

SERMON XIII.

JOB VII. 17, 18.

WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU SHOULDEST MAGNIFY HIM ?
 AND THAT THOU SHOULDEST SET THINE HEART
 UPON HIM ? AND THAT THOU SHOULDEST VISIT HIM
 EVERY MORNING, AND TRY HIM EVERY MOMENT ?

As there is no sort of evil but sin is the cause of it, the introducer of it, and the cause of its continuance in the moral world ; so there is no disease, pain, sickness, or affliction, but the people of God are equally liable to it as well as others : nor is there any kind of temporal distress, or malady, but one or other of the Lord's children have been, or are groaning under.

The Lord hath provided salvation for us in Christ Jesus, and hath sent him to take away sin, which is the cause of all sorrow ; and it is witnessed of him by the

evangelist, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Which expresses thus much to us, that as he by bearing sin, bore it off, and away from the persons of his people; so he hath also removed from them all the real evil contained in affliction; as he turns it into a real blessing, by supporting them under it, sanctifying it unto them, making it sometimes a most instructing, a profitable ordinance unto them.

That the real children of the Most High, his favourites and peculiar friends are not exempted from chastisement, affliction, pain, and grief, Job, (who gives title to the book so called, because it treats of him) bears testimony.

He, though one of God's worthies, a man of whom God himself boasts; though a righteous, holy, and eminent saint, is in the chapter before us represented as peculiarly afflicted. And we have him represented to be, what the Lord's children sometimes are, fretful, impatient, murmuring, and complaining. We are apt, when we hear that the rod of God is upon a believer, to expect of

course great resignation and submission to the sovereign will of God; we conceive the mind will be all calm, and faith divinely exercised: but this is not *always* the case. It was not so with Job, though a great and truly spiritual man, favoured with a sublime knowledge and view of God in his nature, persons, and perfections; enlightened to contemplate him in his essential and consummate holiness and purity, his almighty power, absolutely supreme authority over all worlds, beings, and things, with the various acts of his goodness in nature, providence, and grace towards the sons of men; yet when he, the instance before us, was put into the furnace, with a view to refine, purify, and melt off some dross which cleaved to him, we find him at times uttering wrong words, and expressing some things for which he deserved censure, and for which the Lord himself reproveth him. Even here before us, in his address to God, Job goes on to defend himself as having reason to complain of his extraordinary afflictions, justifies his eager desire of death, and thinks hard of his

case ; since after death he could enjoy no temporal good, and therefore to be deprived of it whilst living causes him to complain. He expostulates with God thus : “ Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me ? When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint : then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions. So that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life. I loathe it, I would not live alway : let me alone, for my days are vanity.” Could a saint speak worse, or utter himself more repiningly under afflictive dispensations ? I think not. He then speaks to God by way of apostrophe, to vent himself : “ What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him ? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him ? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment ? ”

Suggesting that his thought and sentiment of the matter was, it was a truth, man was altogether unworthy of the divine notice in any respect, either for God to bestow favours on him, or to lay his af-

flicting hand upon him. There being no comparison to be made between God's greatness, and man's meanness, God's power, and man's weakness.

In my discoursing from the words before us, I will endeavour to consider the goodness of God, in his gracious mindfulness and regard of man, though he is in himself simply considered, unworthy of the thoughts and kindness of the Lord.

This subject I will aim to pursue in the following method and order :

First, by examining the question, "What is man?" In the prosecution of which I will endeavour to give an account of man in his primitive, glorious state, by, and at creation, and at his first formation ; also to speak of him in his fallen state and condition, as a sinner by conception and birth, the fruits and effects of the fall ; lastly consider him in a state of grace.

Secondly, I will observe the divine compassion, benignity, mercy, and love of God, towards his elect or chosen ones in every state through which they pass.

And, *lastly*, will endeavour to preach and hold forth a part of Job's meaning from the text, that the Lord is pleased to visit man, worthless and insignificant as he is, with reproofs, rebukes, and chastisement for his sin, with his great end and design herein.

I am first to examine the question, "What is man?" To which I may immediately reply, "Verily every man living is altogether vanity. Man is like a thing of nought: his time passeth away like a shadow." But what is man, as a creature made by Almighty power, influenced and actuated by a rational and immortal soul, in which the wisdom of God is displayed; he being created in the image of God, "which consists in righteousness and true holiness!"

Why, truly, Sirs, but a mutable creature; yet as created by the Lord, he was the noblest of all Jehovah's works in this lower world. His body was framed and fashioned and made out of the dust of the ground, and being shaped, organized, and created, into this lifeless lump of clay, "The Lord God breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Which being wholly spirit, immaterial, its essence and faculties of understanding, will, and affections, will last for ever. The soul as immediately created by the Lord, by him infused and united to the body, is the principle of life. The body quickened by it is alive, and lively; and the soul, tho' vastly superior to the body, yet as united to it, and one with it, was at first, and so it is still, dependent upon the body for all its conceptions and ideas.

The Lord God made the world for man, and every creature in it for his use, benefit, pleasure and delight. He formed the body with the most exact symmetry. All the sinews, veins, arteries, bones, like a piece of embroidery or tapestry. Every member hath its exact proportion, distinct office, regular motion. Every part hath a particular comeliness, and convenient temperament bestowed upon it, according to its place in the body. The heart is hot to enliven the whole. The brain, the seat of sense, coins (as one expresses it) the animal spirits by puri-

fyng and refining those which are sent to it, and seems like a curious piece of needle - work. The ear, framed with windings and turnings, to keep any thing from entering to offend the brain, is so disposed as to admit sounds with the greatest safety and delight ; filled with an air within, by the motion whereof the sound is transmitted to the brain. What a curious workmanship is that of the eye, which is in the body, as the sun in the world, set in the head, as in a watch tower, having the softest nerves for the receiving the greater multitude of spirits necessary for the act of vision ? The tongue is framed for speech, like a musical instrument ; the teeth serving for variety of sounds ; the lungs serving for bellows to blow the organs, as it were, to cool the heart ; by a continual motion transmitting a pure air to the heart, expelling that which was smoaky and superfluous. Not the least part of the body is made in vain. The hairs of the head have their use, as well as are an ornament. The whole symmetry of the body is a ravishing object. Every member

hath a signature and mark of God, and his wisdom. He is visible in the formation of the members, the beauty of the parts, and the vigor of the body. This structure could not be from the body, that only hath a passive power, and cannot act in the absence of the soul. Nor can it be from the soul. How comes it then to be so ignorant of the manner of its formation? The soul knows not the internal parts of its own body, but by information from others, or inspection into other bodies. It knows less of the inward frame of the body than it does of itself. The Lord God formed the body, senses, and faculties of it, to take in delight from all things in this visible world. Man is the epitome of every creature, and from them, by means of impressions made on his senses, which is through the medium of the nerves and blood, the soul, the inhabitant within, has, and does receive such apprehensions of present things, as cause us to know, feel, and perceive what is pleasing, profitable, and good for us, as it respects present things. And man in his creation is a

creature in every thing dependent on God. Creation was an act of pure sovereignty. Man's body and soul, his every faculty and perception, is of God.

His original purity, holiness, and righteousness, were wholly from the Lord. The soul, its faculties, their exercise, use, and end, were all of God. Man could not in his first and best state deserve any thing from God in a way of due. He received his being, and his well-being from his Maker. He not only existed because God willed it, but his continuance in being also depended upon the same sovereign and immutable will. His all was of gift. He received his being, and all the blessings he possessed from the Lord, and was accountable to him for all his thoughts, words, and actions.

I pass on to consider what man was at creation: a pure, holy, righteous creature. His soul brighter than the sun. His body pure and undefiled, and though his thoughts were innumerable, yet not one of them was irregular. Though the objects he conversed with were variously

diversified, yet they all led him up to God; seeing in every creature, and in every part of the creation, such prints of Deity, the goodness, wisdom, holiness, love, and power of God so clearly manifested, as filled him with astonishing wonder, gratitude, and praise. Man, the subject of Jehovah's power, wisdom, and love, was in his primitive state honoured by having the moral law, which contains a transcript of God's holiness, which contains his revealed mind and will, and is the foundation of all creature holiness, concreated in him, and together with him; which law was also given to him under the form of a covenant obedience to which was the tie, or bond of union between God the creator, and man his pure and holy creature. He was magnified, and set up as the root, representative, and fœderal head of all his natural offspring, and God honoured him by making him Lord of the whole world; and as he made all for him, he put all into his hands, by giving him a grant of all, and dominion and lordship over the creatures. But we may justly break forth

into surprise, saying, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?" It is wholly impossible for us properly to conceive the pure, holy, upright, blessed state of man, at, and by creation. What it must be to feel perfect creature purity, to have every thought, word, and work, influenced by love to God, and adequate to the precept of the law, to make Jehovah's glory our ultimate end in every action, and for every faculty and affection to be engaged with him, fixed supremely on him, and drawn after him, is what we can have but very imperfect ideas of, seeing we have never been in our own persons the actual enjoyers of such a state. This however was the case, and state of the first man. How long cannot be said. The inspired psalmist says, "Man being in honour abode not long." For the creature was subject to vanity, owing to, and arising from its own mutability. And God never did make an immutable creature. The angels themselves, though stronger made, and higher raised, were not immutable at and by creation. "Behold, (says Eliphaz,) he put

no trust in his saints, and his angels he charged with folly." They were mutable, and liable to fall from God, they were, owing to their mutability, and many of them actually did. And that the rest, stiled *the elect angels*, did not, it was not owing to their own steadfastness, but it arose from a pure act of sovereign grace in Jehovah's will, he guiding on their wills, to will immutably what was truly good and acceptable in his sight, and rendering, and continuing them impeccable by super-creation grace. Man the high favourite of heaven, whose knowledge of God, and his will, was bright and clear, who was admitted into communion with the Trinity in a way suitable to his state and circumstance, yet, though without sin in him, he upon the first assault and temptation, fell from his pure and original righteousness. He became a sinner by his own act and deed, transgressing his Maker's command, and all mankind fell in him, and with him, into a state of sin, guilt, and defilement.

Here I renew the question: *What is man?* Why, he is a fallen, guilty, sinful,

helpless creature ! totally corrupt, sinfully polluted, and entirely unclean, deserving of God's curse, and wrath, not only in this life, but also in that which is to come. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that, or *in whom* all have sinned." Adam being to convey his image, when he sinned, could convey only his corrupt and sinful image to his posterity, and it is expressly said, "He begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, altogether carnal and corrupt. All Adam's descendants are polluted, and stained with the guilt, and filth of his sin, and depravity. For he lost all his original holiness and righteousness, and contracted an impurity. I would here quote Doctor Owen's words, which are, 'When divines affirm that by Adam's sin we are guilty of damnation, they do not mean, that any *are actually* damned for his particular fact, but that by his sin, and our sinning in him, by God's most just ordination, we have contracted that exceeding pravity, and sinfulness of

‘ nature, which deserveth the curse of God, ‘ and eternal damnation.’ By the fall, none of the faculties of the soul are destroyed, nor is there one desire, inclination, or appetite, which was not originally there, at, and by creation, which was not then implanted by the goodness of God towards man. But the holiness of all the desires, affections, and inclinations of our souls is lost; that divine weight, which poised all, is removed; so that there is in us a privation, and want of all good, and a positive inclination within us to all evil. For all evil is within us, it is our very nature, and we are by conception, which lays the foundation of our actual existence, sinners, and are born such. Hence, saith Paul, “ And were by nature the children of wrath.” The fruits and effects of which are manifested in the actual transgressions committed by us.

Take the following testimonies. The world having, from the creation to Noah’s time, run out a period of almost 1656 years; God is fain to cast up the accounts of it, which he did, and it is declared,

“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Jeremiah declares, “The heart is deceitful above all things.” And our Lord Jesus Christ himself declares in the seventh chapter of Mark’s gospel, the same truth: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” In man’s guilty, fallen state, he is dead to God, dead in law, under the guilt and power of sin, deserving of, and liable to eternal wrath. Which leads me to consider how that every one dying in this state is cut off from God to all eternity. It is the just desert of sin, the wages due unto it being a moral, natural, and eternal death—“The wages of sin is death.” And there are some sinners who have undergone and have endured all these kinds of death. As it respects the first, “all having sinned, and

come short of the glory of God ;” so all are equally involved in a moral death ; which consists in being cut off in their hearts and affections from God, and in being and continuing dead to God and spiritual things, being in an unregenerate state, “ without hope and without God in the world.” With respect to natural death, it reigned from Adam to Moses ; from him to the present moment, never but two were exempted from it. And as it respects eternal death, multitudes are already actually numbered with the dead and damned. Some of our fellow mortals are in hell, damned souls. If it be asked for what ? the answer is ready ! For sin. Christ himself hath said, “ If ye die in your sins, where I am, thither ye cannot come.” And also he declares, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” It is only regeneration alters a man’s state. It is by it alone he is made meet for heaven. Without it he cannot understand, seek after, or enjoy God. I shall here omit what might be said of the blessed state of fellowship with God we are brought into when we

are created anew in Christ, and made partakers of the divine nature, being translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and proceed

Secondly to consider the divine compassion, benignity, mercy, and love of God towards his elect and chosen ones, through every state through which they pass: under some of which considerations, their blessed state which they are brought into at regeneration will naturally come under our view and notice.

Here we may with wonder and astonishment break forth with devout rapture, saying, "What is man that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?"

God from everlasting set his heart, fixed his love, and employed his thoughts, upon the elect sons of men, whom he chose in Christ his Son; and upon whom he decreed to manifest his mercy, in such a way and manner as should serve to increase his manifestative praise and glory in time, yea, throughout eternity. The elect of mankind were the objects of

Jehovah's complacency and delight from before all worlds. God's love towards them proceeded from his own pure sovereign good-will and pleasure. They were not deserving of it, they could not merit it. It being an eternal truth what Augustine, (as quoted by holy Mr. Toplady, as one who felt the power of it on his own soul) says, 'There is no more merit in the highest arch-angel in heaven, than there is in the damned in hell.'

There can be nothing in the creature, even in its pure creation state, in all its created purity and excellency which can engage or attract the heart of God, or deserve any thing at his hands. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." "Who hath first given unto him? and it shall be recompensed unto him again."

I believe and thus conceive of it, that the angels and their obedience come to be acceptable, as Jehovah views them in Christ their head, who is to them the centre of union and communion. They are styled in the scripture, "elect angels,"

and Christ is said to be "the head of all principalities and powers," and by this headship of Christ, they are confirmed and kept immutably holy by their beholding him, in whom they see God and live for ever. Hence we say, angels at and by creation were not immutable in purity, holiness and righteousness, which appears from the fall of some angelic beings into sin. And what befel some might have befallen all. For they were all alike in nature, purity, and perfection. The preservation therefore of the elect angels was the fruit of grace, of what we style super-creation grace ; it was Christ as their head under-propped them. At creation, being created with the heavens and in them on the first day of the beginning of the creation of God, so that they shone forth as morning stars and beheld with surprising joy the Lord of hosts bringing out of a rude indigested chaos, this visible world and all in it, yet they had not then that sight of God by vision which they now have. If the angels of God at creation had beheld God, and had that intuitive knowledge of him by clear and

open vision, which the elect angels now have, it would have been impossible for them to have sinned to eternity. It is in Christ God-man in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, that the blessed elect, intellectual spirits, behold God and have divine communion with him. If so, then no creature hath whereof he may glory in Jehovah's presence. All is of grace, both the election of Angels, and men. The preservation of the one from falling into sin, and redeeming the other from the guilt and curse of it, is all of grace. I conclude this with the following words of scripture, "behold, he putteth no trust in his saints, yea the heavens are not clean in his sight." God's elect of mankind, though chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, yet they, as fallen in Adam, are the objects of mercy. It is true, as one rightly states it, the object of God's love is the creature simply considered; the object of mercy is the creature fallen into sin and misery. Mercy respecteth misery, and hath properly misery for its object. The elect as sinners by conception, nature and birth,

have been remembered by God in their low estate, He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and laid their sins on Christ and solemnly condemned him to die the death, sustain the wrath, and feel the curse due to their original and actual transgressions. By which his bounty, mercy and love towards them has been most gloriously manifested and displayed. So that we may here survey God's love to his elect in every state through which they pass. He loved their persons in Christ from eternity. He brought them into a time-state by creation, pure and holy, though they fell from that by the default of the first man; yet he promised to send a Saviour, a great one, to deliver them. And when all mankind were deeply sunk into a state of sin, guilt and misery, "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." We, though conceived in sin, and born into this world "by nature the children of wrath," yet God prevents the elect with his mercy. Neither their original, nor actual transgressions, however heinous, hinder the flowings forth of his

mercy towards us. "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Here we may justly break out with surprise, saying, "What is man that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" We may as justly admire it here, as in any instance whatsoever. For how surprising the grace, mercy and love of God! when it breaks forth in the actual discoveries of it in effectual illumination, quickening and regeneration! at which time, all the thoughts of love which God had of us from everlasting, and which he gave evidence of when he so loved the world as to give his only begotten son, which love was expressed with an emphasis, when he having laid on him our iniquities, was pleased to bruise him, and put his soul to grief, begins to be manifested to us. Now the eternal purposes of the Trinity towards us, actually take place in us, the Holy Ghost actually quickening us, with spiritual and everlasting life. At which time we

actually pass from a state of spiritual death, into a state of spiritual life, being brought into actual communion with the Lord, made meet for eternal glory, and the Spirit of Christ and of glory dwells in us, and rests upon us. It is but for death to do its office on our bodies, and we are in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, in heaven with Christ our head, who hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." God magnifies, or exalts his people, as he raises them up from a state of sin and death, translating them into the kingdom of his dear Son. He sets his heart upon them, rejoices over them to do them good, and they have their seasons of refreshment from his blessed presence. The Holy Spirit quickens the souls of the regenerate, by putting forth his power in their hearts, and by virtue of the promise in which Christ is set forth and exhibited, he draws forth their faith into spiritual acts of hope and love and joy in God. By which we at times taste upon earth the joys of heaven, being filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is true we have cause greatly to lament, that the

greatest part of those who pass for believers in Christ Jesus, live as though they did not experience, or expect to experience, such inestimable blessings. But I must tell you, sirs, real believers are implanted into Christ, and have an influential union with him, and a real communion from him. By which means the Holy Spirit quickens, enlightens and refreshes their souls with his sanctifying grace. He breathes within his people, and he breathes upon them, and he carries on a most sacred, blessed and delightful intercourse between Christ and them. The compassions of the Lord to his children, are never failing; his bounty is exceeding great, he is to them an ocean of mercy, a fountain of never failing supply, who never leaves nor forsakes them; but will be their God and guide even unto death, at which time he will receive them to eternal glory. Which brings me lastly, to endeavour to preach a part of Job's meaning from the text, that the Lord is pleased to visit man, worthless and insignificant as he is, with reproofs, rebukes, and chastisement for sin; and his great

end and design herein. As God out of his own heart's love, draws his people to himself by the cords and manifestations of it to their souls, so all the Lord's dealings with them, all his paths of nature, providence and grace are mercy and truth. God loves the persons of his people with an invariable, invincible, immutable love, yet he hates sin in them. And when under the influence of it, they incline towards it, and fall by it, and into the commission of it, God will visit for it in a way of chastisement, or conviction; and it is the fruit of his love and affection if he deals thus with any of us. For some there are, who call themselves the Lord's, who though they walk careless and live in sin, yet the Lord will not spend a rod upon them, nor give them any reproof, because he does not love them well enough, so to act and deal towards them. "What is man that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning and try him every moment?" Have any of you been in affliction, visited with sickness,

or disease! look back and examine, try and search diligently to find out the Lord's end and design in it? Is it not a rebuke for sin committed? for abstaining from his holy table? for some secret corruption connived at by you! Sirs, God is jealous of his glory, and will act according to the rules of his holy word. He searches the heart, and tries the reins of the sons of men.

If you undertake a journey on the Lord's day, depend upon it your business will be quite marred, the Lord will frown upon you, and ye shall find, think of it as ye will, Christ Jesus will highly resent it in you. I look at times upon, and into the families of some, who profess to know Christ; and it appears to me, that though many attempts are made, and many enterprizes undertaken, which are looked upon as just and lawful; yet no blessing is upon it, nor success from the the Lord granted. Perhaps God is neglected in the closet, and family. Leave off prayer, restrain morning and evening worship before the Lord, and mark it! you will, it may be, fail in business, and

become bankrupts. How can trade prosper without God's blessing? How can you expect prosperity as long as you neglect to seek the Lord? An eminent and aged minister, who was a great friend to prayer, and a real lover of it, used to say, 'People inform me, sir, trade is exceeding bad, we do not know what to do. I ask them do you pray in your families? they reply, O no sir. I say it is no wonder you do not prosper in your business then. For how can that trade prosper which is carried on without God, and which is not sanctified with the word of God and prayer.' I fear there is a licentious spirit indulged by many professors and hearers of the gospel, who seem to think and speak slightly of sin, and talk very loosely concerning the decrees of God. Insomuch that one is tempted to conclude that they conceive the damnation of sinners, the eternal destruction of the well-being of the soul to all eternity, a light matter. It is true, that the power of action is from God, but the victory of it from our nature. God, though he has given the faculties where-

with a man sinneth, concurs not to the sinfulness of that act. God who upholds Christless sinners and their faculties, whilst they sin against him, will continue them in being to eternity, and pour into every faculty of their souls his curse and wrath, which is the true and proper desert of sin. When I hear sinners blaspheme, and see them impelled by their own hearts, lust, and the devil, to commit all uncleanness with greediness, that scripture occurs to my thoughts: "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction!" I would pray to see sin as sin, and view it in the light God himself doth, and hate it as contrary to God's nature, with a perfect hatred in time, and throughout eternity. When I was absent from you last autumn, being at Exeter and knowing a person who was then in prison for debt, having conceived him, from some conversation I had before this time with him, to be a child of God, I thought I would visit him. I did so, but to my great surprise, I found this back-

slider, in the green, playing at bowls. Alas! thought I, can you find no better employment! surely if you were under the feeling sense of Christ's love, you would be making use of your Bible, be in your own room, and delight in frequenting the throne of grace. There was also with him another, who had been a member and high professor in a certain church in Devonshire, alike engaged and employed. Sirs, for professors of Christ's gospel to become bankrupts, looks very sadly. It is David's character of the ungodly, "the wicked borroweth and payeth not again." God visits his people in the world, in his providences; and rebukes, reproves, and chastises them for what is amiss. So that it is highly becoming the Lord's people, to attend to all the Lord's dispensations with them. Have they been put into a state of affliction, and are they now delivered out of it? Forget not to consider how the Lord dealt with your spirit under it. Were your wills brought into submission to the will of God? Did you see more of the importance of soul concerns? Did you conceive more than heretofore of

the value, worth and preciousness of Christ? Had you some love tokens, a Bethel-visit from your Lord? Did he smooth your pillow, dispel your grief, mitigate your pains, and has he brought you out of the furnace as gold seven times purified? Then record it to his praise. For this being your case, ye may say, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." Such impressions set and fixed by the Holy Spirit on your souls, will give some view of the goodness of the Lord in his visitation; ye will cry out, "What is man that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him! and that thou shouldest visit him every morning?" It is God as our God, who blesseth us, he as the God of our mercy, prevents us continually with new, fresh, various and multiplied mercies. He carries us through the day, closes our eyes at night, and locks up our senses with sleep, which is a nurse to nature. He is our keeper and suffers no evil to befall us, nor any plague to come nigh our dwellings. He sometimes perfumes our dreams with a

gracious sense of his presence, by which means our sleep is still doubly sweet and refreshing. He it is who opens our eyes to behold the returning morning, and sometimes he gives us upon our first awakening, such a thought of Christ, as draws the heart after him all the day! which is esteemed and prized by the believer, rich grace indeed! In all the mindfulness of God and his compassions towards his children, with the whole of his dispensations towards them, and his peculiar dealings with them, he designs their spiritual good. He visits them every morning and tries them every moment, and is to them an overflowing fountain of goodness. I drop the subject, praying, what hath been delivered according to God's holy will, may be applied by his Holy Spirit closely and effectually to all our hearts. Even so. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

 ACTS XIII. 32—34.

AND WE DECLARE UNTO YOU GLAD TIDINGS, HOW THAT THE PROMISE WHICH WAS MADE UNTO THE FATHERS, GOD HATH FULFILLED THE SAME UNTO US THEIR CHILDREN, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED UP JESUS AGAIN; AS IT IS ALSO WRITTEN IN THE SECOND PSALM, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE. AND AS CONCERNING THAT HE RAISED HIM UP FROM THE DEAD, NOW NO MORE TO RETURN TO CORRUPTION, HE SAID ON THIS WISE, I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.

THE resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the state of the dead, his being raised up, and delivered from the dominion of death and the grave, is one of the prime fundamental articles of our most holy faith, which is most surely to be believed by us; on which our present salvation, eternal redemption, and glorification in heaven throughout eternity depend. It being hereby absolutely and entirely declared and manifested, that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, the Father having accepted it,

and declared his acceptance of it, "by raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead." I have therefore, considering the vast importance of the subject, chosen to treat on it at this time, intending to make use of the words of my text as the foundation and groundwork of what I aim at, and mean to deliver to you. It may be observed that the scripture before us is selected from one of the longest sermons which we have upon record, as delivered by the apostle Paul, which holds forth to view his method and subject, and is a choice specimen of his knowledge of the efficacy of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus on his own soul; and it also contains an inestimable treasury of his scripture learning, in which he quotes several psalms, and directly applies them to Christ.

The chapter begins with informing us concerning the ordination of Barnabas and Paul to the work of the ministry, which was by the former, and of the Holy Ghost, he speaking and saying, "Separate ye Barnabas and Paul for the work

whereunto I have called them." Which work was, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles distant from the Jews, of which we have an account in the latter part of this chapter, see verses 46, 47.

The means used to fit them for this holy employment, were fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands ; and they being sent forth by the church of Antioch in Syria, passing through Selucia, a seaport in Syria, *from hence they proceed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean sea, and went to two cities of it, Salamis and Paphos ; at the former they preached in the synagogues of the Jews ; at the latter they are owned by the Lord as instruments of the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country, and are opposed by Elymas the sorcerer, whom Paul reproves sharply, and smites with blindness ; from hence they proceed to Perga in Pamphilia, and came to Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul preached this most famous sermon, a part of which hath been read unto you. In which discourse he sets forth the mercies of God to the children of Israel, who having*

loved, and freely chose their fathers, had exalted their posterity above all the nations of the earth, having delivered them by the mighty arm of his power from the bondage of Egypt; he exercised his long-suffering and forbearance, notwithstanding their provocations forty years in the wilderness; and he drove out the nations, and gave them the land of Canaan for a possession, blessing them with divers forms of government; first with aristocracy, which continued under the Judges, and ended in Samuel, which from its first commencement to its period was about the space of four hundred and fifty years; about which time God blessed them with monarchical government, which began with Saul, who when removed by death, was succeeded by David, to whom God “gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” From the mention of which he proceeds to introduce the subject of the incarnation of Christ, who was preached and testified of by John the Baptist, who prepared the way for, and bore tes-

timony to him, and then he treats of the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who was seen alive after his passion many days, more or less for forty days, by them who came up from Galilee to Jerusalem; by whom are to be understood the holy apostles and disciples of Christ, who were witnesses of it to the people. And thus having given you the outlines of the discourse preceding my text, I am thereby brought to it, which reads thus: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

In which words are contained, as it respects the substance of them, all the articles of our most holy faith; truths of inestimable worth and importance, which

give subsistence to our faith, and serve most divinely to increase, nourish, and strengthen it. I shall endeavour to cast the division of the subject before us into the following method and order.

First, by considering the manner in which he introduces the subject before us: "We declare unto you glad tidings."

Secondly, it will be shewed how that the promise made unto the fathers was fulfilled by the Lord in his raising up Jesus from the dead.

Thirdly, that this very act of God's, is our security of his performing all his promises to us, or that he will bestow upon us, as his elect, all the blessings of the everlasting covenant. In opening our text, and going through the method proposed, I will, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, carefully endeavour to include all the substance contained in the words before us, which contain a most cordial elixir, and everlasting consolations for the inner man.

I begin with my *first* head of discourse, in which I have proposed to consider the manner in which Paul introduces the sub-

ject before us ; he, in his address to the people present, says, (including Barnabas with himself) “ And we declare unto you glad tidings ;” which words might well be used as a preface, or introduction to what follows ; for surely if the whole scheme, plan, and revelation of gospel grace most justly deserves such an epithet, and may well be styled “ glad tidings,” much more the actual accomplishment of the whole by our Lord’s resurrection. The method which the apostle adopted to introduce his declaration concerning God’s fulfilment of the promise made to the fathers, was calculated to attract their attention, and fix their minds upon the subject which he was about to deliver. Nor was there ever more glad tidings ! such as cannot but produce peace of conscience, and joy in God in every one, who being enlightened by the Holy Ghost to know the joyful sound, has his heart opened by the same most adorable and sacred agent to receive, embrace, and entertain Christ as “ the Lord his righteousness, the Prince of Peace, and his hope of glory.” In an especial manner the gospel of the

blessed God, which is called “the gospel of salvation,” “the gospel of peace,” “the gospel of Christ,” “the everlasting gospel,” may be said to be “glad tidings,” as it reveals the everlasting love of the Father, the finished work of the Saviour, and the transcendent grace of the Holy Spirit, who is the glorifier of Jesus; who sheds abroad the love of the Father in the hearts of his faithful people, as they are led to glorify him by receiving the record and testimony which he hath given them in his word concerning his Son. For the gospel contains and reveals God’s everlasting love to his elect or chosen ones, on whom he hath bestowed in Christ everlasting life, whom he embraces with everlasting mercy, to whom he imputes, and views their persons as clothed with, the everlasting righteousness of Christ; to whom he pronounces everlasting peace, bestows an eternal pardon, and hath given unto them in Christ everlasting consolation. But let us proceed: we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God

hath fulfilled the same. By this promise we most certainly must understand the Lord Jesus Christ, according to what is said in the twenty-third verse of this chapter, where Paul says, "Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus."

That Christ was promised, and that as a Saviour; that this promise was made unto the fathers, appears from the whole tenor of the sacred Scripture; but *from whence did that promise proceed, and upon what was it originally founded and established?* Verily it was the fruit and consequence of the ancient and eternal "council and covenant of peace," which obtained between the Eternal Three before all worlds, which was the effect of sovereign grace, love, and mercy. In the everlasting covenant, the essential Three displayed themselves and their mutual love towards the elect, in the following way. The eternal Father, viewing his chosen and beloved ones, in his infinite prescience, as fallen and undone, by their fall and apostacy in their natural head, is pleased to propose the

method, to fix the terms, and specify the conditions, upon which he will justify their persons, pardon their sins, and bestow his peace on them. The essential Son, as expressing hereby his own boundless, ineffable love to his Father, and his people, is pleased most freely to engage by contract and covenant with his divine Father, to become their surety, and to act, obey, and suffer for them. And the Holy Spirit, who was privy to, and a witness to the covenant-engagements between the Father and Son, he did immediately upon the fall, and throughout succeeding ages, raise up, inspire, and influence holy men of God, who spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost, and they all bore witness, that one in the self-existent essence was to become incarnate, on purpose to take away sin; hence Peter saith, “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.” So that the mediatorial acts, works, and office of Christ, which owes its original to the eternal acts and transactions between the

Father and the Son, were the foundation from which the promise of Christ proceeded. These eternal acts are expressed in such words as these : “ I have found a ransom.” (Job. xxxiii. 24.) “ I have laid help upon one that is mighty.” (Ps. lxxxix. 19.) “ The council of peace was between them both : i. e. between Jehovah and the Branch.” (Zech. vi. 13.) “ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” (2 Cor. v. 19.) As this ancient council and covenant between the persons in the GODHEAD, which was before the world began, was the foundation from whence the promise came ; so it was given forth and uttered by God himself, (*who cannot lie*) immediately upon the fall, first to Adam, (Gen. iii. 15.) afterwards to Abraham, (Gen. xxii.) and uttered most fully and clearly by that herald of the Lord of Hosts, the prophet Isaiah, who spoke out and publicly proclaimed it, that the Lord God would send “ a Saviour, a great one ;” who should deliver his church and people out of the hands of all their spiritual enemies. And this promise made unto the Fathers, God

hath fulfilled, in giving, sending, and consecrating his co-equal Son to be a covenant unto the people, and for salvation to the ends of the earth. When God gave his Son to take our nature into personal union with himself, and the advent of the Saviour drew near, a New Testament prophet, filled with the Holy Ghost, broke forth saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before him all the days of our lives." (Luke i. 68—75.) The Lord Jesus became incarnate, and lived in his incarnate

state in this our world, to obey the law, as the surety and representative of his people: he entered on the open public execution of his office, under the fresh unction of the Holy Ghost, having his Father publicly, and by an audible voice from heaven, declaring and testifying concerning him, that he was his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased. And our Christ, as he brought in everlasting righteousness by his life of consummate obedience to the law, so he was as the substitute of the elect, solemnly arrested by the divine justice, and charged with the sins of all his people, which the Father laid upon him in agreement with covenant promises and stipulation, and made him to be sin by imputation: which judicial act of the Father, carried into execution made the soul of Christ heavy unto death. He being surrounded and environed on all sides with the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of his people, felt the shock of infinite wrath, and as he bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, so the curse, the punishment, the desert of sin, yea,

what was tantamount to the second death, was executed and inflicted on him. "He was (saith the apostle,) made a curse for us." In his body, and in his soul, in every faculty, sense, part, and member, he suffered, *the just for the unjust*. He was, for the iniquities of his people, stricken with the rod of justice, cut off for a season from all enjoyment of the consolations which flow from the brightness of his Father's manifestative presence, and from all comfort in the creature: he that had all fulness, and who filleth all in all, was emptied so as to have nothing left, no comfort in God, nor in the creature. As holy Mr. Flavel expresses it, 'Christ's sufferings were 'designed to equalize all the torments of 'the damned in hell, to be equal to the 'demerit of sin;' and I add, to satisfy all the demands of justice, and bring more honour to God's holiness, than sin had dishonour; and more glory to justice, than if sin had never entered into the world.

And this brings me to my *second* head, in which I have proposed to shew, how

that the promise made unto the fathers, was fulfilled by the Lord, in his raising up Jesus from the dead.

The Lord had begun and most gloriously fulfilled his great promise concerning giving his only-begotten Son, and sending him in the likeness of sinful flesh; in laying sin upon him, in executing the tremendous curse due to all the sins of the elect, on his holy immaculate body and soul; and the Messiah made his soul an offering for sin. By his obedience unto death, he finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness: which having done, he cried out, like a triumphant conqueror, "It is finished." He was made the whole curse, to redeem us from the whole of it. There was, says the incomparable Dr. Goodwin, a curse went out against his soul, and he in his soul bore the wrath of God, after which he cried out, "It is finished." And as he was to redeem our bodies too from death, therefore, after all this he must die, as it is appointed unto men once to die. Is that a law, saith

Paul, and will Christ be a Mediator? —He must die too. And Christ having obeyed the law, borne the sins of his people, sustained the wrath of his divine Father, and triumphed in himself upon the cross over principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them by his *own power and strength*. He gave commandment to death, to sever between his mangled body and his righteous soul, crying out with a loud voice, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” Thus his body was under the arrest of death, which had power and dominion over it, he being in the state of the dead, and remaining in it for a short season; and as this was the last act, so I conceive it may be rightly said to be the lowest state of Christ’s humiliation, for he was now in a state of corruption, not that his body saw corruption, but yet it was in that state of the dead which tendeth to corruption, and he remained in a state, in which state men’s bodies used to be corrupted. O stupendous grace! “He was

crucified, dead, and buried," laid in the grave, and numbered with the dead. Christ was to get a victory over Death, and also over the grave, and over a state of death. And here let it be noticed, that as Christ from everlasting, in the great council and covenant, acted as the common head and representative of all his members; so he became incarnate for them, and represented them in his person, and acted as their public head and surety in the whole of his life, death, and burial; and when he was raised from the dead, he was raised as their head and surety. As Christ, in all his mediatorial acts had to do with Jehovah his divine Father; so having yielded up his spirit into his hands, he went to Paradise, and God his righteous Father viewed over the work of obedience and sufferings which had been performed by him, and pronounced it to be complete, and perfectly commensurate to the original copy-draught drawn in his divine counsels and purposes. Christ went first to heaven in his soul, immediately after his oblation, to present his sacrifice to God, and receive his judgment about the

validity of it; for that day, the day of his sufferings, he was to be in Paradise; after death, the judgment. This was agreeable to the type of him in the anniversary sacrifice upon the day of expiation, when the High Priest was to go with the blood into the holy place immediately after the shedding of it, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat; for after the blood was clotted, it was incapable of being sprinkled. Christ immediately after his death appears in heaven to receive the acceptation of his Father. This was in his soul his body lying in the grave. And they brought him near before him, i. e. the Son of Man before the Ancient of days, as persons and things are brought near to be tried and diligently inspected; so was Christ brought near to God in a judicial way, that God might pass a judgment on him and his work, and upon a strict view he was so ravished with his obedience, that he conferred upon him a dominion, glory, and a kingdom, which is everlasting; (see Dan. vii. 13, 14. Matt. xxviii. 18.) which that it might be fully known, and fresh acts of grace be passed on him and the elect in

him, the Father puts forth the efficacious might and energy of his power, and raises up Christ's body from the state of the dead, and from the power of death, "declaring him hereby to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." In this act of God, his raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead, the promise made unto the fathers was fulfilled; i. e. as I understand it, completely fulfilled; that grand promise made to Adam and in him to all his believing seed, concerning bruising the serpent's head by the seed of the woman; the promise of blessing all nations, i. e. the elect in all nations, in the seed of Abraham, was fulfilled. These were initially performed by the sending Christ, and bruising him, and completely performed by the raising of him from death, in which the wisdom, righteousness, and truth of God did all shine forth, in their fullest beams; which was the top stone of our reconciliation, as the life and death of Christ, had been the corner stone and foundation. And the resurrection of Christ may well be styled

glad tidings, as it seems to be by Paul in the words before us. "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." Seeing that hereby all the acts of grace, which respect our salvation, are ratified and confirmed. In raising up Jesus from the dead, the Father fulfilled his promise to his Son, manifested himself well pleased with his finished work, pronounced an act of justification on him as the head of his mystic body, and declared him to be his only begotten Son, in whom he is everlastingly well pleased.

As God the Father spared not his Son, but delivered him up to be made sin and a curse for us, so he raised him up again from the state of the dead for our justification: hence saith the apostle, he was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification, (Rom. iv. 25.) Christ's obedience in his life and death, affords the whole matter of our justification; so that faith sees a fulness of worth and efficacy therein to dis-

charge the debt ; yet faith is mightily strengthened and confirmed in the belief of this from Christ's resurrection after his death, that God the Father is satisfied and acknowledges our debts are paid ; for as the obedience and sacrifice of Christ is the matter of our justification and salvation ; so the act of pronouncing us righteous by Christ's obedience and sufferings, which is the formal act of justification, depends on Christ's resurrection, and which act passed and was pronounced by Jehovah the Father, on Christ our head, and upon us in him, when he was raised ; hence we read of Christ's " being justified in the Spirit," (Tim. iii. 16.) But to proceed with our text, Christ's resurrection was *his justification and discharge from our sins*, therefore it is that God calls it, says Doctor Goodwin, his first begetting of Christ, " This day have I begotten thee ;" speaking manifestly of his resurrection. And the reason of it is, because all the while before, during his incarnate state, he was covered with sin and the likeness of sinful flesh, but now having flung it off he appeared like

God's Son indeed, and was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;" and at his resurrection passed from an estate of guilt and death laid on him, to an estate of justification from guilt, life, and glory. The words, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee," do both, in the second Psalm from whence they are taken, and in this text of ours, manifestly refer to our Lord's resurrection, by which God manifested and fully proved him to be his coequal and coessential Son, who he spoke thus unto upon his coming up from the grave, declaring thereby his everlasting delight and perfect satisfaction in his most perfect and complete obedience and oblation. As Jehovah the Father, by raising up Jesus from the dead, fulfilled his promise to Christ, and sealed hereby and confirmed his promise made unto the fathers; so by it he solemnly testified that Christ's soul travail was everlastingly acceptable to his justice, as also his obedience to the law for elect men, and everlasting righteousness;

and that he having accepted the propitiatory offering of Immanuel, was the God of peace to him and all his seed, whom he viewed and pronounced to be holy, righteous, spotless, and complete in him: to whom he saith, I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more, (Jer. xxxi. 34.) And here I will give some account of what Christ was raised up unto. He was raised in the same body in which he bore our sins and felt the curse, with all the same parts and members, but his body was changed from being a weak, mortal body, to be immortal, glorious, powerful, and incorruptible. He appeared on his resurrection morn to be the Lord of glory! He upon his resurrection entered as it were anew on the display of his mediatorial grace, in the new constitution of him to his mediatorial office. He arose from death as the everlasting conqueror of it, to die no more, and with everlasting triumph over it, having at his girdle the keys of death and hell. He is styled "the first begotten from the dead," and the first born

from the dead, the first fruits of them that slept, "the resurrection and the life:" his song when risen as insulting death, having loosed the death bonds of all his saints, may well be said to be this, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." His resurrection was his first step to his supreme exaltation, to sit at God's right hand, to appear in the form of God, and shine as the Fellow of the Lord of hosts: he was now invested with all power in heaven and earth; his body was a most glorious body in itself, and a spring of glory unto others. Of the glory of Christ's body, Peter, James, and John, had a glimpse in the transfiguration, (Matt. xvii.) "He was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Glory was coeval unto his soul from corruption, but the flowing of it unto his body was stopt to qualify him for the work of our redemption, for before he wrought by suffering; and

if his body had been glorified, his body had been impassable and could not have suffered: but at his resurrection this glory broke forth, and as the love of God in his heart was as a boundless ocean of joy; so the Holy Spirit, who was the principle of all the grace in Christ's human nature, was the fountain of glory to it also, and his glory, and his grace are unmeasurable. And because our Lord was thus glorified and thus glorious at his resurrection, hence, as I conceive, it was he appeared to none but saints, at and after he was risen from the dead. Let it be also added, he arose with the same boundless love in his heart to his people, which he manifested towards them in the garden and on the cross: with the same mercy in his bowels, with the same sympathy, pity, and tender feelings in his affections, rejoicing in and delighting to own the relation which subsisted between him and his: saying to her who had the honour to be favoured with first conversing with him, when newly risen, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father

and your Father, to my God and to your God." And to the very end that all believing sinners to the end of time might know that he was and ever will continue to be Jesus the Saviour, he singles out and makes his first appearance to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils; to certify how much his delight was in salvation work, and that all the glory of heaven would not alter his heart nor alienate his affections from his people here below. He afterwards appeared to Peter, who seems to be the first of all the apostles to whom the Lord appeared, nor does he speak to him, that we read of, concerning his shameful fall, but he acts according to his office of Prince and Saviour, and says to the eleven, "Peace be unto you," which he could now as their High Priest pronounce unto them, as he had now obtained it for them by the blood of his cross. Believers, you may well consider the innumerable blessings which flow down from Christ your risen head upon you, and which, by virtue of your union to him, ye are interested and intitled unto. Our Lord's resurrec-

tion has its influence in the quickening of your souls from a death of trespasses and sins, in your regeneration, in working faith in you, in every spiritual act of your sanctification, in your resurrection from the grave of death, in your triumphs over sin, death, and hell, and in your final glorification. You are as one with Christ, what he is. His holiness, righteousness, sufferings, and oblation are yours, and imputed by the Father to you, who hath made Jesus to be to you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His resurrection is your eternal security, and ye may triumph in all the conquests, victories, and spoils of Christ, over his and your enemies. He hath put sin away for ever, out of the sight of law and justice by the sacrifice of himself; he hath bruised the head of the old serpent, called the devil, and vanquished all his principalities; he hath borne the curse and wrath of God, and is the deliverer of us from it; he hath conquered death and abolished it; and having lain himself in the grave, hath most sweetly perfumed it, and made it as a bed of spices to all his; and he is risen from death with the

voice and shout of triumph, as an everlasting evidence that sin is pardoned, peace procured, God's justice reconciled, and heaven opened: so that, believers, ye may well shout, "The Lord is risen." And as you survey what has been delivered in the light of faith, ye may view yourselves in Christ, with pleasure and make your boast of him, for he has left you no room nor cause to have a single doubt respecting his love to you: his salvation as finished, and his complete victories. And it is sweet to view death as spoiled of its sting by Christ: to consider death, as it respects believers, is but sleeping in Jesus, it is but a being "absent from the body, and being present with the Lord." Death doth not dissolve the union between Christ and his, therefore, believers that are already departed, are said "to sleep in Jesus." (1 Thess. iv. 14.) To be "the Lord's." (Rom. xiv. 8.) To be "the dead which die in the Lord." (Rev. xiv. 13.) The everlasting covenant of grace extends unto the bodies as well as the souls of believers. God is said to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, after their death, and

that not only in regard of their souls, but of their bodies also ; (Matt. xxii. 31, 32.) otherwise how can that place be argumentative of the resurrection? and Christ being risen as the surety, common head, and public representative of all his, so we shall be raised by virtue of our union to him, as the fruit of his resurrection for us, in a divine conformity to him, wearing his image, bearing his likeness. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Our bodies and souls, in every faculty and part will be fitted for Christ, to take in and receive glory from him. And as Christ's resurrection was his first step of advancement to glory ; so will it be to us. As he being raised, lived forty days here below ; so will the elect live and reign with Christ a thousand years in the kingdom-state. As he was advanced from hence to heaven and primordial glory, to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; so the bride, the Lamb's wife, the queen of heaven, will, in conformity to Christ her head, be advanced from the New Jerusalem state, to that of the ultimate glory.

But I pass on, and proceed, thirdly, to shew that this very act of God's, his raising up Jesus from the dead, is our security of his performing all his promises to us, as his elect, even all the blessings of the everlasting covenant.

God by raising Christ from the dead, in and by that act fulfilled his past promises, as all his promises were virtually contained therein, and gave security for the full accomplishment, and performance of future ones, which gives virtue and being to them. For as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he saith on this wise, "I will give you the sure mercies of David." When Christ arose, then said God of him, "This day have I begotten thee." Now thou appearest and lookest like that Son of mine, I rejoiced in from everlasting; and now first thou hast recovered that primitive glory, thou hadst in repute with me, as God-man before the world was. It was impossible for Christ to be holden of death, not only in respect of his power, but in respect of justice, for having borne the sorrows of death, death could not hold him; the

law of God, the justice of God, said, "Deliver the prisoner, for he hath satisfied," and being raised up from the pit of corruption, no more to return unto it, "all the sure mercies of David," are confirmed and made sure. God performs those promises, and bestows those blessings, which out of his free grace, and in faithfulness he promised to David, (Psalm lxxxix. 4, 19.) concerning the Messiah, his not seeing corruption, and his eternal throne and kingdom, by raising first from the dead; and Christ was raised to convey to us "the sure mercies of David," to bestow, and apply all mercies to us, for he arose for our justification, for our sanctification, and for our resurrection, and to give us the highest security for all new-covenant mercies, which security was intended by God in the very act of raising Christ. If it be asked, What were those sure mercies of David? the answer is, the promise of an everlasting covenant, as appears from the 55th of Isaiah, from whence the words in our text are cited.

God, as the God of peace, brought

again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through "the blood of the everlasting covenant." The shedding of Christ's blood established, ratified, confirmed, and sealed every article of it for ever, and makes it everlasting; upon this the God and Father of Christ, as the God of peace, brought him back from the dead, evidencing hereby the efficacy of Christ's blood-shedding and death; and has ensured to the elect, that he will give and bestow upon them all the mercies, blessings and benefits which Christ obtained by his sacrifice. These mercies are styled in the margin, holy, or just things, others render it the covenanted things of David. All those blessings of healing, cleansing, peace, pardon, justification, yea, all which belong unto, and flow from, the covenant of grace, were given to Christ for us, are safe in his hands; he hath by his work of mediation opened a way whereby these are conveyed to us, consistent with all the glory of the divine perfections. And as his death was necessary to the intent that we might receive these sure mercies according to the divine council and cove-

nant; so his resurrection was absolutely necessary also, to the end that he living in heaven might bestow them on us, as the fruits of his sorrows and resurrection from the grave. And God hath fulfilled every article which he engaged for in the everlasting covenant to Christ our head, who is seated upon his mediatorial throne, filled and prevented with all the blessings of grace and glory. And what God hath done in Christ, and to Christ, is good security, and as a pledge that he will perform all his promises to the elect. It is a most blessed consideration that our all in time and eternity depends upon what hath passed between God the Father and Jesus Christ; that he knows all his engagements to his Son; and that we are in his hands, and covenant, eternally safe and secure. It is also a comfortable subject for our thoughts and minds to ruminate on, that we are interested in those eternal acts which passed between God the Father, and Christ on our behalf before the world was, and also in all those acts which were transacted between the Father and the Son, in and throughout the whole of Christ's mediatorial work,

which he performed and finished here below. And it is this salvation, in its full glory and efficacy, which alone can set us up on high, out of the reach of our spiritual enemies, and cause us to triumph over our present sins, corruptions and miseries. Now we may look upon every past fulfilment of God's promise, as a certain evidence of his fulfilling all the rest of his promises to us, in his own time and way. Especially, we may so look upon the fulfilment of the promise we have been speaking of in this light and view. Hath Christ been quickened from death, and raised up from the grave by the glory of the Father? so surely will all the elect be quickened by the Holy Ghost with new and spiritual life in their souls, and be raised up at the last day to a state of eternal life, glory, immortality, and blessedness. Was Christ the head justified at his resurrection? so surely shall all the elect who are already justified in him, have the sentence of it pronounced in their minds by the Holy Spirit. And as God, as the God of peace, brought back again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

through the blood of the everlasting covenant; so surely will he bring back from a state of spiritual death, and also out of a backsliding state, all the elect sheep, through the same blood of the everlasting covenant.

He will work, and continue to work in every vessel of mercy, all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power; and this he will do to honour his Son's sacrifice, and to testify his being everlastingly well pleased herewith. It would greatly encrease, and strengthen our faith if we understood that the covenant engagements between the Father and the Son are finished, and that all wrought in us, and bestowed upon us, and enjoyed by us, are the fruits and consequences hereof. God hath every motive to love us; yea, he cannot but be well pleased with us to eternity: for as he beholds us in Christ, we are a perfection of beauty. As he considers the personal value, and worth of the life of his co-equal Son in our nature, and the eternal efficacy of his atonement, he cannot but delight in those eternal acts of his grace which are passed already in his divine mind, and shall yet

be certainly and personally fulfilled in time, the justification of our persons, and the pardon of all our sins. And as he considers what we are in Christ, it cannot but be his delight to work in us all the good pleasure of his will, as he views us raised up together, and made to sit with Christ in heavenly places ; so he will one day raise us up, and give us actually in our own persons to sit with Christ in his kingdom of glory.

May you be enabled to rejoice in what God hath done in Christ, and done to Christ, and bestowed on us in him, and is engaged to bestow on you for his sake ; and where I have most failed in this grand subject which hath been before us, may the Lord the Spirit be pleased there most to glorify himself by giving you such views and conceptions of Christ Jesus, as may make him all in all, in you, and to you : even so. Amen.

FINIS.

