstanding their high pretensions, had only a name to live.

And now, Sirs, let me pause a while, and in the name of GOD, whom I endeavour to serve in the gospel of his dear Son, give me leave to ask one question. Whilst I have been drawing, though in miniature, the character of these foolish virgins, have not many of your consciences made the application, and with a small, still, though articulate voice, said, 'Thou man, thou woman, art one of those foolish virgins, for thy sentiments and practice agree thereto? Stille not, but rather encourage these convictions; and who knows, but that LORD who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him faithfully, may so work upon you even by this foolishness of preaching, as to make you wise virgins before you return home?

What they were you shall know immediately: "But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Observe, the wise, the true believers, had their lamps as well as the foolish virgins; for christianity does not require us to cast off all outward forms; we may use forms, and yet not be formal: for instance, it is possible to worship GOD in a set form of prayer, and yet worship him in spirit and in truth. And therefore, brethren, let us not judge one another. The wise virgins had their lamps; herein did not lie the difference between them and the foolish, that one worshipped GOD with a form, and the other did not: No: as

the Pharisee and Publican went up to the temple to pray, so these wise and foolish virgins might go to the same place of worship, and sit under the same ministry; but then the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps; they kept up the form, but did not rest in it; their words in prayer were the language of their hearts, and they were no strangers to inward feelings; they were not afraid of searching doctrines, nor affronted when ministers told them they deserved to be damned; they were not self-righteous, but were willing that JESUS CHRIST should have all the glory of their salvation; they were convinced that the merits of JESUS CHRIST were to be apprehended only by faith; but yet were they as careful to maintain good works, as though they were to be justified by them: in short, their obedience flowed from love and gratitude, and was chearful, constant, uniform, universal, like that obedience which the holy angels pay our Father in heaven.

Here then let me exhort you to pause again: and if any of you can faithfully apply these characters to your hearts, give GOD the glory, and take the comfort to your own souls; you are not false but true believers. JESUS CHRIST has been made of GOD to you wisdom, even that wisdom, whereby you shall be made wise unto salvation. GOD sees a difference between you and foolish virgins, if natural men will not. You need not be uneasy, though one chance and fate in this life may happen to you both. I say, one chance and fate; for, ver. 5. "while the bridegroom tarried," in the
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space of time which passed between our LORD's ascension and his coming again to judgment, "they all slumbered and slept." The wise as well as foolish die, for dust we are, and to dust we must return. It is no reflection at all upon the divine goodness, that believers, as well as hypocrites, must pass through the valley of the shadow of death ; for CHRIST has taken away the sting of death, so that we need fear no evil. It is to them a passage to everlasting life : death is only terrible to those who have no hope, because they live without faith in the world. Whosoever there are amongst you, that have received the first-fruits of the spirit, I am persuaded you are ready to cry out, we would not live here always, we long to be dissolved, that we may be with JESUS CHRIST ; and though worms must destroy our bodies as well as others, yet we are content, being assured that our Redeemer liveth, that he will stand at the latter days upon the earth, and that in our flesh we shall see GOD.

But it is not so with hypocrites and unbelievers beyond the grave ; for what says our LORD ? " And at midnight : " observe, at midnight, when all was hushed and quiet, and no one dreaming of any such thing, " a cry was made ; " the voice of the archangel and the trump of GOD was heard sounding this general alarm ; to things in heaven, to things in earth, and to things in the waters under the earth, " BEHOLD ! " mark how this awful summons is ushered in with the word *behold*, to engage our attention : " Behold the Bridegroom cometh ! " even JESUS CHRIST, the desire of nations, the

bridegroom of his spouse the church : Because he tarryeth for a while to exercise the faith of saints, and give sinners space to repent, scoffers were apt to cry out, “ Where is the promise of his coming ? But the LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as these men account slackness.” For behold, he that was to come, now cometh, and will not tarry any longer : he cometh to be glorified in his saints, and to take vengeance on them that know not GOD, and have not obeyed his gospel : he cometh not as a poor despised *Galilean* ; not to be laid in a stinking manger ; not to be despised and rejected of men ; not to be blindfolded, spit upon, and buffeted ; not to be nailed to an accursed tree ; he cometh not as the Son of man, but as he really was, the eternal Son of the eternal GOD : He cometh riding on the wings of the wind, in the glory of the Father and his holy angels, and to be had in everlasting reverence of all that shall be round about him. Go ye forth to meet him ;” arise, ye dead, ye foolish, as well as wise virgins, arise and come to judgment. Multitudes, no doubt, that hear this awakening cry, would rejoice if the rocks might fall on, and the hills cover them from the presence of the Lamb : what would they give, if as they lived as beasts, they might now die like the beasts that perish ? How would they rejoice, if those same excuses which they made on this side eternity for not attending on holy ordinances, would serve to keep them from appearing before the heavenly bridegroom ! But as *Adam*, notwithstanding his fig-leaves, and the trees of the garden, could not hide himself

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from GOD, when arrested with an “*Adam*; where art thou?” So now the decree is gone forth, and the trump of GOD has given its last sound; all tongues, people, nations, and languages, both wise and foolish virgins, must come into his presence, and bow beneath his footstool; even *Pontius Pilate*, *Annas* and *Caiaphas*; even the proud persecuting high-priests and Pharisees of this generation, must appear before him: for says our LORD, “Then, (when the cry was made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh!) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the graves were opened, the sea gave up its dead, and “all those virgins, both wise and foolish, arose and trimmed their lamps,” or endeavoured to put themselves in a proper posture to meet the bridegroom.

But how may we imagine the foolish virgins were surprized, when, notwithstanding their high thoughts and proud imaginations of their security, they now find themselves wholly naked, and void of that inward holiness and purity of heart, without which no man living at that day shall comfortably meet the LORD! I doubt not, but many of these foolish virgins, whilst in this world, were cloathed in purple and fine linen, fared sumptuously every day, and disdained to set the wise virgins, some of whom might be as poor as *Lazarus*, even with the dogs of their flock. These were looked upon by them as enthusiasts and madmen, as persons that were righteous over-much, and who intended to turn the world upside down: but now death hath opened their eyes, and convinced them, to their eternal sorrow,

that he is not a true christian, who is only one outwardly. Now they find (though, alas! too late) they, and not the wise virgins, had been beside themselves. Now their proud hearts are made to stoop, their lofty looks are brought low; and as *Dives* entreated that *Lazarus* might dip the tip of his finger in water, and be sent to cool his tongue, so these foolish virgins, these formal hypocrites, are obliged to turn beggars to those whom they once despised: "Give us of your oil;" O! impart to us a little of that grace and holy spirit, for the insisting on which we fools accounted your lives madness; for alas! "our lamps are gone out;" we had only the form of godliness; we were whited sepulchres; we were heart hypocrites; we contented ourselves with desiring to be good; and though confident of salvation whilst we lived, yet our hope is entirely gone, now God has taken away our souls: Give us therefore, O! give us, though we once despised you, give us of your oil, for our lamps of an outward profession, and transient convictions, are quite gone out. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the LORD." My brethren in CHRIST, hear what the foolish say to the wise virgins, and learn in patience to possess your souls. If you are true followers of the lowly JESUS, I am persuaded you have your names cast out, and all manner of evil spoken falsely against you, for his name's sake; for no one ever did or will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, without suffering persecution; nay, I doubt not but your chief foes are those of your own household: tell me, do not your carnal relations