

SERMON X.

ZECH. III. 2.

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO SATAN, 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 ?

IT serves greatly to a right opening and explaining the scriptures of the Old Testament, to consider how variously and copiously the discoveries of Jehovah the Father's grace towards his chosen are ; and that in his revelation of Christ, with his testimony concerning him, it hath been the good pleasure of his will to suit himself to the various periods of time, the diverse states, circumstances, experiences, and cases, which his church and people have been in and passed through ; which when rightly, though but briefly, stated and attended to, leads to a clear view of several passages, as well as this before us, in their simple, genuine sense and meaning. Without attending to this as

a rule to direct to the true, principal and proper import of the word, many scriptures must lose their beauty, and appear to us unimportant, and without a meaning.

The writer of the portion selected for our text, was the prophet Zechariah, who was cotemporary with Haggai, who together with Malachi, lived under the second temple. The two former were with the people of the Jews when they emerged out of Babylonish captivity, through the edict granted by Cyrus king of Persia, who conquered Babylon, and was prophesied of by name more than two hundred years before his birth, by the prophet Isaiah. The Lord having accomplished his declared will concerning the captivity of his professing people in Babylon, (which visitation was the fruit and effect of their national sin) and the seventy years spoken of by Jeremiah, as the term of that captivity being fully completed; he brought them forth with joy and gladness, saying to them, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare

ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob." And as by the exercise of his most holy providence, he had conducted them safely to Judea and Jerusalem, they set up the instituted worship of God in its proper place, built an altar, and offered thereon sacrifices unto the Lord. And in the following year they laid the foundation of the Lord's house, and intended to proceed in building it: which, as it attracted the attention of their enemies, so it also drew forth their hatred. And because the former would not suffer the latter to join with them in building the temple, they gave the Jews much opposition and disturbance. The persons who thus opposed them were Samaritans, a mixture of people of divers nations, with which the kings of Assyria had peopled the land which belonged to the ten tribes, (see 2 Kings xvii. 24.) and who were ever after this the Jews' implacable enemies. These persons hired counsellors against them, to persuade the king of Persia's officers in those parts not to supply them

with money, or to influence the great men at court to get the edict revoked. And they had a favourable season. Cyrus, though an hearty friend to the Jews, being engaged in wars abroad with the Lydians and Scythians, and his son being viceroy in his absence, who was no friend to them. This Samaritan cabal wrote in the days of Artaxerxes, which was a common name given to the kings of Persia (which some conceive refers to their writing to Cambyses the son of Cyrus) and were so successful as to interrupt the building of the Lord's house, for the space of fifteen years, which ran out under Cambyses, and Smerdis an impostor, who pretended to be Smerdis the brother of Cambyses. So the work ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspis; under whose reign the Jews were stirred up by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah to set about the building of the temple again: though they received orders to the contrary from the deputy governors of the king of Persia. These deputy governors wrote a letter to Darius, in which they state the case of the Jews, as they

had it from them, so far as they understood it. Upon the receipt of which letter, the decree of Cyrus was searched for and found, and Darius Hystaspis renewed and confirmed it, and ordered expenses to be given out of his tribute for the building of the temple, and for the sacrifices of it. Which royal order being sent to the deputy governors of Judea, they ceased all interruption : upon which the building went on, and was in due time finished. The first chapter of Haggai is the completest comment which can be given on the first and second verses of the fifth chapter of Ezra. Thus the Lord having put it into the heart of Darius to renew the grant given by Cyrus to go on with and bring this good work to perfection, and having raised up Haggai and Zechariah as prophets to inspire Zerubbabel the prince, and Joshua the high priest, with courage and zeal to go on with temple-work and reformation in a vigorous manner ; by which means the people were also excited to join in prosecuting it : and were farther encouraged by those messages brought them from the

Lord by these prophets of his: the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, with the whole body of the people being thus excited, Haggai sharply reproves them for their former delay and dropping this good work. They had said, "The time is not come, the time when the Lord's house should be built." Whereas this was their mistake. They are encouraged in prosecuting the work, with the promise, that "The glory of this latter house should be greater than the glory of the former house." The prophet, as the herald of Jehovah the Saviour, says, "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." The prophet Zechariah, by various prophetic visions which he explained to the people, encouraged their hearts; and by his prophecy shewed how those prophecies and promises respecting the coming of Christ in the flesh, his sufferings, passion, and death, his kingdom and priesthood, with his sending the Holy Ghost to render the gospel effectual in the conversion of the elect among Jews and Gentiles, would begin to take place under, and before the destruc-

tion of this second temple. In those divine prophetic visions which precede and belong to our text, the first is that of a man riding on a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were three red horses speckled and white. The mystical signification of which is this: that Christ is the head of the church, the helper and defender of it, who is present with his people in their low estate and circumstances: that the angels are the executioners of his providential dispensations of justice and judgments on the enemies of his church, to whom they render an account: telling him that while the church was miserably afflicted, remaining in very low and mean circumstances, all the earth, or nations of the world round about her, were still and at rest. Upon which, Christ, as Mediator, is set forth as graciously interceding with his Father on the behalf of his church. The acceptableness and prevalency of which is manifested in the gracious answer returned. In which the Father's love to the church, his indignation against

her enemies, his reconciliation to her, with his promise concerning the rebuilding the city and temple, and giving them prosperity and increase, are fully declared. See chap. i. His suppressing the enemies of his church is set forth by the vision of the four horns, and four carpenters. Which horns figured the Samaritans, Ammonites, Arabians, and Syrians, who harrassed the Jews, who were frayed away by Zerrubbabel, Nehemiah, and other rulers and helpers of the Jews.

In the second chapter, by the vision of the man with the measuring line in his hand, who being demanded of the prophet whither he was going, said, To measure Jerusalem, is shewed how Jerusalem should be replenished with men and cattle, that God would be her protection and glory: that Christ would be sent by the Father to the Gentiles to restrain them from offering violence to his people who yet remained amongst them: that he would add elect Gentiles to his church, and dwell in the midst of it for ever: upon which the people are called to re-

joyce and believe the sure performance of all this.

In the vision given in the chapter before us, the continuance of the priesthood amongst them, representing the eternal priesthood of Christ, is shewed. "And he shewed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse, or resist him." Joshua, which signifies, says Cruden, the Lord the Saviour, was as the high priest, a type of Christ; and also the representative of the church. He is here represented as acting in the discharge of his sacred office, standing before the Sent of Jehovah, the glorious Mediator; and is confronted by Satan, the adversary, which shews how the devil seeks to distress, accuse, and oppose the servants of God, when they are most immediately engaged in seeking him. Upon which, Christ the advocate speaks to Satan, who had taken the right hand of Joshua, as the accuser used to do of the accused, and says, "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?" This passage is referred to by Jude, in his most excellent epistle, speaking of Michael, which signifies, who is as God. Whom he styles the arch-angel. Who contending with the devil about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. The substance of which seems to be this. The law of Moses was restored in the time of Joshua the high priest, by Ezra and Nehemiah: Joshua breaks some of these laws, by *conniving* at, or not restraining his sons from marrying strange wives. (See Ezra x. 18.) For which cause, it seems probable, he is represented in filthy garments. In the verse which succeeds our text, Satan charges him as guilty, contending and insisting on it that he ought to suffer. This accuser comes before Christ, who is both the judge and advocate of his people; who rebukes him, giving his reason for it, and honours Joshua, commanding that his filthy garments be taken from him; to whom he says, "I have clothed thee

with change of raiment.” The words in part being thus opened and explained, I proceed to give you my design from them ; which is this : to shew and declare how Satan resists and withstands, interrupts and condemns the people of God. Also, how Christ as their advocate casts out his accusations, and silences and confounds him. I will, as the Lord shall enable me, cast the whole into the following division. Shewing, first, how Satan, the adversary, assaults, withstands, accuses, and brings his charges against the believing people of God, with the grounds and reasons thereof, and his own design therein.

Secondly, how the Lord Christ, both as the judge and advocate of his people, casts out the suit, repels the accusations, and silences Satan.

Thirdly, that the Father’s election and grace, shewn already towards his called ones, are considered and made use of by Christ, as motives and reasons for him to rebuke Satan, and defend them.

I begin first with shewing, how Satan the adversary assaults, withstands, accuses

and brings in his charges against the believing people of God, with the grounds and reasons thereof, and his own design therein.

That Satan the arch-head of the apostacy from God, the first who sinned and fell; who drew an innumerable company of spiritual, intellectual beings to follow him in his revolt from God, is an enemy! the great enemy both of God and man, the scriptures declare, the history of all times proves, and every man's experience, whether saint or sinner, abundantly confirms. This is instanced and evidenced in the verse which precedes our text, where we read: "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan," which word signifies an adversary, "standing at his right hand to resist him;" whom the Lord treats as an adversary, an enemy, both to him, and his: saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan!" This evil one has an implacable envy, hatred and malice against Christ and his saints, which breaks forth with rage when he perceives them to be seeking after and cleaving with full

purpose of heart to Immanuel, as their Lord and God. He cannot restrain, nor refrain himself from assaulting them when he perceives by them that they begin to think and speak highly of Christ Jesus, which he discovers by the alteration made in them by the grace of God. He knew them before their regeneration and conversion to the Lord, that then serious thoughts, much more heavenly things, were disgustful to them : that since such time as they have heard with peculiar attention about Christ, they have not been as they were before, and he perceives he cannot have that free access to them, and leave his own thoughts in their minds for them to think freely on as heretofore, which causes him to suspect them. Nay, he sometimes hears them speaking with some warmth and vigour, with real pleasure and delight of Christ and his great salvation ; of his blessings and benefits ; graces and comforts ; victories and triumphs ; glory and felicity ; which fills this foul fiend with rage indeed, and he is determined to assault the soul, and that with the utmost policy. Is it a new con-

vert he assaults? one who has been sweetly drawn to Christ by the cords of love, and has tasted in the exercise of faith that the Lord is gracious! he will suggest a thought to the mind, that having so much spiritual comfort and content is a suspicious thing; that there is reason to doubt of the reality of conversion where the soul has not been shook as it were over the mouth of hell; that many young saints turn out old gross sinners. He will further suggest the importance of looking narrowly within, to see for a cause, reason and motive to be found there, why the Lord should love us, glancing at the same time this thought into the mind, that without it, it is vile presumption to expect to be saved by Christ. If the case of the convert differs, and instead of being thus sweetly and irresistibly drawn by the freeness of grace to Jesus, he sees, feels, and has a deep insight into his own heart; sees the full vileness of sin, and has his own mind surrounded with a sight and remembrance of his past transgressions: then this subtle adversary will form his assault accordingly, and aim to get the soul to

look at sin according to his representation of it. And if he can so far prevail, as for the convicted person to view himself and sin, without any views of Christ and his sacrifices, he will endeavour to swallow him up in despair, by bringing all the sin he knows him guilty of, and charging it upon him; telling him he is too vile, loathsome and filthy to have any part in Christ, or so much as any hope in him. Is the person brought by the Holy Ghost revealing Christ in the word, to a receiving of Christ, and to the exercise of faith on him, and is he in believing filled with all joy and peace? Satan will tempt the believer to live upon his joy and peace, or interrupt his enjoyment by suggesting such queries to the mind, or stirring up such corrupt affections in the heart, as shall fill the soul with such conceptions as shall lead him to value himself upon his enjoyments, or damp and chill the affections to heavenly, spiritual, and divine things. As Satan is the avowed adversary and enemy of the children of the Most High, so he watches them most narrowly, considers them personally, studies

them exactly, and assaults them imperceptibly. He mingles and assimilates with their spirits, and gets within them, suggests his own thoughts to their minds, which look to them like their own. He perceives how they are taken or displeased with them; and tries others as the case may require. Yea, he stirs up the juices and blood, works upon the veins and nerves of the body, and carries his cause most successfully when we perceive least of his assaults. He will and does change the form of his attacks on us, as our views, frames, experiences and walks vary. Such a deep politician, so subtle is he, that as we increase from babes to young men, from hence to fathers, and grow more into the knowledge of Christ, and of the Father's love in him, he will choose out new temptations and try new kinds of stratagems on us.

There are two peculiar cases which befall the believer in Jesus continually, which nothing but faith can surmount. The one is the deadness, formality and want of real communion with the Lord, which the child of God has more or less daily expe-

rience of: the other is the small victory and success the believer has the experience of, over himself and his body of sin and death. Communion with God is altogether a supernatural blessing, which depends entirely upon the gracious presence and influx of the Holy Ghost. The child of God longs for the special enjoyment of it in his daily walking with God, and in his worshipping him in his daily walk. The want of it in private and family duties is distressing to the soul, which distress Satan will as far as in him lies, promote for his own advantage. Nothing is more commonly the experience of believers than to put some dependence on their enjoyments. Therefore if they have not learnt from the Holy Spirit how to keep up communion with God by faith in his written word, Satan when he sees them distressed for the want of comfortable communion, will find it a suitable season to work upon their minds, that they are deceiving their own souls. Yea, it may be, will tempt and even prevail upon them to restrain prayer before God; seeing as he would have

them think, they get so little in it. It is a truth of vast importance to be known in experience, that communion with God is one of the deepest mysteries of grace. That true believers have frequent communion with the Lord when they do not perceive it. That it is not only a possible case, but it is a reality, that it is often enjoyed without sensible comfort attending it. And that some of the highest acts of our communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, consist in fervent desire to glorify God, and to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

As it respects communion with God, the knowledge we have of it, is less than the communion which we have, though that wholly depends upon the sovereign will of our heavenly Father. The believer is subject to much distress in consequence of his not being always a conqueror over sin, self, and Satan; which as this adversary is much better acquainted with than the former, he will chiefly put him in remembrance of. He knows full well what our constitution is, and also

our besetting sin, how, and when it is most likely to prevail. What state of mind will suit best for his temptations to operate most effectually, and what thoughts arise within us afterwards. For though he cannot know the thoughts of our hearts, but by our looks, gestures, words and actions; yet as our words express the state of our minds, and the commotion which is raised there, so he can and will by his hellish influence improve all these things to our disadvantage. He will at such seasons blow and breathe, with his hellish blast within us, with an intent to stir up and draw forth all the corruption within us. At which season he will also cast his fiery darts at us to inflame our lusts, to scorch our minds, distress our hearts, and defile our consciences. To shew the various assaults of Satan would necessarily lead to point out how he disputes the ground of confidence on which the believer stands. How he tries every part of the believer's faith and holy profession. How he secretly works, trying to sap the foundation; and as faith grows he works more

in a direct opposition against it. Which brings me on in pursuing this subject to shew how he withstands, accuses, and brings in his charges against the believing people of God, with the grounds and reasons thereof, and his own design therein. The people of God, as they are marching through this wilderness state to heaven, are withstood continually by this hellish adversary; who withstands them, either as "a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour;" threatening them with sudden and speedy destruction, blocking up their way, setting his traps and gins for their feet, and entangling them therein. Or, as a sly subtle serpent, he will seem to take their part, and pity them that their way should be so hard, so dangerous and distressing. Putting them to look at the ungodly, who have "the waters of a full cup wrung out to them," who enjoy more "than heart can wish," when he will ask, if it can be reconciled with the love and favour of God towards them, that they should be so greatly afflicted, distressed, tried and tempted as they are? Which

will draw forth at such seasons, and under peculiar circumstances, hard thoughts of God ; and this will make way further for the devil to stir up evil affections and desires in the mind, which he will powerfully work and operate on, until, sin prevailing in the soul, the child of God finds himself in “ the snare of the devil, and led captive by him at his will. His subtilty is frequently exercised by his holding a conference with the soul, fixing the mind and keeping it intent upon such a subject as he is positive must produce such effects as will be distressing ; and if he can but fix the attention, and cause it to muse on his temptations, his end is gained. In this snare he often gains advantage over the people of God, when they least suspect and perceive him. Not discerning between what are their own thoughts, and what thoughts the enemy suggests to their minds. His subtilty will be found to be great as it respects his acting as an angel of light. He is well versed in scripture, and knows well how to suit, use, and apply it against the people of God. He will closely at-

tend to their experience, and suit himself accordingly. Their faith he hates, therefore he will try it to the uttermost of his power, by bringing scripture to them, presenting it in his own light, and suggesting it in such a manner to their minds as he thinks will legalize their hearts, and weaken their confidence in the Lord Jesus. He knows the legality of the heart, how "slow it is to believe what the Lord hath spoken." That it is rare for a believer to have such clear views of the covenant of the essential Three, and of the work, office, and complete salvation of Jesus, as to trust simply and wholly thereon, by means of the word of revelation; therefore he finds his working upon the natural unbelief, legality and darkness of the heart, to be one of the most effectual means of weakening faith and distressing the believer. Hence when the soul should be looking to Christ as the healer, he will be suggesting thoughts of God's holiness, wrath, and vengeance to the mind. And if the soul get good by looking to, and viewing Jesus, he will suggest, it may be altoge-

ther a mistake. That it is necessary to find a bottom for faith to act and rest upon within ourselves. When the soul should be fetching its life, health and salvation from Jesus by faith, he will suggest how unlikely it is there should be any interest in the Saviour, seeing the affections are naturally so dead, and the heart so cold ; that the soul should take heed of presuming and forcing itself upon Christ ; that many have deceived themselves, and gone to hell with a lie in their right hand ; that it would be much better to find ourselves worthy of Jesus Christ, than be going continually as poor sinners to him. Nor will he cease, but change the method of his procedure, as we are helped by grace through faith in the blood of the Lamb, to overcome any of the afore-mentioned stratagems of his. When he does not succeed by roaring against us as a *lion*, nor by the subtilty of a sly, cunning *serpent*, he will then turn accuser, and litigate the point, commence a law-suit, indite us in our consciences, threatening to charge us before God for the sins we are the subjects, and

have been the committers of. Satan has a good memory, and though he does not know all our sins, seeing some of them are only conceived in the heart, and never brought into act and practice; yet it is surely the case, that he knows more of us as sinners, and by us as it respects our sinnings, than all men whatsoever, which he will not fail to improve against us. He observes our frames in sinning, the actions done, the words uttered, and what follows upon it. He knows there is a principle of sin in our natures; yea, that our nature itself which is of itself naturally inclined to sin, is in fast league with it, which is easily quickened and influenced by any slight temptation. He also remembers well what was our most prevailing temper, lust and corruption, when we were in his kingdom, and entirely under his influence and dominion, and how we have been since, when under peculiar cases, and trying temptations. And if he knows any remarkable relapses into old besetting sins, he will be sure when it will suit him to accuse and condemn us for it. He will sometimes join with our

inward corruption, stirring it up beyond its usual height, whereby we perceive our souls most awfully defiled; and the strength of sin within us will discover itself to be exceeding strong: at which Satan will triumph, and ask us how it is possible for us to belong to the Lord, when we must acknowledge we were never in such a case before! That the present defilement, stain and guilt is of an exceeding deep dye. That it can hardly escape being visited by the Lord with some remarkable act of his vengeance, and wrathful displeasure! That we have been, all the while we have been professing faith in Jesus, deceiving our own souls, as we may now clearly perceive. Though the believer flies with his guilt to Jesus, presenting himself before his throne of grace, Satan pursues him, and stirs up conscience to accuse him. While the believer is bewailing himself, and sueing out a fresh manifestative pardon, Satan will challenge him, and charge home what he knows of him, and by him. Yea, he will remind him of what he hath been, how cold, dead, life-

less and formal his prayers have been! how alienated his heart hath been from God! that the root of the matter is not in him! that the root and cause of all sin is in him, that he shall as easily as ever overcome him again by the very same snare and temptation! He exhibits his charges against the believer, many of which the believer with shame acknowledges to be too true and just, that he hath been overcome. Satan pleads the law against him, which pronounces an eternal curse upon all unrighteousness. The believer's mind is the court where the adversary carries the cause, and brings in his indictments. And conscience which is the subject of all the guilt and sin within us, turns also evidence against us. So that the believer is sorely troubled, for when Satan has thus turned accuser, summoned conscience to give in its evidence, what it knows and is privy to respecting such and such a case; it, as the echo of the law, turns witness against the believer; yea, brings charges against us which Satan is wholly a stranger unto. This gives

inexpressible grief of heart to the child of God, who cries out, "O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me." But Satan, exasperated at this, hating and fearing the power of fervent, importunate and effectual prayer, will turn accuser even before God himself by following the poor believer to the throne, to disturb his mind and distract his thoughts there.

While the poor fallen believer is crying out in the bitterness of his soul before the Lord, lamenting and bewailing himself, lothing, hating, renouncing, and abhorring himself, as in dust and ashes, Satan will be at his right-hand to accuse him, putting him in remembrance of his sin, bringing various past and present things against him, stirring up present corruption, if possible, in him ; disputing his ground of confidence in the Lord, seeing he knows and confesses he has been, and done, and is inherently in himself, now at this present moment, according to his very confession, so and so guilty, sinful, and polluted. The grounds and reasons of all Satan's charges against us are founded upon our sins, and relapses

into them ; and upon the law of God, which is dishonoured and broken by them, from which no relief can be had. Which, as far as it prevails in its precepts and denunciations at such times, will only serve to irritate corruption, and increase and strengthen our unbelief, which Satan full well knows ; and this is the end which he designs in carrying on and pursuing this controversy. He knows that a sense of guilt naturally weakens faith, makes way for unbelief to enter, by which means the testimony given concerning the virtue of Christ's blood, that it cleauseth from all sin, will not be received, maintained, and relied on ; which will bring more darkness and distress on the believer's heart, which will be quite serviceable to Satan for the improvement of his hellish wiles and cunning policies and accusations against him. Thus the fallen believer, pursued by Satan, condemned in the court of conscience, begins to sink within him. His case requires immediate relief. He is surrounded with an inward sight and sense of sin, with Satan's accusations, law charges, present

and actual personal guilt ;—refuge fails him, inward grace is insufficient to help him, a death is brought upon the whole of his expectations from it. His heart sinks, his hope declines, he feels himself more in need of Jesus than ever. Now he wants Christ, so as he never felt the want of him before. By this experience the Holy Spirit is leading him to know so much of sin, self, Satan, and the holiness of the divine law, with his own entire helplessness, as will make way for an entire renouncing of all help and succour but in the person, work, and office of Christ alone. His very falls into sin imbitter sin to him. The malice and accusations of Satan with his charges against him, constrain him to study the office of Christ, and he is led by these temptations and pursuits of Satan to cry most mightily to the Lord. It is true his words at the throne of grace are very few and feeble, but his desires are now expressed indeed with groanings which cannot be uttered. Like Joshua in the words before our text, he stands before the Lord, and Satan stands at his right hand to

accuse him. Which brings me therefore to my

Second particular head of discourse, in which I propose to set forth unto you how the Lord Jesus Christ, as the judge and advocate of his people, silences Satan in his suits against them, repels his accusations, and casts out his indictments. Our text presents this to our view. Here is Jehovah the Saviour, as both judge and advocate, defending them, exercising himself on their behalf when they are thus impleaded against by Satan, their adversary, the accuser. He applies himself to him, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee!" The same person who in the former verse was called "the angel of the Lord, or the sent of Jehovah," who is the essential Son of the Father, is here styled Lord; who, in the exercise of his advocacy on the behalf of his people, addresseth his divine Father on their behalf, intreating him to rebuke and confound the malicious charges and opposition made by Satan against his beloved

ones. And he repels Satan, and confounds him, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan!" Blessed be God, to the intent that the love and mercy, grace and compassion, righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, may be discovered to his church to the uttermost, and all their cases, maladies, wounds, and wants, be amply provided for, the intercession and advocacy of Christ was appointed, whereby a perpetual memorial and remembrance of his passion is kept up in heaven; he appearing there as "a Lamb newly slain," the efficacy of whose blood is perpetual and everlasting, he being the propitiation. And his intercession and advocacy containing in them a supply and support for his people, let what may befall them. It is this is the grand preservative of the people of God from total and final apostacy. Their recovery from falls and relapses into sin, their freedom from condemnation, their deliverances from Satan, when they have been actually taken captive by him; the renewings of manifestative peace, pardon, healing, and salvation, are all to be ascribed to it.

And never does the grace of Jesus appear in an higher point of view than it does when manifested to the soul who has been exercised with Satan's snares, temptations, resistings, and accusations, in the manner which has been described. When impleaded by Satan, accused in the court of conscience, self-condemned, non-plussed and confounded, inwardly filled with confusion, and assaulted at the throne of grace by our common adversary with his threatenings and menaces; to have the Lord Jesus in these circumstances plead the causes of our souls, this is grace! and some of the highest acts of it, which we have a sensible experience of in this present life. Jeremiah the prophet knew somewhat of this in his own case and experience, which he thus sets before us in the third chapter of his Lamentations, verses 54—58, addressing himself to the Lord, he utters himself thus: "I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice, hide not thine ear to my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee, thou

saidst, Fear not. O Lord, thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul, thou hast redeemed my life." Blessings on our great high priest, his heart in heaven is fixed on his people on earth, and breaks forth towards them under all the sin and misery which befalls them; for he is in union with them, their head in glory, and is so far interested in what befalls them here below, both as it respects sin and suffering, that his mercy, grace, and compassion, break forth in the displays of it just as their cases are, and their necessities require. He is their judge, who knows their cause, and is able to plead it. He is their advocate, who looks on them as his clients, and acts for them as such. He is their friend who loveth them at all times. He is their sanctuary and defence, notwithstanding all the assaults of hell against them. He can actually discern between what is the devil's own work in them, and what is their own act. He knows how far they sin with their will, and how far they are overcome by the superior force and power of the enemy. He knows full well the malice, hatred, and power of the

devil, his goings in, his comings out, and his rage against them. He knows how their souls mourn for offending him, and grieving his Holy Spirit; and though he does not excuse, connive at, or bear with their *sins*, yet he bears with *them*, and bears them up under them, bringing them forth in due time from under these burthens and oppressions with triumph, so that they say, " 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 repels with indignation Satan's accusations against them, and casts out his indictments, having the whole personal worth of his ancient engagements, his righteousness, and blood to plead on their behalf. He casts out Satan's accusations, having more to plead for them, than he can possibly have to plead against them. Does the adversary plead against them that they have broken the law, and are thereby guilty? Christ pleads he has fulfilled the law, and that they thereby are in him justified. Does Satan plead that they are loathsome and filthy in their own persons, being defiled

with sin? Christ pleads that "He hath loved them, and washed them from their sins, in his own blood." Does Satan further charge it upon them, and plead that their wills have been greatly engaged in sinning? Christ hath to plead, that their wills were never so much, so freely and fully engaged in offending, as his will hath been in obeying and suffering for them, "the just for the unjust." Does he further say, They have by their falls greatly dishonoured God? the advocate has to rejoin, he himself has more honoured his Father's law and justice, than it was ever in their power to dishonour them. Satan's accusations against them have no force in them, they being all founded upon the law as a covenant of works, which as such has been fulfilled by Christ the covenant head of his people, for them, and is as such out of force and date as it respects them; so that it cannot pronounce a curse upon them. Also Satan only accuses before God as a lawgiver; but Christ pleads with him as the God and Father of himself, and of his people; using all his in-

terest in him for them ; pleading the everlasting covenant, with the promises thereof. Here I will endeavour to open this mysterious grace, as it is actually manifested to the soul in real experience. There is none of the Lord's people on earth without sin. And every one of them knows, by experience, the bitterness of spirit which is occasioned by feeling the plague of their own hearts. There are seasons when they are overcome by, and fall into sin. Then Satan is busy with his accusations, and their spirits are overwhelmed. They betake themselves to the Lord Jesus, and fall down before him acknowledging what they have done. Grief on every hand surrounds them. It is given them to consider, though their present case, evil, and wound, may be of a deep dye, and of a peculiar nature, attended with it may be very aggravating circumstances ; yet Christ is what he was before to them, *their Saviour*. Though in their experience they feel themselves most awfully defiled ; yet they are not even now so black as Jesus beheld them, when he undertook for them, and saw

them actually to be when he underwent soul *travail* for them. Which consideration, as suggested to their minds by the Holy Spirit of God, enables them to pray the Lord Jesus Christ to look upon them, and be merciful to them, as he hath been used to do to such as believe on him. To act now towards them according to his own heart which burned with love to them, when they were "in their sins, and in their blood." And as he bore their sins in his own body on the tree, and his soul was then oppressed with the imputation of that very particular guilt which now lies on their minds, he would be pleased to give them present relief from it, by creating fresh thoughts, and giving them fresh views of the everlasting cleansing, healing, purging, pardoning, justifying, sanctifying virtue of his bloodshedding, and oblation of himself for them. While they are thus addressing Christ, he by his Eternal Spirit within them, gives them such conceptions of himself as "the High Priest of their profession," as leads them by faith to view him in heaven, as their everlasting

healer and purifier. Which encourages them to approach him with all their fulness of inward sin and defilement, viewing him in the fulness of his worth and worthiness, grace and fulness, as infinitely exceeding and surpassing them in the meanness of their persons, and demerit of their sins. By which means, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, the efficacy of Christ's death and mediation is so gloriously, freely, and powerfully revealed to them, and their faith so distinctly exercised on it, that they inwardly feel, truly, and spiritually in themselves, the virtue of Christ's blood, and experience fresh peace and pardon flowing therefrom, to the comfort of their minds, and quieting of their consciences. Thus they are brought in their inward thoughts to see and perceive the all-prevailing advocacy of Christ, which is founded upon his righteousness and blood, to be their all-sufficient security to defend and shelter them from all the malicious accusations of the enemy, to render them useless and unsuccessful. So that now Christ's advocateship ap-

pears precious, inestimably precious to them. They seeing Christ expressing in his exercise and discharge of that office, those very same bowels of mercy which rolled within him on his atonement day.

This brings me, thirdly, to set forth, how that the Father's election and grace, shewn already towards his called ones, are considered and made use of by Christ as motives, and reasons with him to rebuke Satan, and to defend them.

This is expressed in the text itself. "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?" In which you may observe, that Satan resists such as the Lord hath chosen! That in resisting them, he resists the Lord, who will not repent of his everlasting purpose of grace towards them, nor of the accomplishing of his purpose in, and with them. The work of grace shall be crowned with glory! for "is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" The city of Jerusalem, and the church of God, before, and at the time when these words

were penned, was like a stick half burnt in the fire of Babylonish invasion and captivity; yet God in mercy powerfully plucked them out of this fire. So the people of God may by the devil and his colleagues be brought into a most afflicted and low condition, so near in appearance as a stick burning in the fire is to ashes; yet God can pull them out of this reduced state, this fire of persecution, and restore them to their former state of safety and glory. The grace of God manifested in his choosing his people in Christ, is immutable. The act of election, though from eternity as an act in the mind and will of God, yet it remains for ever; in and by which act, as the fundamental of grace and glory, all is secured. But God hath expressed his love to the persons of his people, whom he thus addresseth, saying, "I have loved you, I have loved thee, with an everlasting love," which is altogether in its eternal cause and perpetual spring, free and sovereign love. By election the church was united to Christ from everlasting. Out of Jehovah's love flows

every blessing which the Father hath bestowed upon his beloved ones in Christ, both in time and eternity. The very foundation of the church's being, existence, interest in, and relation to Christ, is founded upon the Father's everlasting, free and sovereign love! The church of elect men, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, was viewed in Christ's person, as her head, husband, and representative; he becoming her surety, she as thus considered in him, was upon the foot of his covenant stipulation, justified and pardoned from eternity; as we consider these things as acts in the mind and will of God. The following scripture declares so much: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) The people who have thus been the objects of the Father's love before time, were redeemed in the fulness of time, from sin, the curse, Satan and hell, by Christ's most precious blood. He gave himself for them, "that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself

a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He represents them in himself before the throne, wears their names as a seal upon his heart; and as he bore each, and all of their sins, as their sacrifice; so his intercession is a personal and particular one; taking in, including, and extending itself, to each of his people's particular sins, cases, wants, wounds, and miseries. Christ is the head of the whole election of grace; and he saith to them, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." Which love of the Father's has been gloriously manifested both in eternity, and also in time. Election was the fruit and effect of it. All his covenant acts, counsels, purposes, and decrees in Christ, and with him on their behalf, were the out-goings of his love, his heart's love and mercy towards them. He is himself the author and founder of the whole office of Christ as Mediator. Their effectual calling is owing to his abundant mercy. It is he that draws them by the cords of his love to come to, and receive Christ for salvation; and by his Spirit's operations within and upon them, he makes

Christ in their affections and estimation highly honourable, their *All in All*. Now the Lord Jesus being well acquainted with the interest they have in his Father's heart for love, and how highly honourable they are in his view and esteem, this as considered by Christ, is made use of by him, as motives and reasons to rebuke Satan, and defend them.

And here I would be understood to conceive Christ's intercession founded upon the counsel of the eternal Three; and that in the discharge of it within the veil, there is by this means a bringing to remembrance as it were, the utmost depths of that counsel. As may appear if you read, and enter spiritually in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel; which may be well styled an original copy of our Lord's acts for us within the veil. Here a question may be asked; seeing election of persons is an eternal and internal act in the will of God, and Christ's intercession which is the fruit of his salvation is only on their behalf; how are such to act, who have not the immediate testimony of the Spirit witnessing with their spirits

that they are the children of God? Seeing that this sacred witness may, and doth suspend his testimony when believers are in the sinful cases we have been speaking of! At least he leaves them without the powerful belief and comfort of it! I answer, seeing it remains an eternal irrevocable act in the mind and will of God, and Christ knows each, and all of those persons whom the Father gave to him, whose sins he bore, and for whom he intercedes: let them therefore cast themselves upon the belief of his immutable verity, praying him to deal with them according to it. And let them learn to leave the decision of this great point with himself, to shine upon, and manifest himself to them, and give them a sense of their personal interest in himself just when, and as he pleases. Let them also in such high and holy exercises watch diligently, and mark attentively what holy motions are raised in their souls; and what secrets Christ is pleased to impart unto them. If they find by a passive resignation of themselves to God, it is the desire of their souls to be dealt with

by Jehovah according to his high and holy will, which is known to himself, though unknown to them, and find any divine sweetness coming into their souls from the doctrines of everlasting love, and predestinating grace ; let them look upon it as a token for good, and treasure it up as a choice expression, and evidence of God's love to them. If they can leave themselves simply with Christ, and honour him as their remembrancer in heaven, by believing that he hath the everlasting interest of his people at heart, and has graven them on the palms of his hands ; let them know this is the way to be made truly sensible they are his portion. It is one way which Christ is pleased in heaven to make use of, to manifest his love to the hearts of his people on earth ; to quicken their affections, and excite their love to him, by sending his Spirit to bring such a scripture to their minds, as in a moment, through his life-giving influences, creates such thoughts of him as inflame their souls with the most divine affections to him, and give them most high, glorious, and divine views of his love to them.

To conclude ; Christ who knows the heart of his Father in heaven towards his people in their militant state ; also his own thoughts and views of them, and presents them in his own person, work, and intercession, complete before the throne ; will most surely rebuke Satan for their sakes, giving them good evidence of his faithful fulfilment of his promise, that no weapon formed against them, either by earth or hell, shall prosper. May we find the truth of it. Amen.

SERMON XI.

HEBREWS V. 2.

WHO CAN HAVE COMPASSION ON THE IGNORANT, AND OF THEM THAT ARE OUT OF THE WAY, FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY.

It hath pleased God in the scriptures of ruth, to set before us the exceeding sinfulness of sin, with the universal fall and total corruption of all mankind; to the intent, whenever it is given unto us through the gracious teachings and quickening influence of the Holy Ghost to feel our guilt, see our ruin, and acknowledge our danger, we may be fitted to receive the welcome news of a Saviour, and receive him as our salvation. In the everlasting gospel, the ever blessed God sets forth before us, life and salvation, pardon and redemption, in its utmost freeness, fullness and perfection: so that it is indeed the power of God to every one that believeth.

In this epistle the Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in the glories of his person, and in the dignity and efficacy of his priestly office, with the blessings and benefits which flow therefrom. A subject which exactly suits us, so far as by the inward light and teaching of the Holy Spirit we know ourselves to be sinners, as the whole remedy and cure for sin is contained therein.

Of such vast use and importance did that great light of the Church of Christ, the renowned Doctor Owen conceive the epistle to the Hebrews to be, that he said, 'The natural world might as well be without the sun, as the church of Christ without this epistle.'

As the eternal dignity and everlasting efficacy of Christ's sacrifice flows from the essential GODHEAD and divinity of his person, so this epistle begins with giving us an account thereof. The scriptures reveal and speak of Christ's essential, personal, mediatorial, and relative glory. "God, who at sundry times and divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last

days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." The apostle never treats of that great act of Christ's putting away our sins, and purging away the filth of them by the sacrifice of himself, without speaking of his co-existence in the GODHEAD and equality with the Father, that from the view of him as one in the essential, incomprehensible, self-existing essence, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we might trust in his work as our finished salvation; and derive everlasting consolation from his engagements with his Father on our behalf, and from his offices which receive all their validity therefrom. The sacred writer presents Christ, the Son of the living God, clothed with flesh and blood as the true Immanuel; and calls upon us to contemplate his person, excellencies and office:

“wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” As he pursues the subject he presents him in his priestly glory and mercy, as “a great high priest that is passed into the heavens,” to execute his office there agreeably to his personal dignity and royalty, his oneness with, and relation to his people. To make this great and interesting subject the more plain and familiar, the writer instances in the person, office, and qualifications of the high priests under the law, as symbolical of Christ: “for every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” Beloved, so complete is the revelation given us of Christ by the Holy Spirit in the written word, that did we but freely and spiritually apprehend and receive it, all our discouragements arising from guilt and sin would be en-

tirely removed from our hearts. Did ministers preach Christ just exactly as he shines forth in the volume of inspiration, you would find ye wanted nothing but faith to receive the same, and your hearts would dance for joy. I cannot, I dare not say I preach Christ thus; but could I get through the Spirit's influence into the right art of preaching Christ, it would then be found, that one grand design of it is to remove all stumbling blocks out of the way, and that the one constant voice of Christ in it to saints and sinners is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved. Behold me, behold me!" As the gospel expresses the mystery of God's love, so the subject of it is truly sublime and spiritual. Yet the whole gospel contains for the substance of it, but this one plain and simple truth that, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Which truth we are prone to overlook, on account of its spirituality and simplicity. Oh! that God the Spirit may be pleased most graciously to influence

and direct me, whilst I attempt to proceed with my subject and explain the text, which I propose to do in the following order.

First, by considering in a brief manner, the qualifications of an high priest under the ceremonial law, as specified in the words before us, he must be one "who could have compassion on the ignorant, and on such as are out of the way."

Secondly, by accommodating the passage to Christ; and shew how he was fitted and qualified to exercise himself in his office, as the true high priest of his church and people.

Thirdly, I will observe what a blessed account is here given us of the heart of Christ in heaven towards his people on earth, of his bowels of mercy exercised towards them under all and every circumstance of sin and misery, which can possibly befall them in this vale of tears.

I am first to consider in a brief manner, the qualifications of an high priest under the ceremonial law, as specified in the words before us: he must be one "who could have compassion on

the ignorant and on such as are out of the way."

This chapter before us thus begins: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." The very office itself supposes sin, and was appointed on the account of it. Immediately upon the fall, man's sin, and God's method of salvation from it, were set forth in the institution of a sacrifice, which required one to act in the capacity of a priest to offer it. Hereby a standing memorial was kept up under the patriarchal dispensation of man's guilt, pollution, and demerit; and of Christ the immaculate Lamb, who was to take sin away by the sacrifice of himself. Under the Mosaic economy, a constant solemn remembrance of Christ's propitiatory oblation was kept up, and continued every morning and evening; by which the true Israel of God saw in a figure, and beheld by faith, the sufferings, bloodshed, and death of Jesus, with the perfection, virtue and efficacy of the oblation of our ever

blessed Immanuel. At the appointment and by the command of Jehovah, Aaron was elected and consecrated to exercise the office of high priest, which required him to attend in a very particular manner on the yearly day of expiation, to lay his hands on the head of the scape goat, to confess over him all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the people of Israel; and then to send the animal thus loaded with iniquities, transgressions and sins, transferred from the people to it, into a land not inhabited. After which, the high priest having the sacrifices, was to appear before the Lord with blood and incense, and fume it between the cherubims of glory, and sprinkle the blood before the mercy seat; and on his coming out of the holy of holies, he was to lift up his hands and pronounce the benediction. All which service was in behalf of the people, considered as in themselves sinful, unclean, and unworthy. That this solemn service might be performed in a feeling manner by the high priest, he was chosen from among men, a man in himself, and of himself, guilty,

sinful and unclean. He was experimentally to consider this, that he might exercise himself in the discharge of his office in a tender, merciful and compassionate manner. His office was for the benefit of the people. He was the representative of them. His approach to God was on their behalf. He was to make and complete the typical atonement for their crimes, to intercede with God for them. Thus "every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." As a peculiar qualification to the exercise of this office for the real benefit of the people, the high priest must be one, "who could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." He being the subject of the same sinful nature, and liable to sinful infirmities with the people, for whom he was concerned: the consideration of which was sufficient, under the influence of grace, to make him compassionate and tender-hearted. So that if any of them

were gone out of God's way by wilful sinning, falling by infirmity, or ignorant of the revealed will and commands of the Most High, the high priest was to express his pity for them, his compassions on them, and that because he stood united to them, interested in them, and was related to them by virtue of his office. So that let their several cases, as personally considered, be what they would, the atonement made by him was always complete; by which their sin was hid and covered. His intercession was always the same, and their interest in it always alike. His benediction was pronounced with the same love on them, let their cases be what they would. In all which our most precious Lord Jesus Christ was most gloriously typified, represented, and shadowed forth. The high priest bore the names of all the twelve tribes on his breast-plate, inscribed on the twelve precious stones in it, which represented the elect Israel as fixed on the heart of Christ, and his heart fixed on them, he having them in everlasting remembrance in heaven. It is probable the spouse al-

ludes to it, when she prays thus: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart." The high priest also bore the names of the twelve tribes on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, to point out Christ's bearing up his people, though burthened with weights of sin and misery, and bearing up his whole church by the arm of his power. Moses, it may be, alludes to this, when he says: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Isaiah seems to have reference to it also, when speaking of Jesus he saith, "the government shall be upon his shoulder." The high priest appeared in the presence of God in the holiest of all, as "the holy one of Jehovah," having this inscription on the front of the mitre, "Holiness to the Lord;" and though his back was then towards them, and his face turned from them, yet they were worn on his heart, nor was he ever at any time more deeply concerned for them, nor engaged on their behalf, to execute his office for their real benefit. Judge then if it was not absolutely necessary the high priest should bear as it were an im-

mutable love, be full of compassion, and clothed with bowels of mercy, be pitiful and tender-hearted ; that he might exercise himself in his sacred function, agreeably to the nature and dignity of his office, as the representative of our Jesus. From this brief account of the qualification of the high priest under the ceremonial law, with his work and office, on the behalf of God's Israel ; considered in themselves, sinful, guilty and liable to err from the right way, as ignorant, needing divine clemency ; it absolutely required the person who discharged this office, should always in the exercise of it, be one who could " have compassion on the ignorant, and on them who are out of the way, for that he himself was compassed with infirmity," and liable to sin, even as other men, if left of God to himself ! The spiritual meaning of all which, as it represents the compassions of our Jesus, contains true pure gospel. The depths of his grace and mercy are truly astonishing and divine. This brings me therefore

Secondly, by accommodating our text

to Christ, to shew how he was fitted and qualified to exercise himself in his office as the true high priest of his church and people.

How ineffably precious must the Lord Jesus Christ be to that soul, who by faith views him, as "one who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." May the eternal Spirit enable me so to set him forth, as that he may become increasingly precious to each of you who know him! I grant the words before us are not spoken of Christ, but of his type; yet they most surely may serve to represent him to us. For if frail men, Messiah's types who officiated in the office of high priests, were to be qualified with this peculiar disposition to fit them for their office; to be such who could and were disposed to have compassion on the ignorant and those who were out of the way; surely the antitypical Aaron, infinitely transcends them in these qualifications! The person of Christ as God-man, mediator, is wonderful! "The brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his per-

son," in whom, and by whom, all the love, mercy, and grace of the essential Three was to be manifested to the very utmost. The essential Son of God became true and very man, God and man in one Christ, that the love of the GODHEAD might shine forth in its fullest splendour, and the highest instance and evidence be given of it to the elect in their fallen state and sinful circumstances. The love of Christ to his people is infinite! From everlasting to everlasting, it is one and the same invariable act. It admits of no increase, nor decrease. It is eternal, invariable love! That full vent might be given to the out-goings of it, the Son of God left his throne of majesty, the bosom of his Father, laid aside the glory he had with him before the world was, came down from heaven, and for us men, and for our salvation became incarnate, and was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. The human nature of Christ was framed by the Holy Ghost, to be a proper instrument for God the Son to perform the work of obedience and suffering, and to express in it to his

people, all the mercy and compassion of God. The heart of Christ was large enough to contain all the love of God, with the whole of its manifestative fulness to the whole body of the elect. The bowels of Jesus were capable of containing the whole fulness of God's manifestative mercy, and from Christ, God-man, as the ordinance of grace and salvation, all the blessings thereof were to flow forth abundantly. O stupendous grace! the Father's coequal and co-eternal Son veiled his glory, clothed himself with flesh and blood, came into our world by his open and visible assumption of our nature, addressing his Father thus: "A body hast thou prepared me, lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God." Well might all the angels in heaven start from their thrones, leave them, and descend to earth, beholding with inexpressible admiration their Creator and eternal King, wrapt up in the rags of our mortality! No wonder they sung, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men," when Immanuel, whose nature, personality, love, mercy, and sal-

vation, is a confluence of holy wonders, was seen by them, in the likeness of sinful flesh! It is an essential truth, confirmed by the joint suffrage of the whole bible, that Christ is Jehovah, self-existent, and all-sufficient, the true God, and eternal life. It is impossible for us to exalt him too high, he being "God over all, blessed for ever. Amen." Yet when we consider him in his GODHEAD, we must not overlook him as a suitable Saviour for us. If we would view him as the Christ of God, we must behold him as God-man, and consider him as God dwelling personally in our nature which he took into subsistence with himself. Then his being a partaker of our nature will encourage our approach to him, whilst his eternal GODHEAD will give us sufficient cause, and his immutable word sufficient warrant to trust in him, which we may do with safety, because it is written, "blessed are all those who put their trust in him." And here let me intreat you to view this Prince of peace, his taking our nature, state, and condition, that therein he might in his own

person undergo all the miseries of life, taste and experience all sorts and kinds of afflictions and temptations, and experience in his own body and soul the whole curse due to sin. Though our Lord did not represent us in his incarnation and birth, yet he became incarnate and was born for us. He took with our nature all its sinless infirmities, and as he was bone of our bone, so he became like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. He was clothed with a body of frail mortal flesh, and was the subject of all the sinless infirmities thereof; he passed through our state, exposed to the very same trials, afflictions, temptations, and miseries with us. He was the subject who was charged with all the sins of his people. He felt the weight and burden of them, he saw clearly the venom and demerit contained in them. His understanding had a clear and full apprehension of each and every one of them: and though he could not feel guilt in the way we do, yet he so far experienced it as to be in this, as well as in other respects, tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. His whole

life was made up of a loss of his personal glory, an eclipse of his person : he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs. He sustained more misery in his own person, than can ever befall the whole creation. Nor did his people ever experience any, but Christ drank of the same cup though he was never miserable under any of them, because his being in a condition capable to experience them, was the fruit of his own voluntary engagements with his Father on the behalf of his chosen. He was tried with temptations from the world and the devil as his people are. Does Satan tempt any of them to doubt their sonship? He assaulted Christ with, "If thou be the Son of God." Does Satan tempt any of them to murder? Christ their Lord was tried with the same temptation. Do any of them experience the hidings of their heavenly Father's countenance? So did Christ to an inexpressible degree, so that he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Are any of them plunged in deep waters of soul distress? Do they cry out of the low

dungeon? Christ was in such a state and case as to say, "All thy waves and storms are gone over me. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off." Must they pass through the grave and gate of death? Christ hath passed through before them, and by his death he hath abolished death, and by his rising to life again, hath restored to us everlasting life. Oh! what infinite compassions, what depths of mercy, what boundless grace, what matchless love is Jesus Christ the subject of! O Sirs, Christ is as ready to forgive sin, as it is natural to you to be sinful. And Oh! that ye could but apprehend this blessed truth, that Jesus Christ is just exactly what you as poor sinful people need him to be. He can have compassion on the ignorant, on such as have lost their way to heaven, and know not their right hand from their left in scripture matters. Some of you it may be though under some influence of the Holy Spirit, yet know not what ye want. Ye think ye would fain be saved by Christ, yet you know not how to come to him. Ye feel some emotions and de-

sires after him, yet ye cannot tell, it may be, how to express them to Christ, nor to such as ye think belong to Christ. When ye would pray, it may be, you cannot utter your desires at the throne. When ye read the word, it may be, ye complain ye cannot understand it. Be of good cheer, beloved; Jesus, the compassionate Saviour esteems it his glory to prove to a demonstration that he can have compassion on the ignorant. Come and give up thyself to him, for teaching, pardon, salvation and life everlasting. He saith, "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." He teacheth and makes the simple wise unto salvation. He is every way qualified for his office, which is to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn. Oh! that through the grace of the Holy Spirit, ye may each of you, let your cases be what they may, apply this day to Jesus, and find in your souls by blessed experience, the power of the Lord present to heal, that in him, the fatherless and friendless, the sinful, guilty,

polluted, and undone, findeth mercy. Our Lord Jesus, as the high priest over the house of God, hath not only compassion on the ignorant, but also on such as are out of the way. By such as are out of the way are to be understood such as being left to themselves, have willingly and wilfully forsaken the Lord the fountain of living waters, by willingly and wilfully sinning against him. It pleased God under the ceremonial dispensation to ordain and provide a sacrifice for sins of ignorance, and also for wilful sinning; to point out the profession and all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. To shew it was to be a personal one, an atonement including and comprehending each, all, and every particular sin of the elect, and to declare that his blood cleanseth from *all* sin; and, as I think and conceive, the apostle Paul glances at it here, has it in view, and from hence proceeds to set forth Christ in the highest meridian of his mediatorial grace, mercy, and clemency.

Our Lord having once been compassed with the sinless infirmities of his people, covered with their sins and surrounded

with their sorrows, encompassed round about on every side by their enemies; is so feelingly touched with a sense of every sorrow and misery which befalls them, and his bowels are so inwardly moved, that they break forth into such expressions, as prove that he is rich in mercy to them. His bowels roll within him to do them good. He has in our nature, which he wore by personal union, felt every sort of grief which can possibly befall any of his beloved ones; his heart is towards them, he having on their behalf, and for their benefit experienced sorrows inexpressible! tasted all sorts and kinds of death for them, been tempted, tried and forsaken as their head and Saviour; he is therefore out of his own heart, with a pity and affection peculiar to himself, experimentally affected with the case of his people, and always disposed to exercise pity and compassion towards them; let their cases be what they may. So that I go on, and will,

Thirdly, observe what a blessed account is here set before us, and given us, of the heart of Christ in heaven, towards

his people upon earth, of his bowels of mercy exercised towards them under all and every circumstance of sin and misery which can possibly befall them in this vale of tears.

The people of God being the invariable objects of Christ's love, the travail of his soul, the joy of his heart, his crown and diadem, must be remembered by him, though he is exalted far above all blessings and praise, with everlasting kindness. He saith expressly, "All my delight is in the saints which are on the earth." When he was about to die for them, he gave an instance how that having loved his own which were in the world, he would love them to the end, or for ever, by performing a servile act, as recorded in the thirteenth of John's Gospel. Teaching us thereby, that when in heaven his heart would be so continually engaged and concerned about his beloved on earth, that in the midst of all his glory it would as it were cause his heart to leap for joy to be again in the world to evidence his love, even in the least and meanest instance of it. So

full of love was he! Our Lord Jesus being now exalted on his royal throne of mediation, by the covenant and oath of the eternal Three, it is his honour and glory to shine forth in the full lustre of his grace and mercy, and to express and manifest it to the uttermost. The apostle Peter speaking of Christ's exaltation saith, "Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to his people, and the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus as an enthroned, crowned Saviour, in glory everlasting, is upon his throne Almighty to save, bless and defend all who trust in him, to express his love to to his called ones to the very uttermost. He is able to save them from all their sins. His blood is efficacious to cleanse them from every spot, stain, guilt, and defilement: to heal every wound, to pardon every transgression, to save with an everlasting salvation all who believe and trust in him. He lives in heaven a priest for ever, after the power of an endless life, to bestow the blessings of his mediation on such sinners as he died for. As

long as they remain here below, they are the subjects of a sinful nature. Through its influences within and upon them, they sometimes fall into evil, which fetches sighs and groans from them which cannot be expressed. Therefore whilst in this state Christ's love towards them is chiefly discovered and manifested towards them, in acts of mercy and pardon. It is hard for them to believe Jesus, in heaven, who "loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood," can compassionate them, when they have contracted fresh guilt, brought fresh stains on their minds, and gotten fresh wounds, being overcome by their own false and deceitful hearts. It would make Jesus precious indeed, if they did believe his heart was thus towards them, amid all that befalls them of sin and guilt, temptations and misery. Yet his state of exaltation, by which he is so far above them, leads them to think, it can scarce admit that he should be so interested in their sinful cases, as to be naturally inclined, and necessarily disposed, to be full of compassion and mercy towards them. We are forgetful that he

hath actually taken up, into the highest heavens, all the sinless infirmities belonging to our nature, that he may express them towards us, as our wounds and wants require. Let us here take Paul for our guide, and therefore listen to what he says. He opens heaven to us, and speaks of Christ as there, in the thirteenth verse of the former chapter, saying, "Seeing then we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Here is Christ within the veil. Now he proceeds to shew us what Christ is to us, how he feels for us, and is disposed towards us. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." O stupendous mercy! marvellous grace! the bowels of Jesus, though on his throne, are what they were on the cross, bowels of mercy! By *infirmities*, sins are to be understood. Any, and all those which the called are liable to. The mercy of Christ is here set open to our view. It flows forth in acts of everlast-

ing kindness. Are any of you who believe, fallen by your iniquity? Jesus saith, "I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely." Are you under present guilt? "his blood cleaseth from all sin." Jesus is a present Saviour. Are ye fallen into sin? thus it is written, "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Is there a sense of present sin, guilt, and pollution on your minds? Jesus is now this moment with all the virtue of his blood in heaven, "the propitiation for our sins." O believers look off yourselves entirely, and look to Christ continually. He hath you in his thoughts continually. He engages never to turn away from you from doing you good. He saith, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will be your guide through life, your comforter at death, and your exceeding great reward in heaven.

Oh! that God the Holy Ghost may bless what has been thus feebly delivered, and encourage your hearts by it to trust continually in Christ Jesus. Amen.

SERMON XII.

I COR. XV. 57.

BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHICH GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SIN is the greatest of all evils; and it hath, and still continues to produce all kinds of miseries. It has wholly ruined and corrupted our natures, and rendered them the subjects of evils, diseases, and miseries inconceivable and inexpressible. There is not, nor can there be any sort or degree of pain, misery, or distress we feel in our persons, either in mind, body, or estate, but sin is solely the cause of. All the miseries this nation groans under in the present day are wholly to be ascribed to sin. Yea, the damnation of sinners in hell, with all the tremendous horrors they are filled with, which they sustain and undergo in the infliction of

the righteous curse of the broken law for ever and ever, is but the fruit and effect of it, the wages due unto it. So that it may be truly said, there is but one evil to be found in earth or hell, and that is sin; all other being but the natural fruits and effects of it. To describe the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the nature of it fully; to express the guilt, and make manifest the demerit of it, it is impossible! it being infinitely beyond all the evils produced by it, and continued through its reign, power, influence and dominion. Damnation itself, which is the most tremendous of all miseries which can possibly befall a rational creature, hath not that evil in it which is in sin itself, it being but the effect, which sin as the cause produces, and brings upon the sinner's body and soul for ever.

Among the various evils which sin hath introduced, and rendered man's nature liable unto, death is one, which to sinners out of Christ may emphatically be styled *the king of terrors*; because it puts a stop to all present pursuits, deprives of all creature good, separates soul and

body, consigning the one to the dust, whilst it introduces the other into boundless eternity. And the soul falling into the hands of the living God, and being found by and before him in its sinful, guilty, and polluted state, is immediately sentenced to eternal wrath, with, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

The everlasting gospel of the blessed God, as it informs us of the covenant which obtained between the essential, co-equal, coeternal Three; so it declares how sinners may be saved from sin, escape damnation, and inherit glory, viz. by faith in the obedience and atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord; who was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, by being made sin and a curse for us.

This chapter might well bear the title of the believers' consolations against the fears of death, with his triumph over that last enemy and the grave, by faith in the resurrection of Christ Jesus his Lord. Our apostle begins with an account of what he esteemed the prime points of his

ministry, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "I delivered to you, (says he) first of all that which I also received, which I laid as the foundation of your faith and hope in God, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." In the everlasting covenant the essential and only begotten Son of God, at his Father's call, and in obedience to his Father's will, undertook for, and substituted himself on the behalf of the many which the Father had given him. He for them became incarnate, obeyed the law, and bore their sins in his own body on the tree; he died in their law-place, room, and stead, bearing the whole fulness of his Father's curse, and wrath due to their transgressions. Having "finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness," he cried out, "It is finished." As he yielded up the ghost by death, his body was under the arrest of it, and laid in the cold sepulchre that the grave might thereby be perfumed, and become a bed of roses to all his saints. He rose by his

own power on the third day to immortal life, as Lord and conqueror of sin, Satan, death, and hell, i. e. the grave; by which it was fully proved that the work of salvation wrought out on the behalf, and for the benefit of his church and people was fully accomplished, and that he was become "the author of eternal salvation" to all that believe on him.

This being a truth of infinite consequence, the apostle goes on to give undeniable evidence of our Lord's resurrection, by reciting the names, and pointing out the persons who were eye-witnesses, and had borne their testimony thereof. He shews the vast importance of Christ's resurrection by shewing what would be the case, if Christ were not raised up from under the power of death. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." He most positively declares that "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." And the head being risen, his members who are his mystic body, must and will be raised also. But there is an order to be observed. "Christ

is the first fruits." His resurrection sanctifies and ensures the resurrection of all the elect. He rose as a conqueror over death, rose by his own power, rose as "the first born, and first begotten from the dead;" after him, by virtue of union with him, through the mighty working of his power, they that are Christ's will be raised at his second coming. He then enters freely and fully into the subject of the resurrection of the Lord's dead, reproves the folly of such as in the church of Corinth denied the resurrection; treats of the glorious change which will pass on these bodies of ours at the last day; declares a mystery which had been hid from the beginning of the world, how living saints would be changed in their bodies "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (living saints) shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." At which time "will be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory."

The saints risen insult death, and triumph over it, and the grave for ever, saying, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The words of my text thus in part opened, are a triumph over death and the grave; uttered by Paul, and put by him into the mouths of saints, as newly risen from the dead on the glorious morn of their resurrection. In speaking further on them, I will aim to hold forth, and express the following particulars.

First, by considering to whom they belong, and are applicable.

Secondly, that believers in Christ have good reason to triumph in him, and may well shout victory over death itself, and the grave, saying, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thirdly, the misery of such as have no portion in this grace, with the happiness of such as have.

I propose in the first place to consider to whom the words before us belong, and to whom they are applicable. It may easily be seen, and conceived by you, that my text stands closely connected with the words going immediately before it. The word *But* knits it so, that in a very concise manner I must survey them again, that I may shew the true ultimate scope thereof. I will begin with the fifty-first verse, "Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all (i. e. living saints who shall be on earth at the second coming of Christ) be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (i. e. the dead in Christ) shall be raised incorruptible in their bodies, made powerful, glorious, and immortal, and we (i. e. living saints) shall be changed," in our bodies without tasting death, and undergo in them the same change which other saints are the subjects of by their resurrection. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall

have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." These words are quoted from the twenty-fifth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, and were spoken by the prophet of the glorious Messiah, who as the conqueror of death was to swallow it up in his own person in victory, and has done it, and abolished death; and what he did his people have their part, share, and interest in; and these words are here applied by Paul to saints on their resurrection morn; who are represented as insulting death, and triumphing over it and the grave, saying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" These last words are quoted from Hosea, and belong to Christ, and may be considered as spoken by him at his own personal resurrection from the grave. Christ hath destroyed and abolished death, so that at the time these words refer to, it will be known no more for ever. Then the grave, that great devourer, its bands will be loosed, it will never have power any

more. By way of reply to these questions it is said, "the sting of death is sin." But Christ died in the room and stead of his people, charged with their sins, and he bore their iniquities; hence there is redemption in his blood, the free, full, and irrevocable pardon of them. "The strength of sin," that which gives it a damning guilt and power to all who live and die in, and under it, is *the law*, the holy law of God which pronounces an eternal curse upon every transgressor of it. But Christ fulfilled the law for his people; hence they are justified from all things, so that they shout, "But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." So that these words in their primary meaning belong to saints, when risen from the dead, made completely, in body and soul, in every sense and faculty, like Christ, and fully conformable to him; when they most gloriously appear to be the sons of God, being the children of the resurrection. We commonly apply them to believers in their present state, and many of them express their strong faith in

Christ by the use of them, and they well may, as there is a present and everlasting victory in Christ, which they are called upon to anticipate and enjoy. But their fulness of triumph can only be uttered in this language, when risen from the grave of death, as lords and conquerors in their own persons through Christ over it. At which time their bodies will be like Christ's, they will then see him as he is, and be completely fitted for the full enjoyment of him in his eternal kingdom of glory. Having shewn to whom these words belong, and are in their highest sense applicable, so I proceed secondarily to shew how they belong only at present to believers in Jesus, who may mix faith with them, make use of them, and thereby express their triumphs in Christ's victories over death and hell, by which I mean the grave. But will it not be suitable to set forth and declare, who are believers? "All men have not faith." Every man born into this world deserveth God's wrath and damnation. No man can save himself. Sin hath totally corrupted all flesh. All mankind are equally fallen,

and in their natures as ruined by the fall are alike unclean. The law hath pronounced an eternal curse upon all Adam's posterity. Who then can be saved? None. No, not one, by any power, will, or act of their own. This is a truth which shines as clear as the sun throughout the written word of the Most High. Faith is the gift of God, and it cannot be received without the mighty operation of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is pleased to give divine evidence of this in the hearts of all whom he awakens. He quickens their souls as the Spirit of life from Christ, with life in Christ. He shews them what sin is, and what is done in them, and for them. He gives them to see its nature, guilt, and filth. He makes them acquainted with its power and dominion: causes them to fall down in their own view as dead, and damned at the sight he gives them of it, and of themselves as the subjects of it. By which means they see with their own eyes, experience in their own souls, feel in their own hearts, and acknowledge before the Lord, how justly they deserve the dam-

nation of hell. Hereby they feel their need of pardoning mercy, apprehend their need of Jesus and his salvation. His blood and righteousness become precious to them; and to be informed that he is Almighty to save, that he saves freely, fully, completely, every sinner who trusts in him, this is gospel indeed. A joyful sound, harmonious to the ear! The name of Jesus is exhilarating, which yields joy to the heart which is unspeakable. This is a brief account of the Holy Spirit's work in the souls of men, and the method he makes use of, to the intent that they, feeling their want of Jesus and his salvation, he may become inestimably precious unto them, as made known to them in his word, and revealed by it in their hearts. In his own good pleasure, and at the time when it will make most for his glory, he leads the poor, convinced, self-emptied sinner to Christ, takes of his things, and shews them to him, and so effectually, and divinely enlightens the mind with the saving knowledge of Christ from the word of the gospel, and so opens the heart to re-

ceive Christ by it, that there is through the mighty power of the Lord the Spirit a real closing between the sinner and Jesus, most truly effected. This is by the inward revelation of Jesus Christ, by which the soul apprehends the virtue of Christ's blood as effectually sufficient to cleanse from every spot and stain of sin before the Lord, and that for ever; and has a sight of Christ's righteousness, so as to have the heart taken with it, and drawn to pray to be found clothed therein, living, dying, and before God's tribunal. So that such are believers, who see by faith, salvation in Christ, are drawn by the Father through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, under the attractive, and omnipotent sweetness of everlasting love, to the Lord Jesus for pardon, life, and salvation. Such an one is a believer who takes Christ's word for his warrant, and by faith in it rests himself on the person, blood, and righteousness of Immanuel, for present, spiritual, and everlasting salvation. Nor shall such be ashamed, or confounded, world without end. But are all in this congregation

such as believe in Christ to the saving of the soul? Though without all doubt, each of you cannot be styled believers in Christ Jesus, yet ye are all sinners, and ye need Christ, and dying without faith in him ye are everlastingly undone. The gospel, which is the charter of salvation, contains a free, full and perfect pardon, to each and every sinner, be he who, or what he may, who comes to Christ for it. I stand here with one foot on time, the other on eternity, to inform you that Christ himself, who is truth itself, from whom pardon is freely dispensed expressly saith, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Here is no objection against thee, O sinner, though thou hast been *living* in sin and unbelief all thy days to the present moment. If thy sins and guilt are as infinite as sins and guilt ever were; if thine exceed all that are actually in hell; yet upon this general word of Christ thou mayest hope. And if through the power of the Holy Ghost working by it in thy soul, thou art enabled to believe the word which Jesus hath spoken, and

comest to Christ, putting thy whole trust in him, thou wilt find the blood of Christ effectual, and that it cleanseth thee from all sin, and that his all-sufficient righteousness will hide all thy deformity from view. If thou art brought to renounce all self-dependence, to come in the exercise of simple dependence on Christ's blood and righteousness to God for salvation, he will be pleased to pronounce thee a pardoned person, saying and speaking from his word, and by his Spirit to thee, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Oh! that God may accompany this with an effectual blessing to you to-day, and send his Spirit into your hearts that ye may cry, *Abba, Father*. Believers in Christ are interested in every blessing which he obtained by the sweat of his brow, the travail of his soul, the triumphs and victories of his cross; so that it belongs unto them, and it highly becomes them to say in views of death and the grave, "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through

our Lord Jesus Christ." They may now triumph in Christ by faith, as lords and conquerors over sin, Satan, death and hell, and in the exercises of a lively hope anticipate their future blessedness when they shall awake from the sleep of death, in the perfect likeness of Christ, which will yield them complete satisfaction, as it did the psalmist, who said, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

This brings me, secondly, to shew that believers in Christ have good reason to triumph in him, and may well shout victory over death itself, and the grave, saying, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

That such as have life in Christ, and are quickened by the Spirit of Christ are real believers in him, none can deny. That they have good reason to triumph over sin, self, the world which lieth in the arms of the wicked one, Satan and all the hosts of fallen spirits, death and hell, in the exercise of faith on the person, work, salvation, victories, word and promise of

Christ, none will gainsay, who are acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus; for it is an eternal truth founded upon immutable evidences drawn from the word of God, and confirmed by the examples and experiences of many Saints recorded therein. Yet it is to be greatly lamented that few of those blessed persons who believe on Christ, so live on him, by maintaining in their own minds the truths and doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, as to walk by faith according to their high rank and dignity. Some of them do not conceive it to be their bounden duty and service to honour the Lord Jesus to the very uttermost by believing on him, making their continual boast of him, and triumphing in him. Yet there are none of them, acquainted with scripture, but look on Paul as a believer who honoured Christ this way. But then they consider him as a saint of vast attainment in the knowledge of the person, love, salvation, offices, fulness, blessings and benefits of Christ: a champion for free grace, who lived in Christ, high above and beyond himself in sights and views of

Jesus, in the exercise of his spiritual faculties on him, and in real fellowship with him ; by which he had, in holy intercourse with his divine Lord, the possession and enjoyment of the blessings and benefits of his great salvation. As we consider his high valuation of Christ, his personal communion with him through the grace of the eternal Spirit, we wonder not that he should always shout Victory, victory, everlasting victory over sin, Satan, death and hell, saying, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" because we conceive him favoured with peculiar privileges, forgetting that what Paul was as a saint, he was in Christ, and what he did to the honour and glory of God, he did it by faith in Jesus as his Saviour. We are prone to forget and very backward to believe and have right apprehensions of this, that what Paul was in Christ, that every believer also is. Nor does he challenge any thing as belonging to himself as one with Christ, but what belongs to the whole household and family of *faith*. If he speaks of being a conquerer in

Christ he does but place himself in the rank with other believers, and then he says, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." This is the doctrine which runs throughout the whole Bible, that Christ and his people are one. What he is to his whole church collectively, that he is to each and every individual member thereof, the weakest as well as the strongest. Every believer is in Christ, one with him, and hath life, grace, holiness, righteousness, purity, blessedness and glory in him. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God (i. e. of Jehovah the Father) is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) This then affords great and good reason to every real believer in Christ Jesus to triumph in him on account of the union between them, and because "there is no condemnation to them who are in him," they being justified from all things, God having freely forgiven them all trespasses, and because, "they are passed from death unto life, and are complete in Jesus." Union between Christ and his people is

the foundation and fountain of all the communion betwixt him and them; which consists in their being made partakers of him, and in having fellowship with him in grace and glory. It is because they were one with him that "he loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood:" so that they have good reason to triumph in Christ, and may well shout Victory over all enemies, sins, and miseries, which will fully appear as we consider Christ as their salvation. Nothing can distress the believer more than sin doth, in the sense and experience which he hath of it, in its nature and guilt, pollution and demerit. To get above it, to triumph over it by faith in Jesus, is high and most divine.

It may be, you will ask how it can be done? The apostle did for himself, and others, triumph over it. Let me in a brief manner set before you how a believer may, and should triumph in Christ over the whole guilt, pollution and demerit of sin; view himself in Christ complete, glory in his cross, view death destroyed, Satan conquered, the grave vanquished, and cry

out, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" and as the scripture alone shall be my guide, so let me illustrate this by pointing it out in the case and person of our Apostle before us; and we also may by faith in the work and word of Jesus be as bold as he was, and triumph as he did. As it respects sin in its guilt, pollution and demerit; when we consider the eternal worth of the person of Christ God-man, who gave himself for us; offered himself as the substitute, and bore in his own body and soul, in the garden and on the cross, all the sin, guilt and pollution contained in the iniquities of his people, and by the sacrifice of his whole person put away sin, purging away the guilt of it by his most precious blood-shedding: then we see the person, sacrifice, sufferings and obedience of Christ unto death contain such everlasting virtue and efficacy, as infinitely outvies the meanness of our persons, exceeds the utmost evil contained in the nature, guilt and pollution of our crimes, and by believing God's testimony, that the blood of Jesus Christ his son

cleanseth us from all sin, we experience its healing, cleansing virtue, and triumph, saying, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Hear ye the Apostle in his high and mighty triumph over sin, law, justice, Satan and every enemy; and in his challenge to all, and every opposer; over all and every thing which could be urged, or suggested from any, from every quarter. He cries out with a loud voice, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Paul was strong in faith, giving glory to God; a very bold man was he, who read the scriptures with critical exactness, making use of whatsoever he found in them, to encourage his faith and hope in God. He takes these words, in which he expresseth this glorious triumph over sin in its pollution, guilt and demerit, out of the mouth of Christ, and speaks them after him as his own, and the voice

of the whole church. They are quoted from the 50th of Isaiah, where Christ is represented as standing at his Father's tribunal charged with all the iniquities of his people. In defiance of sin imputed and curse inflicted, as the Almighty conquerer of it cries out: "He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near unto me. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me?" Why, Paul, any believer in Jesus may be as bold as you are. And I ask you, sirs, who that belongs to Christ, and has clear views of his union with, and interest in him, but may be thus bold also? by beholding and believing that Christ hath abolished sin, curse and death, and is living in the presence of God as the lamb, who hath for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Does a body of sin and death hinder thee, O believer, from triumphing in Christ? it should not. It did not Paul. He knew himself in Christ perfectly freed from the whole of it, so that it was not imputed to him. He tells us in the sixth

chapter of the Romans, it was put to death when Christ died, and nailed to the cross with him. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." He would have believers upon consideration of their union with Christ in his death and resurrection, and their fellowship with him therein, reckon themselves to be in God's sight what Christ is; as truly dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ their head and substitute. "Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Does the in-being of sin, that mystery of iniquity within us, in its workings, influences and cursed motions in our mortal bodies, hinder us from triumphing in Christ? Paul felt, and had more bitter experience of it than any of us can pretend to. Yet after a sore conflict with it, though he cried out in the bitterness of his soul: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" immediately he triumphs in

faith, viewing his perfect deliverance in Christ from it: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Does the world assault? is it in the arms of the wicked one? Be of good cheer saith Jesus, I have overcome the world. "God forbid (saith Paul) that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:" thus he triumphs in Christ's cross. Is Satan a sworn, constant, subtle enemy? Christ hath trod on his head, hath him under his feet, and he shall soon be under thine. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Doth death assault? Paul triumphs. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" Christ hath destroyed death, and him that had the power of it, that is the Devil. The believer in Jesus may defy death, and when it actually seizes him, may sing and shout: "O death, where is thy sting?" And why, O believers should you not live by faith on Christ, and do as valiantly in the exercise of it on him as ever Paul did? seeing ye have the same Jesus to

look to, the same salvation to live on, and the same victories to triumph in. Ye have the same word of promise, which affords the same supports for your confidence it did to Paul. O that we might triumph in the person, salvation, victories and conquests of our Lord, as he did ! This would be to honour Christ indeed.

This brings me, thirdly, to point out the misery of such as have no portion in this grace, with the happiness of such as have.

Such as have at present no portion in this grace, are sinners in a state of sin and unbelief, of whom it is said, "he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And Christ saith expressly, "he that believeth not shall be damned." The misery of such even in their present state is inexpressible, though they feel it not to any good purpose, so as to turn to the Lord. Sinners, ye that are here this day in your sins, hear ye the word of the Lord. "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." Look round you and see what sin hath done, and is daily doing amongst

you. The present times are truly awful. Go where one will, every body complains of the war : I am not going to enter into the subject, by saying whether it be just, or unjust so to do. But this I must and will say, that which is the sole cause of the war, and continues it, is overlooked, and no complaint is made about it, and it is sin: personal, family, national sin. This, Sirs, is the cause of all our national calamities. Alas ! who lays this to heart ? where are the persons who mourn for the abominations committed in the land, who smite upon the thigh, crying out, What have we, what have I done ? will ye sinners go on in your sins ? think, O think, ye must die ; and how will ye die in your present state ? for ye are liable to damnation every moment. Let but the breath in your nostrils cease, and ye are immediately in hell. The mortality which prevails in this and neighbouring towns, so that death enters into our windows, and daily snatches away some or other from amongst us, is an alarming providence, and loudly calls upon you to prepare to meet God at his judgment seat. The

probability of the yellow fever being in the country, which should it break out and spread, would make tremendous devastation, loudly calls upon you to consider your ways. The want of corn, the scarcity of provisions, the calamities produced by the war, are solemn tokens of God's wrathful displeasure. Will ye then, O sinners, go on in your sins? ye may make a wretched shift and live out of Christ, but what will ye do in the hour of death and day of judgment, if found out of him? it will be damnation indeed, to die out of Christ. A sinner in a dying moment, with his pulse ceasing, his heart failing, his life expiring, his soul departing, and launching into boundless eternity! O what thought can conceive or tongue express the horrors which must then fall on him! I grant that such as die under the curse of God, being through the deceitfulness of sin insensible of their state, may die in peace. But the soul being departed from the body, let us follow it into vast eternity, at the bar of offended Deity, where, found in its sin, the awful sentence of damnation already

upon record in this book, is passed, and the soul is cast into the prison of hell. Let us contemplate its entrance there. What agonies must accompany its final condemnation! Being all intellect now, a full view and remembrance will be presented to it. Eternity which is a continual flux of time will know no end. The damned will have these subjects to engage their minds on, the exceeding sinfulness of their natures, and sins committed in the body: the anger and wrath of God which they are the just objects and subjects of on account of their sin: his holiness and justice, majesty and eternity: this will be hell, unspeakable misery, to be filled through and through with a real sense, feeling and experience of God's curse and wrath due to sin. O the thoughtlessness of sinners! though it may be many of you have fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, friends and acquaintances in hell, yet you live in the same state, in the same sins which were their eternal ruin. We generally follow our deceased fellow mortals no further than the grave.

Never once asking, where is he, and she, whom death hath called from time to eternity? One who viewed the carelessness of survivors, though some of their friends were separated from them by death, and were actually in hell, numbered with the damned, broke out by way of apostrophe to God, saying, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear so is thy wrath!" The pains of hell, the agonies of the damned, the tremendous wrath of the Lord God Almighty which will be executed perpetually on them every moment in eternity is beyond all conception. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord we persuade you by all the terrors of hell, by all the joys of heaven, by the love, soul travail, and bloody sweat of Jesus, to consider and examine what your state before God is. It has been hinted to me, I cannot say I have examined it, but if so, it is vastly remarkable, that of the many lately cut off by death in this place, by the present fatal fever, not one of them were even professors, or so much as hearers of God's word. O

that this may stir you up to attend God's worship, and may the Lord give you to know the day of your visitation, that to day ye may hear Christ's voice, and harden not your hearts ! I turn from this most awful theme ; praying the Lord may accompany the subject with the power and energy of his Spirit to your hearts, to contemplate the happiness of such as have their portion in Christ, and his rich grace.

Believers in Jesus having him for their portion, and an enjoyment in their own souls of his rich mercy and grace, they are blessed in their persons, souls, and bodies, which are united to the person of Christ, God-man ; who has washed them in his own blood from every spot and stain of sin ; presents them in his own righteousness before the throne ; and has obtained eternal peace and pardon for them. Their blessedness consists in their being one with Christ, and in his being one with them. Their safety consists in having him their friend, their shield, and defence, in their being saved in him, as well as by him, with an ever-

lasting salvation. Under the purple covering of Christ's most precious blood, as wrapt up in his consummate robe of righteousness they are proof against sin, Satan, death, and hell: they live in Christ, and he lives in them, he is to them their beloved friend, their all in all. They in due season die, drop the mantle of mortality, which gives them pleasure. In their dying moments they generally find Christ hath swallowed up death in victory; and that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Mr. Romaine tells us, 'never was a day like the present for believers dying in the triumphs of faith, as conquerors over death, their last enemy.' A saint, who lately left this county by death, shouted, "Thanks, everlasting thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Believers die in union with Christ. The Holy Ghost saith "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Being entered eternity, Jesus presents them before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. When they enter heaven then they see

Jesus face to face, and inherit glory: their joys are ineffable! and their bliss will increase every moment in eternity. They live in the presence of Christ, see him as he is, have full, uninterrupted communion with him, in the vision of his person as God-man, who is their ordinance to eternity, and who will fill them with all the fulness of God, which will be the perfection of their happiness. I conclude therefore in congratulating you, ye children of the Most High, saying in the words of Moses: "Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee O people, saved of the Lord!" May the Lord the Spirit bless what has been delivered agreeably to his will. Amen.