



SERMONS,
CHIEFLY ON
DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS

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Sermons, Chiefly on Doctrinal Subjects

by John Colquhoun, D.D.

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MEMOIR OF DR. JOHN COLQUHOUN

The materials are now extremely scanty from which any thing like a detailed account of the personal history of this truly excellent and devoted minister of Christ could be prepared. Almost all his later, no less than earlier contemporaries and associates, who might have been able to furnish information, have already, like him, been removed by death; and he left no written memorials of himself by which the deficiency can be supplied. He still, however, lives in the revering remembrance of not a few who highly and justly esteemed him in love both for his own and his work's sake; and by such, the following sketch of his life and character, short as it is, will, we have no doubt, be received as an acceptable gift,—while it will form no unsuitable introduction to the volume of his Sermons to which it is thus prefixed.

Dr John Colquhoun, the son of a small farmer on the estate of Sir James Colquhoun, Bart. in the parish of Luss, Dumbartonshire, was born on the 1st of January 1748. His first religious impressions appear to have been produced while he was yet in childhood, through the instrumentality of his mother's pious instructions; and they never afterwards seem to have been effaced. The first rudiments of education he received in a neighbouring school, under the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, where

the only branches at that time taught, were English reading, writing, arithmetic, and the principles of religion. The teacher being a man of decided Christian piety, anxiously endeavoured, in communicating religious knowledge to his scholars, to impress its sacred truths on their hearts no less than their memory, and, through the Divine blessing, not without successful results. To his explanations, examinations, and applications of the answer to the question in the Assembly's Catechism, "What is effectual calling?" Mr Colquhoun, accordingly, always traced his saving conversion to the faith of the Gospel. Thirsting after a fuller acquaintance with religious truth, his enlightened teacher particularly recommended him to procure a copy of Boston's Fourfold State, as well fitted to promote his religious improvement. This, however, was not in those days so easily accomplished as now; but so eager was he to obtain it, that he travelled on foot all the way to Glasgow,—a distance, going and returning, probably about 50 miles,—for that purpose alone; and came back rejoicing in the valuable treasure. To this, in time, he added Boston's other works; and these he ever afterwards regarded as next to the Bible, his great authorities, and as it were text books,—studying them with unwearied diligence, and transferring their very substance as well as sentiments into his own discourses and writings.

At length, through the suggestion of an intelligent and devout farmer in the vicinity, with whom he had long not only cultivated the most intimate friendship, but held much improving fellowship in conversation and prayer, being led to think of devoting himself to the work of the ministry, he commenced with this view the initiatory study of Latin, though whether at a school, or merely under private tuition, we are not informed. But that he became thus sufficiently grounded in its elements, as to be capable of suitably profiting by the professional instructions he received in it at the University of Glasgow, which he entered about the year 1768, was satisfactorily evidenced by the very creditable acquirements he subsequently made, not in that language only, but in Greek and Hebrew, to the latter of which in particular it may be almost said

that he was through life enthusiastically attached. After pursuing his literary, philosophical, and theological course for ten years at Glasgow, he finished it by spending a session at the University of Edinburgh; and then, returning to Glasgow, went through the usual steps, before the Presbytery, for being licensed as a preacher of the Gospel, which he accordingly was on the first Wednesday of August 1780.

The New Church or Chapel, (now St. John's Church,) South Leith, having become vacant by the translation of Mr Burnside, its first minister, to Dumfries, and Dr Buchanan, (late of the Canongate) after being elected, having declined coming to it in consequence of receiving a call to one of the charges in Stirling, Mr Colquhoun was chosen in his place, and having accepted of the call, was, on the 22d March 1781, ordained to the pastoral charge of the congregation. And here he continued to labour with all diligence and faithfulness so long as his health and strength remained; teaching and preaching "none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come, viz. that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead; and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." No novice in the Christian life, his matured spiritual experience, and thoroughly furnished mind in regard equally to doctrinal and practical, including casuistical divinity, well fitted him for instructing and edifying his people both in public and private, and soon acquired for him no ordinary degree of reverent affection from them, as well as of general esteem and popularity among the most serious classes of professing Christians, not only in Leith, but in Edinburgh. Nor was this for a very considerable period a mere temporary and transient fame. On the contrary, it long continued; and not a few are still alive who can recollect, from its being the case with themselves, that there was scarcely a quarter of the city from which one or another did not stately resort to the New Church, Leith, every Christian sabbath, foul day or fair, to listen to the truly scriptural lectures and sermons which its admired pastor was accustomed to address to all who sat under his ministry. Neither is it yet forgotten, how many devout

members of other congregations also were wont, during that period, to frequent his ministrations at the times when the Lord's-Supper was dispensed there,—often acknowledging, as well as feeling, that a peculiar blessing had descended on his labours, by the influence of which they were at once refreshed and strengthened for travelling onward in their Christian course. It is true, that several circumstances afterwards occurred, and especially the controversy about Church government, towards the close of last century, which tended very considerably to affect the number of his stated hearers; and this could not but likewise affect his ministerial usefulness as well as comfort. Whether he was always as prudent, as he was certainly conscientious, in his endeavours to secure the attachment of his people to the Presbyterian order of Church discipline and worship, may perhaps be doubted; but of this we believe, even those from whose separation from the Establishment, after having almost idolatrously revered, and often spoken of him as having been their spiritual father in Christ, he suffered most, were as firmly convinced as those who still continued under his ministry, that it was no principle but that of conscience, and a sense of the duty which he conceived he owed, not merely to the Church in which he himself was a minister, but to the interests of truth and godliness throughout the country in general, that led him to take the part which he did from the pulpit, and in private conversation, during that unhappy strife and animosity among Christians,—aggravated in many cases by difference of political sentiment also,—which at the time so sadly alienated them from each other; but which, in the progress of events, under the good Providence of God, has now, and for many years past, happily given place to greater mutual forbearance and charity. It is pleasing to add, that towards the latter part of his life, the friendly intercourse between him and a number of his formerly most esteemed Christian acquaintance, which the circumstances just alluded to had long and completely suspended, was in several instances most agreeably renewed; and that in but few, if any of them, was there wanting the restored feeling of affectionate regard for one to whom, in other days, they had looked

up as their best instructor and counsellor in all that concerned their well-being for time and eternity.

As regards the civil constitution of the country, Dr Colquhoun considered it to be far superior to that of any other nation upon earth; and one of the most perfect that human nature could frame: and the constitution of the Church of Scotland he was fully convinced to be eminently scriptural, and better fitted than any other to promote the interests of religion among the people at large. At the same time, he was by no means blind to the corruption and abuses which had crept into the practical administration of both, but earnestly desired and longed for their removal. The sins of the nation, and the defections of the Church, he deeply mourned over; and the system of lay-patronage as connected with the latter he specially deplored, not merely as evil and unchristian in itself, but the fruitful source at once of error in doctrine and laxity of discipline; yet he often expressed his thankfulness that it formed no part of the constitution, but, on the contrary, was opposed to its very first principles, and trusted that in due time it would be done away with, and that for ever. One of the great national sins he conceived to be the countenance and encouragement given to Popery. The progress, accordingly, that it appeared to be making throughout the land grieved him exceedingly; it being his decided opinion, like that of many other good men, and even learned students of prophecy, that the Lord would yet permit its abominations to spread over the countries of Protestantism. On this account, he fervently deprecated the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, fearing that if it should be passed, though he might not, as he did not, live to see it, it would be the forerunner of judgments on the nation. But although he entertained such a melancholy foreboding, and frequently prayed in public that the danger might still be averted, he comforted himself with the firm belief, that that reign of the man of sin would be but short, because it is thus written in the word of truth, "Him shall the Lord consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming."

His views of the great and peculiar doctrines of Christianity are so clearly and fully developed in the various treatises which were published under his own superintendence,—and with which those to be found in the present volume of Sermons, which, though posthumous in their time of publication, were left by himself in a state of complete readiness for the press, are in all respects accordant,—that it is almost unnecessary to do more than state the above fact. Suffice it therefore only farther to say, that they were systematically evangelical, founded on Scripture, and consonant to the admirable standards of our national Church, partaking to a very great extent of those particular qualities, in cast of thought, mode of evolvment, turns of expression, and plan of illustration, by which the writings of Boston, and the same class of divines, are marked, and withal, like theirs, at once experimental and practical. In all his discourses, his chief aim was to exalt the Saviour, by setting forth the riches of his free and distinguishing grace, and lay the sinner low in the dust, by showing him his utter helplessness and guilt. The love of Christ glowing in his own breast, out of the abundance of his heart he warmly commended the same love to sinful men. The very name of the Saviour, indeed, was precious to him, and he seldom mentioned it without prefixing some epithet, indicating the deep sense of gratitude with which it filled him; often speaking of him as "the infinitely amiable" and "lovely Redeemer," and "the compassionate Saviour of sinners;" and when referring to his righteousness, styling it, "His infinitely meritorious, his immaculate, matchless, consummate, histranscendently glorious, or divinely excellent righteousness."—He was also particularly earnest in pressing on sinners the necessity of complying with the offers and invitations of the Gospel, and of accepting immediately Christ as their Saviour, without money and without price. He dwelt much on the peculiar sin and danger of hypocrisy, warning his hearers against it as one of the most prevailing sins of the day; and in pointing out its distinguished characteristics, as compared with genuine vital godliness, discovered no ordinary power of discrimination and acquaintance with the workings of the human heart. Nor did he leave the suitable inculcation of moral duties

unattended to, but bringing them before his people in their Scriptural connexion with that faith which alone purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world, he strenuously urged them, by every motive which the Gospel presents, to follow after that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

In the performance of his pulpit duties, Dr Colquhoun was more than usually incessant, being seldom or never absent from his own congregation, unless when assisting some of his brethren at communion solemnities,—and these were by no means frequent. Till the infirmities of declining life came upon him, besides doing duty twice every Sabbath, he occasionally preached at night also; while he gave a stated lecture every Thursday evening during summer. How much, and what varied instruction, too, those who regularly waited on his ministry must have received, may be judged of by the fact, that in addition to the multitude of sermons, in the course of more than forty years, which he addressed to them, he during that time lectured through the whole of the New Testament, and the Book of the Psalms, with other passages of the Old Testament; thus affording them the means of being taught the truths contained in almost every portion of the Divine record.

It was not till 1813 that Mr Colquhoun appeared as an author; but in that year his "Treatise on Spiritual Comfort" was published; and, to the no small gratification of many who anxiously wished that he would favour the religious world with the result of his thoughts on other points of Christian doctrine, as well as experience, it was followed at successive intervals by his other works, viz. in 1815, "On the Law and the Gospel;" in 1818, "On the Covenant of Grace;" in 1821, "A Catechism for the Instruction and Direction of Young Communicants;" in 1822, "On the Covenant of Works;" in 1824, "A View of Saving Faith from the Sacred Records;" in 1825, "A Collection of the Promises of the Gospel, arranged under their proper Heads, with Reflections and Exhortations deduced from them;" and lastly, in 1826, "A View of Evangelical Repentance from the Sacred Records."

What a favourable reception each of these publications met with on their first appearance, not only from the author's personal friends, but from the friends of religious truth in general, is still fresh in the recollection of many; and the estimation in which they were then held has not since diminished. Of this, did the limits prescribed to this Memoir admit, abundant evidence might be adduced. But, besides referring to the commendatory terms in which they were noticed in a number of periodical Reviews, we have only room to quote a few sentences from two letters, the one addressed to Dr Colquhoun himself, on receiving a copy of his first treatise, by his endeared brother in the ministry, the late Mr Bonar, of Cramond, whose spiritual worth and saintly character will not soon be forgotten; and the other to Mrs Colquhoun, immediately after her husband's death, from Dr Burns, of Paisley, who revered him as a master in Israel, and was well qualified justly to appreciate the value of his works.

"I am more and more convinced," said Mr Bonar, "that according to the degree of our spiritual consolation, and the measure of our rejoicing in glorious Immanuel as our all, so will be our steadfastness and progress in all the other graces of the divine life. I have often lamented in secret, that even the Lord's own children seem so little impressed with the vast importance of rejoicing in the Lord, in the faith of the Gospel, and in the lively hope of purchased, promised, prepared, approaching glory. I rejoice to think that you, dear brother, have been stirred up to set this important subject in a truly evangelical light. Though I trust you will be long spared to labour, with growing comfort and success, in our Lord's vineyard, yet I rejoice to think, that when you and I lie mouldering in the dust, generations yet unborn will read your work with tears of gratitude, and will magnify the God of Zion for your book 'On Spiritual Comfort.' "

"I have always," are the words of Dr Burns, "looked upon Dr Colquhoun as one of our most valuable scriptural divines, while his life and labours afforded a bright pattern of the sanctifying tendency

of the doctrines he taught, and which are truly doctrines according to godliness. His works afford a most gratifying addition to the Christian library, exhibiting clear views of Divine truth, and abounding in scriptural illustration admirably appropriate. I had occasion within these few weeks, in the course of my ordinary pulpit preparations, to consult, with particular care, his treatises on 'Spiritual Comfort,' and on 'The Covenant of Grace;' and from both I obtained all the satisfaction which I wished; and I am sure more would not have been obtained from the perusal of many volumes of a much larger size. I have no doubt that these excellent works will more and more become favourites with the sincere lovers of evangelical truth; and they well deserve a place in the domestic library of every Christian family."

It was not, however, by means of the pulpit or the press only that Dr C. employed his time and talents in the service and work of the great Head of the Church. He regularly visited, and publicly catechised his congregation: closely examining each individual, old and young, on the important doctrines and duties of the word of God, according to the order in which they are stated in the Assembly Catechisms,—exercises which, from the manner in which he conducted them, were felt to be truly edifying by those who had the privilege of attending on them. In his ministerial visitations he went from house to house; and after being in each separately, collected a number together, and often spent an hour and a half with them in exhortation and prayer. Much time also he devoted to the suitable instruction of the young, who applied to him for admission to the Lord's-table, having stated monthly meetings with them for that purpose, besides more frequently conversing with them individually; anxiously labouring to lead them, by every means, to Christ for salvation, before thinking himself warranted to receive them into the fellowship of the church. Every Friday evening, too, he set apart for religious conversation with such of his friends as chose to avail themselves of the general invitation which he gave to his acquaintance to meet with him on these occasions,—the remembrance of which is still endearing and grateful to many who

were wont to resort to the hallowed chamber, where he sat, and talked with them as their father, and teacher, and friend. His talent for religious conversation, indeed, as well as for giving wise and judicious counsel on every subject connected with religious duty, was of no ordinary kind. Many students, accordingly, who were preparing for the ministry, and to whom he was peculiarly accessible, were in the habit of visiting him on these occasions, and never retired without profiting by his instructions or advice. Then, and at other times when they waited on him, they found him ever ready to listen to their inquiries, and to recommend to them the most suitable books on every topic on which they wished information; at the same time affectionately tendering to them many valuable exhortations respecting the method in which they should prosecute their several studies. In particular, he often exhorted them to make themselves well acquainted with the subjects on which they intended to write, and to seek that the Lord would lead them into a close and experimental knowledge of his whole counsel and will in regard to them; and then would have added, "O! see that you do not study your subjects in a superficial manner, for, if you do, when you come to preach, you will neither be intelligible nor instructive to your hearers."

The depth of his own piety also, and his just and discriminating views of saving truth, peculiarly fitted him for being greatly useful to persons under spiritual distress. Many, accordingly, came even from a distance to consult him in their perplexities; and though he might never have seen or heard of them before, he entered as readily and tenderly into their cases as if they had belonged to his own flock, whilst scarcely any one ever left him without essentially benefiting by his counsels and prayers.

At times, likewise, he was requested to state in writing his opinion on particular cases of Christian experience; which he readily did: and how judiciously he treated the points of doctrine and duty so brought under his notice, may be satisfactorily learned from the following passage of a letter, in which, at the desire of a friend, he

gave his views of a subject that has perplexed the mind of many a Christian, and with regard to which his sentiments may not be unimportant to others similarly exercised.

"My views respecting impressions of promises or other passages of Scripture, upon the minds of believers, are these: Impressions, especially of promises with power and sweetness, are sometimes, yea, often, made on the minds of many exercised Christians. Now, the first thing the Christian should do, when he feels such an impression, is, to inquire diligently, in dependence on illuminating grace, whether the impression has been made by the Spirit of truth, or by the father of lies. That Satan is often permitted to impress passages of Scripture on the minds of even true believers, cannot be denied. In one of Pike and Hayward's cases of conscience, there are, I think, good rules mentioned to assist the Christian in discovering, whether an impression of a text upon his mind be from the Holy Spirit, or from Satan. When he is satisfied that the impression is from the Holy Spirit, his next inquiry should be, What may be the Spirit's intention in bringing this promise to his remembrance, and in impressing it with life and power on his mind? He may be sure it cannot be to furnish him with any new ground of faith, or in the least to encourage him to make the impression itself any part of his warrant for applying that promise, as if the warrant afforded him by the Divine record were deficient, and needed to have additions made to it; but to direct his attention to that promise, as one peculiarly suited to him in his present case;—to encourage him not only to apply and trust it, upon the warrant of the direction of it, and of all the other promises of the everlasting covenant, to him as a sinner of mankind in the Gospel offer, but to persevere in pleading it with a promising God. It is intended, I apprehend, to excite and encourage him to apply that promise to himself, not by itself, but in connexion with all the absolute promises of the new covenant; and, upon the warrant of its being directed in offer to him, to trust cordially and confidently that the compassionate Saviour will perform it and all the other promises of salvation to him in particular: and when he trusts that God his Saviour will perform it to him, to plead it with

him; to plead it in the confidence of faith, not on the ground of the impression that has been made of it, but on the ground of the direction of it in the offer, and of the faithfulness of God pledged in it.

"Thus far, I think, an exercised Christian may go, if the promise impressed is in reference to his own case, and suitable to it. But if a promise is powerfully impressed, either on his own mind, or on that of a Christian friend, for another person, how nearly soever related to him, all, I humbly apprehend, that he can safely do is, to believe it on the ground of the veracity of God in his record, and to take encouragement from the impression,—provided he be satisfied that it is from the Holy Spirit,—to persevere in pleading that it may be performed to his friend; and if he be favoured with enlargement, and with grace to persevere long in pleading it and other promises for his friend, he may, I apprehend, take encouragement from this, to trust that it will sooner or later be fulfilled to him. I say, he may be encouraged by the impression of it to continue instant in pleading it. For though a Christian cannot warrantably believe for another, yet he ought constantly to pray for him. There is one promise especially, whether it be impressed on his mind or not, that a believing parent may warrantably take, and trust, and plead in behalf of his child, namely, the promise to Abraham, Gen. 17:7,—That Jehovah would be a God to him, and to his seed after him. The apostle Peter told the Jews, that this great promise was not only to them and their children, but to all that are afar off; that is, to us Gentiles, and our children. As then, in the dispensation of the Gospel, this promise embraces the children of believing parents, along with themselves, they may freely take and plead it in behalf of their offspring, and conclude that such exercise is warrantable."

There is no reason to think that his correspondence was extensive, but rather that it was confined chiefly to a few individuals in whom he felt a more particular interest, or who wished and asked his advice, or to whom, when visited with affliction, he thought it his duty to tender his expressions of Christian sympathy, and offer the

words of spiritual direction and comfort. And with what tenderness and judgment he could, and did, on such occasions address them, will be sufficiently evidenced by the contents of a letter written to a bereaved widow, and which, like that given above, cannot fail to be perused with gratifying interest by many of his surviving friends. May it prove a word in season to others also who may peruse it, as containing much that is fraught with suitable instruction to all, not only who partake of the same chastisement, but who specially belong to God's afflicted ones.

"I was much concerned to hear of your late heavy affliction, and desire heartily to sympathise with you upon your loss of a pious and affectionate husband. Your loss is indeed great, but it is his great gain, and I doubt not but it will be your's too. Our Divine Redeemer never suffers any of his people to be losers at his hand, but determines that as they gain ground in sanctification they shall be gainers even by their losses. And, therefore, the holy psalmist saith in one place, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" and in another, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest out of thy law." As no affliction befalls the Christian but is light in comparison of what he deserves, so his light affliction, which is but for a moment in comparison of an eternity of torment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory, and in the meantime worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness. I hope you are enabled to see that this is the kind hand of a Father, and not the cruel hand of an enemy, and that instead of repining, you desire not only to acquiesce in the sad dispensation, but even to approve of the Lord's way with you, saying, Good is the will of the Lord, in faithfulness hast thou afflicted me.

"That incomparable Redeemer, to whom you have intrusted all your concerns, is so wise that he cannot err in sending you too little affliction in this valley of tears, and so loving, that he will not err in sending too much. Though you might have had a sinful, He has a sovereign hand in this trial, and, therefore, it is both your duty and your interest to look rather upon the heart and hand that afflict you,

than on the affliction itself. He holdeth every bitter cup to you with his own gracious hand, and takes care that not the least drop of poison shall be mingled with it. There is a great difference, you know, between a cross and a curse. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" and yet every child of God is redeemed from the curse of the law. Christ's cross is better than the world's crown. The worst things of Christ are far better than the best things of this world. As you are warranted to take a cross out of no hand but Christ's, so every cross which you are called to take up shall serve to render you more and more conformable to him; and the heavier any particular cross is, it will render the conformity the greater. Our Heavenly Father loves his children, and as an evidence of it, loves to see them conformed, in as many instances as is possible, to the image of him who is the Son of his love. I am persuaded you desire to have no objections at being made conformable to Him who loved you and gave himself for you, however sensibly you must feel the weight of this heavy dispensation.

"He hath given you this promise, that when you pass through the waters he will be with you, and through the floods they shall not overflow you, and that when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon you. And as I doubt not but you have taken this, among the other precious promises of the everlasting covenant, as the ground of your hope, you may venture to believe that it will be fulfilled to you according to your necessity. This water cannot drown you, this fire cannot burn you, because of the faithfulness and good will of of Him who dwelleth in the bush. You know what reconciled Eli to his severe trial, "It is the Lord, and therefore let him do what seemeth him good." When you are satisfied that it is the Lord, your own covenant God who is afflicting you, then you may be sure that though he can send a dark dispensation, he cannot send a hurtful one. He cannot send any one but what is best for you at the time it is sent. He chastens not for his pleasure, but for your profit, and therefore as he afflicts not willingly, you may rest satisfied that he did not send this fiery trial

till he saw that you could not have been so happy without it. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! His ways at present are no doubt very dark to you; clouds and darkness are round about him; but give him his own time and he will explain himself to your entire satisfaction, and let you see that you could not have wanted a single bitter ingredient in any cup of suffering that ever he presented to you. Perhaps you may think this trial peculiarly afflictive, and that if it had been of another nature you would more easily have borne it; but you are in the hands of that heavenly Physician who cannot possibly mistake your case, but will prescribe that very remedy which of all others is fitted for you. He saw that no other affliction would be so conducive to the health of your soul at present, as this one. He is a God of judgment, blessed are all they who wait for him!"

Simplicity of manners, and godly sincerity of principle and conduct, were the pleasing and attractive features of his personal and private character. Mingling little with the world, and almost entirely secluded from its general society, he knew almost as little, from his own observation, of its men and habits, as if he had not lived in it at all. Retired and unassuming, he sought no place of outward distinction among his brethren, and was scarcely known to the public, except when they heard of his name as a diligent and faithful minister, or of his writings as a sound and instructive divine. His closet and his library were his chief delight,—except when called to visit the house of mourning, and to which he was ever ready to repair,—in the one and in both entering into frequent and devout communing with himself and with God; and diligently labouring, by reading, and meditation, and prayer, to become more fully instructed himself in the "doctrine of the kingdom," that he might be able to teach more perfectly the way of God to others,—"bringing out of his treasure things new and old," for their establishment in the knowledge and faith of the Gospel. Nor did any one more uniformly and consistently practise the three duties which he constantly and invariably inculcated on all around him, viz. to redeem time,—to hate and forsake sin,—and to love and follow after

holiness. Of Dr Colquhoun, indeed, it may with truth be said, appealing to his people and to all who knew him, as the great apostle of the Gentiles did of himself to the believers at Thessalonica, that "as allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so he spoke; not as pleasing men, but God who trieth the heart; for neither at any time used he flattering words, nor of men sought glory; but was gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; and that they were witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he behaved himself among them that believed; knowing how he exhorted and charged every one of them, as a father his children, that they would walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his kingdom and glory." In like manner, no doubt exists, that there is a goodly few, who, through the accompanying grace of the Holy Spirit, had "cause also to thank God without ceasing, because when they received the word of God which they heard of him, they received it not as the word of a man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe." Such were "his hope and joy" while on earth; and they already are, or will hereafter be, his "crown of rejoicing" in heaven, and in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

And as he lived, and preached, and wrote, so he died, avowing his unshaken belief in the doctrine of the free grace of God, through the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ, as that on which he rested all his hope and salvation,—conscious and acknowledging that, in himself, he had never done any thing that was not stained and polluted by sin. The last time he appeared in the pulpit was on the forenoon of November 18, 1826; but during the delivery of the lecture which he then gave, he discovered such symptoms of feebleness as led Mrs Colquhoun to fear that he would never be seen in the pulpit again. And in this she was right; for though he survived not only the winter but the ensuing summer, he continued quite unable to resume his public duties. It was not indeed till the very day twelvemonth of his being wholly laid aside from them, viz. November 18, 1827, that any particular indications of his approaching death were visibly perceptible. On that morning,

however, he complained of the utmost weakness in one of his limbs; and added that "he had lost the power of it, and would soon lose that of his speech too; that he was done with this world, and looked for acceptance in the world to come only through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ." His anticipation, accordingly, was correct; for on being carried to bed, he speedily lost all power of articulation, and never afterwards regained it; though he was evidently perfectly sensible, and often distinctly perceived to be engaged in prayer. At length, his natural strength becoming gradually more and more exhausted, on Tuesday the 27th of the same month, he calmly breathed out his spirit, and entered into the joy of the Lord. His earthly remains were carried to the grave on the Tuesday thereafter, and laid in his own tomb in the adjoining church-yard, of South Leith, attended by a number of his clerical brethren, and many not only of his own congregation but of other Christian acquaintances, in token of their unfeigned respect for the memory of one whom they had so greatly loved and revered. On the following Sabbath, his funeral sermon was delivered by Dr Jones, of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, one of his very earliest, as well as oldest, steadiest, most attached, highly valued, and valuable personal friends and ministerial assistants then alive; who preached on both diets from Luke 16:22.; giving at the conclusion, in his own vivid and forcible style, a short account of his deceased brother's life and character, with corresponding exhortations to all classes of his auditory, suitably to improve the solemn event on account of which he had been called to address them.

Dr Colquhoun was twice married, but had no family by either of his partners. Both of them were distinguished for their decided piety and good works, and live in the grateful remembrance of those who knew and still survive them. The first was taken from him by death but a few years after their marriage. The second was long his chief earthly support and comfort; and though, in mercy, preserved to watch over and cheer him under the feebleness of his declining days, has since also been numbered with the dead. Laid in the same dark and narrow house, their bodies now rest together there, in the

sure and certain hope of the blessed and glorious resurrection unto life everlasting.

The following inscription on the tablet of the Doctor's cemetery will form no unappropriate conclusion to this imperfect memorial of his life:—

In Memory

OF THE

REV. JOHN COLQUHOUN, D.D.

Minister of the New Kirk, Leith,

Who died on the 27th November 1827, in the 80th Year of his Age, and the 47th of his Ministry.

Having studied deeply the doctrines of grace, and experienced their saving and sanctifying power in his own soul, he laboured earnestly and affectionately to communicate the knowledge of them to his fellow-sinners.

As an author, his chief aim was to advance the glory of the Saviour.

In private, he exhibited the effects of the holy doctrines he inculcated in public, by a close walk with God, and by a kind, affable, and humble deportment towards all men.

And in these several ways, his labours were acknowledged of God, by whom they were blessed to many.

He was faithful unto death, and has now obtained the crown of life.

DANIEL 12:3.

SERMON I: ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—JOHN 1:14.

Some of the ancients inform us, that John wrote this gospel in Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the several churches in Asia, in opposition to the heresy of Ebion and Cerinthus, who maintained that Christ was only a mere man. In the beginning of this first chapter, the evangelist, inspired by the Spirit of truth, asserts in the strongest and most sublime manner, the eternal existence, the personal co-existence, and the divine essence of our Lord Jesus. He then demonstrates the truth of his assertion concerning the divinity and divine perfections of our Lord, by observing, that "all things were made by him, and that without him was not any thing made that was made;" and also, that he was the Proprietor and Fountain of life. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Having thus asserted and demonstrated the truth of Christ's supreme Godhead, in opposition to such as in every age would deny it, and said some things in further confirmation of it, he proceeds, in the words of my text, to introduce the great and fundamental doctrine of his incarnation, in opposition to them who, he foresaw, would afterwards deny the truth of his humanity. "The Word," says he, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" the Word, that is, the Eternal Word, the only-begotten Son of the Father, did in the fulness of time become man, or assume human nature, with all its sinless infirmities, into a personal union with himself. Thus, in human nature, he for a time condescended to tabernacle among men upon earth.

In elucidating this delightful subject, it is proposed, in the First place, To discourse a little of Christ, as the Eternal Word; Secondly, To speak of his incarnation, or having been made flesh; Thirdly, To assign some reasons of this; and, Lastly, To unfold the import of this assertion, He "dwelt among us."

I. It is proposed, then, in dependance on the Spirit of truth, to discourse a little of the Lord Jesus as the Eternal Word.

1. He may be so denominated, because he is the only-begotten Son of the Father. The term intimates his ineffable generation; for, as words are as it were begotten in our thoughts, and are the express image of them, as they are only our thoughts expressed; so, the second Person of the glorious Trinity is very properly styled the Word, because he is the only-begotten of the Eternal Father,—that eternal and personal Wisdom which the Lord possessed in the beginning of his way, Prov. 8:22. There is nothing of which we are more certain than that we think, and nothing of which we are more ignorant, than how we think. None can declare the generation of thought, or tell how thoughts are conceived in the soul. Who, then, can declare his generation who is the eternal and only-begotten Son of the Father?

2. Christ may be called the Word, because he is the great Revealer of the secrets of Heaven.—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John 1:18. By him, God expresses and declares his thoughts to the Church, as men express their thoughts by their words. He "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. 1:2. By him, God in the beginning spoke all things into existence—"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." By him, God spake to the ancient patriarchs and prophets. By him was the Gospel preached in the days of his flesh: at the first it began to be spoken by the Lord. It is by him that God speaketh to the hearts of sinners in the day of his power.

3. As it is by him that God declares his thoughts or will to his people, so it is by him that they express their thoughts and desires to God. The Man Christ Jesus "is the only Mediator between God and men." It is by him, therefore, that believers offer the sacrifice of praise and thanks to God continually He spake for his people in the council of peace, and covenanted to pay the price of their

redemption. He speaks for them in his intercession, and presents their prayers and performances acceptable to his eternal Father.

4. He is in the text, and also in the first verse of the chapter, called the Word, because, being the second Person in the Trinity, it was customary among the Jews to call him by this name; and since the evangelist is here speaking of the constitution of his Person, what he says concerning him would consequently be better understood by them than if he had called him by any other name. Messiah was better known by that name among the ancient Jews than by any other; for he was so denominated, not only in several passages of the Old Testament, but in multitudes of places in the Chaldee paraphrase. Besides, it has been observed, that this term was more acceptable, both to Jews and heathens, than the terms Christ or Son would be. Heathen writers made much use of this term to express the power of God; and nothing was more abhorred by the Jews than the phrase, Son of God. Since, therefore our evangelist was treating of the constitution of Christ's adorable Person, it was requisite that he should style him the Word.

5. Once more: he may be so named, because he is the great and glorious Subject of Divine revelation. The oracles of God are full of him. Moses and all the prophets testified of him: they testified of his sufferings, and of the glory that should follow. The evangelists and apostles build all their doctrines upon him, as the foundation laid in Zion: "And other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the centre in which all the lines of Divine revelation meet. The gospel cannot exist without him. There we read, that "he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," and that his name is called "The Word of God," Rev. 19:13. On these accounts, the only-begotten of the Father may be styled the Word.

II. The second thing proposed was,—to speak of Christ's Incarnation, or his having been made flesh.

1. The eternal Word, the only-begotten Son of the Father, "was made flesh;" that is, he in the fulness of time actually assumed human nature, with all its sinless infirmities, into a personal union with the Divine nature in his adorable Person—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. 4:4. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," Heb. 2:14. The word was made or became flesh. He became man, or began to be man, not by alteration, but by assumption; not by changing the Godhead into man, but by taking the manhood unto God; so as to constitute a personal and indissoluble union between the Divine and human nature. In consequence of this union, the human nature does not exist by itself, but subsists in the person of the eternal Son.

2. The evangelist does not say that the Word was made man, but that the Word was made flesh; intimating the astonishing love of Christ to his people, in humbling himself so low for their redemption as to assume flesh, the meanest part of human nature. Besides, the term flesh expresses more fully the truth of Christ's humanity, and shows, that though he did not assume the person of any man, yet he assumed the nature of every man. Moreover, the distinction of the two natures in the person of Christ was hereby rendered more clear, especially to the Jews, who used to set flesh and blood in opposition to the nature of God.

3. The expression intimates, that Christ existed before his incarnation—"The word was made flesh," which implies, that he was the Word before he assumed flesh. He was the Word from all eternity; he was with his eternal Father, as one brought up with him; he was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, but he was made flesh only in time.

4. So great was the love of Christ to his people, and so much did he long to assume their nature, that he is represented in the Old Testament as often trying it on before he actually assumed it. He

sometimes appeared in human form to saints under the Old Testament. I shall cite only two passages in proof of this:—"It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a MAN over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come," Josh. 5:13, 14. "He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," Dan. 3:25. The love of Christ to his spiritual seed was so ardent, so immense, that he longed to resemble them as nearly as it was possible for him, consistently with his infinite holiness, to do. Hence he was styled, long before his incarnation, "the Son of man," Psal. 80:17.; Dan. 7:13.

5. Each of the Persons in the adorable Trinity had a peculiar agency in the incarnation of Christ. The Father prepared a body or human nature for him, Heb. 10:5.; the Holy Spirit, by his overshadowing power, formed it out of the substance of the virgin, Luke 1:35.; and the Son or second Person, assumed the entire human nature to the Divine nature in his person, Heb. 2:14.

6. The human nature of Christ has no personality of its own. In the moment it was formed by the Holy Spirit, it was assumed by the Son; so that, instead of existing for a moment by itself, or having a distinct personality of its own, it subsists in the person of the Son of God. This human nature is so far from being less perfect than that in a mere man, because it has not a distinct personality of its own, that it is much more perfect and excellent; for to subsist in a Divine person is inconceivably more excellent than to subsist by itself. A human nature differs from a human person in this, that a human person subsists by itself, but a human nature can subsist in the person of another.

7. The Divine and the human nature in the person of Christ, though united together, are still distinct,—each nature possessing its own

peculiar properties. The human nature, though united to the Divine, is not dignified with Divine perfections; nor is the Divine nature made finite or dependent. The human nature is not, in consequence of this union, omnipotent, for Christ was crucified in weakness; nor is it omniscient, Mark 13:32.; nor omnipresent, John 11:15. And that these two natures are distinct in the person of Christ is evident also from this, that the Scripture ascribes two wills to him, a human and a Divine, Luke 22:42. Though the two natures are distinct in the Lord Jesus, yet he hath not two persons, but one; as the soul and body, though very distinct, form but one person. It was necessary that his Divine and human natures should be entirely distinct; because otherwise his Divine nature would have advanced his human nature above the capacity of obeying and suffering; and his human would have depressed his Divine nature below the capacity of meriting and satisfying. Notwithstanding this personal union, the two natures are not confused nor changed into each other, which was the error of the Eutychians of old, who maintained that there was no distinction of natures in the person of Christ, but that the human was entirely absorbed in the Divine nature. This union is such, that the properties of both natures are preserved entire; each nature retaining its own essential properties. A change, indeed, is made in the human nature by its being united to the Divine, and yet no change is produced in the Divine by its union with the human; just as a change is made in the air by its being brightened by the sun, and yet no change in the sun by communicating of its brightness to it. One of the Christian fathers considers the burning bush as a type of this union. He makes the fire in the bush a type of the Divine, and the bush itself a type of the human nature. As the bush was united to the fire, and yet was not hurt by it, but remained entire, was not converted into it, but retained its own properties; so the human nature is united to the Divine, and yet, instead of being converted into it, remains entire. The two natures are so united in one person, as to continue two still.

8. There is a great difference between this union and the union among the Divine Persons in the adorable Trinity. Whereas the

hypostatical union of which I have been speaking is an union of two natures in one person, the union in the eTrinity is the union of three persons in one nature, in one numerical nature, or essence. It differs also from the mystical union that subsists between Christ and believers; for although Christ be said, in consequence of this mystical union, to be in believers, and they in him, yet they are not one person with him; they are one mystical body with him, but not one person. It likewise differs from the union that takes place between the soul and the body. Death dissolves the union between the soul and body; but though the soul had been separated from the body of our Lord before it was laid in the grave, yet both his soul and his body were then united to the Divine nature in his person as firmly as ever.

9. In consequence of this personal union, there is a communication of the properties of each nature to the whole person; so that all the acts of Christ, both those which are performed immediately by his Divine nature, and those which are done immediately by his human, are personal acts, or acts of Christ considered as a person. Accordingly, the scripture ascribes that to his person which belongs properly to one of his natures. For instance, it was the human nature only that suffered and bled; and yet, in virtue of this union, the Church is said to have been purchased with the blood of God, Acts 20:28. Though it was the human nature only that ascended to heaven, yet, in consequence of this personal union, we read, "that God hath gone up with a shout," Psal. 47:5. And though Christ Jesus is called the Son of man, only in respect of his human nature, and though, as to his human nature, he, during his humiliation, was only upon earth, yet, in consequence of this union, he could say, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," John 3:13.

10. Once more: The union between the Divine and human natures, in the person of our glorious Immanuel, is the foundation of the mystical union between his Person and the persons of his

redeemed: and since the former shall continue forever, so shall the latter.

1. From what has been said, we may infer, how wonderful redeeming love is. God so loved the world as to send his only-begotten Son to assume our nature, after it had been debased by sin. He laid help for us upon One who is mighty; and said concerning us, "Deliver them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Consider who it was whom God the Father sent to redeem us. It was not an angel nor archangel; it was none of the flaming seraphim around his celestial throne. Had he spared one of his own retinue from attending him, and given such a glorious servant as an angel for the redemption of such a sinful and despicable creature as fallen man, it would have been a bright display of love. But how immense, how astonishing his loving kindness! He gave not an angel, but the Lord of angels; not a servant, but a Son, a dearly beloved, an only-begotten Son! And how marvellous is the love of the dear Redeemer himself, in condescending to assume to himself our nature, with all its sinless infirmities, that he might be capable of obeying and suffering for us! How amazing, that he who was in the form of God took upon him the form of a servant; that he condescended to be "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons!" Should not this love of Christ to us fill us with great admiration, and constrain us to love him, and God in him, with supreme affection?

2. Hence see how great a mystery is the incarnation of Christ. Two natures, infinitely distant from each other, are hereby united in one Person, in order that sinners, who were at an infinite moral distance from God, might be admitted to the closest communion with him. How wonderful is it, that he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be contained in a virgin's womb; that he who is the mighty Thunderer, whose voice divides the flames of fire, and makes the wilderness to quake, should become a poor weeping infant; that he who is adorned by angels should be despised by men;

and that he who is the Fountain of life should be brought into the dust of death!

3. We may also see how suitable a Mediator the Lord Jesus Christ is. He is both God and man in one Person. How suitable that he who is the Son of God should become the Son of man! that he who is the middle Person in the Trinity should be the Mediator between God and men! How fit that he who is the Son of God by nature should make us the sons of God by grace! How agreeable that he should become a partaker of our nature, in order to make us partakers of a Divine nature in union with him!

4. From what has been said, it is evident that the redemption of the soul is precious. It is ransomed at no less a price than the infinitely precious blood and meritorious obedience of Him who is God as well as man. With what assured confidence may we trust in Him, and rely on his consummate righteousness for a title to plenteous redemption, to everlasting salvation!

5. Let lost sinners be persuaded without delay to believe the record of God concerning his incarnate Son, with application to themselves, and in virtue of his being clothed with our nature, to say in faith, "Unto US a son is given," Isa. 9:6. And let all who attempt believing the gracious offer trust in him for all his salvation to themselves; and in the confidence that he will save them, let them love him, and love his commandments.

SERMON II: ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—JOHN 1:14.

III. I proceed now to the third head of discourse, which was,—To assign reasons of Christ's incarnation.

1. The eternal Son of God assumed the human nature to a personal union with himself, that the prophecies and types of his incarnation might be fulfilled in him.—Many prophecies of this were, under the Old Testament, announced to the Church. The Psalmist speaks of him as the Man of Jehovah's right hand, the Son of man, whom he hath made strong for himself. Isaiah speaks concerning him thus:—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Jeremiah thus prophesies concerning him—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper." Ezekiel speaks thus of him—"I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd." Daniel prophesies of him as the Messiah who was to be cut off, but not for himself. Micah prophesies thus—"But thou, Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And Zechariah—"Behold, the Man whose name is THE BRANCH: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory." None of these prophecies could have been fulfilled in him, without his assumption of the human nature; nor without this could he have answered the various typical representations under the Old Testament; especially the bush burning though not consumed, and the law concerning the near kinsman.

If an Israelite, under the ceremonial law, had through poverty sold away his possession, or sold himself for a servant to another man,

none had a right to redeem either his mortgaged inheritance to him, or him to his inheritance, but his goel, or near kinsman. We had all sold away the inheritance of eternal life for one morsel of forbidden fruit, and neither we nor any of our kindred were able to buy it back; and being reduced to the most abject poverty, by the loss of original righteousness, we had sold ourselves to the most sordid slavery, and were utterly unable to redeem ourselves from it. Now, the only-begotten of the Father having, in the everlasting covenant, engaged to redeem by price and power, not only the inheritance of spiritual and eternal life to us, but us to this inheritance, condescended in his love and in his pity to assume our nature, in order that he might become our near kinsman, and consequently have the right of our redemption devolved upon him; he should have had, agreeably to this illustrious type, no right to redeem us, if he had not, by assuming our nature, become our near kinsman.

2. The Son of God assumed our nature, that he might be made under the law, and be capable of obeying and suffering in our stead. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," Gal. 4:4, 5. He engaged to become Surety for those who were, in the everlasting covenant, given to him; and, as sustaining that character, to pay their debt of perfect obedience for life, by obeying the precepts of the law as a covenant of works in their stead, and their debt of complete satisfaction for sin, by enduring for them the full execution of the condemning sentence of the law, But seeing it was impossible for him to obey or suffer, considered as God, he assumed human nature, that he might, agreeably to his suretiship engagements be capable of fulfilling all righteousness. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me," Heb. 10:5. As the sin of the first Adam implied this, that though he was under the law, and obliged to obey it, yet he aspired to be above the law, and to be free from its obligations; so the glory of God, which had been obscured by this and every other sin, could not be retrieved, unless the second Adam, who had been

naturally above the law, and nowise obliged to obey it, should be made under it as a covenant, and be obliged to yield obedience to it. The disobedience of those who are naturally obliged to obedience could not be compensated but by the obedience of Him who was not naturally nor originally obliged to obey. But because what the Son of God engaged to do in the room of his elect could not have been obedience, had he not been under the law and bound to obey it, he therefore assumed the human nature, that as man he might be capable of yielding obedience, which as God only he could not be. On account of the dignity to which his human nature was advanced, in consequence of its union with the Divine nature in his person, he was under no obligation to obey for himself, because his human nature never existed by itself, but, from the moment of its assumption, subsisted always in his Divine person: notwithstanding, as he was hereby capable of obedience, he became bound to obey, as Surety for the elect. Besides, as in the character of Surety for them, he had engaged to bear the execution of the curse of the law for the satisfaction of Divine justice, he became man, that the sword of justice might have an opportunity of smiting him.

3. He became man, that the honour of the Divine law might be supported, and Divine wisdom be more illustriously displayed in his obedience unto death. He was "made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law;" that is, to redeem them in a way fully consistent with the honour of the Divine law, and with the glory of infinite wisdom. If he had assumed the angelic nature, he might no doubt have been capable of obeying and suffering, and his obedience and sufferings might, perhaps, have had as much intrinsic value as they could have had in the human nature. But in that case, Divine wisdom could not have been so illustriously displayed, nor the honour of the Divine law maintained: whereas, in consequence of his assumption of the human nature, the wisdom of God is displayed to the uttermost, and his law is magnified and made honourable. In consequence of this, the law is honoured with perfect obedience in the same nature that disobeyed it; the curse is endured in the same nature that deserved

it; Divine justice is completely satisfied in the same nature that offended it; God is glorified by the same nature that came short of his glory; Satan is conquered by the same nature that he overcame; death is endured in the same nature that was doomed to die; and the inheritance of eternal life was purchased in the same nature that lost it. In this the glory of Divine wisdom shines with transcendent lustre.

4. The Son of God assumed human nature, that he might thereby show his people how much he loved them. Love among men, wherever it is unfeigned, has an assimilating tendency. The Lord Jesus loved his people with an immense love, and therefore he resolved, not only to make them partakers of a Divine nature, that they might resemble him as nearly as it was possible for them to do, but to become a partaker of human nature, that he might be as like unto them in all things, sin only excepted, as it was possible for him to be. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," Heb. 2:17. So infinite was his love to sinful men, that though the human nature was infinitely distant from the Divine, yet he took it into the nearest union with himself; and though it was far inferior in dignity to the angelic nature, yet he hath taken it up with him to the highest heavens, and exalted it, in union with his Divine nature, far above the nature of angels. The apostle Paul informs us, that, clothed in human nature, Christ "ascended up far above all heavens;" and that "God set him at his own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named." Well, then, may we exclaim with the holy Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him! and the son of man that thou visitest him!"

5. Christ became man, that he might overcome Satan in such a manner as to put him to the greater shame.—"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." If that wicked spirit had been overcome immediately by God, he would have had it to say, that he

was conquered by one who was much stronger than he: if he had been vanquished by an angel, he would probably have comforted himself by reflecting, that he was overcome by one who was an equal match for him. But when he was vanquished by a man, (for Christ, though not a mere man, was yet a real man,)—I say, when he was overcome, and, as the Scriptures inform us, was dragged in triumph, and exposed to the view of holy angels and redeemed souls, by a man, with what confusion must that proud spirit have been filled! The Son of God therefore assumed our nature, that, as Satan had triumphed in the shame and destruction of it in the first Adam, he might baffle and triumph over him in that very nature over which he had triumphed.

6. Christ assumed a holy human nature, that he might thereby lay a sure foundation for his people's perseverance in holiness. "Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself; so shall we not go back from thee," Psal. 80:17, 18. When man was at first made after the image of God, he was perfectly righteous and holy, able to love, serve, please, and glorify God; but, seeing God did not unite our nature to himself by a personal union, the holiness that he had communicated to it was quickly lost; the fabric of it, as it were, fell to the ground. By permitting this most grievous loss, the Lord, as it were, declared, that no gracious relation between him and our nature could be secure and permanent, unless it were assumed to a subsistence in himself. This union, then, is the sure foundation of the Church's saving relation to God, as a God of grace, and of the conveyance of gracious influences to its true members; and so long as that foundation stands, the safety, holiness, and happiness of believers shall be secure. Now, the only-begotten of the Father assumed our nature, that it might, in personal union with him, be secured, and that our persons might never be in danger of losing conformity to him, or communion with him. "By him all things consist," Col. 1:17.

7. He assumed our nature, that he might in our nature exhibit an example of what he would by his Spirit renew us unto, and of what

we are bound to attain. His humanity, or our nature in him, was richly furnished with all those heavenly endowments, and divinely adorned with all those spiritual graces which were necessary to render it a perfect pattern of holiness to believers. Our nature was entirely divested of its original righteousness by the breach of the first covenant; so that none of the children of Adam could ever pretend justly to the smallest degree of true holiness, since that woful apostasy, far less to such perfection of it as would render them capable of exhibiting a proper example of it. Christ, therefore, assumed the human nature, that he might again present it to the view of men, shining in all the beauty of perfect holiness, as an example for them to follow. "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He took our nature into personal union with himself, that he might be the pattern of the renovation of the image of God in us. We are predestinated, says an apostle, "to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren;" that is, the pattern of what he would advance the younger brethren to; that as they have borne the image of the first Adam, they might bear the image of the second.

8. Christ took unto him human nature, that in it he might be the Heir of all things, and might secure the inheritance of his spiritual seed from a second forfeiture.—Whatever God imparts to his children, he bestows it on them by way of inheritance. He vested a great inheritance in the first Adam; he made him Lord and heir of all things under the sun. But man by transgression forfeited this inheritance, as well as that of spiritual blessings. Now, as this was an inheritance only for man, and as it could not be secured from a second forfeiture were it again lodged with a mere man, the Lord vested it in the Man Christ Jesus, whom he appointed heir of all things, Heb. 1:2. He transferred it to him; he settled it in him, that it might never any more be forfeited. Now, Christ became man, that the inheritance intended for men who shall believe might be settled and secured in him. When a man receives an inheritance, its burdens and debts descend to him along with it. In like manner, the

inheritance of spiritual and temporal blessings descended to Christ Jesus with all its burdens. There was a burden of boundless debt upon it,—the debt of infinite satisfaction for sin, and of perfect obedience for a title to eternal life. This debt it behoved him to pay, else he could not lawfully possess the inheritance in name of his people; and this, as was already said, required his assumption of the human nature.

9. The Son of God became man, that he might have an experimental knowledge of his people's infirmities; or, as it is expressed by an apostle, that he might be touched with the feelings of their infirmities. In consequence of his omniscience as a Divine Person, his knowledge of the infirmities and trials of his people, even before his incarnation, was as exact and comprehensive as it was possible for it ever to be. But it was only in consequence of his incarnation and subjection to the sinless infirmities of human nature that it was rendered experimental, and that he could be properly said to sympathise with his people in such circumstances, from his own experience. It is because he himself hath suffered, being tempted, that he is able in this sense to succour them that are tempted. O how comfortable, how reviving, that the believer's great High Priest is more sensibly touched with the feeling of his infirmities, his distresses, than he himself can be! And he is not more sensibly touched with the feeling of them, than ready in his own time and way, to remove them.

Lastly, Christ assumed the human nature, that, in its exalted state at the right hand of God, it might be the pattern or model of that glory which will be conferred on the souls and bodies of his redeemed after the resurrection. The apostle Paul informs us, that their bodies shall be fashioned "like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. 3:21. Oh, who transcendently bright is the glory, how resplendent the lustre, that is to be seen on the humanity of our adorable Immanuel! And how reviving to think that the bodies of all

the saints will resemble his glorified body, in as high a degree as infinite power and immense love can make them!

From what has now been said, the following inferences may be drawn:—

1. If the love of our Divine Redeemer to us was so ineffably great as to determine him to stoop so low as to become man, in order that he might be like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, should not the same amazing love constrain you whom he hath redeemed, to press toward perfect likeness to Him in the beauty of holiness? Did he take unto him our nature, that he might be capable of dying for our offences, and of rising again for our justification; and should not we desire and endeavour above all things to be planted together in the likeness of his death, by dying to sin, and of his resurrection, by rising to righteousness, and walking with him in newness of life?

2. Is the union of the Divine and human nature in the person of Christ a sure foundation of his people's perseverance in union with him, and conformity to him?—Let believers, then, be encouraged to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This personal union is, and will continue to be, an everlasting security for the perpetuity of the mystical union between his person and the persons of believers. It will be as easy for an enemy to ascend to the celestial throne, and tear asunder the glorified humanity from the Divine person of our exalted Immanuel, as it will be to dissolve the union which subsists between him and the weakest member of his mystical body. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

3. Is the human nature of Christ intended to be the pattern after which his spiritual seed are renewed and advanced to perfection of holiness? Then let the believer, by the renewed exercise of particular trust in him, constantly derive from his fulness grace to make him come "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," or, "grow up into him in all things who is the head."

4. Let us meditate often on the glory of the person of Christ. There are such mysteries in his adorable person as will be sufficient to employ the contemplative mind, and to afford new matter of admiration to it throughout all eternity. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." The spiritual and devout contemplation of the glory of the great mystery would be attended with many advantages to the exercised Christian; it would promote establishment in faith, increasing resemblance to Christ in his image, and the cure of earthly mindedness. All the spiritual exercise of the saints proceeds upon, and relates to, the mediatorial person of Christ.

5. How tender, how great, is the compassion of the Lord Jesus to his afflicted children! He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is as willing as able to sympathise with and relieve them. What high encouragement, then, have they to come boldly to the throne of grace, and plead the promises in his name!

6. In conclusion: How highly is our nature dignified in the person of our Redeemer! Human nature in its first creation was made a little lower than that of the angels; but now, in the person of Christ, it is exalted far above their's. "To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Heb. 1:13. Should not this distinguishing honour, believers, constrain you to glorify your exalted Redeemer in your bodies and in your spirits, which are his?

SERMON III: ON THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."—JOHN 1:14.

IV. I proceed now to the fourth general head, which was,—To consider the import of the assertion in the text, "He dwelt among us."

The original verb, which is here translated "dwelt," properly signifies, He tabernacled, or pitched his tabernacle; that is, he dwelt in human nature among us. This is foretold in Zech. 2:10. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." It is hinted also in Psalm 68:18. "Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." And in Rev. 21:3. "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them." Now, this expression in the text, "He tabernacled or dwelt among us,"—

1. Does not imply that he had never dwelt in the Church before; for it is evident, that, by his Spirit, and by his prophets, by typical representations of him, and by sacrifices, he dwelt in it long before his incarnation. Hence, long before his assumption of human nature, he said concerning the Church, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it," Psal. 132:14. And we read in the Revelation, that he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; but he could not be said to be slain, when he was in no respect present. The expression, then, does not imply that he never dwelt in his Church previously to his incarnation, but only, that he never tabernacled or dwelt in human nature in it before.

2. It shows his amazing condescension and grace. He dwelt, says the evangelist, among us—among us men and us apostles. He dwelt among us who are counted less than nothing and vanity,—among us who were by nature sinners, the chief of sinners, who were rebellious also, and his most inveterate enemies. If he had, in this affair, consulted his own ease or pleasure, to dwell among us would be worse to him than it was to David to dwell in Mesech, or to Ezekiel to dwell among scorpions. How mean, how sinful, and how dangerous, is this world which we inhabit! and how difficult to a

devout and contemplative mind to be reconciled to dwell in it always! and yet our Divine Redeemer dwelt in it for more than thirty-three years, and that in circumstances of the deepest abasement!

3. The expression also implies, that he lived in the meanest circumstances during his state of humiliation. He tabernacled among us; he lived in a low condition, as shepherds do who dwell in tents. When he was in this world, he did not reside under a gilded roof, nor in a splendid habitation, as the rich and honourable of the earth do; but he dwelt as in a tent or tabernacle. He was like a stranger and a sojourner, and he had not where to lay his head, in order that he might exalt all who believe in him, to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.

4. It imports, that while he was in this world, the rays of his Divinity or Divine glory shone through the vail of his humanity, in the view of those whose eyes had been opened to behold them. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." The eternal "Word, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," was made flesh, and dwelt among us. He tabernacled or dwelt in flesh among us. The expression evidently contains an allusion to the shechinah, or cloud of glory which hovered about the mercy-seat and between the cherubim, in the tabernacle of Moses. This cloud was a lively representation of Jehovah and his glory, as peculiarly present in the most holy place of the tabernacle. Now, as the Son of God dwelt in the Mosaic tabernacle, by the shechinah, or cloud of glory, so he tabernacled or dwelt for a time in the human nature upon earth. He dwelt among us in flesh, which the apostle Paul calls "this tabernacle," as he did formerly in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, by the cloud of glory. And as the high priest, who went once in the year into the holy of holies, had access to see this cloud of glory shining in it, so those who were kings and priests

to God, and had access to see the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, beheld a spiritual glory in him, which, especially on some occasions, shone with refulgent lustre to their view. And, indeed, all true believers behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord Jesus; and so are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. Their spiritual sight of the glory of Christ in human nature is an assimilating sight.

5. The expression suggests, that Christ's state in this world was a state of warfare. In time of war, soldiers who sojourn in a country which is the seat of war commonly dwell in tents. The Son of God had, long before his incarnation, proclaimed war against the god of this world; and now he enters the enemy's country, and pitches his tent, to carry on the war. He that speaketh in righteousness, mighty to save, travelled through this enemy's country: he marched through it in the greatness of his strength, conquering and to conquer. He spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, and triumphed over them in his cross, Col. 2:15.

Finally, It intimates, that the Lord Jesus was not to continue long in human nature upon earth. He dwelt here as in a tent, and not as in a fixed habitation. He so inhabited this world as to show that here he had no continuing city. The ancient patriarchs dwelt in tabernacles, and thereby confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. In like manner, Christ's abode in this world was like that of a stranger and a pilgrim, only but for a time, a short time. But why did the Lord Jesus, after his assumption of human nature, choose to dwell in it upon earth, and not rather immediately among the blessed inhabitants of heaven? In addition to the reasons of this already mentioned, I would say, he chose to dwell for a time rather upon earth, that he might show the more effectually his tender regard to his people. One discovers great regard to a friend when he takes a long and difficult journey to visit him. The Lord Jesus performed a journey of infinite length, in order to visit and redeem his people. He resolved also to tabernacle for a time upon earth, that he might give to his saints an example of being willing to continue

in this valley of tears so long as they had any service to perform in it for the glory of their heavenly Father. And he dwelt for a time in this world, that by his residence in it he might sanctify it, as the place of his people's pilgrimage, before they arrive at their Father's house, the holy place on high.

Now, from what has been said on the whole subject before us, we may see the high honour which is put upon human nature. The greatest and most wonderful work that ever God did was done in our nature. The work of redeeming a lost world was a greater work than the creation of millions of worlds; and yet this most wonderful work was performed in the human nature. If he hath honoured our nature so highly, ought not we to glorify him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his? Shall we debase our nature, which has been thus highly honoured, by yielding to any motion of sin or temptation of Satan? Should not we employ all the faculties of our souls, and members of our bodies, in performing works of faith, and labours of love, and in maintaining good works?

2. Hence we see, that the law as a covenant of works is magnified and made honourable, in the highest degree possible. It has been honoured with the perfect obedience of a Divine Person in human nature. It is honoured and magnified more with the meritorious obedience of the Son of God, than ever it has been dishonoured by the disobedience of man. Whenever, therefore, the law as a covenant finds its way again into the believer's conscience, and charges him with the guilt of dishonouring it by acts of disobedience, let him present in the hand of faith to it, the consummate obedience and the complete atonement of God his Saviour; let him also, in reliance on promised grace, perform that sincere and evangelical obedience to it as a rule of duty by which he will honour it as the law of Christ. Since the Lord Jesus, believer, honoured the law at a covenant for your salvation, it is surely your duty to honour it as a rule for his glory, and the glory of God in him.

3. Hence learn this sovereign remedy for our having been conceived in sin, and our having brought a depraved nature into the world with us. Our Lord Jesus Christ brought a human nature perfectly holy into the world with him, and, as the Surety for sinners, presented to the law an holy human nature; which holiness of nature is imputed to believers as a fundamental part of their justifying righteousness. He at the same time purchased the saving influences of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of their nature. This is ground of comfort to you, to whom the sin that dwelleth in you is the most oppressive and grievous burden.

4. Did the Lord Jesus tabernacle among men, and thereby show that he was not to remain long an inhabitant of this world? Then let believers study to be more and more conformed to him by living so as daily to confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Let them declare plainly, that they seek a better country, and that their conversation is in heaven.

5. Hence we may see what ground we have of thankfulness and praise to our gracious God and Father. Our nature is indissolubly united to the Divine nature in the person of his only-begotten Son. And what reason have we to thank and praise his dear Son for remembering us in our low estate, and for condescending to be made flesh and dwell among us; and so to unite our low nature to himself by a personal and indissoluble union, that he might lay a sure foundation for the spiritual union of our persons with his adorable Person! We ought to thank God for Moses and the prophets, for evangelists and apostles; but, above all, for Jesus the incarnate Redeemer, the Messenger of the covenant, the Desire of all nations. But some disconsolate believer will say, "I ought indeed to be thankful that ever Christ united the human nature to the Divine in his person; but I find it very difficult to be heartily thankful for it. If I were satisfied that I was vitally united to Him as my Kinsman-Redeemer, I should find it easy to give thanks for that personal union; but my fear that this is not the case renders the sincere performance of such a duty very hard to me." Indeed, if you

be under prevailing doubts as to your union and communion with Christ, you cannot be cordially thankful for any thing connected with him. But is it true that you are not united to Christ? Then whence is it that you see indwelling sin so plainly, and feel it so sensibly, as to loathe it, and long for deliverance from it? This must be from the Spirit of Christ. False professors pretend that they see the corruption of their hearts; but that which they see never either discourages their presumptuous confidence, or makes them loathe themselves in their own sight before the Lord. How comes it that you complain bitterly of your want of love to Jesus Christ, and to God in him? Union of affection is a good evidence of vital union. If you were entirely destitute of true love to Christ, you would not bewail your want of love to him. And whence is it that you complain to him of your want of conformity to him in holiness, and of the prevalence of iniquities against you, by which you dishonour him? Is it not, that you delight in his law after the inward man, and long for perfect conformity to it? Credit the reports of sense less, and of faith more. Be thankful for the signs of union with Christ which you have, and especially that, by the offers of the Gospel, you are warranted to come as a sinner in yourself, and to trust in him for all his salvation. Let it fill you with gratitude to the God of all grace, that he hath made this your present duty.

6. In conclusion: Let saints and sinners suffer the word of exhortation. As for you who have not only your nature, but your persons united to Jesus Christ, be persuaded, first, to meditate frequently on the transcendent glory of his person. It is the masterpiece of the manifold wisdom of God. Devout meditation on this glorious object is attended with many advantages. It is a mean of confirming faith, hope, love, admiration, and conformity to the Lord Jesus; 2 Cor. 3:18. 2d, Take encouragement in the midst of all your conflicts with corruption and temptation, from that personal union: for so long as it continues, the union between your persons and the person of Christ shall not be dissolved. There is no condemnation to you, for you are in Christ Jesus; and, in union with him, sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law as a

covenant, but under grace. 3d, Study to make a particular and daily application of Christ to yourselves, in virtue of the union of your nature with him; saying, "Spread the covering of thy spotless righteousness over me, for thou art a near Kinsman." What is the reason that little of love, desire, zeal, courage, joy, and holiness, is in many of the saints at this day? They do not, as they ought, appropriate to themselves the person of Christ, nor place the confidence of their hearts in him for all their salvation. 4th, Did the only-begotten of the Father obey the law as a covenant, and endure the execution of the curse of it in your nature? You are therefore bound to obey it as a rule of life in your persons. His design in assuming your nature was, that he might yield perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works for your salvation; and his intention in obeying it under that form was, that he might merit the sanctification of the Spirit, to enable you to yield sincere obedience to it, as the rule of righteousness in his kingdom. He obeyed it as a covenant for your justification of life, that you might obey it as a rule for his glory, and the glory of God in him. Study, then, in reliance on his promised grace, to fall in with the gracious design of his incarnation and obedience unto death, in your nature. From principles of faith and love, advance daily in holy conformity to him. Glorify him in your body and in your spirit, which are his.

As for you, who are not by faith united to the incarnate Redeemer, and have no communion with him in his righteousness and salvation, be convinced of your sinfulness and misery. If the Son of God had not seen from eternity that you are lost, he would never have stooped so infinitely low as to be made flesh. Do not imagine, that because he assumed your nature, you are secured from perishing in your sins. Except your persons be vitally united to him by a living faith, you cannot inherit eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Oh be persuaded to embrace and trust in the compassionate Saviour, as he is freely offered to you in the Gospel. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

SERMON IV: ON CHRIST AS HIS FATHER'S SERVANT

"Behold, I will bring forth my Servant, the BRANCH." - ZECH.
3:8.

In the preceding part of this chapter, the prophet describes a vision which he had of Joshua, the Jewish high priest, standing as the representative of that people, before the Angel of the Lord. As it was then customary in courts of judicature for the accuser to stand at the right hand of the person he accused, Satan was represented to him as standing at the right hand of Joshua, sustaining that public character, and as accusing him doubtless of many aggravated sins, in order if possible to prevail with God to deliver up his people to the will of their adversaries. Then the Angel, the uncreated Angel of the covenant, was represented to him as replying, in answer to such accusations, thus:—"The Lord rebuke, thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" intimating, that since Jehovah had made choice of Israel for his professing people, and had lately delivered them from the Babylonian captivity, it could not be supposed that he would cease to afford protection to those whom, notwithstanding the crimes of which they were accused, he had thus rescued from utter destruction. And to show that the sins with which they stood chargeable did not hinder the exercise of Divine compassion towards them as a nation, Joshua, though represented as standing before the Angel, clothed in filthy garments, denoting the moral pollution of the people, was shown at the same time as clothed with change of raiment, in token of God's forgiving their iniquities, and restoring them as a nation to a more prosperous condition. As the Jews were a typical people, and their deliverance from captivity a

typical deliverance, the inspired prophet took occasion to announce, in the words before us, an illustrious prophecy respecting Messiah, as the Father's Servant, in accomplishing the salvation of his Church from her spiritual enemies.—"Hear now, O Joshua, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my Servant, the BRANCH." As Joshua was already exhibited as representing the Jewish people in their character as a church and nation, and in their deliverance from captivity, the other priests are here associated with him, and addressed jointly. "Hear now, O Joshua, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at;" or, as it is on the margin, they are men of wonder, signifying that they are typical men, men who portend future things; or, according to the translation of the LXX., men who are proposed to others for signs and types: "Behold, I will bring forth my Servant, the Branch." This is parallel to those words in Jeremiah, "I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch." Messiah, who was in the fulness of time to appear as the Father's Servant, may well be denominated the Branch; because his human nature never existed by itself, but, from the moment of its conception, subsisted as an ingrafted branch in his Divine person; and also because he covers the earth with his shadow. It is entirely owing to his interposition as Mediator, not only that his own people are sheltered from the scorching heat of Divine wrath, but that the world in general is not instantly consumed by it. As it was in consequence of his eternal engagement to the office of Mediator, that he thus secures his people from danger, he is also in the text styled God's Servant. It is God in the person of the Father who here speaketh; and when he saith, "I will bring forth my Servant," the meaning is, that he will send him into the world in due time, and exhibit him to the view of the Church in human nature. Although Messiah is here called his Servant, it is not to be so understood as if he were by nature inferior to the Father, for he was, from all eternity, and shall continue to all eternity, the same in divinity and glory as the Father; but it is to be understood of his inferiority as man and Mediator. His being styled the servant of his Father intimates also his engagement in the everlasting

covenant, the contract of service, to perform the various parts of service which his Father assigned to him, in order to accomplish the redemption of his elect. As he thus engaged or bound himself to serve his Father in this arduous work, he is denominated in Scripture his bond servant; and as the Father promised highly to exalt him as the reward of this work, he is styled his honorary, or his dignified Servant.

In further discoursing on the subject before us, it is in dependance on the Spirit of Truth, proposed, First, to point out what Christ had to do as his Father's bond Servant: Secondly, To show what work was assigned him as his honorary Servant; and, Thirdly, To consider some of his properties as his Father's Servant in general.

I. I am first, then, to point out what Christ undertook to do as his Father's bond Servant. But before I proceed to this, allow me to premise, that the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, actually assumed the mean character of a bond-servant, in the room of poor sinners. This is evident from Phil. 2:5–7. where the apostle Paul, exhorting the Philippians to humility and self-denial, says, "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." We had all lost our reputation in the first Adam, by breaking the covenant of works, the original contract of service between God and man. In order, then, to recover our reputation, the Lord Jesus engaged in the covenant of grace to make himself of no reputation, and to take upon him the form of a servant in our stead. The original word which is here rendered a servant, properly signifies a bond-man, or a bond-servant, and is the same word that is used in this form of expression which often occurs in the new Testament, "bond or free." Christ, then, humbled himself so low for our redemption as to take upon him the form of a bond-servant. This is also plain, from what he himself saith in Psal. 40:6. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened." The word translated "opened," properly signifies digged, as

on the margin; and so the words run,—Mine ears hast thou digged through, or bored, as in our translation of the Psalms in metre. Now, this has a direct reference to the law concerning the bond-servant, in Exodus 21:6. "His master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, (or unto the door-post;) and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever," or to the end of his life. In like manner, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the room of sinners, bound himself to the service of his Father, during the whole time of his humiliation on earth, till he should be removed by death. Hence he said to his disciples, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." That Christ sustained this character, appears also from the price which Judas received for him. The chief priests covenanted to give him thirty pieces of silver, which was the stated price of a bond-servant under the law. It appears likewise from the kind of death to which Pilate was permitted to condemn him; which was the death usually inflicted on criminals who were bond-men. Thus it is evident that Christ, who was from everlasting equal with the Father, humbled himself so infinitely low, as to take upon him the mean and afflicted character of a bond-servant, that poor sinners, who were the slaves of Satan and the servants of corruption, might be set at liberty.

Now, in the character of bond-servant, Christ Jesus had the following parts of service to perform: He had the curse of the broken law to bear; he had the precepts of the law to obey; he had Divine justice to satisfy; the glory of all the Divine attributes to restore; and the prophecies and types respecting his humiliation to fulfil.

1. He had the curse of the broken law to endure. The apostle Paul informs us, "that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. 3:13. As the people in whose room Christ undertook to serve, were all by nature under the curse in consequence of transgression, it was an article in the contract of service between the Father and him, that he should, both in their

nature and their stead, bear the curse due to them for sin. No sooner, therefore, did he partake of human nature, than the curse seized upon him. That dreadful curse which would have sunk a whole elect world to the lowest hell, he began at his incarnation to bear, and he bore it all the time of his humiliation, till at last it brought him to the dust of death. Hence we read, that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and that he at last began to be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. We read also, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor; for as the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow, so his curse is sufficient to render a man poor. This, then, was an article inexpressibly arduous; it was beyond the power of any of the children of Adam to accomplish it, and yet it was but little in comparison of the other parts of service assigned to Christ.

2. He had the precepts of the law to yield perfect obedience to. Accordingly, he said to John, when he hesitated to baptise him, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," Matt. 3:15. The law of the ten commandments was given to the first Adam, under the form of a covenant of works; and though he engaged, as the servant of God to yield perfect obedience to it, yet he very soon failed in that obedience; and by his falling from that height of perfect holiness and happiness to which his bountiful Creator had exalted him, into a horrible abyss of sin and misery, he rendered himself and his posterity utterly unable to perform the least acceptable or perfect obedience to that righteous law. The law, however, still requires perfect obedience as the condition of life, and threatened death, in all its extent, in case of the least instance of disobedience. Now, seeing those whom he had elected to eternal life could not yield this obedience for themselves, it was stipulated that Christ should be "made of a woman, made under the law," that he might, as the Servant of his Father, perform that perfect obedience to it as a covenant which it required of them in order to give them a title to life eternal. Accordingly, in the Old Testament, we find it prophesied of him, that he was to "bring in everlasting righteousness;" and in the New, we are informed, that

he "became obedient unto death," and that "by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." This perfect obedience he yielded whilst he was under the heaviest of all burdens,—the curse of the broken law: which, doubtless, rendered the performance of it infinitely more difficult than otherwise it would have been.

3. Christ, as the Servant of his eternal Father, was bound to satisfy Divine justice. It was incumbent on him, not only to bear the curse of the law during the whole course of his obedience in his life, but to endure the full execution of it at his death, to the complete satisfaction of sin-revenging justice. He was not only to drink of the cup of Divine fury due to sin, but to drink it off. It behoved him to endure all that doleful anguish, all those unutterable torments both in soul and in body which his spiritual seed otherwise should have had eternally to endure. This part of Christ's service was indispensably requisite; for, since the persons in whose room he served were sinners, and therefore were bound over by the condemning sentence of the law to eternal death, as the just wages of sin, it would have been utterly inconsistent with the honour of Divine justice to dissolve this obligation, unless he had bound himself as their Surety to suffer the same punishment in their stead. Accordingly, we read in the Scriptures, that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" that he made "his soul an offering for sin," and that he died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God."

4. In the character of a bond servant, he had to restore the glory of the Divine attributes, which was obscured and sullied by the sins of those in whose stead he served. Hence, in the prospect of his entering upon his service, his eternal Father addressed him thus: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified," Isa. 49:3. Every sin is a direct insult offered to God, and an act of downright rebellion against his supreme authority, interposed in his law. It includes a contempt of his majesty, a contradiction of his holiness, which is his chief glory, a denial of his omniscience and omnipresence, a defiance of his power, a reflection on his wisdom, a

disbelief of his faithfulness, and a disparagement of his goodness. Now, seeing every act of disobedience thus obscures the lustre of the Divine glory, and since it was from eternity foreseen that the elect of God would, times without number, commit sin, and so come short of his glory; it was proposed to Christ, and settled as an article in the everlasting covenant, that he should veil his glory by assuming their nature, and, in the low and obscure condition of a bond-servant, restore the glory of all the Divine attributes in their stead, in order that it might be consistent with the highest honour of all those perfections, to re-admit them to favour. Accordingly, we read that "He restored that which he took not away," Psal. 69:4. and that when his service was almost finished, he addressed his Father thus: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John 17:4.

5. In conclusion: It was also incumbent upon him to fulfil those prophecies and types of the Old Testament which related to his state of humiliation. It was prophesied, that he should "grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," without form or comeliness; "that his visage should be marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;" that he should be "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" that he should "make his soul an offering for sin:" and that he should "bring in everlasting righteousness," "and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." These and many other prophecies, it was incumbent upon him, during his state of humiliation, to fulfil. He was also bound to answer the various types of the Old Testament respecting his abasement, sufferings, and death, as the Servant of his Father, and the Surety for his people.

II. The second general head was,—To show what work was assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the honorary Servant of his Father. That he sustains this dignified character is evident. "Behold," saith his eternal Father, "my Servant whom I uphold; mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." "He shall not fail nor be

discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law," Isa. 42:1, 4. "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth," Isa. 49:6.

The Lord Jesus humbled himself by becoming a bond-servant, and God highly exalted him by constituting him his honorary Servant. His bond-service he finished in his state of humiliation; his honorary service he is now performing in his state of exaltation. To the one he bound himself in the everlasting covenant; with the other, the Father promised to honour him as a part of his glorious reward. Accordingly, having finished the work which was given him to do as a bond-servant, the Father exalted him to be Prime-minister of heaven, to have a name above every name, that in his name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Joseph being exalted to be prime-minister of Pharaoh, and governor over all the land of Egypt, before whom the Egyptians were commanded to bow the knee, after he had been brought thither as a bond-servant, was in that respect an eminent type of Christ. Now, in the exalted character of the Father's honorary Servant, the following parts of service were assigned to him: He was to triumph over all the enemies of his people, as their Representative; he was to take possession of heaven in their name; he was to be the high Trustee of all the grace and glory which he had merited by his bond service; he was to be the sovereign Dispenser thereof to sinners; he was to judge angels and men at the end of time; and to be the only medium of communication and intercourse in heaven between God and glorified saints through eternity.

1. He was to triumph victoriously over all the enemies of his people, as their federal Representative. Having in the character of a bond-servant entered the lists with those enemies of his people, sin, Satan, the world, and death; they were permitted to prevail against

him so far as to get him laid and kept for a time in the grave. It was however, secured to him in the name and as the Representative of God's elect, that, in his resurrection as the first-born from the dead, he should obtain a triumphant victory over them. It is true, he triumphed over them in his cross, before he was laid in the grave; for we read, that "he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it;" but he did not triumph over them completely till his resurrection. In his resurrection, however, he was honoured not only to evidence the acceptance of his bond-service in the room of his people, not only to gain the victory over his and their enemies, but to obtain, in the view of all intelligent creatures, a glorious triumph over them. And, doubtless, it was most reasonable, since they had triumphed in the destruction of the first Adam and his posterity, that the last Adam, as the Head of a redeemed world, should triumph in their destruction.

2. He was to take possession of heaven, in the room of his people, till they should all arrive there in their own persons. Hence an apostle speaks of the believer's hope as entering "into that within the vail, whither the Forerunner hath for us entered, even Jesus." It is true, many of them went to heaven before his ascension thither, but the most of them follow after it. Since, in the character of Bond-servant he humbled himself so low as to endure all the anguish and agony which otherwise his people should have suffered in hell through all eternity, it was most reasonable, that, in the character of the Father's honorary Servant, he should be exalted to possess in their name all the felicity and joy which they were severally to possess in heaven, to eternity. Hence we are informed in Scripture, that after God had raised him from the dead, "he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named." Whilst he was a bond-servant, he was brought very low, lower than any of the children of men; for he saith, "I am a worm, and no man;" but now, he is "exalted and extolled, and is very high," as high as his dearest friends can wish him to be.

3. As the honorary Servant of the Father, he was to be the high Trustee of all those blessings of grace and glory which he merited by what he did as a bond-servant.—"It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. 1:19. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." As it was a special part of the dignity to which Joseph was exalted, after his state of servitude, to have all the treasures of Pharaoh intrusted to him, so it was a special part of the honour conferred upon the Lord Jesus, to have all the inexhaustible treasures of new covenant blessings committed to his trust, and lodged with him.

4. It was incumbent upon him, as the honorary Servant of the Father, to be the sole Dispenser of all the blessings of the new covenant to his people while they remain in this world. To him, then, they must look for all the grace that they need. Out of his fulness they must all receive, and grace for grace, John 1:16. Hence he is called the light of the world, the resurrection and the life, and also the consolation of Israel, because he dispenses and communicates light, life, and consolation to all his redeemed. The faith of the true Christian supposes this; for it is a trusting in him with the heart for all his salvation; that is, a cordial trust, that he will communicate all the blessings of salvation to him in particular, according to the tenor of the promises, and the necessities of his soul. And Oh, what a distinguished honour must it be to the Lord Jesus, to have the eyes of all his saints in the Church militant fixed upon Him, for communications of grace to supply their innumerable wants; every one, expecting his portion in due season! and how well qualified must Christ be for such an honourable office, who is most intimately acquainted with all their wants, and is possessed of the most tender sympathy, to prompt him to relieve them!

5. As the Father's honorary Servant, he is, at the end of time, to be the Judge of angels and men.—During his state of servitude in this world, he was "a servant of rulers;" and at a human tribunal he was judged worthy of crucifixion, the death of a bond-man. Therefore, as

a reward of such astonishing abasement, the Father resolved to judge no man," but to commit all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And since the fallen angels had been active in seducing the first Adam to sin, which occasioned the second Adam's being reduced to the low condition of a bond-servant, the Father resolved that He should be employed as his honorary Servant, to pronounce a sentence of condemnation also upon them, suitable to their demerit. Accordingly "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained," Acts 17:31.

6. Lastly, In virtue of that dignified character, he was to be the illustrious medium of communication and intercourse between God and the saints in heaven, for ever and ever. Hence every blessing necessary to constitute the everlasting felicity of the redeemed in the heavenly world shall be conveyed to them, not only through the channel of his surety-righteousness, but by his own gracious hand. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. 7:17.

III. The third thing proposed was,—To mention some of his properties as the Servant of his Father in general.

1. He is a righteous Servant. "By his knowledge," saith the eternal Father," shall my righteous Servant justify many." He is righteous in the whole course of his service. When he was a bond-servant, he observed the strictest justice in all his dealings with God. He did ample justice to the law of God, by fulfilling all righteousness, as the Surety of his people, in obedience both of its commands and demands, considered as a covenant of works. He did justice to the perfections of God: he gave unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. As an honorary Servant, he is just in the whole of his conduct toward his enemies: he will, with infinite exactness, suit the degree of their punishment to the demerit of their crimes. And as to his

own people, his justice shall go before him, and set them in the way of his steps. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright, and that there is no unrighteousness in him." He will communicate holiness and comfort to them, according to the merit of his righteousness imputed to them, insofar as they shall be capable of receiving them; and will administer the discipline of the covenant to them, in proportion as their cases require it.

2. He is a faithful servant. Solomon says, that "the most of men will proclaim every man his own goodness; but a faithful man who can find?" Prov. 20:6. The glory of God, the honour of the law, and the salvation of an elect world, all depended on the faithful performance of the work assigned him, and the faithful management of the trust committed to him; and yet the Father, who had the most perfect knowledge of the high importance of each of these, intrusted them to him, with the most unsuspecting confidence; and we read that he was faithful to him who appointed him, as Moses was faithful in all his house. It was prophesied of him, that faithfulness should be the girdle of his reins. His people sometimes behave as if they thought him unfaithful; when they do not receive an answer of prayer, or the performance of a promise, or such and such a measure of sensible comfort, at the time that they prescribed to him, or at the time in which they seem to themselves to need it,—they begin to doubt of his faithfulness in the promise; and when they are exhorted to trust in him, and wait for him, they will say, "We cannot." They can trust their friend, they can trust their neighbour; but they cannot trust their Saviour: nay, they will sometimes argue in favour of their inability to trust in him. But whether they can trust in him or not, he abideth faithful, as the experience of all who resolutely trust in him can testify.

3. He is a Servant who deals prudently. Thus saith the Lord, "Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high," Isa. 52:13. The work which was assigned to Christ was such as required infinite prudence to perform it well.

He had contrary interests, and contrary dispositions, to reconcile; it was incumbent upon him to reconcile the glory of God, the glory of his holiness, justice, and faithfulness, with the salvation of guilty sinners,—which were perfectly opposite to one another. He had God to reconcile to sinners, and sinners to God. The infinitely holy Lord God had legal enmity to sinners; and sinners had natural enmity against God. Christ, then, in the character of a bond-servant, had to reconcile God to sinners, by satisfying all the demands of law and justice in their stead; and as an honorary Servant, to reconcile sinners to God, by communicating to them the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit. Besides, he was not only to bring the parties at variance together, but to make them well pleased with one another, and take a mutual, and eternal complacence in each other. These things surely required the most consummate prudence. But Christ, the personal Wisdom of the Father, hath dealt so prudently as to accomplish an everlasting reconciliation. It also requires the highest prudence to manage his people well. They ask many things in prayer which would be unreasonable, and even hurtful to them; but the Lord Jesus deals so prudently with them, as to withhold all such things from them, and to give them only the blessings which he sees proper; and, after all, to make them better pleased with what he has bestowed on them than they could be with what they asked of him.

4. He is a powerful Servant, "able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him."—Never did any service require so much strength for the performance of it as that which was assigned to Jesus Christ. As a bond-servant, he was required to perform perfect obedience to the precepts of the violated law, and at the same time, to bear the infinite weight of its tremendous curse, which would have sunk a whole elect world to the bottom of the bottomless pit; and, as an honorary Servant, to sustain under all their pressures a multitude which no man can number, and raise them up to eternal glory.

5. Once more: He is an infinitely willing and ready Servant.—"Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon

the hills," Song 2:8. He foresaw that, in the course of his service, he should have the greatest difficulties to surmount, and the most excruciating torments to endure; and yet, instead of engaging with reluctance, he said, "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." If he had engaged with reluctance, instead of saying, Lo, I come, he would have said, Lo, I am urged, I am compelled to it against my will. But he said, "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God." His people sometimes fear that he does not delight to communicate the blessings of salvation to them; they question his willingness to supply their wants. But the truth is, if they could believe it, he is infinitely more willing to give them grace, abundance of grace, than they can be to receive it. And if they find themselves, in any degree, willing to receive his whole salvation as a free gift, they ought to regard it as an evidence that he is able to bestow it upon them; for their willingness to receive it, as a gift of sovereign grace, and their desire to possess and enjoy it, are only the effects of his willingness to give it to them.

From what has been said on this subject, we may see ground for the deepest humiliation before the Lord. Christ's having been constituted the Servant of God in our stead, plainly supposes that we were without strength, and were not able to serve for ourselves. If we had ability ourselves to answer the requirements of the holy law, God would never have consented that his only-begotten and infinitely dear Son should become a bond-servant in our stead. But he actually substituted him as his servant in our place; and this substitution demonstrates, though there were no further evidence of it, that our ability for such service was entirely gone. Ought we not, then, instead of extolling the moral powers of human nature in its fallen state, to exercise the deepest self-abasement, and to confess, with the holy apostle Paul, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is only of God?

From the foregoing subject, we may surely infer the amazing love of God to sinners of mankind. Rather than leave us to endure his

eternal wrath, as the due punishment of failing in the performance of our service, he gave up the Son of his eternal love, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," to a state of servitude in our stead; that we who were bound over to eternal death, and were the bond slaves of sin and Satan, might be set at liberty. And how astonishing was the love of Christ to us, who, though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet condescended, in his love and in his pity, to take upon him the form of a bond-servant, that he might merit for us deliverance from eternal death, and a title to eternal life!

Again, hence learn the obligations which believers are under to devote themselves unfeignedly to the service of God in Christ. The eternal Father willingly gave his dear and only Son to submit to the hardest service for you: and if the only-begotten of the Father, served as a bond-servant for your consolation and salvation, is it not reasonable, that you should bind yourselves to serve for his glory, and the glory of God in him? If in the character of an honorary servant, he serves you with communications of grace sufficient for the supply of all your wants, or in other words, dispenses abundance of grace to you, does it not lay you under the firmest obligations to employ this grace in serving him? If he willingly served in obedience to the law as a covenant for you, ought not you with delight to serve in obedience to the law as a rule, for him?

Further, the true Christian may hence learn his duty and exercise. His spiritual exercise, daily, should be to take that perfect work which the Lord Jesus Christ finished in the character of a bond-servant, and in the hand of an appropriating faith, to present it to God, as the only ground of his title to eternal life, and then, from life already received, to serve God in the habitual exercise of every spiritual grace, and performance of every present duty. To live by faith on the finished service of Jesus Christ, and from life received, to serve God by an uninterrupted course of evangelical obedience, comprehend all the duty and exercise of the true believer.

From what has been stated, you who are believers may see what reason you have to abound in thanksgiving and praise to the God of all grace. He hath laid your help on One who is mighty: he hath sent his only-begotten Son to endure all those sufferings, and to perform all that work which were necessary to give you a title to eternal life. Ought you not, then, to break forth in holy transports of joy and praise for such wonderful loving kindness? Some, it may be, will say, "we are sensible that we ought to be thankful for Jesus Christ, and for the arduous service which he performed in the room of sinners; but our fear that we are not personally interested in that service renders such a duty very difficult to us? Doubtless, if ye labour under prevailing doubts of your personal interest therein, you will find it very difficult to abound in thanksgiving. But is it true that ye have no saving interest in Christ, or in the work performed by him? If a man have no part in Christ's service which he finished in the character of a bond-servant, that man is a bond-slave of Satan, and a servant of sin. But if you can say, that you are not, as formerly, the slaves of Satan and the servants of corruption, it is a good evidence that you have a special interest in Christ's finished service. Now, examine yourselves upon this point. Are you indeed servants of sin? Do you habitually follow the motions of indwelling sin, whithersoever they lead you? Do ye follow them with the full consent of your heart? Do ye take pleasure in following them? And are you secretly offended with the law of God, because it forbids you to yield to them? Do ye seldom know what it is to make the smallest resistance to motions of sin in your heart? If this be the case with you, it is indeed a sign that ye are the servants of sin, and have no part in Christ, as the servant of his Father. But, on the contrary, do you, in the strength of promised grace, habitually strive against the stirrings of corruption in your souls, and resist them? When sin is prevailing at any time in you, does it prevail against you, and not with you? When it prevails in the unregenerate, which it always does, it prevails with the full consent of their minds, and inclination of their hearts; but when it prevails in the regenerate, it does not prevail with them, but against them. "Iniquities," says the holy psalmist, "prevail against me;" that is, they prevail against the

disposition or tendency of my renewed nature, against my prayers, my resolutions, and all my endeavours to resist them. Now, when sin is prevailing, does it prevail against you? When it prevails, are you filled not only with sorrow for it, but with indignation against it? The oftener it prevails, does your indignation against it increase? Do you reckon indwelling sin your heaviest burden, your sorest plague? Do ye long to be completely delivered from it? and do you set a high value on that part of Christ's salvation which consists in deliverance from the power of sin; or at least, are you grieved that you do not set a higher value upon it? If it be so with you, instead of being servants of sin, ye are the servants of righteousness, and are personally interested in Christ's fulfilling all righteousness as a bond-servant. But though ye have good reason to be thankful for such a comfortable evidence of vital union with Christ, yet beware of making this, or any other evidence that you have, a ground of right to renew your exercise of confidence in him for salvation: I say, a ground; for though your evidences and experiences are special encouragements to the exercise of particular trust in the Saviour, yet they are not the grounds of trust or confidence in him. Saving faith is grounded, not on feelings or experience, but on Divine faithfulness, in the indefinite offers and promises of the blessed Gospel. Christ, with his righteousness and fulness, is in the Gospel freely offered to you, as sinners of mankind; and the gracious offers and absolute promises of his Gospel constitute an ample warrant for you, as sinners in yourselves, to trust in him for his whole salvation. Trust in him, then, at all times and with all your heart, for all those renewed supplies of grace which will enable you to walk with him in newness of life, and to serve him in newness of spirit.

In conclusion: As to you who are trying to serve God in order that he may serve you, be convinced, I entreat you, that you shall never perform any acceptable service to him till you come to Christ, his righteous Servant, and cordially rely on his finished service for all your right to justification and to sanctification. O believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; so shall you enter the bond of that gracious covenant of which he is the blessed Head; for then, and not till then, shall you

be capable of yielding that evangelical and spiritual service to God which is the obedience of faith.

SERMON V: ON THE SURETISHIP OF CHRIST

"By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament." -
HEB. 7:22.

In the preceding context, the apostle, when treating of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, represents the superior excellence of him as a Priest, above the priests under the ceremonial law. In order to evince his superiority over them, the apostle represents him, not only as descending from a different tribe, not only as appointed to his office by an immutable law, which he denominates "the power of an endless life," not merely as having an unchangeable priesthood, and power to save unto the uttermost, but as invested in his office with peculiar solemnity. The Levitical priests were installed in their office without an oath; whereas, in the verse immediately preceding my text, Jesus is represented as constituted a Priest with the irrevocable solemnity of the Father's oath. God is said in Scripture to have repented of some things; but we never read, that he repenteth of any thing about which he hath interposed his oath. As the law of the Levitical priesthood was afterwards to be repealed, and the office itself abolished, those priests were installed without an oath; but, to intimate the excellence and perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ, he was constituted a Priest with an oath. Now, says the apostle, in the 20th verse, and in my text, which are evidently connected together, "Inasmuch as not without an oath he

was made priest; by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." The meaning probably is, that as he was constituted our Great High Priest with an oath, to intimate the perpetuity of his office, so was he made a Surety; the one being as irrevocable as the other: or rather, the meaning is, that in proportion to the transcendent excellence of his, above the Levitical priesthood, in its nature and form of instalment, he was constituted Surety. The word in the original, which is here translated a surety, properly signifies one who draws nigh. Jesus our great Redeemer, having in the council of peace, drawn near, having engaged his heart to approach unto God, presented himself as Surety for the objects of his everlasting love. A surety is one who becomes bound for another, either for his payment of a debt, or for his performing of a deed; one who undertakes as a sponsor for another, or engages to pay or do for him what he cannot pay or do for himself. Now, such a surety is our great High Priest. He undertook in the everlasting covenant, to be responsible to the law and the justice of God, for that boundless debt which others were originally bound to pay; and therefore he is said in the text to have been "made a Surety of a better testament."

In further discoursing on this delightful subject, it is proposed, through Divine aid, First, To inquire, Who they are for whom Jesus became surety? Second, What it was for which he became bound as a Surety? Third, To speak of the better testament of which he was made Surety; and, Fourth, Of the solemnity with which he was installed in his office.

I. First, then, I am to inquire who they are for whom Jesus became Surety. And,

1. He did not become Surety for God, that he would perform his promises to believers. God hath no need of a surety to secure the fulfilment of his promises; for he not only will not, but cannot lie. Nor can he have a surety: for in the nature of things, a surety is supposed to be a person of more ability and credit than he for whom he engages; or at least, he ought to be one who is provided to secure

against any defect or failure which may be found in him for whom he is surety: neither of which can, without blasphemy, be affirmed of God. Though Christ, as Mediator, is indeed to be considered as surety, in a lax sense, for God, that is, as a witness for him; yet this is by no means to be regarded as proper suretiship: nor is it at all different in its nature from what the prophets and apostles did in the testimony which they gave to him. Besides, when he is represented in our text as a Surety, it is evident from the apostle's design in the context, which was to point out the transcendent excellence of his priesthood above that of the priests under the Old Testament;—it is evident, I say, that his suretiship, which is therein mentioned, relates to the execution of his priestly office; which, like that of the Levitical priests, was for the people to God, and not for God to the people. Now his suretiship for God to us, were we to suppose such a suretiship, instead of relating to his priestly, would relate only to his kingly office; for it is only considered as King, that all power is given to him, and consequently the power of seeing that all the promises of the covenant of grace be fulfilled to his people. Job, when he was appealing to God, said, "Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee," chap. 17:3. And the holy psalmist prayed thus: "Be surety for thy servant for good; let not the proud oppress me," Psal. 119:122. In both of these passages, it is plain, that the suretiship mentioned is not for God, but to him. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, did not become surety for God; but,

2. He was constituted surety for sinners to God. If the first Adam failed in yielding perfect obedience, as the condition of life in the covenant of works, when he had sufficient ability to perform it; sinners, doubtless, cannot be expected to yield it now, when their ability is gone. It was necessary, therefore, in making another covenant with them in Christ, or with him in their name, that he should substitute himself as their Surety, and be responsible to God for them. Now, that he actually became surety for sinners, for poor, and wretched, and miserable sinners, is evident from the infallible testimony of God. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our

iniquities," Isa. 53:5, 6. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21. "When we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly," Rom. 5:6. It is plain, then, that Jesus was a Surety for sinners. But,

3. He did not become Surety for all sinners. He was substituted as a Surety only in the room of those whom the Father gave to him, and whom he received as his spiritual seed, the objects of his peculiar love. These were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and in the estimation of law, were considered as one with him. They were one with him in covenant, and one in law. That it was not for the world in general, but for those who were given him out of the world, that Jesus was made a Surety, is evident from many passages of Scripture. I shall only quote two. "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10:15. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. 2:16. Instead of saying, that he took on him the seed of Adam, he represents him as having taken on him only the seed of Abraham; to intimate that it was only a part of Adam's posterity whom he represented, and for whom he became Surety.

II. I proceed now to the second general head,—To inquire what it was for which our Divine Redeemer became a Surety. Suretiship among men, though it be intended sometimes to secure the performing of a bond or deed, is frequently designed also to secure the payment of a debt. "Be not thou one of them," says Solomon, "that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts." Our great High Priest became Surety to his eternal Father for the debt which his people whom he represented were owing to his law and his justice. With infinite willingness he engaged to clear the boundless sum, which his elect, the principal debtors, had been originally bound to pay; and his gracious Father with equal willingness accepted him as a Surety, and expected the complete payment of the whole only from Him. "The Lord is well pleased for his

righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law and make it honourable," Isa. 42:21.

1. The Lord Jesus, considered as a Surety, engaged to pay their debt of perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works for them. He did not become bound as their Surety to yield for his people that obedience which they were, and still are, bound to perform to the law as an eternal rule of duty, for this obligation can never be transferred to a surety: the true believer, notwithstanding his personal interest in the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, still continues under the firmest obligations to perform all the duties of holiness; nay, his obligations to advance in holiness of heart and life are strengthened by redeeming grace. But Jesus engaged as a Surety to perform for his people that perfect obedience to the law, under the form of a covenant, which they were originally bound to yield as the condition of eternal life. "Moses describeth the righteousness of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them," Rom. 10:5. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19:17. This, according to the tenor of the first covenant, was the unalterable condition of life; and Christ Jesus engaged as a Surety to fulfil it in the room of his spiritual seed. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Though they were utterly unable to yield this obedience to the law for life, because they were dead in sin, and so were without strength; yet the holy and righteous law did not lose its right to require it, and to denounce a dreadful curse upon every one who failed in performing it. They, indeed, lost their ability to yield this perfect obedience; but the immutable justice of God continued still to demand it as a debt which they owed and ought to pay. Now Jesus, as their blessed Surety, transferred this obligation from them upon himself, and became bound to clear the debt in their name. By this substitution of himself in the room of the elect, he became a debtor to do the whole law, as a covenant of works. This he owned by submitting to circumcision; according to these words of the apostle Paul, "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the

whole law," Gal. 5:3. As Christ assumed human nature only, and not a human person; and as the human nature, from the first moment of its existence, subsisted in union with the Divine nature in his adorable person; it had already a title to,—nay, it was actually possessed of eternal life, in consequence of that union; so that it had no need by its perfect obedience to merit life for itself. The perfect obedience, then, which Jesus performed to the law as a covenant of works, was not a debt which he owed for himself, but which, in the character of Surety, he voluntarily engaged to pay for his spiritual seed. If any shall still insist that he obeyed the law under this form for himself, and therefore, that his obedience cannot be imputed to believers, they must by the same mode of reasoning admit, that the execution of the curse which he endured was also for himself; which would be horrible blasphemy. I shall only observe further under this particular, that as they whom Jesus represented in the eternal covenant were, as well as others, constituted hired servants to God in the loins of the first Adam, and failed to perform their service, he, in becoming Surety for their debt of perfect obedience, transferred upon himself their state of servitude. The apostle Paul informs us, "that he took upon him the form of a servant,—and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. 2:7, 8.

2. The Lord Jesus, as Surety for the elect of God, engaged also to pay their debt of punishment, which they had contracted by sin. By transgressing the precepts of the holy law, not only in Adam their federal representative, but times without number in their own persons, they incurred the execution of its dreadful penalty. By failing to perform that perfect obedience which it required, and which they owed to it, as a debt the most just and reasonable, they contracted new debt, a debt of endless punishment; of that tremendous punishment which it denounces against every soul that transgresseth it. Having violated their obligations to obedience, they laid themselves under a firm obligation to suffer eternal punishment, for the satisfaction of sin-avenging justice. It is highly reasonable, that, when men refuse to be bound by their obligations

to do the one, they should fall under an obligation to endure the other. Since then the objects of redeeming love have, as sinners, contracted a debt of infinite punishment, a debt which they could never have been able to clear, the Lord Jesus graciously condescended to present himself as a Surety for this debt also. In the greatness of his love and pity, he became Surety for their debt of punishment; obliging himself to lay down his life for their's, which had been forfeited to vindictive justice. Hence, in a forecited passage he informs us, that he laid down his life for the sheep, John 10:15.; and in the 18th verse he says, "I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down," &c. Since the elect of God deserved to lie under the curse of the law, and to endure the full execution of it, both on their souls and their bodies through all eternity, Jesus engaged to be made a curse for them, and to endure the execution of it in their stead. Hence we read, that he was made a curse for us, and that he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. Seeing they deserved to have the condemning sentence executed on their bodies, He, as their Surety, consented that it should be executed upon his body. We accordingly read, that "his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;" that he was nailed to the accursed tree; that "he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." As the sentence passed upon them was also to be executed on their souls, He consented that it should be executed fully on his holy soul. Having engaged as a Surety to make his soul an offering for sin, his immaculate "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He endured in his soul all the unknown anguish and agony which the objects of his love had been doomed to suffer in the place of torment, for ever and ever. He engaged thus to restore that which he took not away, to pay that immense sum, not only for one sin, not merely for one sinner, but for all his elect, a multitude which no man can number. How astonishing the love and mercy which our dear Redeemer displayed, in becoming responsible for such a debt! and all for worms of the dust,—for sinners, for rebels, for enemies! Some have been found who offered to lay down their lives for their country and friends; but God commendeth his love toward us, in

that, while we were yet sinners and enemies, Christ died for us, Rom. 5:8. Judah offered himself as a surety for the life of his brother Benjamin, whilst he hoped that all would be safe; but Jesus our compassionate Saviour pledged his life for his enemies, when he was certain of losing it, and of suffering death in its utmost extent. How excellent, how astonishing, is his loving kindness! How worthy to be remembered with warmest gratitude in all generations!

On this part of our subject it will be proper to suggest a remark, to which hearers of the gospel should more especially attend, viz. when we think of Jesus, as a Surety for his people's debt of obedience and suffering, we are not to consider his suretiship, as if it only secured the payment of the debt in one way or another, either by himself, or by the principal debtor, which is commonly the case in other instances of suretiship, but we are to view it as implying an exchange of persons in law. Christ Jesus is to be considered as substituting himself in the room of his people, and as taking the whole obligation upon himself. God the Father having admitted of this change of persons, Jesus became debtor in the estimation of law and justice, and so bound to pay the whole infinite sum. In consequence of his being made Surety, all the iniquities of the elect were imputed to him, and he became responsible to Divine justice for them, Isa. 53:6.

III. I proceed now to the third general head,—To speak of the better testament, of which Jesus was made a Surety. A surety of a testament, at first sight, seems an unusual phrase. The legacies bequeathed in a testament being entirely free, it is not easy to find any place for a surety. Hence some translate the original word by the term covenant, and read thus: "Jesus was made a Surety of a better covenant." This, however, seems to me rather unsuitable to the scope of the context. For, in the whole of this epistle, the apostle does not treat of the covenant of grace absolutely, but of one of the dispensations of it, styled the "new testament," in distinction from another called the "old." The apostle is not here contrasting the

covenant of works and the covenant of grace; but two dispensations of the covenant of grace; the one under the priesthood of Aaron, and the other under that of Christ. When he mentions a better testament, he evidently supposes another, which though good, yet when compared with this, was faulty. For as he argues, "If that first had been faultless, then no place should have been sought for the second." The apostle does not say that Jesus was made a Surety of a testament simply, but of a better testament, that is, of the new testament. He also calls him, "The Mediator of the new testament," Heb. 9:15. At first sight there appears no more occasion for a mediator in a testament than for a surety. But Jesus, as was just now said, is not called either the Mediator or Surety of the testament simply, but of the better, or the new testament, as distinguished from the faulty and the old.

Our great High-Priest, then, was made a Surety of the New Testament,—of the new or better dispensation of the covenant of grace. Now, in order to explain the meaning of this phrase, we may inquire, who were the sureties of the old Testament,—of that dispensation of the covenant of grace which took place before the resurrection of Christ? In answer, the Levitical priests were doubtless the sureties of the old testament. They were divinely appointed priests, and thereby sureties under that dispensation. They approached unto Jehovah in name of the people, and, by sacrifices, made typical atonement for their sins. They were the typical sureties of the old testament, which was a typical dispensation. Whilst as priests, they offered sacrifices, figurative of the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and so made typical atonement for the sins of the people; as sureties, they, by these sacrifices, paid typically the people's debt of suffering death for sin: and seeing, by the typical death of the same sacrifices, the old testament was ratified or put in force, they who offered them might well be called the sureties of that testament. Their priesthood included their suretiship. They were typical sureties: Christ, the antitype, is the true Surety. They, the sureties of a testament that was good; He, the Surety of one which is better. The new testament

is every way better than the Old; especially as to light, life, liberty, extent, and duration; which I shall not here stop to explain. Jesus, then, is the Surety of the better testament. As, by his obedience unto death, he cleared the debt of his spiritual seed; so, by his death, by which he completed the payment of that debt, he ratified or confirmed the better testament. He ratified by his death the promises of the covenant of grace, in their testamentary form; and so, by means of death, he put the new testament in force, as his testamentary deed. "For where a testament is," says the apostle, "there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth," Heb. 9:16, 17.

IV. I go on now to the fourth general head,—To speak of the solemnity with which the Lord Jesus was installed in his office of suretiship. That was, the oath of God. "In as much as not without an oath he was made priest; by so much was Jesus made a surety." This solemn oath plainly implies the most absolute certainty, and the inexpressibly great importance of his suretiship.

1. It imports the absolute certainty of Christ's suretiship, that, beyond all possibility of failure, he should be a Priest, and so a Surety for ever. Hence his surety-righteousness is declared to be an everlasting righteousness, and his intercession founded upon it, to continue for ever, Heb. 7:25. Whatever God saith in his word is as certainly and as necessarily true as that he exists, and he so immutably holy that it is impossible for him to lie. His threatenings and many of his promises, however, are in a qualified sense conditional. They therefore are either accomplished or not, according to the condition on which each of them is suspended. If the condition on which a threatening turns be performed, the threatening is not executed; but if not, it is. And if the condition on which a restricted promise is suspended be performed, the promise is fulfilled; but if not, it is not fulfilled. Now, in such cases, God is said in Scripture to repent either of what he has threatened or promised; that is, to change his providential dispensations toward

individuals or nations. But such threatenings and promises are never attended with an oath. Where an oath is interposed, it is a sure token that the Lord will not repent either of what he hath promised or threatened, or that he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips. The phrase, "he will not repent," is sometimes added, as explanatory of what is implied in the oath. Thus in Psalm 110:4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever." Whenever Jehovah pledgeth his oath, then it is absolutely certain that the thing promised or threatened shall come to pass, or that he will on no account alter his dispensation. Thus Christ's being invested by the Father's oath, imports both the certainty and the immutability of his priesthood and suretiship, and also of that testament to which his suretiship refers. Hence our apostle says, that he hath an unchangeable priesthood, and that the new testament is an everlasting testament, Heb. 13:20. We also read, that "the Son is consecrated a Priest for evermore." Heb. 7:28. And if he is consecrated a Priest, then likewise a Surety for evermore; for the one is implied in the other. He will, therefore, be an interceding, though not a suffering Surety, for ever. The endearing relation of a Surety to his redeemed, he will through endless ages retain, and on it he will ground his continual intercession for them. What ground of strong, of everlasting consolation is this to you who have believed through grace!

2. This oath of God also implies the inexpressibly great importance of the suretiship of Christ. Though all the works of Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working, be great, yet some of them are far more important than others. Such, doubtless, are those concerning which Jehovah hath sworn. It was of great moment that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth,—that in the Seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth should be blessed,—that of the fruit of David's body the Lord would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne,—and that to him every knee should bow. To all these, therefore the Lord hath sworn. The suretiship of Christ, then, in which he was solemnly invested by the oath of Jehovah, must be an affair of the utmost importance, of the very highest moment. The

honour of the holy law, and of the blessed gospel of God,—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and the everlasting salvation of a multitude which no man can number,—all depend upon it. If these be matters of great importance, so must the suretiship of Christ Jesus be. It magnified the law, and made it honourable; it is a fundamental doctrine of the glorious Gospel; it is also a fundamental part of Christ's priesthood, which is the ground-work of his prophetic and kingly offices; it was that mainly by which Christ glorified God on the earth. On it depends all that transcendent glory to which Christ as Mediator is now exalted, and all that exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits his redeemed in the realms of bliss. The oath of God, then, by which the Lord Jesus was constituted a Surety, implies the absolute certainty and the inexpressibly great importance of his suretiship.

1. From what has been said we may infer, that every requisite to legal suretiship is found in our adorable Surety. He was qualified for obeying and suffering in the room of sinners, by being of the same nature with them; and by being a Divine person, he was able to satisfy justice, to merit eternal life, and to save his people to the uttermost. He was the absolute proprietor of his own life, and so had a right to pledge that which was his own. He substituted himself in the room of poor sinners willingly, and did it with the full consent of the Creditor and Judge.

2. Did Jesus Christ, as your Surety, die for you who believe in him? Then you all died in him, 2 Cor. 5:14. You sinned in the first Adam, but you died, and so satisfied Divine justice in the second. And did he obey the precepts of the law, for life to you? In that case, you obeyed them for life in him, and you are not to attempt obedience to them for life in your own persons, but to rely on his surety-righteousness for all your title to eternal life.

3. Hence we may infer the wonderful grace and love of God the Father to poor sinners. Instead of sustaining Christ as a Surety for them, he might have insisted that the soul that sinned should die,—

that the sinner himself should be left to perish under the avenging hand of inexorable justice. But instead of this, he, in the greatness of his love, not only admitted, but provided a Surety for you who believe, and laid your help upon One who is mighty. As he reversed the sign respecting Gideon's fleece, so he could have done the reverse of what he has done, by saving the angels who fell, and leaving you to perish for ever. Under the impressions of this amazing love, then, let all that is within you be stirred up to cry, Lord, what is man that thou hast thus loved him! "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. Well might the holy psalmist call it "marvellous loving kindness."

4. Hence we may also infer the astonishing love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners. To the Father's call to become Surety for them, he answered, "Lo, I come"—"I delight to do thy will, O my God." "He rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." For you, believers, he, with infinite willingness, entered into a bond of suretiship. He engaged, without the smallest reluctance, to clear your boundless debt of perfect obedience for a title to life, and of infinite satisfaction for sin. What grace was this in the Lord Jesus! "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor," not merely that your debt might be cleared, but "that ye through his poverty might be rich." So great was his love to you, that he not only paid your immense debt of satisfaction for sin, but has enriched you by giving you a sure title to all the blessings of grace, and to all the riches of glory. This is love that passeth knowledge. O be constrained by it to love him supremely, and to be fervent in spirit serving him.

5. From what has been said, see a firm foundation for the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all who believe in him. It is a surety-righteousness: it was fulfilled by Jesus Christ, as the Surety of a better testament. Having presented himself as a Surety for his people, and his suretiship having been accepted by the Father, he became one with them in the estimation of law. This is a sure

ground for putting on their account whatever he did and suffered in that character. Let communicants, then, in view of sitting at his holy table, rely on his consummate righteousness only for all their title to eternal life. Let them desire above all things to "be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Let them also pray in faith, and with fervent importunity, that each may have reason, with the ancient Church, to say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isa. 61:10.

6. Let believers rejoice in the oath of God, by which their adorable Surety was installed in his office. His oath to the Surety is in effect the source of his oath to you. As he hath sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so hath he sworn that he would not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you in a vindictive manner, Isa. 54:9. As there is a close connexion between Christ and his members, so is there between the solemn oaths which have been made to them. Neither the covenant of works, nor the priesthood of Aaron was confirmed by an oath, for both were to pass away. Not so with the priesthood and suretiship of Jesus Christ. The certainty and immutability of both are attested by the oath of Jehovah. As these, then, are unalterably fixed, the salvation of you who cordially trust in the Lord Jesus is certain. God cannot recal his oath, and therefore you who sincerely trust in Christ for all his great salvation, and rely on his surety-righteousness only, for all your title to it, shall surely be saved. He hath, by his solemn oath, given you the fullest assurance of salvation; and therefore it is your duty to draw near now, not only in full assurance of faith, but in the exercise of the joy of faith. Say then, with David, "God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice," Psal. 60:6.

7. Hence learn how the believer ought to perform the duties of holiness. He ought not to perform them for life, or in order to entitle himself to life; but to perform them from life, from the faith and hope of eternal life. Jesus the adorable Surety fulfilled all righteousness for life to his spiritual seed: his design in doing so was to entitle them to life. Instead then of obeying for life, or thrusting your duties in the room of his surety-righteousness, your duty is to rely on his obedience for a title to life, and then to obey from life. You who have believed through grace are under the firmest obligations to advance in holiness; but you must not, under pretence of this, rely on your performances for your title to life. This would be to erase the Surety's name out of your debt-bond, or, at least, to impute imperfection to his payment of the bond. Relying on his righteousness for all your title to the justification of life, repose the confidence of your hearts in him for grace and glory. Trust that he will be graciously and sensibly present with you at his Holy Table; saying with the Psalmist, "I shall surely be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple," Psal. 65:4.

8. Are you who hear the Gospel personally interested in Christ as a Surety? Are you convinced that you cannot pay the smallest part of your immense debt to law and justice? Do ye rely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ for all your title to the favour of God, and to grace and glory? Do you acquiesce in his surety-righteousness, as your only righteousness for justification? Do ye plead Christ's suretiship daily at the throne of grace, praying that God may hear you for the Lord's sake? Have you the law as a rule of duty, written in your hearts, and, by evangelical obedience to it, do you willingly pay a debt of gratitude to the adorable Surety, and to God in him? Does your payment of it bear a resemblance to his payment of his people's debt to law and justice? Whilst you yield holy obedience to the law as a rule, is the old man crucified in you? And, trusting that God has forgiven you for Christ's sake, do ye love mercy and forgive one another? If so it is well.

9. In conclusion: Hence learn, what we are to think of such as have been brought up in a land of Gospel-light, and yet are willingly ignorant of the better Testament, and of Jesus as the surety of it: they must be considered as strangers and enemies to him. They are not fearers of God; for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." By his word and Spirit he enlightens all who are enabled to fear him in the knowledge of his holy covenant; so that they know it savingly and experimentally. You, it may be, consider yourselves as good Christians, though your consciences bear you witness that you have never thought it worth your while to study the suretiship of Jesus Christ. But be it known to you, that if you know not Christ as the Surety of a better testament, nor believe in him, ye shall surely perish. "It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour." And, saith our Lord himself, "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16. God hath sworn that obstinate unbelievers shall not enter into his rest, Heb. 3:18. But why will ye die, O sinners? Jesus the compassionate Surety is freely and wholly offered in the Gospel to you; and God's offer of him to you, with his invitation and command to accept the gracious offer, render it warrantable for you as sinners to trust in him for all his salvation, and to rely on his glorious righteousness for a complete title to it. Believe then in Jesus the Surety of a better Testament, and you shall be saved.

SERMON VI: CHRIST AS THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"This is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."—JER. 23:6.

In the preceding part of this chapter, the Lord by the mouth of his prophet, having denounced awful judgments against the evil governors of Judah, for their violence and oppression, by which they scattered his people, and forced many of them to seek places of residence at a distance from them, where they might dwell quietly and safely, and for their sins in general, which had been the cause of their having been carried into captivity; he takes occasion, from his having promised that he would gather a remnant of them out of the countries whither they were driven, and that he would set up shepherds or governors over them, who should protect them, to declare an illustrious prophecy of Messiah, who was to reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and to feed his flock like a shepherd. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." verse 5. The Jewish doctors, and almost all the Christian interpreters, consider this as an illustrious prophecy of the Messiah. He is here said to be raised up unto David, intimating, that though God, in the promise of Messiah, had a regard to his people in general, yet he had a higher regard to David his servant, and to his covenant confirmed with him. "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch," or, as it is in chap. 33:15. "I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David." Thus also Zechariah speaks of him, "Behold the Man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place." This name is assigned him with the strictest propriety; for as to his human nature, he came forth as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and as a branch he grew out of his roots. Besides, his human nature has no personality of its own, but subsists as an ingrafted branch in his

Divine person. He is also called the Branch, because he covers, protects, and refreshes his people with his shadow, and brings forth the fruits of honour to God and of happiness to men. He is called a righteous Branch; for he is infinitely righteous in himself, and is the Author of all that imputed righteousness which is necessary to justify, and of all that inherent holiness which is requisite to beautify, his people. Messiah is here also styled a King. About the time this prophecy was written, Jeconiah was king over Judah, and God declared that he should not prosper. But this King shall reign and prosper. He shall exercise spiritual dominion over his people in all generations. He shall reign and prosper: he shall prosper himself, and his true subjects shall prosper under him, notwithstanding all the efforts of their enemies to destroy them. It is added, he "shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." He shall judge the prince of this world, and punish with dreadful calamities those who oppress his people. He shall execute justice, by making all believers righteous and holy,—by giving them rewards of debt to their imputed, and of grace to their inherent, righteousness. "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely:" in his days, that is, during his dominion, which is an everlasting dominion, the true seed of Abraham, typified by Judah and Israel, shall be saved from all their spiritual enemies, and shall dwell safely. Accordingly, we read, that "in his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." In the text we have a most significant appellation given to him: "This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." The incommunicable name, Jehovah, denotes that he is the eternal and self-existent God; that he possesses, by an original and underived right, all the glorious perfections of the Divine essence; and that he is Lord of all, having dominion over all things, not only by a new covenant right as Mediator, to subserve his mediatorial glory and the good of his Church; but by a natural right, as the most High God, by whom all things were created which are in heaven and in earth, and by whom they all consist. This Jehovah, in the person of the Son, possessing every Divine excellence, and shining in all the splendour of uncreated glory, is here said to be our righteousness. He engaged in

the everlasting covenant to fulfil all righteousness in our nature, in order to justify our persons, and to render our persons and performances acceptable in the sight of God. And seeing he is Jehovah as well as man, his righteousness is of infinite value, and is meritorious of eternal life in the full enjoyment of God. This then is the name whereby he shall be called, not indeed by all men, but by all who believe in him. These appropriate Christ to themselves as Jehovah their righteousness,—their's in particular.

In further discoursing on this delightful subject, it is proposed, through Divine aid, First, To make some observations for illustrating the doctrine in the text; Secondly, To show how the Lord Jesus Christ is the Righteousness of his people; and, Thirdly, To point out what is implied in their appropriating of him as such, or in their calling him Jehovah their Righteousness.

I. I am to offer some observations for illustrating the doctrine in the text. And,

1. It may be remarked, that the term righteousness re-refers to a law. When a man wants to try whether such and such a thing be straight or not, he not only looks at it, but applies to it a plane or straight rule, and if from the one end to the other it lies close to, or touches the plane, he pronounces that it is straight and conformed to the rule; but if not, he pronounces that it is crooked. In like manner, the moral law, in all its perfection and extent, is the great standard of rectitude according to which the principles and actions of men are to be regulated. When God compares them with this law, and sees that from the beginning to the end of life, they perfectly agree with it, he pronounces that such and such a man is right or righteous, or is possessed of righteousness; but if he finds, upon comparison, that he deviates from it in the smallest degree, he declares him to be unrighteous. Accordingly, we are informed by Him who searches the heart and tries the reins, and who is not liable to the smallest deception, that men by nature are filled with all unrighteousness,—that they have turned aside to crooked ways,

—and that there is none righteous, no, not one; that is, none whose nature and practice agree with the Divine law, the sole standard of moral rectitude.

2. The moral law, or law of the ten commandments, is in Scripture taken in a twofold sense; either as a rule of life, or as a covenant of works. The law as a rule of life is the Divine precept considered simply as in itself, without relation to any covenant form. In this sense, it was written in the heart of man at his creation, before any covenant was made with him; and the obligation upon man to yield perfect obedience to it, being founded in the nature of God the Creator, and of man the creature, is indispensably necessary, and cannot be dissolved as long as God continues to be God, and man to be man. Man would have been bound to obey the law in this view of it, though no covenant of works had ever been made with him; and believers in Christ, though they are dead to it as a covenant, are nevertheless bound, and will to all eternity be bound perfectly to obey it. Upon their union with Christ, they receive it from his hand as Mediator. Hence it is in Scripture called the law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." On the other hand, the law as a covenant is the same moral law in the form of the covenant of works, proposed to the first Adam, and accepted by him as the public representative of all mankind, and is called by the apostle Paul, "the law of works." Now every descendant of fallen Adam, by ordinary generation, is bound to obey the law perfectly as a covenant of works, and that in his own strength, and upon pain of death in all its dreadful extent; or else to betake himself to a sufficient Surety to obey it for him. If it be true, no surety, how sufficient soever he may be, can free him from his obligation to obey it in his own person as a rule; for this obligation, as was already observed, is indispensable: and therefore those who are personally interested in the surety righteousness of Jesus Christ, are, notwithstanding, firmly bound to yield even perfect obedience to it in this view. But a responsible Surety may deliver from an obligation to obey it as a covenant. Accordingly, true believers are said in Scripture to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ;" that

is, to be freed from the obligation of it as a covenant of works. But all unregenerate persons, while they continue to reject him as a Surety, are, as the apostle says, "debtors to do the whole law;" that is, they keep themselves under an obligation to yield perfect obedience to it as a covenant, and that in their own strength, and upon pain of eternal wrath. This is the dreadful condition of every descendant of the first Adam who is not vitally united to Christ, the second Adam.

3. The law, as a covenant of works, requires three things from every son and daughter of Adam who is under it, viz. perfect holiness of nature, perfect righteousness of life, and complete satisfaction for sin. It required only two of these from man in his state of innocence, namely, holiness of nature, and righteousness of life. It required, that from the first moment of his existence in this world to the last, he should retain the perfect holiness, or original righteousness of his nature, inviolate. It also demanded perfect righteousness of life, or perfect conformity of all the thoughts, words, and actions of the life, to the Divine precept. The law in this form required not only habitual righteousness or holiness of nature, but actual righteousness, or righteousness of life, and that without the smallest intermission of obedience. As a covenant of works, it required from man in innocence only those two; but upon the entrance of sin, it had, as a broken covenant, a third demand,—a demand of complete satisfaction for sin, by suffering death in all its extent. Now these three articles, the law in its covenant form continues to require in the utmost perfection from every descendant of fallen Adam, as long as he remains under it: and it will be impossible for him ever to enter heaven except he answer completely every one of them, either in his own person, or in that of a responsible surety,—the Surety of a better testament. The Lord Jesus saith, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19:17. As this particular is of the very highest moment to us all, permit me, before I dismiss it, to put two or three questions to every self-righteous and secure sinner. And,

First, I would ask you, are you able to present to the law perfect holiness of nature? Have you been perfectly holy from the first moment of your life? and can you retain perfect holiness, without the least shadow of imperfection, till the last moment of it? I do not ask, whether you have a high profession of religion, or a high degree of moral virtue, or not? But I ask, whether you be able to answer the law's demand of original righteousness, or to present it with a nature perfectly holy? Again, are you able to yield to the law a perfect righteousness of life, or to obey the precepts of it perfectly, in every thought, word, and action of your life, in answer to its demand of perfect obedience, as the condition of eternal life? "The law is not of faith; but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." I do not ask, whether you resolve to obey, or whether you be grieved that you have not obeyed perfectly; but, whether you have actually obeyed from the beginning, and if you be persuaded that you can obey to the end of your life, that you can yield complete obedience to all the precepts of the law, in all their purity, spirituality, and great extent? If you cannot, then, though all the virtues of the heathens, and all the good works of the saints, from the beginning to the end of the world, were imputed to you, you should come short of eternal life. But further, are you able to answer the legal demand of satisfaction for sin? You know that every violation of the Divine law, as it is objectively an infinite evil, lays the sinner under an obligation to endure infinite or eternal wrath, as a punishment answerable to the infinite demerit of the crime. Supposing you could say that your nature was perfectly holy, and that you were never guilty of the smallest actual sin, the law, notwithstanding, would condemn you for your breach of covenant in the first Adam, your representative. We read in the Scriptures of truth, that "in Adam all die;" but how could all die in Adam, if all had not sinned in him? Death is only the wages of sin. Be assured, then, that you are guilty, and condemned as such in the first Adam. Now, are you able, I ask, to answer the just demand of infinite satisfaction for sin? to endure the full execution of the condemning sentence of the broken covenant, to the full satisfaction of sin-avenging justice? How can you dwell with the devouring fire? how can you dwell with

everlasting burnings? You are a reasonable creature, capable of reflection; think with yourself, if you be able to satisfy the law in these three articles, or in any one of them. If you be able, you may expect justification and eternal life by the works of the law; but if you are not, why, O why do you not despair of life by your own righteousness, and flee without delay to Christ as the Lord your righteousness? That you are far from being able, whether you believe it or not, is abundantly evident; for,

4. In the last place, I remark, that all the children of men "have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. 3:23. We all have lost our original righteousness in the first Adam. "Behold," says the psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." We cannot therefore present to the law, now, perfect holiness of nature. We have sinned, not only in the first Adam, but, times and ways innumerable, in our own persons. As to our thoughts, while in our unregenerate state, He who searches the heart declares, "that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually," Gen. 6:5. As to our words, one apostle testifies concerning unconverted sinners, "that their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; and the poison of asps is under their lips." And another declares, "That the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, that defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell," James 3:6. And as to the actions of sinners, we are told, "That there is none that doeth good, no not one; that they are all gone out of the way; and that they are together become unprofitable." It is evident, then, that sinners are without strength, and that instead of being able to yield perfect and perpetual obedience to the precepts of the law, they cannot perform so much as a single action that is spiritually good and acceptable to God. As to satisfaction for sin, we who are finite creatures, cannot suffer an infinite degree of punishment, otherwise than through an infinite length of duration, or through all eternity. Thus it is manifest that we are utterly unable to yield to the law either perfect holiness of nature, or perfect righteousness of life, or complete satisfaction for sin; and far less,

all of them together. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God; for by the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3:20. Ah, the ignorance and Pharisaical pride of that sinner who is going about to establish his own righteousness in the affair of justification; and who imagines that he shall obtain a title to the favour of God, and to eternal life, by his own performances! And yet multitudes, alas! who call themselves Christians, entertain such sentiments; nay, many among us account none rational Christians but such as do so. The very first lesson, however, that all who are made wise unto salvation learn is, that by their own righteousness they can never be justified in the sight of God, or be entitled to eternal life.

II. I proceed now to the second general head, To show how, and on what accounts the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Righteousness of his people. And,

1. He may be so styled, because he was chosen from everlasting as their Surety and Representative, to fulfil all righteousness in their stead. Accordingly, we read in the Scripture, that God made a covenant with his chosen One; that he laid on him the iniquity of us all; and that he "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." God the Father, in consequence of infinitely free and sovereign grace, having chosen some of lost mankind to everlasting life, who, notwithstanding, could not obtain that life in a way consistent with the honour of law and justice, without answering all the demands of the law as a broken covenant, which, because of sin, they became incapable of doing, chose his only-begotten Son, and proposed that he should, in the fulness of time, fulfil all righteousness as their Surety. Hence the Father is represented as saying, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people;" and the Son himself declares, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," Prov. 8:23.

2. Christ may be called the righteousness of his people, because as their Surety he engaged with infinite willingness to fulfil it for them. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," Psal. 40:6–8. As if he had said, "The law as a covenant is within my heart, to fulfil all its requirements in the room of my spiritual seed; and therefore I consent with my whole heart to veil my glory; to be made sin for them, and a curse for them; to bear their griefs, and carry their sorrows! No sooner did the eternal Father propose it to him than he cheerfully consented to be made of a woman, made under the law; to assume their nature, and in that nature to sist himself as their public representative; taking upon himself the obligation of obeying the precept, and of suffering the penalty of the law as a covenant, in their stead. Hence in 1 Cor. 15:45. he is called the last Adam; for, as the first Adam engaged in the covenant of works, as the representative of his natural posterity, to yield perfect obedience for them, as the condition of eternal life; so the last Adam engaged in the covenant of grace, as the representative of his spiritual seed, to fulfil all righteousness for them, as the condition of life eternal. Hence also he is styled the Servant of the Father. "Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." The first man engaged for himself and his posterity in the service of God; but he soon forfeited his good character as a servant, and we all lost our reputation in him. In order, therefore, to recover the reputation of his spiritual seed, Christ "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant," that he might perform all the service which was necessary to entitle them to life.—The Lord Jesus, then, is called the Righteousness of believers, as he cheerfully engaged to fulfil it in their stead.

3. He may be so called, because he actually fulfilled all righteousness for them. When John the Baptist was hesitating to baptise him, he replied, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," Matth. 3:15. Does the law as a

covenant require holiness of nature, as a condition of eternal life? Christ, as the Surety of his people, yielded to it a holy human nature. That it requires this as a condition of life, is evident. For if it forbids corruption of nature, then, according to the just rules of opposition, it must require that which is contrary, viz. holiness of nature. But that it forbids corruption of nature, is plain from the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." Christ therefore, that he might as their Surety answer for them the perfect holiness of nature required by the law, was born with a holy nature, instead of them conceived and born in sin. A holy nature was given to the first Adam, as the root of mankind, to be kept, and, by natural generation, conveyed to his posterity. Upon this ground, the law requires all men to be born holy, and pronounces them children of wrath in the contrary event. Since, then, they have all brought a corrupt nature into the world with them, it was requisite that He, as the last Adam, should bring a holy human nature into the world with him; that, seeing they had been created holy in the first, they might, in the eye of the law, be born holy in the second Adam. The angel accordingly said to the virgin, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." As the law required that that holiness of nature given to the first Adam, as the root of mankind, should be kept uncorrupted to the end, as a ground of obtaining eternal life, the Lord Jesus was not only born holy, but he retained this holiness unblemished to the end. Therefore, in Isa. 42:4. it is said, "He shall not fail;" that is, as the original word signifies, he shall not decay or wax dim; he shall shine in all the beauties of holiness without waxing dim; and in Heb. 7:26. the apostle observes, that "such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners."

Did the law, as a covenant, require righteousness of life? Christ, the public representative of his people, being made of a woman, made under the law, began and completed a course of perfect obedience to all the divine precepts: he "became obedient unto death." The law was set before him in all its perfection, spirituality, and great extent; and in all his thoughts, words, and actions, he yielded perfect

obedience to it. His life was a life of perfect conformity to the whole moral law, and to all the Divine institutions, whether ceremonial or political, which were then in the Church. Hence we read in Scripture, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness;" that he hath brought in everlasting righteousness; and that "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." That righteousness which the law required of the first Adam, to entitle him and his posterity Wife, was, in all its parts and degrees, fulfilled by the second Adam, to entitle his spiritual seed to eternal life, according to the form of the covenant of works, "This do and thou shalt live "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." And as he was God and man in one person, the obedience of his human nature derived such value from his Divine nature, that the law as a covenant is not only satisfied, but magnified,—not only fulfilled, but made honourable. He yielded more obedience to it during thirty-three years than the first Adam could have done, though he had continued in obedience to this day. The apostle Paul, when speaking of this righteousness, uses a very wonderful expression: he says, Christ was made sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He does not say, that we might be made righteous; that would indeed have been sufficient for our title to life; but righteousness in the abstract. Neither does he say, "the righteousness of a man, or of an angel; but, "the righteousness of God in him." Oh! the transcendent glory, excellence, and suitableness of that righteousness! How inexpressible the happiness and honour to which the saint is exalted, when he is exalted in this glorious righteousness!

Further: Did the law as a broken covenant, demand full satisfaction to vindictive justice, for the sins of his people? Christ gave that satisfaction: "He was once offered to bear the sins of many." The sins of all the elect being summed up as so many breaches of the law or covenant of works, and imputed to him, he as a public Person gave complete satisfaction for them all. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray,—and the Lord hath laid on him the

iniquity of us all," Isa. 53:5, 6. This satisfaction the Lord Jesus gave, by suffering that death, in all its dreadful extent, which they should have endured, as the just punishment of sin. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!" which death implies the curse or sentence of the violated law, binding them over to suffer all that revenging wrath which they deserved for sin; and the actual execution of that sentence to the uttermost upon them, for the satisfaction of Divine justice. Christ, I say, endured this death in all its extent: for having substituted himself, and having been sustained in law, as the Surety of his people, he became responsible to Divine justice for their sins, in consequence of his bond of suretiship, registered in the records of heaven; and a sentence was passed upon him, binding him over to endure all that revenging wrath which those sins deserved. Hence we read, that he was made a curse for us. Besides, the sentence was fully executed upon him as our Surety. He actually suffered all that was essential to the death threatened in the first covenant. As the bodies of his people were instruments of sin, and therefore were obnoxious to wrath, the curse was executed on his body. We read that he became poor: for, as the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it, so his curse, when it began to be executed on the glorious Surety, rendered him poor, and made him a man of sorrows. In consequence of that, he had not where to lay his head. He was subject to weariness, hunger, and thirst. "His visage was so marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men." "His hands and feet were pierced, and his heart was melted like wax in the midst of his bowels." And because it was written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," he was hanged, as one devoted to destruction, on the accursed tree. His precious blood was shed: "his strength was like a potsherd dried; and he was brought into the dust of death." The curse was executed on his soul also. We read, "that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The floods of revenging wrath so overflowed his soul as to fill him with trouble; to load him with heaviness, to overwhelm him with exceeding sorrow, and to strike him with sore amazement. And because it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun, and still more

pleasant to enjoy the light of God's countenance; when the natural sun refused to shine on him, his heavenly Father hid his face from him. And as natural death was included in the threatening of the law, he not only suffered but died: he was brought into the dust of death. He endured spiritual death, in so far as was consistent with the perfect holiness of his human nature; for on the cross he was deprived of sensible comfort. And because of the dignity of his adorable Person, he suffered in a short space all that inexpressible pressure of infinite wrath which the elect could not have endured though they had lain in the place of torment through all eternity. He did not only endure all the wrath due for one sin, which we own to be infinite, nor did he only endure the wrath due for all the sins of one sinner; but he endured the wrath due for all the sins of all the elect of God,—a multitude which no man can number. He thus gave full satisfaction to law and justice, in the room of his people; which he asserted, when he said on the cross, "It is finished," and which his righteous Father declared, by raising him from the dead. The Lord Jesus, then, may be called his people's Righteousness, as he actually fulfilled all righteousness for them, by yielding to the law, as a covenant, perfect holiness of nature, perfect obedience of life, and complete satisfaction for sin by death; so that they have his holiness of nature and righteousness of life to plead in answer to the law's demand of perfect obedience, as the condition of life, and his death in answer to its demand of satisfaction for sin.

4. Christ may be styled the Righteousness of his people, because their justifying righteousness is lodged with him, as the faithful Trustee of the new covenant.—They, in their natural state, were far from righteousness: for it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and they could not be happy without righteousness; "for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The Lord Jesus, therefore, having fulfilled perfect and everlasting righteousness, brought it in, and presented it to the Father, who, having accepted and sustained it, for the justification of all who believe, lodged it with him, as Prime Minister of Heaven; that as he wrought it out in the low condition of a bond-servant, so he might

dispense it in the exalted character of the Father's honorary Servant. Accordingly, he is said to be made of God unto us Righteousness; and in Isaiah 45:24. we have these words: "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness;" that is, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as is evident by comparing the preceding verse with Rom. 14:10, 11.

5. He may be styled his people's Righteousness, because he reveals and offers his righteousness to them. He makes an external revelation, and a free offer of it, in his word of grace, to sinners of mankind in common, and consequently to them as such. For, how sufficient soever it might be to merit salvation, sinners could have no benefit by it, if it was not revealed to them. The Gospel, therefore, is called the power of God unto salvation, because "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Neither would it be warrantable for any sinner to receive or appropriate this righteousness, or to rely on it as his justifying righteousness, unless it were offered to him in particular, as an undone sinner. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." Christ, therefore, makes a free and unlimited grant of this glorious righteousness, in the Gospel, to sinners, even the chief. "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness," Isa. 46:12, 13. Because sinners, dead in sin, cannot come near to it, the Lord Jesus, in the gracious offers of his Gospel, brings the gift of it near to them. And lest the awakened sinner should think that it is offered only to persons who possess certain laudable qualifications, and not to him, because he sees he has them not, the offer is so framed, and they to whom it is made are so described, as to exclude any such apprehension. It is not said, Hearken unto me, you humble penitents, you sensible sinners, you who hunger and thirst after righteousness, &c. but, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness;" I bring it near to you: so that if we desire to know whether we be warranted to believe, on the ground of the Divine record, that this glorious righteousness is offered to us, we have only to ask ourselves, if we are sinners of mankind or not; or if we are stout-hearted, or hard-hearted, and are far from

righteousness or not. If we can say we are, then we are guilty of criminal unbelief the moment we refuse to believe that the offer of a justifying righteousness is made to us in particular.

Christ also may be styled, The Righteousness of his people, not only because he makes an external revelation and offer of his righteousness to them, but because he makes an internal revelation and gift of it to them, by his Holy Spirit enabling them to believe. The external offer is made to all who hear the Gospel; but the internal gift only to those whom he represented as a Surety. In the one case, he gives it only in offer, and gives it to sinners in common who hear the Gospel: in the other, he gives it in possession, and gives it to those only whom he enables to believe on him. On these accounts, then, the Lord Jesus may be called, The Righteousness of his people.

SERMON VII: CHRIST AS THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"This is his name whereby he shall be called, the LORD OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS."—JER. 23:6.

III. I proceed now to the third general head,—To point out the import of their appropriating the Lord Jesus as Jehovah their Righteousness. "This is his name whereby he shall be called" by all who believe in him, "Jehovah our Righteousness." This implies,

1. A real persuasion wrought in them by the Holy Spirit, that they have no righteousness of their own.—We will never come to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness to us, till we be convinced, by a saving work of the Holy Spirit, of the utter insufficiency of our

own performances, to be a justifying righteousness for us. It is as natural for the children of fallen Adam to rely on their own works for the favour and acceptance of God, as it is to breathe. They are naturally ignorant of the holiness and vast extent of the Divine precepts; and therefore they conclude that it is not difficult to obey them. The young man in the gospel, ignorantly imagining that he yielded all the obedience that the law required of him, asked our Lord, "What lack I yet?" They are ignorant of the universal corruption of their nature, as Paul was when he was alive without the law; and therefore they are not persuaded of their utter inability to perform the least action that is spiritually good. Hence they delay repentance from time to time, because they secretly imagine that they can repent at any time. They are ignorant of the vindictive justice of God, and therefore conclude that their own performances will not only entitle them to Divine favour, but will also make atonement for their sins. This is the lamentable case of all of you who are unregenerate, whatever convictions and desires you may have: and if you are disposed to deny it, I would ask you, Why do ye betake yourselves to your duties, whenever you apprehend that God is angry with you, instead of coming to the blood of Jesus Christ? And why do ye take rest to your consciences in them, instead of seeking it in him, if you did not entertain the hope that they would both pacify him and procure his favour? In few words, they are ignorant of the righteousness which the law requires, and as they are strongly attached to the way of the first covenant, "Do and live," they go about to establish their own righteousness; and because of the pride of their heart, they will not submit to the righteousness of God. But whenever the quickening Spirit of Christ enters the dead soul, he convinces it not only of sin, but of righteousness. He persuades the sinner, that as he hath forfeited heaven, and exposed himself to hell, by his sins, he wants righteousness to entitle him to the one, and to secure him from the other;—persuades him that his religious attainments, his performances, and professions, are of no use at all to secure him from the wrath, or to recommend him to the favour of God. And while the Spirit of Christ convinces him that he needs a righteousness fully answerable to the requirements of the

broken law, he overcomes, at the same time, his inclination to seek justification by his own righteousness; and he makes him willing to "receive the blessing from the Lord, even righteousness from the God of his salvation."

2. It imports a spiritual and experimental discernment of the excellence and suitableness of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. —When sinners are convinced that no blood can expiate their sins but blood of infinite value, and that no obedience can merit eternal life for them but obedience infinitely perfect, the Spirit, shining into their darkened understandings, and shining at the same time upon the Gospel report concerning Christ, discovers to their hearts the excellence and suitableness of his surety-righteousness, revealed in the Gospel; discovers that as it is the righteousness of Him who is God as well as man, it will be more than sufficient for expiating the guilt of that punishment which they have incurred, and for meriting that eternal happiness which they have forfeited. And therefore when they are said in the text to claim the Lord Jesus as their righteousness, they are represented as expressing that name which of all others is the most expressive of his Godhead,—"Jehovah our Righteousness;" intimating, that as they are sensible no righteousness can suit their condition but a righteousness so infinitely valuable as to expiate their guilt and to merit their felicity, so this righteousness, being fulfilled by Him who is the supreme Jehovah, derives such value from his adorable Person as not only to answer all the demands of the law as a covenant in their stead, but to magnify "the law and make it honourable." Thus when they see that the blood of Christ is the blood of God, and his righteousness the righteousness of God, they, like the merchant-man in the parable, seeking goodly pearls to enrich him, find that this pearl is of great price, and desire above all things to possess it. They begin to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, that they may be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. When they attain a spiritual view of the

glory of this consummate righteousness, the glory of their own will vanish from their sight.

3. It implies also a cordial approbation of the way of a sinner's justification and salvation, through that glorious righteousness. When a man, in the common affairs of life, possesses any thing which he despises or disapproves of, he is almost ashamed to speak of it as a thing that belongs to him; but if he values or approves of it, he will be disposed frequently to mention it as his property. Now, this is the name by which he shall be called, as if believers had rather give him this than any other appellation, "Jehovah our Righteousness." Often have they occasion to make mention of his name; but this is the name by which they call him. They so highly approve of, and they take such delight in his consummate righteousness, as their ground of hope, that they cannot forbear glorying in it, and making frequent mention of it as their righteousness. Many are so much attached to the way of the first covenant, as all unregenerate men are, that they disapprove of grace reigning through this righteousness to eternal life; and therefore they speak as little of imputed righteousness as they can. Nay, so highly do some disapprove of it, that they spend much of the precious time for which they shall one day be accountable, in labouring to persuade themselves and others that no such righteousness is necessary for them. And to strengthen such a persuasion, they labour to disbelieve the supreme deity of Jesus Christ; for if he is not a Divine person they are sure he could not work out a righteousness sufficient for the justification of a sinner. But this is the name whereby he shall be called by such as believe in him, "Jehovah our Righteousness;" for "in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." They shall all glory in him as Jehovah their righteousness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of his great goodness, and shall sing of his righteousness.

4. To call Jesus Christ "Jehovah our Righteousness," imports our belief of God's grant or offer of him, in the Gospel, to us as our righteousness.—His gracious Father makes an authentic grant of

him, and he makes a free offer of himself, to sinners of the human race, in common, who hear the Gospel, as Jehovah their Righteousness. This deed of grant is commonly called, The gospel-offer, because it is not a giving in possession, but a giving only in offer, in order to afford a warrant to take possession. If Christ were not offered to sinners of mankind as the Lord their Righteousness, it would be unwarrantable for any of them to appropriate him as such. It is God's offer of Christ and of his righteousness to sinners, and that alone, which renders it warrantable for any sinner of mankind to claim him as Jehovah his Righteousness. The reason why it would be unwarrantable for fallen angels to trust on Christ and his righteousness, is because neither he nor it is offered to them; and the very reason why fallen men have a right of access to him, or a right to call him Jehovah their Righteousness, is, because in the word of grace he is freely tendered to them. And, indeed, if sinners as such had not a right in consequence of that, to believe in Christ, or to claim him as the Lord their Righteousness, they could not justly be condemned for not believing on him in this character; for no man can justly be condemned for not doing that which he has no right to do;—"but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." When believing sinners, then, call Jesus Christ Jehovah their Righteousness, this appropriating persuasion, as it is grounded, not on good qualities in themselves, but on the unlimited offers and invitations of the gospel alone, implies their belief that he is freely offered to them as sinners; else it would be highly unwarrantable for them to lay the smallest claim to him. As it would be accounted presumption for a person to take what belongs to another, except it were offered to him, so, supposing it to be offered to him, yet if he is ignorant of the offer, or does not believe it, it is justly accounted presumption in him to attempt taking possession of it, and he is guilty of vicious intromission the moment he does it. In like manner, though Christ is offered in the Gospel to sinners of mankind, it would be high presumption for any of them to claim him as his Saviour, or to claim him as the Lord his Righteousness, if he did not believe that this offer was directed to him. If it be asked,

What foundation have sinners to believe that it is addressed to them? I answer, They are to believe this, on the ground of God's faithfulness in those places of Scripture in which the offer is expressly mentioned, and in those other passages which contain invitations to accept of it: such as Isa. 9:6. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." Chap. 42:6. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." And chap. 46:12, 13. "Hearken, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness." John 3:16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In Chap. 6:32. Christ, speaking to a promiscuous multitude at Capernaum, expresses these remarkable words,—"My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." This last passage contains the Father's offer of Christ and his righteousness to sinners, in the most explicit terms. He does not say, My Father hath given to those of you who are believers, or, he will give to such of you as shall believe, upon condition of your faith and repentance, the true bread from heaven; but, He giveth you presently the true bread; he giveth it to you who, instead of seeking salvation by me, seek me only for the loaves; to you who, instead of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or desiring to be fed with the true bread, murmur, because I said, I am the bread of life? He said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;" intimating that himself was the gift of God to sinners. "In this mountain," says the prophet Isaiah, "shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things," &c. And in Prov. 8:4. the personal Wisdom of the Father saith, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." In these passages, and many others which might be cited, we have express mention made of a free offer of Christ, and of his righteousness, to sinners of mankind, who are denominated the people, the Gentiles, the world, men, and the sons of men, &c., which are all indefinite terms; not, indeed, a giving of him in possession, else every sinner who hears the Gospel should possess him, and be saved by him; but a giving in offer, so that every

sinner has hereby a right to take possession; and he is guilty of unbelief if he do not avail himself of this right.

Now, when by a true faith we call Jesus Christ Jehovah our Righteousness, we believe that he is freely offered to us as unworthy sinners, not on the ground of our attainments or evidences, but on the ground of God's faithfulness in those and similar passages of Scripture: and we believe that he is the Lord our Righteousness; ours in the offers of the Gospel; so that it is warrantable for us as lost sinners to make use of his righteousness, and depend on it for a title to salvation, with as much freedom as though it had been fulfilled by ourselves. This is the way to take home and apply to ourselves that which before lay in common in the Gospel offer. And indeed, if we were better acquainted with God's gracious offer of his Son to us as sinners, and with believing by the direct exercise of faith, that he is the Lord our Righteousness, in consequence of that offer, there should be more liveliness, holiness, and comfort among us than we can at present pretend to.

Lastly, To call the Lord Jesus, Jehovah our Righteousness is, to trust in him and on his righteousness as ours, for all our salvation. —The main design of a justifying righteousness to lost sinners is, to entitle them to salvation; and if they had a perfect righteousness of their own, they might safely trust to it for this purpose. But, seeing believers are convinced that they have none, and are enabled to call Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Jehovah their Righteousness, they do so for this very end, that they may have his righteousness to rely on for a title to eternal life. They are sensible that they cannot be justified and saved without it, and at the same time that it is unwarrantable for them to trust to it as theirs, till they believe that it is theirs in the offer of the Gospel. When, therefore, they call the Lord Jesus Jehovah their Righteousness, they not only believe that he and his righteousness are graciously offered to them, but they cordially rely on his consummate righteousness as the sole ground of their title to complete salvation, and present it to God in all their addresses to

him as the only meritorious cause of grace and glory. They not only make it a ground of confidence in their approaches to God, but build all their confidence for a title to life upon it. They confide in Christ for his whole salvation, and devise liberally of Him, saying with the holy psalmist, "Thou wilt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies; thy right hand shall save me:" "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me:" "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me:" "He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Thus they confide in Jesus Christ for all his salvation; but this confidence they found on his surety-righteousness as theirs in the gospel offer. They not only renounce their own righteousness in the affair of justification, and acquiesce in that of Christ, but they rely on this solely for a right to grace in time and to glory in eternity. They cordially trust that they shall be exalted in his righteousness; that God will not only bring their souls out of trouble, but be well pleased with them, and bless them, for his righteousness' sake: they trust that for his righteousness' sake all the precious promises of the new covenant shall be fulfilled to them: thus they embrace the promises. They trust that for that spotless righteousness, in fulfilling which their Divine Surety obeyed the law as a covenant, all necessary grace shall be communicated to them, to enable them to obey it acceptably as a rule. On that ground they trust that Christ will graciously supply them with present strength for present duty, and for maintaining the conflict with corruption within, and temptation without; in a word, that he will supply all their wants according to his riches in glory, and fill them with fruits of righteousness, which are by Him to the glory and praise of God. Sometimes, indeed, when unbelief is prevailing against them, they find that they cannot hold fast this confidence. But this is no more a proof that doubting is of the nature of faith, than that darkness is of the nature of the sun when he is under an eclipse. The believer, when unbelief prevails against him, is almost ready to cast away his confidence; but instead of thinking this to be his duty, he thinks it both a sin and a shame to him. Sometimes he is so foolish as to make his pleasant frames and

evidences grounds of his confidence and comfort, instead of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; but when Christ, who is always jealous of his own honour, casts a veil over those evidences, and suffers him to discern nothing within him but confusion and corruption, he learns by degrees to act more wisely. Instead of making his experiences a ground of trust, he learns to consider them only as encouragements to him to rely with more assured confidence on Christ as Jehovah his Righteousness.

Now, from what has been said on this subject, we may see, 1. the inexpressible greatness of redeeming love. How admirable is the love of the eternal Father to sinners, in giving his only-begotten Son, in giving his Son who never offended him, but was his eternal delight, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; in giving him up to the most direful anguish, agony, and death, that he might make reconciliation for iniquity! How transcendently great the love of God to vile rebellious sinners, which could vent itself to them through the vital blood of his own dearly beloved Son! "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son:" "He commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Here also we may see the amazing love of the eternal Son, who not only consented to fulfil all righteousness, to endure the most exquisite anguish in our stead, but consented with infinite cheerfulness. In the making of the everlasting covenant he said, "Lo, I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." The law requires us only to love our neighbour as ourselves; but the Lord Jesus loved his enemies, in some sense, more than himself. He willingly consented to endure death in all its direful extent, that they might be exalted to endless life. His blessing the sacramental elements in the night in which he was betrayed, is called his giving of thanks; for he loved his people so much, that he was thankful he had their boundless debt to pay, and was able to clear it. How hard must that heart be that this wondrous love does not melt! how cold those affections that it does not inflame!

2. From what has been advanced, we may infer the inflexible severity of Divine justice. The Lord Jesus had, in the council of peace, undertaken, as the Surety of elect sinners, to make satisfaction for their sins, by enduring the execution of the tremendous curse of the law in their stead. And although God should not spare impenitent sinners who are mean creatures, and who have provoked him in innumerable instances, but punish them without mercy, it would not be at all wonderful. These he might have left to perish, and yet have spared his dear and only-begotten Son, who had been chargeable with no sin of his own, but had the iniquity of others imputed to him. The infinite dignity of his Person, the greatness of the Father's love to him, his personal innocence, the benevolence of his design, all pled for him, and seemed to promise him an exemption, or at least a mitigation of suffering. This, then, is the greatest trial that ever has been made whether Divine justice be strictly inexorable, and whether God can be prevailed on by the strongest inducements to connive at sin. We are told that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; and that it pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief. He endured the full execution of the curse of the broken covenant due to his people for sin, without the smallest abatement of suffering. If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the Father yielded up his dear Son to such doleful and exquisite anguish, for the satisfaction of infinite justice, without the least mitigation of suffering, how vain must it be for the finally impenitent to think that they shall escape?

3. Hence learn what good reason believers have to rejoice greatly. Jesus Christ is Jehovah their righteousness. Unrighteous and unregenerate men often rejoice: the most of them spend all their days in mirth: but it does not become them to rejoice. It becomes them rather to mourn and weep; for they are under a sentence of condemnation to the vengeance of eternal fire, and they know not but it may begin to be executed upon them the very next moment. Indeed, were it not that they are ignorant of their deplorable condition, they would find it difficult to cease one moment from

weeping and wailing. But believers who are exalted in the righteousness of Christ should rejoice all the day, and should say with the Israelitish Church, we will greatly rejoice in the Lord; our soul shall be joyful in our God; for he hath clothed us with the garments of salvation, he hath covered us with the robe of righteousness. To a criminal condemned to the most excruciating death, it would afford great joy to have a free pardon put into his hand, but how greatly would his joy be increased, were he, at the time he received the pardon to receive an indefeasible title to the highest honours that his prince could confer upon him! Now, in Christ as Jehovah their righteousness, believers are not only released from the condemning sentence of the violated law, but they are entitled to the favour, the image, and the enjoyment of the ever blessed God: exalted to sit with Christ in heavenly places, and as kings and priests to God to reign with him for ever and ever. Such great reason have they to rejoice, that they are peremptorily commanded to do it. "Rejoice in the Lord alway," says an apostle: "and again I say, rejoice." Some will be ready to object and say, "If we knew that he were Jehovah our righteousness, we would rejoice in him; but we are afraid that we have no personal interest in his righteousness! Indeed, if you have no kind of interest in his righteousness, you cannot warrantably rejoice in it; but though you cannot perhaps rejoice in it, as that which you are sure, from clear evidence, is yours already in possession; why may not ye rely on it, and rejoice in it, as yours in the free offers and absolute promises of the Gospel? "God hath spoken in his holiness," says the psalmist; "I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine," &c. Psal. 60. These places were not his in actual possession, but only in promise. God had given him his promise for them; and therefore he rejoiced in the sure prospect of possessing them. The apostle Peter says of those to whom he addressed his first epistle, that "believing, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Though you therefore may not be yet certain that the righteousness of Christ is yours in possession, yet if you can cordially believe that God makes a free offer of it to you as lost sinners, why do you not rejoice in it?

Do not you think that the offer and promise of God, who cannot lie, are a good ground of security for the enjoyment of it? If believers were to rely on God's faithfulness in the promise rather than on their own feelings, and on that ground to believe the gift of the Saviour's righteousness with application to themselves, they should not be such strangers to the joy of faith as many of them seem to be.

4. From what has been said, we may also see the impossibility of being saved without a personal interest in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are all sinners not only in the first Adam, but by innumerable transgressions in our own persons; and as such, the law of God hath condemned us to eternal wrath, for the satisfaction of Divine justice. But as we are finite creatures, it is not in our power to give satisfaction by any temporary sufferings. And supposing we could yield, for the time to come, even perfect obedience to the precepts of the law, this could not satisfy for our former sins. Though we were to exert ourselves to the very utmost, in performing every duty,—though we were to pray seven times a-day, to communicate every Sabbath-day, to fast twice in the week, and to weep for our sins till all the moisture of our bodies were exhausted,—though we bestowed all our goods to feed the poor, and gave our bodies to be burned,—we could not expiate the guilt of one of our sins. Besides, as we are sinners, and under obligation to eternal punishment, so we are without strength, and cannot yield that perfect holiness of nature, and righteousness of life, which the law requires. There is no other name, therefore, given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness. Except his righteousness, in virtue of vital union with him, be imputed to us, we are undone; we are heirs of hell, and destitute of a title to heaven. We are destitute also of holiness, because while we are without that righteousness, the curse of the law chains us down under the dominion of sin; and being under the arrest of vindictive justice, no sanctifying influence hath access into our souls. We are at the same time destitute of happiness; they only who receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus

Christ. We can derive no solid comfort from any quarter. From above, God is angry with us every day, and ready to tear us in pieces, while there is none to deliver; from beneath, Satan hunts for our precious life, and hell is moved to meet us at our coming; from within, unmortified corruption always promotes our ruin; and from without, we are beset with innumerable snares, and every enjoyment comes to us in the channel of Divine wrath.

One will be ready to say, "They who are destitute of the Saviour's righteousness are indeed miserable; but for my part, I trust I am personally interested in it." Have you any good evidence of a personal interest in it? all who have that righteousness imputed to them, which Christ fulfilled by obeying the law as a covenant, have also holiness implanted in them, by which they are conformed to the law as a rule. Now, are you holy in heart and in all manner of conversation? Do you hate all your sins, the sin of your nature as well as the transgressions of your life; and do you abhor them rather because they are hateful to God, than hurtful to yourself? You were told that all who embrace the righteousness of Jesus Christ are persuaded that they have no righteousness of their own. Now, are you convinced of this? The question is not, whether you were persuaded formerly; but whether you are convinced now that all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags, which can neither adorn you nor screen you from the tempests of Divine wrath? Are you verily persuaded that by nature you are destitute of original righteousness, and filled with all unrighteousness? I do not ask, if you merely believe that your nature is corrupted? for that is easy; but whether spiritual light is introduced to let you see your corruption, and spiritual life to make you feel it? They who are spiritually dead do neither see nor feel that they are depraved, only they believe it, because it is customary to do so. Are you from your own experience convinced that your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? and that, instead of being able to yield perfect obedience to the law, you are not sufficient so much as to think one good thought? Have you seen in any degree the spirituality and great extent of the Divine law, reaching to the

thoughts and motions of the heart, as well as to the words and actions of the life; so that, upon comparing your heart and life with it, you have despaired of life by your own righteousness?

Again: Do you in any degree see the glorious excellence and suitableness of the Redeemer's righteousness? Do you discern its suitableness to answer all the requirements of the broken law in your stead? The views which many have of it are so slight and unaffecting, that all the length they go is only to entertain a good opinion of it. But are your views of it such that you cannot but admire its infinite excellence and fitness for the purposes of the Divine glory, the honour of the Divine law, and the exigencies of your soul? Do your discoveries of it so attract your heart to it and to that adorable Redeemer who fulfilled it, as to make you say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith?" If this be not in some degree the language of your heart, you may suspect that you are as yet a stranger to the glorious righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

Again: Do you cordially approve of attaining eternal life only on the ground of this righteousness? Are you pleased with having Christ and his righteousness exalted, yourself and your works debased, in the affair of justification? Are you well pleased with this transcendently excellent righteousness, and content to be eternally indebted to it for all your title to complete salvation? I do not ask if you be sensible of no disapprobation of it in your heart; but, if you so cordially approve of it as your ground of title to life, that your remaining dislike to it is ground of self-loathing and godly sorrow to you? If this be the habitual frame of your heart, it is a favourable sign.

But further: Do you believe on the ground of God's faithfulness in his Record, that he makes a free grant or offer of Christ, and of his surety-righteousness to you, as a lost sinner of Adam's race? Do you call the Lord Jesus Jehovah your Righteousness, not on the ground of your attainments and works, but upon the warrant of the indefinite offers and promises of the Gospel? Do you cordially believe that these gracious offers are directed to you, not because you imagine yourself to be better than many others, but because God, who cannot lie, has addressed them to you as a sinner of mankind? You can easily believe that they are to others, but that they should be addressed to you, when you see your heart exceedingly depraved, and find iniquities prevailing against you, you find it hard to believe. Indeed nothing but Omnipotent Power is sufficient to make you believe it. Now, do you often find it very difficult to call the Lord Jesus Jehovah your Righteousness? and are you resolved notwithstanding, in the strength of promised grace, to do so? Are you urged to attempt this, not only by a sense of need, but by a conviction of duty; God having commanded you to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ?

In fine: Do you cordially trust in Christ for all his salvation, and rely on his righteousness as offered to you, for all your title to salvation? This is a question which requires your deepest attention. I say, do you cordially trust in Christ as Jehovah your Righteousness alone, for complete salvation? The most of people trust that they shall at last be happy. Now, what is your trust that you shall be happy founded on? Is it on the righteousness of Jesus Christ offered to you in the Gospel, or on your own performances? If you say, on the righteousness of Christ, then the question is, Is it grounded on that glorious righteousness alone, and on nothing done by yourself in conjunction with it? Do you add neither your attainments nor your duties to it, as grounds of confidence and of comfort? This is what no hypocrite can do. He knows not what it is to build his confidence for salvation on the righteousness of the Saviour, independently of his own doings. Do you, then, resolve to rely for a complete title to eternal life only on the obedience unto death of the incarnate

Redeemer? And whilst you are as careful to maintain good works, as though you depended on them for life, do you trust as little on them as if you had never performed them? Besides, do you rely on Jesus Christ as Jehovah your righteousness, for the whole of his great salvation; for deliverance, not only from suffering but from sinning, and exaltation not merely to happiness but to holiness? Many pretend to believe in Christ for salvation, who do not trust in him for complete salvation. Every unregenerate man, how high soever his profession be, retains some idol with which he cannot endure to part. His conscience can bear witness that it is the real desire of his soul to be allowed to take it even to heaven with him. He does not see how heaven itself could make him happy without it. Now such a man may properly enough be said to fear that Christ may come and deprive him of it; but he can with no propriety be said to trust that he will deprive him of it, or save him from it: because trust implies desire that he should do so. But it is absurd to say, that a man desires to be saved from that which he desires at the same time to retain. It is, therefore, the distinguishing character of a true believer, to trust in Jesus Christ and on his righteousness for his whole salvation. Is it then the unfeigned desire of your heart that the Lord Jesus may save you from the love and practice, as well as from the guilt of all sin, and exalt you to the love and practice of universal holiness? If it be so, it is well.

5. To you who have good ground to conclude that you have vital union with Christ, and spiritual communion with him in his righteousness, I would offer these advices: 1st, Study, in the strength of promised grace, to appropriate Christ and his surety-righteousness, as offered in the Gospel to you; saying, "Surely he hath borne my griefs, and carried my sorrows." "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." 2d, Endeavour to bring his consummate righteousness along with you, in all your approaches to God on the throne of grace. Never plead for the smallest blessing either of mercy or grace, either to yourselves or others, without presenting this glorious righteousness as the only ground of your plea. And when you do so, be sure that you devise

liberally of an infinitely gracious God, and expect abundance of grace, as well as of the gift of righteousness from Him. The true art of praying successfully is, to bring this spotless righteousness in the hand of an appropriating faith to God, as a God of grace; and not only to pray for grace on the ground of it, but to trust that he will give you sufficient grace to help you in every time of need. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." 3d, Be very thankful that the Lord Jesus offers himself to you as Jehovah your Righteousness; and express your thankfulness by studying universal conformity to Him in your heart and life. Seeing he obeyed the law as a covenant, by fulfilling all righteousness for your justification, endeavour, in the faith of the promise, to yield universal obedience to the law as a rule for his glory, by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by him to the glory and the praise of God.

SERMON VIII: UNION WITH CHRIST

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."—1 COR. 6:17.

In the 15th and 16th verses of this chapter, the apostle exhorts the believers at Corinth to guard against such unclean practices as were very common in that city; and he enforces his exhortation by two considerations. He informs them, that if they were to be guilty of such sins, their bodies, which being constituent parts of their persons, were united as members to the Lord Jesus Christ, should in that case become the members of an harlot. "Know ye not," says he, "that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?"

God forbid." He also represents it to them as a self-evident principle, that he who is joined in affection and criminal conversation to an harlot, is one body with her. "What! know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two (saith he) shall be one flesh." But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. He who is joined to an harlot is degraded so low as to be one body with her; but he who is joined to the Lord is advanced so high as to be one spirit with him. To be joined to the Lord, is to be vitally united to the Lord Jesus, who is not only of the same essence with his eternal Father; but in virtue of his mediatorial office, is Lord and "Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." It is the exalted privilege of every true believer to be joined to Him, or, according to the import of the original word, to be compactly cemented to him,—so compactly cemented to him, as to be actuated by the same Spirit, who, in immeasurable fulness, resides in him as the Head of the body.

In further discoursing on this subject, it is proposed, through Divine aid, I. To offer some remarks upon the union of believers with Christ; II. To inquire into the nature and properties of this union; III. To consider the bonds of it; IV. The representations of it in Scripture; and, V. The immediate effect of it as expressed in the text.

I. I am then, in the first place, to offer some remarks on the union of believers with Christ.

1. True believers had a federal union with Christ from eternity.—We cannot call this an actual and formal union, because believers had then no actual existence: but it may be styled an intentional union, an union in the eternal purpose of God; "according as he hath chosen us in him," says an apostle, "before the foundation of the world." In the making of the everlasting covenant, a certain number of mankind lost was given to Christ, as the Head of the election; and upon his accepting of them, and consenting to be their Covenant-Head and public Representative, an union between him and them was formed. It is called a federal union, for the bond of it was the

covenant of grace. It was an union in covenant, and an union in law. By this union Christ stood in the relations of a Representative and Surety to God's elect; and the Father legally, as well as federally, laid upon him the iniquities of them all, Isa. 53:6.

2. They begin to have vital union with Christ at the moment they begin cordially to believe in him.—This union proceeds from spiritual life imparted to the soul at regeneration; and it is in consequence of it that vital influence and spiritual nourishment continue to be communicated in sanctification. It is in consequence of it that the believer is one spirit with Christ, or, that the same Divine Spirit who resides in Christ, dwells also in every member of his mystical body. Although this union differs from the former, yet it necessarily depends on it. One may be federally united to the Saviour, and yet not be vitally united to him, as is the case of the elect before regeneration. One may be federally united to Christ, and at the same time continue to be dead in sin; but none can be vitally or spiritually united to him, without being a partaker of his quickening Spirit. And yet no man is vitally united to Christ in time but he who was federally and legally connected with him from eternity.

3. The foundation of this vital union between the Person of the Son of God and the persons of believers, is the personal union between his Divine nature and their nature.—That union of persons depends on this union of natures. If the Son of God had not graciously consented to unite the human nature to the Divine in his adorable person at his incarnation, none of the sons of Adam could ever have been united to him at regeneration. Are any of the children of men exalted to be sons of God in union with him who is the First-born among many brethren? it is because He who is the Son of God became the son of man,—became an infant of days, a child born, a son given. If he had not engaged to unite natures infinitely distant from each other, the Divine and human, he could not consistently with his transcendent glory unite persons to himself who are so distant from him as the persons of sinners are. If he had not been

made flesh, none of us had ever been so united to him as to be one spirit with him. His having a mystical body depends upon his having consented to have a human body, Psalm. 40:6.

4. Before a sinner be vitally united to Christ, he is united to the first Adam, Rom. 5:12. All the children of men, in their natural estate, are united to the first Adam as their moral representative. The bond by which they are joined to him is the bond of the first covenant. He who was their natural, became their moral root, bearing them as their representative in that covenant, Rom. 5:19. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "In Adam all die." There was a moral bond between Adam and his posterity, by which they were joined together, namely, the bond of the covenant of works. Elect sinners, though in their natural state they are federally united to the second Adam, yet they are still, by virtue of the covenant of works, really united to the first. This union between the first Adam and the elect sinner is never dissolved, till the latter be vitally united to the second Adam; or, as the apostle Paul expresses it, "till he be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," Rom. 7:4. As union with the second Adam dissolves union with the first, so none are united to the second Adam but such as were united to the first.

5. Although the union between Christ and believers is mutual, yet it begins first on his side. It commences by unition, which is before mutual union. By unition is meant Christ's uniting himself by his Spirit to the dead sinner, according to this gracious promise, "I will put my Spirit within you." The Holy Spirit unites himself to the sinner, by coming into his soul at the time of love, at the happy moment designed for his spiritual marriage with the heavenly Bridegroom of the Church; and he so quickens it, that it is no more spiritually dead, but alive. "Even when we were dead in sin," says the apostle, "he hath quickened us." As communion flows from union, so vital union arises from unition; from Christ's approaching in the day of his power, and uniting himself by his Spirit to the poor

sinner dead in sin. Though it be not completed till the sinner trust in the Lord Jesus by saving faith, yet it begins on his side.

6. The instruments, or means of this union, are the law and the Gospel. Accordingly we read, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel." The law, by discovering to the sinner his sinfulness and wretchedness, leads him to the Saviour indirectly, while the Gospel, by exhibiting Jesus in his glory, fulness, and ability to save, leads him to Him directly. The law in the hand of the Spirit, set home to the conscience, lets him see that he is united to the first Adam, and that he has communion with him, in imputed and inherent sin; and the Gospel, when it comes in demonstration of the Spirit, powerfully persuades him that he may be united to the second Adam, and have communion with him, in imputed righteousness and inherent holiness. It is by believing the Gospel, as it testifies of Christ, and by confiding in him as therein exhibited, that the sinner becomes vitally united to him. Then it is that the poor trembling soul meets the compassionate Saviour eye to eye and heart to heart.

7. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's-supper are the external seals of this union with Christ.—They not only signify, but seal it. Baptism seals the believer's spiritual ingraftment into Christ, or begun union with him: the Lord's-supper seals his continued union with him, and communion in his body and blood, or in his Person, righteousness, and fulness.

8. Though the union between Christ and the believer be very mysterious, yet it is far from being contrary to right reason.—It is far, indeed, above reason, but it is not in the smallest degree contrary to sanctified reason. Were our incarnate Redeemer no more than a man, it would be contrary to reason to suppose that he, at such an immense distance as the third heaven, could be

intimately united to a believer upon earth. But, seeing he is God and man in one Person, there is nothing inconsistent in supposing and believing it. Though his human nature is in heaven, his Person is everywhere. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." If any should inquire, where Christ may be found on earth, in order to his uniting with him? it might be replied, that he is to be found in the word of truth, which is always near to us. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth, the word of faith which we preach," Rom. 10:8.

II. I proceed now to the second general head,—To inquire more particularly into the nature and properties of union with Christ. And,

In the first place, it is not an essential union.—The union of the Father and Holy Spirit to the Person of the Son is an essential union; but the union of believers to the Son is not so. The Person of the eternal Father and that of the adorable Spirit are so united to the Person of Christ as to be one with him by an essential union, or an union of substance or essence. The persons of believers are so united to him as also to be one with him; but it is not by an essential union, else they should be gods, possessed of every divine attribute of which he is possessed. Although Christ and believers are one, and he and the Father are one, yet this is not to be understood with respect to the kind of union, but with regard only to the resemblance between the one kind and the other.

2. Neither is it a personal union.—It is indeed an union of persons, but it is not a personal union. The union of the Divine and human natures in Christ is personal, his Person still continues to be but one; whereas believers, though they are united to Christ, make not one person with him; they only constitute one mystical body, of which he is the head. An apostle says to the believers at Corinth, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," 1 Cor. 12:27. If the union of Christ with believers were personal, if they and he together made but one person, they might, in that case,

consider themselves as joint mediators with him, and as equally entitled to the honour of meriting eternal life. This sublime expression, which he uttered in ancient prophecy, would be no longer true: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." But to suppose this, would be blasphemous.

3. It is not merely a political union.—To be one with Christ, or to be joined to him as represented in the text, is much more than to be subjected to him as a political head. Were it no more, it would follow, that all the unregenerate among men, yea, that the devils themselves would be united to him; for they are all under his sovereign dominion as King of Zion. "Thou hast led captivity captive." "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." The prince and power of darkness are under his controul, and all the children of men are under his all powerful restraint. He has them all in his hand, all under his dominion, as Governor among the nations. Were the union between Christ and believers, then, no more than a political union, their privilege would be no more than that of the most miserable in the creation of God.

4. Nor is it merely a relative union, or union by profession.—To be connected with Christ, as professors of the true religion, is the privilege of all the members of the visible church. They are all visibly united to him, and receive from him spiritual gifts and restraining influences. Hence they are represented as persons who are in Christ, as the branch is in the vine. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit shall be taken away." "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." This is to be understood not of true saints, for they shall never be totally or finally separated from Christ; but only of nominal Christians, who are visibly in Christ, united to him by the bands of common influence and temporary faith. They who are united to Christ in this sense may be

taken away, and cast forth into everlasting burnings; while such as are joined to him in the sense of the text shall be secured from eternal misery.

5. It is not merely to be united to Christ in sentiment and disposition.—In this sense holy angels are one with him. In so far as they can penetrate the amazing mysteries of redeeming grace and Divine Providence, their views coincide with his; and in proportion as their limited faculties are capable of it, they are holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect; and yet they are never said in Scripture to be in Christ or joined to him, as redeemed saints are. None of these kinds of union, then, come up to the idea of the union with Christ that is intended in the text; for,

In the 1st place, It is a real union.—Believers are united to Christ as really as the members of the natural body are to the head. Hence the apostle says, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. 5:30. Though this union be not an object of sense, yet nothing is more real. The union between soul and body is such as can neither be seen by our eyes nor truly represented by our imagination, like things which are objects of sense; and yet we cannot doubt of its reality. In like manner, the union between Christ and believers, though not the object either of sight or of feeling, is notwithstanding so real, that there is nothing which they who enjoy it are more firmly persuaded of. The reality of vital union with the Saviour is clearly revealed, and the happy effects of it sensibly experienced by believers. Is it true that you who are saints of the Most High are now sitting in your seats, or see the light of the sun? it is as true, as real, that you are united to Him who is the Sun of righteousness, the Light of the world.

2ndly, it is an intimate union; so inexpressibly intimate, that believers are said to be one in the Father and in the Son; as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, John 14:20. and 17:21. "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." How intimate, how

inexpressibly intimate, is the union, the oneness, between the Father and his only-begotten Son! No less intimate, however, is the union that is between Christ and the true Christian, though it be an union of another nature. So near, so close is it, that Christ is said to be formed in the believer, to dwell in him, and to walk in him. Though Jesus Christ and believers are not essentially one, yet they are mystically one. The stock and graff are not so near, soul and body are not so near, husband and wife are not so near, as Jesus and the believing soul. They are incorporated into one, so that the Church is represented as Christ's body. Though it does not make the believer one person with Christ, yet it is a most intimate union of his person with the Person of Christ.

3dly, It is an immediate union.—Though it is not so immediate as to exclude means, yet it is so immediate as to exclude higher and lower degrees of nearness to Christ among believers. In the natural body, every member is not equally near to the head, the foot is not so near it as the hand; but in Christ's mystical body, every member is alike near to him who is the glorious Head: the lowest believer, as to his state, is as near to Christ as the highest. Some of the saints are much nearer to him than others, in their spiritual attainments and exercises; but not as to their state. Those in the church at Corinth who said they were of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, were as closely united to the living Head as those who said they were of Christ.

4thly, It is a spiritual union, an union by which, when joined to the Lord, we are one spirit with him.—As one soul enlivens and actuates both the head and the members of the natural body, so one Spirit, the self same Spirit, resides both in Christ and in the believer. "If any man," says Paul, "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. 8:9. If, in virtue of the marriage union, husband and wife become one flesh, much more do Jesus and the believer, when thus united, become one Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit, as he dwelleth in Christ, a Spirit of grace? he is poured out upon the believer as a Spirit of grace also: for out of Christ's fulness does he receive, and grace for grace. The believer by his union with Christ, partakes of

the same influences, and operations with Christ as to kind, though not as to degree. This is the reason of its being called a vital union.

5thly, It is a fundamental union; for it is in some sense the foundation of a believer's other privileges. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's" by vital union with him. It is the foundation of all acceptable obedience. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me," the foundation of all spiritual comfort. The saint, while in this valley of tears, is in the midst of devouring enemies, and of great tribulations; but since he is united to the Consolation of Israel, he shall be comforted. He is one with Jesus Christ; and were this compassionate Saviour to cease for a moment caring for him, he would cease to take care of himself. Christ is the foundation of life to the believer: "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19. Are any of you destitute of the spirit of life? it is because you are not united to the living Head. It is the foundation of the believer's hope, "Christ in you the hope of glory," and the foundation of his honour and elevation. The highest honour that can be conferred on a soul is to unite it to Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. How high the dignity of the true believer!

6th, It is union in the eye of the law.—Though it is not a mere legal union, such as hath subsisted between Christ and the elect from all eternity, yet it is an union which stands, or which is sustained in law. No sooner does this union begin in the day of first believing, than all that Christ did and suffered for the believer is reckoned in law as if he had done and suffered it himself. Hence he is said to be crucified with Christ; to be buried with him, being buried with him by baptism; and to be raised up together with him, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God: He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ; intimating, that, in the eye of the law, the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the believer's Surety, are placed as properly and fully to his account as if he had been

crucified, dead, and buried, in his own person. By this union, Christ and believers are one in law: being thus found in him, they have not their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.

7th, It is a mysterious or mystical union.—"This is a great mystery," Eph. 5:32. Is any of you desirous of hearing mysteries? O what ineffable, what amazing mysteries are here! Christ in heaven far above all things; and yet in the believer on earth, who is less than the least of all God's mercies! Christ, an infinite Person, infinitely distant from the finite nature of the believer, and yet closely united to him! Christ living in the believer, and the believer living by him; walking in the believer, and the believer walking with him; dwelling in his heart, and he at the same time dwelling in God; Christ receiving the believer as one of his jewels, and the believer putting on Christ; Christ always the same without any alteration, and yet the believer eating his flesh and drinking his blood; Christ in heaven, and the Christian on earth, and yet intimately united together! Are there mysteries in the essential union between the Father and the Son, and in the personal union between the Divine and human natures in the person of Christ? there are ineffable mysteries in the union between Christ and the believing soul,—mysteries which angels desire to look into. A greater mystery than this has never been exhibited unto the children of men,—a mystery to be believed, and yet never to be fully comprehended.

8th, It is an indissolvable union.—It is infinitely strong and durable. The saint shall be separated from his nearest relations, from his most intimate friends, from his dearest earthly enjoyments, and his soul ere long shall be separated from his body; but it shall never for a moment be parted from the Lord Jesus. Supposing the believer's body were burned, and every particle of its ashes removed as far from each other as the east is from the west, they would still be united, indissolvably united, to Jesus Christ, Rom. 8:35–39. As death did not dissolve the hypostatical union in the person of Christ, so neither will it ever dissolve the mystical union between

him and his saints. Their bodies when dissolved in the grave are as intimately united to the Lord Jesus as their souls dwelling in the mansions of glory. They sleep in Jesus: he keepeth all their bones. This union can never be dissolved: no creature can dissolve it, and the Lord Jesus himself will not. The creature cannot do it, "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." He, the compassionate Redeemer, will not. "He will not turn away from them to do them good." O the safety, and honour, and glory of the true believer! His union with Christ shall continue throughout all eternity.

SERMON IX: UNION WITH CHRIST

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit."—1 COR. 6:17.

III. I proceed now to the third general head, which was,—To consider the bonds of union with Christ. An union so inviolable as this hath need of strong ligaments or bonds. As Christ and believers are the parties in this union, the bond of it on Christ's part is the holy Spirit; and the bond on the believer's is holy faith, wrought and increased by the Spirit.

1. The bond of this mysterious union on Christ's part is the Holy Spirit.—"By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body," 1 Cor. 12:13. "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," 1 John 4:13. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," 1 John 3:24. Christ, finding the poor sinner connected with the first Adam, that killing root, by the bonds of the covenant of works and his own legal temper, comes to him in the time of love, and unites himself to him by his Spirit, as a spirit of life. Though the elect sinner, in his

natural state, is actually united to the first Adam as his head of sin and death, yet, as he is at the same time federally united to the Lord Jesus, as his Head of righteousness and life, Christ comes at the time appointed, and apprehends him by his quickening Spirit. The same Spirit that is in Christ as the living Head, is now communicated to the sinner dead in sin, never to depart from him; but to be in him as a quickening and sanctifying Spirit. Thus Christ, as the Prince of life, unites himself to him, takes hold of him, and keeps him in his own gracious hand. Now, this bond is infinitely powerful, and it renders the union of Christ and the believer indissolvable, and so inviolable, that it is impossible for it to be broken. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John 10:28. When the Holy Spirit hath once entered the soul, he never departs from it, nor ceases for a moment to dwell in it, John 14:16, 17.

2. The bond of this union on the believer's part is faith, the faith of God's operation.—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," Eph. 3:17. When the Lord Jesus apprehends and embraces the dead soul by his Spirit, as a spirit of faith, the soul, thus quickened and endued with the principle of faith, embraces Him in its turn by the acting of faith, by which the union becomes mutual and complete. "Having the same spirit of faith, we also believe, and therefore speak," 2 Cor. 4:13. No sooner does the spirit of faith enter the dead soul than the soul begins to believe. The sinner thus quickened believes first the precepts of the law as a covenant, so as to be convinced that he is a sinner in heart and in life; and he believes its dreadful threatening with application to himself, so as to be deeply sensible that he is inexpressibly miserable. The Spirit working in him the faith of the law, persuading him that he can never live in union with the first Adam, under the covenant of works, dissolves his union with the law as a covenant, and separates his heart from it; so that he sees it is in vain to cleave to it any longer, Rom. 8:2. While he is enabled thus to believe the precepts and curses of the law, so as to despair of life by the works of it, he is helped so to believe also the offers and promises of the gospel, as to apply the

Saviour and his whole salvation to himself. Accordingly, he applies Christ, as the head of the new covenant, to himself, and expects righteousness and life from Him. Thus Christ having embraced the sinner by his Spirit, and the sinner having embraced him by faith, the union is completed. Saving faith is the consent of the heart to match with the Lord Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom of the Church, and Head of the body. When therefore it is exercised, Christ and the believer are joined together as in a marriage-covenant. "Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee," Hos. 3:3. Now, this bond is inviolable as well as the former. For though the actings of faith are sometimes interrupted, the habit of it shall never be permitted totally to fail. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Should one ask which of these two bonds is it that unites the soul to Christ? it might be replied, that both of them concur in this act.—So much for the bonds of union with Christ.

IV. The fourth general head was,—To consider the representations which we have of this union in the Scripture.

1. It is represented in Scripture by five metaphors, or resemblances.

1st, The union between the foundation and the superstructure is employed to represent it.—"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded," 1 Pet. 2:5, 6. "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught," &c. Col. 2:7. As the building is joined to and supported by the foundation, so believers are united to and sustained by Jesus Christ, the sure foundation laid in Zion.

2d, It is compared to the union that is between the root and branches of the vine.—"I am the vine," saith Jesus, "ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." "Abide in me

and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me," John 15:4, 5. Now, as an intimate union is between the branch and the root, by which the former is supported by, and derives vital sap and juice from the latter, so there is a vital union between Jesus, the Root of David, the true vine, and believers who grow up into him. In consequence of this union, they partake of vital influence from him, by which they grow up as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Sooner shall a branch lopped off from the stock derive vital nourishment from it and grow, than a man who is not united to the Saviour partake of grace from him. This union is also represented by the connexion between the stock and the graft that is set into it. "For if we have been planted together," says an apostle "in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," Rom. 6:5. The true believer is implanted, or, as the word is sometimes rendered, ingrafted into Christ, so as to partake of vital nourishment from his fulness.

3d, It is represented in Scripture by the union between husband and wife.—Thus says an apostle, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God," Rom. 7:4. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body," Eph. 5:23. As the husband and the wife are no more two, but one flesh, by virtue of the marriage covenant, so the Lord Jesus and his believing people are one Spirit.

4th, It is compared to the union of two pieces of wood, joined by glue. He that is joined, or, as the original word literally signifies, is glued to the Lord, is one spirit. The word signifies, not only to cement compactly, but to cement with glue. "From whom," says Paul, "the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," &c. Eph. 4:16.

5th, It is represented by the union that is between the head and the members of the natural body.—"He is the head of the body the church," Col. 1:18. "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ," Eph. 4:15. As the head and the members are so connected as to become one natural body, so Christ and believers are so intimately united as to become one mystical body, of which he is the Head, and they the members. As one spirit or soul animates both head and members of the natural body, so one quickening spirit animates both the Head and the members of this mystical body. This is the fullest representation of union with Christ to be found in Scripture.

Though this great mystery is represented by these different sorts of union, yet not one of them, nor all of them together, can sufficiently express the nature of it. The union between the foundation and superstructure cannot do it; for every stone in the building cannot be alike near to the head; but every believer is alike near as to union with Christ, the foundation laid in Zion. The union between the root and the branches cannot sufficiently represent it, for that union can easily be dissolved; but this cannot. Nor can the union between husband and wife, for this can be dissolved by death, and the one party may live without the smallest connexion with the other; but this stands proof against death and the grave. The union between such things as are glued together cannot do it. This union is indeed very intimate; but the union between Jesus and the believer is vital, as well as intimate. Nor can the union between the head and members of the natural body sufficiently do it; for in this union every member is not equally near to the head; whereas in that mysterious union the lowest member is as near to Jesus the living Head as the highest.

2. It is represented in Scripture by words the most expressive of it, and the most comprehensive.—"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one; as we are.—I in them, and thou in

me, that they may be made perfect in one," John 17. How sublime, significant, and comprehensive, are these words!

3. Lastly, This union is represented in the Scripture by identity or sameness of interest.—The believer is represented as having interest in Christ's sufferings, "I am crucified with Christ;" and Christ as having interest in the sufferings of the believer. "In all their affliction he was afflicted." "Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh," Col. 1:24. The believer is said to have interest in the same Father, and the same brethren, as Christ. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The believer is represented as having interest in the surety-righteousness of Christ, and Christ as having interest in the inherent holiness of the believer. He has personal interest in the Redeemer's righteousness, for he is the righteousness of God in him; and his Redeemer has a special propriety in his holiness, for he requires it, and his glory is promoted by it. He has the same interest as Christ himself, for he is an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. I "will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also," John 14:3.

V. I go on now to the fifth general head,—To consider the immediate effect of union with Christ, as expressed in the text, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit." To be one Spirit with the Lord Jesus is an inestimable privilege; and it is the sure, the inviolable privilege of every one who is vitally united to him.

Now, in the 1st place, he who is joined to the Lord is not one Spirit with him essentially, but only mystically. As the believer is a member of Christ's body mystically, "we are the body of Christ, and members in particular;" so he is mystically one Spirit with him. Jesus and the believer are so closely united as to be one, and so are Christ and the Spirit: but Christ and the blessed Spirit are so united as to be one essentially,—the person of the one and of the other possessing only one Divine essence; whereas the Christian and the

Spirit are one mystically. Though the Divine essence is not so common to the believer and the Spirit as to constitute them one in essence, yet the union between them is, notwithstanding, so intimate that they are no more two, but one. Believers are not only one in the Father and the Son, but one in the Spirit.

2d, He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit, that is, he is united to the Spirit.—The true Christian not only receives Christ Jesus the Lord, but he receives the Spirit by the hearing of faith. As he is united to Christ the moment he receives him, so no sooner does he receive the blessed Spirit than he is as intimately united also to him. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, is revealed in the promise; and he makes his triumphant entrance into the soul in the day of regeneration. But whenever he thus unites himself to the soul of the sinner, it is enabled to receive him in the promise as the Spirit of Christ. Wherever union with Christ is, there is also union with the Spirit in him. When one is united to Jesus as his Saviour, he is united to the whole Trinity in him; to his Father as his Father, to the Son as his elder Brother, and to the blessed Spirit as his Sanctifier and Comforter. This is a necessary consequence of union with Christ, as Mediator. He, then, that is so joined to the Lord Jesus as to be one Spirit with him, is accordingly one Spirit: the eternal Spirit and he are so intimately united as to be one. O what a high honour, what an exalted privilege is this!

3d, He is one Spirit; he partakes of the same influences and operations of the Holy Spirit that Christ himself does.—Though there is a great difference as to the degree, yet there is none in the kind or quality of the influence. The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto the man Christ, but he deals to every believer according to the measure of faith: and yet every kind of influence that was communicated to the One as Mediator is imparted also to the other. All who are joined to him are in this sense one Spirit with him. Does the Holy Spirit rest upon Christ the Mediator as a Spirit of glory? He rests as such on every believing soul. "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," 1 Pet. 4:14. Does he rest upon

him as a Spirit of wisdom and understanding? He is communicated as such to all who believe. "That God may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened," &c. Eph. 1:17, 18. Does he reside in Christ as a Spirit of counsel? So does he also in the believer. "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel." Does he rest on Christ as a Spirit of knowledge? He rests as such on every member of his mystical body. "Ye shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." The Spirit resides in Christ as a Spirit of might, and therefore on believers as a Spirit of power: "For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power." Does he rest upon Jesus Christ as the Spirit of life? Then the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made the saints free from the law of sin and death. Does he dwell in Jesus as a Spirit of Joy? He resides as such in all his members. "I will send another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Does he rest upon Christ as a Spirit of truth? He dwells as such in all his people. "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth." He resides in the Lord Jesus as a Spirit of the fear of the Lord, and all believers enjoy him as such. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Does he dwell in Christ as a Spirit of grace? Then, "out of his fulness do all believers receive, and grace for grace." Does he rest upon Jesus Christ as the Spirit of holiness? He resides as such in the heart of every believer, rendering him holy in conformity to his image, as the first-born among many brethren. Although the blessed Spirit proceeds from the Son, as God, yet he is communicated to him, as Mediator and man, and to all the members of his body mystical.

4th, Lastly, He who is joined to the Lord Jesus is one Spirit; he is of the same mind as Christ. To this the apostle Paul exhorts the believers at Philippi, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," &c. Phil. 2:5. None are vitally united to Christ but such as are enabled to correspond to him in sentiment, inclination,

and affection; none but they who acquiesce in his gracious covenant, and pursue diligently the exercise of faith and holiness.

1. From what has been said on this subject, we may see special ground of consolation to believers. Union with Christ is the believer's security for all Divine protection and gracious provision. When Jesus cares for the believing soul, he cares for himself. When a poor sinner goes home to Christ, and is united to him by faith, his carnal friends begin to cast him off. But be of good courage; Christ hath received you. What though a servant frown, when the Master bids you welcome! be of good comfort, for though you have many wants, yet, when you are joined to the Lord Jesus, you are united to overflowing fulness.

2. Hence see ground of great admiration. Christ and the believer are intimately united to one another. The Creator is united to the creature: strength united to weakness, light to darkness, fulness to emptiness, and life to death! O Christian, admire and adore the ineffable mystery of this union. Believers are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified; and yet they grow not on their own root, but on Him who is the Root and Offspring of David.

3. Hence we may infer a special ground of the perseverance of the saints; they are vitally united to the Lord Jesus. Their life and his life are bound up together; and because he liveth they shall live also. The believer ingrafted into Christ can never be separated from him. The branch of a tree may sometimes be agitated much by a tempest, or even bowed down by a man's hand, and yet it will cleave to the stock; and when the tempest ceases, or the hand lets it go, it will rise as formerly. In like manner, the believer united to Christ may be violently tossed with tempests, and not comforted, and may appear to be torn from him; but being still vitally connected with him, he will rise again and revive. "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me," Psal. 138:7.

4. We may hence learn the sinfulness and danger of persecuting, or otherwise injuring any of the saints: they are intimately united to Christ Jesus, and whatever is done to the least of them is done to him. They are one spirit with Him; when they are despised He is despised; when they are persecuted He is persecuted. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Consider, O disdainful sinner, that while you despise the true Christian, you condemn Christ himself. "He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me," Luke 10:16. Your hard speeches against the believer are all registered as so many reproaches uttered against Christ himself; and, if mercy prevent it not, you shall be called to answer for them.

5. How vain and delusive is it in men to pretend to union with Christ, without partaking of his Spirit? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If the Spirit who resides without measure in Christ, dwell not in them, they are not one spirit with him. Alas! many seem to have taken hold of Jesus Christ, who yet eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, and are only called by his name. "They call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; they make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness," Isa. 48:1, 2. Nothing is more vain and delusive than an empty form of godliness.

6. Hence learn how firm the believer's obligations to the love and practice of holiness are. Fruitfulness in good works is the very end of his vital union with the Lord Jesus. Are any of you united to Christ as your Head of sanctifying influence? Then you are bound to love him with supreme affection, and to love and practise holiness, in all manner of conversation. You know that in the natural body, if the head be in danger, the hands will interpose for its defence. You are laid under the highest obligations, in the faith of his love to you, to love your living Redeemer with all your heart, and to serve, to please, and to glorify Him, in your body and in your spirit, which are

his. O be tenderly concerned for the honour of the great Redeemer, and never account that glory lost to you that redounds to Him!

7. Hence learn why the Lord Jesus sympathises tenderly with his people in all their afflictions; and why they sympathise with him in whatever dishonour is reflected on him. It is because he and they are intimately united together. Mutual sympathy springs from union. Though Christ as to his person is infinitely far above the reach of all affliction, yet Christ mystical is exposed to calamities of every kind, and needs to be relieved. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them," Isa. 63:9.

8. Hence infer ground of praise and thanksgiving. How thankful, O believer, should you be, when you contemplate the amazing love of your dear Redeemer to you, in taking such dust and ashes, such a vile, unworthy, and rebellious sinner as you acknowledge yourself to be, into intimate union and communion with himself!

9. From the subject before us, we may be supplied with marks for trial.—Are you vitally united to Christ, or not? This is a question of the very highest importance. If you be united to him, your heart is, by the sanctification of the Spirit, habitually turned against all manner of sin: you are separated from sin by means of contrition, and from self by humiliation. The union between your heart and allowed sin is dissolved. Again, if this be so, you have come willingly to the Lord Jesus, and your hearts trust in him for all his great salvation. When the bridegroom has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage. If you, then, bestow yourselves cheerfully upon the Lord Jesus, and say, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend," it is a good evidence that he hath bestowed himself upon you, and that he will never leave you nor forsake you. Are you sometimes afraid that you are yet destitute of union with Jesus Christ? Upon the warrant of the gospel-offer, come anew to him, and humbly trust that he will unite you to himself, and admit you to communion with him in his righteousness and salvation. Do you love and pursue holiness, both of heart and life, and long for the perfection of it? In a word, can you

take no pleasure in any other connexion or comfort, whilst you apprehend that Christ is not united to you? and is it your habitual desire and endeavour to cleave to Him in affliction and persecution, as well as in prosperity? If so, it is a sign that you are united to him, and are true believers.

10. Be exhorted, 1. To rejoice in Christ Jesus. Observe what the root is to the tree; what a friend is to a friend; what a husband is to his spouse; and what a father is to his beloved child: so is Jesus, believers, to you. 2. Believe daily with fiducial confidence in Him. You are united to him as the branch is to the root. The branch depends on, and derives all its nourishment from the stock. 3. Aspire after much heavenly mindedness. You are united to Christ, who is exalted far above all heavens, and are risen with him; seek then the things which are above, &c. 4. Be very careful that you do not yield to any sinful inclination. You are so united to the Lord Jesus as to be one spirit with him. Do not lodge in your heart an unclean spirit together with the Spirit of Christ. 5. Be clothed with humility. You are indeed highly favoured and advanced; but remember you bear not the root, but the root you. 6. Study to be more and more united among yourselves; "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Be as the first Christians were, of one heart and one way. 7. Advance in brotherly love, "for ye are members one of another;" and one cannot love the head and hate the members.

Finally, be persuaded, you who are not united to the Lord Jesus, that while you continue estranged from him, you can have no spiritual life, no true holiness; and without holiness no man shall see the Lord. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." How can you have spiritual comfort while separated from the consolation of Israel; or spiritual light, while you are not united to the Light of the world? How can you have peace with God, when you are strangers to the Prince of peace; or life, while estranged from the Resurrection and the Life? O

believe the declarations and offers of the glorious gospel, with application of them to yourselves, and trust cordially in the Lord Jesus for complete salvation. Here is a suitable Saviour, a well-ordered covenant, and a sure portion for you. Here are precious promises to embrace, and an infinitely meritorious righteousness to receive. These are all offered, or addressed in offer, to every one of you; that it might be warrantable for each of you, so to trust in Jesus and on his righteousness, and so to rely on his promises, as to have union and communion with him, in all his riches of grace and glory.

SERMON X: JUSTIFICATION

"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."—ISAIAH 45:25.

Having already considered the doctrine of the believer's union with Jesus Christ, and of that spiritual communion with him which is founded on it; the next thing which presents itself to our view is, communion with him in his righteousness for the justification of life. His surety-righteousness is in order the first thing, in which his spiritual seed have fellowship with him. After he had tenderly invited all the ends of the earth, to look unto him and be saved, he promises, in the verse immediately preceding our text, that the salvation of those who sincerely look unto him, shall be effectually secured. "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" righteousness to entitle me to the enjoyment of God, and strength to sustain me under every pressure, and enable me to perform every good work, until I be exalted to the consummation of

endless bliss. In union with the Lord Jesus, the believer has righteousness to justify, and strength to sanctify him; he has, as it is on the margin, all righteousness and strength; an entire sufficiency, so that he has no need to apply to himself for any. As it is here promised by Him who cannot lie, that one, every one who believeth, shall say for himself, and say from the heart, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness;" so, in the text it is matter of promise that in the same Lord "all the seed of Israel shall be justified and shall glory." It is Jehovah the Son who is here called the Lord, as is evident from Paul's quoting a part of the 23d verse, and applying it to Christ in Romans 14:10, 11. In the Lord Jesus Christ, then, all the seed of Israel shall be justified. The seed of Israel here does not mean the natural posterity of Jacob, for many of them were never justified; but the spiritual seed of Christ. These were typified by the natural seed of Jacob, and they resemble him by prevailing as princes with God for the blessing. As Christ, who descended from Jacob according to the flesh, is in the Old Testament denominated Israel, Isa. 49:3.; so his spiritual seed is styled the seed of Israel, the generation of them who seek God. They are all justified in union with him as the Lord their righteousness, and in him do they glory.

In treating this subject, it is proposed, through Divine aid, I. To discourse of justification in general; II. To consider the causes of it; III. The parts; IV. The manner of it; and V. That particular effect of it which is mentioned in the text.

I. Then, I am first to discourse a little of justification in general. And here,

In the 1st place, to justify is not to make one righteous or just.—It does not consist in a real, but only in a relative change; in a change of state, but not in a change of nature. Justification is in the Scriptures opposed to condemnation. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" Rom. 8:33, 34. "Then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked," Deut. 25:1. Now, to condemn in law is not to make a man guilty, but judicially to pronounce him

guilty, and liable to punishment for his crime. Accordingly, to justify, is not to make one righteous in law, or to infuse righteousness into him. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just," are said both of them to be "abomination to the Lord," Prov. 17:15. But if justification consisted in making a wicked man righteous, instead of being abomination, it would be a work highly pleasing to the Lord. To justify, then, is not to make, but to account or pronounce one righteous in law.

2d, It is to sustain or declare a person innocent and righteous, according to law. Justification is a forensic or law term, borrowed from courts of judicature among men, in which a person accused and arraigned is pronounced righteous, and in court openly absolved by the judge. In such a court, the judge, instead of making the pannel just or guilty, according to the evidence on which the judgment is given, only sustains and declares him to be so. This is either to justify or to condemn, and it is always the act of a judge: nor is it the act of a judge simply, but of a judge sitting in judgment. A judge, upon surveying the exculpatory evidence in his chamber by himself, may intentionally and in his own mind absolve a person who is afterwards to be tried before him; and yet he does not absolve him in law, until he pronounce the sentence in open court, and order it to be intimated to the pannel. That justification before God is a juridical act, declaring a person righteous in law, is evident from its being in Scripture opposed to condemnation; which is not the infusing of sin into one, but the passing of a sentence upon him, according to his demerit. To justify, then, is to declare one just upon a legal ground. "Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified." "Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified," Isa. 43:9, 26.

3d, They who are justified before God are considered previously as sinners and ungodly. They are viewed as sinners. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom 5:8. They are also considered as ungodly. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," &c. Rom. 4:5. If Adam had continued in

innocence and perfect obedience, he and all his posterity should have been justified or declared righteous, according to the tenor of the first covenant, without supposing them to have been sinners or ungodly. But since in the first Adam and in our own persons we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, we cannot now be justified, without being previously considered as sinners and ungodly. We are to consider none as justified, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, but such as are previously supposed to be sinners in the first Adam and themselves. The persons whom God justifies are previously sinners and ungodly; but they do not continue such: the grace of God which hath appeared in their justification teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, in progressive sanctification.

4th, They are to be considered as previously condemned in law on account of sin.—The elect, as well as others, were all laid under a sentence of condemnation in the first Adam; for they were considered as guilty before God. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. 3:19. "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. 3:10. To be under the curse or condemning sentence of the law, and under the guilt of sin, which is a liableness to eternal punishment, are the same. Indeed, if those whom Christ represented as their Surety had not been considered as under the curse in the first Adam, there would have been no occasion for his becoming a curse for them, as he did, Gal. 3:13.; or for his becoming sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. They are all to be considered, then, as condemned already; actually sentenced by the law as a covenant to eternal punishment as due for sin. And were sinners not considered as already under condemnation, they could not be partakers of a justification which includes absolution from such a sentence as a necessary part of it. There would be no need to absolve from condemnation, by reversing the sentence of it in justification, if the persons justified had not been previously condemned.

5th, They are all to be regarded as objects of God's electing love, and as the seed of Israel.—"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified." All the seed of the first Adam were laid under condemnation for his first sin; and it is only the spiritual seed of the second Adam that inherit justification for his everlasting righteousness. They only by faith receive the gift of righteousness. None, therefore, are to be regarded as justified persons, but those who are the objects of electing love. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified," Rom. 8:30.

6th, They must be viewed as persons vitally united to Christ.—It was in union with the first Adam that they were condemned; and it is only in union with the second Adam that they can be considered as justified. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified." Though the elect sinner has no righteousness of his own to produce as the ground of his justification, yet upon his union with Christ he has communion with him in his righteousness, and on this ground is pronounced righteous in law. "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness." Justification necessarily depends upon union with Him who "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. 10:4.

7th, Justification is an act passed in the court of heaven upon a believing sinner, and not a work wrought in him.—It is an act passed in an instant, never to be repeated, and not a work carried on by degrees. Like the sentence of a judge, it is completed at once, and is as perfect the moment it is passed as ever it will be. "Then they shall justify the righteous," Deut. 25:1. If the sinner be not perfectly justified, he is not justified at all. If he be under the guilt of eternal wrath but for one sin, he is as effectually condemned by the sentence of the law as if he were under condemnation for all his sins. Justification is incapable of degrees like sanctification: it cannot be repeated unless you could suppose that a justified person were to fall under condemnation every time he committed a new sin, or, that one could be both justified and condemned at the same

time. But the Scripture expressly informs us, that he who heareth Christ's word, and believeth on Him that sent him, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation. John 5:24.

8th, Lastly, Justification before God is very different from justification before men.—To be justified in the sight of God, is to be judicially acquitted and declared righteous at his tribunal. It is to have the sentence of condemnation reversed, and the sinner's title to eternal life pronounced by the mouth of Him who is justice itself. But to be justified before men, is to have our pretensions to true religion justified by a holy and consistent deportment. A man is justified before God, solely for a perfect righteousness imputed, before men, by an imperfect righteousness inherent. It is by holiness of heart and of life that one's pretensions to union with Christ can be justified or made good before the world. Of the former, the apostle Paul speaks when he says in Rom. 3:28. "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It is of the latter that the apostle James speaks, chap. 2:24. when he says, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Though it is by the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, apprehended by faith alone, that the sinner's person is justified in the sight of God, yet it is by an holy practice, that his character can be justified before men.

II. I am now to consider the causes of a sinner's justification before God.

1st, The Author or efficient Cause of it is God.—"It is God that justifieth," Rom. 8:33. And again, "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith," Rom. 3:30. It is the sole prerogative of Jehovah to acquit and justify the believing sinner. It is he whom the sinner has times without number offended; and it is his law that the sinner has transgressed, and his authority on which he has trampled. He is the supreme Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, and whose judgment is always according to truth. It is he only who imputes

righteousness, who sets the believer free from every judicial charge, and pronounces his title to eternal life. It is he also to whom the debt of perfect obedience and of infinite suffering is due. But which of the Persons of the glorious Trinity is it that justifies? All the three adorable Persons are concerned in this grand affair. Considered as one God, they all unite in justifying. Considered in relation to the method of redemption, in which each of them sustains a distinct character, God in the person of the Father, justifies in respect of original and judicial authority. "To declare at this time, I say, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Rom. 3:26. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Servant of his Father, justifies in respect of the exercise of that authority. "By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many," Isa. 53:11. The Holy Spirit justifies, as he not only applies the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the believing sinner, but as he pronounces the sentence of justification both in the court of heaven and in the court of conscience. "But—ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. 6:11. Besides, the eternal Father sends his beloved Son to fulfil a justifying righteousness; the Son fulfils this as the grand condition of justification; and the adorable Spirit testifies of it to the awakened sinner, and demonstrates his right of access to it by the gospel-offer. Thus the Three-one God justifies, and none on earth or in hell shall ever be able to reverse the sentence. When He acquits in judgment, there is no superior tribunal to which an appeal can be made.

2d, The moving cause of a sinner's justification is grace, rich and sovereign grace.—In respect of God, justification is an act of unmixed favour, of entire grace. In respect of the sinner, it is absolutely free, suspended on no personal worth. Both of these the apostle Paul mentions in this cheering expression, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. 3:24. In respect of God, justification is by his grace; it originates in the richest grace, the freest love; it springs from the most unspeakable, the most transcendent favour. O how wonderful

the grace that gave rise to this incomparably excellent blessing! Here Jehovah loveth because he loveth; he is gracious because he is gracious. With respect to the believer who inherits this inestimable blessing, justification is "freely by his grace." The original word here rendered freely, is used by the LXX. to express the meaning of that word in Psalm 69:4., which we translate,—"Without a cause." It is the word, too, which is employed in John 15:25., where Christ saith of the Jews, "They hated me without a cause." To be justified freely, then, is to be justified without a cause; without any holy qualities in the sinner, or any good works done by him, as the cause of the high privilege. As the innocent Lamb of God was hated without a cause, so the sinner considered as in himself is justified without a cause. There is no cause in him why he should be justified; nothing in or about him that God can consider as a qualification for such a blessing. In the act of justification, the sinner is considered by the impartial Judge as absolutely unworthy in himself. O how free, how immensely free, how gratuitous to you and me, is this justification! Such, indeed, as are acquitted and declared righteous are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; but, this instead of obscuring, serves rather to increase the glory of the grace displayed in it. The redemption which is in Christ is the honourable channel through which justifying grace flows to the sinner, Eph. 1:7. Hence is this illustrious expression of our Apostle,—"Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. 5:21. Here grace reigns in all its exalted dignity, in all its magnificence.

3d, The meritorious cause is the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ.—This is sometimes called the matter or ground of justification. It is not his essential righteousness that is here intended, for that is incommunicable, but his surety-righteousness; that righteousness consisting of the holiness of human nature, obedience of life, and satisfaction for sin, which Jesus our Representative and Surety fulfilled in our stead; that righteousness of which he himself spoke when he said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;" and of which Paul speaks when he says,

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This righteousness is altogether perfect; it is abundantly satisfactory to the high demands of the holy law. By this the penalty of the broken covenant has been fully endured, and the precepts of the law perfectly obeyed; by this Divine justice is completely satisfied, and the honour of the holy law highly magnified. None can be justified without a perfect righteousness. The use of such a righteousness is, not to make the believer meet for heaven, but to give him a title to heaven. By breaking the first covenant, justifying righteousness had left the world: "there was none righteous, no, not one." None of Adam's guilty race could perform a single duty corresponding to the purity and extent of the holy law, far less an obedience absolutely perfect, in parts, degrees, and continuance. But without such a righteousness, none of them could ever be entitled to eternal life. "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Jesus Christ, therefore, the Surety of elect sinners, yielded to the law as a covenant, in their room, a righteousness fully commensurate to its high requirements. Hence this is mentioned as his honourable and endearing name, "The Lord our Righteousness;" and he is introduced in Dan. 9:24., as about "to bring in everlasting righteousness." Now, this consummate righteousness is strictly meritorious of justification for the believing sinner. As it was fulfilled by Him who is both God and man, it strictly merits that eternal life for men which consists in the full enjoyment of God. Though the believer did not fulfil it in his own person; yet it is as much his for the purpose of justification, as if he had done so. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. 5:19.

This glorious righteousness becomes the believer's by a twofold right; the right of a free gift received, and the right of communion with Christ. It is his by the right of a free gift received. Hence we read of receiving the gift of righteousness, so as to reign in life. What we receive as a gift is as much our own as what we pay the highest price for. It is his, too, by right of communion with him who fulfilled it. The believer has real communion, or common interest

with Jesus in his righteousness, for his justification, Phil. 3:9. This righteousness is the sole meritorious cause of his title to life. None of the believer's own works are to be connected with it in the affair of justification. It is therefore styled "righteousness without works," Rom. 4:6. No works of any sort are to be joined with it in that view; neither the performance of rites of the ceremonial, nor of works of obedience to the precepts of the moral law; neither works performed before regeneration, nor good works performed after it. "Therefore we conclude," says Paul, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." "By grace are ye saved through faith; —not of works." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," &c. The apostle, in these passages, does not exclude some particular works merely; but works in general, duties of every kind. That obedience by which many are constituted righteous, is the obedience of one, and not of many. Paul clearly distinguishes between the righteousness by which he was justified, and all his own righteous deeds, Phil. 3:9. Add to this, that if our works be connected with Christ's righteousness, in the affair of justification, it will convert the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and will effectually obscure the lustre of justifying grace. Sooner, O self-righteous sinner, will you increase the brightness of the meridian sun by the feeble light of a candle, than increase the merit, the infinite merit of the Saviour's righteousness, by your poor, your polluted performances. If they cannot merit any good thing, how can they add to the merit of a Divine righteousness? Can they increase the value of that which is already infinite in value?

4th, The formal cause of a sinner's justification, or that by which the righteousness of Christ is made his, is its being imputed to him. It is graciously imputed to all who have believed through grace; that is, it is placed to their account. God accounts it unto them for their justification, as if they had fulfilled it in their own persons, and treats them accordingly. Nay, it is so effectually placed on their account, that they are called righteousness in the abstract, 2 Cor. 5:21. Believers are not only made righteous, but the righteousness of God in Christ. O amazing grace! O incomparable benignity! In

imputing this consummate righteousness, God does not reckon that the believer fulfilled it in his own person, for that would be a judgment not according to truth; but he accounts it to him for justification, as if he had fulfilled it personally. When the Psalmist, in Psalm 32:2., says, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," the apostle Paul explains it by saying, that he imputeth righteousness to him. "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works," Rom. 4:6. What daring impiety is it, then, to be avowedly offended with that expression, when it is used repeatedly in sacred Scripture? After the apostle had, in the 6th verse of the forecited chapter, said, that God "imputeth righteousness without works," he adds, in the 11th verse, "That righteousness might be imputed to them also;" and in the 24th verse, "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe," &c. As to the grounds of this imputation of righteousness to the believer, it is imputed to him on the surest grounds,—the ground of his federal union with Christ from eternity, and that of his vital union with him in time. The Lord Jesus as our Surety engaged from everlasting to fulfil this righteousness for us; he fulfilled it in our nature, the nature that was to be adorned in it, and his eternal Father declared his high approbation of it in our room. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable, Isa. 42:21.

It is so imputed, that none of the parties concerned can have any just cause of complaint: not the justice of God, for it is a satisfaction of infinite value, abundantly sufficient to compensate the infinite offence given to justice by sin; not the law, for the law is thereby magnified and made honourable; not the glorious Sponsor himself, for in fulfilling all righteousness, no man took his life from him: he had power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. Though innocent in himself, yet the law had a right to inflict punishment upon him, as one who was made sin, and undertook to satisfy for it. As God, he had an absolute right to dispose of his life which way he pleased; nor could his death occasion any loss to society, as he was

soon to rise again from the dead. Besides, he engaged to lay down his life, in order to accomplish the highest and noblest design of love to his people. The sinner to whom this glorious righteousness is imputed has no cause to complain, but rather to rejoice and say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness," Isa. 61:10. This is an imputation of the righteousness of Christ, not only in its effects but in itself. As Adam's first sin is imputed, so is this righteousness. The guilt itself of that sin was imputed, by which judgment hath come upon all men to condemnation; in like manner, this righteousness itself is imputed to the elect, in consequence of which the free gift comes upon them unto justification of life. Some one will ask, How can that obedience which Christ as man owed for himself, be imputed to others for justification? Answer: As his human nature had no personality of its own, but, from the moment it was assumed, subsisted in his Divine person, it owed no obedience for eternal life to itself. Another will say, How can the law require obedience from the believer, if he has a perfect obedience already imputed to him? Answer: The law as a covenant of works, cannot now require of him obedience for life; but the law as a rule of duty can require of him even perfect obedience from life.

5th, The final cause or end of justification is, that the glory of Divine justice, and of redeeming grace, may be illustriously displayed, and boasting on the part of the sinner entirely excluded.—Believing sinners are justified, chiefly that the glory of Divine justice may be displayed in the manner of their justification, "to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Rom. 3:26. In the justification of a sinner on account of a perfect righteousness imputed to him, the glory of infinite justice will eternally shine. They are justified, too, for a righteousness wrought out by another, that the glory of rich and sovereign grace may be displayed. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,

according to the riches of his grace," Eph. 1:6, 7. They are justified in this way also, that boasting may be for ever excluded. "By grace are ye saved through faith,—not of works, lest any man should boast." "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? nay; but by the law of faith," Rom. 3:27.

6th, Lastly, the instrumental causes of justification are two, the Gospel and faith. The Gospel is the external instrument of it; "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth; that is, the word of faith which we preach." In the gospel, the righteousness of Christ is brought near, and offered to condemned sinners for their justification. In the gospel the way of justification is clearly stated, and an offer of perfect righteousness for justification is made. "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off." "They who receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." The internal instrument is faith. "Being justified by faith," says Paul, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith," &c. "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Faith is not the proper condition of our justification; for we are not justified on account of our faith. It is not faith itself that is imputed to us; for it is evidently distinguished from that righteousness on account of which believers are justified. Hence we read of "the righteousness of God by faith;" and of "the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." Here righteousness for justification is plainly distinguished from faith. Were a sinner to be justified on account of his faith, he should be justified on account of it, either as it is a habit in his soul, or as it is an act or work performed by him. As a habit, it is a principle and a part of inherent holiness; and to be justified on account of it in this view, would be to be justified by inherent righteousness. Neither can he be justified by it as an act performed by him, as if his act of believing were accounted to him for righteousness; for then he would be justified by an imperfect righteousness, by a faith far from

being perfect. Besides, faith as an act is one of the works of the law: "This is the work of God, that ye believe," &c. It is a duty, a work required in the moral law. The very first commandment of this law is a command to believe: "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," &c. To be justified, then, by the act of faith would be to be justified by a work; a work commanded in the law, and performed by the sinner himself. But this is contrary to the express declarations of Scripture; for there all sorts of works, whether of the moral or ceremonial law, whether performed before or after conversion, are excluded from the affair of justification. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law," Gal. 2:16. Faith, then, does not justify as an act or work; for in the article of justification it is distinguished from works; but it justifies in these three respects: relatively, instrumentally, and objectively.

Faith justifies relatively. A sinner is not said to be justified for faith, but only by faith. Faith justifies in relation to Christ and his righteousness; justifies as it is a bond of that union with Jesus Christ, upon which the believing sinner has communion with him in his righteousness. It justifies instrumentally. It, and no other grace, is the instrument appointed in the eternal covenant, for applying the righteousness of Christ to the conscience. It is the very office of faith to appropriate and present this glorious righteousness as the only ground of title to justification. As the hand is said to nourish, because it is the instrument of applying food to the body; so faith justifies, as the hand or instrument of applying the Redeemer's righteousness to the soul. It also justifies objectively. It is not the act but the object; it is not faith itself, but the righteousness which it appropriates, and on which it relies, that justifies. A sinner is justified before God, not by the act of receiving, but by the righteousness received. When we read in Scripture that the faith of the believer is counted to him for righteousness, the meaning is, not that the act, but that the object of faith, is so

accounted to him: the righteousness on which it relies is accounted in law his righteousness. It is usual in the Scriptures often to put the act of the mind for the object on which it terminates. In 1 Tim. 1:1., Christ is called our hope; that is, the object of our hope; and in Heb. 6:18., believers are said "to lay hold upon the hope set before them," that is, the object of hope. When believers, then, are said to be justified by faith, the meaning is, by the object of faith; and when faith is said to be counted for righteousness, it is the object of it which is so counted. Add to this, if the believer were counted righteous for the sake of his faith, he might depend on his faith for justification; and then there would be as many righteousnesses as there would be of persons justified: but the righteousness by which many are justified is the obedience of One. Faith, then, justifies relatively, instrumentally, and objectively. But why is faith, rather than any other spiritual grace, thus said in Scripture to justify? Faith alone has been selected to be the instrument of justification, that the glory of redeeming grace might the more illustriously shine. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." It is the nature of faith, only to receive, but of the other graces only to give. It is the property of faith never to present itself as a condition, but to receive the spotless righteousness offered in the gospel as the only condition of a man's justification.

SERMON XI: JUSTIFICATION

"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."—ISA. 45:25.

III. I now go on to the third general head,—To consider the parts of justification. The constituent parts of a sinner's justification are these two,—the pardon of his sins, and the acceptance of him as righteous in the sight of God.

1. The pardon of sin is a part of justification.—"Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," Rom. 4:6, 7. When God pardons sin, he absolves the sinner from the condemnation of the violated law; He dissolves his obligation to suffer eternal wrath, denounced in the curse of the law; and that, on account of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ in his room. That there is forgiveness with God, is a truth plainly taught in the Scripture. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." The pardon of sin is a capital blessing of the covenant of grace. In Heb. 8:8–12. after several other blessings have been promised, Jehovah saith,—"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness," &c. This inestimable blessing is, in the sacred volume, described by a rich variety of expression. Is the guilty sinner compared to an insolvent debtor, owing ten thousand talents to the justice of God? His pardon is described by a blotting out of the boundless debt, Psal. 51:9. Is he a rebel against the King of kings, a rebel condemned to die? The remission of his sins is the absolving of him from the charge, and the remitting the penalty due for his crime. Is he represented as impure and loathsome? His forgiveness is said to be a covering of his sins, Psal. 32:1. Are his transgressions represented as clouds, dark luring clouds? The remission of them is described by blotting them out as

a thick cloud, so as no more to be seen, Isa. 44:22. This inestimable benefit is further represented by God's removing sins as far from us as the east is from the west; by his casting them behind his back; by remembering them no more; and by his casting them into the depths of the sea. This pardon is completely full. When a gracious God forgives sins, he forgives all sins. "I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me," Jer. 33:8. O what an invaluable, what a transcendently glorious blessing is this! All the sins of a believer are together and at once pardoned in his justification: his past and present sins are formally forgiven. "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." His future sins are forgiven too, by securing the not imputing of them, with respect to that guilt which is a liability to eternal wrath. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This pardon is not only complete, but irrevocable and eternal. The guilt of sin once taken away, can never recur again upon a justified person. "He that believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation," John 5:24. The sins which the pardoned sinner afterward commits may indeed provoke the Lord to suspend the sense of former pardon; but they will never make him revoke that pardon itself. Hence, saith Jehovah, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." The sentence of pardon, then, can never be revoked: the believer's security for the non-imputation of his future sins can never be lost. One will say, If this be so, why are believers taught to pray daily for the pardon of their new sins? Answer: We are not to imagine that as often as the believer commits, confesses, and bewails his new sins, God passes new acts of pardon; and therefore, when he prays for the pardon of sins lately committed, he prays that he may be delivered from the guilt of paternal anger, for this he daily contracts. He prays also that he may enjoy the sense or manifestation of his first pardon, which he is in danger of losing by the commission of additional sins. This pardon is absolutely free; it is suspended upon no works or conditions, to be performed by

impotent sinners. Paul was an eminent instance of the truth of this. He was pardoned and converted, when he was so far from performing any condition, that he was persecuting the church of Christ: and he informs us, that in him Christ showed forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe. Let no awakened sinner, then, be deterred from coming to Christ.

2d, The second part of justification is God's accepting a believing sinner as righteous in his sight.—When God justifies a sinner, he not merely absolves him from guilt or a liability to eternal death, but he pronounces him righteous, and as such, entitled to eternal life. He accepts him as righteous, and considers him as legally entitled to life. Hence it is called "the justification of life." O how superlatively valuable, how transcendently glorious, is this blessing! In his justification, the believer is not only declared innocent but righteous, yea, the righteousness of God in Christ. Were he only pardoned, and no more, he would indeed be innocent in legal estimation, as Adam was before he fell; he would be under no legal charge of guilt; but still he could have no legal title to eternal life. But in justification, he is declared not merely innocent, but righteous; not only secure from eternal death, but entitled to eternal life. Adam in his innocence had no right to life eternal, for he had not yet performed all that perfect obedience that was the condition of it; but a sinner the moment he is justified has an irreversible title to it, because in his justification he is pronounced not only innocent, but righteous in law. The passive obedience or death of Christ, his adorable Surety, is imputed to him, and this secures him from eternal death; and the active obedience of Christ to the precepts of the law is placed to his account, and this affords him a legal title to everlasting life. Or, to be more explicit: it is the satisfactory death of the Lord Jesus imputed that secures a believer from eternal wrath; it is the perfect holiness of his human nature imputed that entitles him to be presented to God holy, and without spot; and it is the perfect obedience of his life imputed that founds his title to the consummation of eternal life. Though these are not to be separated, yet they may, and ought to be, distinguished from

each other. Among men, a criminal may be pardoned, and yet never admitted to favour with his offended sovereign; but this is not the manner of our gracious God. When He takes away all iniquity, he at the same time receives graciously: he receives into special favour, and accepts in the Beloved. Rejoice then, believer; you stand entitled to life, eternal life; and as it would be unjust to deprive you of your right, the righteous Lord neither can nor will do it. Justice now pleads for you, as well as mercy. This is owing to nothing in you, but to the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to you.

IV. Under the fourth general head, I was to consider the manner of a sinner's justification.

The elect were justified,

1. Intentionally, or in the absolute purpose and decree of God. It is called "the justification of life." It is legal life, in opposition to legal death under the condemning sentence of the violated law, and as such is a constituent part of eternal life. Now, we are told that eternal life was promised and given to the elect in Christ, or to Christ as Representative of the elect, before the world began. "In hope of eternal life, that God who cannot lie promised before the world began." "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Hence justification, as a fundamental part of that life, was according to the purpose and grace of God, promised and given to the elect in Christ, before the world began. It was promised to Christ their Representative, in their name, upon condition of his fulfilling all righteousness for them in time. Thus on the ground of their federal union with their adorable Surety, they were justified according to the purpose and grace of God, even from eternity. Hence is this cheering declaration, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," Isa. 53:6. The Father, in making the covenant of grace, laid the guilt of the iniquities of all the elect upon him, and that from everlasting. But this load of guilt could not be considered

as transferred to him, without being in some sense transferred from them. The same delightful truth is hinted in the first promise, Gen. 3:15. There the elect are comprehended under the seed of the woman; and are represented in Christ their Head, as the enemies and conquerors of Satan. Now this presupposes the suretiship of Christ, and the guilt of their iniquities already laid on him. It implies that in the decree of God they are set free from the guilt of sin; otherwise they could not be represented as delivered from the dominion either of sin or of Satan. That promise implied a declaration, that on account of the suretiship of Jesus Christ, God never intended to execute the sentence of the broken law upon any of his chosen. Whenever a surety is admitted, the principal debtor is understood, intentionally at least, to be free from obligation to advance the debt.

2d, They were justified virtually, in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.—When Jesus died, he died in order to satisfy Divine justice, as Surety of the elect: when he rose, he rose as their Representative, and in him they all virtually arose. In his resurrection, he was publicly and solemnly acquitted; and he received a full discharge from the hand of his righteous Father, for the debt which he engaged to clear. Hence the Father is represented as the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; and as having raised him up, loosing the pains of death. When vindictive justice had now no more to demand from him, his Father, as an evidence thereof, knocked off the fetters of the grave, and released him from that prison-house. "He was taken from prison and from judgment," Isa. 53:8. His righteous Father, having accepted the payment of the infinite debt at his hands, solemnly absolved him at his resurrection from every judicial charge. "Then was he justified in the Spirit: He was raised again for our justification." As he was one with the elect in law, his justification was fundamentally and virtually their justification. They were crucified with him in his death, and justified with him in his resurrection. Then were they all virtually absolved from guilt, and virtually accepted as righteous. Then it was

that God declared that full satisfaction was given by Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19. Then he reconciled to himself the elect world, and declared that he would not impute their trespasses to them for condemnation. Having rent the veil of the temple, and torn the handwriting of ordinances, he took it out of the way. And is not tearing the hand-writing, or the bond, an evidence that the creditor has no intention to demand payment from the principal debtor?

3d, They are justified actually, when they apply this justification, each of them to himself by faith.—"All who believe are justified from all things;" that is, are justified actually, so as to have the sentence declared, both in the court of heaven and in the court of conscience. Though our adorable Surety has merited pardon of sin, and a title to life, for all his elect, so that God hath already declared that the condemning sentence shall never be executed upon them; yet, they are not actually pardoned nor entitled to life till they apply by faith this declaration to themselves, and so receive the remission of sins. Notwithstanding their intentional and virtual justification in Christ their Representative, they are still considered as children of wrath, as under condemnation, Gal. 3:10. till they flee from the curse of the law to the promise of the covenant of grace. When they have through the Spirit applied Christ and the blessing of justification to themselves in particular, and have presented, in the hand of faith, his perfect righteousness to God, as the sole ground of their title to eternal life, they are justified actually. They are not only absolved from guilt and adjudged to life, but declared to be so, declared righteous in the sight of God. Jesus Christ merited a right to eternal life for all his spiritual seed, so that none of them can perish; but this right is not particularly applied to them, until they believe, and be vitally united to him. The sentence is not judicially declared, not does it terminate in the sinner's conscience, till he present that righteousness to God the Judge for acquittance. He must first plead the complete satisfaction of his Divine Surety at the

bar of the court of heaven, before the sentence can be intimated in the court of conscience.

Lastly, They shall be publicly justified at the last day.—Then they shall be solemnly absolved before an assembled world, and have their title to eternal life publicly proclaimed. In that day, judgment shall be passed, an irreversible sentence shall be pronounced on them. On this account, it is called the day of judgment, Matth. 12:36. In that day, the good works of the saints shall be proclaimed, not as the ground of their justification, but as evidences of their interest in the spotless righteousness of Christ, and of their title to life eternal. This, the sentence of the righteous Judge implies,—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." It is only in union with Christ that men are blessed; that they inherit, or possess as sons by hereditary right, the kingdom. Thus, the elect shall be justified publicly, and be declared heirs of an eternal inheritance. Now, the sentence of acquitment and of title to life, is pronounced only in the court of heaven, and to the believer himself; but in that day, it shall be declared before all kindreds and nations. O what triumphant, what transporting joy, will fill the hearts of that redeemed company, when, clothed with the white robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, they shall enter the heavenly sanctuary, no more to go out! "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace."

Thus the elect are justified.—They were justified in the day of eternity, before the world began; in the day of the Redeemer's resurrection; in the day of believing; and in the last day.—In the day of eternity, they were justified intentionally; in the day of the Saviour's resurrection, virtually, or fundamentally; in the day of believing, actually, or declaratively; and at the last day, publicly and solemnly. In the day of eternity, their justification was actually secured; in the day of Christ's resurrection, it was actually merited; in the day of believing, it is actually applied to the conscience; and in the day of judgment it shall be actually declared in the most public and solemn manner. From eternity, they were justified in the

purpose of God; at Christ's resurrection, they were justified in the Son of God as their representative; at the time of their beginning to believe, they are justified in the court of God, the court of heaven, and the court of conscience; and in the last day, they shall be justified publicly at Christ's august tribunal.

V. I proceed now to the fifth general head,—To consider that particular effect or consequence of justification which is mentioned in the text,—"And shall glory."

As the seed of Israel are justified in the Lord Jesus, in him shall they glory. As they receive all their righteousness from Him, they ascribe all the glory of their justification and salvation to him. They make their boast in him, and not in themselves; they glory in his righteousness, and not in their own. This they do with all their heart. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord," Psal. 34:2. Such as glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, glory in all that he is, and in all that he hath: they glory even in his cross, Gal. 6:14. Such as are under the curse of the violated law, glory in that which is their shame,—their own shame; but they who are justified, glory in that on which their glorious Redeemer submitted to shame. In him shall they glory; they shall glory in union and communion with him, and in conformity to him. They shall glory in his righteousness, and glory in his grace, glory in his offices, and glory in his fulness. But should any ask, What is it to glory in the Lord Jesus, as made unto us righteousness for justification? I would answer, It is,

1. To delight and rejoice in him as Jehovah our Righteousness. "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." "Delight thyself in the Lord." They who are justified, instead of being displeased or offended with being necessitated to rely on the righteousness of Christ Jesus, rather glory in it. They are so highly pleased with that self-abasing method of justification, that they rest in it with sweet complacency; and it is ground of sorrow to them that they do not delight more in it.

2. It is to esteem the Lord Jesus very highly, and to count him most excellent and glorious.—There are some who appear to esteem him as a Teacher and a King, who are far from regarding him as the Lord their Righteousness: but such as are justified say, each for himself, "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord," &c. Do you, believer, highly esteem him, and desire to boast of your relation to him? Would not you boast, if you were related or allied to an earthly potentate? How much more should you do so when you are joined in a marriage covenant to the Prince of the kings of the earth!

3. It is to commend him to others, or to recommend him by words and by works.—It is to recommend his person, and say, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand:" to commend his righteousness, and say, "Other foundation can no man lay:" to recommend his grace, and thus exclaim, How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! to commend his word, and say, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." To glory in the Lord Jesus is to commend him by a holy conversation. This is the best way to recommend him.

4. Finally, It is to publish the great things which Christ hath done for us; to recount his favours to us, and say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," Psal. 66:16. These particulars are all implied in our glorying in the Lord Jesus.—I shall further observe, that as this exercise is the subject of a command, so it is matter of promise. In the law it is said, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." In the gospel it is promised that, "in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

From what has been said, we may infer the inexpressibly great happiness of the spiritual Israel of God: they are justified in the Lord Jesus Christ. Happy are you whom Christ apprehends by his grace, supplies with light and life, adopts into his family, humbles by his power, conforms to his image, instructs by his gracious visits,

and honours with his service; but thrice happy whom he justifies freely by his grace! If it be a happiness to be saved from a sentence of death,—eternal death, you who are justified are happy. If it be felicity to be declared righteous before God, and entitled to eternal life, according to the law as a covenant, you are blessed.

Have you who are justified, all your iniquities pardoned, freely, fully, and irreversibly pardoned? Be very thankful for such abundant mercy, such undeserved favour. Say, as the holy psalmist did, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Your pardon is irreversible. If Satan, or an unbelieving heart, impute blame to God for writing it, he will say, and for ever abide by it, "What I have written, I have written." It is a full, a free, an irreversible, an absolute pardon; and your gracious God is said to give it with his whole soul. How inexpressibly sweet is such a pardon! O, believer, praise your merciful, your forgiving God. There is forgiveness with Him that he may be feared, and forgiveness that he may be praised.

From what has been stated, we may learn a satisfactory answer to this question, How shall man be just with God? How can an unrighteous person be accepted as righteous, by an infinitely righteous Judge? It cannot possibly be on the ground of his own performances; for though he should even from the moment of his birth till that of his death, obey the law perfectly, it could never satisfy for the sin in which he was born. It is by the consummate righteousness of Jesus Christ received by faith, that he can be just in the eye of the law, or the sight of God.

Hence learn, that the righteousness which is the ground of a sinner's justification, is not the believer's because it is imputed to him; but it is imputed to him because it is already his. In God's imputation of it, he reckons it to be what it is already, the believer's justifying righteousness. It is the believer's, in virtue of his legal union with Christ from eternity, and of his vital union with him in time.

See also the glorious design of Jehovah in imputing the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ to his spiritual seed. It is that you, believer, may live; may have a legal right to spiritual, temporal, and eternal life. Your sin was imputed to Christ that he might die: his righteousness is imputed to you that you may live. Sin deserves death; righteousness merits life. He was made sin, sin committed by man; you are made righteousness, the righteousness of God in him. He died for you, that you might live to him; that you should not henceforth live to yourself, but to him.

Hence we may infer, that whenever the believing sinner is actually justified, the body of sin in him is actually condemned. As soon as Adam, that leading sinner, was condemned, the sentence began to be executed upon him; he began to die spiritually. In like manner, when the body of sin begins to be actually condemned in any of Christ's spiritual seed, the sentence begins to be executed upon it in him. Then it begins to be mortified and to pine away. Are you actually justified, believer? The body of sin is actually condemned in you, and the sentence is begun to be actually executed. Christ having condemned sin in the flesh, was justified in the spirit. When, therefore, you apply him and justification in him to yourself, you apply, at the same time, the sentence of condemnation to the body of sin in you. No wonder if indwelling sin be so irritated by this treatment as to distress you more than before, and to dispose you often, in the bitterness of your soul, to apply the same condemning sentence to yourself.

We may infer also the excellence of true faith: it is the great instrument of applying justification to the believing sinner. Though you, believer, are not justified for faith, yet you are justified by faith, by the instrumentality of faith. It is the office of faith to receive the forgiveness of sin, and to apply this inestimable blessing to the awakened conscience. The grace of faith humbles itself so low as to give nothing, but to take everything; and God highly exalts it above all other spiritual graces, in the affair of justification. One reason why unbelief is the most heinous sin is, that it directly strikes

against the glory of God, in the method of a sinner's justification and salvation.

We may see hence an evidence of actual justification, namely, a rejoicing or glorying in Christ Jesus, and in the method of justification through him. Some one will say, "I fear I am not justified, for I do not rejoice as I ought to do in that glorious device. I think, instead of glorying in it, that I am more displeased with it sometimes than ever." Is this your grievance, and your heaviest burden, from which you long earnestly to be delivered? To esteem the Lord Jesus and that glorious device, is another evidence. He who is actually justified, esteems the Lord Jesus above all other Saviours, and his righteousness beyond every other righteousness. David's soldiers said to him, "Now thou art worth ten thousand of us;" and Christ's redeemed, in the day of believing, say of Him, "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."

Hence learn the meaning of these expressions in the thirty-second Psalm, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," and "blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The first expresses the way in which God in justification pardons past and present sins; and the last, the way in which he forgives the sins, that the justified person afterwards commits: he pardons the first formally, and the last by securing the non-imputation of them.

From what has been said, the exercised Christian may see how to treat the law as a covenant, when it presents its enditement to his conscience, and demands eternal death. He is to send it to Jesus his responsible Surety, and it cannot refuse to go. He is united to Christ as his glorious Husband, and justified in him: and whatever claim the law may have upon him, he is to refer it to his Husband. It is the husband that pays the debts.

Hence, we may see the reason why the believer's good works are accepted by God: it is neither for their sake, nor his sake, but for Christ's righteousness' sake; it is because the believer's person is

accepted in Christ the Beloved, in whom he is declared righteous. In the covenant of grace, acceptance begins with the person, and passes on to the work.

See hence, how brightly the glory of God's justice and law shines in a sinner's justification. In this method of justification, his justice and law are glorified both actively and passively. Had we been justified for perfect obedience performed by the first Adam, law and justice had only been glorified actively: if we had been sent to hell, to endure the eternal execution of the condemning sentence, these would only have been glorified passively. But, in the justification of a sinner, by the active and passive obedience of Christ, they are glorified in both of these ways.

How illustriously does the glory of Divine grace shine in justification! With respect to God, it is an act of pure unmixed favour; respecting the sinner, it is absolutely free, suspended on no proper condition to be performed by him. What is there here to the condemned sinner but grace, infinite riches of grace! Grace is displayed in devising and providing a justifying righteousness; in accepting it, in imputing it, and in giving faith to receive it.

This subject suggests grounds of trial.—Are you justified or not? I do not ask if you justify yourselves, or if men justify you; but does God justify you? If you are guilty but of one sin, and have not repented, you are as certainly condemned as if you had been guilty of ten thousand. The chains of natural corruption with which you are girded declare you to be still under condemnation. Now, have you seen and felt yourselves in a state of condemnation? Justification is a judiciary sentence, and before you can expect it, you must appear in court, and answer to your libel. Do you see your want of a perfect righteousness, the insufficiency of your own performances, and at the same time, the gift, suitableness, and sufficiency of the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Do you trust cordially in Christ as Jehovah your Righteousness? and are you humbled for your unbelief? Have you ever been grieved and

troubled for the legal propensity of your heart? Is your self-righteous temper a burden, and a sore grievance to you? If so, it is a favourable sign. Do you rely on Christ's righteousness for all your title to eternal life? Believe more, trust more; for they who believe are justified from all things, &c.

Let secure sinners consider, that every sermon addressed to them is a summons put into their hands, to answer for their innumerable sins at the bar of that omniscient God whose eyes are as a flame of fire. What consternation will seize you, O condemned and impenitent sinner, when you shall see an infinitely just Judge upon his great white throne; when you shall find a strict law before you, and an accusing conscience within! Like Shimei you have broken through your rules of confinement, and are men of death. Be persuaded that you cannot be justified but on the ground of a perfect righteousness; and you have no such righteousness of your own. Rely, then, for the justification of life on the surety-righteousness of the Lord Jesus, freely offered in the Gospel to you. Renew frequently your actings of faith on Him as your righteousness and strength, and glory in his finished work.

SERMON XII: SANCTIFICATION

"By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ-once for all."—HEB. 10:10.

This epistle was originally directed to Jewish believers, who were still much attached to the ceremonial law. In the 7th verse of this chapter, the apostle, having pointed out the insufficiency of the priesthood and sacrifices under the law, recommends and extols the

priesthood of Jesus Christ. He recommends him as the great High Priest over the house of God, and his atonement as the true atoning sacrifice which gave that full satisfaction to Divine justice which none of the legal sacrifices could give. He introduces him as addressing his eternal Father in the council of peace thus, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." These words the apostle quoted from the 40th Psalm, and they excellently suit his design in this place. The sacrifices under the law must be considered as totally insufficient, either to satisfy the justice of God, or the conscience of a convinced sinner; for God the Father is represented as not accepting of them for that purpose, or as taking no pleasure in them. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ must be preferred to them, and be regarded as fully sufficient for those important objects; for when he covenanted to offer it, he engaged with infinite willingness: He said, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God." This engagement was written in the volume of the book, or, at the head of the roll of eternity, the book of life. It is the principal article in that book, as well as in the volume of prophecy. Besides, God prepared a body for Christ, which he might offer up; and his offering of himself was in obedience to his Father's will. "I delight to do thy will, O God." By our Lord's expressing himself to his Father in that manner, the apostle informs the believing Hebrews, "that he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second;" that is, he taketh away the first priesthood, that he may establish his own as the second. He evidently shows that the former appointment of God's will respecting the typical sacrifices is to be no longer in force, that he may establish the second, or the last mentioned will respecting the new dispensation of the covenant, and the sacrifice which he came to offer for sinful men. It was the will of God, of God essentially considered, in the Person of the Father, that his eternal Son should stand in the place of elect sinners, and give complete satisfaction for their sins. On this great object the heart of the whole glorious Trinity was set from all eternity. Accordingly, Christ not only revealed but fulfilled this will, in his obedience unto death. Now, in our text we are told, that it is by this will, as fulfilled by Jesus Christ, that believing sinners

are sanctified. "By the which will we are sanctified;" as if the apostle had said, it is in consequence of this will and appointment of God, as fulfilled by Christ, that we who believe are sanctified; that we are sanctified not ceremonially, as the Israelites were by the typical sacrifices under the law, which could only sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; but effectually and substantially, in our actual deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, and our separation to the service and enjoyment of the blessed God. The apostle adds, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. "As the sacrifice of Christ's human nature, of which his body was the visible part, was once offered, so it is on account of it, and by virtue derived from it, that any sinners of mankind are sanctified.

In discoursing from the words before us, it is, through Divine aid, proposed, I. To speak in general of the sanctification of believers; II. Of habitual; III. Of actual sanctification; IV. Of the difference between it and justification; and lastly, Of the ends and uses of it.

I. First, then, I am to speak in general of the sanctification of believers.

And here, in the 1st place, to sanctify has in Scripture various significations. It signifies to acknowledge that to be holy which was holy before. Thus, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, is to acknowledge him to be infinitely holy, and to celebrate with all our heart the praises of his holiness. It is to pray as Christ taught his disciples, that his name may be hallowed. It also signifies, to separate any person or thing to a holy use, Exod. 13:2. and John 10:36. "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest?" &c. The Father sanctified, that is, he set him apart, and ordained him to the offices of Mediator. In this sense it is true also of the saints. They are separated from the world that lieth in wickedness. It signifies to dedicate to God and his service. Thus the altar, temple, priests, and sacred utensils, were sanctified; that is, were dedicated to God and his worship. In a

similar manner, the elect are sanctified; they are dedicated to God; they are a peculiar treasure to God, above all people: He hath chosen them to be his peculiar treasure; a treasure, as the original word imports, which he impressed with his seal; his excellent possession, which he claims as his own, and which he glories in. It also signifies to make one a saint, or a holy person; to transform him from the power and pollution of sin into the pure and spotless image of the second Adam; to cleanse him from spiritual impurity, and make him holy in heart and in life. Thus the apostle Paul understands it, when he prays for the Thessalonians, that the very God of peace may sanctify them wholly, 1 Thess. 5:23.

2d, The Author of sanctification is God alone. "That they may know that I am the Lord that sanctifieth them," Ezek. 20:12. Nothing can be the source of created holiness but that which is uncreated. The sinner himself cannot be the author of it: he can indeed pollute, but he cannot purify himself. The law commands us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to make to ourselves a new or a clean heart; but the law is the rule of our duty, and not the measure of our ability. To sanctify a sinner is the work of God, and is a greater work than to create a world. It is the work of a whole Trinity of Divine Persons. As all the Persons of the glorious Trinity were jointly engaged in making man a living creature, so they jointly concur in making him a new creature. This is effected by God the Father, Jude 1., by God the Son, Eph. 5:26., and by God the Holy Spirit. Hence we read of the sanctification of the Spirit, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Although, in the economy of grace, sanctification is more immediately ascribed to the Holy Spirit, yet this is not to be so understood as if the Spirit were more immediately concerned in it than the Father and the Son. The powerful influence by which believing sinners are sanctified is common to all the Persons in the Godhead, and is exerted by each of them equally. The one does not accomplish this work by the other, as an instrument. As the Spirit follows the Son in their order of subsistence, so he follows him in the order of operation. As sanctification, therefore, follows upon the righteousness and blood

of the Son, so it is, by special appropriation, attributed to the operation of the Spirit, as the Spirit of the Son.

3d, As to the subjects of sanctification, they who are sanctified are elect sinners. This inestimable blessing belongs to them and to none else. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. 2:13. And in another place, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," &c. Others put a new face on the old man, and assume the appearance of being sanctified; but the objects of everlasting love are the only persons that put on the new man. Should one ask, What it is in the elect that is sanctified? I answer, It is the whole man, including all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; or, as our apostle expresses it, the whole spirit, and soul, and body, 1 Thess. 5:23. By the spirit we are here to understand the mind, that leading faculty in man, and by the soul, the affections and sensitive appetites. By the body is meant the receptacle of the spirit and soul. The soul in all its faculties is the subject of sanctification. They were all polluted with sin, and are all renewed after the image of the second Adam, in righteousness and true holiness. Gracious habits are infused and advanced, and the power and pollution of indwelling sin are gradually removed. The understanding is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him who created it, and is "filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." The will, that imperious faculty, receives a new bent or propensity to holiness. Although no punishments were threatened for sin, and no rewards of grace promised to such as are holy, the sanctified will would be averse from sin, however pleasant and profitable, and be inclined to universal holiness. The affections are also sanctified. They were formerly unholy, but now are holy; formerly disordered and tumultuous, but now are orderly, and calmly resigned to the government of the blessed Spirit. The memory and conscience, too, partake of the saving change. The body is rendered a temple for the Holy Spirit, and the members of it are sanctified in respect of use. They are no more instruments of

unrighteousness unto sin, but instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Thus the whole man is the subject of sanctification. As in union with the first Adam, the old man possessed every faculty and member, so, when united to the second Adam, the new man in his turn possesses the whole. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. 5:23. Though, however, every part be sanctified, yet no part is perfectly sanctified in this world. There is no spiritual grace implanted without having corruption in the same faculty struggling against it, Gal. 5:17.

4th, Sanctification is both a privilege and a duty.—It is a privilege, as graciously promised in the Gospel. "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. 36:27. It is a duty, as required in the law. "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit: purify your hearts, ye double-minded." It is a privilege, for it is purchased for us, given to us, and wrought in us by the sanctifying Spirit. As a duty, we study it, and attain to higher degrees of it. We daily receive it out of the fulness of Christ, by faith in his death, resurrection, and promise. As a privilege, it comprehends all the graces of the Spirit, as so many gracious habits implanted in the soul, and ability for the present exercise of them: and indeed, without fresh supplies communicated from the fulness of Christ, the Head of sanctifying influences, no habits of grace, however strong, can be excited to the smallest degree of exercise. As a duty, sanctification includes the exercise of spiritual graces, in the performance of all our duties.

5th, The causes of sanctification are various.—The impulsive cause of it is the sovereign grace, or good pleasure of God, Phil. 2:13.; Tit. 3:5. The blessing of sanctification is of more value than all the treasures and kingdoms of the world, and yet it is freely bestowed. God sanctifies none because of any previous good qualities in them, for before it they have none; but merely from his sovereign grace. Nay, he often overlooks persons of the sweetest natural tempers,

and bestows sanctifying grace on the most rugged and stubborn. O the freeness of his sovereign grace! As the sun diffuses natural light without reward, so the light of grace is bestowed on the chief of sinners freely, without any cause in them. And that the glory of sovereign grace may the more illustriously shine, the Lord suffers the sinner sometimes to proceed extraordinary lengths in sin, before he begins to sanctify him. Manasseh, the thief on the cross, and Paul, are eminent instances of this. The meritorious cause of it is the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. 13:12. This infinitely precious blood, as it has an atoning, so it has a sanctifying efficacy. It purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.—It has also a regulating cause, namely, the holy law. It is denominated holiness, because it has a resemblance to the holy nature of God, and righteousness, because it corresponds to his law as a rule of duty. The instrumental cause of it is saving faith, Acts 15:9.

6th, It is initial and progressive.—Initial sanctification is the same as regeneration, or the renewing in effectual calling. It is the sowing of the spiritual seed of grace, in the heart of the dead sinner. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him," 1 John 3:9. In initial sanctification, the Spirit of Christ enters the heart with all his train of spiritual graces, and implants them there. He introduces spiritual life, impresses the soul with the image of God, creates new inclinations and motions, or, in other words, forms the new creature. This he does in an instant. How inexpressibly happy is the soul that is favoured with it! In this initial sanctification, the sinner is entirely passive.—Progressive sanctification is the Holy Spirit's carrying on the work already begun, till he brings it to perfection. Initial sanctification introduces a perfection of the parts of the new creature; progressive, is the gradual advancing of each of those parts to perfection, till this new creature grows to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. In progressive sanctification, the body of sin is

more and more mortified; the image of Satan is more and more defaced; the graces of the Holy Spirit are gradually strengthened; and the image of the second Adam is more distinctly expressed: the soul's aversion from evil increases, and its inclination to good becomes more universal. The Holy Spirit, not only preserves the habits of implanted grace, as so many sparks of fire in the midst of an ocean, but quickens them for exercise, and by daily communications from the fulness of Christ, strengthens, and in due time renders them perfect. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me."

7th, It is a native consequence of union with the second Adam, of justification, reconciliation, and adoption.—It is a fruit of vital union with Christ. By vital union with him, we become members of his mystical body, of that body to which he is united, as the glorious Head of sanctifying influences; but as the head is holy, the members must be holy also. Besides, they who are united to Christ are in him; but all who are in Christ are sanctified. "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus," 1 Cor. 1:2. In virtue of this union, the believer lives in Christ, and Christ in him: he partakes of the same Spirit that dwells in Christ.—It is a necessary fruit of justification, and inseparably connected with it. It is connected with it in the decree and promise of God, in the offices of Christ, and the design of his obedience unto death. When the blood of Christ is sprinkled on our conscience for justification, it has a special efficacy for sanctification. It purges the conscience from dead works, and then the believing sinner is enabled to serve the living God. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The sprinkling, or application of the blood of Jesus, has a sanctifying efficacy; for it removes the curse of the law which is the strength of sin, and which hinders the acceptance, both of the sinner's person and performances. When this is done, the dominion of sin is taken away: its power and pollution begin to be gradually removed. Hence are these reviving expressions; "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,—that we might receive the

adoption of sons, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.—It is also a fruit of reconciliation. No sooner does the sinner begin to have peace with God in Christ, as one reconciled to him, than a way of free communication is opened between Christ the head of influences, and his soul. Besides, the sanctifying efficacy of the blood of Christ arises from its atoning or pacifying virtue, Heb. 9:14. It necessarily follows adoption. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. 8:29.

8th, Sanctification, instead of being a proper condition, is a part of salvation.—Inherent holiness in the saints gives them neither a meritorious nor a pactitious title to eternal life; but is itself a necessary part of that life to which the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed gives all the title. Salvation signifies not only spiritual safety, but health: now sanctification is the very health of the soul. When the blessed Spirit sanctifies, he heals the sinful soul. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him;" "I will heal their backsliding, and will love them freely."

9th, Sanctification is a blessing inexpressibly excellent.—Next to the glory of God, it is the chief end of all the precepts of the law as a rule of life, and the great design of all the promises of the Gospel, 2 Cor. 7:1. It is the end of the almighty operations of the Holy Spirit, both on the Head and on the members; the end of all the mysterious dispensations of Providence, both to the church and the world, Isa. 27:9.; the end also of all the offices of Christ. Was he set up from everlasting to be a Saviour? It was that he might save his people from their sins. Is he the Prophet and Messenger of the covenant? It is that he may give his people an understanding to know him that is true. Is he a sacrificing and interceding Priest? It is that he may sanctify the people with his own blood. Is he the King of Zion? He is so, that he may slay our enmity to God, and subdue us to himself. Are we chosen in him to life eternal? It is that we

should be holy, and without blame before him. It is the end of our effectual vocation, 2 Tim. 1:9.; of our justification, Rom. 6:14.; and of our adoption. It is the most important of all the Christian's privileges.

II. Under the second general head I was to discourse a little of habitual sanctification.—Sanctification is properly distinguished into habitual and actual. Habitual sanctification is a renovation in the whole man after the image of God. It is the renovation, not so much of the life as of the nature; and it produces habitual holiness in the soul.

1st, To be sanctified in this sense is to be renewed: it is to have a renewed nature, or, as an apostle expresses it, to be renewed in the spirit of the mind. Sanctification is much more than a change of life; it is a renovation of the nature. Though the substance of the soul is not renewed, its qualities are rendered new: "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." There is a difference between the renewing of the heart in effectual calling, and the renewing of it in sanctification. The renewing in effectual calling is only a begun renovation, consisting in the implantation of graces, or in sowing the seed of grace: the renewing in sanctification is a gradual renovation, consisting in the Spirit's watering the seed of grace, and causing it to grow. In the former, he begins; in the latter, he continues to renew: in that he infuses principles of grace; in this, he strengthens them. "We are saved, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. 3:5. To renew is to take away what is old, and to fill its room with what is new.

2d, It is to be renewed in the whole man; in all the powers of the soul, and all the members of the body.—In sanctification, the faculties of the soul are gradually renewed: The understanding is renewed in knowledge. The time was when the understanding was involved in thick darkness; was so grossly ignorant of Divine truth as to be darkness itself; was not only blind, but in love with

blindness; not only ignorant, but unwilling, as well as unable to know. This was depravity and misery indeed. But the case is now happily altered; this leading faculty is not merely opened to apprehend spiritual things, but is enlightened, Eph. 1:18. A new and spiritual light shines into it with increasing brightness, in which the believer will see the things of Christ in their own beauty, and behold in them the manifold wisdom of God. He will now see the truth as it is in Jesus, and see it so as to feel the power of it penetrating the very centre of his soul, transforming it into the Divine image. He now sees nothing in the promise but what is agreeable to him; nothing in the precept that he chooses to alter; and nothing in holiness but what is inexpressibly attracting. Thus he is gradually filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.—The will also is gradually renewed. Formerly this faculty was totally averse from all that is spiritually good, and strongly inclined to all evil; inclined to it in so high a degree, that every imagination of the heart was only evil, and that continually; in such a degree, that it was the more impelled to what is evil and forbidden, merely because it was forbidden. But now when it is renewed, it is irreconcilably averse from sin, and strongly inclined to holiness. The enlightened understanding now represents to it the blessings of the new covenant, as good things greatly to be desired; and it cheerfully consents to receive them. Its great ambition now is to be swallowed up in the will of God, and to be so conformed to him as to have the same inclinations, and the same aversions. Reader, is your want of more resignation to the will of God's purpose, precept, and providence, a grievous and heavy burden to you? If it be, it is a favourable sign.—The affections and the other inferior faculties are also renewed. Formerly the affections were deeply depraved; they were not only so fixed upon things carnal and sinful as to exhaust their vigour on them, but they rushed headlong on such things, scorning to be guided by the dictates of the understanding. Well, then, does an apostle call them "vile affections." They eagerly lusted after sinful gratifications, and, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cried, "Give, give." In Micah 7:3. we thus read, in the original, "Both hands are upon evil, that they

may do it well." Ah, how depraved, how miserable, is such a soul! Now, in sanctification, they are gradually renewed; they are regulated and exalted; their tumult subsides by degrees; and they are attracted by spiritual objects. They resign themselves to be governed in their exercise by the Holy Spirit. Instead of rushing after earthly and sinful objects, they now suffer themselves to be led by the holy commandment. In so far as they are renewed, they do not so much as desire that any thing that the Lord hath done or said, should be done or said otherwise than it is. Who that has the least degree of spiritual wisdom would not desire to be thus inclined?

The members of the body have communion with the powers of the soul in this renovation. And as this is the case, they are not only restrained from obstructing the soul in the exercise of grace, but are all ready to serve the Lord, and be active for his glory. They yield themselves not merely as weapons to fight in opposition to the prince of darkness, but as instruments of righteousness to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. The eyes yield themselves readily, to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; the ears, to hear his word; and the tongue to celebrate his praise and proclaim his sovereign grace.

3d, The immediate result of being renewed in the whole man, is, the new man or new creature.—"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." By the new man is meant that new and holy nature which is communicated to the believer in sanctification. As the corruption of nature is called the old man, because it depraves all the faculties and members of the man, so, the holiness communicated in sanctification is styled the new man, because it occupies and ennobles the whole man. It may be called the new man also, because it is rare and attracting; new things are often attracting; and because it succeeds the old man, and occupies his

place in the soul. To put on this new man, is daily to derive increasing degrees of holiness from the fulness of Christ.

4th, This new man is formed according to the image of him who is God and man, the man Christ Jesus.—The old man is after the image of the first Adam: the new man is according to that of the second, the Lord from heaven. As the greater part of our misery consisted in receiving the deformed image of fallen Adam, and in it losing the image of God, so the highest part of the happiness of believers lies in being formed after the image of the second Adam, and of God in him. Accordingly, when the new man is formed in the soul, he is formed according to the image of the heavenly Adam, who is God and man. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The image of the last Adam is the image of God, the Triune God; for he is the express image of the Father's person; and this image chiefly consists of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The new creature, then, as formed according to this image, consists of knowledge in the understanding, righteousness in the will, and holiness in the affections. When a sinner is renewed after this image, he is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him who is the Light of the world; in righteousness, according to the image of him who is the end of the law for righteousness; and in holiness, after his image who is infinitely holy as God, and perfectly holy as man. The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; and therefore, when a sinner is born again, he is created in Christ Jesus, and adorned in all his faculties with the image of God, the image both of the Father and of the Son. As this image was fully expressed on the human nature of Christ, by virtue of its union with his Divine nature, so it is expressed on all who believe, immediately from Him, by virtue of union with his adorable Person. And as the image of the invisible God in his human nature depended on the personal union, so this image in all who believe, depends on the mystical union. Hence, Christ is said to be formed in his saints. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," Gal. 4:19. When the image of God was defaced by

sin, it could not be again expressed on man, unless he who is the image of the invisible God had assumed the image or likeness of sinful man, and endured not only the reproach of men, but the infinite wrath of God. Hence the apostle says, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" "Who of God is made unto us sanctification." Christ received holiness of human nature, to be communicated by regeneration to all his spiritual seed; and therefore, their habitual sanctification, as it is after his image, so it is immediately derived from him. Their sanctification of nature, not only resembles, but it is conveyed from the holiness dwelling in his human nature; for the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. O what an ornament to be holy, to be adorned with the image of Him who is the first-born among many brethren!

5th, Though in habitual sanctification the believer is renewed in the whole man, yet he is not wholly renewed in any part while here. He is sanctified wholly as to the parts, but not as to the degrees of sanctification. Light is introduced into his understanding, righteousness into his will, and holiness into his affections; but still there are remains of depravity left in each of these faculties. Corruption and grace are so near to each other in all who are sanctified, that in every faculty and member where the one is, the other is close by it. "I know," says an apostle, "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," Rom. 7:23. Though the body is united to Christ, and is a temple of the sanctifying Spirit, there is, notwithstanding, so much corruption remaining in it, that the apostle styles it a vile body. As depravity dwells beside grace in every faculty and member, and as the one is irreconcilably opposite to the other, the one constantly struggles against the other. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." In the understanding of a sanctified soul, remaining darkness lusteth against the light, and eagerly desires the destruction of it; and the light ardently desires, and attempts the

removal of the darkness. Sometimes the one prevails, and sometimes the other. At one time, the Christian experiences a longing after more of the knowledge of Christ; and at another, he feels not only indifference, but even a degree of reluctance at seeking it. In the sanctified will, aversion to holiness lusts against aversion to sin, and aversion to sin against aversion to holiness. The propension to holiness lusts against the remaining inclination to sin, &c. The one lusts against, that is, vehemently opposes, and strongly exerts itself to overcome the other. This takes place also in the affections of the soul. In them, love and enmity, spirituality and carnality, order and disorder, hope and fear, desire and aversion, constantly oppose and war against each other. "What will ye see in the Shulamite? The company of two armies." In so far as the believer is deserted, he acts according to the one principle; and so far as he is visited with renewed supplies of grace, he exerts himself according to the other. While sanctifying grace urges him forward toward the perfection of holiness, remaining depravity exerts itself to drag him back: while by the one, he mounts up and soars aloft; by the other, he is so weighed down, as to complain, "My soul cleaveth to the dust." The one principle counteracts the other in its activity, so that neither of them can carry their respective actings to perfection. "That which I do," says Paul, "I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." In proportion as the work of sanctification advances, remaining depravity, though weakened, will exert itself the more violently, and vex the believer the more keenly; nay, in some cases, prevail against him the more frequently: the struggle will become more vehement, and more harassing; but grace will finally overcome. Spiritual death will be swallowed up in victory.

SERMON XIII: SANCTIFICATION

"By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."—HEB. 10:10.

III. Under the third general head, it is proposed to speak of actual sanctification. By actual sanctification we are to understand, our being enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteousness. This differs from the former considerably: the former respects only the habit, the latter the exercise of grace: the former consists in the gradual renovation of the nature, the latter in the renewal of the life: the former makes one resemble Christ in his human nature, the latter in his death and resurrection. What I intend to offer on this part of the subject shall be said in answer to the following queries: First, What are the parts of actual sanctification? Second, Whence does it spring? Third, By whose energy is it more immediately performed? And, Fourth, In what manner is it accomplished?

First, Should any ask, What are the parts of actual sanctification? I answer, They are these two,—dying to sin, and living to righteousness.—All who are sanctified are dead to sin. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Rom. 6:2. To die to sin, is to put off the body of sin, or the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. As in natural death the soul puts off the diseased body, and leaves it behind, so in dying to sin, the believer puts off the body of the sins of the flesh, that old man which is corrupt. Sin dies to the believer, and he dies to sin. The dead body is not a fit habitation for the soul; nor can the soul operate upon it. In like manner, true believers are dead to sin: it cannot live or exert itself in them, as formerly. Dying to sin is the same as the mortification of sin. Now, to mortify the body of sin is to abhor it as the most execrable object, and to resist and suppress its motions, so as to prevent them from reviving. As the natural body consists of various members, so the body of sin includes

several depraved habits, thoughts, purposes, and propensities, as its members. To mortify this body of sin, is to subdue it in all its members, not only by resisting and suppressing their motions, but by refusing to yield to them, and by withholding provision from them. Hence are these exhortations, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth:" "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:" "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." The other part of actual sanctification, is living to righteousness. To live unto righteousness is more than to be quickened: it is to come forth, as it were, out of the grave, and walk in newness of life. It is to walk in newness of life, or to perform acts of new obedience, from principles of faith and love. It is to serve the Lord in newness of spirit; in exercising the graces of the Holy Spirit, in performing duty from a spiritual principle, to a spiritual end, and by a spiritual rule. One who lives thus to righteousness, obeys the commands of the law as a rule, not so much because it is his will, as because it is the will of his redeeming God. This will he regards both as the rule and the reason of his obedience. He believes the doctrines of grace to be true, not merely because his reason suggests their truth, but because God who cannot lie hath testified that they are true.

Second, Should one inquire, Whence do the believer's dying to sin and living to righteousness arise? I would reply, They arise from his having communion with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection; or from the virtue that his death and resurrection have to render his mystical members conformable to him in them. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death," Phil. 3:10. The death and resurrection of Christ have this transforming power, because when he died and rose again, he did so as the representative of his people, and thereby merited for them this conformity to himself. And indeed, it was most reasonable that, seeing there was virtue in the sin and death of

the first man, conforming all his natural posterity to him in each of them, there should be efficacy in the death and resurrection of the second man, conforming his spiritual seed to him, in their dying to sin and rising again to newness of life. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." No sooner has a believing sinner actual communion with Him, who by dying for sinners died to sin, than he begins actually to die to sin, in conformity to him, and by virtue derived from his death. As Christ died by being crucified; so the believer dies to sin, by having the old man crucified with him. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5:24. When Christ was crucified, he continued on the cross till he died: in like manner, when the body of sin is, by virtue of the believer's fellowship with him in his death, nailed, as it were to his cross, it will not come down, but languish and struggle until it be destroyed. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Rom. 6:6. Indwelling sin, believer, may disturb and frighten you; but it shall not be suffered to hurt you: it may struggle violently; but as it is fixed to the cross, it shall not be able to mount up to the throne of your heart. Again, no sooner has the believing sinner communion with Christ in his resurrection, than he derives virtue from it, enabling him to rise from the death of sin, to a new kind of life: "If we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." As the Lord Jesus, in his resurrection, rose to a new manner of life in human nature, a life that shall never end, so, in actual sanctification, the Christian rises to newness of life, a new manner of life, which he shall enjoy in full perfection, for ever and ever.

Third, Should any inquire, by whose power or energy is it that believers die to sin and live to righteousness? I would reply, It is not by the power of the grace already received, far less is it by natural ability; but it is by the power of the Spirit of grace. One may have habitual sanctification, or the habits of grace, and yet not be able actually to die to sin, and live to righteousness, 2 Cor. 3:5. It is not

grace in the heart, but grace in the promise; not grace already imparted, but grace to be communicated, that enables the believer to die to sin and live to righteousness. Habitual grace is not sufficient here; actual influences must be afforded, else no acceptable obedience can be performed. Strength for actual exercise and spiritual performance consists not in being strong in the grace that is already in the soul, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8:13.

Lastly, If any ask, In what manner does the Spirit of grace enable the believer to die to sin and live to righteousness? I would reply, He enables him to do it gradually. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "They go from strength to strength;" "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The Holy Spirit enables him to die to sin, more and more. "He drives out his spiritual enemies before him by little and little." He gives him victory at one time over carnal security, at another over a self-righteous spirit, at another over unbelief, at another over earthly mindedness, and at another over some strong and sore temptation. He enables them not only to gain one victory after another, but to pursue the victory. Besides, he enables them to exercise one spiritual grace at one time, and another, at another time. He not only furnishes opportunities for the exercise of grace, but he strengthens grace, and causes the Christian to exercise it more vigorously, till by renewed communications, and repeated exercise, it arrives at a perfect man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

IV. According to the fourth general head, I was to point out the difference between sanctification and justification. The inattention of some exercised Christians to this, is a ground, not only of much confusion in their spiritual exercise, but of great discouragement and perplexing fear.

Now, in the 1st place, sanctification differs from justification in this, that whereas the latter constitutes a relative, this produces a real

change.—Justification is a relative change, a change in relation to the law in its threatenings, to the gospel in its promises, and to God in his justice, faithfulness, and eternal enjoyment; but sanctification is a real change of the whole man, soul and body. That is a change of state in relation to him; this, a change of heart and of life: "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

2d, Sanctification differs from justification in its matter.—The matter of sanctification is the fulness of Christ communicated; whereas the matter or ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ imputed. The one is put within the believer; the other is put upon him. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all who believe." In sanctification we have grace for grace in the man Christ, grace in our heart, answering to grace in him; but in justification, we have a righteousness, answering to all the requirements of the law as a covenant.

3d, The one differs from the other in their subjects. The person of Christ is the subject of our justifying righteousness; but the person of the believer is the subject of the righteousness of sanctification. The righteousness of justification is inherent in Christ; that of sanctification is inherent in the Christian. The one was fulfilled for the elect sinner; the other is implanted and inherent in him: the former is on him, as an embroidered robe; the latter is in him as a new nature; by that he is comely without, in the view of remunerative justice; by this he is glorious within, in the eye of Divine omniscience.

4th, Sanctification differs from justification in their extent. The former terminates immediately upon the whole man; the latter only upon the conscience. Justification, though it relates to the whole man, yet terminates immediately upon the conscience, only setting it free from alarming fears of Divine wrath; but sanctification, on the other hand, terminates immediately upon all the faculties of the soul and members of the body, and it consists in the gradual

renovation of the whole man. In the former, conscience is only pacified, or at most purged; in the latter, it is renewed.

5th, Sanctification and justification differ in their properties.—The righteousness of justification is the righteousness of God-Man. The righteousness of sanctification is the righteousness only of a mere man, a sinful creature. The one is meritorious of eternal life, the other is meritorious of no blessing at the hand of God. Sanctification is imperfect at first, and carried on by degrees; justification is perfect at the beginning, and incapable of degrees. The former is unequal; for some believers have more of it than others. Hence we read of little children, young men, and fathers, in the family of Christ, 1 John 2:13. The latter is entirely equal in every believer.

6th, They differ in their order of precedence. In the order of nature, though not of time, sanctification follows justification, as the effect follows the cause. Righteousness imputed is, in order of nature, prior to holiness, implanted and inherent; the removal of guilt is prior to the removal of the defilement of sin; a title to eternal life in justification is prior to the beginnings of it in sanctification, just as the sun is before the light and heat afforded by him. How vain is it to expect justification on account of any performances of our own, and to expect to be holy without being already justified!

7th, Sanctification differs from justification in its use. By justification we are instated in the Divine favour; but by sanctification we are adorned with the Divine image. That gives only a title to eternal life; this gives a meetness for, and a capacity of enjoying it. It is one thing to have a right to heaven, another thing to be ready for it; to have the nature so much sanctified as to be fit to live in it. What would a title to it avail, if one were not qualified to live in it? What would it profit a man to be qualified to live in it, if he wanted a legal title to it? Consider this, you who are self-righteous, and who imagine that, because you think you have some degree of holiness or reformation, all shall be well. Suppose your

holiness were true holiness, and so perfect that you are now qualified for heaven, what would this avail, without your having at the same time a title to heaven, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to you? It is his righteousness only that can afford you a right. Attend to this, you who pretend to an interest in the righteousness of Christ, and yet who have no genuine holiness; although you had a title to heaven, what would it profit you, if you are not qualified to live there?

8th, They differ in the respect which they have to the offices of Jesus Christ.—Justification flows immediately from the priestly office of Christ; sanctification springs immediately from his prophetic and kingly offices. As a sacrificing priest, he satisfied the law and justice of God, by fulfilling a justifying righteousness; as a prophet, he gives an understanding to know him that is true; and, as a king, he writes his law in the heart, and inclines it to yield obedience to him. Now, to introduce light into the understanding, and to write the law in the heart, is to sanctify. In his priestly office, Christ is made to sinners justification; in his prophetic and kingly offices, he is made wisdom and sanctification.

9th, Sanctification differs from justification in its relation to the law of God.—Justification has respect to the law as a covenant of works; sanctification relates to it, as a rule of obedience: the one sets the soul free from it as a covenant, the other makes the soul delight in it and yield obedience to it as a rule. Justification sets free from debt to the law; while sanctification renders us fit for duty to the law.

10th, Sanctification is an evidence of justification; but justification is not an evidence of sanctification. None can warrantably conclude that he is justified, if he be not pressing toward the perfection of universal holiness; but if he be, this is a real evidence that he is in a state of justification. On the other hand, justification, as it is the root from which sanctification springs, cannot be an evidence of sanctification. The stem of a tree, as it appears to us, is an evidence of its root which is under the ground; but the root under ground

cannot be said properly to evidence the stem of the tree. Just so, sanctification discovers justification as its root; but justification does not discover sanctification. The former is not discerned but by the latter. It is by the exercise of grace in general, of justifying faith in particular, that a believer can for ordinary discern that he is justified. "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39. So much for the points of difference between justification and sanctification.

V. Under the fifth general head, I was to consider the design and the use of sanctification. And,

1st, The design of it is not to gain the approbation or applause of the world. Sanctification is so far from being of use for this purpose, that it rather exposes one to contempt and hatred from worldly men. If a man be so far reformed as to be habitually attentive to social duties, he will gain a reputation from the most of men; but if they discover that he is sanctified, by having respect to all God's commandments in their great extent and spirituality, and by testifying against all manner of sins, he shall be sure to be despised, and counted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you," Luke 6:26. Do not, then, O believer, apply yourself to the practice of holiness, in order to gain a reputation among men. Remember what Jesus said of the Pharisees, who loved to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men, "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward," Matt. 6:5.

2d, It is of no use in order to justification before God. As it is not the design of it to entitle a man either to the pardon of sin, or to acceptance as righteous in the sight of God, so it is of no use for these purposes. It is of great use, indeed, to evidence his title to eternal life; but of no use to afford him a title. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." A man is not justified on

account of his being sanctified, or because of his sanctification; but is rather sanctified because he is justified.

3d, It is of no use to qualify a man for justification. If one must be perfectly justified before he can begin to be sanctified, surely his sanctification cannot qualify him for such justification.

4th, But it is of great use for the following purposes; such as, for evidencing our faith. "I will show thee my faith by my works." As faith worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, so, wherever there is true holiness, proceeding from supreme love to God, it is an incontestable evidence of a living faith.

Again, it is useful for evidencing our justification. Would you, believer, desire to advance to more assurance of your justification? Study to walk closely with God in the exercise of every grace, and the practice of every duty. Besides, it is highly useful for promoting the glory of God. As they who are sanctified propose the glory of God in Christ for their ultimate end, so their walking in newness of life is the very way to glorify him. While they go on without offence till the day of Christ, "they are filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." It is only by actual sanctification, or the practice of evangelical holiness, that a person can be active in glorifying God, or in showing forth his praise. In the new creature, or new creation, all things are of Him, that they may be to him.

Further, It is useful for qualifying one for heaven; and indeed there is no other way in which we can be meet for it. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is necessary for "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour," Tit. 2:10. A holy and heavenly conversation, as it becomes the gospel, so it adorns the gospel: it is an ornament to the gospel.—Again, it is useful and necessary for promoting spiritual peace, and consolation of soul. "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Although peace and joy are not

derived from sanctification as the ground of title to them, yet they are promoted by it as a means of them; they grow usually in proportion as it grows.—But further, sanctification is very useful and beneficial to those around them. "These things are good and profitable unto men." It serves to gain others over to Christ. In this way, our light shines before men, and they, seeing our good works, glorify our Father which is in heaven. The believer who is advancing in sanctification is more useful than a thousand others.—In a word, it is very useful and necessary for maintaining communion with the holy Lord God. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him." Communion with God consists in receiving grace from him, and in exercising spiritual graces upon him. Now, habitual sanctification consists in receiving grace from him: actual sanctification, in exercising spiritual graces upon him. Let none say, that seeing sanctification does not merit eternal life, it is of no use.

From this subject we may learn, that there is a great difference between true and counterfeit holiness. The one is substantial, the other is merely a shadow: the one springs from union with Christ, the great receptacle of the sanctifying Spirit, the other arises from a man's own spirit: the one proceeds from nature, the other from grace: the one includes an irreconcilable hatred of all sin, of secret sins, as well as those that are open; the other only of some sins; the one flows from the supreme love of God, the other from self love.

Hence we may be informed, that none of our performances are good works but such as proceed from a sanctified heart. There cannot be a new life without a new heart, neither can there be a new heart without our being renewed in the whole man. None can love God in Christ but he whose enmity against him is slain in sanctification; and nothing can be deemed a good work but what springs from faith working by love. That is not genuine love which does not produce

evangelical obedience; and that deserves not to be called evangelical obedience which springs not from supreme love to God.

Hence we may learn the way in which the true believer performs his duties. He performs them acceptably, though not perfectly; in all their parts, though not perfectly in any part. David showed that he was sanctified, by fulfilling all the will of God, that is, every part of it. If you are sanctified, you yield obedience in all the parts of it, though not in all the degrees of those parts. Now, no formal professor performs it in this way; he comes short of the very parts of it. Besides, you perform it acceptably, though not perfectly. You show a good will to every duty, however difficult to be performed; and if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, for the sake of Christ, according to that which a man hath. Though you cannot perform duties perfectly, you can perform them sincerely; and though sincerity cannot be accepted in the affair of justification, it is accepted in the article of sanctification.

Hence see what we are to understand by perfection, as it is ascribed to saints in this world. We read that Job was perfect and upright, and that Hezekiah walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart. But were these saints absolutely perfect? No; their conduct showed that they were not. They and all God's sanctified ones are said to be perfect. "As many as are perfect be thus minded." They are perfect even in this world, with a subjective perfection: they are sanctified wholly in the whole man: they are perfect objectively: they have a regard to the whole law, and yield obedience to all its precepts without limitation; they are evangelically perfect, and truly sincere, and are going on to absolute perfection. Some of them are comparatively perfect; more perfect than they who are but children in knowledge, faith, and experience. Perfection, then, is ascribed to the saints while here in all these senses. Do not say, secure sinner, that none are perfect: if you be not perfect, in one or other of the senses of it, already mentioned, you are not yet sanctified.

Are believers renewed according to the image of God's dear Son? Then see how highly they are honoured. What an inexpressible honour is it to bear the image of the second Adam; to receive grace for grace out of his fulness! The more spiritually and attentively the Christian contemplates the glory of the infinitely amiable Redeemer, the more of his image will be expressed on him. He shall attain more lively features of his glorious image. What an honour is it to resemble him who is worthy to receive all honour! Nothing can be more dishonourable than to resemble Satan; nothing more honourable than to be conformed to Jesus Christ. God's holy ones are a delight to him: He delights to look upon them, and to shine upon them.

From what has been said, we may learn, that nothing can be more vain than for sinners to attempt this or the other good work, in order to gain a personal interest in Christ, or to entitle themselves to his righteousness and salvation. No performances can be pleasing or acceptable to God, but such as are done by one who is sanctified, and already interested in Jesus Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing;" nothing that can please God. Works proceeding from an unsanctified heart are far from pleasing him, and, as our reformers used to say, are no better than splendid sins. Besides, a personal interest in Christ is not procured by the sinner, but granted by God freely, granted to the chief of sinners, in a way of sovereign grace.

Hence we see reasons of special encouragement to disquieted and disconsolate believers. Your sanctification is the work of omnipotent grace; and therefore your strongest corruptions cannot hinder it or retard it for a moment; it is the work of infinitely free grace, and no unworthiness in you can prevent it.

Does sanctification include a perfection of the parts of renovation? We may hence be informed what judgment we ought to form of such as pretend to sanctification, and yet are not renewed in the whole man; we are to consider them as not truly sanctified. Some may have a new life, but this does not prove them to be sanctified

unless they have also a new nature. Some attain new notions; they acquire new knowledge; but unless their knowledge be transforming, it does not accompany salvation.

Is sanctification the chief and leading part of salvation? Then we may learn what it is that constitutes the chief part of a sinner's misery; it is the disconformity of his heart and life to a holy God. Alas! are there not many who say that they are sanctified, and yet are so far from accounting themselves miserable because of their love to some reserved sin, that they think themselves happy in the indulgence of it! How miserable is that sinner who has no changes but from evil to evil! One will say, they are miserable indeed who are destitute of sanctification; but though I am deficient in many things, as the best of men are, I trust, notwithstanding, that I am sanctified. But are you indeed sanctified? If you be, how comes it to pass that you have such a passionate desire to the pleasures of sin, such love to present enjoyments, such enmity to holy persons, and such strong aversion from spiritual and heavenly conversation? Are not these evidences of your being destitute of sanctification?

Should an exercised believer ask, How shall I be satisfied that I am indeed sanctified? I am often disquieted with discouraging doubts concerning this. I would reply, If you be already sanctified, the love of Christ constrains you to love him supremely; his obedience to the law for you constrains you willingly to obey him; his sufferings for you constrain you to submit to reproaches and persecutions for him; his crucifixion for you constrains you to crucify the body of sin; his death constrains you to die to sin; and his resurrection to rise to more newness of life.

Again: If you be sanctified, you are dead to sin. Now, is this your experience? If it be, then every member of the body of sin has lost its reigning power in you. When one is seized with an infectious distemper, he may lose the power of some member of his body, but it is only when he is dead that he has lost the power of them all. Further, if your understanding be sanctified, you will discern an

illustrious display of wisdom, love, and grace, in the glorious method of redemption by Jesus Christ. You will see the truth so as to feel it. You will see nothing in the promise but what is suitable and agreeable to you; nothing in the precept that you would choose to alter; nothing in holiness but what is amiable and attractive; and nothing in sin but what is loathsome to you. If your will be renewed, it will pursue holiness of heart and life from choice; its great ambition will be to make the promises of the new covenant the rule of your faith and comfort; the precepts of the law in the hand of Christ the rule of your life; and the providence of God the rule of your lot in this world. Your want of perfect resignation will be a grievous burden to you. If your affections be sanctified, in so far as they are so they will not desire that any thing that God hath done should be undone, or done otherwise than it is. You are never satisfied, either with your degree of hatred to sin, or love to Christ. Further, if you be sanctified, you love the commandments of God, because they are holy, and just, and good. You are watchful against all sin; you trust in Christ for more sanctification, and delight in doing his will.

Would you who are believers desire to advance in sanctification? Then contemplate frequently the death and resurrection of your dear Redeemer. This is the way to advance in mortification, and vivification. Exercise your spiritual graces frequently; for they grow by exercise. As the natural body cannot grow or be vigorous without exercise, neither can the new creature formed in the soul. Exercise faith especially. It is by this that you derive an increase of sanctifying grace from the fulness of Jesus Christ. Trust that he will keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. Embrace, and trust, and plead the promises of sanctification: believe that they shall be fulfilled to you. Be more acquainted with checking the first motions of sin in your heart: whenever you are sensible of a sinful thought, be sure to resist it by faith and prayer. Again: Be well acquainted with the proper uses of good works; otherwise you shall often be in danger of running either into Antinomian licentiousness, or Arminian legality.

Associate with lively Christians; association begets assimilation: Search the word, and seek the Spirit of Christ. In a word, labour to adapt your spiritual exercise to the Lord's dealings with you. Be thankful in all your enjoyments, patient under all your afflictions, fervent in all your devotions, humble in all your attainments, and holy in all manner of conversation.

As for you who are destitute of sanctification, be exhorted to come to Christ for the sanctification of the Spirit, and you shall be sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Consider your misery; you are now under the curse of the violated law, and you are no more able to bring forth fruit to God, than the cursed fig-tree was to bear figs. While you are under the curse, nothing that you do can be accepted by God. Every attempt of believers is acceptable to him; but nothing that you do can please him. Be persuaded that there can be no salvation without sanctification. To believe that you shall be saved in any sin, is to believe that God, who cannot lie, shall prove to be a liar, and that Christ shall be so far degraded as to be the minister of sin. Come to Christ for justification and adoption, to give you a title to heaven, and for sanctification, to qualify you for the felicity and work of heaven. Consider what shall become of you without justification: "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." What will you do if you be not sanctified? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Come to him, and your death in trespasses and sins shall be removed by spiritual life; your deformity by beauty; your darkness by light; and your enmity against God by love to him. One will say, I cannot come to the Saviour; but he says in the promise, "To him shall men come." Another will say, How shall I come to him? You are to come to him by trusting that he cometh to you. But where shall I find him? You shall find him in the field of the Gospel. I am very unworthy. Yes, you are; but he intends to glorify the riches of his sovereign grace. I have no right to trust in the Lord Jesus. Yes, you have an ample warrant to place the confidence of your heart in him for all your salvation. He is offered freely to you, and is your Saviour by office: touch, then, the hem of his garment,

and you shall be made whole. Come, you who are young sinners, and the Lord God will enter into a covenant with you, and you shall become his: then shall he wash you with water in your sanctification, and thoroughly wash away your blood from you.

SERMON XIV: SALVATION FROM SIN

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for He shall save his people from their sins." - MATT. 1:21.

When Joseph, who was espoused to the mother of our Lord, had, in consequence of observing that previous to their coming together, she appeared to be with child, begun to suspect her fidelity, and to entertain thoughts of dissolving the connexion which had for some time subsisted between them; we are told, in the verse immediately preceding the text, that an angel appeared to him in a dream, and thus addressed him, "Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;" and then he added the words which were now read, "She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." In which words, we have, first, a prediction of our Saviour's birth, "She shall bring forth a Son;" second, an injunction given with regard to his name, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Jesus, in the original language of the New Testament, is of the same import with Joshua in that of the Old, and signifies a Saviour. Thou shalt call his name Saviour, "for he shall save his people from their sins." This name is very comprehensive, and includes all the other appellations which are

given to Christ in Scripture, considered as Mediator. Joshua, who was Israel's captain, at their first settlement in Canaan, and Joshua who was their high-priest, at their second settlement in it, after the Babylonian captivity, were both of them illustrious types of Jesus, who is, not only the Captain of our salvation, but the great High Priest of our profession. Lastly, we have in the words a reason assigned by the angel, for giving the incarnate Redeemer this name: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." By his people, here, we are to understand those who are chosen and given to him in the everlasting covenant, in order to be saved by him from sin and wrath: "He shall save his people from their sins."

In discoursing on this subject, it is proposed, through Divine assistance, I. To point out what it is in sin from which Jesus saves his people; II. To mention some of the properties of his salvation, and III. To describe the character of his people whom he saves from sin.

I. I am first, then, to point out what it is in sin from which Jesus saves his people.

And here, in the first place, he saves them from the guilt of sin.—By the guilt of sin, is meant an obligation to suffer eternal punishment on account of sin. They whom Christ undertook to save were, on account of their breach of covenant in the first Adam, and of their other innumerable transgressions of the Divine law, condemned as well as the rest of mankind, to endure such tremendous wrath, both in soul and body, as would have rendered them inexpressibly miserable. While, therefore, they continue under the law as a covenant of works, they are necessarily under this dreadful sentence; and were they to die in that state, it would be executed upon them to the uttermost, through the revolving ages of eternity. But since they were not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, he comes in the day of regenerating power, and having united them to his person, admits them to actual

communion with himself, in his infinitely precious atonement. No sooner is this atonement actually imputed to them, than they are legally absolved from condemnation, according to this Divine promise, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. 31:34.

They are then delivered from the guilt of sin, or from their obligation to endure punishment on account of sin, and have sufficient security afforded them, that though they may often incur the guilt of fatherly displeasure, they shall never enter into condemnation, or fall under the guilt of eternal wrath.

2d, Jesus saves his people from the dominion or reigning power of sin. "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin." God had told the first Adam, as the federal head of all his natural posterity, that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die. No sooner did he eat of it than he was punished with the loss of spiritual life; or, in other words, with the loss of the original righteousness of his nature, in which the spiritual life of the soul consists. Now, the corruption of the whole nature, or the dominion of sin in the soul follows as naturally, upon the want of original righteousness, as darkness follows the setting of the sun. Those, therefore, whom God hath appointed to obtain salvation, as they were involved in the guilt of Adam's first transgression as well as others, and consequently born under the condemning power of the law, which, in this sense, is the strength of sin; so they are all born destitute of original righteousness, and subject to the dominion of sin. The condemning power of the law as a covenant, so long as they continue under it, detains them as prisoners, under the reigning power of depravity. No sooner, however, does the Lord Jesus, whose office it is to say to such prisoners, Go forth! come and admit them to communion with himself, in his surety-righteousness, than they are delivered from the condemning power of the law, and consequently, from the reigning power of sin. This infinitely glorious righteousness, as it entitles them to the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, so it removes the curse of the law,

which formerly stood in the way of those influences, and obstructed their entrance into the soul. Hence are these words of the apostle Paul: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. 6:14. If believers would make more use of the righteousness of the incarnate Redeemer in their approaches to God than they do, they should find that sin would not prevail against them so much as it does.

3d, Jesus saves his people, not only from the dominion, but from the defilement or pollution of sin. As sin is infinitely opposite to the spotless holiness of God's nature, it cannot but be very impure and loathsome in his sight. Hence we read, that he is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look upon iniquity." As sin is in its own nature filthy, sinners in whose heart it reigns, are represented in Scripture as altogether filthy; and therefore as such, they are utterly unqualified to enjoy communion and intercourse with an infinitely holy God. Now, in order to render his people fit to enjoy fellowship with God, since without this it is impossible that they can be either holy or happy, Christ, as the glorious dispenser of grace in the new covenant, sends his Spirit, in the day of effectual calling, as a Spirit of holiness, to cleanse them from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, according to that promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." He begins thus to purify his people at their regeneration; for we read that they are "saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." He continues to purify them from remaining depravity, by affording them fresh supplies of the sanctifying Spirit, and by enabling them to improve his death and resurrection for that purpose; until at last he presents them to his Father without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The fountain that is opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, is kept continually open to them, in the offers of the Gospel; and the streams of it are appointed to follow them while they travel through this valley of tears, that they may always have an opportunity of

washing away their spiritual pollution, until they come to the end of their journey.

In the last place under this head, Jesus saves his people from the very being of sin.—Though the true Christian is an heir of complete salvation, yet he is never completely saved from sin while he is in this world. Though he is transformed into the Divine image, by the renewing of his mind, there is, notwithstanding, a law in his members which wars against the law of his mind, and often brings him into captivity to the law of sin, so as to make him sometimes exclaim as the holy apostle Paul did, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" who shall deliver me from this cruel, this deceitful enemy, which often wounds my soul, disturbs my peace, retards my progress in the spiritual life, darkens my evidences for heaven, and prevents my complete happiness? How long shall I go mourning, because of the oppression of this enemy! The Christian shall have reason thus to complain of indwelling sin, while he is in this valley of tears; and the higher the degree of holiness is to which he attains, the more sensibly he will feel it, and the more bitterly will he complain of it. The triumphing of this enemy, however, is but short; its destruction is fast approaching. Yet a little while, and Jesus will call the oppressed believer, not only to put off the tabernacle of flesh and blood, but to put off the body of sin and death, so as never to be troubled with it any more for ever. Then sinning and suffering, sorrowing and sighing, shall cease at once. When spiritual death is entirely swallowed up in victory, "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people will he take away."—Thus Jesus saves his people from the guilt, the dominion, the defilement, and the very being of sin: He saves them from the guilt of sin, in justification; from the dominion of sin, in conversion; from the defilement of sin, in sanctification; and from the very being of it, in glorification.

II. Under the second general head I was to consider some of the properties of Christ's salvation.

And in the 1st place, it is a great salvation. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" The salvation of the Lord Jesus is great in its contrivance; it is the result of the counsels of infinite wisdom. It is great in itself: peace is one of the blessings of it; but "great peace have they who love God's law." The mercy which is displayed in it is great: "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Joy constitutes a part of it, but it is great joy: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord," said the ancient church. Nay, it is unspeakably great: "Believing ye rejoice," says an apostle, "with joy unspeakable."

2d, The salvation of the Lord Jesus is a spiritual salvation.—It is a deliverance from spiritual enemies; it chiefly contains spiritual blessings; and is spiritually discerned only by those whose understandings are savingly enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

3d, It is a costly salvation.—It cost no less than the holy incarnation, the righteous life, and the satisfactory death of the Father's dearly beloved Son. There are many in the visible church whose practice demonstrates that they estimate the salvation of their souls at a very low price; and yet the Lord Jesus Christ, before he could purchase salvation to his people, was obliged to stoop to the very lowest degree of humiliation, to endure the most excruciating sufferings, and to shed the most precious blood. How deeply ought we to be ashamed before God, that we value this salvation so little, when it cost our glorious Redeemer so much!

4th, The salvation of the Lord Jesus is a free salvation.—It was purchased by Christ at a very high price; but it is given to sinners freely, without money and without price. Hence are these expressions in Scripture: "We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." Nothing can be freer than a gift. A gift is usually so free, that in so far as you begin to offer anything for it, however insignificant, you destroy the very nature of it. But the blessings of salvation are

expressly called gifts in Scripture: "Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also." There is nothing that the proud sinner is more unwilling to do than to accept of salvation as an absolutely free gift: since, however, God has resolved to bestow salvation on sinners as a gift, and delights to do it freely, every sinner who is appointed to obtain it, shall, sooner or later, be made willing, cheerfully to receive it, as God's free gift to him in particular.

5th, The salvation of Christ is an undivided salvation. It is undivided in the purpose of God: Whom he predestinated, them he purposed to call; whom he calleth, them he determined to justify; and whom he justifies, them he will glorify. It is undivided in the promises of God. He promises in one place, to "put his fear in the hearts of his people;" and in another place, that to those to whom his promise begins to be fulfilled, or, to "those who fear his name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." When one promise begins to be fulfilled, it is a certain sign, not only that the same promise shall be completely fulfilled, but that all the other promises shall be fulfilled also in due time.

6th, It is a common salvation.—"Beloved," says the apostle Jude, "when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common salvation," &c. Jude 3. This salvation is not only suited to the case of every sinner, and bestowed on some of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, but wherever the light of the gospel shines, it is offered to all in common, so as to render it lawful and warrantable for any sinner of mankind to whom the gospel is preached, to receive the same. Accordingly, when Christ himself was preaching the gospel to a mingled multitude at Capernaum, he addressed them thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." He does not here mean, that this true bread was given them in actual possession, else they should all have been brought into a state of salvation; but that it was granted or offered to them, in such a manner as to afford to every individual of them a right of access to it, or a right to receive it.

7th, The salvation of the Lord Jesus is a glorious salvation.—It is glorious in its design: it is to the praise of the glory of infinitely free grace. It is glorious in its own nature. When persons are made partakers of it, they are glorious within: while they behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord Jesus shining forth in it, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory. As nothing is so mean and shameful as sin, so nothing about a rational creature is so glorious as holiness. When one is exalted in Christ's salvation, the glory of this present world shrinks almost into nothing in his view; and he is disposed from his very soul to pity that man, be his worldly magnificence ever so splendid, who appears to have his portion only in this life.

In the 8th and last place, It is an everlasting salvation. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." With respect to eternity past, this salvation took its rise from everlasting love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." With regard to eternity to come, though it was purchased, and is applied to sinners in time, it shall never have an end, but continue to be enjoyed by the saints, without the smallest interruption, through all eternity: Christ gives to his sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.

According to the third general head, I was to describe the character of Christ's people, whom he thus saves from their sins.

Here it might be shown, that, previous to their regeneration and actual union with him, they are sinners, as well as others, in their heart, and in their life, and they are the servants of sin; that after their regeneration, they are truly convinced of sin; that they obtain saving discoveries of the suitableness, ability, and willingness of Jesus, as a Saviour; that they cordially approve of salvation by Him; that they accept of Him as their Saviour in particular, on the ground of God's free and unlimited offer of him in his word of grace; that they trust cordially in him as their Saviour for all their salvation;

that they live upon his grace, and act for his glory;—but, passing the illustration of these particulars, I shall conclude the discourse with some application.

From what has been said on the subject, we may be able to assign a reason why the Lord Jesus is so precious to them who believe: He saves them from their sins, and from all the dreadful effects of sin. Were it not for Jesus and his great salvation, instead of being at liberty to walk with God in newness of life, they should have been held under the dominion of sin, and fettered with the bands of spiritual death. Instead of having access to a reconciled God, and liberty to lift up their souls to him at the throne of grace, they should have been lifting up their despairing eyes in that place of torment where God hath forgotten to be gracious, and where his mercy is clean gone for ever. Were it not for this compassionate Saviour, there would have been no such thing as true holiness, no such blessing as communion with God since the fall, among any of the children of men.

This subject also presents us with a touch-stone for self-examination. Would we desire to know whether we be in a state of salvation or not? We have heard that Christ's salvation is undivided; that where he saves a sinner from the guilt, he also delivers him from the dominion and pollution of sin. Now, when we profess to trust in Christ for salvation, whether do we cordially trust in him for the whole of his salvation, or not? There are many who say that they trust in Jesus for salvation, and hope that all shall be well with them at last, whose habitual practice shows that they never trusted cordially in him for every part of his salvation; and, indeed, no unregenerate man can do so. There is no unconverted sinner but has some darling lust or other with which he cannot endure to part. Now, such an one may very properly be said to fear that Christ may some time or other come, and deprive him of that beloved idol; but can with no propriety be said to trust that he will do so; for this would imply a prevailing desire that it should be done; but to have a

prevailing desire to retain any sin, and a prevailing desire at the same time to part with that sin, is impossible.

No man, therefore, can trust in the Lord Jesus for deliverance from every branch of indwelling sin, or, in other words, for every part of his salvation, but one who is already regenerated, and enabled by the Holy Spirit to long for deliverance from every part of the body of sin. Now, can we say in the presence of that God who knows our thoughts afar off, that in so far as we are acquainted with our own hearts, we are enabled in some measure to trust in Christ for every part of his salvation, for deliverance from the love and practice of every sin; so as to desire above all things to be sanctified wholly in spirit, soul, and body? If we can, it is a favourable sign.—When the Lord, according to his promise, sprinkles clean water on sinners, and makes them clean, or when he saves them from the pollution of sin, he informs us, that they will then loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and abominations. There is some abomination or other for which the hypocrite will by no means loathe himself; some darling sin in which he would consider it a singular favour if God would allow him to continue in it with impunity. Whereas the true Christian, instead of accounting it a favour to spare any particular lust, is, on the contrary, persuaded that God does not favour him but in so far as he enables him to mortify it. "By this I know," says the holy Psalmist, "that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me." Are these, then, our sentiments with respect to sin? Did we ever obtain such discoveries of the defilement of sin as to make us loathe ourselves in our own sight, not merely for this or that particular transgression, but for all our abominations, and desire above all things that God would create in us a clean heart, and renew in us a right spirit? If such be our habitual sentiments, it is an evidence that our deliverance from the dominion and pollution of sin is already begun.

From the subject already discoursed of, we may see what strong obligations you who are the heirs of Christ's salvation lie under to

the love and practice of holiness. If the Lord Jesus hath done and suffered so much to save you from your sin, and to save you for this very reason that you might be holy; are not you thereby indispensably bound, in the strength of that grace which is treasured up in him, and exhibited to you in the free promise, to press toward higher degrees of holiness, in your heart and life? Hath he sent his Holy Spirit to destroy the dominion of sin in your souls? This lays you under the firmest obligation no more to serve sin; but to yield yourselves to God "as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness." Being thus delivered out of the hands of your spiritual enemies, you are bound to serve God in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of your life.

In conclusion: With respect to you who yet appear to be in your unregenerate state, be persuaded that while you continue strangers to Jesus Christ, and destitute of a personal interest in his salvation, you are in a lost and undone condition, sealed up under the curse of the broken law, and bound over to the insupportable wrath of an incensed and omnipotent God. Believe, not only that you are sinners, and deserve eternal condemnation; but that you are actually condemned already; and that there is no name given under heaven among men, by which you can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. O be concerned to obtain salvation! it is the one thing needful. If you lose your precious souls, it will be a greater loss to you than though you should lose ten thousand worlds. If God were just now to send an angel from heaven to intimate that some sinner among us was most certainly to perish in hell through all eternity, would not every one, struck with awful solemnity and dread, be ready to ask, "Lord, is it I?" How much greater reason have we to be alarmed, when we are expressly told by Him who not only will not, but cannot lie, that few shall be saved; that many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able? "Seek ye the Lord, therefore, while he is to be found, and call ye upon him while he is near." The Lord Jesus Christ is constituted the great ordinance of Heaven for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind; and as sustaining this gracious

character, God the Father, with the infinite approbation of the Holy Spirit, makes a free grant or offer of him as a Saviour to you, and to every lost sinner who reads or hears the gospel. "I have given thee, saith Jehovah, for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; that thou mightest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Come, then, men and brethren, and accept of him as the Father's unspeakable gift to you. Pray frequently and fervently for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; and for the spirit of faith, to enable you to receive the Divine testimony concerning Him, and to trust cordially in Him for the whole of his salvation; for holiness as well as happiness, for grace as well as glory. Thus shall you receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of your salvation. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and the chief of sinners."

THE END.

MONERGISM BOOKS

Sermons, Chiefly on Doctrinal Subjects by John Colquhoun ,
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