

# A DISCOURSE OF GOD'S BEING THE AUTHOR OF RECONCILIATION

by Stephen Charnock

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*Stephen Charnock's powerful sermons on atonement and Christian discipleship.*

6 Chapters

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## **A Discourse of God's being the Author of Reconciliation**

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## **And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus**

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Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.--2 Cor. 5:18,19.

These words are small in bulk, but great in mystery, it is the heads of the gospel in a nut-shell; the most sparkling diamond in the whole golden ring of Scripture. It comprehends the counsels of eternity and the transactions of time. A wonder in heaven, God bringing forth a man-child to be a propitiation for sin, which was the Jews' stumbling-block and the Gentiles' scoff. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; but wherein the wisdom and grace of God's counsel in heaven, and the power of his actions on earth, clearly shine forth in the face of Jesus Christ. The Jacob's ladder, the upper part fixed in heaven, and the lower foot standing upon the earth. Angels descended on that; God descends to man by this in acts of wisdom and grace, and man ascends to God in acts of faith and love.

If there be any mystery in Christianity more admirable than another, it is this of reconciliation. If any mystery in this mystery, it is the various and incomprehensible engagement of the Father in it, in and through Christ. If anything in Scripture sets forth this mystery in a few words like a picture in a little medal, it is this which I have read, wherein the apostle gives us a short but full and clear account of the doctrine of reconciliation, which is the substantial part of the gospel.

There is a double reconciliation here and in the following verse expressed.

First, Fundamental; at the death of Christ, whereby it was obtained.

This is the ground of God's laying aside his anger; this is reconciliatio legalis or de jure.

Secondly, Actual or particular, when it is complied with by faith. This regards the application of it, when God does actually lay aside his enmity, and imputes sin no more to the person. Which consists of two parts.

1. The proclamation of this: ver. 20, 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' declaring God's willingness to take men into favour. This is the declaration of reconciliation de jure, or the right of reconciling. The gospel contains the articles of peace, and the counsels and methods of God about it. It is the copy of God's heart from eternity.

2. Particular acceptance, which is on our part an acceptance of the terms of reconciling, on God's part an acceptance of us into his favour, and a non-imputation of our sins to us, which the apostle calls, Rom. v. 11, the receiving the atonement; this is the accepting the atonement, the ground of reconciliation on man's part, and the application on God's part.

The first, viz., the proclamation of it to us, is God's promise to us, the other is the performance; the one is God's gracious favour to us, the other is God's gracious act in us. Christ is the cause of both these reconciliations: of the fundamental reconciliation by his death, of our actual reconciliation by his life; the one by himself in person, the other by his deputy the Spirit.

God. God is taken here by some\* "ousiados", for the whole trinity, Christ, "oikonomikos", as mediator.

Others, and more likely, understand by God the Father, to whom reconciliation is ascribed per modum appropriationis, as he is the

fountain of the divinity, as the fathers use to call him. As the Father is the principal person wronged, and declaring his anger against us, the reconciliation is principally made to him; in which sense we are said to have 'access to the Father,' Eph. ii. 18, through Christ, and by the Spirit. The Son brings us to the Father, and the Spirit directs us to the Son. Christ takes away God's enmity to us, and the Spirit takes away our enmity to God. As the first creation is appropriated to the Father, so is the second also. The apostle having described the new state of things, ver. 17, tells us, ver: 18, that 'all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;' that this new state is of God, who is no less the creator of the second state than of the first. Adam, the common head of God's appointment, by his falling, overthrew himself and his posterity; God therefore appoints another head to reduce men again to himself. What is here called reconciling, is called, Eph. i. 10, 'gathering together in one,' "anakephalaïosasthai". God would gather them together to himself under one head, as they had been separated from him under one head. God was in Christ. Some make this expression to signify no more than by Christ, ver. 18; or for Christ's sake: Eph. iv. 34, 'As God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.'

But the expression notes something more than for Christ's sake. In actual pardon, Christ, is the moving cause by his intercession, as well as the meritorious cause by his propitiation: 1 John ii. 2, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation,' &c. But the first purpose of reconciliation, and the appointing Christ as the medium for it, had no moving cause but the infinite compassion of God to his fallen creature. Christ was not the moving cause of this, though he be the meritorious cause of all the effects of it, and laid the foundation of an actual reconciliation by

being the centre of the agreement between the justice and mercy of God. God's anger was appeased by the death of Christ, but God was the first author of this propitiation, appointing this method of restoring the creature, and this person, or Jesus, to do it.

God was in Christ. It may be meant of the Trinity: the Father was in Christ constituting and directing, the Son was in Christ by personal union, the Spirit was in Christ gifting him for this work of reconciliation; but I would rather understand it of the Father.

Being in Christ is not meant,

1. Of that essential inness or oneness whereby the Father and the Son are one in essence. Or as a father of the flesh and his son are said to be of the same nature, disposition, and likeness, whereby we say the father lives in the son, in the lineaments and temper of the son, whereby he resembles the father. It is true, the father and the son have the same nature, the same perfections and divine excellencies; so the Father is in the Son without any respect to reconciliation. He is so in the Son in creation also; he is so also one with the Spirit. But this notes some singular manner of inness in Christ, which is not in the third person, or in any else.
2. Nor in regard of that affection the Father bears to Christ. He is indeed in a peculiar manner in Christ in regard of love, more than in all believers besides. He loved him as the head, believers as the members. This is common to believers with Christ, though not in the same degree.
3. But it notes some peculiar manner of operation in Christ as mediator. Redemption was not the work only of the Son; the Son wrought it, the Father directed it; the Son paid the price, the Father appointed him to do so, received it of him, accepted it from him, and accounted it to others through him, which is that we are bound to

believe, as Christ tells the Jews, John x. 38, 'that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him,' John xiv. 20, 'I am in my Father.' The Father is in Christ by way of direction, support, and influence, and Christ in the Father by way of observance, obedience, and dependence. As the world was in Christ as in their surety and head, satisfying God, so God is in Christ as in his ambassador, making peace with the world. All things that Christ acted and managed in this work are to be referred to God as the prime author.

The world. The world properly signifies the frame of heaven and earth, and all creatures therein, joined together by an exact harmony, order, and dependence upon one another; but in the Scripture is chiefly understood of mankind, the top of the lower world and end of its creation. It is frequent in all writers to put the place for the inhabitants; and it is taken for the most part for the corrupted world, the world fallen under sin and wrath, and opposing God: John i. 10, 'The world knew him not.' And when God takes some out of the world, he calls them not by the name of the world, but his church. And those that he brings out of this sinful condition, he is said to bring 'out of the world' John xv. 19, and to choose 'out of the world,' John xvii. 6.

The world is fundamentally reconciled, there being a foundation laid for the world to be at peace with God, if they accept of the terms upon which this amity is to be obtained; or all ages of the world, those before the coming of Christ in the flesh as well as those after, 1 John ii. 2.

Reconciling. The greatest controversy lies in this word, whether by it be meant God's reconciliation to us, or our laying down our enmity against God. Socinus and his followers say God was not angry with man, he was reconciled before, but that this place is meant of affection towards God, because it is said we are reconciled to God, and not God

to us.

But learned men have cleared this. The phrase in heathen authors of men's being reconciled to their gods, is always understood for appeasing the anger of their gods, and escaping those dreadful judgments either actually inflicted or certainly threatened from heaven. By reconciliation of us to God in this place cannot be meant our conversion, or any act of ours.

1. Because the reconciliation here spoken of was the matter of the apostles' discourses and sermons, and the great argument they used to convert the world to God. If, then, that sense were true, it would be an impertinent argument, unworthy of those that Christ called out to be the first messengers and heralds of this redemption. The sense of their discourse would run thus: God has already converted you, therefore be converted to him; as it is nonsense to exhort a man to do that very act which he has already done.

2. This reconciliation does formally consist in the non-imputation of sin to men. Now this is God's act, not the creature's. 'Not imputing sin' and 'forgiving sin' are the same thing, Rom. iv. 7, 8, therefore the reconciliation itself is an act of God. If God were to be brought into our favour as a person offending, we should be said rather not to impute God's supposed offences to him, and not to charge him with that which was the ground of our hatred of him.

The apostle tells us that God does not impute the trespasses of the world to them emphatically, as Grotius observes, but he does to another whom he had made sin for them: ver. 21, 'For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.' And the apostles were sent about the world to testify this benefit, that men might give credit to God, and turn to him.

And upon the declaration of this doctrine, that God had in Christ laid

aside his anger for their sins, and having punished another for them, would not punish them if they embraced by faith what was proposed to them, they besought men that they would lay aside their enmity against God, as he declared himself willing to lay aside his enmity against them, and had testified this by sending his own Son to bear their punishment.

There is a like place with this: Rom. v. 6, 10, 'if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' If Christ died for sinners to make an atonement for them, it was then to procure God's well-pleasement with them, because they had offended him. But if he died to bring God in favour with us, then his death was an atonement for God, and to expiate God's offences, who never was, nor can be, guilty of any towards his creature.

But it is evident the reconciliation there mentioned, as well as in the text, was antecedent to conversion, and therefore is not the same with the conversion of the creature.

1. Because otherwise the apostle's argument would have little validity in it, for it proceeds a majori, 'much more, being reconciled by his death, we shall be saved.' If God were so infinitely kind to us as to turn away his anger from us by the death of his Son when we were yet enemies, how much more tender will he be of us since he has taken us into favour, and we are actually converted to him!

2. The effect of this reconciliation is a saving from wrath by the blood of Christ: ver. 9, 'Much more, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' Therefore this reconciliation must be by appeasing that wrath under which we should otherwise have fallen.

And the effect of it is to have peace with God: ver. 1, 'We have peace

with God;' whereas, if it were meant of God's being brought into our favour, it should have been said, God has peace with us, and that God has access to us.

3. Justification is the effect and consequent of this reconciliation.

And this Crellius confesses, *Justificatio est effectus reconciliationis*. But this is the act of God, Rom. iv. 5, Rom. viii.

33.

4. Reconciliation is here attributed to the death of Christ as a distinct cause from that of conversion: Rom. v. 10, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' that is the *reconciliatio impetrata*, which in the second expression of our actual or applied reconciliation is ascribed to the life of Christ or intercession, that being the end for which he lives in heaven, Heb. vii. 25.

5. We are said to 'receive the atonement,' Rom. v. 11, which is the same with 'receiving forgiveness of sins,' Acts x. 43. But to receive conversion is a phrase not at all used in Scripture. When a man turns to the east, no man says he receives turning to the east. Besides, if it were meant of bringing God into our favour, it were more proper to say God received the atonement, and not we.

6. If by reconciliations were meant our bending our hearts to love God, there could not be any sufficient reason rendered why the sanctification of the heart should be laid down by the apostle as the end of this reconciliation, as it is Col. i. 22, 'Yet now has he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unreprouable in his sight.' For nothing can be both *medium* and *finis sui ipsius*, its own end and means too.

By reconciliation is meant the whole work of redemption. The Scripture has various terms for our recovery by Christ, which all amount to one

thing, but imply the variety of our misery by sin, and the full proportion of the remedy to all our capacities in that misery. Our fall put us under various relations; our Saviour has cut those knots, and tied new ones of a contrary nature. It is called reconciliation as it respects us as enemies, salvation as it respects us in a state of damnation, propitiation as we are guilty, redemption as captives, and bound over to punishment. Reconciliation, justification, and adoption differ thus: in reconciliation, God is considered as the supreme Lord and the injured party, and man is considered as an enemy that has wronged him; in justification, God is considered as a judge, and man as guilty; in adoption, God is considered as a father, and man as an alien. Reconciliation makes us friends, justification makes us righteous, adoption makes us heirs.

This verse then represents to us the doctrine of redemption under the term of reconciliation. In it we have,

- I. The principal author and spring of this reconciliation, God.
- II. The immediate efficient or the meritorious cause of it, Christ.
- III. The subjects, God and the world: 'the world to himself.'
- IV. The form of this reconciliation, or the fruit of it: 'not imputing their trespasses unto them,' not charging them with their crimes.
- V. The instrumental cause of actual reconcilment, the ministry of the word.

The observations we may take notice of are these:ó

First, Reconciliation by Christ is the foundation of the regeneration of nature: ver. 17, 18, 'All things are become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' The design of God was to reduce us to happiness, which was not to be done without the satisfaction of his justice. Christ by his death satisfies that; in his life is a model of our sanctification. God is first the God of

peace before he be the God of sanctification: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.' The destruction of the enmity of our nature was founded upon the removing the enmity in God. There had been no sanctification of our natures had there not been a redemption of our persons, no more than for devils, who remain unholy because they remain unreconciled. Besides, since God has been at peace with us he will sanctify us, that the actual peace may be preserved by the weeding out the remainders of the enmity in our natures. It is as he is a God of peace that he conquers any of our spiritual enemies. He will never engage in the bruising Satan under our feet till he be our reconciled God in Christ: Rom. vi. 20, 'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.'

Secondly, God does not act principally as a Creator, but as a reconcilable God ever since the first promise All blessings flow from him as standing in that relation. All his providences in keeping up the world, the fruitful showers, the enjoyments of the sons of men in the world, are upon the account of the Mediator, wherein he has declared himself a reconciling God. He acts towards the world as a reconciling God, towards believers as reconciled. He is reconcilable as long as he is inviting and keeps men alive in a state of probation. But he is not reconciled but to those that accept of the way of reconciliation which he has wrought in his Son, and according to the methods whereby he wrought it. The relation of a Creator cannot cease while there is any creature; but if God should act towards the world only as Creator, the dissolution of the world had been long ago, because the law of the creation had been transgressed. But he acts as a 'faithful Creator', 1 Pet. iv. 19, as a Creator according to the promise of the new covenant, which his faithfulness respects.

Thirdly, And that which I only intend, is this,

I. Doctrine. God is the great spring and author of our recovery. Or God was principally engaged in the whole undertaking and effecting of our redemption and reconciliation by Christ. God was the first mover in those acts whereby the first foundation-stone was laid and the building reared. All was begun by his order, and managed by his direction and influence: 2 Cor. v. 18, 'All things are of God, who has reconciled,' i. e. all things are of God in this reconciling act. The whole Trinity is concerned in it. Each person acts a distinct part. The glory of contriving is appropriated to the Father, as he that made the first motion, counselled Christ to undertake it, sent him in the fullness of time, and bruised him upon the cross, making his soul an offering for sin. The glory of effecting it is ascribed to the second person, both in the satisfactory part to the justice of God, and also in the victorious part, the conquest of Satan. The glory of working the conditions upon which it is enjoyed, and the applying it, is attributed wholly to the Spirit. The story of the creation seems to intimate some other work to be done in the world by God besides that work of creation which God the Father made at that time: Gen. ii. 2, 'And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made, and rested from all his work which he had made;' and ver. 3, 'and rested from all the work which God created and made;' thrice repeated, He rested from that work which he had made, he made no more of that kind and nature. But a rest he could not find; he rested from it, but not in it; there was a work of a nobler strain behind to be made by him for his rest. He foresaw how soon he should be disturbed by the entrance of sin; and though he rested from making any more creatures of that sort, yet he had works of grace to make afterwards, more wonderful than those of nature. He had a further display to make of his gracious perfections, which could not be deciphered on the face of that creation; but a work there was remaining

wherein he intended to bring forth the glory of his divine excellency which yet lay hid. This is the highest draught of divine wisdom and goodness; therefore if the Father created all things wherein his wisdom and goodness appears in a shadowy manner, drawn with fainter colours, he should have no less hand in this, wherein his wisdom was to appear without a veil, in its full lustre and eternally durable colours, when this material world shall pass away: Eph. iii. 10, 'A mighty variety of wisdom,' "polupoikilos sophia", which delights the Creator and amazes the creature! He would no less have a hand in the second creation of all things by Christ than he had in the first, since a greater glory was to redound to him as reconciling than as creating, by how much it is more excellent to give man a happy being than to give man a bare being. God is therefore said to be the 'head of Christ,' 1 Cor. xi. 3, as Christ is the head of man. As man was made to declare the glory of Christ, so is Christ formed to declare the glory of God. As all influences the members receive in point of direction and motion are from the head, so all the influences Christ had were from God, as the head directing and moving him. As the head counsels what the members act, so God counsels what Christ acts. God brings forth this Mediator as his divine image, and diffuses all his perfections in and through him before the eyes of men, and thought it a work too worthy to be contrived by any but himself, and transacted by any but his Son. God only sent him to make it, and called him back to himself as soon as ever he had finished it.

We shall consider,

1. What reconciliation is, and wherein the nature of it consists.
2. That God the Father is and must be the prime cause of this.
3. Wherein the agency of the Father appears, and by what acts it is manifested in this transaction.

#### 4. The use.

## 1. First, What reconciliation is.

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(1.) Reconciliation implies that there was a former friendship. There were once good terms between God and man, there was a time wherein they lovingly met and conversed together. Man loved God and was beloved by him, till he left his first love and broke out into rebellion against him. God pronounced all his creatures 'good,' and man at the last 'very good,' with an emphasis. A God of infinite goodness could not hate his creature, which was an extract of his own image. Man had the law of God engraved upon his heart, and therefore could not in that state hate God, while he was guided by that law of righteousness and exact goodness in himself. Thus was man God's favourite above all creatures of the lower world, styled his son, Luke iii. 38; but how quickly did he prove a parricide, and a quarrel was commenced between God and him! Now, reconciliation is piecing up of a broken amity, and a reglutination of those affections which were disjoined. And the miracle of this reconciliation made by God in Christ excels the former friendship; that might be broken off, as we find by woeful experience it was. This as to some acts and fruits may be interrupted, not abolished; as the beams of the sun may be clouded, but the influence of the sun cannot be eclipsed. Then God and man were not so closely united but they might be parted; now God and the believer are so affectionately knit that they cannot be separated.

(2.) Reconciliation implies an enmity and hatred, or at least a disgust on one or both sides. Adam was created in a state of God's favour, but not long after his creation he apostatised to corruption; by his creation a child of God's love, by his corruption a child of God's wrath. While he stood, he was the possessor of paradise and heir of

heaven; when he fell, God seals a lease of ejection, and man becomes an heir of hell; he turns rebel, and joins with Satan, God's greatest enemy. God took the forfeiture of his possession, turns him out of house and home, and hinders his re-entrance by a flaming sword turning every way to keep his fingers off from the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24, or hope of felicity upon the former score. Man invaded God's right of sovereignty, and God, of a sovereign Father, becomes a punishing judge. Man falls into sin, and wrath falls upon man; sin separated between God and him, and unsheathed the flaming sword. Thus are heaven and earth at variance. The hatred is mutual: God hates men, not as his creatures, but sinners; man hates God, not as God, but as sovereign and judge. Man turned off God from being his Lord, and God turned off man from being his favourite; man vents his serpentine poison against God, God pours out his wrathful anger on man. On man's part this enmity is by sin; on the part of God (1.) from the righteousness of his nature, since he cannot behold iniquity without indignation, Hab. i. 13. As he cannot but love goodness, so he cannot but hate iniquity, Ps. v. 5, 6. He hates and abhors all the workers of iniquity. He hates the sins of his saints, though not their persons; he hates the persons of wicked men, not primarily, but for their sin. (2.) From the righteousness of his law made against sin, whereby he cannot but according to his veracity punish it. His curses must be executed, his law vindicated, and his justice satisfied; truth and fidelity to his law, his nature, his justice engages him. Since there is nothing of the life of God in us naturally, there can be nothing of the love of God to us; for what affection can the Deity have to brutishness, and infinite purity to loathsomeness? Now, there having been such an enmity, man is properly said to be reconciled. Good angels cannot properly be said to be reconciled, because there was no difference between God and them. It is

a question, because believers are said to be reconciled, and reconciliation implying a former hatred, Whether God hated believers before their conversion? In answer to this,

[1.] To say God hated them fully before, and loves them now, would argue a mutability in God, which the apostle excludes: James i. 17, he is 'the Father of lights,' who is so far from having any real change, that he has not 'a shadow' of it. If he did not love his elect before Christ died for them, and loves them afterwards, then there is a change in his will; for to love them is nothing else but to will eternal life to them, and for God to hate any is not to will eternal life to be their inheritance. If God did so hate his elect before Christ's death as to will that they should not inherit eternal life at all, and after Christ's death did will that they should, his will would then be inconsistent and changeable. If God chose them from eternity, he loved them from eternity; if he chose them in Christ as their Head, Eph. i. 4, he loved them in Christ as their Head, he could not choose them to eternal life in those methods without loving them. As he loved Christ the Head before he died for those that were to be his members, so he loved those that were to be his members before they were actually engrafted in him. As he loved Christ as Mediator before he was actually sacrificed, so he loved his chosen ones before they were actually reconciled. When Christ came to reconcile, he came to do God's will; and when any soul is actually reconciled, it is not a change in God's will, but the performance of God's eternal will.

[2.] There is a change in the creature, but that does not imply a change in God. It is not a new will in God, but a new state in the creature. The creation adds no new relation or accident, but a change and effect in the creature. And as the schools generally determine, it is one thing *mutare voluntatem*, another thing *velle mutationem*; as a

master commands a servant this work one day, another work another day, the master changes not his will, but wills a change in his work, or as some illustrate it, as a physician prescribes his patient one sort of physic one day, another kind of physic the next, the physician does not change his will, but will a change. As a man has a mind to adopt a poor child to be his son, affection is the ground of this resolution; but he lets him for a while run about in rags, and seems to take no notice of his misery, yet at length takes him, and clothes him, and adopts him. There is a change in the state of this child, but not in the affection, the original of it. There was a change in the prodigal when he returned, but not in the father when he embraced him: "My son which was lost is found," it was a new finding of the son, but not a new affection in the father.

Well, but how may God be said to love or hate believers before their actual reconciliation, since he is the author of it?

[1.] God loves them with a love of purpose. God loves them with a love of purpose or election, but till grace be wrought, not with a love of acceptance, we are within the love of his purpose as we are designed to be the servants of Christ, not within the love of his acceptance till we are actually the servants of Christ: Rom. xiv. 18, 'serves Christ,' and is 'acceptable to God.' They are alienated from God while in a state of nature, and not accepted by God till in a state of grace.

There is in God a love of good will and a love of delight, amor benevolentiae, seu "eudokias", amor complacentiee seu "euarestias". The love of good will is love in the root, the love of delight is love in the flower. The love of good will looks upon us afar off, the love of delight inns itself in us, draws near to us. By peace with God we have access to God, by his love of delight he has access to us. God wills well to them before grace, but is not well pleased with them till

grace. Christ is the effect of his love of benevolence and compassion to relieve us, which love ordered Christ as the means, John iii. 16; but Christ is the cause of that love of friendship wherewith God loves us. A king has a kindness for a prisoner in his bolts, and sends some to clothe him; but he has no delight in him to think him fit for his embraces, till he be delivered, both from his fetters and his filthiness. An elect person is not simply beloved before his actual reconciliation, because he has no gracious quality which may be the object of that love. Neither is he simply hated, for if so, how could he have any gracious habits infused into him whereby he may be made the object of delight? It cannot be denied but that God intends to bestow supernatural gifts upon those he has chosen, else wherein does his love consist? And it cannot be conceived how a simple hatred can consist with such an intention. He loves them to make them his friends, and after reconciliation he loves them as his friends. It is love in God to make an object for his love. God loves an object qualified with grace, therefore to qualify an object so as to make it lovely, argues love in God to that object he so qualifies; love in intention before the qualification. Hatred could never be the foundation and cause of that qualification; sea, the gift of Christ, which is the effect, does suppose the love of God which is the cause. God indeed was angry with all mankind, but it was an anger mixed with love; he was angry, but yet willing to be appeased. A pregnant example of this, which may give us an understanding of it, we have from the mouth of God himself: Job xiii. 7, 8, 'My wrath is kindled against thee' (speaking to Eliphaz), 'and against thy two friends. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering.' There is a cloud upon God's face, but his mercy as the sun peeps out behind the cloud, as he acquaints them with

his anger, so he shows them the way to pacify it. Though his wrath was kindled, yet he is not so ready to inflame it as he is to have it quenched by the means he prescribes them, wherein Job was a type of Christ, whose sacrifice God only accepts as well as appoints. There is no love of complacency either in the persons or services of any, but as considered in Christ the reconciler satisfying the justice of God. When an elect person is engrafted in Christ, that love which was bubbling in the fountain from eternity flows out in the streams.[2.] God does hate his elect in some sense before their actual reconciliation. God was placable before Christ, appeased by Christ. But till there be such conditions which God has appointed in the creature, he has no interest in this reconciliation of God; and whatsoever person he be in whom the condition is not found, he remains under the wrath of God, and therefore is in some sense under God's hatred.

First, God does not hate their persons, nor any natural or moral good in them. Not indeed the person of any creature, for as persons they are his own work. The creation was good in God's eye at the first framing, and whatsoever of goodness remains is still affected by an unchangeable Being, for infinite and unbounded goodness cannot hate that which is good either naturally or morally. Christ loved that morality he saw in the young man. God loves their moral qualities, and they are the common gifts of his Spirit, and qualities wherewith he has endowed them; as their primitive natures were good, so what approaches nearest to that nature has some tincture of goodness, and therefore has some amiableness in the eye of God. But he took no pleasure in them, neither in their persons nor services, as acceptable to him, without the Son of his love.

Secondly, God hates their sins. Sin is always odious to God, let the person be what it will. God never hated, nor ever could, the person of

Christ, yet he hated and testified in the highest measure his hatred of those iniquities he stood charged with as one surety. The father could not but hate the practices of a prodigal, though he loved his person. God loves nothing but himself, and other things as they are like himself, and in order to himself; therefore God must needs hate whatsoever is contrary to his immaculate purity, and different from his image. He hates the sins of believers, though pardoned and mortified; though his mercy pardons them, his holiness can never love them; though the punishment be removed from the person, yet the nature and sinfulness is not taken from the sin. Much more does God hate the sins of his unconverted elect, which are neither pardoned nor mortified. If he hates sin in its weakness, much more in its strength. He hates their sins objectively, that is the object of, and the only object of, his hatred; their persons terminative, as the effects of his wrath do terminate in their persons. Though sin is the object of God's hatred, as being a contrariety to his holy law, yet it is not the object of his wrath, but the person sinning; actions are not immediately punished, neither can, but the persons so acting. In that respect God may be said to hate the persons of men, and of his elect before conversion, as the effects of his wrath do terminate in them.

Thirdly, God hates their state. Though God loves morality in men, yet that does not include the acceptance of their persons, or of their moral acts, or any love to their state. Though Christ loved the young man's morality, yet he could not love his state, since it was at some distance from the kingdom of heaven, though not so great a distance from it. The elect before their conversion are in a state of enmity, a state of darkness, a state of ignorance, and a state of slavery; and that state is odious to God, and makes them incapable, while in that state, to 'inherit the kingdom of God.' 1 Cor. vi. 9-11, 'Such were

some of you,' such sinners, and in such a state of sin that could not inherit the kingdom of God. A man that has a love to a beggarly child, and does intend to adopt him, he loves his person, but hates his present state of nastiness and beggary; and when he does actually adopt him, changes his state, his relation, and divests him of his filthiness. The state of the elect before actual reconciliation is odious, because it is a state of alienation from God; whatsoever grows up from the root of the old Adam cannot be delightful to him.

Fourthly, God hates them as to the withholding the effects of his love.

We call the effects of God's grace grace, and the effects of God's wrath wrath. So God may be said to hate an elect person before his conversion, because, being in that state a child of wrath, the wrath of God abides on him, and the curses of the law are in force against him.

As God is said to repent, when he withholds those judgments and effects of his anger which he had threatened against a nation, so God may be said to be angry and to hate, when he pours out vials of wrath, and also when he withholds the fruits and proper effects of love.

(3.) Proposition as a caution. Though God be the prime author of this reconciliation, yet no man is actually reconciled to God till he does comply with those conditions whereupon God offers it. 'God was in Christ' when he was 'reconciling the world;' we must be in Christ if we be reconciled to God: he in a way of direction, we in a way of dependency. Till a man does believe, though God has been reconciling the world in Christ, yet he is not under the actual peace with God, though under the offers of this peace. 'The wrath of God abides' on him, as well as the offers of peace are proposed to him, otherwise what need had the apostle to beseech men to be reconciled to God, upon the account that he was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, if there were not something to be done by us in order to it: ver. 20, 'We

pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' To what purpose should we be exhorted to lay down our arms, discard our enmity, offer up our weapons, if nothing were to be done on our parts. It is true, God is in Christ 'reconciling the world, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' But to whom? To all the world without any distinction? Though the offers are made to all, yet while men accept not of them, sin will be imputed to the unbelieving world. Shall we think God will recede from his anger till we recede from our sins? What rebels can be said to be reconciled to their prince till they observe the conditions in his proclamation? Christ cannot present men friends till by faith they are united to him; for though there be an accomplishment of the general reconciliation in the death of Christ, yet there is no benefit accruing to us till full union by faith. Much less can man be said to be reconciled from eternity; the apostle cuts off that conceit: Col. i. 21, 'Yet now has he reconciled,' now, not before. If it were from eternity, the Colossians were never enemies to God, if always reconciled, the apostle speaks a falsehood, for to be enemies and friends at the same time implies a contradiction, to be reconciled from eternity, and yet but now, are inconsistent. Alas! we come into the world with the badge of God's wrath upon us, and our backs turned upon God. The first thing we do is to kick against him. Reconciliation in the decree is from eternity; but we cannot more properly be said to be reconciled from eternity because of that, than to be created and born from eternity, because decreed to come upon the stage of the world in time. Reconciliation in the purchase is temporary; we were reconciled meritoriously at the time of Christ's death, but no more actually reconciled than we can be said to be born when Adam was created, because we were in him as a cause. Reconciliation particular and actual is temporary; we have then God appeased towards us, when we can by

faith hold upon his Son upon the cross, and with a hearty sincere faith plead the wounds made in Christ's sides, the sorrows in his soul as a propitiation for sin, an atonement of God's own appointment. It is not sin but the sinner is reconciled. 'God will hold an eternal antipathy to sin, as sin does to God; God will never be pacified towards sin, though he will towards the sinner. He is in Christ reconciling the world, not sin in the world, to himself; let none, therefore, build false conceits upon this doctrine. We must distinguish between reconciliation designed by God, obtained by Christ, owned by the gospel, received by the soul.

(4.) This reconciliation on God's part in and by Christ is very congruous for the honour of God, and absolutely necessary for us.

[1.] For the honour of God.

First, For the honour of his wisdom. Had not a mediator been appointed, mankind had been destroyed at the beginning of his sin, God had lost the glory of his present works, and his wisdom would seem to lie under a disparagement in publishing a rest from his works and pronouncing them good, when the very same day (as some think) they should be sullied with an universal spot, and the choicest part of the lower creation turned back upon God, and all the other creatures employed to base and unworthy ends, below their creation and contrary to the honour of their Creator. Without the appointment of a reconciler, the honour of God in creation had been impaired, the creation had been in vain. No creatures could have attained the true end of their creation, since man, whom they were designed to serve, had apostatised from the service of his and their Creator; they could not be employed by him in that state for the service they were ultimately intended for.

Secondly, For the honour of his truth and justice. Since God had decreed and enacted that whosoever sinned should die, God must either,

upon man's sin, destroy him to preserve his truth and justice, or neglect his own law, and turn it upside down for the discovery of his mercy. These things were impossible to the nature of God; he must be true to himself, just to his law. If justice then should destroy, what way was there to discover his mercy? If God should restore man to his friendship without any consideration, where would be the honour of his justice, the firmness of his truth in his threatening? The wisdom of God finds a way for the honour of both, whereby he preserves the righteousness of his law and the counsel of his mercy, not by changing the sentence against sin, but the person, and laying that upon his Son as our surety, which we by the rigour of the law were to endure in our own persons, whereby justice was satisfied with the punishment due to the sinner, and mercy was satisfied with the merit due to our Saviour.

[2.] Necessary for us. Necessary since all men had breathed in the contagion of Adam, had his corrupt blood, and the poison of the old serpent diffused in their veins; and being thus enemies to God, became subject to wrath and the eternal malediction of the law. Necessary at the very first defection; had there not been an advocate to interpose, we cannot conceive how, according to the methods of the established law, God could have borne one moment with the world. There was as much necessity for some extraordinary remedy against the biting of the old serpent as against the bitings of the fiery ones in the wilderness, which could not be cured by any natural means. They must have inevitably perished under their venom, and man under his. If we come to God in ourselves, what are we but as criminals before a judge, stubble before fire? God is infinitely good, i. e. infinitely contrary to evil; and if to evil, then to us, who think, speak, act nothing but evil. The justice of God upon man's sin required that man should endure an infinite punishment; and because he could not endure a punishment

intensely infinite, by reason of the limitedness of his nature, as a finite creature, therefore he was to endure a punishment extensively infinite in regard of duration, whereof he was capable by reason of the immortality of his soul. Since things stood thus, the fallen creature could not be restored to felicity till some way were found out to restore the amity, with a full satisfaction to both, that God might, without any dishonour to himself and his law, rejoice in his creature, that the creature might with a firm security rejoice again in God. The will of God is an evidence of the necessity of it. Why did God ordain it if it had not been necessary? The natural inclination and will of Christ as man was contrary to it; for he in the flesh desired this cup might pass from him. How, then, should the infinite wisdom of God, the infinite affection to his Son, put him upon that which was so ignominious, and the infinite wisdom of the Son consent to such an event, without an apparent necessity?

## 2. Second thing. That God the Father must needs be, and is, the author of this

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reconciliation.

1. That God must needs be the author of this work. Reconciliation in all the parts and degrees of it, in all the model and frame of it, is his act. The first invention of this way, the first proposition, the last execution and acceptation, owns him for the author. To him we must needs owe the contrivance, declaration, and accomplishment. If God be the first cause in all things, he is the first cause in the highest of his works. Nothing comes to pass in time but what was decreed in eternity, If anything were done which he did not first know, he were not infinitely wise; if anything were done which he did not first will, positively or permissively, he were not infinitely supreme and powerful. All things are wrought by his counsel, which is the act of his understanding; all things are wrought by his will, which is the act of his sovereignty, Eph. i. 11. By God in Scripture sometimes is meant the Father, by way of eminency, because he is the fountain of the Deity: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

(1.) No creature could be the original author of this work.

[1.] All human nature could not first invent it. The whole wisdom of Moses and the Jewish nation in the wilderness could not find a remedy against the bitings of the fiery serpents, which indeed were so venomous that they were absolutely mortal. And if they were the presteres, as the Greeks call them, which word signifies the same that the Hebrew does, burning serpents, no remedy was found against their venom for many ages after. In the time of the Romans' flourishing, the

poison suddenly inflamed the blood, puffed up the skin, disfigured the countenance, deprived them of the shape of men, with the benefit of life; an exact representation of the misery of man by the fall. No remedy could be found in nature against this evil in the figure, no more can any against the evil represented by it; neither the languishing law of nature, nor the sickly philosophy of the heathens, could ever find a cure. The reconciliation of God to man was too stupendous a work for the joint wit and wisdom of man to arrive at. Man was so plunged in the sink of lapsed nature, that he knew not how to desire it; so amiable were his dreams of happiness in his rebellion, that he had no mind to cherish any thoughts of it. He was so furious in his unjust war against God, that he had no will to accept of any such motion. The world was filled with all unrighteousness, and men were 'haters of God,' Rom. i. 29, 30. By all their wisdom they knew him not, 1 Cor. i. 21. No mind to know God, no will to be at peace with him. Had the wisdom of the world been sensible of their deplorable condition, could it have contrived a way for the glorifying his mercy without invading the rights of his justice, they might have dreamt of a pardon from his mercy as the supreme governor. But how would the contentment of his justice, as eminent a perfection in God as that of his mercy, and the stability of his truth in his threatening, have insuperably puzzled them? The difficulty lay not upon the point of mercy; every day's sun, and every seasonable shower were rich discoveries of this. But there was no direction in the other case, to be read in the whole manuscript of nature. The heavens declare the glory of God as creator, not as reconciler; they discovered his glory, not any way of entrance into it. Had they had thoughts of accomplishing it by a surety between God and them, where could they have pitched upon one worthy of God's acceptance? If they could have found out and proposed one, what tie was

there upon God to accept any other offer for the offenders but to exact it of their own persons? What man could have thought of such an extensive love as the reconciliation, not of one or two particular men, but of the world, by so strange a means as the death of God's own Son? We read, indeed, of some one or two of the heathen philosophers that declared an impossibility of the world's reformation without God's taking flesh, but none imagined anything of the death of the Son of God; no, not the Jews, but here and there one of their rabbis, long before his coming. Oh the immense grace of God, to discover that to us in his gospel, which all the wisdom of fallen nature might have fruitlessly studied to eternity! As no man can frame an universal law, accommodated to the several states and tempers of all the men in the world, and to those notions of fit and just in the minds of men, but God, who knows what he has engraved upon men's minds; so none but God can know how to find a way of redemption that may answer the glory of all his attributes, and the pressing urgency of men's necessities.

[2.] But might not the unblemished wisdom of angels, out of pity to mankind, have found out a way of reconcilment? They knew much more of God than man; they knew the wonders of his goodness, yet had seen many of their own order drop into hell under his wrath. They might know that the devils, a stronger nature, could not satisfy God for their offence, much less man, the weaker nature. They would never have stood gazing upon it with astonishment when it was revealed, had it been so obvious to their clear and comprehensive reasons. The greatest learning they have in it is by the church: Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.' Objectively, not efficienter. It was a mystery hid in God, and only in him; not an angel seems to have had any thoughts of it till the revelation of it was made

to the church. Now, not before; all the angels in heaven were ignorant of it, and probably understood not the meaning of the first promise in paradise till the coming of Christ in the flesh. Yea, after the revelation, those intelligent spirits have not a perfect knowledge of the whole scope of the gospel state, for, 1 Peter i. 12, they 'desire to look into' those things they could never be inventors of, or consulters in, that which they did not understand. Well, then, angels and men may admire it when revealed, but not before imagine it; they may applaud it, but never contrive it. Which of them could presume to nourish such a thought, that the Father should call out his eternal Son to be a temporary sufferer, to veil his divinity with the rags of an afflicted humanity? What, then, was impossible to the approved wisdom of men and angels, must only be ascribed to the wisdom and grace of God.

(2.) God the Father must needs be the principal in this business.

[1.] The order of the Trinity requires it. There is an order in the operation as well as the subsistence of the three persons. As the Son is from the Father in order of subsistence, so the actions of the Son are from the Father in order of motion and direction. The Son is sent by the Father, not only as man, but as God; for the Spirit, that has only a divine nature, is said to be sent by the Father and the Son. The persons are all equal: Philip. ii. 6, Christ 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' yet one operation is appropriated to the Father, another to the Son, another to the Holy Ghost, in regard of order; and the Father, as he is the fountain of the Deity, is the fountain of all divine operation. As the sun is the fountain of its beams, so it is the fountain of all the operation of its beams. All things are of the Father, by the Son. He 'created all things by Jesus Christ,' Eph. iii. 9. He reconciled us unto himself by Christ, 2 Cor. v. 18. All things of

the Father as the fountain, by the Son as the medium. There is a priority of order in the divine paternity upon the account of generation, and this order is observed in the divine institutions. Baptism is first in the name of the Father, then of the Son, then of the Holy Ghost, Mat. xxviii. 19. Now, it is most congruous, that as the Father was the original of our Saviour's person, so he should be of his office; as he was God of his substance, so he should be mediator of his will, the Father first sets the copy, after which the Son writes. John v. 19, 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, for what things soever he does, those also does the Son likewise.' All operations begin first from the Father; this place the ancient fathers understood of Christ as the second person, not as mediator. If the first motion come from Christ, the order of working in the Trinity would be inverted; the Father would then do what he sees the Son do; the Son would be the director, the preponderator, and the Father the follower; the Son would go before in proposal, and the Father follow after in consent. God would not then be the God of order in heaven. Besides, the love of the Father would not then be the principal cause of our redemption, upon which the Scripture everywhere places it, but the love of the Son. Nay, if the authority of constituting the mediator were not in the Father by way of order, there could be little or no testimony of his love since the fall of man. To imagine, therefore, any other root of our redemption, is to contradict the order in the trinity. But this is agreeable to our conceptions of things, as far as we can apprehend such mysteries. The Father from himself, Christ from the Father, the Spirit from both, so the Father contrives this, and is pleased with it, as being the most exact model of his love, wisdom, and justice, and the highest act of love he could show to his Son. The Son consents to it, and is pleased with it, as being the highest act of

love he could show to his Father, and to men, in being their reconciler, and to angels in being their head. The Spirit is pleased with gifting him, as being the greatest demonstration of his power to gift Christ for so great a work, therefore the Spirit is said to 'rest upon him,' Isa. xi. 2. Not only noting the continuance of the Spirit on him, but the satisfaction the Spirit should have in his employment, as much in gifting Christ for it, as Christ in undertaking and managing the work.

[2.] If the Father were not principal in it, the undertaking a reconciliation could not of itself be valid.

First, There had been an injury to the Father in undertaking it without his full consent at least. The Father is the principal party injured, and was therefore to be consulted with in that which concerned his own right. He is also the governor of the world. It is not convenient that a public work should be undertaken in a nation without the consent of the chief magistrate, who may else make it frustrate. When princes of equal dignity are at war, none undertakes the composing of the quarrel, till both parties accept of the mediation. But here is the supreme Lord of the world and ungrateful rebels at variance; the chief governor unjustly wronged. Now, every man would judge it a presumption for any to offer terms of peace to his enemies, and undertake the satisfaction of himself without his own consent in the case.

Secondly, The Father could only by right appoint the terms upon which, and the way whereby, this reconciliation should be made. The Father being the law-maker could only dispense with his law, and judge that satisfaction was fit for the vindication of it. The law ran in that strain, that the party sinning should die. Had the letter of the law been exacted, every man had been a stranger to salvation; the right, therefore, of waiving the letter of the law, while he maintained the

reason and substance of it, belonged to the Father. As the supreme Governor, too, he could only transfer the punishment from the offending party to another that was willing to stand under the penalty in his stead. Since creation is appropriated to the Father, and sin entered upon the world immediately after the creation, it was God as a creator was principally injured. The first sin struck more immediately at the Father, as creator; unbelief at the second person, the Redeemer; and a despitefull contempt of Christ, after the manifestation of him by the Spirit, and the motions pressing upon men, is called the sin against the Holy Ghost. Christ intimates this when he says, 'They have both hated me and my Father;' i. e. me now, as well as my Father before. Non they show a particular hatred to me by unbelief, as well as they have done to my Father formerly by idolatry. The Father, therefore, only had the right to appoint the way of reconciliation according to his good pleasure; since he was chiefly dishonoured, he is fittest to prescribe the method which he judges most convenient for the restitution of his honour. As all his attributes were wronged by sin, so it was fit all his attributes should be glorified in reconciliation of his enemies. It was not fit that glory he is so jealous of should be entrusted in any hands but by his own will; and his prescribing all the ways of vindicating and illustrating it, and the glorifying of himself, was his end in appointing Christ to this work: Isa. xlix. 3, 'Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;' and the glory of God seems to be a name whereby Christ is called: Isa. lx. 1, 'The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Since, therefore, a greater glory was his end in redemption than barely in creation, he had as much a right to be principal in the miracle of restoration as in that of creation.

Thirdly, The Father was not obliged, nor could be obliged by any to entertain any thoughts of a reconciliation. He might, without any

prejudice to his goodness, have demolished this defiled world, and by his power reared another wherein to show forth the glory of his immense perfections; he might have made good the law upon the person of every sinner, much less was he bound to accept of any surety; he might have exacted the satisfaction at the hands of the criminal before he would have been reconciled. Being sovereign, it was at his liberty whether he would be appeased or no towards rebels. If he was willing to be appeased, he might have chosen whether he would have admitted of any surety to stand in their place. When Reuben offered Jacob his two sons as a pledge for Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 37, Jacob was not bound to receive this offer, but at his liberty whether he would take them or no. Nor was Naboth bound to part with his vineyard for a better than his own upon Ahab's offer, 1 Kings xxi. 2, 3. No man is bound to part with his propriety in his goods, or his right over his prisoner; but if a price be agreed upon, he is then bound by the rules of commutative justice to set the prisoner at liberty.

Fourthly, Therefore if the Son of God himself had been incarnate, and died for the world without the Father's call and mission, the Father was not obliged to accept it as the price of our redemption. For all things without a call are of themselves invalid, and depend only upon the will of the person to whom they are related for their acceptance. God's institution confers validity upon any things. Could the brazen serpent ever have cured the bitings of the fiery ones had not God fixed it as a remedy?

Three things go to the establishing the reconciliation: 1. The dignity of the person reconciling; 2. The valuableness of the satisfaction he offers; 3. The call of the person injured, or the acceptance of it.

The two first makes the merit sufficient, the third only makes it accepted. Had Christ endured all the torments of the cross, the

acceptation of him for us might not have been, had not the Father's constitution of him for that purpose preceded his undertaking. Though the death of Christ had an intrinsic value, and therefore was in itself acceptable, yet the consent of the Father only made it accepted; he 'made us accepted' in Christ, Eph. i. 6; therefore our acceptation depends first upon the acceptation of Christ. The strength, therefore, of it in Scripture is put upon God's well-pleas'dness with him, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And upon God's call of him, Eph. i. 9, it was his will, the 'good pleasure of his will', and 'purposed in himself;' it rose up in his own heart and mind. Though the satisfaction of Christ derives not its virtue of meriting from the grace of God, yet it derives its acceptation from the grace of God. The grace of God, and the merit of Christ, relate to one another as the cause and the effect, the antecedent and the consequent. The merit of Christ is the cause of our actual favour with God, but the merit of Christ is not the first spring of it; for it is subordinate to the general grace of God, which orders it as a means of that reconciliation which he purposed in himself. In short, it is like this case: when a man desires the goods of another, and offers him as much as they are worth, and more, though what he offers has an intrinsic value to compensate the possessor for those goods, whether the person accept of that offer or no, yet the acceptation of it depends purely upon his will, and the sum has no validity to purchase what is desired without the will of the present possessor.

First, If the Father had been obliged to receive any satisfaction, it must be from the person offending. No obligation can be conceived incumbent upon him to receive it from a person wholly innocent, though it were of infinite value, because none can transfer over the right of another but he whose right it is.

Secondly, Had not the Father fully agreed to this, I do not see how Christ could have made a compensation by his sufferings. Had he assumed a body, and laid down that body, and courted death, had that been justifiable without a call? The humanity of Christ was a creature, and therefore obliged by the law of nature, as creatures are, to preserve itself. All men are bound to do so, unless God calls them to lay down their lives, who is the supreme Lord of life and death. Suppose our Saviour might have laid down his life intentionally as a compensation for us, what could he have undergone in his humanity but a temporal death? Was it not more we were to suffer? Was not the wrath of God due to our souls? The soul was the chief offender, the soul then ought to be the principal sufferer. If God therefore had not appointed Christ for those ends, the wrath of God could not have been inflicted upon the soul of Christ, for who should have inflicted it? Had it been just with God to have loaded a person with his wrath, who was innocent from any actual or imputed crime both in his own person and transferred from others? His mere bodily sufferings could not have been a recompense for the sin of the soul. The order of things fairly lies thus: man being unable to satisfy God for himself, nor any creature being sufficient to satisfy God for them, the Father calls the Son to take upon him the human nature, and by satisfying his justice for sin, restore us to happiness. The Father's call, and his own voluntary consent, make him capable of having our sins transferred upon him, and bearing them in his own body on the tree. And Christ lays it upon the commandment received from his Father, together with his own free consent: John x. 18, 'I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received from my Father.' He had an authority to lay down his life, he had also a promise of restoration of it by his resurrection. And to this end he had received, not only an

invitation, but a command, which gave him full authority to die, and a ground also to plead the validity of it, for the ends designed by it.

Therefore had he not received such a command, he had had no authority to lay down his life; no more than Abraham had authority to sacrifice Isaac of his own head, neither could he have challenged any acceptance of it for man at the hands of God.

Thirdly, The Scripture does ground the merit of Christ upon the grace of God. It is called the 'gift of God,' and 'the gift by grace, which by Christ has abounded to many,' Rom. v. 16, 16, &c. Some bring this place to prove the absolute efficiency of Christ's merit, had he laid down his life without the appointment of the Father, because, as the sin of Adam had demerit enough to condemn the world, so the righteousness of Christ had merit enough to save the world. But the question is, whence this merit did arise? It did arise personally from Christ himself and the dignity of his person; but as to the acceptation, from the Father, which the apostle resolves in this place in telling us; it is the grace of God, and the gift of God, because if Christ's death had a natural power of merit without any precursory agreement between the Father and the Son, it could not be said then to be the grace of God, for God could not but in a way of justice accept it. There is a double merit, absolute, and ex pacto or covenanted merit, absolute when any good is done to a person, which in the very deed itself obliges him for whose good it is done to the benefactor which does it, as generation and education are the acts whereby parents merit of their children. So that, whether children will or no, upon that very account that they are begotten and brought up they owe everything to their parents so creation being the work of God, the good of the creature, for that very cause every creature, especially rational, is obliged to God, and God by this act does merit all

adoration, obedience, and respect from his creature. Covenanted merit is a work done which does not in its own nature oblige, but by virtue of some preceding compact and agreement between the person meriting and that person of whom he does merit. As when a king proposes a reward to those that run a race, let men run never so well, they have no right to demand a reward but upon such a declaration of the prince; and supposing that edict and declaration, he that runs has a right to the reward promised and appointed by the king, but no right to a reward in general. The whole right does rise, not from the race simply considered, but as it respects the declaration and order of the prince. If we speak of a covenant merit, Christ did fully merit at the hands of God eternal salvation, for he fully performed what was agreed upon; but if we speak of absolute merit, neither Christ nor any creature could merit anything at the hands of God, or render God obliged to them by a natural right, no more than any man that runs a race can oblige a king by his swiftness. As the merit of Christ regards us, it is absolute, for Christ by his very undertaking (supposing he had not had any agreement with the Father) to deliver us, and appease the wrath of God against us, he had absolutely merited of us all love and observance, yea, though he had failed in it; but he had not merited of God anything for us, by any undoubted right, but as it respects that agreement between the Father and the Son. Ps. xvi. 2, 'My goodness extends not unto thee, but to the saints which are in the earth.' Christ did not add anything to God, whereby he might absolutely merit of him; but to the saints he did, whereby they are for ever obliged to him. Christ did not merit anything for us at the hands of God but as mediator, and to this office he was predestinated by God, and therefore he merited nothing but by that decree. What he did was from the office of mediator or priest; and because he was so, therefore he merited. As when any

officers are appointed by the king, whatsoever they act by virtue of their office has its foundation in, and force from, the royal authority. His faithfulness whereby he merited has its validity from the appointment of him in his offices by God, who, Heb. iii. 2, was 'faithful to him that appointed him.' There had been no honour accruing to him, and consequently nothing challenged by him, unless he had been called of God: Heb. v. 4, 'No man takes this honour unto himself but he that is called of God.' Christ himself owns the Father to be the foundation and stability of all the salvation he wrought: Ps. lxxxix. 27, 'He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation; also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.' This is taken from 2 Sam. vii. 14, and cited, Heb. i. 6, as belonging to Christ, to prove his dignity above the angels. 'The rock of my salvation,' the strength and foundation of the salvation I have wrought for men, or alluding to the rock from whence the waters flowed to the Israelites in the wilderness; either way our Saviour owns his Father as the stability of it. This salvation, i.e. not personal but mediatory salvation.

Thirdly, As it could not have been valid had not the Father been principal in it, so it must needs be principally from him, because it had not been for his honour that it should principally have come from another hand. It was not expedient that we should be redeemed by any but God, both as to the medium of our redemption and the grand author and contriver of it. As God created us for happiness, so we by our own fault revolted from him. To be restored to that happiness from which we fell is a greater good than simply to be created, because it is more deplorable to lie under the intolerable vengeance of an infinite God, than to lie in the depth of nothing. Since therefore man's happiness does consist in a blessed immortality, how much more would man be

obliged to him who restores him to his lost happiness, than to him who created him in a state wherein he might fall to imperfection and misery! Being God has given us life, if another should bring us to a better life, without his interesting himself in it, how much more of tender melting bowels would he discover in conferring upon us that which is more magnificent! And we should be indebted to him for the greater, to the former for the less. If it were so honourable a thing for his goodness to create us by himself, it is no less honourable to interest himself in our restoration. It had been no honour to him to have his work restored to beauty and perfection by any other skill and directions rather than his own. It is as much for the honour of the Father to appoint a head for the restoring the world, as he did a head for the increase of it. By that one man which he appointed, the root of mankind, a blot came upon the world; it were not honourable for him to have another head stand up for reinvesting man in a nobler happiness without his appointment.

Considering that in this work there is a discovery of the dearest love and profoundest wisdom, therefore the Father, the principal person in the Deity, must needs be the principal author and director, otherwise the principal glory of these perfections would not belong to the principal person.

Love. If the first motion came not from him, it would represent him a hard master, negligent of the good of his creature, without bowels, and only won by the importunities of his Son to have pity towards us. It would represent him only with thunders and the Son with bowels; the greatest honour would redound to the Son, and the Son would deserve more honour than the Father, whereas the honour upon the account of mediation is equally due to both: John v. 23, 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' The Father is to be

honoured for the greatness of his love, in committing his right of judging to the Son. As the Son is to be honoured for undertaking, so the Father is to be honoured for sending him. 'He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which has sent him.' The sending Christ is the ground of the honour due to the Father in the work of redemption. If the Father were not then the chief author, the honour of this love of Christ would not redound to him; it would not be 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' as Eph. i. 6, but to the praise of the glory of the grace of the Son. Herein is the love of the Father, that he was placable, desirous to be at peace, orders his Son to procure it upon such honourable terms for himself, and secure in the issue for the creature, that he might communicate his goodness through a mediation to the polluted and rebellious world. The love of the Father in this dispensation is as great in moving it, as the love of Christ was in consenting. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son was a type of this. Christ's death was prefigured in Isaac, the Father's willingness represented in Abraham.

Wisdom. As goodness was the motive of this reconciliation, so wisdom was the director. The Father would not be principal in the greatest and highest notes of wisdom that ever sounded in the ears of men; the highest act of wisdom would originally flow from the Son, not from the Father. In this business he is known to be the only wise God, which attribute Paul celebrates with an emphasis: 1 Tim. i. 17, 'Now unto the King eternal, &c., the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever,' after he had spoken of salvation by Christ. No less than the wisdom of God could invent it. A punishment was due to lapsed man, that justice might not be defrauded; an infinite punishment the creature could not bear; the honour of God could not be fully vindicated in that way. Man justly owed a satisfaction, but could not pay it; nor without

that satisfaction could be acquitted by justice from the obligation to an eternal curse. What but infinite wisdom could contrive a way for man's deliverance, whereby justice might have the highest right, and mercy the greatest applause; that the enmity between God and the creature might be totally demolished, never to break out again; the security of the creature established never to be unravelled any more! The wisdom of God must then be the arbitrator in this great affair, to compose all seeming contradictions, and appoint means fully proportioned to the ends intended. His love would not leave the world to perish, nor his justice leave sin without punishment. The one did not consist with his merciful goodness, nor the other with the honour of his law and the immutability of his sentence. There is a way therefore found in the treasures of his wisdom to procure peace to the sinner with honour to himself; to reconcile the sinner without impunity for the sin; to satisfy both the cries of his justice and the yearnings of his bowels: the one in the punishment of sin in a surety, the other in pardoning sin in our persons. That God might be appeased, and that man might have wherewith to appease him, there is given to the human nature a new man, greater than a man, which might satisfy for man, and have that in himself which might exceed all the debt man owed to God. This is such a manifold wisdom which must spring from the Father, and to whom the honour of it is due, as being the eternal purpose which he purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord, Eph. iii. 10, 11. This being therefore the highest act of wisdom, must originally arise from the Father, the principal person in the Deity, the fountain of all decrees, and therefore of those wherein the choicest wisdom of the Deity sparkles. How could it be the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6, if he had not concerned himself in the whole undertaking? It is hereby that title of the Father of Glory belongs to him, as he is the

God of our Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, Eph. i. 17; herein shines the glory of his paternity.

2. God the Father is the principal author of this reconciliation.

(1.) The particular style God assumes in the New Testament manifests

it. A title not known in the Old Testament, often in the New, Eph. i.

3, Eph. iii. 14, 1 Pet. i. 3. In the Old Testament he was called the

God of Israel; and immediately before the discovery of Christ in the

flesh, Zacharias blesses him under that tide: Luke i. 68, 'Blessed be

the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.'

And God in a solemn manner entitles himself 'the Lord God of their

fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.' This

was to be his name for ever, and his memorial to all generations, Exod.

iii. 15, because he was a God settling his covenant with them, and

promising the Messiah out of their loins; therefore when he was to

deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage according to his

promise to Abraham, he entitles himself thus, that their fathers might

respect him in that promise, and among them he was chiefly known by

this title, and that of 'their God that brought them out of the land of

Egypt,' and sometimes 'the Lord which created heaven and earth.' But

when the mystery of redemption, hid in God from ages and generations,

was drawn out of his treasury, he appears upon the stage in another

garb, with a new title, when the spiritual redemption, whereof all

their other deliverances were as types, was wrought. He declares

himself in a new style as 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ,' because the seed promised, upon which account he was called

the God of Abraham, was now come, and the covenant of redemption was

fully settled with him and in him; and so he is called the God of

Christ, Eph. i. 17. [1.] Not in regard of the divine nature, for so

Christ is God equal with the Father, Philip. ii. 6; but in regard of

his human nature, as he was a creature, and subject to God as a creature. [2.] In regard of his mediatory office, in which respect he is his Father's ambassador, sent with a commission, acting according to instructions received from him. In this regard he often owns that he acted by his Father's authority, that his Father was greater than himself. [3.] In regard of the covenant between them: in this respect chiefly he is said to be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, as he is said to be the God in a special manner to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, as being in covenant with him. Christ was in covenant with God several ways: under the legal covenant, having subjected himself to it, and covenanted to fulfil the conditions of it; in the covenant of redemption, wherein it was promised him to have a seed, and to be the mediator and foundation of the covenant of grace, the confirmer of it by his death, and interpreter of it, and advocate for the fulfilling the terms of it, though he was not properly in that under the covenant of grace himself. And as he is thus the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the 'Father of mercies,' and 'God of all comfort to us,' 2 Cor. i. 3. And as he stands in this relation, all spiritual blessings flow from him to us, Eph. i. 3; he is therefore the principal person to be considered in the work of reconciliation, not only as the party to whom we are reconciled, but the party by whom the whole plot and model of our reconciliation was laid, which is effected by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

(2.) All the spiritual blessings we have by Christ spring from the Father. Surely, then, reconciliation and redemption, which are none of the meanest blessings, indeed the visible foundation of all the rest, arising immediately from election, the secret foundation, and which are indeed the end which electing love aimed at, these are the corner stone upon which all the rest are built. What communications could we have

from a God implacable? a God not reconciled? Therefore to God the Father the apostle ascribes all: Eph. i. 8, 'blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' If all, then this; none are excepted, pardon of sin, endowment with righteousness, adoption of sons, infusions of grace, participation of the divine nature; whatsoever blessings deserve the title of spiritual own the Father as the first fountain. He adds, 'in heavenly places,' as our translation, or 'heavenly things,' as others; both amount to the same, all the blessings which respect our heavenly state. The Father was the authoritative actor in all that Christ did: John xiv. 10, 'The Father that dwells in me, he does the works.' As the power of a prince resides in the ambassador for the performance of those actions to which he is designed. Whatsoever Christ purchased of the Father, he purchased by the will of the Father, that he might communicate himself to us with honour to all his glorious perfections. The Old Testament also ascribes this to the principal person in the Deity: Hosea i. 7, 'I will save them by the Lord their God,' or Jehovah their God; or, as the Chaldee, 'I will redeem them by the word of the Lord.' He is therefore frequently called 'the God of peace,' because he is full of thoughts of peace, and is the fountain of our peace in Christ; as he is called the God of holiness, because there is nothing he thinks, nothing he does, nothing he speaks, but is holy, and is the fountain of all holiness to his creatures. All that which we have by Christ is said to be 'the mystery of his will, purposed in himself, according to his good pleasure,' Eph i. 9. What was the object of this purpose? All those spiritual blessings the apostle had numbered up before, which he resolved himself to complete and communicate to us by Christ. As all the motions in the world depend upon the motion of the primum mobile,

so all our blessings upon the motion of God's love. In the communication of those blessings the Father has a particular hand; it is not said only that Christ is 'made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' but made all those to us of God, 2 Cor. i. 80. And the apostle distinguishes the Father from the Son by this character, 'The Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things,' 1 Cor. viii. 6. The Father is the first cause, first mover, first contriver of all spiritual mercies for us: 'of him are all things.' Christ, the only means appointed by the Father to work those things for us, and communicate them to us; therefore it is said, 'by him are all things.' Therefore the whole work of redemption is often in the Old Testament called God's salvation, and in the New Testament called 'the will of the Father;' and Christ all along owns it: 'As my Father has commanded me, so I do.' Even those blessings which follow upon the death of Christ are the issues of the grace of God; 'the riches of his grace' is the first cause of forgiveness, Eph. i. 7; the freeness of his grace, of our justification: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ.' Yet those are the meritorious fruits of Christ's death, much more are the counsels, contrivances, and resolves about this, the acts of his free grace.

(3.) The order and foundation of election discovers it. God chose men in Christ, Eph. i. 4, which election is there ascribed to the Father. This was an act of love in the Father, which in no wise falls under the merit of Christ. Some things Christ merited, as our reconciliation, justification, &c.; some things were purely the acts of God's love, without any merit of Christ, as election, and the incarnation of Christ, Christ did not merit election, for he was the first fruit of it; nor God's purpose of reconciliation, nor his own mission into the

world. Election, then, being the proper act of the Father, all those means which were ordered for the accomplishing the ends of election are of the Father's appointment, for under election does fall both the manner and order of that which is to be done, therefore Christ also, who is the only means of our redemption; and Christ himself tells us that the love of the Father did precede his mission, John iii. 16; it did therefore precede his designation. And Peter expressly asserts it: 1 Peter i. 19, 20, 'Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you.' For you relates not only to the manifestation in the latter times, but to the foreordination of him before the foundation of the world. Christ was first elected as head and mediator, and as the cornerstone to bear up the whole building; for the act of the Father's election in Christ supposes him first chosen to this mediatory work, and to be the head of the elect part of the world. After this election of Christ, others were predestinated to be conformed to this image of his: Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren;' i. e. to Christ as mediator, and taking human nature; not to Christ barely considered as God, for, as God, Christ is nowhere said to be the first-born among many brethren. This conformity being specially intended in election, Christ was in the intention of the Father the first exemplar and copy of it. One foot of the compass of grace stood in Christ as the centre, while the other walked about the circumference, pointing out one here and another there, to draw a line, as it were, between every one of those points and Christ. The Father, then, being the prime cause of the election of some out of the mass of mankind, was the prime cause of the election of Christ to bring them to the enjoyment of that to which they were elected. It is likely that

God, in founding an everlasting kingdom, should consult about the members before he did about the head. Christ was registered at the top of the book of election, and his members after him. It is called, therefore, 'the book of the Lamb;' Christ was the title and chief subject-matter of the book. He was first chosen as the well-head of grace and glory, then others chosen on whom, from, and through him those should be conferred; for he has chosen us in him, that we should be holy, therefore he chose Christ as the spring to convey this holiness to his elect. The elect were given by the Father to Christ as mediator. Christ therefore was set up as mediator by the Father's pleasure; his office was settled by the Father before the gift was bestowed upon him.

(4.) The creation of the world, which is ascribed to the Father, was principally intended by him for this end: 'All things were created by him and for him,' Col. iii. 16. Christ was the means whereby God created all things, and the end for which they were created, that he might be head of the elect kingdom which God intended to establish by him, and discover the perfections of God in an illustrious manner, and therefore God willed Christ then as the head of all his works. It was from eternity decreed by God to create a world, to communicate himself to his creature, and to have a number of elect to praise him; therefore he resolved to create man, and endue him with such faculties, yet mutable. He knew that everything would work if it were created in this or that state and condition. He knew the devil would be envious of man's happiness; he knew what temptation would assault man, and the full strength of that temptation, to what degree it would arise, and that man would sink under his temptation, apostatise from him, engulf himself and the whole human race in misery, and give him thereby an occasion to lay open his wisdom, goodness, mercy, and justice; for God

sees all things distinctly in their true causes, and therefore cannot but know the event of them. Upon this foreknowledge God appointed a remedy for man, wherein to manifest his perfections in a transcendent manner. And indeed God willed the creation, and upon that the permission of sin, that he might take occasion from thence to communicate himself to man in the most excellent manner; for he that works wisely does not only work from foreknowledge, but from a previous intention; as when God would make Joseph a prince in Egypt, and use to that end the envy and ill-will of his brothers, it is not to be thought that God only, after the foresight of their sin, did will to make Joseph a prince, but, on the contrary, he would advance Joseph to a prince-like state; and therefore did permit his brothers' sin, to use their evil to a good end. We find all the providences of God concurring since the foundation of the world, to the bringing forth Christ the head of it; therefore, the first will of God in the creation was the advancement of his Son, and founding an everlasting kingdom under him, because in all wise disposals of things, even by men, the execution of things answers the intention, and those things which are last in execution are first in intention. And the Scripture does clearly evidence this, for it speaks of 'a promise of eternal life given to those that believe before the world began,' Titus i. 1. He does not say the decree, but the promise. This promise was then made by the Father to Christ, for the constituting this mediatory kingdom; he is therefore, by this promise, settled by the Father as head of the creation, and the author of reconciliation; for it is made to him as the head of the believing world, and as the feoffee in that for them, for it concerns eternal life. To us, says he, i. e. to those that believe; and this promise was nothing else but that word which is now manifested through preaching, ver. 3. The whole gospel is built upon

this promise, and is nothing else but the manifestation and result of that negotiation between them before the beginning of the world. The gospel is nothing else but this piece of gold beaten into lead. We cannot rightly understand the gospel till we understand this transaction, because the gospel is nothing else but the explication of this first promise of God to Christ. Now these great acts of election and creation being the acts principally of the Father, and done for the glory of Christ, and the completing under him an eternal kingdom, it will follow, that the Father was also principal in all the designs of Christ, and in what he did. All things are for the elect, the elect for Christ, Christ for God. The glory of God stands at the top, as the chief end of all: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'All are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's'. They were all created for Christ as the immediate end, for God as the ultimate end, and therefore now ruled and governed by Christ; and at last the kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 24.

(5.) All the thoughts of God in all ages of the world were about this concern. Christ owns this in his acknowledgement to God: Ps. xl. 6, 'Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' Some observe that this psalm has wholly a respect to Christ, by reason of the different placing the words of the title; the name of David in the Hebrew being put before the word psalm, "ledawid mizmor", and rather to be rendered, 'To the chief musician, concerning David, a psalm,' i. e. the antitype of David, Christ being called David, Hos. iii. 5, Jer. xxx. 9. He that speaks of the innumerable thoughts or consultations of God about this, is the same person that speaks, ver. 6-8; which words are applied to Christ, Heb. x. 6-7, and those verses

seem to tell us what those counsels of God which appear so admirable were, viz. about redemption by Christ. To this result did they all come, that 'Sacrifice thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.' The infinite numberless thoughts of God centre in this one thing, of making Christ the foundation of the reconciliation intended, and exalting him thereupon. All the thoughts of God discovered to us in the Scripture refer to this; the spirit of prophecy seems to be given chiefly for the publication of this. This God spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets ever since the world began, concerning the sufferings of Christ: Acts iii. 18, 'Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has fulfilled.' Concerning also his exaltation, and the completing of his kingdom, it was spoken 'by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began,' ver. 21. This thing run so in the mind of God, that he would have all the mouths of all his prophets filled with it; and when prophecy began first to breathe in the world, it was to declare this grace of God. Not a signal prophecy revealed since the foundation of the world, but there was something of Christ in it. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,' Rev. xix. 10. The prophetic Spirit which was from the beginning of the world, was a witness of Christ, what God had appointed him to do; not one prophet is excepted, Luke i. 70, Acts x. 43. And therefore the Spirit is sometimes more large in those stories or passages which were types or declarations of Christ, than in other things; as in Abel's death by Cain, when nothing is spoken of the death of the other children of Adam. How lively and largely is the story of Joseph, a type of Christ in his sufferings and advancement, represented; David's flights, and his ascent to the crown; Solomon's temple, the particular description and punctual delineation of the Jewish ceremonies, all relating to this; the story of Jonah upon

record, when many other prophecies were lost, chiefly as a type of his death in the belly of the whale, and of his resurrection in being cast out upon dry land, after three days' lying in the pit. The law and the prophets appear two distinct things at the first sight, as Moses and Elias at Christ's transfiguration appeared distinct from Christ, Mat. xvii. 8, 8; but when the cloud was removed, none but Christ was seen. So law and prophets centre in him, and his reconciling expiatory death; they, as it were, disappear, and Christ appears to be the full sum and scope of them, when we lay our eyes nearer to the divine mystery. His whole undertaking was enclosed in the types, and represented by the prophets. God has discovered that all his counsels and thoughts from the beginning of the world were about this, and whenever he sent any prophetic message, it was a witness of Christ, or had some relation to him. This may give us an item how we should read the prophets with an eye to Christ, that our thoughts in reading may agree with God's thoughts in declaring. So that I think, from these put together, it appears that the Father is the principal author of our redemption; that the original of God's favour to lapsed men must spring from his own natural grace and goodness, that the death of Christ did not first dispose God to have mercy on us. The Father's love preceded the gift, and therefore preceded his resolution concerning the gift. The Scripture makes Christ's death everywhere the effect of God's love; what is the effect is not the moving cause; his first workings of mercy to us were not raised up by the death of the Redeemer.

### **III. Third thing. Wherein the agency of the Father in this affair does appear.**

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'God was in Christ reconciling the world.'

1. As choosing and appointing Christ. In which respect he is called, Isa. xlii. 1, 'the Elect of God,' the servant whom he has chosen, Isa. xliii. 10, said to be appointed by him, Heb. i. 2. He was foreordained in the decree, designed in the promise, prefigured in the types, predicted by the prophets. Our Redeemer came forth of the womb of a decree from eternity, before he came out of the womb of the virgin in time; he was hid in the will of God before he was made manifest in the flesh of a Redeemer; he was a lamb slain in decree before he was slain upon the cross; he was possessed by God in the beginning, or the beginning of his way, Prov. viii. 22, 23, 31, the head of his works, and set up from everlasting to have his delights among the sons of men. The Father's appointment of Christ is not to be understood of an appointment to his Sonship, for so he was from eternity begotten; but to his mediatorship. As he was from eternity the Son of God by generation, so he was from eternity the Mediator between God and man by constitution. The one is natural, the other arbitrary. As he was the Son, he was only God; as Mediator, God and man. His being a Son is in order of nature before his being a Mediator; his being a Son is from God's nature, his being a Mediator is from God's will. Believers are said to be begotten sons according to his will, but Christ is a begotten Son according to his nature, and Mediator according to his will. Christ is a name of charge and office, not of nature. He had been a Son had he never been a Mediator, or stepped in for the rescue of the world. All therefore that Christ did is comprehended in one word, doing

the will of God: Heb. x. 7, 'I come to do thy will, O God.' There was an antecedent act of will in God before there was a subsequent act of will in Christ in order of nature. It is called therefore the wisdom of God in regard of contrivance, Eph. iii. 10; his purpose in regard of the immutability and peremptoriness of his will, :Eph. i. 9; the pleasure of the Lord, Isa. liii. 10, in regard of the delight he took both in the contrivance and resolution, both in the act of his head and heart.

(1.) He was appointed by the Father to this end, viz. of redemption. God set him up as a screen between the injured Deity and the offending creature. It is the scope of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews to manifest that Christ was designed to be an high priest, to offer sacrifice for men. He was designed to be a sacrifice, because all other were insufficient, Ps. xl. 6, 7 and he submits to be a sacrifice, for to that purpose he had a body to do the will of God in. This was God's aim in his first choice; he was to be the foundation of the covenant for his people, to bring the prisoners from prison, and those that sit in darkness out of the prison-house, Isa. xlii. 1, 6, 7; he intended him as a propitiation for sin: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation,' "proetheto", purposed (the same word is translated, Eph. i. 9, purposed), ver. 25, 26; 'to declare, I say, his righteousness at this time that he may be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.' "Hilasterion", alluding to the propitiatory under the law, a type of Christ. He purposed him in his eternal decree to this end, he shadowed him in the mercy-seat under the law, and afterwards exposed him to public view, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sin. And because it seems incredible, which a wounded conscience especially will hardly believe, the apostle repeats it again. One would think that justice should lay aside its

demands against the sinner rather than feed on so rich a sacrifice. But God did, notwithstanding his near relation to him, single him out in his eternal council from angels and men, intended him in the "hilasterion", and all the types of the law, and brought him upon the stage in time to declare his justice to be as ready to be appeased and save upon that account, as before it was to damn. He is therefore called the Lamb of God, John i. 29 (in allusion to the lambs separated for the daily sacrifice), to be offered up to God for the taking away the sins of the world. It was with respect to the will of God in this first appointment that he delivered up himself, Gal. i. 4. :He 'gave himself for our sins according to the will of God,' whereby is meant the Father in the Deity. In the very ordaining him, the Father respected our glory: 1 Cor. ii. 7, 'Hidden wisdom which was ordained for our glory.' This hidden wisdom is Christ crucified, as appears in the next verse. Christ as reconciling by his suffering is the wisdom of God, hidden with him, not known to the world for many ages. Had God had a mind to remain an enemy, he had dealt with mankind after that covenant of works which they had transgressed, and never had deputed a mediator to stand between himself and them, to administer things according to the tenor of another covenant. It was highly represented, Exod. xxiv. 8, when Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice upon the people, calling it the blood of the covenant. At the end of this action Moses and Aaron, with his sons and the seventy elders, saw the God of Israel in a human shape: ver. 10, 'There was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness.' The sapphire, some tell us, was an emblem of the kingly and priestly office. Such a representation there was when he appeared as a man to Ezekiel, chap. i. 26. Immediately after this typical representation of him in the sprinkling the blood of the covenant, he

appeared to them in a human form, as the great intended antitype of that type they had been immediately before celebrating. As the Spirit is appointed to a peculiar office to sanctify, and therefore is called a 'Spirit of holiness,' and the end of his mission is to sanctify, Rom. i. 4, so the appointment of Christ was to an office of high priest and reconciler, and therefore whatsoever he did and suffered belonged to that office by peculiar designation. He was appointed to be a 'witness to the people, Isa. lv. 4, 5, a witness of the transcendent love of God, to bring men to God, that the nations which knew him not might run unto him.

(2.) God appointed him to every office in order to this redemption, to every degree and circumstance: as a priest, to appease his wrath; a prophet, to declare his mercy; a king, to bring men to the terms of reconciliation. He was appointed a priest for ever, that we might draw nigh to God, Heb. vii. 17, 19; God designed him as a prophet, from whom we might receive his lively oracles, Acts vii. 37, 38; God set him up as a king, that those might be blessed that put their trust in him, Ps. ii. 6, 12. The very circumstances were appointed by God: that he should be born of a virgin; the place where, Bethlehem; of the Jewish race; of the royal line of David, and that when it was decayed and sunk to poverty and misery, 'a rod out of the stem of Jesse,' Isa. xi. 1, a 'root out of a dry ground,' Isa. liii. 2; and the Jews never questioned the royalty of Christ's extraction. The time of his coming was fixed in Jacob's prophecy about the time of the fall of the Jewish government, Gen. xlix. 10, before the ruin of the second temple, Mall iii. 1, after seventy weeks of years from the time of Daniel's prophecy. What was figured in God's opening Adam's side to form a spouse; in the death of righteous Abel by the hands of his brother Cain; in Isaac, under the edge of the knife upon mount Moriah, and raised to be a blessing to the

world; in Joseph in the pit and prison, and afterwards on the throne, to deliver the church from famine; in the paschal lamb, killed to save the sprinkled houses with its blood from the destroying angel, were really fulfilled in him; all the circumstances were appointed with a particular designation of the end of them. The manner of his death was foretold by David: Ps. xxii. 16, 'They have pierced my hands and my feet.' The manner of his crucifixion, his burial, resurrection, and prosperity afterwards, the blessing of men by him, justification by the knowledge of him, were deciphered by Isaiah, chap. liii., above seven hundred years before his coming, so exactly, as it that prophecy had rather been a Gospel written after his death, since the events answered so punctually to each prediction. He was promised as a 'Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6, one that should make no noise, appear with no pomp and grandeur, Zech. ix. 10, send forth the prisoners out of the pit, ver. 11; be 'the peace' himself, Micah. v. 5; as a king destroy the empire of the devil, pour the waters of grace upon the world, Ezek. xxxvi., take away iniquity, make reconciliation for sin, bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24.

(3.) It was a settled, firm, and irreversible constitution. It was not only a counsel, wherein wisdom pitched upon it as absolutely the best means for the creation's standing; but determinate, wherein it was unalterable: Acts ii. 23, 'Delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' Counsel and foreknowledge are joined, to show that there was the highest reason and most resolute will; not a casual thing or contingency, but an immutable decree for his reconciling death, fixed after the wisest counsel. And therefore, in this appointment to this office, God took an oath, and thereby constituted Christ an irrevocable priest, 'after the order of Melchisedec,' Heb. vii. 21, to bless his people with peace, which oath must refer to the

first appointment of Christ to this office, in order to the making him a surety of a better testament, ver. 22; better, for the preservation of the honour of God and happiness of man. It was such a constitution that admitted not of the least alteration or repentance in God; an oath which was not taken for the creation of the world, or the settling of the Aaronical priesthood. By this oath he declares this constitution to be irreversible. In this regard he is said to be sealed by God, to skew the perpetuity of this constitution, as the seal to the book, Rev. v. 1, skews the irreversible certainty of God's decrees. And therefore his appearance before his incarnation in his glory, as well as after his ascension, was with a rainbow encircling him, Ezek. i. 28, Rev. iv. 8; a sign of an everlasting covenant that God would no more bring a destroying deluge upon the world, Gen. ix. 16. The apostle seems to intimate as though this decree and constitution was the standard of all God's other actions; the point in which they should all centre, or the rule which they should be squared by; for as all our sins met on Christ, Isa. liii. 6, so all God's counsels met in him, Eph. i. 9. The rule must be perpetual, since all God's works were to be regulated by this counsel. Speaking of this mystery of his will, which he had purposed in himself, to gather in one all things in Christ, he repeats again, ver. 11, this purpose of him 'who works all things according to the counsel of his own will.' All things took birth from this counsel, and were for the perfecting this will.

(4.) God chose him to this work with an high delight, as one fully fit for the work, in whom he could confide. He 'put no trust in his saints,' Job xv. 15, for they were in their own nature defectible.

Where a man cannot trust his concerns, he can have no pleasure. The Son of God's undertaking to be the head of the elect, and satisfy for them, was that the Father could only place his confidence in. This was that

which could only be acceptable to him. He calls him his elect: Isa. xlii. 1, "bechiri", 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, my Elect in whom my soul delights.' My tried elect; the word signifies, one chosen after serious consideration and trial. God found none so fit among all the legions of angels, none that could so completely answer his design for reconciliation; but upon a full examination of the whole affair he found him exactly fit for it, and therefore brings him in with a Behold, a note of admiration, as one he could rest in; for so the word "etmach" signifies, as well as to uphold. Upon this trial, and upon this confidence, his soul, as it follows, delighted in him. He knew he would be faithful, and able to perfect it; some therefore refer Heb. i. 9, 'Thou hast loved righteousness, &c., therefore God has anointed thee,' &c., to the first constitution of Christ. God rested upon the holiness of his nature; and that Isa. xlix. 1, 'From the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name,' expresses (in the judgment of some) the great joy of God in this mediator. He had my name, as I was constituted mediator, continually in his mouth. It was his pleasure to be always thinking and speaking of it; or it may note the familiar converse between the Father and the Son, concerning this work of redemption. We speak and think much of that wherein we have the greatest pleasure; and those words, Prov. viii. 30, 31, 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth,' intimate that the Son was the daily delight of the Father, as he had placed his mediatory delights among the sons of men, as the Father saw all things exactly settled and governed by the Son, according to his mind and counsel. And therefore, when this suretyship of Christ is mentioned, God is pleased to express himself with a pleasing admiration: Jer. xxx. 21, 'Their governor shall proceed out of the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this

that engages his heart to approach unto me? says the Lord;' showing the delight of his soul in his own choice, and his Son's acceptance, in the greatness of his person, and the heartiness of his undertaking. The word "arav" signifies to pawn, or be a surety. We many times express our joy in a mode of admiration; so is God pleased to descend to our capacities in expressing his. What is the ground of it? Ver. 22, the everlastingness of the covenant: 'And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.' How may we approach to God with the pleas of Christ in our mouths, since the Father had so mighty a delight in him?

(5.) The Father had a particular love to Christ in this appointment, and highly loved him for his acceptance of it. If he loved his Son's consent to it, he loved his own proposal of it: John xvii. 24, 'Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world;' which, according to the best interpreters, respects Christ's person as mediator, rather than his naked deity. The Father loved Christ as mediator in the first designment, that in him he might love his elect. Our Saviour prays as mediator; the love therefore which he uses as an argument, was the love of the Father to him as mediator. The Father's love to him as the second person in the Trinity, had not been an argument congruous for that petition of his people's seeing his glory; for the love of the Father to him in that regard, did not necessarily infer a love to any creature; but his love to him as mediator and head does infer his love to all his members, and was a suitable argument wherewith to press him for a glorifying his whole body. Certainly if God loved Christ because he did 'lay down his life for his sheep,' John x. 17, there must be an high degree of love to him, because he answered the Father's appointment of him from eternity, by a voluntary consent. As the act of suffering, so the first undertaking, draws out the Father's love. The Father loved him before as his natural Son, he now loves him as the

universal head. The Father's loving him for complying with this appointment, manifests the height of his love to all his members, for whose sake, next to his own glory, he constituted him in his mediatory office. Some think that the well-pleas'dness of the Father with Christ for this work was one part of the glory of Christ; no doubt it was, after his performance of it, and is his glory now in heaven. If so, I would thus understand John xvii. 5, 'Glorify me with thy own self, with that glory which I had with thee before the world was;' i. e. testify thyself well-pleas'd with my mediation, which was the glory I had with thee as mediator before the world was. The glory of his deity was not impaired; that was not therefore the glory he prays for. It is a glorifying him with his own self. What is it, then, but the high affection the Father bore to him; for what glory can we conceive to come from the Father to the Son, as mediator, before the world was, but this? The argument he uses evidences it. Ver. 6, 'I have manifested thy name,' i. e., I have actually done that, in the undertaking whereof, O Father, thou wert so highly pleas'd. And ver. 4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, and finished the work thou gavest me to do.' I have glorified thee by witnessing that thou art a God placable, full of love, reconciling the world, therefore glorify me. As the glory Christ brought to God relates to the business of redemption, so the glory he requests of God, which he had before, more likely relates, not to the glory of his deity, but his glory as mediator, which is God's mighty pleasure with it, acceptation of his willingness to perform it, and great affection he bore to him thereupon. The glory of his deity was not a subject to be pray'd for; the glory which he was by covenant to have after his death and resurrection in his human nature, was a glory in decree, and by compact, but not actually possess'd before his ascension. But the acceptation of him, and high pleasure in him, as

undertaking to be our surety, was a glory he really had with the Father before the world was. Nor does this sense weaken the proof from hence of the deity of Christ; for if he were in being before the world was, he was no creature. How comfortably may we take up the same argument in our mouths as Christ did here, since the love he bore to Christ, as mediator, before the world was, did redound to every member of his sons which was to be in time!

(6.) God does glory in this contrivance and appointment. With what daring expressions to all creatures does God challenge the honour of founding this covenant of love and peace wholly to himself! No creature did so much as put in his opinion in this counsel, or contribute anything to it, but he would go away with the whole glory himself: Isa. xiv. 21, 'Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who has declared this from ancient time? who has told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God besides me; a just God, and a Saviour.' There is no contriver, no declarer of this but myself. It is not meant of the deliverance from Babylon, as some interpret it, which is evinced by the following verses, to the end of the chapter; as also verse 17, where it is called an 'everlasting salvation,' which shall admit of no shame and confusion, world without end; a salvation that shall last as long as eternity endures. Well might all the attributes of God glory. How surprising is his love, that the Holy of holies should so love sinners, the sovereign Monarch justly jealous of his glory, furious rebels, and unprofitable slaves, as to appoint his Son for the reconciler and saviour. What motives could there be but misery to draw out the bowels of his love! What attractives in ungrateful creatures lying in their blood! What arguments could be in our thoughts to plead with God for so admirable a design! Justice and mercy are comprehended as the great things he

glories in; 'just God, and a Saviour.' Wisdom might glory in the contrivance, and goodness in the appointment of one so strong to be a sacrifice for propitiation; to be himself a just Judge, and yet a tender Saviour (for the Father is called Saviour as well as the Son, Titus iii. 4; 'the kindness of God our Saviour,' distinguished from Christ our Saviour, ver. 6). He finds a way to have a valuable satisfaction of his justice, wherein should be bound up an eternal security to the sinner: a great priest for our guilt, and a beautiful pattern for our imitation; justice should triumph in the punishment, mercy in the redemption, the creature in the fruits redounding from both. How much was his sovereignty glorified in it, which he seems also to aim at: 'I am a God, and there is none besides me.' His sovereignty was manifest over all the creation, men and angels were his absolute vassals, there was nothing wanting to declare the highest pitch of it, when his own Son became a servant; the Lord of all things became lower than angels, and as low as the meanest man. Who shall stand out against his pleasure, since the Son, equal with him, stood not out against his Father's will? God does this of himself, of his own grace; by himself, his own wisdom; for himself, his own glory,

2. God the Father solemnly called him: John x. 86, 'Say you of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest because I said, I am the Son of God?' Our Saviour mentions a double act of the Father towards him, separation and mission, a dedication of Christ to his mediatorship, and then his actual mission. This call is expressed, Isa. xlix. 1, 'The Cord has called me from the womb,' which does not imply, says Calvin, that he was but then called, when he came out of the womb of the virgin, or that the prophet does define the beginning of time; but it is as much as if he had said, Before I came out of the womb, God called me, and separated me to this office. As

Paul speaks of his separation from the womb, Gal. i. 5, yet he was chosen before the foundation of the world; and Jeremiah was known before he was formed in the belly, and sanctified and ordained a prophet before he came out of the womb, Jer. i. 6; so that in this place the prophet introduces Christ speaking of his call to this office after it was formed in the eternal counsel of God. In regard of this call by God, and his acceptance of it, he is the same yesterday that he was today, and will be for ever. His call to the mediatorship was of a higher date than the types of the law, for before Abraham was, he was, in the call to and actual exercise of his mediatory function, it was an argument to prove his former assertion, that Abraham saw his day, and rejoiced in the sight of it, which would be of no strength if he were not then known as mediator, by whom God was to be reconciled to man. It is I am, to show the constant relation he had to this office: 'Before Abraham was, I am,' mediator, affirming himself here to be the Messiah, according to the Jews' usual speech, that the law and the Messiah were before the creation of the world. The words used to express the call of Christ are of a greater signification than the word used for the call of Aaron, Heb. v. 4, kaloumenos", as if you should in an ordinary way call a man to you, or call him by his name; but ver. 10, speaking of the call of Christ, it is a word of more weighty signification, "prosagoreutheis", solemnly called and pronounced a high priest. (1.) God called him to it as an honour: Heb. v. 4, 'No man takes this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.' Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he, i. e. the Father, glorified him, and bestowed an honour upon him when he called him. The Father thought it an honour at the time of the call,

not that there could be any addition of honour to the person of Christ as God, or as though he had been defective in honour in being the Son of God and not the mediator, but as the mediatory or priestly office is an excellent office and honourable employment. Supposing the incarnation of Christ designed, the mediatory office was the highest honour could be conferred upon him. What greater glory can there be than to be placed in such a sphere, wherein he may honour the Creator more than all besides! Can there be a greater honour, next to being the Son of God, than to compensate the injuries God had suffered, and repair the ruins under which the creature had fallen; to restore God's honour to him without blemish, yea, with a greater brightness; like a bloody sun in the evening, rising fairer and fresher the next day; and happiness to man without a flaw; to give God ground to look upon his works with pleasure, and man a foundation to look upon God with delight? The honour appears to consist in being the 'author of eternal salvation,' as it follows, ver. 9. Though this honour was to cost him dear, yet he was recompensed in the ends of it, the high satisfaction of God and reparation of the creatures. In which sense 'his reward' is said to be 'with him,' as well as 'his work before him,' Isa. xl. 10, 11. How is his work his reward? 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and gather the lambs with his arm;' he shall restore God's chosen ones into his fold. What greater glory than to be a reconciling mediator, through whose hands all the communications between God and man were to pass! Nay, the very calling him to death, and proposing it to him for such high ends, seems to be a greater honour than his innocence barely considered, or his exaltation afterwards: Heb. ii. 9, 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man.' It would be worth

consideration whether this glory and honour be not meant of the honour of his office, as his being lower than the angels is meant of his state of humiliation in the world; and understanding it so, the words lie very fair before us. If it were understood of his glory after his sufferings, why should it be added immediately after, 'that he should taste death for every man'? That was not the end of his exaltation after his death, but his exaltation was the reward of that. But the sense runs cleverly thus: But we see Jesus, who in his state in the world was lower than the angels, yet in regard of his office and design had a crown of honour and glory above them all, in that by the grace of God he was set apart to taste death for every man; and by the pursuit of the apostle's discourse, speaking of his perfection by suffering for the destruction of the devil, who had brought death upon mankind, and the making reconciliation for the sins of the people, the office itself in which he was placed for those great ends may be well said to be a crown of honour and glory. It was an honourable office in a state of humiliation, as David's line was an honourable line in a state of poverty. It was in his death he discovered his virtues, victories, and triumph. In his death he blazoned out all the perfections of his Father; he illustrated his mercy, and showed how dear the souls of men were to him. He displayed his holiness, and manifested how odious the sins of men were to him. What would Christ have been (supposing the union of the second person to the humanity) if he had not died? He had not been made perfect, as the apostle intimates (ver. 10, 'to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering') without suffering. He was called by God to suffering, that he might be perfect as mediator, that the justice of God might as it were quench its thirst in his blood, and the mercy of God rise out of that sea of blood, like a rich morning sun; and perfect also as a pattern, for in that his

humility, charity, patience appeared in the highest manner to the sons of men for their imitation. God called him to it as an honour, and placed the very honour of it in the very suffering that death, as well as in acting afterwards upon that foundation as high priest for reconciling man. It is inconsistent with the immense goodness of God, to bind his creature to anything but what is highly conducing to the honour and happiness of his creature. Much less does it consist with the goodness of God, and that infinite affection he bore to his Son, to call him to that which was not an honour in itself. But this honour of high priest God calls him to, is an honour next to that of his sonship, which those words intimate, Heb. v. 5, but 'thou hast said to him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee,' as if it were a new begetting him. If it be then an honour in the account of God for Christ to die for such worthy ends, it is not less an honour to him to exercise that office, which is so honourable in itself, which is an high ground of faith and confidence in him, in all our approaches to him, wherein we do engage him in glorious acts and worthy of him.

2. God counselled him upon this call to undertake it with large proffers: Ps. xvi. 7, 'I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel.' It was the same person that blesses God for this counsel, who says, ver. 8, that he had 'set the Lord always before him;' which words are expressly said by Peter to be spoken by David concerning him, i.e. Christ: Acts ii. 25, 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand;' and so cites it to the end of the psalm. Christ does bless God for this counsel, and set this counsel of God always before him, which I have spoken of in reference to Christ blessing God for it, before upon another occasion. I now cite it to evidence that there was a counsel of God to Christ about this affair. What was that he was counselled unto? To his sufferings, which are intimated in the

following verse; upon the assurance, that his flesh should rest in hope, and that his soul should not be left in hell or the grave, the state of the dead, and the assurance of the fullness of joy and pleasure which he should have upon the account of this mediation for evermore. If the Father were the first mover, that motion was not without an advice to Christ to concern himself as mediator, and declaring how agreeable it would be to him; upon which account, what Christ did and suffered was not only out of a bare obedience, but an affectionate obedience: John xiv. 81, 'That the world may know that I love the Father.' Therefore, Ps. xl. 8, it is said, 'God's law was within his heart,' or within his bowels. It proceeded out of a tenderness of affection to satisfy his Father, who was desirous of reconciling man to him. For in Christ's undertaking, it could not be love to the Father, unless the effect of it, which was reconciliation of man, had been declared by his Father to be a thing highly pleasing to him, which declaration was as a counselling Christ to this work. The Father counsels the creation of man: Gen. i. 26, 'Let us make man;' no less was the counsel about redemption the Father's counsel, Let us so make man. The Father counselled him to be the head and knot of the whole creation, whereby he might rest in it with a full complacency; the Son clasped about the Father with love and joy, the Father enfolds Christ in the glorious bosom of his counsel; the Son embraces the Father with the arms of an affectionate compliance: a mighty harmony! The one in proposing, the other in complying, that the glory of God, and the felicity of the creature, might be completed in an eternal marriage. The truth is, the manner of the eternal decrees and counsels of God, are to us finite creatures incomprehensible; but the Scripture lowers itself in expressions suitable to our conceptions. As God is, in his word, represented to us with eyes and ears and human members, in a

way of condescension to our capacities, upon the same account are the transactions of God, by such ways of expression, brought down to our apprehensions. Add to this, Zech. vi. 12, 13, 'The counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Some make this counsel of peace to be between the two offices, the royal and priestly, both in conjunction and not interfering one with another, as sometimes they did in the Jewish state. Others, between the two persons, the Lord, and the man that is called the Branch. The will of the Father and the Son, as they are one essence, is one; as they are two persons, there is the counsel of both. Counsels seem to belong rather to persons than offices.

3. God gives Christ a particular command concerning our reconciliation and redemption. God purposing the redemption of man, the uniting his elect under one head, designing the person, proposing to him the affair, to be managed in a body; our mediator, accepting of this constitution, receives a command to die: John x. 18, 'This commandment have I received of my Father,' i.e. to lay down his life. Sometimes it is called the will of his Father. The will of God is called a law, Ps. xl., and the sufferings of Christ are called obedience: Philip. ii. 8, 'He became obedient unto the death of the cross.' He was obedient in all things, things antecedent to the cross, and to the last point. It could not be obedience to the law as a creature, because he never transgressed it; and being innocent, and under the covenant of works, he had not disobeyed, if he had not suffered, because, according to that covenant of works, he was not bound to suffer; for being without sin he might have pleaded his right; besides, God would never command any thing against his own covenant. It must, therefore, be obedience to some other precept, concerning his mediatory sufferings. And Rom. v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' The obedience of Christ

is opposed to the disobedience of Adam; therefore, as the disobedience of Adam was a proper disobedience, opposite to a plain precept, so the obedience of Christ was a proper obedience, conformable to some precept. A congruous reason may be rendered for this command, because, as men were destroyed by disobedience, so they should be repaired by obedience; and because a work done in obedience is more perfect in itself and acceptable to God, for his authority and sovereignty, the righteousness, holiness, and equity of his law is solemnly owned thereby. Some question whether the command laid upon Christ, as mediator, was a particular precept, or only a revealing of his incarnation and death as a necessary means for the redemption of man, because he had decreed to accept no other satisfaction. Some think this latter, and that, upon God's revealing his mind, there presently did arise in Christ an obligation to undertake this. It is more likely that this affair is expressed to us under the notion of a call, counsel, command, to show the ardency of the Father's affection for man's recovery, in an honourable way, to himself; because the Scripture places redemption in the Father's love and grace, as the fountain, and in Christ's love to his Father as well as to us, as has been before noted. There was the declaration of the will of the Father, which was the rule of Christ's acting, as the will of God is the rule of the Spirit's intercession in us: Rom. viii. 27, 'According to God;' or as our translators have it, 'according to the will of God.' A rule seems to be set for the Spirit's acting when he was sent, and a rule set for Christ's acting when he was called. The Spirit had a rule set, for he was to glorify Christ, John xvi. 14, and act upon that foundation. This does not weaken the voluntariness of Christ in his undertaking, who was ready to comply with the call, 'and made himself of no reputation, when he became obedient to the death of the cross.' When this command was

given, is not so clear; but as the promise was made before the world began, Titus i. 2, so might the precept be given, before the world began, to Christ, considered as mediator; for precepts many times accompany promises. The divine nature, which undertook the mediatory office, was not in itself capable of a command or a promise.

Use of these two heads.

1. First, How adorable then is the depth of God's wisdom, and the vehemence of his kindness, to have a remedy ready to apply for the cure of fallen nature! God had a salve lying by him for the sore, and provided himself with a remedy for defeating the designs of Satan. When he came to make a process against Adam for his disobedience, and pronounce that death which he had merited, he like a merciful Father declared this appointment of one that should suffer indignities from Satan, and delivered man from the death he had deserved. When he came to expel Adam out of his forfeited paradise, he assures him of one that should open the gates of the heavenly paradise to him. He appoints his recovery, as well as charges him with his crime; and though he barred the garden against him by a flaming sword, he promises to re-admit him by the 'seed of the woman,' Gen. iii. 15, in whose blood that sword should lose both its edge and flame, its cutting and scorching quality.

Oh the miracles of divine love! The law saw us guilty, insolently taking up arms against him, plunging ourselves into those crimes he had prohibited, loathing those virtues he had commanded, guilty of millions of sins, meriting millions of deaths, and the wrath of God, the quintessence of hell. Yet how did his bowels work within him, and never ceased till he had found a way infinitely satisfactory to himself, and infallibly safe for his creature, whereby his injured attributes are righted, and our offending souls rendered capable of the happiness they had made themselves unworthy of! He did this, and did it himself, by a

decree incapable of any alteration, standing like a firm pillar to support man's happiness; the everlasting fountain of his love and joy were opened at the very thoughts of this admirable design. He clasped about the mediator with the dearest affections never to be withdrawn, counselled, commanded, would not grow cool, and faint in the concern. He drew out of the depths of his infinite wisdom such a model which makes angels gaze, and believing sinners fall down to the dust in an humble admiration. He has appointed the heir of all things to be a servant for rebels, the Lord of glory to be a man of sorrows, to pay his life, more worth than the lives of all the angels, as a ransom for us; appointed him to shed his blood, to preserve ours, and singled him out to feel the sword of his wrath in his own heart, that we might feel the effusions of his healing balm in ours. Oh wonderful goodness, to appoint and call out purity to suffer for impurity, and the innocent for the criminal!

2. Raise pleas in prayer from these considerations. You address yourselves to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; represent to him his eternal design, the mark of his love, the centre of his delight. Desire of him that Jesus, with all his glories, with all his graces. Argue with him, whether he has not as much joy to see the fruits of his Son's death, to confer them upon his lost and sensible creatures, as to call him out for so great a purpose. Spread before him his eternal counsels, open the book of his resolves about Christ, read every syllable before him; let your soaring admirations, and your ardent petitions, keep pace together. How infinitely will the Father be pleased with such arguments, drawn from his own eternal thoughts of redemption. If he appointed a mediator for you when you were rebellions, he will not deny that mediator to you, when you are earnest and humble suppliants. His delight will be as much to bestow him upon them that seek him, as it

was to consecrate him for men, when he knew they would spurn against him. He has the same thoughts of reconciling mercy, and nothing that he has done in order to this does he yet repent of; he has sworn when he called his Son, and will not repent: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' Make use therefore of him as supports of faith, and arguments in prayer.

3. The Father enters into terms of agreement with the Son about the work and methods of redemption, which is expressed by divines by the term of a covenant.

A covenant is an agreement of two or more persons, in some common end pleasing to them both, upon certain articles and conditions voluntarily consented to by both, and to be performed by each party with solemn obligations. So that in it there are two persons, mutual proposals and conditions, mutual consent, terminating in one and the same end. Now this covenant between the Father and the Son was a transaction between them concerning man's recovery, consisting of articles to be performed by both parties; something to be performed by Christ to the Father, something to be performed by the Father to Christ; something the Father required of him, something the Father promised to him. Some make this covenant to be rather God's purpose and decree concerning Christ's incarnation and, passion, and success of his suffering, and the issue thereupon, and therefore improperly called a covenant. I do not stand upon the term, though it seems to be best represented to our conceptions under the notion of a covenant. And the Scripture delivers it to us under the form of a treaty and debate, Isa. xlix. Though the Father, Son, and Spirit have but one will essentially, yet in this affair they are distinctly considered as two Persons treating and agreeing in one point upon certain conditions; or, as there was a new habitude of will in the Father and the Son towards each other, that is

not in them essentially, and it is called new, as being in God freely, not naturally. Such a covenant is acknowledged by most. Arminius confesses it to be pretty clear from Isa. liii. 10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,' in his oration de sacerdotio Christi. And some of the greatest Jesuits, as Suarez, Tirinus on Isa. liii. 10, which is much. For, asserting this covenant, the doctrines of election, efficacious grace, and perseverance of that seed, are established. That there is such a covenant, I shall offer some considerations.

1. As there was a covenant made with the first Adam for himself and his posterity, so it is very likely there was a covenant made with the second Adam, for himself and those which were chosen in him. Though this covenant of redemption be not the same with the covenant of grace, yet something in this covenant of redemption did concern the seed of Christ. Upon the account of this covenant, God is the God of Christ, Ps. lxxxix. 26, xl. 8, and Rev. iii. 12; you have Christ calling God his God, no less than four times in that verse. He is a surety of the covenant of grace; there was then some other previous treaty whereby Christ entered into terms of suretyship.

2. Christ is said to be faithful, Heb. iii. 2. As obedience implies a precept, so faithfulness implies a trust, and a promise whereby a man has obliged himself to perform that trust, according to the direction given him; and Christ is said to trust God, Heb. ii. 13. As a precept is a formal object of obedience, so a promise is a formal object of trust; as he had a command, so he had a promise, both which imply a covenant.

3. Christ's prayer does in various parts manifest this; he does not only entreat and petition, but he challenges something as due to him, upon the account of what he had done; in John xvii., he seems to run

altogether upon a covenant strain, which must suppose some agreement and promise on the Father's part. God had not else been obliged to accept what he had done, nor could our Saviour have challenged it at the hands of God. A claim implies a promise preceding, annexed to a condition to be done by the party to whom the promise is made, which being performed, gives a right to demand the reward. And hence, perhaps, it is that he calls God 'righteous Father,' appealing therein to the faithfulness of God in this business. And, indeed, the mediatory covenant seems to me, by that John xvii., to be the ground upon which Christ builds his whole intercession; that being a transcript of it, and the pleas there being drawn by a strong compact.

4. This treaty is distinctly evidenced, Isa. xlix. 3-6, from which chapter to the end of that prophecy, there seems to be a continued discourse concerning Christ. Christ directs his discourse to the Gentiles, acquainting them with the manner of this treaty: ver. 1, 'Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far.'

(1.) God calls out Christ by the name of Israel: ver. 3, 'and said unto me,' i. e. the Lord, 'Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;' the name of the body being given to the head, as the name of the head is given to the body. The church in union with Christ the head is called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12, which some think also to be the meaning of Gal. iii. 16. The promises were made to Abraham and his seed; 'not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and thy seed which is Christ,' Christ mystical. I will be glorified in thee, as the head of the Jews, to prepare them a spiritual people for me.

(2.) Christ thinks this too low: ver. 4, 'Then I said,' i.e. he whose mouth God had made a sharp sword, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God.' A small income for so great pains and

cost. What, shall I glorify thee only in Israel? It is but a little glory thou wilt get from so small a handful that will believe in me among them, however, I refer myself to thee, O Father, and will stand to thy judgment. It is a glorious thing to be the Redeemer of Israel, yet it seems to be too narrow a field for me to run my race in. Judge of the greatness of my pains; and though I shall be in thy eye, though Israel be not gathered, yet consider whether so great an undertaking will not require a greater reward than a few Israelites. Thou shalt, O Father, be glorified in me, but I foresee that few of the Jews will embrace my doctrine; I shall spend my strength, prayers, and blood for nought, "hevel tohu", the word used to express the chaos before it was formed into a world. It will be as a thing without form, a very little part of a new creation. Christ was at first God's angel to Israel, and before his coming in the flesh had no other nations, but as some sprinklings of them were proselyted to the Jews; and therefore the Gentiles are said, Isa. lv. 5, to be a people that he knew not, i.e. that he did not actually possess as his peculiar, in that manner as he ruled in Israel, though the providential government of all nations was committed to him. But after his exaltation in his human nature, he had the possession of them. Therefore

(3.) Christ then declares God's enlarging his terms: ver. 5, 'My God shall be my strength;' which words some take by themselves, as the beginnings of God's further grant. My God was my strength, he added courage to me by enlarging his gift, which is expressed, ver. 6, 'And he said, It is a light thing that thou should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may be my salvation unto the end of the earth.' The word also represents as it were a former sticking in the Jews. It is too low a thing to take

flesh, sweat, labour, and die for one nation; thou shalt spread thy tents to the end of the earth, and have the Gentiles for thy possession. When God saw me ready for so high a work, he did in his treaty extend the bounds of my power and advantage further. He said the limits of Israel were too narrow, the gain of Israel too light a recompense for so great a labour. God is brought in here proposing; Christ grieving at the narrowness of it, yet complying with it. God making a second proposal, wherein Christ does acquiesce; and no further debate is mentioned, after the Gentiles were cast into his lap.

Whereupon some make a double decree, or at least two parts of the decree of salvation: 1, for the conversion of the Jews; 2, a decree for the conversion of the Gentiles.

5. The notion of a treaty and covenant is suitable to our conceptions, and gives us a distinct account of the methods of redemption; and also of the ground of the salvation of the fathers, who died before the coming of the Redeemer in the flesh. In order of conception, the first resolution was this, that man should be redeemed; the second, by what ways and means this redemption should be wrought; and how to make it sure, that there may be no revolt again. The second person is pitched upon for this undertaking. We must then conceive his voluntary consent to this, and also some terms upon which he undertakes it, which is necessary to every action according to the rules of wisdom. Had not this way of redemption been settled and stated, the fathers before and under the lay could not have been saved; for they were saved by faith. Faith could not be without a promise; a promise could not be without a previous ascertaining the method of redemption. Had Christ only consented to it at the time of his coming into the world, there had been no ground of any promise before, because the consent of the Redeemer had till that time been uncertain; but the promise supposes

his consent positively given, before the promise was made. Again, the covenant of grace is as ancient as the first promise of the seed of the woman. And since the grace the patriarchs had was communicated by virtue of a covenant of grace, it implies that there was an agreement between the Father and the Son for it is by this agreement the covenant of grace is established. Faith in a mediator, the condition of that covenant, supposes the settlement of the mediator. We cannot suppose how anything could be bestowed upon men by virtue of a covenant of grace, before the Redeemer had actually merited, without this agreement; for whatsoever was bestowed, was given upon the account of that merit to be wrought in time, therefore at least a promise of so meriting must precede; as articles of agreement are made among men, before the sealing of writings and payment of the money, by virtue of which articles there is some kind of right converted. Upon the account of this agreement, the Spirit was given to some particular men, but to very few, and in a less measure, for it was not congruous that there should be as great an effusion of the Spirit before the actual payment required for it, as after. How this could be without a designation of the person of Christ to this work of redemption, and a voluntary undertaking on his part, and how there could be this designing and appointing him to it, and his accepting of it, without some terms in the nature of a covenant between the Father and the Son, cannot so distinctly and easily be conceived by us. But such a notion as this makes the whole work more obvious to our weak understandings. For a close of this part, I shall direct you to Ps. lxxxix. throughout, where this covenant is very plainly mentioned; and the whole contexture of the psalm discovers the design of it to be, to set forth some higher person than David; and seems to be too magnificent and lofty for an earthly prince. As ver 2, 'Mercy shall be built up for ever, thy

faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.' But how was it established in the heavens? Ver. 8, in making a covenant with his chosen, and swearing to David his servant: 'Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.' Here indeed was faithfulness established in heaven. This will be more remarkable if the notion of a learned man of our own be true, that this psalm was penned in the time of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt, by Ethan, the son of Zerah, and grandchild of Judah, the son of Jacob, who is mentioned 1 Chron. ii. 6; therefore called Ethan the Ezraite, or of Zerah, who was the son of Judah. Though there is mention made of Ethan in the time of David, 1 Chron. xv. 17, 19, and though David be often mentioned in the psalm, yet, says he, that was done prophetically. Howsoever it is, the psalm is understood of Christ by most of our interpreters. And Christ is several times called David in the prophets, who lived after the time of David. Why might not David be prophetically mentioned many years before his birth, as well as Cyrus was by the prophet Isaiah, some years before his? Some make this covenant of redemption the same with the covenant of grace. But they seem to be two distinct covenants

1. The parties are distinct. In the one, the Father and the Son are the parties covenanting. In the covenant of grace, God and man. In the mediatory covenant, there were two persons equal. In the covenant of grace there is a superior, God; and an inferior, man.
2. The conditions are different. Death, and satisfaction for sin thereby, was the condition of the covenant of redemption. Faith is the condition in the covenant of grace; death required on Christ's part, faith required on man's part. The giving Christ a seed, and eternal life to that seed, is the condition on God's part to Christ, the giving eternal life only to the party believing, is the condition on God's part in the other. So that the reward in that covenant is larger than

the reward promised to us in the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace, the condition runs thus, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' In the covenant of redemption the condition runs thus, 'Make thy soul an offering for sin, and thou shalt see a seed.'

The promises of God to Christ, or rather God absolutely considered in that covenant, was the object of Christ's faith; God in Christ is the object of our faith in the covenant of grace. Believing in Christ could be no condition in the covenant of redemption, as it is in the covenant of grace. Christ must be then the object of his own faith, not his Father's.

3. The time of making these covenants is different. The covenant of grace was made in time, after man had broke the covenant of works; the covenant of redemption was made from eternity. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths, I was brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world; (set up as mediator) rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth,' Prov. viii. 24, 25, 31. He rejoiced in angels, the chief parts of his creation, as God; in the habitable parts of the earth, as mediator. The revelation of the covenant of redemption was in time, but the stipulation was from eternity; the Father and Son being actually in being, and so stipulators. The decree of making a covenant of grace was from eternity, but not the actual covenant, because there was no soul to covenant with; as the decree of creating the world was in time, but the actual creation at the beginning of time. The covenant of redemption is expressed, Isa. liii., whence we can no more conclude, that it was but then made, than we may say, that Christ suffered then, because his sufferings are spoken of there as already undergone. It was made when some were given to Christ, and therefore must be as ancient

as election, which was before the foundation of the world.

4. Christ is the mediator of the covenant of grace, Heb. xii. 24, but not the mediator of the covenant of redemption, but a party. He was the surety of the covenant of grace, Heb. vii. 22. The covenant of redemption had no surety; the Father and the Son trusted one another upon the agreement. The covenant of grace is confirmed by the blood of Christ; but we cannot say that the covenant of redemption was confirmed properly by that blood, any more than as the shedding of his blood was a necessary article in that covenant.

5. Christ performed his part in the covenant of redemption; and by virtue of this mediatory covenant, performed the covenant of works; but he did confirm, not perform, the covenant of grace.

6. By the covenant of redemption, Christ could challenge his reward upon his own account; but by the covenant of grace, believers have a right to the reward only upon the account of Christ. There is an intrinsic worth in the obedience of Christ whereby he merited, for there was a proportion between it, in regard of the dignity of his person and the infiniteness of God; but there is no intrinsic worth in that grace which is the condition of the covenant of grace, to merit anything. There was a condition of a valuable consideration required of Christ, but the condition required of us has no valuable proportion to the greatness of the reward. The reward was of debt to him, because what he performed was by his own strength; of grace to us, because what we perform is by the strength of another. And though the exaltation of Christ is called a free gift, 'He has given him a name above every name,' "echarisato", Philip. ii. 9, that is in respect of the whole economy of the mission of Christ, and the manifestation of him, which is an act of God's free grace to us. And in his exaltation he is considered as appearing for us, and receiving from the Father all for

our good; and because it was an act of free grace to us, to unite the second person in the Trinity to our flesh.

7. The mediatory covenant respects others in Christ, as well as Christ himself, viz. his seed, and the giving them a glory. In the covenant of grace, the promise respects only the particular person that believes; it regards none else but the particular person answering the terms of that covenant. No person can challenge any right upon another's believing, but must believe himself, if he will be within the compass of the covenant. But Christ, upon the performance of the condition of the mediatory covenant, could challenge not only for himself, but for others, and all that were to be his seed, and were to believe on him to the end of the world, John xvii. 20, 24, because that covenant respected not only himself, but others, upon those conditions he was to perform; for the redemption, justification, and happiness of believers are promised to Christ upon the condition of dying, Isa. liii. 11. All the seed of Christ are in the covenant of redemption before they are regenerate, but not actually in the covenant of grace, and under the influence of the special benefits of it, till they are regenerate; as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, but not guilty of his pollution till their natural generation.

8. If the covenant of grace and that of redemption were the same, then Christ should be both the testator and a party. Christ is the testator of the covenant of grace, Heb. ix. 16, 17. A testator makes not a will to bequeath legacies to himself.

So that these two covenants are distinct; they agree in the common nature of a covenant, that there are conditions to be performed, and privileges thereupon to be enjoyed. But the conditions and privileges are distinct. They agree in this, that the salvation of the seed is promised in both covenants: it is promised to the believer upon his

faith; it is promised to Christ in behalf of the seed upon his suffering; and, further, the covenant of redemption is the foundation of the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace, Christ, or God in Christ, is the object of faith. Christ had not been the object of faith, had not such an agreement between the Father and the Son preceded. How is Christ the object of faith, but as dying? What force had his death had, without some compact between the Father as the principal party wronged, and the Redeemer as the person satisfying? The everlastingness of the covenant of grace depends upon the perpetuity of the covenant of redemption: Ps. lxxxix. 28, 29, 'My covenant shall stand fast with him; his seed will I make to endure for ever.' This covenant between the Father and the Son must be broken, before the covenant of God can fail to a believer. Upon this account Christ is said to be 'given for a covenant to the people,' Isa. xlii. 6; a covenant to the people, i. e. to bring the people into covenant with me; as being the foundation of the covenant of grace, upon which account he is called the peace, Eph. ii. 17; as being the foundation and cause of peace between God and man. And all the promises as established by his death are yea and amen in him: they receive their validity from his death, and his death receives its validity from the covenant of redemption. He thereby performing what was required on his part, settled the covenant of grace between God and us for ever unrepealable, and it had not its full settlement but in the establishment of this. Upon the account of this covenant, the right of Christ as a testator bequeathing the inheritance is grounded, for he could not as a testator bequeath what he had no right unto. His testament was made by him, not as God, but as mediator by means of his death, Heb. ix. 15, 16. Therefore, as mediator, he had a right, which cannot well be supposed without some precedent agreement between the

Father and the Son, because the right originally resided in the Father. And this covenant of redemption is the ground of our hope and faith: Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which was promised before the world began.' The hope believers have of eternal life springs up originally from that promise made by the Father to the Son before the foundation of the world; for the promises of the covenant of grace were included in this covenant of redemption; and to be made good when Christ made the conditions on his part in that covenant good. In this agreement, then, God was in Christ reconciling the world.

(1. ) The Father covenants with Christ, that he should undertake for man as a common head; to free men from that dreadful condition, wherein God foresaw from eternity they would fall upon their creation. Hence he is called the second Adam, as being a public person; and as Adam had fallen off from righteousness to the love of iniquity, and violated the law of God, so the second Adam, as a head of many fellows, was to 'love righteousness, and hate iniquity,' Heb. i. 9, i. e. vindicate the honour of God, laid prostrate by sin, and restore the righteousness of the law. This being rendered there the ground of his advancement by God as his God, a God in covenant with him, implies that it was the main article insisted on, and a condition in the covenant which Christ was to perform. Man was a criminal debtor, the debt must be paid; Christ by agreement puts himself in the sinner's stead, to pay this debt, submit to the revenging arm of justice, and thereby release the prisoner: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;' as we were under the law, so was Christ to bear the curse of the law for us, that whatsoever power the law had over us in regard of its precepts, Christ was to obey, in regard of its curses he was to undergo, and thus undertaking for us, he was to endure the shock of his Father's wrath, which we sinners are liable to: and, therefore, he is

brought in, offering himself as a surety in our stead Ps. xl. 7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God;' thy covenant-will, as thou art my God; which will was our sanctification by the 'offering of his body,' Heb. x. 10. Referring to ver. 7, and as being instead of us the principal debtors, he calls our sins his own (ver. 13, 'mine iniquities have taken hold of me'); as he was our surety, the debt which a surety engages to pay being legally his own debt, though he did not personally incur it by any crime of his own, or receipt of that for which he stands indebted.

(2.) In order to this, another condition necessarily consequent upon the other was, that he was to take a body. This debt could not be paid, nor the articles of the covenant be performed, but in the human nature, the divine being impassible. He was therefore to have a passible nature, a nature capable of, and prepared for suffering, Heb. x. 5; a body to suffer that which was represented by these legal sacrifices wherein God took no pleasure, ver. 6. He was to have a body of flesh, surrounded with the infirmities of our fallen nature, sin only excepted; whereupon Christ does freely comply, 'I come to do thy will, O my God;' I am come to take such a body, which by thy will is allotted to me.

(3.) In this body he was to pay a service and obedience to his Father. After this agreement, whatsoever Christ did in the body falls under the term of obedience to the mediatory law prescribed him. Hence he is called God's servant, Isa. xiii. 1, and 'took upon him the form of a servant,' Philip. ii. 7; not as servants were formerly bought with a price, and passed wholly into the right and dominion of another, but a servant who, by covenant and agreement, undertakes an employment by the order of another; for he was such a servant, that he was also Lord, Heb. iii. 6, Heb. i. 2. This is expressed, Isa. 1. 5, 'The Lord God has

opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious.' God constituted him his servant by the opening his ear, according to the Jewish custom of boring the ear, and he was not in any thing rebellious, he was to do whatsoever was commanded him to do; and, therefore, all the time of his life before his death, he acted an obedience to his Father, and did nothing but by his Father's command and order: John xiv. 31, 'As the Father has given me commandment, so I do.' He stipulated to take upon him the 'form of a servant,' Philip. ii. 6, 7, which seems to refer to this agreement; and after that, 'was made in the likeness of men,' referring to his incarnation; as a man is said to take upon him such a task, when he has covenanted to do it.

(4.) In this body he was to die at last; and, therefore, his dying is said to be obedience: Philip. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross;' his dying, and dying so ignominiously upon the cross, was obedience; which implies a command and order to die, and to die such a death, otherwise it had not been obedience, though it might be termed affection. This was the chief article of the covenant: Isa. liii. 10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.' "Tasim" is then the third person, and being feminine, agrees well with "nefesh", a feminine noun. Other translations read it, If he shall make his soul an offering for sin; or, rather, according to others, and according to grammar, If his soul shall make an offering for sin. In this death he was to respect the satisfaction of God's justice; for it was not a bare offering, but an offering for sin. God, in imposing this article, respected this chiefly, as this was the main end of sending him to be an "hilasmios": 1 John iv. 10, 'God has sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' So it was the main end of this article of dying, which Christ was to respect in his dying; for the regarding the end of any service or command is a principal

ingredient in obedience; by virtue of which covenant and command thereupon, there was an ought upon Christ: Luke xxiv. 26, 'Ought not Christ to have suffered those things?' And a command, John x. 18, 'I have power to lay down my life; I have,' "ksousian", 'authority, for I have received a command from my Father.' Hence his death is said to be determined: Luke xxii. 22, 'The Son of man goes as it was determined.' In the first giving himself to God, he gave himself as a ransom, to be testified and brought forth upon the stage in time, wherein his mediatory office chiefly consisted, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. And methinks Christ does intimate this laying down his life for his sheep to be the effect of this mutual agreement between the Father and himself: John x. 15, 'As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.' It was the effect of their knowledge of one another, not a bare knowledge, for that might have been without Christ's dying; but an intimate conjunction of mind, an approbation on both parts. This mind, to take upon him the form of a servant, was in Christ, Philip. ii. 5, and therefore this mind was in his Father, for their minds could not be different; there was a mutual knowledge and agreement in the whole affair, and from this knowledge one of another, did arise the laying down of his life. God required this sacrifice of Christ, exclusively of all others, in the first treaty, as to any satisfaction: Heb. x. 5-7, 'Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not; in them thou had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come.' He pronounced them utterly useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to prefigure the grand sacrifice he intended. And that voice of Christ upon the cross, 'It is finished,' John xix. 30, seems to refer to this agreement. I am come to a period on my part, the article on my part is completed, there remain no more deaths for me to suffer. This seems to be a necessary article, very congruous to the wisdom of God,

as he is creator, governor, and the end of all things: Heb. ii. 10, 'It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' It became him as a wise Creator, as a wise Governor, as he is the end of all things, to insist upon the sufferings of Christ as the fittest means for the attaining the end he aimed at; for hereby his justice and mercy are glorified. In the performance, Christ was very exact in every punctilio: 'As they were skewed by the mouths of the prophets, he so fulfilled them,' Acts iii. 18; and God showed them by the mouth of the prophets as they were determined and agreed upon. The ancient Jews had some prospect of this covenant. One of their writers. says, God treated with the Messiah: Righteous Messiah, those who are hid with thee, are such whose sins in time shall bring thee into grief; thy ears shall hear reproaches, thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, thou shalt be wearied with sorrow. The Messiah answered, Lord of the world, I joyfully take them upon me, and charge myself with their torments, but upon this condition, that thou shalt quicken the dead in their days. God, says the rabbi, granted him this, and from that time the Messiah charged himself with all kind of torments; as it is written, Isa. liii., 'He was afflicted.' So that the death of Christ was not by a fortuitous reencounter of things, nor merely by the violence of the Jewish rage, nor from any inability in his Father or himself to hinder so strange an event, but it was the issue of a previous agreement, flowing from infinite love, managed by incomparable wisdom, disposing things to so great an end.

(5.) In regard of what Christ was to do and suffer, the Father makes excellent promises to him.

[1.] Promises of assistance. [2.] Of a seed. [3.] Of glory.

[1.] Promises of assistance.

First, Promises of a fitness for it. He had the promise of the Spirit to this purpose: Isa. xi. 1-3, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord;' to distribute all his gifts to him, in a fullness of measure, in a fullness of duration. All the gifts of the Spirit should reside in him, as in a proper habitation, perpetually; as the Deity dwelt in the humanity, and was never to forsake it. The human nature being a creature, could not beautify and enrich itself with needful gifts; this promise of the Spirit was therefore necessary, his humanity could not else have performed the work it was designed for. So that the habitual holiness residing in the humanity of Christ, was a fruit of this eternal covenant. Though the divine nature of Christ by virtue of its union, might sanctify the human nature, yet the Spirit is promised him, because it is the proper office of the Holy Ghost to confer those gifts which are necessary for any undertaking in the world; and the personal operations of the Trinity do not interfere. It also might be, because every person in the Trinity might evidently have a distinct hand in our redemption.

Secondly, Promises of protection in it. Upon this one stone there were to be seven eyes, Zech. iii. 10. Seven eyes upon one stone, a special care of him, and counsel about him. Seven notes multitude; eyes note intention. Providence is signified by eyes in Scripture; a special providence shall be exercised towards Christ in the whole management of his office, and defence of his kingdom; hence, he does acknowledge that he was under the choice care of God: Luke ii. 49, 'Wist you not that I am about my Father's business?' "en tois tou patros", among those things my Father takes care of; 'why sought you me?' Do you not know that I am the choicest jewel of my Father, and that he has his eye upon me; as one of the cabinet rarities of my Father? God promised to hide

him in the shadow of his hand, preserve him as a shaft in his quiver, in the midst of the rage and fury of his enemies. He does solemnly promise his omnipotence, all his creating and governing power, to hold his hand in his being for a covenant of the people, and a light of the Gentiles, till he had brought 'the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house,' Isa. xiii. 5-7. He promises here, in the loftiest expressions, to strengthen him so, that he should not be discouraged, but see the blessed effects of his undertaking. He would uphold him tenderly, as a father does his son in his arms, that no hurt may happen to him, and that because he had called him in righteousness; or, as some, our righteousness, to settle an evangelical righteousness in the earth. He is said, therefore, to be made strong by God for himself: Ps. lxxx. 16, 'The Son of man, whom thou hast made strong for thyself,' the King, Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself; so the Targum. The title of Son of man was by way of eminency given to the Messiah in Daniel, and the title he commonly gave himself in the New Testament. This assistance of Christ was represented by the ark, which had three coverings, together with the table of shewbread representing the Church, Num. iv. 8, as a type of a special protection to both, whereas other consecrated things had but two coverings.

Thirdly, This assistance was to run through the whole course of his mediation. He was to be assisted in his conflict, and in his success, while his soul was travailing, and while it was triumphing. He should not be discouraged, till he had 'set judgment in the earth,' Isa. xiii.

4. It is a meiosis; he shall be mightily encouraged, till he have wrought a perfect deliverance for his people; and there shall be a supporting hand under him till he has completed the work of redemption. He should stand, and be established, and 'feed in the strength of the

Lord,' Mic. v. 4, 'in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.' He should gather, rule, and save his sheep in the choicest of God's strength, as he was his God, i. e. a God in covenant with him, and had appointed him to be 'the Judge of Israel,' ver. 1, and this, till he should be 'the peace,' ver. 5, not only laying the cornerstone by his death, but the top-stone by his exaltation.

Fourthly, Christ was to plead these promises, and encourage himself in them. He was to plead them: Ps. lxxxix. 26, 'He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.' After the repetition of the promises of strength and assistance, ver. 19-21, &c., he was enjoined to put those covenant promises in suit, and then he should be made the firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth, and his covenant should stand fast with him; as though God promised him the Gentiles for his possession, yet he was to ask it, Ps. ii. 8. In this covenant there was an injunction upon Christ to intercede and plead for himself, and for his people; so that the intercession Christ does manage in heaven for the completing of those promises, which were formerly in that covenant, or depended upon it (as all the promises in the covenant of grace do), is an article in that covenant, and therefore will be kept up till all enemies are made his footstool, and death, which is the last, swallowed up in victory. Christ encouraged himself in those promises; by these God made him hope when he was 'upon his mother's breasts,' Ps. xxii. 9, and he prophetically pleads them, ver. 10, 11, 'I was cast upon thee from the womb: be not far from me, for trouble is near.' It was an high satisfaction to him, that he should not be moved, therefore he set God always before him, Acts ii. 25. In regard of confidence, and supply of strength, his eye was not upon him in one strait or two, but in the whole affair, Ps. xvi. 8, 9; he had a confidence that God would be at his right hand, which

signifies to be an helper and fellow-champion in fight for the weakening of his enemies; it being a metaphor taken from conflicts, where he that is at the right hand of his companion does first expose himself to danger, and receiving the enemies' force defends his associate from the blows. The same expression is used of standing by Christ: Ps. cx. 5, 'The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings.' How loftily does he express his confidence in it: Isa. l. 8-10, 'The Lord God will help me; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. The Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?' and challenges all the power of earth and hell to contend with him, since he had the promise of God to justify him. 'My God shall be my strength,' Isa. xlix. 5, my God in covenant with me. And the apostle brings him in declaring his trust in God: Heb. ii. 13, and 'I will put my trust in him.' And he acknowledges that the preservation of his disciples, and consequently all his people enjoy by him, is through the 'name of his Father,' John xvii. 12. He acknowledges his powerful assistance in every part of his work. 'I have kept them in thy name.'

[2.] Promises of a seed, as the success of his undertaking. He was first in order to die, and then to see his seed: Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall see the travail of his soul;' his grief and pain shall not be fruitless. He was to have a flock to guide as a shepherd, members to animate as an head, a spouse to cherish as a husband, children to breed up as a father, subjects to reign over as a king. There was a designation of some to him for those relations at this first agree meet, which he does acknowledge as a donative from his Father: John vi. 6, 'Thine they were, and thou gave them me.' Thine by election and creation, mine by donation and merit; they belonged to Christ as God

before, though originally to the Father as the fountain of the Deity; but now to Christ by another tie, as mediator, as jewels to be made up by him; upon the account of which gift by compact, he calls them his sheep before their actual enfolding, John x. 15, 16. The promise made to Abraham of the blessing of the nations in his seed is said to be made to Christ, Gal. iii. 19; 'till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made, which seed is Christ,' ver. 16. And some interpret ver. 17, 'the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ,' "eis Christon" for to Christ, as Eph. i. 5, "eis auton" for "heautoi", and Col. i. 20, reconcile all things "eis auton", to himself; but howsoever, the promise to Abraham is certainly grounded upon a promise to Christ, that in him who was Abraham's seed all nations should be blessed; whether that Hos. xiv. 5, 6, be a promise to Christ, who is called Israel, or rather a promise or prophecy concerning the church, of the beauty of Christ's seed as a lily, the firmness as a cedar, and the fruitfulness as an olive.

God promised, 1. A numerous seed. 2. A succession of seed. 3. A duration of seed.

God promised him a numerous seed, like the dew that falls at the dawn of the morning in abundance upon the flowers and plants of the earth, Ps. cx. 3: 'The dew of thy youth, from the womb of the morning.' Micah v. 7, As the dew upon the grass. As the poets call the dew the tears of the morning, so was this the fruit of Christ's tears and blood; they were upon his ascension to flock to him from all quarters of the world. He promised to 'bring his seed from the east, and gather them from the west; he would say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth,' Isa. xliii. 5, 6. And Isa. liv. 1, 'More shall be the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says the Lord.'

The Rachel of our mystical Jacob, that had remained so long barren, should be suddenly mother of a numerous train. Then was our Saviour Israel indeed, one that prevailed with God (as the word signifies) to enlarge the lines of his inheritance to the Gentiles. He was to 'speak peace to the heathens,' Zech. ix. 10. And, according to this article, God enlarged the tents of the church, so that twenty-three years after the publication of the gospel, not only Syria and Arabia, and the bordering provinces on Judea, were full of Christians, but Asia, Italy, Spain, and the chiefest of the western part. And Tacitus says, that in the eleventh year of Nero, which was thirty-one years after Christ's ascension, Rome, the capital city of the world, swarmed with men professing the name of Christ. The death of Christ was to be more fruitful than his life, and being lifted up upon the cross, he was to draw all men after him, and gather a plentiful harvest of all kindreds, tongues, and nations; a mighty generation to be new born to serve him. He was to be cast into the ground, that seed should spring up from him, John xii. 24. He was to be dead in reality, as Isaac in figure, that he might be the everlasting father of many nations. Thus, when he was on his part to be laid low as a root in the earth, by making his soul an offering for sin, God, the husbandman of this vine, promises to bring forth a new set, an abundance of branches sprouting up from him. They should come 'from afar off and build in the temple of the Lord,' Zech. vi. 15. Gentiles as well as Jews should be knit together as lively stones to rise up for a temple to the Lord.

God promises a succession of seed. 'His name shall be continued as long as the sun,' Ps. lxxii. 17, "yionon", filiabitur, his name shall be childed in him, as the name of a man is continued successively in his posterity. It is not only one morning that the rich and plentiful dew shall fall from heaven upon the hearts of men, but successively to the

end of the world, as long as this Sun of righteousness shall rise in any horizon, and the day dawn before him. Grace shall be dropped upon the hearts of men for a succession of seed, till in the last generation a period be put to the world. Seed shall be springing up till the last fire seize upon the world, at which time there shall be some caught up into the air to meet him, and a generation among the nations shall be successively blessed in him.

A perpetual seed is promised him. God's covenant shall stand fast with him, and the issue of that is, that his seed will God make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, Ps. lxxxix. 28, 29. His seed and throne are coupled together, as if his throne could not stand if his seed did fail. If his subjects should perish, what would he be king of? If his members should consume, what would he be head of? The promise of a perpetual kingdom secures the duration of his seed. This was so considerable an article, that in his plea he insists on it more resolutely, and challenges it with a more vigorous earnestness: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me,' &c., as he had at the first treaty insisted upon the enlarging his inheritance among the Gentiles. He had hitherto been praying only for his own glory, and their preservation and sanctification in the world. He now brings in an also; there was an article for the glory of his seed, as well as for the glory of his person, and the word also signifies that he would be as earnest for them, and insist as much upon the performance of this article which concerned them, as upon that which concerned himself. And the reason rendered signifies thus, 'For thou loved me from the foundation of the world.' Thou did manifest the love to me as mediator before the foundation of the world, in this promise of a seed, and that they should be perpetually with me to behold my glory; this was the main

article which encouraged Christ to this work, wherein the Father manifested his love to him as mediator before the world, and therefore in that rich promise wherein God engages the majesty of his name for the strengthening of him, the perpetuity of his seed is ensured: Micah v. 4, 'He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide.' Who? Ver. 3, the remnant of his brethren that shall return to the children of Israel, the brethren of that ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from everlasting, they shall abide. And some thus interpret Isa. liii. 10, 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,' i. e. the days of his seed. They shall be perpetually with him. For it was the pleasure of the Lord in this compact to give them a kingdom (as Christ tells his disciples); and this pleasure of the Lord should prosper in the hands of the mediator. That which God in his wisdom aimed at in his Son's sufferings, he aimed at certainly in the calling him and engaging him by covenant to suffer, and that was the bringing many sons to glory: Heb. ii. 10, 'It became him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' The end and the means were becoming propositions for the wisdom of God to make, and as becoming for the wisdom of God to perform. Since the means have been fully wrought, the end will be perfectly attained. Christ had those promises of eternal life made to him as a common head, and a feoffee in trust for them: Titus i. 2, 'Eternal life was promised before the world began.' Not for himself, who was the eternal Son of God. Could the promise of eternal life to his humanity make him take flesh barely for that? It was promised to him for his seed, for whose redemption he was to lay down his life as a ransom. As God made a covenant with Adam, not as an individual person, but as a nature, he being the representative of mankind, so that if he had stood, his

posterity had stood and enjoyed life; so he made a covenant with Christ to give eternal life to those that should believe in him, who are as really in him by regeneration as men are in Adam by natural descent.

To which may be added,

God promised his grace to draw men to him. That this seed should be sure to him, God promises to prepare men for him: to remove the stony heart, mollify their hearts, give them hearts of flesh, conquer their carnal principles and resolutions, and put his Spirit into them, that they might be a fit progeny for Christ. Christ intimates this in that speech 'None can come unto me except the Father, which has sent me, draw him,' John vi. 44. As the Father's sending him was the issue of a compact between them, so the drawing any is a fruit of that compact; for Christ removes this from himself, as an article to be performed on his part, as that which lay solely upon his Father's hands, as belonging to him as much as his own mission, and the particular circumstances of it. And this promise he had, Ps. cx 2, 'That the people should be willing in the day of his power.' God ordered him indeed to call the nations: Isa. lv. 5, 'Thou shalt call a nation which thou know not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God; for he has glorified thee.' But the vigour which should spirit them to so quick a race to Christ he reserves to himself; they shall run because of the Lord thy God; by his power, as he was the Lord, by his faithfulness, as he was his God in covenant; and the reason rendered is the glorifying him; which is both an engagement to Christ to call those his Father would have him call, and an engagement on the Father to bring the nations to him. The coming in of nations would redound to his honour; and it is likely this is part of the glory Christ prays for, John xvii. 5. He does not particularise what that glory was, but some guess may be made by his falling off from

that petition to the praying for his people. The preservation of them and keeping those that had been given to him (which includes the bringing them all in) is part of the glory which was promised to him. And this glorifying of him in his people he begs for at his Father's hand, as being by this covenant to be his act. The coming in of nations to him was a great part of the glory of Christ promised him in this covenant. The conversion of every man by the efficacy of grace, is the fruit of the covenant between the Father and the Son, as God is the Lord God of Christ. And therefore the calling of us by God is said to be according to his own purpose, and that grace, which was given us in Christ before the world was, 2 Tim. i. 9, a promise of grace for us, and of our calling in time, made then. For what is here called the purpose of God is, Titus i. 2, called the promise of God, and intimated as a promise in those words, 'given us in Jesus Christ,' by an agreement with him as our head, as the promise of life upon the covenant of works was given us in Adam as our common head. And so the promise of taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, may be said to be promises made to Christ on the behalf of his seed, not of his person; because, without this taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, it was impossible the nations, or any man, could be blessed in him. Notwithstanding that this efficacious grace is from the Father, and by his Spirit, by the covenant, yet all thus regenerated may well be called the seed of Christ, because the end of the sufferings of Christ was to merit a spirit of grace for those that were given to him; and the Spirit does nothing in forming a seed, but what rises up from the merit of Christ's sufferings. It is the travail of his soul, though the formation of the Spirit. Christ endured the pangs upon the cross for every new creature, though the Spirit brings it forth into the world. So that they are his seed, as springing

up from the merit of his death, and being animated by the power of his life; they are Christ's seed by right of purchase, the Spirit's seed in regard of operation; yet as they are the Spirit's seed, they may be called Christ's seed, because the coming of the Spirit in its plentiful effusion for such an end was a fruit of his death and his ascension, John xvi. 7. He was sent by him as the greatest gift of his royalty. There was something concerned Christ to do in this article of a seed; he was to take a special care of them. There was not only a may, but a must bring: John x. 16, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.' He was to call them, and the Father would draw them, and he was to bring them into one fold with the Israelites; and this does arise from this compact, or the mutual knowledge the Father and he had of one another; the mutual agreement, which was the cause of laying down his life, Ver. 15. Knowing, in God, sometimes signifies election, 2 Tim. ii. 19. God had chosen Christ to this end, and Christ had accepted of it to this end. These he was to teach, Isa. viii. 16. Those which he calls children, which the Lord had given, are, ver. 18, called his disciples, among whom he was to seal the law; whom he was to instruct in that knowledge of God which was eternal life, and manifest his name to them, John xvii. 2, 3, 6. And particularly, he was to instruct them in this great doctrine we are now treating of: ver. 7, 'Now they have known, that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee'; which was indeed the manifestation of the name of his Father, which he had spoken of, ver. 5, that all things which I do are by thy appointment, order, and assistance. I have ascribed nothing to myself, but magnified thy love, as the sole fountain of all that I have done; which was necessary, for I doubt many men think the Father to be cruel, and full of hatred to his creatures, and that he was over-persuaded to redemption by the

importunities of his Son, as a severe prince might be mollified by the supplications of his heir. It was not so, and Christ was to acquaint men with the true notion of God, and what his thoughts and affections were concerning them, and to show him to be a proper object of faith in this business. He was to use a great tenderness towards them, he was not only to gather the lambs with his arm and power, but to carry them in his bosom, not only to lead them, but gently to lead them; to have a special care of them, Isa. xl. 11. When they were given to him, they were given with some rules and orders how he should manage them, and he was to have his eye not only upon the flock in general, but upon every one in particular, that as any of them were weak, he should use them with more gentleness; take such an one in his bosom, he should have seven eyes upon the weakest, as his Father had upon him the corner-stone. He is therefore said to know his sheep, John x. 14 (every one in particular, as he knows the stars by name); otherwise the foundation of the Lord, this covenant of redemption, which is the foundation of all his proceedings, could not stand sure. The Father knew them in particular when he gave them to Christ, and Christ knew them in particular when he received them from him. It seems also that by this covenant he was to bring every conquering soul to a triumph, and he had power given him to this purpose, John xvii. 2. In the perfection he promises to them that overcome, he seems to refer it all to the covenant with the Father: Rev. iii. 12, he would make them pillars in the temple of his God, write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from his God; where he mentions God as his God in every reward he promises the victorious souls in the church of Philadelphia, four times in that verse, as I have observed before.

[3.] Promises of a glory upon his suffering. As he was to endure the

cross, so he was also to enjoy a crown. The enduring the cross was an article on his part, the bestowing a crown was an article on God's part. It was testified before by the prophets that sufferings should precede, the glory follow, 1 Pet. i. 11. The solemn inauguration into all his offices was after his making reconciliation; making an end of sin, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and thereby shutting up all prophecy and vision, because all the prophecies tended to him, and were accomplished in him, and then as manifesting himself the most holy, he was to be anointed, i.e. fully invested in all the offices of king, priest, and prophet, Dan. ix. 24. The compact runs thus, Do this, suffer death for the vindication of the honour of my law, and thou shalt be a priest and king for ever. He could not, therefore, be solemnly installed till he had performed the condition on his part (for the promise was made to him considered as mediator, or God-man); then it was that he was advanced, for the ground of his exaltation is pitched wholly upon his sufferings: Philip. ii. 9, 'Wherefore God has highly exalted him;' i.e. because he became obedient to the death of the cross. God has given him a name which is above every name; and because he loved righteousness, therefore God, as his God covenanting with him, has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Heb. i. 9, therefore he has given him a glory, as a just debt due to the price paid, the sufferings undergone, and the obedience yielded to the mediatory law. Therefore the glory Christ prayed for, which he had before the world was, John xvii. 5, may be understood of that glory which he had in promise to be given to him upon the completing the work he then engaged for. For this covenant was not about giving him his essential kingdom, for that belonged to him by nature, as he was God equal with the Father. But the mediatory kingdom belonged to his office by a particular grant. There were two works of Christ, works of

humiliation, which were suffering and dying; which were voluntary, not natural works; no natural tie upon him as the Son of God to undergo them, but a moral tie, after agreement and promise. There are regal works which were conferred on him by his Father, that he should be honoured and adored in the world as mediator, Heb. i. 6, worshipped by all the angels of God, when the glory of his deity should be manifested in the humanity, which had been so long veiled, and had but now and then beamed out; and this full shine of the Deity through the humanity was a new mode of glory acquired by the right of his death.

First, He had a promise of resurrection. As he had a power or authority by command to lay down his life, so he had a power and authority by promise to take it again, John x. 18. His heart was glad, his glory rejoiced, his flesh had hope in his sufferings; the ground of which hope was the assurance from his Father that his soul should not be left in hell, nor his Holy One (one so holy in the undertaking, and so holy in the execution) see corruption, but should be reduced again to the path of life more glorious, and attended with a fullness of joy, Ps. xvi. 10, 11. It is contained in the promise of seeing his seed; for if he were to remain dead, how should he see his seed?

Secondly, A promise of a royal inheritance. The appointing him in the human nature heir of all things (Heb. i. 2, 'Whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds'), which is distinguished from that power he had over all things by right of the creation of them, as the person by whom God made the worlds. That power was natural, this by appointment. The inheritance that belonged to Adam, as the head of the lower creation, being forfeited by him, was restored to the human nature of Christ; which Christ was so pleased with in the first grant, that he esteems it a goodly heritage, Ps. xvi. 6, which appointing him head and heir of all things was for the behoof

of the church, his spiritual seed: Eph. i. 22, 'The head over all things to the church.'

Thirdly, An extensive power. In heaven as well as earth, Mat. xxviii. 18, not only to judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations, Micah iv. 3, but to be the head of principalities and powers. That every knee in heaven, and under the earth, as well as in the earth, should bow down to him, and every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, who appointed him, Philip. ii. 10,11. A power over all flesh was granted to him, and claimed by him, as a glory given him by promise upon his glorifying of his Father: John xvii. 2, 'Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' A power over the seed of the serpent, the whole flesh as it stood in opposition to spirit and the interest of the redeemed ones; for it was granted to him as a feoffee in trust for the use and behoof of his seed, and to be exercised by him in subservience to the eternal happiness of his people, the great design and fruit of reconciliation. He had power before his suffering; for as God saved men upon the promise of his suffering, so upon the same promise he committed all power of judgment to him; but the solemn investiture and publication of it was at his resurrection and ascension: Acts ii. 86, 'God has made that same Jesus whom thou have crucified both Lord and Christ.' For the setting him at his right hand in the human nature was a full declaration and confirmation of the right of that power which he had acquired by his death; therefore he prays for his glory, and pleads a deed of gift for it, which was by this agreement, and therefore desires a full investiture of it, as it had been agreed on first to be asked by him, and then given by God: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me.'

Fourthly, A perpetual and royal priesthood, Ps. cx. 4. And indeed all

the rights of the firstborn, which were the right of government, and the right of priesthood; by virtue of which he was to perpetuate the virtue of his expiation, and also purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness, Malachi ii. 2.

Fifthly, An universal victory; the propagation of his kingdom in all parts of the world. Isa. xiii. 4, 'The isles shall wait for his law;' the conquest of many hearts by his Spirit, the willingness of people in the day of his power, the subduing some rebellions by the sword of his mouth, others by the sword of his arm, when the Lord at his right hand should strike through kings in the day of his wrath, Ps. cx. 5, 6. At last a conquest of all his enemies, the devil and death, 1 Cor. xv. 26, which was for the benefit of his people. He had conquered the devil and death in his person, he was to have a complete victory over both in his members; so that we see the encouraging promise made him by his Father was the purchase of a seed, and the glory God promised him was in relation to, and for the advantage of, that seed, that the reconciliation to be purchased for them might be completely enjoyed by them. Judge then whether the Father was not signally, in this agreement in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

We have handled this covenant, let us see what confirmation there was of it. On God's part we find an oath. God swears that Christ should be a priest, Ps. cx. 4; he is therefore called the man of God's right hand in the prayer of the church: Ps. lxxx. 17, 'Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,' whether for the hastening the suffering of Christ, or for his assistance, is uncertain; the man to whom thou hast sworn with thy right hand, so the Targum; the manner of taking oaths being to lift up the right hand: so Ps. lxxxix. 3, 'I have sworn to David my servant,' when he made a covenant with him; though this was

spoken to David in the type, 1 Sam. vii., yet, ver. 14, 'I will be his Fathers and he shall be my Son,' is applied to Christ, Heb. i. 5. And he swears by his holiness: Ps. lxxxix. 36, 'Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.' By David I understand Christ; once, i.e. once for all, irrevocably, unchangeable; and that by his holiness, by all that will fit him for a governor and judge of the world, by that holiness which he chiefly aimed to advance by this undertaking of his Son. As I am an holy God, and desire my holiness may be trusted by this undertaking, I will stand to my word, by that holiness which is the beauty of every attribute, without which, neither power, mercy, justice, nor wisdom could be perfections worthy of a God, as they could not be if holiness could not be ascribed to every one of them, holy power, holy mercy, holy justice, and holy wisdom. By his holiness, which comprehends all his attributes, which would fail, should he violate his oath; whereby it appears that this of settling the seed of Christ, was the main article which God intended, which his heart was set upon, since he assures it by the strongest bond of an oath, and an oath by that attribute which was so necessary to the being of the Deity, without which we can have no conception of a God. We may conceive God punishing all men by justice, or pardoning all men by mercy, but we cannot conceive a God without holiness, for then we conceive a God without the highest perfection belonging to the Deity, an ungodded God. Now, by this seed is not meant Christ the seed of David, because that David whom he had found as his servant, ver. 20, must be meant of Christ, by the greatness of the expression which follows after, and it is the seed of this David he will make to endure for ever, ver. 29; 'his seed,' his seed who was the first born. And though the word of the oath is said to be since the law, Heb. vii. 28,

that must be in regard of the manifestation of it, or rather in order of nature. For in this covenant God excluded all other sacrifices as insufficient, the order in the decree runs thus: first, the creation of man, covenant of works, &c. The foresight of the violation of that covenant, the insufficiency of other sacrifices for expiation, then the settling this grand sacrifice and high priest by an oath; for the first call of Christ was upon the inability of other sacrifices to afford God any pleasure, Heb. x. 5-7; i. e. the foresight of their inability. It was confirmed also to Abraham by an oath, that the nations should be blessed in his seed: Heb. vi. 17, "emesiteusen" he mediated by an oath, the tenor whereof was, that as Abraham was willing to offer his son in a bloody sacrifice to him, so he would offer up his only Son for Abraham, and all such as should follow his example of faith and obedience.

Use of this.

1. We see the main cause of unbelief and despair. It is the ignorance of the Father's interest in redemption; the ignorance of the transaction between the Father and the Son is the cause of this, John xv. 21, 'because they know not him that sent me.' They consider not that this was the Father's contrivance, that I am sent forth by him, and ordered by him to do what I do. If we had a clear vision of the gospel, and remembered God as intent upon a way of redemption, we should not nourish that which disparages the whole plot. Such souls look upon him as a God of wrath rather than a God of peace, whose hand is more filled with thunders than his heart with love; they regard him as one of a narrow and contracted goodness; that God minded nothing after man's sin but preparing his bow and sharpening his arrows. Hence they have frightful thoughts of God, slavish fears, fretful jealousies, that he will never accomplish their desires though they seek him never

so fervently.

2. See the blackness of unbelief. It is as much as lies in a man to make void the end of God, frustrate the covenant of redemption, deprive God of all the glory he was to get by the articles of it, and Christ of the honour of his undertaking, and make the whole covenant insignificant, rejecting the eternal counsel of wisdom, as well as the rejecting John's baptism, Luke vii. 30, was so interpreted. Whosoever does not believe upon the declaration of the gospel does endeavour to deprive Christ of a seed as far as he can. And those that endeavour to keep off others from Christ, endeavour, as far as their power extends, to make God violate his oath. This contrivance of God is the greatest masterpiece of wisdom and love; it was the most becoming thing God ever set about, most agreeable to his mercy and justice. Unbelief does what it can to demolish this fabric of God's erecting, as though the contrivance of his wisdom were a piece of folly, and the beating of his heart only worthy of the spurns of our feet.

3. Salvation is upon the most certain terms to every believer.

(1.) In regard that every believer is the seed of Christ. God has given such to Christ with an absolute will that they should not perish. Christ by covenant was to take care of them; God by covenant was engaged that Christ should see his seed. He confirmed it by oath, that his seed should endure for ever. Shall God be defeated of his will and the design of his everlasting covenant? He committed by covenant the souls of his people to Christ as his charge, John vi. 37-39. Would God put a charge he values into the hands of impotence or unskilfulness. Will Christ be guilty of disaffection to his Father? Can he break the trust reposed in him? Will the Father be guilty of unfaithfulness to Christ? Can there be a violation of articles so solemnly made between them? This seed was to be perfect, Christ was to see the travail of his

soul, which will be when he has given Christ a full possession of that trust he acquired for him upon the cross; but they must wait, for it is with his people as with himself. He obtained a right upon the cross for himself and them, but neither he nor they are yet in a full possession of the right he then purchased.

(2.) In regard of the firmness of the covenant between them. The covenant the Father has made with Christ is an obligation wherein he stands bound to Christ, and consequently to every parcel of his seed. Free grace to us made him a promiser to Christ, and his promise made him a debtor to him. Therefore if it be possible that the infinitely true God could be false to a temporary promise, how could he be false to his Son, the Son of his dearest love, the Son that he appointed, called out, and put upon this undertaking! How can he be false to his own counsel, and to a solemn everlasting covenant! His truth is a powerful engagement for performance, especially added to that love which first moved him to make this covenant. The covenant indeed was firm between God and Adam, had Adam stood; but there was not altogether so strong an obligation on God, he never confirmed it by an oath; he never was so much pleased with that, as with this. The greater pleasure any man has in the promise he makes, and the stronger resolution to perform it, the stronger asseverations he backs it with. To what purpose does Christ give us a draught and epitome of this eternal transaction as the ground of his pleas in heaven, but that the joy of believers may be full, that they might have his joy fulfilled in themselves? John xvii. 13, 'These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves;' that they might have a joy in the consideration of it, as he had in the making this covenant, and performing his part in it. 'These things I speak in the world.' I give them this history of our agreement, this copy of the articles

between thee and me, that they may read thy eternal counsel concerning their good, and have a strong consolation, and run to this public record in all cases, spread it before, yea, and plead it with thee. And by virtue of this covenant, though a believer fall into sin (for it is not possible he can run on in a course of sin), God will reduce him. The afflicting them to that end is a condition ensured in this covenant, Ps. lxxxix. 28-32, God will visit them with rods, but not lash them with scorpions; he will afflict them, but not destroy them; whip them, but not damn them; because he will not take away his loving-kindness from his Son, or suffer his faithfulness to fail.

(3.) In regard that Christ has suffered and performed all on his part.

Christ has performed his part by making his soul an offering for sin; he must therefore see his seed, and that to satisfaction, Isa. liii.

11, otherwise there would be a breach of covenant and promise on the Father's part. God was to please Christ, as Christ had pleased him; and the pleasure is not mutual unless both be pleased alike. The waiving therefore of every believer through this vale of misery is a debt God owes to Christ, and a satisfaction necessary to make his happiness as mediator complete, and which our Saviour may challenge as a due debt by virtue of compact. Will God ever go back from his word, tear the articles on his part in pieces, and so let the strength and blood of Christ be spent for nought?

(4.) In this covenant God has linked his own glory and the salvation of believers together. For in this covenant, wherein God was to be glorified, Christ was to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. xlix. 3, 6. As he covenanted with Christ for a glory from him, so by covenant he gave up the Gentiles to him; and thus having settled them together upon one corner stone, the happiness of a believer is as firmly upon that basis established as the honour of God. And therefore

what the prophet calls the glory of God, Isa. xl. 5, 'All flesh shall see the glory of God,' Luke expresses by salvation, Luke iii. 6, 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God;' and when God has declared his will for the sending Christ for the redeeming of the prisoners from captivity, Isa. xliii. 5, 6, ver. 8 he says, 'My glory will I not give unto another.' I will entrust no other with redeeming work, which is my glory, but this servant of mine; so that the peace is as firm as God's honour, and can then only cease when God shall cease to love himself, his Son, and his own glory. What greater ground of faith can there be than this, since God's love cannot reach a strain higher than to venture his own glory in the same bottom with a believer's happiness?

4. Fly to this covenant of redemption, as well as to the covenant of grace, since that is the foundation of this. All other considerations of Christ's death, merit, and everything stored up in Christ, can give us little hope, unless we consider this covenant, which supports all the other stones of the building. Fly to it when your souls are in heaviness. Though there may be sometimes clouds upon the face of God, yet consider those compassion in his heart, when he struck this covenant with Christ. He covenanted to bruise his own Son by his wrath, while he promised to support him by his strength, and the sounding of his bowels always kept pace with the blows of his hand. The consideration of this will encourage our faintness, silence our fears, nonplus our scruples, and settle a staggering faith. Is a believer in a storm? Here is an anchor to hold him. Is he sinking? Here is a bough to catch at. Is he pursued by spiritual enemies? Here is a refuge to fly to. Sin cannot so much oblige God's justice to punish, as his oath to Christ obliges him to save a repenting and believing sinner. These two covenants, that of redemption, and the other of grace, are as a Hur and Aaron to hold up the hands of a feeble faith. His love cannot die, as

long as his faithfulness remains, nor his peace with the soul perish as long as the covenant with his Son endures. This covenant of redemption is to be pleaded by us, as well as the merit of Christ's death, because the merit of his death is founded upon this compact.

IV. The Father did fit Christ for this great undertaking to make reconciliation. Christ was the vine, John xv. 1, 'I am the vine, and my Father the husbandman,' a vine of the Father's planting, a vine of the Father's dressing. And God planted him a noble vine, in order to the bearing branches. He made him a vine fit to cherish those he should insert in him. He is therefore said to be sanctified by the Father when he is sent into the world: John x. 36, 'Say you of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world,' sanctified in order to his mission, or sanctified at his mission, that the glory of God's reconciling love might be manifest by him; sanctified to do the works of his Father, for which end he was sent into the world, as ver. 37 intimates, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.' Much of God's secret counsel was spent about him, whence he is called 'a polished shaft in his quiver,' Isa. xlix. 2, 'in the quiver of his secret counsel wherein he was hid.' This promise he had in that agreement between them, that 'the Spirit of the Lord should be put upon him,' Isa. xlii. 1; and for this great end of redemption, as you may read in the following verses in that chapter. And since the end of his undertaking was to glorify God in the work of redemption, the wisest counsels would be employed to furnish Christ for bringing about the highest glory to God and happiness to man.

1. A fitness for so great a task was absolutely necessary. In regard of his office: As he was settled in an office by the Father, so the graces and gifts of the Spirit were necessary to fit the human nature for those great works of the Father which were to be performed in it. The

human nature had been unprofitable without an office, and an office had been unsuccessful without graces and gifts for the execution of it. An office of mediator, without capacity, fullness, charity, and goodness, had been useless, and to no purpose. In regard of the greatness of the work he was to do: Sin had blemished the world, turned all creatures from their true end by man's revolt from the service of God, whereby those creatures which were made to serve a loyal subject were forced to serve a rebel. The world then was to be restored, the ruins by sin repaired, the sin removed, and the sinner redeemed. As this required infinite skill for the contrivance, so it required infinite fitness for the execution. The glory of God's design required it, which was to make his attributes most illustrious, and display them more magnificently in the work of redemption than in that of creation; and this being to be done in the human nature (whose fall had necessitated a reparation or destruction) because by that God was dishonoured, in that therefore the glory of his attributes was to be manifested, it required a mighty fitness for the manifestation of an infinite glory.

2. Christ in regard of his divine nature was infinitely fit, and in regard of the union of that to the human suitably fit. For in regard of his infinite knowledge, he knew the rights of God in the infinite extent of his glory, and what was fit for the reparation of those rights which had been violated, he knew the infinite holiness of his Father, he knew the utmost malice of the inward bowels of sin, which he was to expiate; for he knew all things; for 'the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that himself does,' John v. 21. As God, he knew what wrong God had sustained in point of honour, and in point of service; and what was necessary to restore the honour to God, and reduce the creature to the service of the Creator. In regard of his infinite holiness therefore, God, who is holy, could be sanctified in

his righteousness, Isa. v. 16. In regard of his power, as he was the fittest medium by whom God created the world, Heb. i. 2, so he was the fittest medium by whom God might repair the world, and give a new consistency to it: Col. i. 16, 'He was before all things, and by him all things consist.' He was 'the mighty God, the everlasting Father,' or the Father of the age to come, and therefore 'the prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6. It was necessary he should be God, as it was necessary he should be man, to make the compensation suitable, because the human nature had committed the trespass; so it was necessary he should be God, to make the compensation sufficient, because God had received the wrong. Two things were requisite: suffering, therefore he must be man; satisfaction by that suffering, therefore he must be God. Two things in justice to be considered: the equity of justice, therefore the nature offending must suffer; the infiniteness of justice, therefore an infinite person must suffer. He therefore being thus infinite, could answer the infiniteness of God's honour in the reparation, and the infiniteness of our debts in the expiation. For as he had a human nature, wherein to merit, so he had a divine nature whereby to make that merit sufficient. No other nature could be fit; the angelical nature was not infinite, and therefore could not pay an infinite price; the human nature was neither infinite nor innocent, and therefore could not satisfy for infinite guilt. He was to stand under the sin of the world, and what creature could ever be fit to bear so vast a burden! As none but an infinite goodness could exercise so great a patience towards the sins of men, so none but an infinite goodness could pay a satisfaction for them. Now, though Christ, as he was the Son of man, 'gave his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28, yet the value of the redeeming price arose from it, as 'the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. He gave his life as man, but the purchase was made by him as God. It could

not have been for our glory, or purchased a glory for us, unless he who was the Lord of glory had been crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8; for 'being the express image of God, and upholding all things by the word of his power, he did by himself purge our sins,' Heb. i. 8. So that his shoulders were able to bear the weightiest burden, his strength able to endure the sharpest curses, and his soul able to drink down the bitterest potions. Christ therefore being God, and united to the human nature, was every way fit, as being God and man in one person, that what the human nature could not do by reason of its imbecility as a creature, the divine might; and what the divine nature could not do by reason of its perfection, the human nature might perform: that God's honour might be repaired by an infinite satisfaction, and man reduced to service by the highest motive, viz. the incarnation of his Son, than which God could not afford a greater.

3. The fitness, whether of his divine nature or his human, did originally arise from the Father. The Father, as the fountain of the Deity, did confer on him his natural fitness, by communicating to him the divine nature from eternity by natural generation. He had a natural fitness as the Son of God, and a gracious fitness as the Son of man. The natural fitness was from the Father, for 'as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself,' John v. 26. To have life in himself is the property of God, who is therefore called the living God, and this is given by the Father.

(1.) All the fullness whereby he is fit to reconcile, and accomplish his mediatory work, he is enriched with from the Father: Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.' It is true, the word Father is not in the Greek text, but is to be supplied from the discourse of the apostle before, verse 12, where he begins a thanksgiving to the Father. He did not only ordain him to be head of

the church, but he fitted him with whatsoever was necessary to constitute him in that office, and enable him for the exercise of it. By this fullness is meant both a fullness of the divinity, as he is the image of God, and a fullness of habitual grace, as he is the first born of every creature, having the rights of the firstborn given to him, as he is the head of the body the church, and the firstborn from the dead. God would have this great mediator filled with all the perfection of the Deity, and all the excellency of grace in his humanity, that he might be in this office of mediation every way acceptable to God, and successful for man; that no fault might be found in him, either by God or man, to stave off the acceptance of the one or the reliance of the other, that so the reconciliation might be in all parts and degrees complete.

(2.) The Father stored up this fullness in Christ with a mighty pleasure. He did not only order the communication of this fullness to him, and the perpetual residence of it in him for his appointed ends, but he did it with a transcendent pleasure, an "eudochia", such a pleasure as he had in his person, as that which answered all his ends, both for his own glory and his creatures' recovery. As he was the treasury of grace for us, so he was the object of God's delight.

(3.) This fullness was lodged in Christ, for the making peace with his Father, and accomplishing all the ends of it. As he assembled all light together and fixed it in the sun, as a natural type of Christ, to convey light and heat thereby to all sublunary bodies, as also to the stars in the firmament, whence both might derive that excellency they have, and so agree in one point and principle, so he has espoused together the divine and human perfections in one person, that thereby he might reconcile all things to himself; by him I say, 'whether they be things in earth or things in heaven,' that both the restoration of

the broken peace with men, and the confirmation of the standing peace with angels, might meet in him, and be derived from him as one centre of both. For as it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell, so it was a pleasure to him that it should perpetually reside in him to this end, that peace might be made, and all the intendments and consequence of it be promoted to a perfect issue; that he having an alliance to God by his divinity, and an alliance to man by his humanity, might stand as a perfect mediator between God and his creature, to make peace and preserve it. For hereby he understood the rights of God to secure them, and the indigences of man to relieve him. He had his humanity fitted to be a sufferer, and his divinity fitted to be a repairer; the one made him possible, the other able, and the holiness of his person made him acceptable. His being in the form of a servant made him obnoxious to suffering, and his being in the form of God made that suffering meritorious of our peace, that in all respects he might become a prince of peace both in heaven and earth.

4. We may note also the constancy of it; it dwells in him. This was the pleasure of the Father, that it should not only be communicated to him to lodge, but dwell in him; not as a private person, but an universal principle; as head of the body, as well as a reconciler, that he might be able to do the works of God, and fill the emptiness of man. God promised to engrave the engravings of this stone, which is ushered in with a repetition of a behold: Zech. iii. 5, 'Behold the stone that I have laid: behold, I will engrave the engravings thereof, says the Lord,' that men might observe it, and the end of it. He would work all habitual grace in him with an indelible character; as the engravings of a stone cannot be razed out without defacing and dissolving some part of the stone at least, sometimes not without breaking the whole. The end of this engraving is expressed in the following words: 'And I will

remove the iniquity of that land in one day.' Some understand it also of his death; and I think it may be understood of both his fitness for suffering, and his actual suffering. The end of this sculpture was for the taking away sin, and making reconciliation with God by the expiation of it. So that the graces of the Spirit are not only poured upon his head, as that which may be dried up again, but engraved on him, as noting fixedness and duration. Fullness acquaints us with the abundance of this grace, and dwelling signifies the perpetual residence of it, engraving the deep rootedness, and all for this end of redemption.

This fitness of his human nature was the work of the Father, not immediately, but by his Spirit.

1. He is fitted with a body.

(1.) This was necessary. Man, as constituted of soul and body, had violated the articles of the first covenant; therefore man, as constituted of soul and body, must answer the violations of it. He was therefore to have a body of the same kind with that man that had broken the covenant, whose punishment he was to remove; therefore he was not to be new made from the earth as Adam was, but to descend from him; otherwise he had not been of the same kind, and so could not satisfy for that kind whereof he was not a part. As the obligation descended upon all men from the first man, so it was fit that one descended from him should satisfy that obligation.

(2.) It was also necessary that he should have a mortal body, that he might be nearly related to us in all things (sin excepted), and redeem us by his passion. Blood was to be shed, death was to be endured (for we owed to God our life and blood), the righteousness of God was to be declared, Rom. iii. 25, which could not be but in the offending nature. His life he must lose, thereby to lay a strong foundation for the

removing of sin, with a rich manifestation of God's righteousness. Now, to make a body mortal, which was not in itself sinful, was a work only to be wrought by the wisdom of God, whereby to make a salvo for his righteousness, always manifested to his rational creatures. That soul that sins, it shall die. Had not Adam sinned, he had not died. Our Saviour died who never sinned; he was therefore to have such a body whereby our sins might be imputed to him, yet not inherent in him. He was then to have a human nature to suffer our punishment, as well as a divine nature to surmount it. A flesh was necessary to be a sacrifice for sin, as well as the Deity to be a priest. What could he have offered for us, had he not had flesh and blood? Without a body he had been a priest without a sacrifice, without an holy flesh he had been a priest with a sinful sacrifice. He was to have a body to 'bear our sins on a tree,' 1 Peter ii. 24; yet an holy body, that by the offering of that body 'once for all, we might be sanctified,' Heb. x. 10. As God only could, so he did provide him such a body. This he ascribes to God: Heb. x. 5, 'A body hast thou prepared me.' A mortal body, fit to be a sacrifice; a body prepared, after the rejection of all other sacrifices, wherein God could find no pleasure; a body also prepared to be a reconciling sacrifice, such a body wherein he might do the will of God, i. e. the whole will of God, which was to take away sin. It was a body so fitted as to be obedient to the soul, to have no rebellious power in it against reason and command, but to be fully and readily obedient in all its motions to God; not barely a body, but a body so tempered as to do the service required of it. It was not indeed fit that the body wherein the Deity was to tabernacle, John i. 14, "eskenosen", should be framed by a less wisdom, and slighter order, than the Mosaical tabernacle, which was a shadow of it, which was done by exact order, and by the inspirations of the Spirit, filling the

workmen with skill, Exod. xxxi. 2, 3.

(3.) Yet he was to have a holy body, free from any taint of moral imperfection, fit for the service he was devoted to, for which the least speck upon his humanity had rendered him unfit. This could not have been, had he descended from Adam by way of ordinary and natural generation. He had then been a debtor himself, a lamb with blemish, and so wanted a sacrifice for himself. His sacrifice would have been defective, and have needed some other sacrifice to fill up the gaps of it. It was necessary he should descend from Adam in a way of birth, but not in a way of seminal tradition, that he might have the nature of Adam without the spot. Such a knot could not be untied without infinite skill, nor such a way of production be wrought without the infinite power of God.

Therefore,

(1.) The Holy Ghost frames the body of Christ of this seed of the woman, that it might be mortal, and have his heel bruised by the devil, Gen. iii. 15; not of the seed of the man in an ordinary way of generation, that it might be without any taint of sin, sanctifying therefore the seed of the woman in a peculiar manner. Wherefore in relation to his humanity, conception, and birth, he is 'the holy thing,' Luke i. 35; as his body is called the Holy One in the grave: Ps. xvi. 10, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' His soul was not in the grave, being separated from the body upon the commendation of it upon the cross into his Father's hand. And as it was an holy body, so it was a mortal body, called therefore a 'body of flesh,' Col. i. 22. This God had appointed and predicted as an extraordinary thing: Jer. xxxi. 22, 'The Lord has created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man;' "gibor", a mighty man. By calling it a new thing, he points to a miraculous birth of the Messiah,

and the word creating signifies something out of a natural course, next to a mere creation, and God's work as much as creation. A new thing as not being from the old stock; for though his nature was the same with Adam's, yet he had no taint of original sin; because he was not morally in the loins of Adam before his fall (the promise of his incarnation of the seed of the woman being given after the fall), whereby the sin of Adam could not be imputed to him. It was therefore a new thing, and an holy thing according to that new promise after the fall. Though the Spirit was the immediate agent in fitting this body, yet it was by the appointment and power of the Father: Luke i. 35, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;' where by the Highest is understood the Father, the mystery of the Trinity being manifested in the incarnation of the Son of God.

(2.) The Holy Ghost makes the union between the divine and human nature. The overshadowing by the power of the Highest unites the two natures, whereby that 'holy thing' in the virgin's womb should be 'called the Son of God,' Luke i. 35, which could not be without a union of the divine nature to the substance made of the seed of the woman, by this overshadowing; which also is the act of the Father by the Spirit, as being in the 'power of the Highest.' And this is that which is called the *gratia unionis*, grace of union, which Christ had from God, whereby the Godhead dwelt bodily in him, or personally, Col. ii. 9; the two natures—the divine, signified by the Godhead, the human, by that wherein it dwelt—making up one person; "Soma" among the Greeks signifying not a bare body, but a person, as it does also in common speech among us.

The union of the two natures by a particular conjunction, whereby the divine nature dwelt substantially in the human, and was acted by it in all undertakings, was the work of God by his Spirit. This union of both

natures was for the making peace: Col. i. 21, 22, 'And you that were sometimes alienated, yet now he has reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death.' Who? Ver. 15: He who was 'the image of the invisible God.' The image of the invisible Deity rendered himself visible in the humanity, to reconcile us to his Father, so that by this union we who are afar off from the Deity are brought near in his humanity; and the gulf of original sin, which consisted in enmity to God, and which hindered the passage of God to man, or man to God, is filled up, taken away, and the work done in and by him. As he was God, he knew the terrors of hell, because he knew all things; but, as God, he could not have experience of them: he was to have a body of flesh to bear them, as well as he was the image of the invisible God to support that body under them. As man, he was fit to endure his wrath; and as God, fit to appease it. As man, he was fit to undergo the sharpness of the curse; and as God, able to remove it. As man, he was capable to obey both the moral and mediatory law; and as God, to transmit the fruit of that obedience to us, which is intimated in these words, 'Yet now has he' (who was the image of the invisible God) 'reconciled, &c. to present you holy, and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight.' Presenting us, as he is the image of God in our nature, free from sin by the washing of his blood, after he had reconciled us through the body of his flesh; the meriting of reconciliation was wrought in his flesh, but arose from his deity.

Thus Christ had a body every way fitted with a holy soul, with a glorious indweller, that he might be every way fit for making peace: a body in all things like ours, but without impurity, that he might be our kinsman, and become a Goel, a redeemer by right of propinquity; that he might be the suffering head of the human nature, which he could not be without our nature. Had he taken the angelical nature, which was

more excellent in itself, and suffered in that, his sufferings would have been esteemed the sufferings of that whole nature, but not of the human nature, because not partaking of it, and so he could not have suffered for it unless he had suffered in it: for since he was to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, 'he took upon him not the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, because it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make this reconciliation,' Heb. ii. 16, 17. We may note, besides the holiness of his body, it was so framed by the appointment of the Father, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, and tempered with such affections, as to do this work with the greatest compassion to the fallen nature of man, that whereas he had a holiness to make him faithful to God, so he had a tenderness in his nature to make him merciful to us for the carrying on this reconciliation and the ends of it to the highest perfection, so that those two natures, thus united by God, made him every way capable and fit to be a reconciler, knowing the justice of God's claim, that he might give to God what he knew to be his due, and feeling the infirmities of our nature, that he might purchase that remedy he knew we wanted. Herein we see the incomparable wisdom and love of the Father, in fitting Christ, so that he might be in him reconciling the world to himself.

(3.) He is filled with his Spirit by the Father, i. e. with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit necessary to this work. That precious ointment, composed of so many sweet and excellent ingredients, wherewith the Levitical high priest was anointed, Exodus xxx., was a type of those excellent graces of the great high priest, whereby he was qualified for the exercise of his offices. As the Spirit espoused the human nature to the divine, so he espoused all his gifts and graces to

the human. As the body was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, so his soul was beautified and adorned by the graces of the Holy Ghost, whereby he became 'fairer than the children of men, and grace was poured into his lips,' Ps. xlv. 9: 'His going forth is prepared as the morning,' Hos. vi. 3, furnished with all things necessary to work out redemption, and free the world from the wrath of God, as the sun is with light to deliver the world from the darkness of the night.

[1.] The subject of these gifts was the rational soul of Christ. The human nature was only anointed with the Spirit; the divine nature being infinite, could receive no increase of gifts, it having a fullness of perfection by eternal generation. Yet though the divine nature stood in no need of those gifts, it did capacitate the humanity of Christ for greater receipts, by reason of its union with it, than any other mere creature was capable of. We must not think, as some may conceive, that the divine nature was instead of a soul to the body of Christ. He had a real rational soul; for since the whole nature of man was corrupted, both soul and body, the whole nature of man was to be repaired. How could he have suffered in a body, without a soul, the wrath due to our souls as well as bodies? Had he only had a body, he had not taken the human nature; only the meanest and worst part of man, not that which constitutes the man. Unless he had been God and man in one person, his blood could not have been called 'the blood of God;' and unless he had a soul and body, an entire nature, his blood could not have been the blood of man. As he was to have a body prepared, so he was to have a soul proportionately furnished.

[2.] He was abundantly filled with them; he had 'the Spirit not by measure,' John iii. 34; not as light in a room, but as light in the sun; not as water in a vessel where the bounds are visible, but like water in the ocean, where the depths and limits are unknown. In him

there was nothing but Spirit and fullness, without limits for quantity, without imperfections for quality; all the treasures, the fountain, not the rivers. There are varieties of gifts, as there are of stars, and the qualities of them, in heaven; and of flowers, and the beauties of them upon earth: what were various in others were entire in him. Others have parcels of those gifts and graces, like Abraham's children by Keturah; but Christ had them entire. As Isaac had an inheritance as the heir of promise, so Christ, as the heir of all things, had the possession of the choicest gifts in the treasuries of his Father. As God had communicated an infinite being to him by eternal generation, so it was convenient to communicate a fullness of graces and gifts to the humanity as far as it was capable to receive and contain it, because it was joined to so excellent a nature as the divine; for though he was made flesh, yet he had 'the glory as of the only begotten Son of God.' It was fit therefore he should be 'full of grace and truth' in that flesh, John i. 14. It was not congruous that the Spirit of God should come into the soul of Christ with half his attendants, but with the greatest majesty, with his whole train of excellencies. Not that the perfections poured out upon his soul by the Spirit of grace and glory were infinite, because those graces were created qualities, and infiniteness can never be ascribed to a creature; and his soul was the subject of them, and that being a creature, was not capable of receiving into it subjectively that which is infinite; but he had them without measure, as to the kinds of gifts; in the mass, not in parcels. As to the degrees of them, others have them in a lower degree, as light in a candle; Christ in the highest degree, as light in the heavens: so that whatsoever pertains to the nature of grace was conferred on Christ, as whatsoever belongs to the nature of light and heat is stored up in the sun. 'All his garments did smell of myrrh, aloes, and

cassia,' Ps. xiv. 8. As God has made the sea a treasure of waters, emptied into it from all the rivers of the world, so he has made Christ a mighty ocean of all perfections, in a vaster quantity and richer qualities than any other creature is capable to receive, as the sea is more capacious to receive the perpetual floods than the greatest river in the world. If the whole creation should be reaped, and gleaned, and stored up in one person, it would be but as the drops of a bucket to the fullness of Christ, which the Father has laid up in him.

(4. ) These graces were infused into him at once. As the new creature has all its parts framed at once, so the head of all the new creatures was principled at once with them, though in regard of the various exercises of them, they grew up in him by degrees: Luke ii. 40, 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom,' ver. 52, and shone forth as he increased in age, by new excitations of them by the Spirit of God. Grace came into the soul of Christ, as his soul into his body, or as light into the sun at the creation, not by pieces; but as the soul did not exercise its functions, so his graces did not exert their strength, but by degrees, according to the capacity of his age, and occasional occurrences. The anointing of this Spirit was conferred upon him at his incarnation; when he was made flesh, he was full of grace and truth, John i. 14. Also visibly at his baptism, which was his entrance into the exercise of his office, as a visible token of his Father's acceptance of him, now at his inauguration, Mat. iii. 16, 17; as David, the type, was anointed at Bethlehem, the place of his habitation, by Samuel, and afterwards at Hebron, when he was actually installed king by the tribe of Judah. The first anointing at his incarnation was his furniture for his office, that at his baptism his investiture in his office.

(5.) These gifts and graces of the Spirit were necessary for the human

nature. It was necessary that the soul of Christ should exert supernatural acts. There was a necessity of love to God, to spirit him in his mighty difficulties; of faith in God, to suck refreshment from the promises made to him as mediator, when he should arrive at any conflict: these were supernatural acts in themselves, and so were above the bare natural strength of the soul of Christ, and the powers of it. As the soul of Christ did need a natural concourse to natural actions, as other souls do, and needed the gift of miracles for the working of miracles, so he needed a supernatural grace to exert supernatural acts. It is essential to the nature of a creature to depend upon God for all communications. To act independently, and without the influence of another, is a property of God, not to be derived to any creature. The humanity of Christ then being a creature, could not act of itself without the influence of a superior being; the humanity then did not endow itself; grace is not minted by any creature. It did no more inspire itself with grace than it did inspire itself with life. As God was the Father of Christ, so he was the Father of grace to him; the divine nature of Christ gave a personal dignity by union, but conferred not of itself a beauty upon it. Had the divine nature, by virtue of its union, elevated the faculties of Christ's soul, he needed not have grown in wisdom and knowledge; the divine nature, though united to the humanity, did not communicate to it all that it was capable of receiving. This communication was the proper word of the Spirit, according to the order in the operations of the Trinity: hence his human soul knew not the time of the day of judgment, though as God he did. If his divine nature had advanced his rational faculties, it had also stocked him with full comforts, without the mission of an angel to refresh him in the garden, Luke xxii. 43, and why did it not also advance the vegetative power to rear up his body to a full stature?

This elevation was the work of the Spirit. It was necessary he should be thus furnished.

[1.] In regard of the greatness of his task. Gifts are imparted to men suitable to the places wherein they stand for action, and according to the largeness of the vessel. Christ's place was higher, his work harder than any creature's, therefore required a greater measure of gifts than all creatures in heaven and earth put together. Though he was mighty in his person, and fit to have help laid upon him for us, yet he was to be anointed with the holy oil, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20). Without this fullness of grace the human nature could never have arrived to the perfection of the great undertaking, but would have sunk in the midst of the work.

[2.] In regard he was to be a pattern, as well as the prince of believers. A pattern ought to be the most perfect in the kind. Christ was to be set up as a pattern for believers, both of the Spirit's operation in him, and of their imitation of him. Those who draw pictures look upon the original, that they may work them into a likeness to it. The Spirit of God in the fashioning souls, is to conform them to the image of Christ, Rom. viii. 29. It was fit that the pattern of all the heirs of heaven should be fully exact to the pleasure of God. It being God's end to bestow more upon the creature in this redemption than he did upon it by creation, and that in a more suitable manner, there was as much need of an infinite fitness in the person that was to prepare the way for those communications in an honourable manner to God, and everlastingly comfortable to the creature.

(6.) The Father was the principal cause of this furniture. It was God that 'anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost,' Acts x. 38, and 'God gives the Spirit not by measure to him,' John iii. 34. It is rendered as a reason why 'he that God has sent' (which is a peculiar

and ancient title of Christ) 'speaks the words of God.' This the Father did out of the infinite affection he bore his Son for this work of mediation; ver. 35, 'The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.' The power he had conferred upon him, giving all things into his hand, did require a fullness of the Spirit to manage that power also, that he might be a person fit to be believed on, and confided in, ver. 30. All this was that he might do the Father's will, speak his words, perform his command of love in the repair of his creature. The Lord anointed him, Isa. lxi. 1, and as a God in covenant with him. God, Heb. i. 9, 'Even thy God,' according to the promise made to him, and with an oil of gladness, a joyful oil, as that which is a pleasure to the Father, makes the countenance of Christ cheerful, as the psalmist speaks of oil in another case, and joyful to the church; because upon this fitness depends its happiness and salvation, its reconciliation, and all the fruits of it. And if "dia toutou", therefore, notes to us the final cause or end of this anointing, viz., that he might love righteousness, and hate iniquity; it acquaints us that the end of this unction was to fit him for this work of redemption with a perfect holiness, without which he could not have restored God's honour, nor appeased his wrath, nor consequently reduced the creature to terms of amity with God. This putting his Spirit upon him was a fruit of that delight God had in him as his servant: Isa. xlii. 1, 'My servant in whom my soul delights, I have put my Spirit upon him.' Which delight is also testified, when the Spirit did visibly descend upon him, that he was 'his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased,' Mat. iii. 16, 17.

The gifts and graces he was endowed with by this Spirit the Father had given him, were

[1.] Habitual holiness. He was infinitely holy in regard of his deity

holy by the hypostatical union in his humanity, holy by the residence of the Spirit; a greater holiness than man in innocence or angels in heaven have. The giving the Spirit not by measure to him implies a greater holiness, as well as other abilities in the human nature, than all the angels in heaven ever had, who have the Spirit by measure. The holiness, therefore, of Christ's person incomparably exceeds all the holiness of the angelical nature, which has a limited communication of the Spirit. As the apostle argues for his deity, Heb. i. 5, 'Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?' so to which of the angels did he at any time give the Spirit not by measure? Though he took upon him the form of a servant, yet he was a righteous servant. There was no original sin in his conception, nor actual sin in his conversation; he was separate from sinners in the manner of his birth and in the actions of his life; he had a purity of nature and a purity of life commensurate to the law, that he might be our paschal lamb without blemish; he was holy in the account of angels, Luke i. 35; holy in the account of devils, Mark i. 24, 'the Holy One of God;' holy in the account of his Father: John viii. 29, 'He always did those things which pleased him.'

This was necessary for his office. It became him and us, as our high priest, to be undefiled, Heb. vii. 26. As it was necessary he should suffer for the satisfaction of God's justice, so it was necessary he should by a purity be fit for so great a task. As reasonable creatures we owe a perfect obedience, as rebellious creatures an eternal punishment; there must, therefore, be an holiness commensurate to the precepts of the law, as well as a passion commensurate to the curses of the law. Upon this holiness of his is our reconciliation grounded: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'For he has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Had he known

experimentally the least spot, he could not by his sacrifice have been made the righteousness of God to us; for not only as his servant, but as his 'righteous servant,' he was to 'justify many,' Isa. liii. 11.

Hereby he was able to 'appear to take away our sins,' and did do it, because 'in him there was no sin,' 1 John iii. 5, the apostle rendering the latter as the reason of the former. Had he had the least speck, he could not have been a mediator, because he had then been a party in being a sinner; his office could not have been performed, which was to make up the breach, not to make a new one; he had rather polluted than purged us, and fastened our sins rather than took them away. What could he have offered if he had not had flesh and blood? How could he have offered acceptably if there had been any spot upon him in his appearance before the holy justice of his Father? Heb. ix. 14. He had then been a rebel, a prisoner, and had forfeited all that might have been a ransom for us. How could he have made peace with God for us, when by reason of a blemish he could not make peace in his own conscience? An inevitable destruction had been brought upon mankind, which could not have been repaired. His intercession kept up the world from sinking when Adam fell; but whose mediation should have preserved the world had this mediator failed, since God had no other son to employ in so great an affair?

It was necessary in regard of his dignity. The Deity, because of infinite holiness, could not have dwelt in a tainted humanity. Though this habitual grace be given by God, yet it is a connatural property of Christ, God-man, because by the dignity of his person it was due to him. It had been a prodigious and preternatural thing to unite the human nature without the ornaments of grace to the divine, as it had been if the body of Christ had not by reason of the hypostatical union been made immortal and glorious, though those properties of the body do

not flow from the union by any physical resultant; for to the humanity by this union there is only communicated esse personale, not essentielle divinae naturae, the personal, not the essential being of the divine nature; and therefore divine operations of grace do not physically follow this union, but as they are due to that nature so united. Had they followed physically this union, the body of Christ could not have been weary, hungry, and subject to the infirmities of our flesh. In regard of the dignity of his person, this holiness was due to him; without it, it had been the greatest disparagement to God to send him, and the greatest prejudice to us; for had there been any spot, the person of Christ had been said to sin, as well as the person of Christ is said to suffer. Since the Father had placed his delight in him, and had promised to uphold him, it could not be that that should enter upon him, which was so contrary to the perpetual delight God had promised to fix in him.

This was the act of the Father, and ascribed to him: John x. 36, 'Say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world.' Some understand it of the sanctification of Christ by eternal generation, receiving, by that, holiness per essentiam, by essence; others by sanctification understand only a separation of him to his office. But it rather seems to be meant of the preparations for the exercise of his office, sanctification and mission being joined together; the Father separated him and anointed him with the Spirit, who, as the Spirit of the fear of the Lord resting upon him, Isa. xi. 2, was the immediate inspirer of him with this internal holiness.

[2.] With wisdom and knowledge. As God, he had an uncreated knowledge, but this could not be communicated to his humanity, because a creature is not capable of anything infinite; and though he was filled with all gifts from his conception, "hupestatikos", personally, yet it does not

follow from thence that the soul of Christ should know everything, because this did not belong to the property of that nature. And though he was the head of angels, it will not follow that he should know, as man, what the angels knew; for then he had not stood in need of an angel to strengthen him. And if he were made lower than the angels, it was no disparagement to him, as being in the form of a servant, to be ignorant in some things which the angels knew, which he implies he was in that speech concerning his ignorance of the day of judgement: Mat. xxiv. 36, 'Of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven.' But there was no privative ignorance in Christ, but a negative, which is not sinful; and this kind of ignorance was no more disparagement to Christ than it was, that his soul, which was the soul of God, as well as his blood the blood of God, should be sad to death. But the wisdom he was filled with was the wisdom pertaining to his office of mediator; as he was to reprove, and convince, and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth: Isa. xi. 2-4, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord'. He had wisdom, i.e. a right judgement of things pertaining to his office, judging of things according to the divine will, counsel and prudence in the direction of his actions, knowledge of all accidents and circumstances which might occur to hinder him from the accomplishment of his work, and might to effect all; which gifts were bestowed upon him by the Spirit. All which gifts did end in this of the fear of the Lord, a reverence and observance of his Father as superior to him in this work of mediation. And therefore it is repeated again, verse 3, 'Shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;' an observance of the will of God in that work committed to him. All the gifts he had were to run into this ocean of faithfulness to

God. The fear of the Lord in Christ was a reverence of the divine majesty and the divine command; not a fear of separation from the Father by any sin, or a fear of punishment by him for any sin, because he could not sin. Without a reverence of God, he had not been faithful; without wisdom and knowledge, he had not been able. Ignorance could never have managed his work, unfaithfulness could never have accomplished it; the one had made him incapable to attempt it, the other to perfect it; the one had stripped him of all capacity for it, the other of all successfulness in it. The knowledge of the will of God was that whereby he was 'mighty to help', Ps. lxxxix. 19. He had counsel to direct as well as power to effect; he had the gift of wisdom to manage his power to the defeating of his enemies. This was necessary; the human nature had been defective in that which it was designed for, unless it had understood what was fit to be done in order to it. It had not consisted with the wisdom of God to send one about so great a work who did not understand the nature of it, who was not fully instructed how to manage it. This was necessary as well as holiness, without knowledge he could not have been a reasonable and voluntary sacrifice, all voluntary acts being to be founded in reason; and without holiness concurring with it, he could not have been an acceptable sacrifice. This wisdom did fit him to sprinkle many nations: Isa. lii. 13, 15, 'My servant shall deal prudently, he shall be extolled, and be very high; so shall he sprinkle many nations.'

"Yashchil", some translate prosper, it signifies both; when any one prospers, it is commonly ascribed to his own prudence and wise management of things. He shall understand what is due to God for the reparation of his honour, what is necessary for men for the relieving their necessities, and so purge many by the blood of his sacrifice. Now this wisdom, and the increase of it, was from the strength of the

Spirit in him, and the grace of God upon him, Luke ii. 40. There were constant revelations to him of what was fit to be done by him in the exercise of his office, according as the Father pleased by his Spirit to communicate himself to his humanity.

[3.] The Spirit was given him to fit him with a tenderness to man, and to lead him out to those exercises whereby he might be sensible of the indigences of man. He had not only the law of redeeming love in his head, whereby he had a knowledge of his office, but in his bowels, whereby he was fitted for a tender execution of that office: Ps. xl. 8, 'Thy law is within my heart,' "me'ay", bowels. The Spirit therefore descended upon him in the likeness of a dove, an emblem of meekness and tenderness. And the apostle Peter, Acts x. 3, intimates that the intendment of this unction of him was to fit him for a compassionate converse with man: 'God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.' He had a tenderness as God, and his humanity is fitted with a tenderness to keep pace with that of the Deity as much as was possible, that the tenderness of both natures might be joined together in one person. And when this Spirit visibly settled on him after his baptism, he led him presently to an exercise whereby he might feel the miseries of man, and from an experience of them, be affected with more tenderness towards him: Mat. iv. 1, 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit in the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.' Then; when? As soon as ever he had the Spirit as a dove lighting upon him, and had heard those encouraging words, Mat. iii. 16, 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' He was led by this Spirit to be tempted by the evil one, that he might in his humanity be acquainted with the craft and subtilty of that adversary which had overturned the world, brought all the dishonour upon his Father, and sank mankind into their present

misery; that he might know the enemy which was threatened in the promise of his incarnation, and experience the subtleties of that serpent which had wrought all those mischiefs he came to redress, and so, as he was to be 'acquainted with grief,' Isa. liii. 3, he might understand the first author of that which occasioned this grief to him. It was by this grace of meekness and humility he was specially fitted to be a second Adam to redeem us, because pride was the sin of the first Adam to destroy us, who, because he would become as high as God who created him, the Redeemer would become lower than man that was created by him; yea, 'a worm and no man,' Ps. xxii. 6; so excellently did the Spirit fit him with a humility proportionable to his undertaking.

[4.] The Spirit was given to him by his Father, to enable him with a mighty power to go through this undertaking. He had a 'Spirit of might,' executive of his wisdom and counsel, Isa. xi. 2, a courage to attempt the most daring difficulties, and endure the fiercest calamities: a power to suffer for the satisfaction of justice, a power to relieve the pressures of our wants, a power to conquer his and our enemies. When he was anointed by God with the Holy Ghost, he was anointed 'with power,' Acts x. 38, "dunamei", not "eksousiai", for the exercise of his office and the doing good. The design of putting the Spirit upon him, was that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, for that immediately follows the promise of the Spirit to him, Isa. xlii. 1. This was his encouragement actually to engage in the exercise of every part of his office: Isa. lx. 1, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek,' &c. The Spirit was upon him in all the acts of his mediation, the Spirit therefore did continually assist him in every exercise; he was not left alone, but 'he that sent him was with him,'

John viii. 29. The Father was with him by his Spirit: the Father had promised his assistance. Now, assisting grace is the work of the Holy Ghost. His grace was fed and actuated by the Spirit, and brought forth into exercise. The Spirit led him into temptation, what? only to lead him to the conflict and desert him in it? No, surely, but to actuate those graces wherewith he had filled him against the tempter: 'God was with him,' Acts x. 38, assisting, exciting, actuating him. And the Spirit did assist him, and excite the graces in him to the very last gasp, for 'through the Spirit he offered up himself' Heb. ix. 14, through the virtue of this Spirit sanctifying his human nature, gifting him with strength and wisdom, exciting those eminent graces upon the cross, wherewith he had filled him at his conception, and supporting him with his power while the Father was bruising him. As he lived in this holiness of Spirit, so he died and offered up himself through the strength of it, without spot to God. Through the Spirit, signifies the strength and power of the Spirit, as when we are said 'to mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit,' Rom. viii. 13, i.e. through the powerful operation of the Spirit. For as the highest graces of Christ, faith, love, and obedience, were to be exercised upon the cross, so the assistance of the Spirit was necessary to the exciting and actuating those graces; for acts of grace being supernatural, a suitable concurrence is necessary for the exerting those acts, and this concurrence is truly the exciting and assisting grace of the Spirit. The natural powers of the humanity cannot otherwise be helped by the word, but as the "logos" or word does flow in upon it to actuate those powers of the soul. But this influx and motion is common to the Trinity, and therefore it is not from the divine nature, as hypostatically united, but from God as the first cause, and from the Spirit as the person whose office it is to excite grace, and assist it in the exercise. Not

that the Spirit did so possess Christ, as that he did not exercise his own faculties in his whole office; but as the Spirit is said to pray in us, Rom. viii. 26, and we said to pray in him, Jude 20. The Spirit quickens our faculties, and by his inspiration excites and assists the act. The Spirit did all along enable Christ with a mighty power; it did first unite his soul to his body, his divine nature to the human, strengthened him in his temptation, stood by him in his passion, and at last united his body to his soul at his resurrection: 1 Pet. iii. 18, 'Quickened by the Spirit', Rom. i. 14, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead;' showing himself here in the whole administration a Spirit of holiness, in his conception, conversation, oblation, justification, and resurrection. Upon which account he is said to be 'justified in the Spirit,' in the administration and ordering of the church. For it was 'through the Holy Ghost he gave commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen,' Acts. i. 2, not leaving his human nature till it was made immortal and glorious in heaven, that thereby the redemption and reconciliation might be every way complete. It was to those ends and purposes God gave the Spirit not by measure to him. [5.] The Spirit was given to him by his Father, not only to fit him for his mediatory undertaking, but thereby to accomplish all the fruits of reconciliation in his seed. As God prepared him a body to lay down as a ransom for us, Mat. xx. 28, so he gave him the Spirit to bestow as a largess on us. He was given to him to be derived from him, as from the fountain, to all believers, whence they are said to be his fellows, Heb. i. 9. As he made himself their fellow, by descending to the fellowship of their nature, so they were to be his fellows by the communications of his Spirit. All men are his fellows in regard of his partaking of human nature, but believers only are his fellows in regard

of conformity to the image of God. There is a fullness of merit in him resident in heaven, as a sweet smelling savour before God, and a fullness of grace to distil upon his seed to make them acceptable to God: merit to keep up the amity on his Father's part, and grace to keep up the amity on the believer's part. The graces of the Spirit were given to him, not only as mediator, without which the human nature had not been capable for the work, but as a head, which redound from him upon his members, Col. ii. 19, and convey nourishment to every part. As God assembled light in the sun to fit it for a full fountain of light, to transmit from heaven to the creatures on earth motion, warmth, and influences, whereby the qualities in all bodies are preserved and excited, so has God given the Spirit to Christ, the Sun of righteousness, and stored him with grace and holiness, as a common fountain of gardens, a public head, for the quickening, beautifying, and enriching believers. Without this fullness of light, the sun could not be beneficial to the world, nor answer the end of its creation, so without this fullness of Spirit in Christ, he could not accomplish the fruits and ends of the reconciliation he has made. And therefore, though the Spirit sanctified Adam in innocence, as the third person in the Trinity, and so he breathed an holiness upon Christ, yet he sanctifies believers now in a new habitude, not only as the third person in the Trinity but as the Spirit of Christ, the mediator, sent in his name by the Father, John xiv. 26, as purchased by Christ, upon which account he is called the Spirit of Christ, and Christ is said to send him, John xvi. 7. Because, as mediator, he acquired a right by the merit of his sufferings to dispense this fullness of the Spirit, who now acts as a fruit of Christ's intercession upon believers: John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter.' Use of this part.

1. How gross a sin is unbelief, which practically denies the ability of that Saviour, which the Father so richly fitted by his Spirit to the work of reconciliation! It is a charge and imputation upon God, as though he did not furnish him with sufficient abilities. It is a deriving his divinity or humanity, or both. It is all the heresies that ever were started against the person of the Son of God in the mass; they are all practically bundled up in this one single sin. God's anger will most flame when that which cost him the greatest treasures is despised. It is the despising all that is great in God; his riches, his power, his honour: his riches in furnishing him, his power in supporting him, his honour designed by him in both. It is a more sensible contradiction to the Trinity than any sin against the light of nature, because there is a more evident discovery of the Trinity in his mediation; the Father appointing, calling, counselling, ordering; the Spirit furnishing, fitting, exciting, supporting; the Son acting as the subject of all this. It does affront not a man; nor an angel, no, nor only the Son of God himself, but the magnificence of the Father towards him, and the pains of the Spirit on him.

2. How should we be encouraged to faith in this able Saviour! Since he has all the fitness that could delight God, and all the fullness whereby he can pleasure man, he is every way able to satisfy God and save the believer. His ability being so much and so great upon the earth, is not diminished in heaven, no more than his compassions are abated. As he learned a new mode of compassionating men before his departure out of the world, so, since his ascension to heaven, he has received a greater power of assisting men. Before, he had the Spirit to gift himself, now he has the Spirit to send upon his people. He has a fullness of grace, a fitness of gifts, that he may be every way able to help. He had a body to bear our sins, and a divine nature whereby to

expiate them, his merit was as infinite as his person. He is an holy high priest, not tainted with any of those evils which he was to expiate in others. He is not only man; then he might have fallen as the first Adam did, and left us in the same, or a worse condition than before: he is not only God, then he could have performed no obedience to the law, as being not concerned in it as a subject, but as the lawgiver; nor could he have offered any satisfaction to God, as being incapable of suffering in the Deity; but God and man, fit to repair the honour of God and the fallen state of the creature. He had an enlarged understanding to know his work, inconceivable power to perform it, and incomparable goodness to be faithful in it. Such wisdom as he was furnished with could not be ignorant of his office, nor is to this day; such power could not be weak, nor will ever languish; such integrity could not be false, nor will ever deceive the comers to him.

3. Admire these infinite compassions of God. Oh marvellous grace! that Christ should be endued with the richest grace by his Father to relieve our poverty, with the highest might to help our weakness, with a powerful assistance to conquer our enemies, with an overflowing fullness to fill up our emptiness, and abundant grace poured into his lips to comfort our dejectedness. God cannot show greater love than to send his Son to make the peace, and unlock his cabinet wherewith to furnish him. An old frame of thankfulness will not fit an evangelical discovery of love. When God tells them, Isa. xiii. 9, 10, of his 'Servant in whom his soul delights,' and upon whom he had put his Spirit for the redemption of man, then he makes this use of exhortation of it, 'Sing unto the Lord a new song.' New love calls for new praise. God might have destroyed us with less cost than he has reconciled us; for our destruction there was no need of his counsel, nor of fitting out his Son, nor opening his treasures; a word would have done it,

whereas our reconciliation stood him in much charge. It was performed at the expense of his grace and Spirit, to furnish his eternal Son to be a sacrifice for our atonement. An inexpressible wonder, that the Father should prepare his Son a mortal body, that our souls might be prepared for an incorruptible glory!

4. God commissioned Christ to this work of reconciliation. He gave him a fullness of authority as well as a fullness of ability. He is therefore said to be sealed, as having his commission under the great seal of heaven: John vi. 27, "Touton gar ho pater esfregisen, o Theos". Sealing notes a special designment of the thing sealed to some special purpose; so the sealing of Christ signifies his separation and authority to exercise his offices, and in particular, of giving meat to the world, which should endure to everlasting life. By virtue of this commission, whatsoever Christ does is valid, for he does it as God's attorney, to whom he has transferred a power to carry on the work of redemption, in which respect he is called God's servant, not by nature, but a servant by office. In this respect he is said to be anointed, Isa. lxi. 1. Anointing was not so much the fitting a person as a declaration of his fitness, and an authorising him to an exercise of his offices. Anointing under the law signified an authority conferred upon a person for government, priesthood, or prophecy. In that place Christ does distinguish his commission from his fitness, and declares himself fit, because he was commissioned. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me;' there is his fitness, 'because, "ya'an", therefore the Lord has anointed me.' It was not agreeable to the divine wisdom to commission any for an office but whom he had furnished with an ability for that office. What was he commissioned for? Not to thunder the law, but to declare the gospel, the gospel of peace to the broken-hearted, to reveal the thoughts of amity which his Father had. Upon this account

Christ tells us he did not come of himself, John vii. 28, and in regard of this commission he is called God's angel, Mal. iii. 1, 'messenger;' the word signifies an angel, the 'apostle of our profession,' Heb. iii. 1, because, as he authorised and sent the apostles, so the Father authorised and sent him; 'a messenger, and an interpreter,' John xxxiii. 23. Though this commission was given him at his birth, yet God renewed the declaration of it several times: at his baptism, Mat. iii. 17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' at his transfiguration, Mat. xvii. 5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you him.' Christ pleads this commission, as well as the covenant between them: John xvii. 4, 'I have finished the work thou gave me to do,' when he calls it a work given him to do. What work I have done was appointed me, and I have done it by thy authority, and therefore our redemption and security in it depends primarily upon the covenant or federal transaction between the Father and the Son; and next, upon the commission given to Christ, which was indeed but the performance of the first articles on the Father's part. Christ's commission was declared several ways; by the miracles he wrought by his own hand, as well as by the apostles; by the holiness of his life; by the accomplishment of all the predictions of the prophets in his person; by his resurrection from the dead; and by the conversion of the world executed in the most astonishing and divine manner. This commission he had at once, as well as his fitness; but he did successively enter into the exercise of his offices. At first he performed his prophetic, then exercised his priestly a little before his death, at his authoritative prayer, John xvii., where he begins his intercession, the greatest, choicest, and most durable part of his priesthood. His kingly he exercised more especially after his resurrection, in the orders he settled for the church; all power was

then more manifestly declared to be given him.

He had then in the whole, the stamp of all God's authority upon him.

(1.) His whole work was prescribed him; which is expressed by the notion of a precept as he was God's servant. The command of a superior is a sufficient commission to a servant to do a work he is ordered to perform; and Christ, in regard of his mediatory office, was inferior to his Father, John xiv. 28. In which respect the Father is said to be greater than he. The command was his commission from God, but miracles were the manifestation of that commission to man. This command implies not any unwillingness in Christ to undertake and perform this work (as though God were necessitated to bend his will thereunto, and to force him by virtue of his obedience to it); but it is rather a law or rule of his acting voluntarily, agreed upon between the Father and the Son, and as heartily embraced by Christ as it was kindly enacted by God for the good of man. In regard of this particular order, his whole mediatory management in the world is called obedience: Philip. ii. 8, 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Obedient to death, even to the utmost and sharpest point; which infers an extension of the command on God's part, and obedience on Christ's part, in all things preceding the cross, and all the circumstances of his reconciling death, doing nothing in his whole state of humiliation but in obedience to his Father's injunctions; which injunctions were so particular, that there is no material thing in the whole life and death of Christ upon record in the New Testament, but is expressed in the mysteries of the law, or the oracles of the prophets in the Old. He did nothing either as man or as mediator, but according to God's order. As he was man, he was observant of the moral law, as being that covenant of works he was to make up the breach of, which he performed in the highest manner upon the cross, manifesting his love to God in laying

down his life according to his order, and love to man in giving his life for a ransom for him; and by an act of charity incumbent upon him by the moral law, praying for his persecutors. As he was born under the Jewish administration, he observed God's orders in that: in circumcision, as a federal rite, which he suffered in his flesh; and the Passover, a commemoration of a national deliverance, which he celebrated with his disciples; but not in purifications and sacrifices, which were appointed for atonement, and implied sin in the offerer, which it was not congruous for him to be subject to by reason of the exact purity of his person. But above all, he was an exact observer of the mediatory law, which was a law added over and above to him in that economy, and incumbent upon none else, neither angels nor men. In this he did nothing but by order; he 'did nothing of himself, but what he saw the Father do,' John v. 19, i.e. what he had directions from his Father to perform; for if you understand it of Christ as mediator, he did many things which the Father did not do, but nothing but what the Father did order him to do. And therefore whatsoever Christ did was manifested to him by the Father: ver. 20, 'For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that himself does,' &c.; and he had no respect to his own will, did nothing of his own head, but observed exactly the pattern set him by the will of his Father: ver. 30, 'I can of my own self do nothing; I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.' As he was sent by his Father's order, so he was altogether guided by his Father's will, wherewith his own will exactly concurred. Therefore those good works he had done were showed them from his Father, John x. 32, those "kala erga", those comely works; all that tenderness he had showed, either to soul or body, were wrought by his Father's commission and his Father's power. In this respect, as he was polished in regard of fitness, so he was a shaft in

regard of motion, Isa. xlix. 2, flying swiftly to the mark whereto the archer designed him. And because he had so exactly observed his commission, he did 'abide in his Father's love,' which he uses as an incentive to his disciples' obedience, both from his own example and the issue of it, John xv. 10.

(2.) God gave him instructions how to manage this work. When any wise man intends an end, and fixes upon the best means for it, he orders every circumstance, time, place, manner, as far as he is able. God intending the mediation and incarnation of Christ, comprehended under that decree the place, manner, and all the circumstances of it in every punctilio. It is so evident that Christ had his instructions from God, that the Socinians fancy an ascension of Christ into heaven after his birth, and before his preaching in the world, to be instructed by God what he should preach; for Paul, say they, ascended into heaven before he was sent to the Gentiles; and if the servant did, why not the master? But this is to argue against the deity of Christ. It is strange that the Scripture, which speaks so particularly of the actions of Christ, of what was done before his preaching, viz. his birth and baptism, should be silent in so remarkable an occurrence, and every evangelist be forgetful of it. It is not credible, that if they had known it, they should be silent in it. But the Scripture plainly denies this pretended ascension: Heb. ix. 12, 24, 'He entered once into the holy place.' In regard of this instruction, God is said to call Christ to his foot, Isa. xii. 2, i.e. taught him, as scholars used to sit at their master's feet: 'Who raised up the righteous man from the east,' "tsedek", righteousness. Some understand it of Abraham, some of Cyrus, both which were raised from the east; but the following expressions are too high to suit either of them. God brought him as the sun from the east, to shine upon a dark and blind world. His work is in this respect

said to be before him, Isa. lxii. 11, as having his instructions copied out to him, as ambassadors receive instructions from the prince. His doctrine is therefore said not to be so much his as his Father's, John xvii. 16; it is a transcript of his Father's mind and will: whence Ps. xl. 9, 10, 'I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation, I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth;' wherein Christ is represented speaking to his Father, and giving an account how he had observed his rule, and how faithful he had been in the declarations of his will; how emphatically is he referring all to God, thy righteousness, thy faithfulness, thy salvation, thy loving-kindness, thy truth. Whatsoever Christ spoke, he heard from the Father; not only as a Son by eternal generation, but as a mediator by an authoritative instruction, he spoke to the world those things which he had heard of the Father, John viii. 26, and every little of his instructions was observed, John xv. 16. He had communicated all things which he had heard of his Father; and whatsoever he did communicate, was revealed to him by his Father. This declaration, which was the chief part of his instructions, was of the name of God, which he pleads he had declared, John xvii. 6, 26, the name of grace and love which is expressed, Exod. xxxiv., his reconciling name. The name of God is said to be in him: Exod. xxiii. 21, 'My name,' i.e. my law and doctrine, as in some places the law of Christ is expounded, his law, Isa. xlii. 4, which is rendered his name, Mat. xii. 21. This was promised, Dent. xviii. 18,19, 'I will raise them a prophet, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.' They were God's words in his mouth; God's words which he should speak in God's name. God gave him authority to reveal his will, and commanded men to hear him if then had any mind to eternal happiness. You have the full instructions of the work he was

to do and the words he was to speak, Isa. xlix. 8, 9, after the covenant made with him: he was to establish the tottering earth, which was shaken and disordered by sin, he was to be an herald, to proclaim pardon and liberty in favour to the prisoners bound in chains of guilt. God instructs him what he should say: 'That thou may say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves;' come out of your dungeon, you that are sold under the power of sin, show yourselves, appear before God as a reconciled Father; for I am the covenant of the people, and God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

(3.) Miracles performed by him were a confirmation of the authenticity of his commission. They were miracles of that nature that had not been performed by any prophet before him. The opening the eyes of one that was born blind was an act unheard of in the world, and the raising one that had lain some days putrefying in his grave was not to be paralleled by any of the ancient prophets. And those miracles done by him which were of the same kind with those done by the prophets of old, were done with more ease, and in a way of absolute authority. These were such credentials, that not only Nicodemus acknowledged him upon that account to be 'a teacher sent from God,' John iii. 2, but the devils knew him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, Luke iv. 41. The casting out devils was an unanswerable argument of his authority, since those malicious spirits were too strong to be subject to a created power, or obey his command without a touch of omnipotence to compel them to it; these he dispossesses with authority, as one that had power over them, whence the people began to admire the excellency of his doctrine, because accompanied with such triumphant seals, Mark i. 27. Without a divine commission to fortify his command, his word had been as ridiculous to them as they were malicious against him. The end of all those miracles wrought by him was to testify God's approbation and

mission of him. Acts ii. 22, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you,' "apodedeigmenon". They were demonstrations of his commission, and are called signs which God did by him, as they are called also the works of his Father, John v. 36, which did bear witness of him that the Father had sent him, and challenge from the Jews a belief of him, and he intimates that their unbelief had been excusable if he had not done such works, John x. 37. These miracles were an evident testimony that the Father was in him, because, exceeding the sphere of natural causes, they were products of the creative power which is ascribed in Scripture principally to the Father, and therefore more unanswerable than an audible voice from heaven, which had been more liable to evasions and objections than ocular demonstrations, allowed by the common sense of all spectators, and felt by the subject who received the benefit of them. These being acts of omnipotence, could not be affixed to a falsity. For it would follow that either God were deceived himself, which he cannot be because of his omniscience, or that he would deceive others, which is impossible, because of his truth. And especially when he was solemnly desired to assist him with his omnipotence in the raising Lazarus, to this end, that 'they might believe that he had sent him,' John xi. 42, which he durst never have desired, nor would God ever have granted, had he only pretended an authority; for then he had settled the faith of man upon a false foundation, in overpowering their reason by a supernatural work, to assent to those things which they could not have been induced unto by lower arguments. These were the seals of his patent from heaven; whence, when John sent his disciples to know of him whether he were the Messiah, he gives no other demonstration than that of the supernatural works he had wrought.

(4.) The end of this commission was the reconciliation and redemption of man.

[1.] Satisfaction for our sins: Gal. i. 4, 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.' It was the will of God and our Father, that he should give himself for our sins; wherein God acted not only as a just judge, to have the honour of his law maintained; nor only as a sovereign lord, to reduce the creature to obedience; but as a tender father, out of a paternal affection to restore the creature to happiness, 'according to the will of God and our Father.' The apostle lays therefore our atonement upon the will of God whereby Christ was authorised to this work, 'by which will we are sanctified,' Heb. x. 10. By this will of God given in charge, and instructions to Christ, we are atoned and brought into a state of reconciliation, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. Hence "hilaskesthai", a making reconciliation for the sins of the people, is said to be a thing pertaining to God, wherein Christ expressed his faithfulness to the instructions God gave him as a high priest, Heb. ii. 7.

[2.] Testification of the love of God. Isa. xliii. 10, 11, 'Ye are my witnesses, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he, I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.' To witness the nature and love of God in the salvation he has provided, to evidence that he was the only true God, because the only fountain of' salvation to the lost world. He had therefore an account of all from his Father upon whose hearts an impression of this love was to be made, so that he knew them all by name, John x. 3. It was to give us an understanding of God, both of his truth and of his love, 1 John v. 20.

[3.] Final and perfect salvation. It was the will of God not only that

he should give himself for our sins, but that he should deliver us from this evil world, i. e. conduct us to heaven, that we might be for ever there without spot or any stain of the evil of the world upon us, Gal. i. 4. Upon this account he had authority, "eksousian", to give eternal life to as many as God had given him, and it was in his instructions not to cast off any that came to him, John vi. 38. Whence the conversion of the Samaritan woman is said to be the will of his Father, John iv. 34, and there is no work of grace upon any soul by the merit of his passion and power of the Spirit, but is by an order of his Father to him for it; and therefore when God shall call for all those that as a right are deposited in his hands, he expects the full performance of his charge, and a resignation of them all to him without the loss of one, John vi. 39. For his commission and instructions extended not only to take away the enmity on God's part by the satisfaction of his justice, but to present them unblameable and unreprouable in the sight of God, that there might be no ground for the breaking out of this enmity again on either side, Col. i. 20, 22. Thus was our Saviour made, by the authority of God, a 'surety of a better testament,' Heb. vii. 22: a surety on man's part, to satisfy the debts which were owing to the justice of God, which he performed as a priest by his death; and a surety on God's part, to secure pardon and peace to believers, that they should be no more under arrest for their debts, which was ensured when all authority and power was given into his hands; so that the commission and instructions were every way extensive for the asserting the honour of God and ensuring the happiness of the creature.

5. The Father actually sends him. Nothing more frequent in the Gospels, especially of John, than Christ's affirming he was sent by the Father: John viii. 42, 'I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of

myself, but he sent me.' As he intruded not himself, nor appointed himself, so he did not take his journey, and present himself to the world, till he had his despatch from God; as he had his divine being by communication from the Father, so he had his temporary mission from his Father. His generation is the proper ground of his mission. John vii. 29, 'But I know him: for I am from him, and he has sent me,' though his mission is not the necessary consequent of his eternal generation; his eternal generation did not necessitate his temporal incarnation, no more than the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son can necessitate the incarnation of the Spirit. There was in the Father a right of sending prompter relationem originis; and because of Christ's voluntary putting himself into the relation of a mediator. In respect of his being the second person in the Trinity, he is said to be begotten; as mediator and reconciler, he is said to be sent. Generation was an eternal act, mission a temporal; that was natural, this voluntary; the decree of mission was eternal, the act of mission temporal. His being sent does not impair his deity; though sent, he is Jehovah: Zech. ii. 8, 9, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, After the glory he has sent me: and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me.' The person that says he is sent is Jehovah, and he is sent by Jehovah; and the end of his sending is there expressed, ver. 11 for the conjunction of many nations to the Lord, in that day of his sending and dwelling in the midst of Zion. And when he affirms that he is sent by the Lord, ólsa. xlvi. 16, 'And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, has sent me,' óhe affirms himself to be 'the first and the last', ver. 12, 13, 'Whose hand laid the foundation of the earth, and his right hand spanned the heavens,' when he called unto them to stand up together. His ancient name was sent, which some think is the signification of the word Shiloh, Gen. xlix. 10, which they derive from a word which

signifies sending; and Moses speaks of him to God by this title. Exod. iv. 13, 'O my God, send, I pray thee, by the hand thou wilt send;' which anciently was understood of the Messiah, because the patriarchs did in difficult things express their desire of the coming of the Messiah, who was to restore and settle all things in a happy state. Moses knew that God would send him to be a redeemer, and he desires God would send by him. And it is a title appropriate to Christ by John Baptist: John iii. 34, 'He whom God has sent.'

(1.) There is the highest reason to acknowledge him sent of God. That there was such a person in the world, is acknowledged by the very enemies to his person, and owned in human stories as well as divine writ. Since he professed himself to be sent by God, if he were not sent by him, he had been guilty of the greatest falsity; and greatest folly in affirming so. Had he been a mere man, and come without any authority, how comes it to pass, that after his death he prevailed against the laws of the nation, the grandeur and valour of the world, the wisdom and eloquence of men, and against the whole world that resisted his doctrine; that he put to flight the powers of hell, silenced their oracles? How should one crucified as a malefactor be so powerful, after his death, to make such impressions upon the minds of men; to change the whole scene of the world, to assist his followers for many years after in the working of miracles? If God would for a time have left such a wickedness (had it been a false assertion) unrevenged, yet would he never have seconded it by his own power, and nonplussed men into a belief of it! Would he have assisted the heralds of this news even against himself, and his own truth and righteousness? Had this been done by human means, it might have been suspected; but a divine wisdom and art appeared in all. It was not by riches, honours, or the promises of worldly greatness, that this doctrine spread itself

over the world, and found such harbour in the minds of men; but by promises of an invisible and future happiness, and assurance of present misery, reproach, poverty, prisons, torments, and death; and by these means his followers increased to a formidable number, against the opposition of princes and learning of the world; and they were more willing and fond to lay down their lives to seal the truth of the doctrine, that Christ was sent of God, than to strike one stroke for the propagation of it, though they wanted not courage for acting, as well as for suffering, had any such commission been granted them. Now if God does rule the world justly and righteously, we must believe that Christ was sent by God for those ends he declared in the time of his life, or we must deny the righteous providence of God, and acknowledge all things to be ordered by chance, or some worse power; we must accuse God of the highest unrighteousness, in bearing witness by a divine power to so great an imposture, whereby millions of souls would be undone, had he not, according to his own declaration, been sent by God. (2.) God sent him for this end of reconciliation and redemption. He was sent as 'the messenger of the covenant,' Mal iii. 1, to declare the peace, as well as to be the peace, Eph. ii. 14, 17. The thing itself was so incredible, that an injured God should be desirous of reconciliation, and upon such terms as the death of his Son, that it was as needful to be declared by God, as contrived and acted by God. The objections that might have been made against it had such strength, that he only who lay in the bosom of the Father, and knew all his eternal counsels, and was the actor of it in his own person, could reveal the thoughts, purposes, and resolves of his Father concerning it from all eternity, John i. 18.

6. Uses. (1.) We see again here the sad charge against unbelief and disobedience. It is a despising the stamp of all God's authority upon

Christ, and tearing his commission; a refusal of one particularly sent, a rejection of the messenger of the covenant, and all the covenant treaties of love and peace. This was the aggravation of the Jews' sin, and is likewise of all the inheritors of that unbelief, to the end of the world; that Christ has an authoritative commission from his Father, and is not received by the rebels; that he speaks in his Father's name, and is not believed by the offender, John v. 43. God was in Christ reconciling the world, as a prince in an ambassador; therefore God and his reconciling offer are despised in the refusal of his commission. It is to God the affront is offered, Christ being the representative of God in the highest and most gracious charge, in the tenderest and most indulgent offers; any slight thoughts of his person, any contempt of his precepts, any disregard of his promises, redounds upon the person authorising him to those ends. He was sent to be heard and obeyed, Mat. xvii. 5, not to be slighted and despised.

(2.) Study Christ's commission in the extent of it. Whatsoever Christ does, he does it by command, and commission from his Father. This will support faith against fears, and hope against despondencies. It will afford us arguments in prayer, when we can open before God the commission he gave to his Son, and back every petition with some clause in it; when we can go to Christ as an officer authorised and instructed, and show him what instructions he had: Isa. lxi. 1-3, 'To bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be trees of righteousness.' To bind up the broken-hearted, deliver the captives, open the prisons, change deformity into beauty, and sorrow into joy, a spirit of heaviness into a spirit of praise, a languishing frame into a fruitful growth; all

which parts of his commission were owned by him, Luke iv. 18, and observed in his actings in the world. The poor woman pleaded with him for mercy, as he was the Son of David,' Mat. xv. 22; we upon a higher title, as he is the commissioner of God, the apostle of our profession, the messenger of the covenant.

3.) Act faith much upon it. There is little comfort in all that Christ did and suffered, unless we respect him as one sent. Had he come of his own head, we could not with any confidence plead his merit before God. He is sent as his Father's servant, to do service for his Father and his people. Christ must be respected, not only as dying, but as one sent by the Father to such an end. This is the character he gives his disciples' faith in his relation to the Father: John xvii. 8, 'They have believed that thou did send me.' It is this commission Christ pleads in his intercession: 'Let not them that wait upon thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel because for thy sake I have borne reproach,' Ps. lx. 6, 7. It is Christ's passion prayer. The 9th, 21st, 22rd verses, are applied to Christ in the New Testament. It was by thy order, and for thy honour, I bore this reproach; let not, therefore, any believer be ashamed and confounded. What he desired on earth, he intercedes for in heaven, and upon the same ground. He will not therefore refuse those that come unto God by him, he has an office in heaven for their reception. You come to one who has an obligation and order from his Father to receive you, and has too faithful a disposition, and too compassionate a nature of his own, ever to reject you. It was from the strict observance of his Father's orders, that he did nothing but what was pleasing to God: John viii. 29, 'I do always those things that please him' ( a r e s t a ) (aresta). 'A r e s t o n (Areston) signifies, some say, an order of a court. Not a work done not

a word spoken, but was agreeable to the tenor of his commission, to the copy of his instructions: John xii. 49, 50, 'Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.' We cannot but please God by believing one that is so exact, by presenting to him what he is so highly pleased with. The command given him by his Father, was the publishing everlasting life. We should then believingly put in plea God's order. This is a stronger ground of support than the principles of sciences, and fallibility of sense, and the totterings of reason.

(4.) Bless God for his love, and for any work in your hearts. The authorising Christ is a piece of love, that could never enter into the heart of any man, unless God had revealed it. It is therefore called a mystery, Eph. iii. 3. The apostle could not consider the will of God and our Father in this work, without interrupting his discourse with a doxology: Gal. i. 4, 5, 'To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.' Bless him for any gracious work in any of your hearts. It was by the order of his Father any work was done by him in the world. It is by the same order any work is done by him in your souls. It is Christ's 'meat and drink to do his Father's will' in both. Not a person that finds the qualifications of grace in his heart, but may read his name in the commission of the Father to Christ. As the angels rejoiced in the manifestation of the wisdom and power of God, when the new creation was laid in the incarnation of Christ, so should we in the mission of the Son of God. 'Glory to God, and peace on earth,' are in conjunction in themselves, and should be in our meditations on it.

7. The Father actually bruises him. In this act is the corner-stone of our reconciliation laid. He bore from his Father our punishment; the punishment of sense in his agonies in the garden, the punishment of loss in the eclipse upon the cross. In the one, he tasted the terrors of hell, in the other, he felt the bitterness of a temporary clouding

of heaven. He was 'smitten of God and afflicted,' Isa. liii. 4, percussum Dei, "muchah Elohim". Men that were extremely afflicted, they regarded as smitten by the immediate hand of God. God indeed both loved and punished him in that act, John x. 17: he loved him as our Redeemer, and bruised him as the surety engaging for our debts; he loved him for the glory he was to gain by him, and punished him for the sins he did legally bear upon himself; he loved him as his servant in whom he would be glorified by the punishment of our sins, and the redemption of our souls. It is granted on all hands, that God was the supreme cause and author of Christ's sufferings; but some say, not the immediate executioner with his own hands. For the phrase in Scripture, that God did these or those things, concludes not that he did them with his immediate hand; but that he was the decreer, disposer, and director of them by his just judgment in a holy manner to correct the sins of men, or by his wisdom to make trial of his saints; God using for the executioners men or angels, good or bad, or other inferior creatures, as seems best to his wisdom: Amos iii. 6, 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord has not done it?' where he does not ascribe all evil of punishment to the immediate hand of God, but to the sovereign judgment and power of God, appointing and ordering what should be done. It is certain, that the grace of God was the cause of his tasting death, Heb. ii. 9. But it is most likely, that the Father did immediately bruise him.

(1.) It seems necessary that the stroke should come immediately from the Father.

[1.] In regard of what he was to suffer. It was more than a bodily death was due by the first sentence against Adam in case of failure on his part. Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' "mot tamut". All kinds of death; the curse of the law

reached further than the case of the body. If nothing more were due to the sinner but the temporal death of the body, it were a light and tolerable punishment. An infinite wrath surely was due both to soul and body for transgressing the precepts of an infinite majesty. The soul being principal in sin, must be the principal in suffering; the soul was the agent, the body but the instrument. The whole nature of man had sinned, and violated the articles of the covenant; the whole nature of man must therefore answer. The soul in us then being the proper subject of sin, the soul of Christ must be the immediate subject of suffering, otherwise he suffered not the penalty due to sin. Not one of those murderers, whose hands reeked with the blood of his body, could reach his invisible soul, and stain their hands immediately with the oppression of his spirit; that was beyond their touch, and was obnoxious only to the Father's stroke. No creature could drop an inward wrath upon his soul. An infinite justice was wronged, an infinite punishment must be suffered. Now none can execute infinite wrath, but an infinite person; what creatures could be sufficient to revenge an infinite offence against an infinite majesty? As every faculty of our souls had been depraved by sin, so must every faculty of the soul be afflicted with sorrow. 'The whole world was guilty before God,' Rom. iii. 19, *u p o d i k o V t w J e w* (hupodikos toi Theoi), under the judgment of God: 'his wrath abode upon us, John iii. 30. We were 'by nature children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. Christ must endure the wrath due to us; it was more than a common death that he was to taste, and did taste, Heb. ii. 9, 14, 15, that death which the devil had the power of, who labours not only for the death of the body, but for that of the soul; that death which men under a sense of guilt feared, which was not a temporal, but an eternal one. Men feared not a death in sin, but a death for sin; not so much the death of the body, as that of the soul.

Such a death which men feared, Christ endured; the penal death of men, not the spiritual death of men; and that in regard of the nature of it, not of the continuance, nor the despairs and moral evils which follow upon it. Such sins as the damned are guilty of, are not essential to the nature of punishment, but arise from the inherent unrighteousness of the person; neither is the eternal duration of the punishment essential to its nature, but arises from the finite nature of the suffering creature which renders a commensurate satisfaction from him impossible. The infinite holiness of Christ's nature was a bar against the sins which are committed by others under that wrath, and the infinite grandeur and dignity of his person was a bar against the eternal duration of that punishment. Now such a death is immediately inflicted by the wrath of God. I cannot see how any creature can inflict that which is infinite.

[2.] In regard of the attributes the Father intended to glorify in the death of Christ. He acted herein as judge, for the manifestation of his vindictive justice; as supreme lawgiver, for the vindication of his holiness; as a governor, for the declaration of his tenderness and kindness towards man: all which attributes were glorified in the highest strain by his being an actor in the death of his beloved Son. His Justice. His justice had not been so eminent, if Christ had only suffered the death of the body, without impressions of wrath on his soul; nor if God had left him to the strokes of others, without striking him himself. This attribute had been manifested upon the highest creatures, angels in heaven, man upon the earth, and upon the account of the latter had reached both the irrational and inanimate creatures; there wanted nothing to express it to the utmost but this of bruising his Son. God designed the utmost demonstration of this in the death of his Son, Rom. iii. 26. Christ was 'set out as a propitiation,

that God might be just;' that God might be just, i. e. that he might be known, and declared in the highest manner to be a righteous God; implying, that all other expressions of it before had been drawn in fainter colours than what he intended here, as if he could not have been known to have an impartial justice without such a way of discovery. He did, therefore, all in this case which an exact justice could require; for to neglect what it requires, is an injury to it, as well as to do what it prohibits. In the creation, he was a God of power and wisdom; in the law, a God of vengeance, which is mounted to the highest point in inflicting wrath upon Christ for man's violation of that law. In extraordinary visible judgments by the hand of God, there are clearer notices of his justice than when the hand of instruments is more sensibly felt in them. 'The heavens' then 'declare his righteousness,' when 'the Lord is Judge himself,' Ps. 50. 6. Abraham's obedience was more eminent by the laying hands upon his own son Isaac himself, according to God's order; so was God's justice in laying his own hand upon Christ, than if it had been committed merely to instruments. Had our Saviour suffered only a bodily death, with those griefs in his soul which are incident to men barely for the death of the body, he had under all that load of sin which was laid upon him suffered less than madly men have done. There was something therefore of wrath dropped into his soul, which was the act of his Father's bruising of him, for the manifestation of his justice, and giving it an unexceptionable satisfaction.

His holiness. God was now upon the highest discovery of his holiness and hatred of sin. Had this punishment been left only to instruments, he had indeed declared his holiness, but in a fainter degree; his hatred of sin had not been so conspicuous, had he not with his own hands poured out a wrath upon him. His end in sending his Son 'in the

likeness of sinful flesh' being to make him a sacrifice to 'condemn sin in the flesh,' Rom. viii. 3, his shooting his wrath upon him was a more sensible, high, and full condemnation of sin, than if all the devils in hell, and all their subjects and votaries on earth, had been let loose to buffet him. Herein he showed that sin was odious and abominable to him, that it should not be spared though it were only by imputation upon his Son; and hereby he lays a foundation of greater awe and reverence of his sanctity, and pure indignation upon the hearts of men. Here was the beauty of his holiness, as well as the exactness of his justice; vindicating the honour of his law, displaying the purity of his nature by sheathing his sword with indignation in the bowels of sin, while he pierced the heart of his beloved Son. A prince punishing his own son for some enormous crime by his own hand, would evidence a greater abhorrence of it than if he only exposed him to the hands of executioners.

His love. If God's love appeared more in giving up Christ as a sacrifice than if he had saved the world without the death of his Son, and without any satisfaction, óas appears, John iii. 17, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c., which was a purer strain of love than pardoning sin without a sacrifice, óit may also follow, that since God resolved to signalise his love to us, he would have it reach the highest note, and it could not be screwed up to a higher peg than the sacrificing of his Son for us with his own hand. If there be such an emphasis of love in sending him, there is a stronger emphasis of love in bruising him. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son;' but God so loved the world, that he bruised his only begotten Son, declares a richer magnificence of love, and raises it to a height of glory, in showing what he would do for miserable creatures. He magnifies his kindness, demonstrates how much he values

and delights in his elect, and gives an undeniable proof of the treasures of love in his heart for them. His earnestness in shooting his arrows into himself, rather than lose his people, and engraving upon him the marks of his anger, is the highest point his compassion to us could amount unto, and a step beyond the bare offer and mission of him. God would save us as a Judge, with the evidence of his righteousness; as a Lawgiver, in the discovery of his holiness; as a King, in the display of his sovereignty: Isa. xxxiii. 22, 'The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, and the Lord is our King; he will save us;' and as a Father too with the clearest and dearest affection.

(2.) God did bruise him: Isa. liii 10, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.' This chapter is the history of the cross, and the epitome of the gospel; it is Christ's crucifixion in effigy before he was crucified in person. The double state of Christ, of humiliation and exaltation, are here described. The verse is a prophecy which has something minatory and something consolatory: minatory, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him,' he speaks of what was future as if it were past, consolatory, 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days;' and yet, this word refers to something antecedent in ver. 9, 'he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' Though he had an unspotted holiness in his nature, an unblameable purity in his life, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, as he stood in our stead, and represented our persons. It pleased the Lord, "chafatz". The word signifies not only a bare will, but a will with delight. The word is used to signify God's pleasure in his church, Isa. lxii. 4, where the word is Hephzibah, my delight is in her, the same word, and it is used to express Christ's

delight in his saints, Ps. xvi. 3, 'in whom is all my delight.' Not only his resolve, but his pleasure, his heart was as much in it as his hands; the word speaks more than a bare permission. He delighted not simply in the strokes he gave, but in his own essential perfections manifested by those strokes; he delighted not simply in the rod, but in that balsam which was to drop from the end of the rod upon mankind; he was pleased with every wound, as it was a necessary medium to redemption; the text intimates it, he was pleased to bruise him, but it was in order to another pleasure that was to prosper in the hands of the bruised person.

To bruise him, "racha", he has put him to grief. The word signifies to pound as in a mortar, whereby the greatness of Christ's sufferings is expressed. God came armed with his vindictive justice, the sentence of the law in his mouth, and the penalty of the law in his hand; he appeared as a just governor of the world, with a readiness to exercise his authority for the vindication of his law, he glittered in his holiness to right the wronged holiness of his law, and in his justice to revenge the insolences committed against it. His delight in this might very well consist with his love to his Son. As a Father he loved him, as a judge he punished him; as a Father he loved his person, as a God he loved his own honour. A son enters into suretyship with his father for an insolvent debtor; the father loves his son as he is a father, but demands the debt of him as he is a creditor, and has the law passed against him as he is a governor: he did affect him as he stood in relation to himself, and punished him as he stood in relation to us; he loved him for his own holiness, and punished him for our sins.

Again, it is no wonder that it is expressed that the Lord was pleased or delighted to bruise him, since the bruising Christ was a part of the

acceptation of the sacrifice: as fire descending from heaven to consume any sacrifice presented to God was a sign of the acceptableness of it to God. This is supposed to be the sign of the acceptation of Abel's sacrifice. Fire from heaven consumed Abel's sacrifice, and not Cain's. Theodotian therefore renders accepted *e n e p u r i s e n* (enepurisen), and the Scripture gives us frequent examples of this way of acceptation. So it was with Gideon's offering, Judges vi. 21; and so it was with Aaron's, Lev. ix, 24, and with Elijah's, 1 Kings xviii. 38, and with David's, 1 Chron. xxi. 26. God had never kindled the sacrifice, had he not been pleased with it.

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. When God was to deal with him in a way of vindictive justice, as he was a sacrifice for us, he would not spare him, nor abate one stroke due to him for our sins; he would deal with him in the same manner as he would deal with us, in whose place he stood as a sacrifice; he did not bruise him as he was his Son, but as he was a sacrifice, and so would not abate anything of that weight of suffering which was due by the law and by the demand of justice for our iniquities.

The promissory part follows. 'He shall see his seed,' there shall be a succession of generations for the glory of Christ, according to that Ps. lxxii. 17, 'His name shall be continued as long as the sun;' he shall be childed, he shall have a generation of children to keep up his name.

In the verse you see,

1. The greatness of Christ's sufferings, expressed by bruising.
2. The inflicter of them, the Lord.
3. The reason of them, as he was an offering, a sacrifice for sin.
4. The subject, the Redeemer.
6. The fruit of it, a spiritual seed, with duration.

Doct. The greatest punishment inflicted upon Christ, when he stood as a sacrifice for sin, was not the act of men, but the act of God. There were sufferings in the body of Christ, as buffetings, spitting, scourging, crucifying; in these, men were the instruments, but the determinate counsel of God preceded. But there were sufferings in his soul which was beyond the reach of men. God himself made the impressions on this; the fire that as it were scalded his spirit, that made him sweat clods of blood in a cold season, came down from heaven, as the fire did upon the legal altar. He never expressed so great a sorrow under all the calamities he felt in the course of his life as in the garden; he was sore amazed and very heavy: Mark xiv. 38, 34, 'he began to be sore amazed,' as if he had tasted nothing but joy in the time past of his life, and never understood the invasions of any sorrow before. He then began to feel the first impressions of that wrath due to sin, a sudden consternation seized upon his faculties. Both words, *ekthambesthai* and *adhemonein*, signify that his pangs were highly strained; a mere bodily death could not amaze him thus. He had a divine nature to support his human, against a mere separation of his soul from his body, since the divine nature would be separated from neither, and he knew a few days would reunite them for ever in a glorious state. Christ did as well foreknow by the promise, the glory that was to follow upon his sufferings, as he did by the precept the passion he was to undergo. It was the wrath of God, a greater bitterness than any other gall in the cup of death, that the human nature, though supported by the divine, stood looking upon with apprehensions of grief and amazement; he knew the greatness of the punishment due to sin, and the greatness of the passion he was to undergo for sin. He is called 'the Lamb of God,' a lamb of his own appointing, a lamb of his own sacrificing, distinguished from the

paschal lamb by the author and giver, called the Lamb of God, whereas those were the lambs of men. In the constitution of Christ in the office of mediator, which was God's immediate act, he acted the part of a wise governor; in punishing sin in the person of our surety, thereby satisfying his justice, he acts the part of a just judge. May not the punishment of Christ be immediate by God's own hand, as well as the constitution of Christ was immediate by his own mouth? Isaac was to be the sacrifice, and Abraham the sacrificer; Isaac a child of promise, in whom the seed should be called, ordered to fall by the hand of Abraham the father of many nations: Christ's suffering represented in the one, and God's striking prefigured in the other, God seeming to intimate, that as Abraham was willing to offer up his son at his command with his own hand, so he would offer up his Son as a sacrifice for him, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. It is true the devils were let loose upon him, with all the powers of darkness, Luke xxii. 53, John xv. 13, and upon the cross he combated with principalities and powers, because there he spoiled them, Col. ii. 15, they bruised his heel by their instruments, and his Father his soul by his wrath. The church of old expected and desired this: Ps. lxxx. 17, 'Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man,' &c. The psalmist complains of the miserable desolation of the church, for which there was no remedy but in Christ, the man of God's right hand, the man of his love. By the hand being upon a man, is meant punishing, many times in Scripture: as Ps. xxxviii. 3, 'Thy hand came upon me,' i. e. thou did strike me with a plague. Indeed, his Father mixed the cup, would not suffer it to depart from him, though he offered up supplications with strong cries; and God, who, as a righteous judge, will not clear the guilty, did sentence him to the drinking the dregs of it; and it is as righteous an act to inflict the punishment as to pronounce the

sentence. He constituted him mediator by an act of sovereign mercy, he inflicted the punishment upon him by an act of sovereign justice, he sent him into the world, as the Father who had the power of mission, and bruised him upon the cross, as a judge who had the power of punishing.

1. The imputation of our iniquities to him was the act of God: Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all;' "panenu", *accurrere fecit incursu hostili*. He gathered together the debts of men, put them into one sum, and transferred them upon Christ, as to guilt and punishment. He bound our transgression upon the back of his only Son, as Abraham did the wood upon the shoulders of his Isaac. Our sins were laid upon Christ, as the transgressions of the people were laid upon the head of the scape-goat, Lev. xvi. 20, 21, 22, which was but a type of this imputation to Christ; for their sins were not truly laid upon the goat, it had then been the antitype, not the type. Sins were confessed, fathered together by confession, laid upon the beast, which is said to bear them, he, and all that touched him, were accounted unclean. All our sins were laid upon the head of Christ by God. He it was 'made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21; not by inhesion, but imputation; not only a sacrifice for sin, but sin itself. The double antithesis in the text intimates, he was made that sin he knew not; he knew the punishment by suffering, but he knew not the guilt by commission and practice; he was made that sin which is opposed to righteousness, and that was sin itself, which must be understood only as to the imputed guilt; for punishment could not have been indicted on him, unless guilt had first been imputed to him. Had he not first borne our sins, he could not have been driven into the wilderness of desertion and death. Upon this is laid the difference of his first and

second appearance: Heb. ix. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' At his first he bore our sins, not personally inherent, but legally, after the substitution of him in our stead; counted to him as his proper debt; upon which account he 'restored what he took not away.' At the second, he shall 'appear without sin.' His nature was free from sin in his first coming, but not his condition; he had sin as our surety, though none in his person; it was impossible he could be our surety without this imputation. Upon the account of this suretyship, God reckoned him a debtor, as 'made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,' Gal. iv. 4. That what God in justice might charge upon the bankrupt, he might, after this constitution of him under the law, by the same right charge upon the surety, for this guilt, by the Father's act of imputation, upon his own voluntary submission to take our offending nature, became his; and, therefore, what penalty was by the law due from us was to be paid by him. All punishment supposes a guilt one way or other; but the Redeemer had no personal guilt, for 'he had done no violence,' Isa. liii. 10, 'yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, when his soul made itself an offering for sin,' imputed to him. This imputation was God's immediate act, and could not be the act of any other, because he was the sole creditor, without any partner; and therefore it is no more rejection upon God immediately to punish him, than it was to transfer our sins upon him, which was an act of God, not possible to be done by any creature. God imputed a world of sins to him, because he undertook for that world God had created by him; therefore God alone indicted upon his soul that punishment which was principally due for our sins. Since he died for our sins, he died under that hand which was to strike us for them; for God made him sin for us, i. e. he handled him as he would

have done those sinners in whose stead he suffered, had he not undertaken for them.

2. His greatest sufferings appear to be above the power of any creature to indict. Was it a contest with any creature that made him desirous to waive that death, which was the main end of his coming?

(1.) How was his soul begirt with the wrath of God, before his agony in the garden! What an excess of sorrow do those words signify, Mat. xxvi. 37, Mark xiv. 33, *ekqambeisqai, adhmonein*, sore amazed, sorrowful, very heavy; an inward quaking, an inexpressible amazement. What a deluge fell from heaven upon our ark, of which that of Noah was a type! How was his soul ground to powder in his agony! How did his soul boil under the fire of wrath, and his blood leak through every pore of the vessel by the extremity of the flame! Must it not be more than a finite breath that thus melted his soul in the garden? Must it not be a stronger than a finite stroke, that wrung out those bitter cries? Was there any visible person to afflict him? Yet his agonies there are thought to have more of hell-fire in them, than his sufferings on the cross; clods of blood dropped from him when there was no visible hand to strike him. Inconceivable must be the afflictions of his soul, that could make such dismal commotions in his body, and put the whole instrument out of tune; that should make a dissolution of the parts, and make his heart like melted wax 'in the midst of his bowels,' Ps. xxii. 14. His spotless conscience could not flash such lightnings, as to melt the sword, when nothing touched the scabbard; his Father was then charging him with our sins, actuating his knowledge and sense of them; he had all his lifetime a knowledge of the ingratitude and rebellion of sin; he knew how it had offended and injured God, how it had deformed and ruined the creature; now was his knowledge actuated, and the charging upon him the punishment of them made his knowledge sensible and

experimental. This cup discovers more bitter ingredients than any creature could wring out into it.

(2.) Could it be only the sense of an approaching bodily death, that could so deeply afflict his innocent soul? If so, he had discovered a greater weakness than many of the martyrs; nay, had been outstripped in courage by many moral heathens. His nature sure was as strong as theirs to bear it, had not his sufferings been attended with a more sensible sting than theirs were. Martyrs have suffered as great outward torments with joy, laughing in the faces of their persecutors, and edging their fury to more sharpness. But, alas, he suffered more deaths than one: Isa. liii. 9, 'He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,' "bemuto"; the death of the soul in regard of the bitterness, though not in regard of duration. His Father inflicted what was evil, and withdrew that which was good. Were not the clouds of his Father's countenance, and a subtraction of good looks from him, a bruising him? All the outward torments of the world could not have drawn one doleful cry from any man under the full and sensible beams of God's favour, much less from Christ. Could all the instruments in hell, earth, or heaven, draw a veil between his soul and his Father's countenance? This must only be his Father's act, and was a signal stroke. It is clear there was a negative act of God, denying that comfortable presence which was due to him as a holy person by the covenant of works; and could not be denied his humanity, as united to the second person in the Trinity, had he not been in another capacity upon the cross, and not only precisely as the Son of God. The inflicting of the evil of inward punishment was sure as much the act of his Father, as the withdrawing from him an inward good, the light of his countenance. Might there not be more than a bare cloud, might there not be some bitter frowns darted upon him, since he appeared at that

time in the condition of the greatest sinner? If the wrath and justice of his Father did not immediately drop upon him, how could he satisfy it; what satisfaction could arise to it, if he were not at all touched by it? The fire upon the typical altar came down from heaven, and so did this wrath which consumed our sacrifice.

3. God had a choice delight in the bruising him. With what ardency does he rouse up the sleepy sword, to sheath it in the bowels of the man that is his fellow! Zech. xiii. 7, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow; strike the shepherd,' &c. The latter part of the verse is applied to Christ, Mat. xxvi. 31.

He commands it to pursue his design with a strength like a man newly refreshed and risen from sleep, and make the deeper gashes. Never was God so pleased in drawing his sword against his creatures, as in drawing it against the man his fellow, against the Shepherd, one of Christ's titles in Scripture. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, Isa.

liii. 10. God delighted in his bruising. The word "chafatz" answers to eudokian (eudokian) in the New Testament, when he says that he is well pleased in Christ as his beloved Son. In the formal condition of this action, as it was conversant about punishment, it was not delightful to God, for he does not punish with his heart: Lam. iii. 33, 'He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men'; 'He delights not in the death of a sinner,' much less in the death of his Son, Ezek. xviii.

33. But as finally considered, it is highly pleasant to him in regard of his glory and man's redemption. The reason why God bruised him was not any delight simply in the death of Christ, but because in that act he broke in pieces our sins (which were the cause of the enmity) which were borne by Christ in his body upon the tree: 1 Peter ii. 14, 'Who his own self bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we

were healed,' which is a comment on Isa. liii. 4, 5. He has borne our griefs, he was smitten of God, he was bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed. Christ appeared in that state, as bearing the whole body of sin, as well as the body of flesh. The Jews aimed at killing his body, and God aimed at killing our sin. Every stroke he fetched was not ultimately to put his Son to death, but the enmity to death; to destroy the dominion and power which sin by its guilt had derived from the law; for so being dead to sin must be understood, which is clear by observing the like phrase, Rom. vi. 11, 14, where by being dead to sin, he means sin not having dominion, or condemning power over him, which is evidenced by a suitable expression of being 'dead to the law,' Rom. vii. 4, which is no more than the law not having dominion over us in regard of the curse, as appears, ver. 1-3. It was sin which had made the breach, that God principally struck at in the bruising his Son. He had a pleasure to bruise him as our surety, a trouble to bruise him as his Son. He was afflicted in his afflictions as his Son, and would have the sun in the heavens bear witness to it by hiding its head. But he was delighted with his sufferings as our Redeemer, because they were for the satisfaction of his justice, the condemnation of sin, and the restoration of his creature. In this respect, the death of Christ was the sweetest sacrifice that ever was offered, and consequently the smiting of him the pleasantest work that ever God engaged in.

4. The graces of Christ were most eminent in enduring the inward impressions of wrath from his Father. The odours of his graces brake out more strongly by his Father's bruising him.

(1.) His kindness and tenderness to man. Christ was now upon the highest manifestation of his compassions to mankind. His death was the emphasis of his love; his love was stronger and purer than the love of

any creature, not only in regard of the excellency of his person, but the greatness of his sufferings. Had he endured only a death of the body, and not such a death that could have been inflicted only by an infinite hand, his love had lost much of its lustre. His love is principally laid upon the score of his death: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' If his passion had been only in his body, without impressions from an higher hand upon his soul, he had been in some measure paralleled in this (except in the dignity of his person) by several, who have freely resigned their lives to the enemies' swords, and some to unexpressible torments, for the public good of their country, as the Roman Regulus to the Carthaginians, because his country should not agree to disadvantageous conditions of peace. Besides, by this inward conflict he was fitted for further tenderness, having hereby an experience of the worst men were exposed unto by sin, that he might be more tender of their welfare, and with more melting bowels solicit his Father for relief; hence did arise his strongest sympathising with the condition of men.

(2.) His obedience to his Father. It is a signal testimony given him, that he was 'obedient even to the death of the cross,' Philip. ii. 8. The sharper then his circumstances were upon the cross, the more illustrious his obedience was. The lustre of obedience is seen in engaging upon command with the most affrighting difficulties. It was a more full acknowledgement of his Father's sovereignty, and a stronger asserting his own obedience, in 'making his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. 53. 10, than if he had only made his body so by a temporal death (though I confess by soul, many times in Scripture, is only meant life), and also to have his eye fixed upon the mediatory law, and his own duty arising from thence. When his Father seems to have forgotten all the promises he had bound himself in, and shot frowns into his

heart, and denied him both the light of sun and stars, comfort both from heaven and earth, he adds yet holy inflammations to obedience, which under those circumstances was most ravishing to the Father, and most meritorious for us. It was then an offering and 'a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God,' 3:ph. v. 2.

(3.) His fiduciary trust in God, and the promises made to him, was more signal and noble. To trust a God smiling, when he does east about us nothing but cords of love, is not a case of difficulty; every man has a strong impulse to this, when God drops sweetness into him. But then is faith at the highest elevation, when a man can trust God though he kills him, and wait upon him when he hides his face and drops hell from his hand. Thus was our Saviour's faith put to the trial by this proceeding; yet he went forth conquering and to conquer, and would not let go his hold. Though his Father's beams were withdrawn, and his bowels seem contracted, the heaven overcast with darkness, and all the curses of the law let fly at him, he would still depend upon God for his help in his greatest passion: Isa. 1. 7, 9, 'The Lord God will help me;' ver. 10, 'Who is among You that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and sees no light? let him trust in the name of the lord, and stay himself upon his God.' He would not let the storm blow these concerns of the world out of his hands, which then were managed by him; which trust of his, in this dismal time, he seems to set as a pattern for our imitation, in the words immediately following intimating we should have his faith under those dreadful circumstances always in our eyes to encourage ours.

These graces of Christ, tenderness, obedience, and trust, had not been set forth in such orient colours to us, had not his soul drunk a cup of wrath of his Father's tempering, as well as his body felt the strokes of human fury.

5. I must add a caution or two for the better understanding this, and preventing any mistake.

(1.) Though Christ suffered from his Father an infinite wrath due to us, yet it was not necessary it should be eternally endured by him, because eternal wrath is due to us, for the eternity of punishment arises from the condition the subject suffering, not from the nature of the punishment itself. A creature being a limited nature, cannot give an infinite satisfaction commensurate to an infinite justice, without suffering eternally. Therefore though infinite punishment be due, yet eternal punishment is not in itself due, but falls in for want of the creature's ability to satisfy the demands of legal justice; since it cannot satisfy the law by one or many acts of suffering, it is always suffering, but never fully satisfies. But the infinite dignity of the person of Christ transcending all creatures, made the satisfaction he offered valuable without an eternal duration of those torments, which the insufficiency of the creature could never have made by suffering to eternity. He satisfies the debt, that pays at once the millions he owes; but he can never satisfy, but must remain in bondage, that pays a farthing in a year when his debts amounts to millions, besides his running farther into debt while he is paying. The eternity of punishment proceeds not only from old debts, but new ones contracted by blasphemies and hatred of God; for though some say that in termino the damned do not sin, I cannot think but loving and glorifying God is the essential duty of a creature; and while he is a creature, let him be in what state he will, he is under the obligation of it. It is impossible a creature can by any conditions be freed from the obligations of loving and adoring his Creator. Christ might suffer the pains of hell, but not with all the accidental circumstances, nor in the place of hell; time and place are but accidental things, and not of the essence

of punishment. It is not the place of hell makes hell, but the wrath of God, in what place soever it is poured out. A surety goes not to prison if he pays the debt; the prison is not a place of payment, but a place to enforce the payment where there is unwillingness to pay.

(2.) This act of his Father in bruising him by his wrath was no approbation of the guilt of the instruments in the death of his body. The sufferings in his soul in the garden were before the Jews had laid hands on him to apprehend him. God dropped wrath upon his soul, yet had no hand in the crime of the Jews, in the covetousness of Judas, envy of the pharisees, cowardice of Pilate, and the fury of the people: these did spring from their natural corruption; they had one end, God another; they aimed at the satisfaction of those lusts, God aimed to content his justice, declare his wisdom, manifest his mercy, clear his holiness, remove the enmity, and relieve our souls. Though God approved of the death of Christ, and 'delivered him up,' Acts ii. 23, yet he did not approve of those ends which managed them in that action. It was the highest guilt that ever was manifest upon the stage of the world in them, as it was the highest love that ever God showed in the ordering things to the redemption of man. God determined redemption by the death of his Son, but did not positively determine the evil of the instruments. God laid no inward restraints upon them, left them to act as voluntary agents; he knew what their fury would do, and resolved to govern it for his own glory and the good of the world. God had given them a free power to act otherwise; he did not necessitate them to this rage; their own corruptions met together to commit this horrid crime. They were not impelled by a command, threatening, or promise; his law was a rock against it; the destruction of their city and the dissolution of their state were assured them by our Saviour if they went on in that way; they had no motives from God, but from their own

lusts, which were not of God's infusion, but engendered by themselves and inflamed by the devil. God only as a wise governor used them, and ordered them to his own glorious ends, as a man uses the ravenous disposition of his hound to catch the hare, which the hound would of itself do, and governs it to his own ends, different from that of the animal. In short, they acted utterly against the law in shedding innocent blood; God acted according to the mediatory law, in bruising him who had voluntarily substituted himself in our room; they aimed not at any one end which God aimed at in it; their intentions were wholly different. Though God approved of the death of Christ precisely considered, because he delivered him up, yet his death as managed by them was the greatest wickedness that ever the sun saw, so that the Father's bruising Christ does not in the least excuse the Jews, nor had they been excusable had their intentions concurred fully with God's in the act, unless they had received a command from him to crucify him, as Abraham had for the offering his son.

The Father then has been in Christ reconciling the world unto himself: in bruising him by his wrath, glorifying his attributes in that act, which were necessary to be manifested in our redemption, laying all our sins upon him, delighting in it as it was for his glory and our happiness, thereby winding up the graces of Christ, necessary for the exercise of his office and our redemption and imitation, to the greatest height, and thereby relieving us from that curse of the law which we must always have borne and could never have satisfied. So deep a hand had the Father in this work of redemption! The Trinity were signal in it: the Father bruising, Christ receiving the stroke, and the Spirit supporting him under it.

Use 1. How may our meditations swim in this unlimited ocean of love! Oh the depth of the riches of grace, that we should have the cursed

pleasure of sinning, and Christ the bitterness of suffering; that the punishment due to us should be charged upon the Son of God by the fathers. Priest the Father bruise the Son for us, who had deserved as well as devils to be kept bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day? Might he not so easily have condemned us, than condemned his beloved Son for us to a bitter death? But here he would have infinite love and infinite justice kiss each other. What could we do to deserve it? If we could merit any good, could we merit so great a gift as this? If we could have deserved that he should open his arm to embrace us, would we merit that he should wound his Son's heart to redeem us? If we could deserve to be filled with his grace, could all the world deserve that his Son should be emptied of his glory? Could they deserve that God should be wounded by God for their transgressions? God gave Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners, Rom. v. 13, when we wanted motives of love as well as merits of grace, and had no incentive of his grace, unless the want of grace could pass for one. Were God as man, his thunder had crushed the world; the disciples, the best of man Spin earth at that time, would have been prodigal of God's thunderbolts, if they had had them in possession, when they desired fire from heaven upon the poor Samaritans. And had man a storehouse of punishment, he would empty it upon persons that notoriously wrong him; but God poured out those vials upon his own Son, which of right belonged to us. Consider, it was his Son whom he bruised, not a servant, not an unspotted angel; his only begotten Son, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, not an adopted Son, having only a dark representation of the divine nature; a begotten Son of his nature, not begotten of his will; a beloved Son, not a disaffected Son; an only Son, not one picked out of many children. God had no more in all the world, and yet he bruised him; he

bruised him not only by a temporal death of the body, but by a weight of wrath on his soul, not to purchase some small favour, but an everlasting inheritance. How great is this love, that valued our salvation above the life of an only Son, and shed a blood more valuable than the whole creation to preserve ours, which could not be equivalent to the price of it, and put him into the posture of an enemy to his Son, to make us his friends! If the thunders of the law had been shot upon us, what strength had we to bear them? What merit to remove them? How great is the love of the Redeemer, to be willing not to be spared for a time, rather than millions of men and women should fail of being spared for ever! It was 'for our transgressions he was wounded, for our iniquities he was bruised, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Isa. liii. 5. In every wound God gave him, he minded the full punishment of our sin, in the person of our Saviour, that those whom he represented might go free. He spared him not, abated not a mite of what justice might demand, that so his people might have a full redemption: Rom. viii. 32, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' He did not spare him in regard of the strength of justice, wherewith he punished him. What could more enhance the love of God than the terrors inflicted on Christ! And what could more enhance the love of Christ, than that he endured not only a bodily death, but a wrathful death in his soul for us!

2. Let then this love engage every man to come to God through Christ. how should it ravish us into an humble compliance with him, and subjection to him! If he has bruised him for us, he will not bruise us if we come to him. The blood shed by the order of God, is able to expiate a world of sins. God has spent his wrath upon him, and has none for those that accept of him. God has discovered a propensity to be reconciled, though we lie open to the stroke of his justice, and have

no strength to withstand him; a higher evidence he cannot give.

3. Spare nothing for God. He spared not the best thing he had in possession, and shall we spare our lust from being mortified by him? The sin of man grieved him more than the death of his Son; shall we preserve that which grieves him, and slight that which was his greatest pleasure? How comes it to pass we are so indulgent to our lusts, and murmur to be parted from that which is the grief of God and the ruin of our souls? Are those destroyers of our souls so extremely dear to us, that we are loath to bring them out of our bosoms, and deliver them to a crucifixion; no, not in love to that God who melted that Son in the fire of his wrath out of love to us, whom he had cherished by the warmth of his bosom from eternity? Sure if our souls were all flint, being smitten by such a love, they should yield some fire to consume our corruptions. How hateful should sin be to us, since it is evidenced to be so hateful to God, as that he would not spare his only begotten Son, when he lay under the imputation of our iniquities, and caused the curses of the law to meet on him with all their stings, upon whom our sins had met in all their guilt! Why should we spare that, for which God did not spare his Son who never offended him, but highly pleased him, and in this very act, too, of bowing down under his strokes by reason of our transgressions? Why should we indulge that in our hearts, which God has discovered by this act to be so abominable and odious to him, and so deserving an object of his just indignation? Let not that find rest in our bosoms, under which, while our Saviour was in the form of a servant, he found no rest from the curses of the law and the wrath of his Father, till it had bruised him, and offered him up as a sacrifice of atonement for it.

6. The Father was in Christ reconciling the world, in accepting him, and his expiatory reconciling sacrifice. The steam of his precious

blood went directly up to heaven, as the smoke of the sacrifices ascended right up to heaven (as they say), not blown aside by any wind. This gave God a rest, of which sin after the creation had endeavoured to despoil him, for if God had a complacency in the work of creation, which is signified by the word refreshed, Exod. xxxi. 17, "yinafesh", 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed;' much more must God be refreshed by the work of redemption by Christ, it being a restoring God's rest to him by a new creation, and a greater glory to God than the work of creation was, or, simply considered, could be. God did perform what was incumbent on his part, according to the covenant of redemption, in regard of acceptation, after Christ had trod the wine-press alone; and his grace was of the same tenor in the entertainment of Christ. after his work, as it was in the first designation and call of him to it, the foundation and the topstone being all the fruit of a condescending grace. The grace of God accepted it, and justice could plead nothing against it; grace and justice took him by each arm and led him to the throne of glory. It was God that justified him, Isa. 1. 8. His entrance into heaven, with the same clothes of flesh he wore upon the earth, only changed in the fashion suitable to that glorious country to which he was returning, was an evidence of his full acceptance.

(1.) It is evident that the Father did accept him.

[1.] The types and representations of this reconciling sacrifice were grateful to God upon this account. That first sacrifice after the deluge was a sweet savour, or a savour of rest: Gen. viii. 21, 'And the Lord smelt a sweet savour'; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not any more curse the ground for man's sake, "hanikhakh". He smelt in that sacrifice a savour of that wherein he should have a rest, and

which should fully quiet his mind; and such a rest, that he said in his heart, or swore, Isa. liv. 9. The oath there mentioned can refer to no other place but this. For the sake of the antitype, which was respected in that offering, God swore that he would not any more curse the ground for man's sake. What influence could the steam of the blood of a beast, and the stench of the burning fat, have upon a spiritual substance, an angel, much less upon God? Could the blood and burnt caresses of a few silly animals appease God, so much as to engage him to make so magnificent a promise, not to curse the ground any more for man's sake, when the doleful cries, and vehement supplications of multitudes of dying men in the deluge, could not persuade him to stop his hand, and shut up the flood-gates of heaven? Could this make him order the constant course of nature, and succession of times, when in the very moment he promised it he considered the perpetual fountain of evil in the heart of man, that 'the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth?' No; but God was pleased with a resemblance of Christ, presented to him in the faith of the offerer; as a man is with the picture of his friend whom he dearly esteems, and loves the person that presents such a medal to him, because of the estimation he has of his friend. If the picture be so acceptable, because of the relation it has to a delightful object, how much more dear is the object itself! In the day of the general expiation of the Jews, the sins of the people were atoned by the sacrifice of the beast, and sprinkling of the blood; what force had the blood of a brute to wash off the sins of a rational creature, and those of a nation? But this typified the mighty acceptableness of the blood of Christ, satisfactory to justice, and pleasing to the mercy of God, whence all sacrifices received what efficacy they had. God's being pleased with this sacrifice of Noah, and others of his own appointing, was but to testify how highly pleasing

the death of his Son would be to him, as it was an atoning sacrifice, and sweeter than the iniquities of men were loathsome, both being under his consideration at one and the same time.

[2.] The time of Christ's coming, and being in the world, is called by way of eminency an acceptable time, much more was his suffering so, which was the complement of his humiliation work. It was an acceptable time, because it was a day of salvation for man: Isa. xlix. 8, 'In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee.' They are the words of the Father to Christ, wherein he assures him of the acceptance of his sacrifice extensively for the Gentiles: 'I will give thee for a covenant to the people;' which place the apostle uses as an argument to press the Corinthians to the sincere embracing of the gospel, 2 Cor. vi. 2, because it was an acceptable time, a time wherein Christ was accepted, and all believers accepted upon his account; a time acceptable to God in the prophet; a time which therefore ought to be acceptable to man, as the apostle infers. It is therefore called the acceptable year of the Lord: Isa. lxi. 2, 'To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' The clearest, and serenest time that ever God saw since the creation of the world. Why was it so acceptable? Because it was the day of vengeance of our God, a day of vengeance upon sin, a day of the taking away and removal of that which had caused all the enmity. Upon the knowledge of God's approbation of it, Christ prays for his assistance in the time of his suffering, Ps. lxi. 13. A psalm of Christ, as appears, ver. 9, 21, applied to him in the Gospel, 'As for me, my prayer is unto thee in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation,' when the whole world was set against him, and he was made the song of the drunkards; the time wherein he put it up, and the circumstances he was in, were pleasing to God, as being for his

greatest service and glory. Let the mercy which engaged me first in this attempt, and the promise thou hast made me of the salvation of man, move thee to hear me now, and to manifest the truth of thy salvation which thou hast committed to me, and I am now upon the effecting of. When was this acceptable time? this time? By? When he was in the mire and deep waters, ver. 14; when he was reproached, and full of heaviness, ver. 20; when they gave him gall for his meat, and in his thirst vinegar to drink; then was the time of this highest acceptance with God for the redemption of man.

[3.] All the fruits of his death manifest God's high acceptance of it.

First, The mission of the Spirit. The great end why the Spirit was sent, was to manifest this acceptance; to evidence to the world that Christ was no impostor, because he was gone to the Father, John xvi. 7-10, and had a welcome in heaven. The coming of the Spirit, and the working miracles in the name of Christ, kept up the credit of his mission and authority from the Father in the world. He was sent by the Father, in the name of Christ: John xiv. 26, 'The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,' i. e. upon the account of his mediation, as a fruit of it. His name would have been of no authority for so great a gift, had not his death been of a grateful efficacy. And by the virtue of his intercession, John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter,' God unlocks to him all his treasures, as a testimony of the pleasure he took in his death, and the completeness of it to appease his anger, and satisfy the most extensive demands of his justice. So high a favour could not be dispensed, if justice had not first been fully contented. This Spirit was also to abide for ever with his people: John xvi. 16, 'That he may abide with you for ever;' which sheds the everlasting acceptance of this sacrifice by God; for since the first coming of the Spirit was upon the first

acceptance of his offering, the abiding of the Spirit evidences the perpetual prevalence of it with God; for he could not abide any longer than the ground of his mission did endure, for they must both run parallel. Now, had he not gone away, the Comforter would not have come, John xvi. 7, which refers not only to his ascension, but to his passion. And had he gone, and his death been unapproved by God, the Spirit had stayed in heaven. His work also testifies this approbation. He was to 'bring things to remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said to them,' John xiv. 26, which would never have been, had not Christ in every little been faithful to his Father's instructions. He was not to speak of himself, John xvi. 13; he was not to be the author of a new doctrine in the church, but to impress upon men what Christ had taught, and what he had wrought by his passion; he is therefore called the Spirit of truth, teaching and clearing up to the minds of men that truth which Christ had taught, and confirmed by his blood. There was no error or mistake in any part of the management of this work on Christ's part; for the Spirit is not sent to rectify anything, but to raise the superstructure upon that foundation Christ had already laid. He was to declare only what he heard, John xvi. 13, 14; to act the part of a minister to Christ, as Christ had acted the part of a minister to his Father; to glorify Christ, to manifest the fullness of his merit, and the benefits of his purchase; for he was to receive of Christ, i.e. the things of Christ, his truth and his grace, and manifest it to their souls, and imprint upon them the comfort of both. There had been no foundation to glorify Christ, had not Christ in this work been glorious in the eyes of God, and been acknowledged by the Father to have glorified him to the utmost. Now since all this is come to pass, according as Christ did predict it, it is an undeniable evidence that the Father has fully approved of Christ's faithfulness in his office,

and rests highly contented by his death.

Secondly, The answer of prayers in his name. As his acceptance by the Father was the ground of all the miracles which were wrought in the name of the Son after his ascension, 60 it is the ground of all the answers of prayer that any believer receives from God, for our Saviour joins them both together: John xiv. 12, 13, 'He that believes in me shall do greater works than these, because I go to the Father; and whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' 'Whatsoever you ask in my name,' i. e. says Cajetan, for my glory, not only in the intention of the petitioner, but the direct tendency of the thing petitioned for, I will do. His power to do it, is an argument of the strength of his oblation, and validity of the price. 'That the Father may be glorified in the Son,' which is the end for which our prayers are answered, and is the event of those mercies we receive as answers from the hands of Christ. The Father is glorified in the success of Christ's mediation, and the 'finishing the work he gave him to do,' John xvii. Every return of prayer, upon the account of the merit of Christ, is a testimony of this success; and glory redounds by it to the wisdom of the Father, for contriving; to the kindness of the Father, for appointing so able a Saviour, who could fully satisfy all the concerns of God, and provide for the necessities of the creature, and lay a foundation for the full communication of all mercies needful for him. His receiving from his Father the keys of all his stores, to dispense to believers, manifests how welcome he was to the Father upon his return, after his conflict in the world, and how successful he was in his execution of his office, and how fully he contented the justice of his Father, which could not by any right keep those stores from him after his meritorious passion, so that in every answer of prayer, the wisdom, love, righteousness of

the Father are glorified, in the obedience, merit, and purchase of his Son; the love of the Father is manifested in sending so sufficient a mediator; and the justice and grace of the Father is glorified in accepting him, and performing the conditions requisite on his part by the covenant of redemption. There is a most intimate conjunction of the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son in this mediation of Christ, which is the foundation of the acceptance of him, and his acceptance upon the same foundation will be perpetual; because, as whatsoever he did here was for the glory of his Father, whatsoever he does above also, in distributing his gifts, communicating his grace, is for the same end, and therefore can never be unacceptable; for, by this acceptance of him, the Father has a current and standing revenue of glory established; his exchequer is daily filled with it, by virtue of this approbation. This acceptance is writ upon every return of our supplications, put up in his name, and tending to his glory; the wonderful effects whereof have been known in all ages, and in the private experience of every sincere Christian. Would God ever listen to those pleas in his name, were he not well pleased with the sacrifice of his person? Would God ever expend his gifts to man, to keep up the credit of a person he had disowned? This is the ground of that near communion believers have with God, nearer than Adam was admitted to in paradise, wherein God condescends to the familiar expressions of his grace, and converses with men in and through a mediator, who before were alienated from him, and made the marks of his wrath. The 'golden altar with incense,' Rev. viii. 3. is the pleasant perfume of his merits.

[4.] The content God has in men's believing on Christ manifests it. God has made faith, the acceptance of him by men, the only condition of enjoying the fruits of his purchase; and it is not all the amiable

virtues in the world, nor the riches of the whole creation, can procure us any right or title to him without it. So much does the Father stand upon the honour of his Son, that he will not grant an eternal happiness to any but those that join with him in a sincere and hearty acceptation and approbation of him, his meritorious death, and the righteousness evidenced thereby. Without this, no beams of glory can sparkle upon us, but an eternal wrath will swallow us up. As the Father has approved him, so as to give all power into his hands, so he wills us to approve him, so as to bring all our own righteousness to the footstool of Christ, and embrace him only by a naked faith, that nothing of the glory of his work and merit may be clouded by any thing of our own. A true, willing, cordial, lively acceptance is required, a resting on him for salvation, as God rests on him upon his satisfaction. An estimation of him approaching as near as a creature can to that of God's; the knowledge and embracing of him is the best savour to God, next to that of his own oblation; and man only in a believing embracing, stands in his true posture of acceptation with God.

[5.] The naked declarations of Christ to the world are acceptable to God. The very discourses, and the discoursers of it, are a sweet savour to God: 2 Cor. ii. 15, 'We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.' Yea, though men cast away the thoughts of him, and perish in their unbelief; yet the proposal of it to them for their acceptance is very sweet to the thoughts of God. As he will express how high his acceptation of them was, in the gifts of eternal happiness to them that entertain him, so the rejecters shall learn the same in the severity of the punishment inflicted on them. But whatever men do, the sound of it in the world is a sweet savour to him; and all men shall be at last convinced, that his righteousness was acceptable to God, because he is gone to the Father.

(2.) God accepted him with a mighty pleasure. As soon as he was made perfect by his sufferings, he was saluted an high priest, 'called an high priest,' Heb. v. 10, Prosagoreuqeiv saluted; prosagoreuei, aspazetai (Hesych.) When, by the accomplishment of his passion, he became the author of eternal salvation, God congratulates him for his attainment of a new honour by his consecration, as men congratulate one another upon new acquisitions. It was a 'sweet smelling savour to God,' Eph. v. 2; there was eudokia in his mission, and euwdia in his passion. God smelled a greater fragrance in his death than stench from our sins; the sweetness of the one did drown the noisomeness of the other: his death was more satisfying to God than our sins were displeasing. As he was a vine, he sent forth a delicious fruit of his blood to cheer both the heart of God and man; of God, by the fragrance of his satisfaction; of man, by the fullness of his merit. God's soul delighted in him, Isa. xiii. 1. He had an overflowing joy. All the attributes of God, which are the soul and perfections of the Deity, had an undisturbed acquiescence in him. There was an unblemished exactness in his work, because there was a fullness of delight in his Father. The delight he took in his designation was rather heightened than diminished by his faithfulness in the execution. He was, after his death, brought near before God: Dan. vii. 13, 'One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him,' two words to express the height of pleasure, near and before him. As if God would express his pleasure in the strait and intimate embraces of his Son, after his great engagement and return from the battle; and so welcome he was, that God presented him with the dominion of the whole world. For the order of the vision expresses first his incarnation, and then his exaltation; so that this being 'brought near before the ancient of days,' must be upon his ascension

just after his death, and before his full investiture in the dominion of the world.

[1.] He pleased him more than all the sacrifices under the Jewish economy; far more than all the devoted creatures, than oxen and bullocks which have horns and hoofs; it is the expression concerning Christ, Ps. lxxix. 31. A mark of eminency, a how much more is put upon this offering, above the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, Heb. ix. 13, 14. Though they were instituted by God, yet they were not acceptable to God for the removal of sin, 'neither could make the offerer perfect before him,' Heb. x. 1. Nor could the heaps of sacrificed animals, the streams of brutish blood, persuade him to the justification of any one offerer: 'In burnt offerings or sacrifices he had no pleasure,' or rest, Heb. x. 6. He had a pleasure in them, not as they were the sacrifices of beasts, but representations of his Son's passion, and appointed as remembrances before him, of what was to be suffered by the true object of his rest in time. Christ is the person, and his death the sacrifice, wherein God only can find a rest: Isa. lxvi. 1, 2, 'Thus says the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that you build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things has my hand made, and all these things have been, says the Lord: but to this will I look, to the poor and a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.' The temple and temple-worship was not the place of his rest; God speaks with contempt of them, and seems to cast in the whole created compares of heaven and earth, as no firm object of his pleasure. But to this will I look, i. e. this poor and contrite spirit, "nkheh", stricken; of the same root as "makhah", smitten of God and afflicted: Isa. liii. 4, 'That trembled at my word;' he speaks as of one that trembled under the curses of the law, and felt the weight and bitterness of them; to him

will I look, or intently or fixedly look, as the word signifies. The word tremble, "kharad", signifies to be careful or solicitous, as, 2 Kings iv. 13, it is so translated, Thou hast been careful for us with all this care,' though it signifies also to tremble. Who was more stricken than Christ? Who more careful of the honour of God's law than Christ? Or who tasted more of the gall of the curse than Christ? Who can that signal mark this point to, but Christ? Who can be set in the balance with the whole frame of the creation, angels and men, but Christ? 'All those things has my hand made,' which seems to refer not only to the temple, but to the heavens, his throne, and the earth, his footstool; all those have been, and yet no rest found in them. Now after the coming and striking of this person, upon whom the eye of God is intent, an end is put to all the ceremonial sacrifices: ver. 3, 'He that kills an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck,' &c. It was a disgrace to him for men to think he could be pleased with such sacrifices, when he had appointed and accepted another; if they then kept them up, they should be an abomination to him, as the blood of swine, and yet they kept them up after this poor stricken spirit, after the offering of his Son: he calls them 'their own ways, their abominations in which he delighted not.' And ver. 4, he would 'bring their fears upon them;' perhaps it may be meant of their fear of the Romans, which you know they pretended, for the putting Christ to death, thereby to prevent any occasion of an invasion; and ver. 6, he prophesies of their destruction. But before this destruction she should be 'delivered of a man child,' ver. 7. You know how he armed the Romans against them, discharged his wrath upon them, gave up the city and temple, which they (and even their enemies) studied to preserve, for the death of his Son, as a prey to the fury and avarice of the enemies. I have been the

longer upon it, to show there is some ground to understand this place principally of Christ, though not to exclude the common interpretation; perhaps we might have had more ground for the understanding it so from Stephen's discourse, Acts vii., where he ends his citations with this place of Scripture, ver. 48, 49, and descending to the application of what he had before cited, and charging upon them the blood of Christ, was interrupted by the fury of the Jews from any further light which his discourse might have given us. To consider it again, God demands where the place of his rest was? They might answer, the heavens. No; all these has mine hand made, yet no rest in them; but to this I will look; this is my rest, as the antithesis carries it; this stricken in spirit, as if he had pointed to Christ on the cross and in the garden, trembling under a sense of wrath. An intent look is a look of expectation, or a look of pleasure.

[2.] He shows his mighty pleasure in the acceptance of him by a public proclamation as it were: Heb. i. 6, 'Again, when he brings his first begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him.' Or as some read it, 'And when he brings his first begotten into the world again,' understanding it of his resurrection, he then proclaims him to the angels as an object of worship, He is the heir appointed, as well as the heir eternally begotten, proclaimed to the angels as their head, and the root of their standing. He was 'seen of angels,' manifested to them in such a manner as their head, after he was justified by the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Methinks being 'seen of angels' should signify something more than the simple vision. he was 'justified by the Spirit,' when he was quickened and raised by the Spirit, 1 Peter iii. 18. His being 'preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory,' were evidences of this acceptance of him by the Father. He brings him after his

resurrection, as he did Adam after his creation, into the possession of the world, and gave him dominion over the creatures. He brings in his Son, and gives him an empire over the angels as he was mediator, which he had before as he was God blessed for ever; and the angels praise him, and acknowledge him 'worthy,' as the lamb slain, 'to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,' Rev. v. 11, 12.

[3.] He declares the pleasure he had in his acceptance of him, by fixing his love for ever upon him. He was settled in his Father's love, because he had performed the mediatory command: John xv. 10, 'If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' A commandment was given him, and a commandment was kept by him, which obedience has been hitherto the foundation of his Father's love to him as mediator; and when he had fully finished it, would make a fixation of his Father's love. If he had not performed the mediatory command, he had had no interest in his Father's affections; as poor creatures if they observe the commands of Christ, shall for ever be rooted in his love, never to be cast out. So is Christ, upon the observation of the command his Father gave, for ever settled in his affection and acceptance, whereby he has given us assurance, that he was in Christ reconciling the world.

(3.) As the Father accepted Christ, and accepted him with a mighty pleasure, so this acceptance of him and his death redounds to every believer. Grace and glory depend upon this; take away God's approbation, and the whole chain of privileges, linked together by it, falls in pieces.

[1.] It is the stability of the covenant. His approach to God as a surety, having engaged his heart for us, is that which God speaks of with a pleasing astonishment, and is so transcendently taken with it,

that he settles the covenant of being their God, and making them his people upon it; that is the issue, Jer. xxx. 21, 22. And the everlastingness of the covenant is founded in his being a witness to the people: Isa. lv. 3, 4, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you; behold, I have given him for a witness to the people.' All the promises of God are yea and amen, in him the faithful and true witness, Rev. iii. 14.

[2.] Justification is founded upon this acceptance. God was in Christ reconciling the world, i. e. not imputing their trespasses to them, but discharging them. For the pleasure he took in Christ's sufferings upon mount Calvary, he graciously forgets our sins, and of rebels entitles us heirs. There is a fundamental justification of future believers in the discharge of Christ, though not formal and actual till they believe. As there was a fundamental condemnation of all in the loins of Adam upon his fall, not actual till they were in being, and did actually partake of his nature; so Christ having his discharge as a common person, all those whose sins he bore have a fundamental discharge in that of his person from any more suffering. As he bore the sins of many as a common person in the offering of himself and satisfied for their guilt, so he has an absolution as the head from all that guilt he bore; no more to lie under the burden of our sins, or endure any penalties of the law for them: Heb. ix. 27, 'As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment, so Christ was once offered for the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear without sin unto salvation.' As judgment is appointed for all men, as well as death, and they receive their judgment after death, so Christ after his death was judged by God, and judged perfect, fully answering the will and ends of God, and shall not appear any more as a sacrifice, but as a perfect Saviour. He is no more to appear in a

corruptible body prepared to bear sin try imputation, but in a glorious body, as a manifestation of his justification, fitted for the comfort of those that look for him. Unto them does this judgment extend, for upon the score of this judgment passed by God in his behalf, he is to appear at length to them for salvation. For if Christ satisfied for believers, he is accepted by God on their behalf; therefore his sufferings are imputed to them; for it would be strange that Christ should endure a punishment for them, be approved of God as standing in their stead, and his acceptance not be counted to them. If there be an approbation of his sufferings for us, there is an imputation of his sufferings to us, or else no satisfaction is mice to justice upon our account. As he suffered, so he was acquitted as our surety and representative.

[3.] The acceptance of our persons and services redounds to us from the Father's acceptance of Christ. His love to Christ as mediator, is the ground of our acceptance: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.' He chose him first as the head, and his members in him; he accepts him as the first beloved, and believers in him. Had not Christ been accepted first, none could have pretended an holiness worthy of the notice of God. The grace of God is the cause, his love to Christ the ground, acceptance of us in him the effect of both. In ourselves, we are the objects of his anger; in Christ, the marks of his choice affection. It is the pleasure God took in the obedience of his Son, which makes believers as his members, and their services, though weak imitations of him, delightful to God.

[4.] The constant wooings of men by God flow from hence. He entreats and beseeches men to embrace him, to be reconciled to him, because he has been thus reconciling the world in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 20, 'As though

God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God.' The entreaty and arguments used to persuade men to the acceptance of it, could have no validity without this foundation, that a reconciliation is wrought, and the expiatory sufferings of Christ accepted by God. So much is God in love with Christ's performance, that he condescends to the lowest step, to beseech and solicit the creatures' affections for him, and presses them with that sweet importunity, as loath to take any denial at their hands.

Use 1. See the inexpressible value of Christ's mediation with God. God truth given the highest evidence of the grandeur of it, of Christ's faithfulness in the discharge of the trust committed to him, glorifying the Father in all that he undertook and taught. It is from his being a 'righteous branch,' that he is become the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xiii. 5, 6. He was by his voluntary submission, and his Father's designation, made sin for us, which performance is so grateful, that all that believe in him are made not bare righteousness, but 'the righteousness of God in him.' He seems to become sin itself, wholly guilt, and believers thereby righteousness itself in the presence of God. His death is so valuable as to procure the casting our sins into the depths of the sea, and the advancing our persons to the heights of glory, to stand before God in his kingdom. Our persons, odious in Adam, are made beautiful in Christ; and our duties, that smell rank by nature, smell sweet by his merits, Rev. v. 8. The odours of his merits are so strong as to overcome the stench of our nature. There is no need of any masses, human satisfactions, and additions of any merits of our own.

2. Comfort to believers. Since this acceptance, how does justice itself smile! The rod of God's fury falls out of his hand upon the sweetness of his Son's offering, and gives way to a sceptre of grace; nothing was

omitted which was Necessary for the pleasure of God's piercing eye. This may well calm the fears in our hearts, because it smooths the frowns in God's face. If no charge can be brought against Christ since the acknowledgement of the sufficiency of his offering, no charge can be brought against believers. For whom was it performed, but for them? For whom was it accepted, but for them? The acceptance must be for the same ends for which his sufferings were endured, shall not then the influence of it upon them answer the intention of it for them? If it should not, the first acceptance would be in vain, Christ must then return to offer another sacrifice, which shall never be. In the acceptance of Christ for you, he has accepted you in him. He stood in no need of it, but in relation to you, he was the eternal Son of God, acceptable to the Father, but by this he is established an eternal Saviour. An obedient faith on our part will entitle us to salvation on his part: Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' Since God has accepted him for you, God will appear full of omniscience to understand your wants, full of compassion to pity you, full of power to relieve you, full of wisdom to guide you, full of grace to pardon you, full of glory to bless you for ever. Every believer will be accepted by God, because by his faith he owns that which gives God a rest; and as the grace of God assists him, so he contributes to God's contentment. Oh, then, remember your offences against God, to be humbled; and God's acceptance of the blessed offering, to be comforted. The odour of this sacrifice was so agreeable to God, that, not content to discharge us from the condemnation we had merited, he would also that we should partake of the life, and enjoy the kingdom of his Son, judging it not equity to make any separation between the head and the members, the redeemer and the redeemed, and a disparagement to the greatness of the

offer, and offering, to shut heaven against them. Hereby is not only condemnation removed, but eternal glory assured. It is not only a not perishing, but an eternal life upon faith, John iii. 16.

3. This is the main foundation of faith. How invaluable had all Christ's sufferings been and how vain our faith, had God disapproved him; justice had been armed against us if a blemish had been in the oblation. Faith first reads Christ's commission, then casts its eye upon the streams of blood flowing from his heart, listens to his doleful cries, considers them for itself, but ultimately rests itself in God's acknowledgement of the full discharge of the debt, and his cancelling the obligation wherein Christ was bound. After this, none have any excuse for Unbelief, unless they will accuse God of weakness, or falsity, and imposture in bearing witness to the faithfulness of one who had not discharged his office.

4. Glorify God. It is the use Christ in the prophetic psalm makes of it: Ps. xxii. 23, 24, 'Praise ye the Lord, all ye the seed of Jacob; glorify him, all ye the seed of Israel: for he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has he hid his face from him:' a meiosis. His face indeed was hid for a time, but to return with fresher and brighter beams; and the warmth at the return made a recompense for the clouds upon the cross. How should our hearts swell with praise, as heaven did with joy, and the thankful gladness of our hearts keep time with the joyful acceptance of his Father!

5. Accept Christ. What is worthy of God's acceptation cannot be unworthy of ours. If this be agreeable to the fountain of goodness, why should it not be grateful to the derived streams? That which gratifies an infinite ocean of purity would surely gratify us, were we not abominable sinks of corruption. It is the highest contrariety to God not to seek and acknowledge rest in that wherein God finds a full

content. If the pure eye of God behold not the least spot to disturb, but a commensurate goodness to settle his rest, what can we see in Christ which should make us nauseate him? Christ is the object of God's rest, and well may be of ours. As God rested not in anything after the degeneracy of the world but in Christ, so neither should we rest in anything since the degeneracy of our hearts but in the same object. God will love us highly for our acceptance of him. God is highly pleased with his creatures' converse with him in and by a mediator: Deut. xviii. 16, 17, 'They have well spoken that which they have spoken,' when they desired that God would not speak to them but by Moses, a type of the Mediator. God never gave them so great a commendation as in this case, nor ever approved so highly of any action or words that came from the body of this people. God dwells above in the clouds, we cannot come to him but by Christ. He is a God of vengeance; and we the meritors of it; we cannot be screened from his wrath but by Christ; accept him, and God will accept TIS in him; refuse him, and all the other righteousness in the world cannot secure us. Let God's approbation be the director of ours. Acceptance of Christ is a noble imitation of God.

7. God raised him. There was a necessity of his resurrection in regard of the predictions; for since the Messiah was to die, and not see corruption, Ps. xvi. 10, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption,' it is clear he was to rise again, else his body in a natural course would have seen corruption. This resurrection is a clear evidence of his acceptance; himself uses this as an argument both of the authority of his commission and fidelity in execution: John ii. 18, 19, 21, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,' speaking of the temple of his body. Rev. i. 5, he is the 'faithful witness,' manifested to be so by being the 'first begotten from the dead.' Without his resurrection, his acceptance had not been manifest;

neither could he have appeared in the quality of a Redeemer and High Priest, had he, like one of us, lain rotting in his grave; he had not, without it, been powerfully declared to be the true Son of God, nor consequently evidenced to be our Redeemer, nor been in a capacity, according to the decree, to reign to the ends of the earth. All men would have concluded him an impostor' but by rising up from the power of an ignominious death, he was manifested to angels and men to be not only God's beloved Son, but his obedient servant, faithful in all his will, the exact revealer of his counsels, and grateful to him in his sufferings, whereby not only the valuableness and sufficiency of his passion for a foundation of everlasting reconciliation, but the actual acceptance of it, was evidenced. It was a testimony to Christ of his faithfulness, a testimony to us of the approbation of his sacrifice for those purposes for which it was offered As his resurrection by the Father was, as it were, a new generation of him as the Son of God, Rom. i. 4, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead,' so it was as a new constitution of him as the mediator of men. Himself calls his resurrection a regeneration, Mat xix. 28, and he is therefore called not the first risen, but the first-born from the dead: Col. i. 18, 'Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead,' this being a new birth of him from the womb of the earth. It is a rule in the language of the Scripture, *aliquid factum dicitur, cum factum esse demonstratur*. Hereby his person was owned to be the Son of God, and his works and suffering, as our Redeemer, were declared highly pleasing; the suit was depending till his resurrection, but then the controversy between God and sinners upon the account of the law was at an end, and the bond was cancelled in token of full satisfaction. The public decree of God determined it; the decree is extant, Ps. ii. 7; the interpretation of it, Acts xiii. 33, 'God has fulfilled the same

unto us, in that he has raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' Thus was he justified and declared righteous, and his obedience, which run through all his acts, exceeding acceptable. He was indeed approved of God by miracles, which God did by him in the time of his life, Acts ii. 22; and by such miracles that could not fall under any jealousy, but by those he was testified to be a prophet, a man approved of God, a teacher come from God, as Nicodemus argues, John iii. 2. But by his resurrection he was testified to be more than a man, the Son of God in his majesty. Notwithstanding the miracles of his life, he appeared in the form of a servant, and scarce assumed any other title than that of the Son of man; but after he had by his conquest made death his captive, he illustriously appears to be the Son of God, the glory of which is increased by his ascension, exaltation, and the plentiful effusion of the Spirit: by all which his righteousness and obedience was declared to be pure without any mixture, perfect without any defect, clear gold without any dross, and a full payment of the utmost farthing to divine justice for believing sinners.

(1.) It was the act of the Father. The body of Christ was raised, and resurrection is not the work of either soul or body, but of God only. God raised him from the dead in such a manner as to declare him to be his Son. It being the declaration of the Father, his resurrection was the act of the Father: 'God raised him from the dead,' Acts xiii. 30, 33. Upon which account God is set forth in this raising Christ as the object of faith: Rom. iv. 24, 'If you believe on him, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' This being, as it were, a new begetting him, was the act of the Father, whose Son he was by eternal generation. It is particularly ascribed to the Father: Rom. vi. 4, 'As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father;' by the glorious

power of the Father, which was made illustrious in it. Some take glory of the Father for the formal cause, as though the meaning were, Christ in his resurrection was adorned with the glory of the Father; others for the final cause, he rose to the glory of the Father; but to take it for the efficient cause is more natural; as the love of the Father was most magnificent in giving him to die, so the power of the Father is most glorious in unloosing the bands of death, and delivering him from the grave with triumph; because the reuniting the soul to the body, and restoring it to all the functions of life, in an act of creative power. And this resurrection was more glorious than a single creation, in regard of the mighty load of guilt Christ lay by imputation under when upon the cross. It is true this resurrection was the work of the Trinity, it was the work of the Spirit; he is therefore said to be 'quickened by the Spirit,' 1 Pet. iii. 18, and 'justified in the Spirit,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. His resurrection was the justification of his person in all that he performed for the satisfaction of God. Christ also is said to raise himself: John ii. 19, 'I will raise it up,' and had an authority to 'take up his life again,' John x. 18. As he is said to conquer his enemies, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 'he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet;' yet the Father is said to do it, Ps. cx. 1; for acts of power are more peculiarly ascribed to the Father, and resurrection is an act of omnipotence, as wisdom is ascribed to the Son, and love to the Holy Ghost. The conquest of his enemies is the act of his Father, and therefore the beginning of his triumph, and the overpowering the great enemy death. And as he waits at God's right hand till his enemies be subdued, so he waited in the grave till his discharge was ordered by the Father.

(2.) It was most congruous and regular for the Father to be principal in the raising Christ. The Father had the power of mission, and

therefore of acceptation; and therefore the act whereby it was declared did principally pertain to the Father, as it was a full manifestation of the faithfulness of Christ in his office. As he received his commission from his Father, so it was most regular he should receive his discharge from the same hand, because he had been faithful to him that appointed him. The Father was the creditor, he had covenanted with his Father to suffer and give him satisfaction; the Father then was the most proper judge whether the articles were performed or no, whether the satisfaction was valid and the debt paid. As the Father was the lawgiver and judge, the delivering Christ to death belonged to him; upon the same account the delivering him from prison and judgment belonged to the Father. None have power to remit or discharge after the sentence but the supreme authority. So that the raising Christ belonged as properly by right to the Father as the power of delivering him to death. When the account was made up in heaven, and not a farthing of what was due was found wanting, but the demands of justice fully balanced by the satisfaction of Christ, 'he was taken from prison and judgment,' Isa. liii. 8, and God sends an angel to roll away the stone, Mat. xxviii. 2; not indeed to make way for the resurrection of Christ, as though there was a necessity of rolling away the stone to give his body passage out of the grave, but to evidence to the women that intended to come into the sepulchre that his discharge came from heaven, and that they might see the grave empty of his body. As he that is in prison for debt ought not to go out without the judge's authority, so Christ was held in the fetters of death till his Father's absolution, and then was delivered from the grave as a debtor from prison. 'God loosed the chains of death,' Acts ii. 24, 'it being not possible that he should be held' in those chains, for it was not equitable that after he had satisfied he should be held longer in his

fetters. The judge only can free from prison; and when the law, where any is imprisoned, is satisfied, he is in justice bound to order the discharge, and pronounce in open court the acquittal of the prisoner.

(3.) This act of the Father in raising him was with respect to this work of reconciliation, and the accomplishment of all the fruits of it.

[1.] For the justification of every believer. As the same authority which had delivered him to death raised him from the grave, so in pursuance of the same ends for which he was delivered, he was 'delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,' Rom. iv. 24, 25. It is declared as an encouragement to believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; which argument would have no validity in it to incite the soul to faith in God, if those ends there spoken of were not actually aimed at in those acts of his. The Father, who was the author of both, had the same ends in both those acts; they were the acts of the Father, and therefore the ends of the Father. Though his death was the foundation of his merit, yet his resurrection is the foundation of the application of that merit to all his seed. At this door comes in our justification. As God, in delivering him up to undergo the curse of the law, delivered us in him, and looked upon believers as suffering in him the punishment due to sin, so in raising him he virtually raised them in him, and fundamentally comprehended them in that discharge. His resurrection was not meritorious of our justification, that was the fruit of his death; he paid by his death what was due for our sins, and began to receive at his resurrection what was due for his sufferings; by compact he suffered for us, and by compact he was raised for us. As the expiation of our offences depended upon the death of our surety, so the justification of our persons depended upon the discharge of our surety; and to that end he was raised up by God to be a standing foundation of

and encouragement to our faith, to believe the promises of God, and grow up into hope of the enjoyment of them: 1 Peter i. 21, 'God raised him up from the dead, that your faith and hope might be in God.'

[2.] For the regeneration of the seed promised him. This depends upon his resurrection, and was the aim of God in it: 1 Pet. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' As the resurrection of Christ was as the Father's new begetting of him to be the Son of God, so in regard that he rose as a common person, his resurrection was a new begetting all his elect to be the sons of God. Herein was the foundation of their regeneration, as well as of their justification, settled. He was 'taken from prison and from judgment,' and then it follows, 'who shall declare his generation?' Isa. liii. 8. For by the resurrection of Christ, God having declared himself pacified, has opened all the treasures of his grace to Christ for the framing a new generation in the world to serve him, without which merit of the suffering, and discharge thereupon, there could not have been a unite of grace given out of God's treasury for the renewal of the image of God in any one person. The spiritual resurrection of any one soul is as much the effect of this resurrection of Christ, as the resurrection of bodies shall be at the last day. That power which does raise any soul from a death in sin, would never have wrought in any heart without this antecedent to it, it would have wanted the foundation of satisfaction, for God only sanctifies as n God of peace. And therefore the power which was exerted for the raising of Christ from the grave was put forth as a power to work in the hearts of all his seed. As the subject of this resurrection was not a private person, but a public representative, as God acted in it in a public manner as the governor

and creditor, so the power whereby he raised him was, as I may call it, a public power, a pattern of what was to be spiritually wrought in the hearts of all those whose debts he paid and for whom the payment was accepted by God. His working in all believers is but 'according to the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,' Eph. i. 20. It was also a pattern of that power which should be employed for doing all works necessary in the hearts of those that believe. It is the fountain from whence all spiritual life streams down to us; by this God put into him the spring of the Spirit of life to flow out upon all his seed.

[3.] For to give us the highest security for all new covenant mercies.

This security was intended by God in the very act of raising him. 'For 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,' Acts xiii. 34. This was in the thoughts of God when he put forth his hand to the raising of him. There can be no greater security than the fulfilling of the promises made, which the apostle there places in the resurrection of Christ, 'For,' says he, 'we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promises made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he has raised up Jesus again,' Acts xiii. 32, 33. What promise was that which was thus fulfilled? It was the promise of 'an everlasting covenant,' Isa. lv. 3.

Whence this is cited, that grand promise that God made to Adam, and in him to all his posterity, was fulfilled in this act of raising Christ; it being a declaration of the bruising the serpent's head, the author of all the enmity between God and man, by the seed of the woman. The promises also of blessing all nations in the seed of Abraham, and the bringing in an everlasting righteousness, were fulfilled. These were but initially performed by the sending Christ and bruising him. But the

wisdom of God, the righteousness of God, and the truth of God, did all shine forth in their fullest beams, in the raising him from the dead, which was the top-stone of our reconciliation, as his death had been the corner-stone and foundation. The certain enjoyment of all the blessings of the new covenant is insured to us by this act of God, and so intended by him in the act itself; this giving and dispensing of the sure mercies of David, i. e. the making all the mercies which this our David had purchased by his sacrifice, and had been promised to him in the first agreement, sure and settled for ever.

Use. How strong a ground is here for our faith and comfort! When our Saviour was upon the cross, there was a black cloud of wrath between God and him, the heavens were dusky, the face of God veiled; but in his resurrection the heaven looked clear, the wrath of God was pacified. It left its sting in our Saviour's side. Christ therefore after his resurrection salutes his apostles with peace: John xx. 21, 'And Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, so send I you;' which seems to be more than an ordinary salutation, since it is attended with a special commission, the fruit of his reconciling death. Peace dawned at his birth, but was not in its meridian till his resurrection. Thereby he was cleared to all the world, and eased of the burden of men's sins, which bowed down his head upon the cross. Had not God been a God of peace, i. e. fully reconciled by his death, he had not brought him again from the dead, but suffered him to have lain there: Heb. xiii. 20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.' Would we be perfect in every good work? Would we do the will of God? Would we have everything well-pleasing in his sight wrought in us? Then we should go to him as a God of peace, as a God lifting up Christ from the grave, that he might with honour to all his attributes work such excellent things in the

hearts of all that believe in him, and act faith upon this act of God's power, righteousness, and truth, in the raising the great Shepherd of our souls. He delights now to be called the God of peace, and by this act has laid aside what was terrible to us in the consideration of a judge for the breach of his law. Why may we not hope to attain whatsoever is needful at his hands, since he has clothed himself with a new title? And it is to be observed that the apostle says, God 'brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' He entered into prison as our surety, and paying the price, was delivered by that payment; and freeing himself by that payment from any more satisfaction, he frees all those that are his members; so that the blood of Christ will have the same virtue for those that it has for himself. God manifested it to be the blood of the everlasting covenant, a blood sufficient to establish the everlasting covenant upon, by this deliverance of him. God has no more to lay to his charge, all bonds are cancelled, all actions against him fully answered; he rose not only by his own power and right, but by his Father's warrant, whereby God owned himself his Father, and in him our Father, upon which account he tells Mary, John xx. 17, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.' This resurrection is the testimony, God is become your Father as well as mine, the enmity is abolished, you stand in a relation to God, and I ascend to him as your Father as well as mine, to take possession from his hands of the inheritance I have purchased for you.

8. God glorified Christ, and so was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, fully establishing this reconciliation wrought by him. All power was promised to him: Ps. ii. 8, 'I will give thee the heathen for shine inheritance.' It was performed: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given me.' His resurrection had not attained its full end and

perfection, had he not been exalted to a glorious government; it was for this end, *dia touto*, that he died, that 'he rose again and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living.' He died to purchase it, he rose to possess it, and lives for ever to manage it. He was exalted for the honour of God and the happiness of believers, as Joseph the type was advanced to manage things for the interest of the crown and the good of the people.

First, We must premise these two things: there is a double glory and dominion of Christ.

(1.) Essential, as God, which was communicated to him in the communication of his essence; for being God from eternity, he had all the prerogatives of God.

(2.) Mediator, which was by an agreement between them to be bestowed upon him upon the accomplishment of his work in the world. He had a right to this by the donation of his Father at his conception, for he was made Lord when he was made Christ: Acts ii. 36, 'Know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' But he had not his actual investiture and full settlement in it till after his resurrection, because his reconciling death was to precede his entrance into glory, where he was to reside for the management of this power. In this respect he is called the heir of all things: Heb. i. 2, 'Whom he has appointed heir of all things;' which inheritance is not meant of his essential dominion, for so he is not appointed but begotten heir. He might then be said to be constituted God as well as heir, which would be an improper speech, like the Socinian's *Deus factus*. What is natural, cannot be said to be by constitution; the one is voluntary, the other necessary. He is appointed heir, as he was appointed mediator, Heb. iii. 2. He was mediator by a voluntary designation, he was heir by a voluntary

donation, and all judgment was committed to him by a voluntary deputation, but he was a Son by a natural generation. Again, an heir succeeds in the place of another; so Christ as mediator succeeds in the place of his Father, in regard of government, as his delegate and deputy; but what the Son has from the Father as God, he has not as his deputy, but by an essential, natural, and eternal communication. So that these two differ.

(1.) The one belongs to his essence as God, the other to his office as mediator.

(2.) The essential is by nature, the mediatory is conferred as a reward of his humiliation and expiation of sin: Philip. ii. 8, 9, 'Wherefore God has highly exalted him,' viz. because of his obedience to death. The one belonged to him without suffering, but his suffering death for us was the moral cause of his exaltation. Since the heavenly sanctuary was shut against us, the expiation of our crimes must precede his entrance into it, and possession of it.

(3.) The essential is an absolute sovereignty, the mediatory is delegated. For it is a judgment committed to him by the Father, John v. 22. In the first he is one with the Father, in the other he is the Father's substitute and deputy; his Father's lord-lieutenant in the world according to a derived authority.

(4.) The essential is wholly free, it has no obligation upon it; the mediatory has a charge annexed to it. It is a dominion with rules, and given him as a means to bring believers to salvation, which is part of the work belonging to the charge of mediator, John xvii. 42. He has this power given him by the Father, 'that he should give eternal life to all that God has given him.'

(5.) The essential is necessary: he cannot possibly be God without an infinite glory and dominion. The other, though due by the covenant, yet

is a free gift: Philip. ii. 9, 'God has given him a name which is above every name,' i.e. Christ. Not that God, who is infinite goodness and holiness, would ever let such an exquisite holiness and affection to his glory, which Christ discovered in the whole course of his obedience, pass without a rewarding and crowning it with the greatest glory in his treasury (it being an obedience superior to that of all the angels, it required a recompense superior to all their glory), yet that high exaltation is a free gift.

[1.] In regard that the whole economy, the mission of Christ and his incarnation, is a free gift of God to us; and in his exaltation he is considered as appearing for us, and receiving from the Father those treasures which were to be dispensed to us, and that power and dominion which was to be employed for us.

[2.] Because as it was the free gift of God to unite our flesh to the deity of the second person, it was also an act of free grace to continue the manifestation of the glory of the divinity in the same flesh.

[3.] Because the death he suffered, and the conquest he gained thereby, being by the powerful assistance of the Father, according to those promises of assistance made to him, his glory may be well said to be a free gift from the Father.

[4.] Because given without constraint, with a free pleasure, though upon a valuable consideration.

(6. ) The essential is eternal, without beginning and end; the mediatory has a beginning after his death and resurrection, and shall have an end. When all the seed are brought in and perfected, all enemies subdued and conquered, (Christ shall resign his commission and his people, for whose sake he was commissioned and deputed to this government, unto his Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, when he shall still reign

with his Father in the glory of the Deity. The Father lays aside his immediate government, that Christ may- be all in all; at last Christ shall resign the government to the Father, that God may be all in all, and delight immediately in his people, when they shall be fully perfected, and free from sin. The power, in regard of the particular ends for which it was conferred on Christ, ceases when those ends cease; but what belongs of right to him AS God, or what was given him by covenant as a reward for his obedience, will endure as long as the humanity remains united to the divinity.

Secondly, This is to be considered, that it was the person of Christ which was exalted by the Father. The subject of this power is the person of Christ, and the execution of this power is by the person of Christ.

1. His divine nature was exalted and glorified in regard of its manifestation. The Father would manifest that the Redeemer of the world was God blessed for ever, above angels or men. His deity in the time of his humiliation was incapable of any change, and therefore neither did nor could receive any detriment in its nature and essential perfections. It could not be subject to infirmities, or fall under the strokes of death; yet the Son of God emptied himself in taking upon him the form of a servant, and veiled that deity which dwelt bodily in him by the flesh he took, and suffered reproaches and indignities from men, and masked the glory of it by human infirmities; but in his resurrection and ascension, the deity did gloriously spring out of that obscurity, and brake out from under the cloud of his humanity in a glorious lustre, which before had discovered itself in some few sparklings; he was now 'clothed with a gesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God,' Rev. xix. 13; i.e. he was manifested to be the Word of God after and upon the account of his death.

2. His human nature was exalted and glorified by a new acquisition and addition of perfections of glory, which had been never conferred upon any man or angel. That was really delivered from all that suffering and debasement it had been subject to before in the days of his flesh, and was drawn up into a great and glorious condition, and endowed with gifts above all creatures in heaven and earth, and received a new royalty and power of ruling; and as the Mediator had performed a new work in dying, so he received a new glory in his exaltation. Thus the person of Christ, and each nature, may be said to be glorified in a distinct sense: the divine, in the manifestation of it, from that obscurity wherein it had been disguised; the human, in the reception of that which it had not before possessed. This was fully conferred on him at his ascension, and sitting down at the right hand of God; whereas before the name of a servant was written upon him, the fashion of his vesture being changed, there was a new name writ upon him, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16.

These things premised.

1. The exaltation and power of Christ is everywhere ascribed to the Father. It was his promise: Ps. lxxxix. 27, 'I will make him higher than the kings of the earth.' Several monarchies overtopped the Jewish kingdoms throughout the whole duration of that state. He bruised him as he was the rector and judge of the world, to whom belonged the right of punishment; he advanced him as the supreme governor and fountain of all honour; and thus he was in Christ ordering the application, and insuring reconciliation to us upon the conditions in his word.

(I.) In regard of donation. It is a gift from the Ancient of days, Dan.

vii. 14. God anointed him to this office as well as to the rest. He sets him in the highest place next to himself, at his right hand: Ps.

cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord;' gives him all the ensigns of

authority, a crown in the day of his espousals, an everlasting throne, a sceptre of righteousness: Heb. i. 8, 'But unto the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;' a sword in his mouth, the keys of life and death, all royal prerogatives; subjects all the angels to him, to receive commissions from him, and be at his service; they are now the eyes and horns of the Lamb, ministers and instruments of his jurisdiction. He 'committed all judgment to his Son,' John v. 22; not only a power of judging or sentencing, but a power of governing and conducting all things. In regard of the power he received, he is said to sit down, Luke xii. 69, 'at the right hand of the power of God.' In regard of the authority invested in him, he is said to sit down at 'the right hand of the throne of God;' in regard of the glory conferred upon him, he is said to sit down 'at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,' Heb. viii. 1. His royal power to manage it, and the glory attending it, being all the gifts of God to him, and that not in a way of common providence, whereby other kings reign, but by a peculiar deputation and special decree, in a mighty affection, whereby he does as it were take him by the hand and set him upon his throne, Ps. cx. 1, 'Sit thou at my right hand,' and peculiarly calls him his King, Ps. ii. 6; makes him higher than the heavens, gives him by inheritance a more excellent name than all the angels; all which are peculiarly the acts of God towards him, Heb. i. 8, 18, the special orders of God concerning him.

(2.) In regard of fitness for this government. 'The Spirit of counsel and might' did rest upon him for the exercise of this government, as well as for his other transactions in the world; that he might 'reprove with equity,' 'smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips slay the wicked,' Isa. xi. 4; righteousness was to be the 'girdle of his loins,' and 'faithfulness the girdle of his

reins.' This was his excellency, conferred upon him as King of the church; he had seven horns, a full power, and seven eyes, a perfect wisdom, for the management of the government, Rev. v. 6. He had need of the highest fitness, because this government upon his shoulders was a charge incumbent upon him above what all the angels in heaven were entrusted with. He has a spirit of wisdom to guide the church, a spirit of power to defend it, a spirit of faithfulness to take care of it, a spirit of compassion to pity it, and inexhaustible fullness to impart unto his people in all their necessities, able to fill the cistern, the church, and every private bucket He was not without power to rescue those out of the hands of the devil by conquest, whom he had redeemed from the wrath of God by his death. He had full power given him to force the jailer, after he had contented the creditor; God fitted him with wisdom against the wiles of Satan, and might against this power.

(3.) In regard of defence and protection in it. He has the whole power of the Godhead to defend him in it, he sits at his right hand. The right hand is a place of honour, and the right hand of a great king is a place of security Though Christ has a power to subdue his enemies, yet the Father is said to make his enemies his footstool. Putting forth his power, to show in the punishment of his enemies the high acceptance of his person and passion, that he will with his own hands bring down all that concur not with him in giving honour to his Son. The power which is essential to the Deity, is promised to be employed for the subduing his enemies under his sceptre and under his feet: Ps. cx. 1, 'Till I make thy enemies thy footstool.' As he did bring him to his throne in spite of all opposition, so he will establish it against the storms and powers of hell. He set him Upon the throne with a mighty zeal for his honour, and indignation against his opposers: 'Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, yet have I set my king upon my holy hill

of Sion,' Ps. ii. 5, 6, notwithstanding all their counsels against him and resolutions to cast his cords from them. So the increase of his government and peace, the ordering of it, the stability of it with judgment and justice, and the perpetuity of it, are Settled, protected, and assured by the same zeal that placed him in it: Isa. ix. 7, 'The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this,' i. e. that vehement love which he has both to the honour of Christ and the eternal peace and security of his seed. The power of God first lifted him to his throne, and the same omnipotence will keep it from being shaken by the powers of darkness. And the Redeemer was still to exercise faith in God as his Father, as his God, the rock of his salvation, even when he had 'set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers', Ps. lxxxix. 25, 26. Then God does promise to 'beat down his foes before his lance, and plague them that hate him,' and 'his seed' he would make to 'endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven,' verse 23, 29.

2. The Father did this upon the account of his death, and to show his high valuation of it, and that reconciliation he wrought by it.

(1.) This exaltation and dominion was upon the account of his reconciling death. His sufferings were the way to his crown; he first surrendered himself as our surety to the justice of God, before God surrendered his power to the management of Christ for the good of man: 'He died and rose again and revived, that he might be Lord of the living and the dead,' Rom. xiv. 9; he obtained a new state of life, not to die again, as Lazarus; and he was not raised barely to a life, but to a royal and princely life, to have an extensive dominion over all, the foundation whereof was laid in his death. God 'lifted up his head,' because he did 'drink of the brook in the way,' Ps. cx. 7, and it was as he was a lamb that had been slain as a sacrifice, that he had both his power and his wisdom, Rev. v. 6.

[1.] The exercise of his dominion before his incarnation, did in order of nature presuppose his death. Though he exercised a power in the world before his incarnation, yet it was exercised by him as a constituted mediator; and his assumption of a mortal body, and offering it up to death, was the condition required at the first constitution of him as mediator, as a reparation of the honour of God, which had been violated in the disorder of his first form of government by the entrance of sin. As soon as ever man fell the government of the world devolved into the hands of Christ by virtue of the covenant between the Father and himself. When sin had undermined the pillars of the world, they would have fallen had he not given a new consistency to them, Col. i. 17, and 'upheld all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 3, and 'established the earth,' Isa. xlix. 8, which else would have been overthrown by justice as well as the angels. Had not the government of the world been put into the hands of Christ, and a covenant of grace been erected, the world had been destroyed; the holiness of God would not have endured the sinfulness of it, and the justice of God could not have endured the standing of it according to the covenant of works. And this government was not put into the hands of the mediator, but upon a supposition of his death. What reason have we to think God should constitute a new mode of government without a reparation of his honour in the first? 'The government was upon his shoulders' when he was first given to us as a Son, Isa. ix. 6. He was given to us in promise before he was given to us in the flesh; and in that first promise' wherein his power is ensured to him for us, viz. the bruising the serpent's head, his death is supposed by the serpent's bruising his heel, Gen. iii. 15. He was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and it was upon this presupposed oblation that the world had its standing, that any had grace bestowed upon them, and found acceptance with God. If the great

end of the government he is since his death invested with, was performed by him before his incarnation, viz. the salvation of souls, yet with respect to his future death, then the government also, which was but a means in order to this, was conditionally conferred upon him. As believers were saved before his coming, so the world was governed by him, because he was to die. Hence he was the angel of the Lord in delivering his church; the captain of the Lord's hosts in fighting their battles, Joshua v. 14; the guardian of the church, and an advocate for them in their distresses, Zech. i. 8, 12, and attended upon his throne with all the angels as messengers to perform his will, Isa. vi. 1, 2, which, in the evangelist's interpretation, was the Lord Jesus, whose glory Isaiah saw, John xii. 41, when the seraphims celebrated his glory in the earth: it was he, the foundation of whose glory was laid in the earth, in the redemption of the sons of men. They are silent of that glory God has in the vast heavens, and speak only of his glory in the small point of earth, which relates to that of his mediation, wherein the establishing the earth and reducing it to a due order was the main concern.

[2.] He was absolutely confirmed in it upon his death. There was a confirmation of it in the first instant of his conception, for he was made Lord when he was made Christ; at his birth he was proclaimed by the angels a Lord as well as a Saviour, Luke ii. 11, but his full investiture was after his death, upon his ascension, when seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. David had an authority conferred upon him at his anointing, but was not fully inaugurated till his coronation at Hebron. So after the Redeemer had finished his ministerial work, God did fix him in his royal dignity to exercise his power, not only in the divine nature, as he had done before, but also in his human nature assumed by it. There was an 'anointing' of him

after his 'bringing in everlasting righteousness' by his death, and 'making reconciliation for iniquity, making an end of sin, and sealing up the vision and prophecy' which centred in him; then was the most holy to be anointed and have his solemn investiture, Dan. ix. 24. Because of that illustrious holiness he had manifested in the whole course of his humiliation, and that signal obedience upon the cross, he then was settled an high priest for ever, which he exercises by himself; a prophet of his church, which he exercises by his Spirit; an everlasting king, which he manages partly by his Spirit, partly by himself. Thus our Noah was brought out of the ark after the suffering, the terror of a deluge, to be the father of a second world, and as Isaac was raised up, after he had appeared as a victim under his father's sword, to be the father of many nations, he was to be Shiloh, a peacemaker, before the gathering of the nations under his sceptre, Gen. xlix. 10; and the Son of man, before he was to have a 'dominion that should not pass away,' Dan. vii. 13, 14. As God brought him again from the dead, 'through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' he raised him because his blood was a covenant blood, Heb. xiii. 20, so by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12. But it was not only after his death, but because it was a death for man voluntarily submitted unto. The conquests made by him in the world, his having a 'portion divided with the great, and the spoil with the strong,' was 'because he poured out his soul to death, made intercession for the transgressors, and bare the sins of many, Isa. liii. 12. It was upon this score of purging and expiating our sins by himself that he 'sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,' Heb. i. 3. He expiated sin by the oblation of himself, not as other high priests, by the blood of animals. If any creature had been offered by him, though held in the highest rank in the creation, the priest had

been infinite, but the sacrifice had been finite. But it was himself which he offered, a finite, human nature, in conjunction with an infinite person, and that for the atonement of our iniquity; for which infinite obedience, and infinite charity, God rewarded him with an infinite exaltation. It was his own blood which procured his admission into the holy place, and he was crowned because he had combated with the curses of the law and enemies of our peace, and conquered them for us.

There are two things requisite to the exercise of this power and dominion: the knowledge of God's decrees, and authority over the chief ministers in the execution of them; both which Christ has upon the account of his redeeming death.

First, The knowledge of God's decrees. God gave to him the knowledge of his decrees concerning his people, Rev. i. 1. No man on the earth or angel in heaven was found worthy to open the book, i.e. to be acquainted with the contents thereof, nor to unloose the seals, to dive into the depth and mysteries of his counsels and providence, but only the lion of the tribe of Judah. But it was by virtue of his death (in that he was the lamb slain, the antitype of the legal lambs sacrificed) that he took the book and opened it, Rev. v. 6, 7. The prevalence of his death with his Father was the cause of the knowledge of all the secrets of his will. As he was the lion of the tribe of Judah' and the root of David, as he had taken human nature according to the will of his Father, and suffered in it, he prevailed to open the book and unloose the seals thereof, Rev. v. 5, that they should not be concealed from him who was the head of the reconciled world. When the justice of God was appeased by the prevailing death of Christ, he gives forth willingly whatsoever may conduce to the salvation of his people; and in order to this, there was a necessity Christ should understand his

secrets. How else could he be an executor of all the counsels of God? This revelation is to him as mediator in his human nature, as appointed king by God, which is distinct from that knowledge he had as God, as his mediatory kingdom was distinct from that essential kingdom he had as God. As that was a delegated power, so this is a revealed knowledge; and both one and the other he had, as he was the lamb of God taking away the sins of the world.

Secondly, Authority over the chief ministers employed in the execution of his will. 'Things in heaven' must bow down to him, Philip ii. 10; 'all power in heaven, as well as earth, was given him,' Mat. xxviii. 18, and nothing was exempt from his jurisdiction but only the Father, who did put all things under him, 1 Cor. xv. 27. The innumerable company of angels, which are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and mount Zion, the seat of his royalty, Heb. xii. 22, are under his sceptre. His sitting on the right hand of God (as was said) was because he purged our sins by himself, and whatsoever did accrue to him by virtue of this session was upon the same foundation with the session itself. Part of that dominion accruing to him, as sitting at the right hand of God, was the power over angels (1 Peter iii. 22, 'Who is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him', who had authority and power from God in the administration of his providence either among other angels or among men; they were subjected to him, i. e. by his Father. He was passive in it, and had it conferred upon him as part of his mediatory glory. As God, he did himself subject the angels to him. Thus, as an honour for the oblation of himself, were they all marshalled under the power of Christ by the Father, who had power to dispose of his creatures under the reins of what government he pleased. And the most excellent orders of them were not exempt from this subjection, but every person to whom

God had granted a principality, power, might, and dominion, either in this world or that which is to come, was brought under his sceptre, to be serviceable to him in the execution of those designs he had for the church, which he had reconciled to God by his blood: Eph. i. 21, 'Far above all principality and power;' not only anw, but uperanw, exceedingly above in excellency of dignity and largeness of authority; whence they are called his angels, Rev. i. 1, and fellow-servants of 'those that have the testimony of Jesus,' Rev. xix. 20, and therefore servants to Christ as mediator. And as a testimony of this subjection of them, God sent all his angels to wait upon him at his triumphant reception, as his chariots to convey the human nature of Christ to heaven, and to welcome him after his victory, Ps. lxxviii. 17. He was 'among them as in Sinai,' when he came down to give the law; he was commander of them, and gave them directions in that affair. This is spoken with respect to his ascension, as it follows, ver. 18, 'Thou hast ascended on high;' they attended him to his throne and waited upon him, to be employed in the execution of his royal edicts. Now, this adoration which the angels are commanded to render him was because he had expiated sin, Heb. i. 3, 6. Their waiting round about his throne to attend his pleasure, and the joyful acclamations they shout forth in his praise, is because he was the lamb slain, the reconciling sacrifice, whereby God and man were brought together, Rev. v. 11, 12.

[3.] It was very fit and congruous that he should have this glory. This was the agreement between the Father and the Son before he set foot out of heaven. He had glorified God, had given him a foundation by his submission to the sharpness of his mediatory work, to display his wisdom in the highest glory, his justice in the deepest severity, his mercy with the clearest lustre, his veracity in the firmest stability. Without his undertaking this, none of those attributes could have

appeared in such glory upon any other foundation; they could never have been thus manifested by any creature, or the undertaking of the whole creation. As he therefore glorified the Father more than all creatures could glorify him, so it was fit he should have a glory transcendently above them. As he had improved his talents above them, so he should be possessed with a rule above them. Without this power he could not have conducted those whom he had purchased to a blessed eternity. It was very reasonable, that as the Father had by him done the hardest work, viz., the expiating sin, he should also by him work the full accomplishment of it. It was congruous that things should be given into the hands of the Redeemer to manage, who had purchased them all by a price so valuable as that of his death. If he died to purchase them, it was fit he should have authority to perfect them. He, being a divine sacrifice, was of infinite price, and as his sufferings surpassed the punishments of all creatures, so the value of his sacrifice exceeded the riches of the whole creation, both of heaven and earth, angels or men. He had not had a reward commensurate to the value of his death, had not a dominion been added to him as mediator, beside that of his deity, which was his by nature, and could not fall within the compass of a purchase, since he never was nor could be dispossessed of it. It was but reason the angels should be subjected to him, who had been preserved and confirmed by him; for God hath in him 'gathered together things in heaven as well as things in earth, Eph. i. 10' which collection would have signified little, unless by it they had been wrapped up into a permanent state, and a full assurance from any danger of apostasy from God and a fall into misery, as some of their fellows had done. It was very convenient that they who had received so great a benefit by him should be subject to him, that they who had been gathered under his wing should be as well under his sceptre. Besides,

as he had discovered himself faithful to death against some reluctance of human nature, he should have an opportunity to discover himself faithful in the other parts which concerned the honour of God; he that was faithful to him under the curse of the law would not be unfaithful to him under the blessing of deliverance. And very fit at last that he that was the innocent sufferer should be the judge of his guilty enemies, and condemn the great head of that enmity which was the occasion of his conflict with his Father's wrath, to remove it out of the way. As he, being rich in the deity and in the form of God, became poor in his humanity and in the form of a servant, eclipsing thereby the glory of his Godhead, it was fit he should reassume his former state as the heir of all things, and exercise that power in his humanity which he had a right unto in his deity.

[4.] This power was conferred upon him for the application and perfection of the fruits of reconciliation. This power and dominion is given to him for the advantage and full growth of his seed. When his people shall be perfected and his enemies subdued, the government devolves wholly to his Father, there being no longer any occasion for the exercise of his mediatory dominion. If it were conferred upon him only for himself, the power would not cease as long as his person endures; but the cessation of it upon the accomplishment of such effects evidences that those effects were the end for which it was first conferred. It is upon this score the Scripture places the extent of his dominion, Eph. i. 22. He, i. e. the Father, has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, for the church's welfare, for the good of the subjects as well as the glory of his empire. He is the King of saints, to rule them by his grace; and the King of nations, to rule them by his providence. He is set to reign in Zion, the hill of holiness, Ps. ii. 6, as the centre

of all the power and wisdom of his government, as the chief city of a prince partakes most of the fruits of his valour in conquering, and his wisdom in ruling. As his prophetic office is not to cease till instruction be swallowed up in vision, nor his priestly till his intercession be succeeded by immediate communion, so neither his kingly till there be a total cessation from all danger, and not an enemy left to disturb their peace.

First, For the bestowing gifts on men for the publishing this reconciliation. He received gifts at his triumph, that he might, as a royal steward of his Father, distribute them for the good of those that had been rebels to the government of God, to fit them for the great fruit of this peace, viz., a communion between God and them, 'that the Lord God might dwell among them,' Ps. lxxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8, 11-13. These gifts come from God as a God of salvation, as the doxology infers, Ps. lxxviii. 10, 'Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.' The intent whereof was to wound the head of the enemy Satan, who had been the first makebait: Ps. lxxviii. 21, 'God shall wound the head of his enemy.' The Spirit was not therefore given in that eminency and fullness of gifts and graces till the glorification of Christ, wherein he absolutely received the keys of all the treasures of his Father, as well as the keys of hell and death: John vii. 39, 'The Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' The giving the Spirit depended on the glorification of him as Jesus, a Saviour. God would receive those gifts for the triumphal coronation of his Son as an evidence of the peace which was made by him, by the effusion of the richest treasures of God. The Spirit was in the world before, as light was upon the face of the creation the three first days, but not SO glorious, sparkling, and darting out full beams till the fourth day, the day of the creation of

the sun, and fixing it in the heavens; so was the rich beaming forth of light, when after four thousand years, the fourth divine day, the Sun of righteousness was seated in the heavens to disperse his beams. The first edict he gave out after the receipt of his power, was the commission for preaching the gospel: Matt. xxviii 18, 19, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; Go therefore and teach all nations.' It was the intention of his Father that he should dispose of his power for this end; for he who did all things according to his Father's will would not use his power in the least, but for those ends for which it was conferred upon him.

Secondly, For the inviting of men to an acceptance of him. As the most beneficial commands that ever he gave, so the most condescending affections he ever discovered, the most gracious invitations that ever he made, were at those times where he had a sense of this power in a more peculiar manner, to show the proper intendment of it, and to what ends he was to manage it. The grant of this power is the foundation of that invitation he makes to weary souls, Mat. xi. 27, 'All things are delivered to me of my Father;' the inference is, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour;' and his governing them as a leader and commander to the people is the encouragement God uses to men to accept of that rich and liberal invitation of coming to the waters and buying wine and milk without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1, 4. God exalted him to all his power, to enable him to make the most gracious offers to men, and encourage their acceptance of him, as himself intimates in that fore-mentioned Mat. xi. 27, that the delivery of all his treasures to him was to make a revelation of his Father to the sons of men.

Thirdly, For the preserving the reconciliation for ever firm. As there is an increase of his government, so there is an increase of his peace: Isa. ix. 7, 'Of the increase of his government and peace there is no

end.' His government, and the peace he purchased, go hand in hand; as his glory rises to the meridian, so does the reconciliation. He therefore went to heaven to purify the heavenly things themselves with his sacrifice, Heb. ix. 23, i. e. (say some) heaven itself, which in some sense was polluted by the stench of our sins coming up into the presence of God, into which Christ as the high priest entered with his blood, to settle the sweet savour of that before God, instead of the loathsome savour of our sins which had offended his majesty. But howsoever, this exaltation was that he might 'appear in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, and preserve by his intercession what he had wrought by his passion. He has therefore his head encircled with a rainbow, Rev. x. 1, to evidence the perfection of the peace he had made, and the establishment of the security in heaven, against the opening any more the flood-gates of wrath for an overflowing deluge. Fourthly, For the subduing his and our enemies. He is to continue in the exercise of this power, 'till all the enemies be put under his feet,' 1 Cor. xv. 25. All the enemies, all the enemies to him as God, all the enemies to him as mediator, all the enemies to the great design of his mediation, all the enemies to him in that state and condition wherein he sits at the right hand of God, which is as mediator, and therefore whatsoever is contrary to his mediation and the intendment of it, all those enemies to his members which would hinder their arrival at happiness, and their blessed conjunction with their head, are to be destroyed. And those are,

First, Sin, which has 'reigned unto death,' Rom. v. 21.

Secondly, Satan, who as a prince has reigned in the world, and kept up sin in its vigour, John xii. 31.

Thirdly, Death, the last enemy, which has reigned from Adam to Moses,, Rom. v. 14, and will reign to the end of the world, 1 Cor. xv. 26.

Whatsoever sets itself in contrariety to the happiness of believers, is an enemy to the design of Christ, and is to be put under his feet, as one end of the authority granted to him. All the powers of hell must be crushed, all the fortifications of the devil must be demolished, and himself despoiled of his arms. This was necessary, that his kingdom should extend over the devils, to repress them, if it did extend over his subjects to secure them; these could not be advanced by his mercy, if the others did not sink under his power.

Fifthly, For the perfect salvation of his seed. His exaltation was for the perfection and perpetuity of salvation; the apostle's inference else would have no validity: Rom. viii. 34, 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' But the apostle sets forth the eternal knot between him and believers, upon his session at the right hand of God, with a rather. God 'exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour,' Acts v. 31. A princely Saviour, to bestow the royal gifts of repentance and forgiveness of sins. As he appointed Christ to give it, so he has appointed men to attain it by him, and from him, 1 Thes. v. 9. As he merited salvation by his death, he might perfect it by his life, Rom. v. 10. That as his death was by the ordination of God to purchase a seed, so his exaltation was, by the like designation, for a full sanctification of this seed, that he might at last behold them in their perfect glory; and therefore that he thought his proper work, upon a sense of it in his soul, when he considered his divine original, and his approaching glory, when yet it was not absolutely conferred upon him, John xiii. 3, 4, he will think his work when he is in full possession of it, viz., the full sanctification of his people, the washing their souls, which was symbolically signified by the washing their feet. What seems to be

the end of that present sense, will much more be the end and issue of his enjoyment. As he was humbled to save them, so he was exalted to perfect them; and since he was made sin for us in his death, he is in his advancement made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, a full treasury to supply all our necessities, that as he was the author, so he might be the finisher of our faith. If God delivered to him the full contents of his will because he was a lamb slain, it must be in order to carry on that work for which he was slain, to perfect an eternal amity between God and them, that there might be an eternal rejoicing in one another, The mediator being to reign till the whole church be brought to heaven, the intendment therefore of his heavenly royalty is the perfection of them in a heavenly glory; that as in his humiliation he Divas the way of our access, as by his spirit he was the discoverer of the truth, so by his life he might be the perfecter of our happiness: John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' As he glorified his Father on the earth by a full satisfaction of his justice, so his Father glorified him in heaven, to make a full application of his merits, John xvii. 1, 2.

[5.] By this the Father testifies the highest acceptance of his person, and the sufficiency of his death. John iii. 35, 'The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hands.' His coronation testifies the acceptance of his person, and it being after his death, testifies the acceptance of his passion; as Pharaoh's elevating Joseph from a prison, to the highest dignity in Egypt, next to that of the sovereign, was a testimony of that king's high admiration of Joseph's wisdom. This acceptance is testified by two things: the manner of his reception and settlement; the nature of his power.

First, The manner of his reception and settlement. It was with an infinitely pleased countenance, and all the marks of joy in the soul of

God, which rejoiced him more than the crown of pure gold set upon his head, or the length of days for ever and ever granted to him. The psalmist places all the joy of Christ upon his ascension in this: Ps. xxi. 3-6, 'Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance,' "tekhadehu besimkhah", thou hast made him glad with joy. One frown in the face of God would have damped all the joy of Christ. The psalm was anciently understood of the ascension and glory of Christ, and Ainsworth makes a pretty observation of the word rejoice, "yishmakh", by transposition to be "mashiakh", Messiah. If there be joy in heaven at the return of sinners, how great was the joy of God at the return of the Saviour of them, after the performing unto God so eminent a service! How heartily did the Father take him in his arms! How straitly did he embrace him! How magnificently did he fix him in a throne of immortality and advocacy! And when he did thus constitute him his king upon his holy hill, he established his throne and perpetuity of his kingdom by an oath: Ps. lxxxix. 35, 36, 'Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David: his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.' What men are mightily pleased with, they confirm under the highest obligations. As when the daughter of Herodias pleased Herod, he confirms by an oath the grant he had made of whatsoever she should ask him, Mark vi. 22, 23. And the solemnity at Christ's entrance into heaven, and sitting upon his throne, lasted ten days before the sending of the Spirit as the first fruits of his purchase.

Secondly, The nature of that glory and power invested in him. It is not in the orbs of the planets, or the starry heaven, where Christ has taken up his residence, but he is mounted above all the visible heavens: Eph. iv. 10, 'Far above all heavens;' uperanw, not anw, exceedingly above the heavens, into the holy of holies, the habitation

of the glorious majesty of God; a place of purity for a pure Redeemer, a place of glory for a glorious Mediator. And he is seated in his humanity in the highest place of heaven, next the Father, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, yea, 'in the midst of the throne,' Rev. vii. 17, an honour never allowed to the highest angels, Heb. i. 13, which stand before the throne of God, but sit not in the throne with him. The obedience of angels never did, never could, equal the obedience of the Son of God. His empire is of the same extent with his Father's; so highly did his Father value his expiatory offering, that he would not exempt an angel in heaven, nor a devil in hell, nor any creature upon earth from a subjection to him, but poured the whole rule and government into his hands, ordered the same worship to be performed to the Son as to himself, John v. 23, and that in heaven, Heb. i. 6, Rev. v. 13. And for duration, it is for ever and ever; he is to reign as Mediator till all the ends of it be accomplished, and afterwards for ever with the Father in the glory of the Deity, Heb. i. 3. He is to reign as Mediator in the place of the Father, till the church be perfected, by reducing all enemies to an entire subjection, and then to resign his power to his Father. As the son of a king, sent to reduce rebellious countries to obedience, has a royal commission from his father to act as king, an authority to pardon or punish, till his conquest be finished; so when Christ shall have gained the full victory, he shall cease his mediation, and God shall reign immediately over all, and Christ shall reign with him, not as Mediator, but as God. 'God shall be all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28, which is opposed to Christ's interposition or intercession as mediator; there will be no need of God's communicating himself by a mediator but he will immediately shine forth upon them, when the fruits of sin, and sin itself, is abolished in them. But for the Father to resign things to the management of his

Son, as the Son had given himself up to the justice of the Father, in a sort to eclipse his own glory for so long a time, as the Son had eclipsed his Deity in his humiliation, and as it were lay by the immediate exercise of his authority of Judging and governing which originally pertains to him, and veil it, to let the beams of it shoot into the world only through this medium, is such a mark of his acceptance, that higher cannot be given. It cannot be conceived how the Father should do more than this, for a testimony of his pleasure in him and his sacrifice. It is impossible the Father should dethrone himself, and therefore anything higher than what he has done cannot be imagined. For though the authority still resides in the Father, and is extant in every act of Christ's government, yet he acts not immediately, receives no addresses immediately to himself, lint all in and by his glorified Son. Had he had the least displeasure with him, or found the least blemish in him, he had not lodged the exercise of his power in him.

Use of this head.

First, This exaltation of Christ by the Father is a mighty encouragement to faith in Christ.

1. Hereby we have assurance, that all that Christ spoke and did was agreeable to the will of the Father. This exaltation of Christ will not suffer us to think that anything was left undone by him which he ought to have done. Otherwise the exact justice of God would never have consented to have put the government of all things into his hand; an exact obedience was to precede before a glory was to be conferred. Since therefore this glory is conferred, it is evident his obedience was unblemished. All the world, and the concerns of it, would never have been laid upon his shoulders, had the piercing eye of the Father discerned any fault in it. The infinite wisdom of God would never have

entrusted him with so great an affair, if he had not been faithful in the management of what had been before committed to him; because, if he had been unfaithful in one, there was no ground to think he would be faithful in the others. But it is a strong argument that he will be exact in the glorious part of his charge, since he has been exact in the ignominious part of his work. It is upon the account of his being a faithful witness, that he is the 'Prince of the kings of the earth,' Rev. i. 5. It is this argument the Spirit uses to convince the world of righteousness, i. e. the righteousness of his person, the righteousness of his mediation, that there is a full expiation of sin, because he is entertained and received by the Father, John xvi. 10.

2. Hereby we have assurances that it is the intent of the Father, that all things should be managed by Christ for the good of those that believe in him. Since he has delivered the book to Christ, containing the secrets of his will, because he was a lamb slain, it is evident that it is the pleasure of the Father, that his government shall be for those ends for which he was slain, and that the book contains the will of God pursuant to the ends of that death. Had that book contained anything contrary to those ends, and to the interest of his people, the Father would not have delivered it into his hands. The end of his exaltation can never cross the end of his passion; nor could the unchangeable love of the Father give him rules for his acting in his government, opposite to those he had designed his humiliation for. Since therefore he was in Christ upon the cross, reconciling the world to himself, he is in Christ upon his throne, pursuing the ends of that reconciliation, and bringing the fruits of it to a glorious maturity by the glorification of the reconciler. How soon were the tears of John dried up, when he looked upon Christ opening the book of God's decrees, and found by the praises of the elders that the world was committed to

him, to order all things for the good of the church, Rev. v. 4, 5. What encouragement would they else have had to have fallen down, singing the praises of him, and acknowledging him as their Lord and King, and to present to him their golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints? The first homage he receives, after his opening the book, and that as a pleasant odour, is the prayers of believers: ver. 8, 'And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints;' which does evidence their good to be the intendment of the Father in delivering it to him, and that the rules in it were to that purpose, and his own resolution to observe the rules of it.

3. It is to be considered who this person is that is thus exalted, in order to the encouragement of faith. It is the same person, in whose humiliation the Father was reconciling us; our kinsman, by the assumption of our nature, but more by the relation of our faith to him into whose hand this power is put. He is made the steward to dispense his Father's gifts, who knew our indigences and wants of them, and whose tenderness cannot be questioned, since he has had an experience of our infirmities. He that shed his blood to save us, will not spare his power to relieve us. As he had not died but to reconcile us, so he would not have been exalted as a reconciler, but to perfect it by bringing us to the Father: by the one he made way for our access, and by the other for our perfect conjunction. His being quickened by the Spirit, and the glory following thereupon, as well as his being put to death in the flesh, was to 'bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18. He had a tenderness as he is the Son of God, partaking of the same nature with his Father; he has a tenderness as our mediator, and clothed with our flesh; he has also an engagement of faithfulness, since all the

treasures of heaven are put into his hands, to be expended for those ends for which he died. He is not only administrator of his Father's goods, but guardian of the souls committed to him by his Father, and faithful he is in both.

How may we then cast our souls into this bottom, since the directions he receives from the Father are agreeable to all the former economy? Since, as a lamb slain, he is God's steward to distribute; since both his heart, and the heart of his Father, are so full of love, one in the execution, the other in the acceptation, nothing can be cross to the interest of those for whom the one died and the other accepted it. No higher ground can there be of faith, than the love the Father has strewn to our Redeemer for his reconciling passion, by his glorious exaltation. He loved him in the laying down his life, and he loved him in the taking of it again, John x. 17. Get your thoughts then up into heaven. Behold the Father taking him up in his arms, congratulating his victory, adorning his triumph, conferring upon him, and perpetuating a government. See if in all this you can find a frown on God's face, any doubt in his heart of the validity of his sacrifice; see if any letters, but those of grace, be written about his throne. And if God has no doubt of it, who is more concerned in his glory, than you in your salvation, why should any jealousies remain' in any heart that accepts him, discards all affection to sin, and endeavours to imitate him in an holy obedience to God? 'Be followers therefore of God as dear children,' since he has so magnificently entertained his Son, upon the account of what he did, for all that will believe in him; and wait upon God till he shall send his Son in all his royal attire, to bring you to the full enjoyment of all the fruits of this reconciliation, so strongly wrought, and so heartily accepted, and till that be accomplished, let hope every day pierce through the veil, and enter

into that which is within it, more inward, Heb. vi. 19, eis to eswteron tou katapetasmatoV, inning our souls by faith and hope every day in the veil. This faith is a firm anchor, to hold the soul safe in storms, and the Father's admission of Christ into heaven is the rock on which it should fasten.

The second use is of comfort.

1. Sin is fully expiated, since it is upon the recount of the expiation of it that he is thus dignified. The purging of our sins by himself has met not only with a bare acceptance, but an high valuation, with the Father. Since he has thus crowned and enthroned him, what assurance have we of the full atonement by the blood of his cross! How can we doubt the full satisfaction, delight, and content of the Father with him, and with us upon the condition of faith, since it was for the purging, not his own, but our sins, that he did 'sit down,' as of right, 'on the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high'? Heb.

i. 3. The gratifications the Father made to our Redeemer, manifest the satisfaction of his justice, since not only God's kindness, but his justice, which is a part of his majesty, was employed in the welcome reception of him. End that frowned, there had been no throne for him to sit on; and if it ever frown upon him, his throne will shake under him.

But it never shall, for it is a 'throne for ever and ever,' and that because 'his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness,' Heb. i. 8. A majesty still offended would never have admitted him to this honour. Is there any room for sorrow and dejection, for jealousies of the sufficiency of the ransom, after so illustrious a discharge from the Father?

2. Accusations shall be answered. We have great enemies; the devils that tempt us, our corruptions that haunt us, and both to accuse us. To whom must they accuse us? To that majesty, at whose fight hand Christ

has his residence. Whence must the vengeance they call for issue, but from that majesty upon whose throne Christ sits as a lamb slain, who sits ready to answer the accusations, and stop the revenge? He tore Satan's charge upon the cross, will he let it be pieced together in his triumph? As he bowed down his head upon the cross to expiate our sins, so his head is lifted up on the throne to obviate any charge they can bring against us. Satan knows it is fruitless for him to bring his indictment there, where Christ perpetually appears, and is never out of the way. The perpetuity of our justification results from this sitting of Christ at the right hand of God; for he sits there, not as an useless spectator, but an industrious and powerful intercessor, to keep up a perpetual amity, and prevent sin from making any new breach: 1 John ii. 1, sin we must not, but 'if any man sin' (not a course of sin, but fall by some temptation), 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' He sits as an advocate, as a reconciler, and a propitiation for sin, spreading before his Father the odours of his merits and righteousness, to answer the charge and indictments of sin. 'He appears in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, before the face of his glory in the highest heavens. It was through the blood of the covenant he arose, it was through and with the blood of the covenant he entered into the holy place, to carry the merit of his death as a standing monument into heaven. God, by his advancement, would have the sight of it always in his eye, and the savour of it in his nostrils; that as the world, after the savour of Noah's sacrifice, should no more sink under the deluge; so the believers in Christ should no more groan under the curse of the law, though they may, in this world, smart under the corrections of a Father. It is a mighty comfort in the midst of all infirmities (where there is the answer of a good conscience towards God), that Christ is gone to heaven, and is on the

right hand of God, to save those that are baptised into his death, and that have the 'stipulation, eperwthma, of a good conscience towards God,' which is the apostle's reasoning, 1 Peter iii. 21, 22.

3. Wants shall be relieved. It is that human nature wherein the expiation was made on earth, which is crowned with glory in heaven by the Father; that human nature, with all the compassions inherent in it, with the same affections wherewith he endured the cross and despised the shame, with the same earnestness to relieve them as he had to deliver them, with the same desire to drink of the fruit of the vine with them in the kingdom as he had to eat the Passover with them upon the earth, to supply their wants as he had redeemed their persons. If the free gift of all things be argued from the Father's delivery of the Son to death, Rom. viii. 32, the full distribution of all things may be expected from the Father's setting him upon his throne, and giving him the keys of death and hell to stop their inroads upon a believer, and the command of his treasures to dispense at his pleasure; what can be denied to the merit of his death, since as our surety he is established in an eternal throne? Since he was admitted as a 'forerunner for us,' Heb. vi. 20, prodromos, what can there be necessary for us, in our journey till we overtake him, that we may not expect at his and the Father's hands? All our needs will be supplied, since there are riches in glory in Jesus Christ, Philip. iv. 19.

4. Spiritual enemies shall be conquered. All enemies are to be made his footstool, Ps. cx. 1. Satan, who was wounded by him upon the cross, shall not rise, since he is upon his throne. He that could not overpower him while he was covered with the infirmities of our flesh, cannot master him, since all power is delivered to him in heaven and earth, and the keys of hell put into his hands. He bruised him while he was known only to be the seed of the woman, and bruised him for us; and

shall he be able to repair his broken strength, since his conqueror is now declared to be the Son of God with power? Our inward enemies shall fall under the same might. It was the purpose of the Father to 'conform his elect to the glorious image of his Son,' Rom. viii. 29. What has Christ this power in his hands for, but to destroy the power of that in the heart, the guilt whereof he expiated by his blood? That as he appeased the anger of God, and vindicated the honour of his lava by removing the guilt, so he may fully content the holiness of God by cleansing out the filth. As he had a body prepared him to effect the one, so he has a power given him to perfect the other; that as there is no guilt to provoke his justice, there may be no dirt to offend his holiness; that, as the Father has been reconciled by the death of Christ, he may delight himself in the soul by the operation of the power of Christ. This will be accomplished. The first fruit of his exaltation was the mission of the Spirit, whose proper title is a Spirit of holiness, in regard of his operation, as well as his nature; and whose proper work is, to quicken the soul to a newness of life, and mortify by grace the enemies of our nature. The apostle assures the believing Thessalonians of it, from this argument, of his being a God of peace: 1 Thes. v. 23, 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly,' autos o QeoV. That God of peace: ver. 24, 'Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it.' It is not only a petition, but an assurance; as appears by ver. 24, that it will be done by him as the author of reconciliation; and completely done, of, wholly perfect, universally for the subject, in understanding, will, affections, body, 'in spirit, and soul, and body.' The enmity else would not be taken away; as the enmity is removed from God in the satisfaction of his justice, by the blood of his Son; so the enmity shall be removed from a believer, in the renovation of his image by the grace of his Spirit, that there may

be at last no disgusts on either side; for 'he is faithful who has called you.' He is not a God of peace for a day or an hour; it is not an imperfect reconciliation he designed; it is a faithfulness to himself, to his own resolves, to his own honour, to his Son's blood, to the call of his people. And this is a good argument to plead in our prayers for sanctification, since God has manifested himself to be a God of peace in the raising Christ, accepting him, exalting him; all which were evidences of a perfect reconciliation, that he would perfect in you every good work, Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

Use 3. As the Father's exaltation of Christ is comfortable to the believer, so it is as terrible to the unbeliever and unregenerate. He that advanced him to the throne, and conferred upon him a power of asking the heathen for his inheritance, confers also upon him a power of destroying his enemies: Ps. ii. 8, 9, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,' &c. 'and thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.' The breaking refers to ask of me; and as thou shalt have blessings for believers, so thou shalt leave wrath and judgment for unbelievers. Unbelievers that break his bands, and cast his cords far from them, are so far from having the benefit of Christ's intercessions for mercy in his glorified state, that they have a dreadful interest in his pleas for wrath. He has a power of dashing them like a potter's vessel conferred upon him. He that gives Christ the whole world upon asking, will not contradict him in his severest acts against his unbelieving enemies. For that love to him that advanced him, as a lamb slain, will spirit his wrath with a greater fury against the undervaluers of his death and sufferings. Will the Father, who upon his death thought him worthy to devolve the government of the world upon him, and to act all by the hand of his Son, take it well that he is not imitated by his creature? Is it not a reflection

upon the Father, as if he had acted a weak part, had set too high a value upon the death of his Son, that his eyes were too dim to pierce into the nature of it? Will God, who is pleased with him, bear with such real blasphemies against him? for so all unbelieving rejection of Christ is. Shall his obedience be so pleasant to God, and be unrevenged, if it be unpleasant to us? Shall God subject the whole host of angels to him, and let worms despise him without severe punishment? If there be not an holy estimation of Christ, obedience to his will and laws, it will not consist with the Father's exaltation of him to suffer the affront, or let his authority be an idle name, an authority without hands, an empty title. No; as he has a sceptre of righteousness, so he has an iron rod to bruise his enemies. What a folly is it to despise that Redeemer, wilfully to violate his laws, who has all power given him in heaven and earth, and the power of judging committed to him by the Father! This is to dare the curses of the law, break open the store house of his wrath, and be bent upon hell with violence.

Use 4. Let us accept Christ then, as our Reconciler and our King. God is not contented only with the establishment of him in this honour, but he loves to hear the world ring with acknowledgments of it; he will have every tongue to confess to the glory of God the Father, that Jesus is the Lord: Philip. ii. 11, 'That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' For the glory of God, who conducted him through this great undertaking, accepted him for it, and dignified him for bringing in an everlasting righteousness. The way to glorify God the Father, is to acknowledge the dignity of Christ, and to accept him for those ends for which the Father has exalted him. All things are for the glory of God, but this more signally; hereby he has discovered the wonders of his wisdom, justice, power, and love, before men and angels; and he that owns Christ as a glorified Mediator,

owns God in the glory of all those perfections; without this  
acceptation of him, we cannot answer the end for which God has exalted  
him, 'he has given him a name above every name,' that we might confess  
and acknowledge him as he has declared him, and pay him a service by  
our faith. If he do not render him a voluntary homage now, we shall be  
forced to render him an homage hereafter in a deplorable state.  
Heartily to accept him for our Lord, is to perform a duty in fellowship  
with the angels which encompass his throne. Faith is a choice of Christ  
for head and governor; it is therefore expressed, Hos. i. 11, 'They  
shall appoint themselves one head,' i. e. the Messiah, they shall  
believe in him. Christ is an head of God's appointing, and of  
believers' approving. God sets him as an head authoritative, and we  
should embrace him voluntarie and obedientialiter, freely and  
obediently. As the magistrate chooses a public officer, and the people  
consent to him; the magistrate gives him the authority, and the people  
encourage him in the exercise. God 'set his Son upon the holy hill of  
Sion,' Ps. ii. 6, and we are commanded to kiss him, which is a token of  
acknowledgement, consent, and subjection. As he sits at the right hand  
of God, he ought to sit in the centre of our hearts. Since he is  
possessed of the highest place, and does not disdain the lowest, it is  
unworthy to keep him from it. Serve him as a Lord. As he has made  
himself a sacrifice for us, and rose again and revived, Rom. xiv. 9, i.  
e. acquired a new state of life, we should serve him as a living Lord,  
in obedience to the pleasure and authority of God the Father, who has  
been in him reconciling the world, and for his work has advanced him to  
the dominion over all creatures. As God exalted him out of a sense of  
what he had done for the appeasing his wrath, and the salvation of man,  
so should we exalt him in our hearts, out of a sense of what he has  
done for our souls: 'He that honours not the Son, honours not the

Father who has sent him,' John v. 22, 23, and who has glorified him.

For he contradicts the ends for which God has given all judgment to the Son.

Use. 6. Glorify God in Christ, glorify Christ. 'God is gone up with a shout.' Ps. xlvii. 5, 'God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our king, sing praises;' alluding to the joy in the fetching up the ark, 1 Chron. xiii. 8. There were shouts of angels at his entrance into heaven: 'God reigns over the heathen, God sits upon the throne of his holiness;' a throne which his holy and righteous obedience purchased, or the holiness of God is now gloriously apparent, fully vindicated. Glorify the Father for it, the Father and the Lamb are joined together in their praises: Rev. v. 13, 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' As the Father has enlarged his hand to Christ, as our reconciler, we should enlarge our hearts in thankfulness to him. God was not satisfied with giving a little mite to Christ, a small reward; all the treasures of heaven must be open for him. Why should we put off God with a little praise?

## General use of the doctrine.

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### 1. Information.

(1.) This declares the excellency of the Christian religion above any other that ever was in the world. All the philosophy and learning in the world can never acquaint us with these mysteries. In the gospel we see the face of God unveiled, whereas with natural light we can but feel or grope after him Acts xvii. 27. He is not far from us by the light of nature, but in a cloud not barefaced; but the light of the glory of God shines forth in the face of Christ. How does this way of the gospel shame all other religions, all other notions of God! It resolves the question, which nonplusses the natural learning of the world, and gives light to the impossibilities of reason. No other knowledge presents us with a reconciled God, and a reconciling Jesus; this only saves the honour of God, repairs the ruins of nature, ensures the happiness of the creature, and discovers an eternal inheritance upon a firm foundation; this varnishes all God's attributes, calms the conscience, cures natural jealousies of God, and restores the creature to answer the end of his creation; this declares things worthy of God, honourable to him as well as beneficial to the world; it shows him in the heights of his wisdom, and the depths of his holiness, the length of his love, and the breadth of his justice.

[1.] It declares the glory of God. We know something of God by natural reason, but the full story of his glorious perfections is not printed in the book of the creation, as in that of redemption. Hence, when he speaks of his redeeming design, he often adds, 'that I may be glorified,' Isa. xlix. 8, lx. 21, as though he had no glory lying in the womb of creation, but all was to spring out from that of

redemption. The creation of the world was but a preparation to this; the creation was too dim a glass to show the image of God's glory. He seems to intimate, Isa. xiii. 5, 6, that his creating the heavens and stretching them out, the spreading forth the earth, and that which comes out of it, and giving breath to people upon it, was as a stage on which he would call Christ to act the highest part, as a covenant for the people. He laid the foundation of the old world, to build those new things upon. The glory of the creation was too low for a great God to rest in. Upon sin the creation was laid waste, and the glory of God had sunk with the ruins of it, had not this succeeded. This restored to him the glory of his creation, with interest and increase. His stretching out the heaven and spreading the earth had glorified his power; the damning man upon his fall had honoured his justice; where then should the standing angels have had prospect of his tenderest love, immense wisdom, and severest justice? He had never been known in his full beauty by any creature, had not the platform of this counsel been laid and executed; whence he calls his calling Christ in righteousness, to open the eyes of the blind, and committing the work of reconciliation to him, his glory, that he would not give to another, i. e. entrust in any other hands than in the hands of his Son, Isa. xlii. 6-8, peculiarly his glory, which he does not ascribe to himself so eminently in stretching out the heavens. His attributes were glorified, some in one act, some in another; here they kiss each other with mutual congratulations; mercy rejoices that justice is satisfied, justice rejoices that mercy is manifested, wisdom and holiness join the hands of mercy and justice together. In other things they are scattered in various subjects, here they are banded in one knot, and shine forth with united beams. In which respect Christ may be said to be 'the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person,' as well

as in that of his deity, Heb. i. 3, carakthr, wherein we may see the perfections of God engraver as visibly as a stamp upon the seal, his wisdom, mercy, justice, holiness, and truth. 'The light of the glory of God' breaks forth 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6. In the actions and sufferings of Christ, God exhibits himself in the glory of his nature, and gives a fuller view of himself, who was but imperfectly known before. Here the world may see him in the beauty of trig holiness, the condescending sweetness of his nature, the severity of his justice, the inexhaustibleness of his bounty, and brightness of his wisdom; thus he shows himself at once clearly legible in all his perfections. What religion in the world gives us such an account of God? What discovery did so fully evidence him in his robes of royalty at once? Never was the earth seen so full of the glory of God, as in the mediation of Christ; then was there glory to God in the highest ascents, a glory reaching as high as the highest heavens, when there was peace on earth, Luke ii. 14.

First, It manifests his wisdom. which shoots forth with clearer beams in his Son than in the creation. In which regard Christ is called 'the wisdom of God,' i. e. the highest discovery of his wisdom. There is a counsel, as well as will, in the more minute passages of his providence; but there is a more glorious workmanship of wisdom in the work of reconciliation, a manifold wisdom in laying the reconciliation frame with advantage to the glory of his name, and the welfare of the creature, which could not be conceived by angels or men before they saw it unfolded, for it was hid in God from the beginning of the world, and was not then made known to the angels, Eph. iii. 9, 10. What is the frame of heaven and earth to this? Just as his power and wisdom is in the making a clod of earth, to that which appears in the fabric of a man. In the creation it is like a sunbeam through the cranny of a wall,

this like the sun facing us in its full glory; he is the only wise God, as he is our Saviour, Jude 25. And the apostle fixes the best note to it, when he calls it 'all wisdom and prudence,' wherein God abounded too: Eph. i. 8, 'Wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.' All wisdom in contriving and determining the way, prudence in ordering and disposing the means consonant thereunto, wisdom in drawing the platform, and prudence in digging through all impediments, and making even the seeming obstacles serve as steps to the execution. How great was that wisdom that restored us by that *logos*, that Word, whereby he had created us, and appointed his Son, who had an holiness exactly to obey him, and a power to bear the weight of whatsoever was necessary, to make up the breach! And this mystery he kept secret in his own breast from the beginning of the world, revealed to none distinctly, but by the gospel, after the incarnation of Christ, that it might evidently appear to be the work only of his wisdom, and therefore called 'hidden wisdom,' 1 Cor. ii. 7; whence the apostle, speaking of this as a mystery kept secret, breaks out into the praise of God for it, as 'The only wise God,' Rom. xvi. 25-27. What religion in the world declares the security of God's rights with man's happiness? What doctrine beside this answers all contradictions, and discovers justice possessing all its rights, and mercy fully answered in all its desires? Secondly, His power. As the Father was in Christ reconciling the world, Christ was the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God: 1 Cor. i. 24, 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' The power of God in breaking the heart of the enmity by the death of the cross, and overthrowing all the designs of the evil spirit. The power of God is manifest in sustaining all things after the foundation of the world tottered, more than if he had destroyed this world and made a new one. That man has a mighty power over his own passions, that when he is

extremely injured without giving the least occasion, yea, and against multiplied benefits, should study ways of reconciliation with that person, though he knew he should receive new slights from him upon the offers of such kindness; a mightier power would be manifest over himself, if he should part with his dearest friend, or a beloved son, to expose him to contempt and ignominy, for renewing the amity between him and his ungrateful adversary: such a man would have a mighty power and royalty. Rex est qui sibi imperat. Other things show the power of God over the creatures, this is as it were power over himself. If the pardon of one sin, or the sins of a nation, argue the greatness of God's power, Num. xiv. 17, the power of God is pleaded by Moses as an argument to pardon the provoking Israelites, 'Let the power of my God be great,' much more does the reconciling a world. Here is a power over his own wrath, deeply provoked by his offending creatures; a power over his own affections and love to his Son; a power over himself after such vast provocations, and a foresight of more, enhanced by ingratitude and slights of his creatures, and studying ways of reconciliation, while the offender was exercising fresher hostilities against God. It is an inconceivable power, and greater than that which is visible in the creation, and will be acknowledged so by those that understand the evil of sin, and the immense provocations offered to the justice of God. What religion in the world gives us any notice of so vast a power in God, as the gospel does in this case?

Thirdly, The wonders of his goodness. How is the gospel an edition of God's heart, as it wrought from eternity! An unfolding, and opening of his bowels which lay secretly yearning! This 'brings life and immortality to light,' 2 Tim. i. 10, which lay locked up in the cabinet of God's purpose, till they were unlocked and brought down to men in the gospel. In this we may see the scheme and model of his thoughts,

the method of his counsels, the treaties about man's recovery, all the motions of his goodness, in its descent to earth and ascent to heaven, carrying at last the creature with it, to the wearing an eternal crown upon its head. How did he prepare all things for man's recovery, before man's fall, which was foreseen by him, and decreed to be permitted, providing a medicine before the disease, and a solder before the crack, casting about to reduce rebels to amity, before they had A being wherewith to rebel! Where is that religion, besides, that presents us with such draughts of divine love, that declares its secret resolves and transactions, that tells us of such an immense flood of bounty flowing down upon mankind! The heathens regarded God as severe, though they saw testimonies of his patience, they saw not those springs of kindness bubbling up in his own breast; they imagined them squeezed out by their sacrifices and solicitations, and purchased by their services. Here is the goodness and tender compassions of God making the first motion, laying on one colour after another, till it was brought to perfection. The gospel shows us God contriving redemption by his own wisdom, drawing it with his own hand, working it by his own power. All this shows the excellency and amiableness of his nature. Honourable to God, a pattern of goodness to men, the highest incentive to a worship, adoration, and service to him, to all those duties which are most fit for a creature toward God, admiration of him, self-humiliation, dependence, ingenuous obedience: such discoveries of God leave men without excuse in all their contradictions to him. He is not represented in the gospel with his standard up, his weapons sharpened, his bow bent, and his arrows prepared, unless against inveterate and wilful unbelievers; but the gospel draws him to our view sheathing his sword, placing his arrows in his quiver, not in his bow, with his arms open, his countenance smiling; means sufficient to make

us sink down in self-abomination, and rise up in the choicest affections to God. No religion represents God so admirably, so amiably to man, so worthy of himself, and with greater motives to those duties which become a creature; and therefore this has an excellency above all other religions in the world.

[2.] It has an excellency above all other religions, in showing the true way of attaining peace with God, and thereupon peace in ourselves. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;' not in any other methods, not in purifications and washings superstitiously practised by the heathens; not in sacrifices of beasts, though commanded to the Jews; but only as types of the great sacrifice God intended. All other ways of appeasing God are fond and foolish, cannot find a foundation in common and ordinary reason; they disparage God rather than honour him, in such mean and sordid thoughts of him, as though an infinite justice could be bribed by the blood of a beast. All other religions widen the breach, but do not in the least close it. But here we see a God of peace, and a prince of peace embracing each other, and 'the voice of the turtle is heard' in the world. The gospel is the dove bringing an olive-branch of peace, put into its mouth by God. It brings us news of the allay of his wrath, which was due to our sins, and that his sword is blunted by himself in the bowels of his Son, that it might not be sheathed in ours. It shows us a shelter for storms, a light in God's countenance even in the shadow of darkness. Here God draws near to man, that man may have access to him. He makes his Son like to man, that man might be rendered capable of approaching to God. Two natures are joined in one person, that there may be an amiable conjunction of two different parties; he exposes his beloved Son to the strokes of his justice for a time, that he might reassume his life with honour for ever. It is a way that reason cannot disapprove of, since nothing could

conduce more to the honour of God, and nothing more establish the peace of the creature. Other religions have framed mediators of their own, deified men, whereby they might have access to God. God in the gospel presents us with n mediator of his own choosing, of his own fitting, of his own ordering; one that he will not refuse, whose intercessions he is pleased with; that he might keep off the darts of divine justice from us, that we might 'draw near through the veil of his flesh,' Heb. x. 20, that we may look upon God in Christ, without being dazzled by his glory, or scorched by his wrath. Now may devouring fire and combustible stubble meet together; fire without scorching, stubble without consuming. Here misery may approach to glory, because glory condescends to misery. Hereby guilt is removed, which makes us incapable of access to God; and wrath is removed, which hinders our actual access. Here may all that will believe in God through Christ and conform to his laws, walk in the midst of the furnace of God's justice without having an hair of their heads touched, without feeling the smart of that which will be quick in consuming unregenerate men. Since nothing else discovers any peace with God, no doctrine else can make any peace in the conscience. It is the old way gives rest to the soul, Jer. vi. 16, the way as old as the first promise of a reconciler. All other ways, if rightly considered, rather promote than allay suspicions of God. Conscience has no ground to make any comfortable reflection, without some plain declaration of God's reconcilableness and reconciliation. Conscience can show us our guilt, but nothing in the world evidences the way of our peace but the gospel; no other religion discovers God in treaty about reconciliation.

Herein the Christian religion transcends all others; it glorifies God, and dignifies the creature. Salvation is bestowed upon fallen man, but the honour of all redounds to God, 'that no flesh may glory in his

presence.' Here is an admirable temperament of justice and mercy, in the reconciliation of God and the creature: Hosea ii. 19, 'I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and judgment, in kindness and mercy.' Judgment in the satisfaction by the surety, an efflux of mercy in requiring no portion at our hands.

(2.) Second information. If God be the author of reconciliation and redemption, then the knowledge of this, the declaration of the gospel, is an inestimable blessing to a nation. What better news can God send to men? The very declaration of it is a lifting a nation up to heaven: Mat. xi. 23, 'And thou, Capernaum, that art exalted to heaven.' The Bibles in our hands are inexpressible blessings, since God has made a large comment upon that first promise which he gave to Adam; God has declared to the world in full, what he gave Adam as it were in a scrip of paper, he has unfolded in his word the mystery, brought it to perfection, and proclaimed it openly, and given us a glass wherein we may see his glory. The discovery of Christ in the flesh was a greater glory belonging to the second temple than what was in the first, notwithstanding all its ornaments and riches. The people wept when they saw the beauty of the second temple inferior to that of the first; and indeed there was wanting in it the propitiatory, the holy fire, Urim and Thummim, the spirit of prophecy, and the ark of the testimony, yet, Haggai ii. 9, God tells them, 'the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former,' though it wanted all those things. The matter of it was not so precious, the condition of the inhabitants was more grievous. The temple was often pillaged, by Antiochus, Pompey, Crassus. There must be some other gift proportionable to the majesty of that God who had promised, as the words following declare, 'I will give peace.' Not a temporal peace, for they never had such cruel wars as after the building of that temple; but a spiritual peace, a peace

between God and man, between God's justice and our sins, by the means of the Messiah. He would not adorn the temple with riches; he could if he would, for the gold was his and the silver his, ver. 8. But the declarations of peace which should be wrought in that city, and published in that temple, was the glory of the place. What though a nation should be brought to poverty and disgrace, have the waves of all kinds of afflictions go over their heads, while God keeps up the declarations of a spiritual peace, while he proclaims still the reconciliation he is the author of! That nation is still glorious, though externally miserable. God never employed his thoughts so much about the riches and honour of a nation, the gold and ornaments of the temple, as about the reconciliation of man. While God declares that to a people which is the subject of his thoughts, the delight of his heart, the glory of a nation is preserved, but when once he shuts his mouth, and will speak no more when his voice shall not be heard in our streets, when he shall shake off the dust of his feet against us, then we may write Ichabod upon ourselves, the 'glory is departed,' though wealth and outward glory should stay behind. The proclaiming the everlasting gospel is the fall of Babylon. When the auger comes forth with the everlasting gospel, Rev. xiv. 6, he is presently followed by another that brings the tidings of Babylon's fall: ver. 8, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' The removing the everlasting gospel is the rising of Babylon, and makes way for an army of judgments. Desolation follows upon a nation when God's 'soul departs from them,' Jer. vi. 8 and his soul departs from them when he breaks off any further treaties With men upon the articles of peace in the gospel. The gospel is nothing else but a proclamation of the articles of peace. His thoughts of peace were the cause of his sending Christ, the accomplishment of the reconciliation is the ground

of proclaiming it. He sent Christ to effect it, and his Spirit in the gospel to ratify it. It is called by the title of 'the word of reconciliation,' 1 Cor. v. 19, as though nothing else was intended in it, but to make God and man at peace together actually. It is a declaration of his ardent desire to return into amity with us, that he is satisfied by the death of his Son, and can admit us, without any contradiction to his justice, and with a stronger security than at the first creation. What a mercy is it that God should make known his gospel to us, and not to all in the world! If he did not intend to be reconciled to some in a nation, he would never transmit it from one nation to another. He has made known his Godhead and power to all, Rom. i. 20 but not his placability and mercy to all. Men may know by natural light that God is merciful, and yet not know that he has erected a propitiation for the world in Christ, and without this distinct knowledge no man can be saved under the New Testament; and by all the knowledge of God's mercy in the world, they were never able to arrive to this without a special revelation, no more than by the knowledge of the nature of a candle they can arrive to the knowledge of the nature of the sun in the heavens. Is not this a glory, a happiness? What praise does God deserve from us for it!

(a.) Third information. This doctrine acquaints us with the whole concern of faith. It shows,

[1.] What a strong foundation of faith we have. God chose him, called him, counselled him: he is wise, and would not choose a feeble and uncertain reconciler, unable to manage the business committed to him, he is immutable, and in regard of the holiness of his nature, will not and cannot recede from his own choice and approbation, he has done all that he can possibly to show himself placable and pacified. Christ has done all which concerned him, to the high satisfaction and content of

God. All the business lies on our side, whether we will join issue with God in it; whether our hearts shall endeavour to run parallel with the counsel of God in it; whether his approbation shall be the joyful measure of ours. What high ground have we to own and accept this pacification; or what pretence can we have to refuse it? If we do not refuse it, God cannot. His act hath been already passed, for Christ is a reconciler of his election. It is his glory and our security, that he is a God that changes not: Mal. iii. 6, 'For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.' Which seems to me to be spoken in relation to the messenger of the covenant, ver. 1, and not to the words immediately foregoing, ver. 5. As if God should say, I will punish, for I am unchangeable in my justice; which would infer rather their destruction than their preservation: but I have decreed the sending the messenger of the covenant, and I am unchangeable in this purpose, and in the accomplishing all the fruits of his coming, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. The assurance is stronger, since the decree has been manifested, and the satisfaction accepted by the injured Father. God has provided such a satisfaction to himself, in the death of his Son, as is answerable to the greatness of the creature's guilt, a remedy for the creature's fears. The God who was offended is pacified; the law which cursed the sinner is satisfied, the honour of God, which stood in the way of happiness, is repaired, He sent him when we did not desire him, he sent him when we did not expect him; when there was scarce any faith in the promise of the Messiah left in all the land of Judea, and sent him not to procure a temporal good, but the favour of God, which is the womb of inconceivable happiness; and was so far from dealing with us as enemies when we were in his hands, that he did the utmost he could to lay a foundation of amity, and put the management of it into the hands of the person dearest to

him, whom he could only trust.

Had God spared any cost to reconcile us, our doubts might be excusable; but since he has discovered a combination of gracious acts about Christ, that his thoughts only run upon this, and had no other intention but the glory of his name in the happiness of the offending creature; there is no room for distrust if we embrace his conditions. The very end of raising him and giving him glory, and therefore of all the actions preceding, was 'that your faith and hope might be in God,' 1 Pet. i. 21, that you might believe him to be a God reconciled, and thereupon hope for all blessings from him which he has promised. As crucified, Christ is the object of faith; as exalted, he is the ground of faith. This sufficiency of Christ as a ground of faith, God hath witnessed in the highest manner possible: 1 John v. 7, 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and those three are one,' i. e. that give an heavenly and divine authority to this truth. The word heaven is not to be taken for the place or local heaven, for many there bear witness to it, innumerable companies of angels, and martyrs, and glorified spirits but we must understand it of an extraordinary testimony. (As Job xx. 27, when it is said, 'The heaven shall reveal his iniquity,' i. e. God, by an extraordinary judgment, shall manifest to man, that he was a wicked creature.) 'And these three are one,' not only in their essence, but in their testimony, which gives a greater strength to this witness; as the testimony of a man is stronger, when it is in conjunction with the testimony of others, who are worthy to be credited; and this record is, that faith has a strong foundation, and will have a blessed success; it was the whole purpose of the blessed Trinity to join together in this extraordinary witness in all their acts, that Christ is a full ground of faith in God, so that now a faithful person may highly plead this,

Lord, I present thee with a mediator of thy own choice. Thou did choose him for me, before I did choose him for myself; thou did counsel him to undertake this office, before thou did command me to accept him; thou did call him to be a reconciler, before thou did call me to be reconciled; thou did bruise him for me; this is thy only act, and this I plead, and upon this foundation will I rest the weight of my soul. It is a ground for a brace plea; for God would not busy himself about any thing that should have no effect. God would not deceive his people, and feed them with vain hopes in a business of so great a concern; he will not go back from his own appointment, he cannot go back from his own word, his own deed, his own counsel, which he is pleased with, especially since it was not by permission, as Adam's sin was, but by his grace, which makes, in the apostle's judgment, the efficacy of Christ's death stronger for reconciliation, than Adam's offence was for the breach of amity: Rom. v. 1a, 'If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many,' i. e. acting all along in it and with it in a way of grace from the first original of his gift, and therefore it abounds, i. e. is more efficacious to the salvation of men, than Adam's was to their condemnation.

[2.] It shows us the nature and necessity of faith. God has appointed Christ a mediator between himself and man. God has testified himself reconciled in this mediator, all his acts about him signify those things. Faith on our parts is nothing else but an act of our souls, answering to those acts on the part of God. As God chose him, commissioned him, accepted him, glorified him, so faith is a full approbation of all the acts of God in this concern. A choice of Christ, an acceptance and glorifying him, putting our concerns into his hands, receiving him as our mediator and king, upholding him, a; far as

creature-ability reaches, in his office; resting in him, in his precepts by obedience, in his promises by dependence; and by such terms faith is set out in Scripture. As God looks to him as his rest, Isa. lxvi. 2, so we are to look to him and be saved, Isa. xiv. 22. As God looks unto him faith all the affections of a God, we should look unto him with all the affections of a creature. A mediator must be accepted by both parties that are at variance, and they must stand to what that mediator does. As when two princes are at difference, and a third interposes to make an agreement between them, they must both consent to accept of that prince for mediator, and both put their Concerns into his hand; he can be no mediator for him that does not accept of him in that relation. God has appointed this mediator, and settled him in this office, because God and man did not stand upon equal terms, God being the sovereign and only offended, man being the offending criminal. God has declared himself fully contented, and has complied with all the conditions of the first agreement; it only rests now that man will accept of him for those purposes for which God did constitute him, and comply with those conditions which God has settled. This is necessary; God saves no man against his will, and he that does not join issue with God in consenting to this, declares he has no purpose to be saved by him.

There must be some mediator to make God and man meet in agreement, to answer all the ends of God, and restore the fallen creature; God has appointed no other than his Son; if men could find out any other and propose him, God is not hound to accept of him. But what mediator can man appoint to treat with God? Without consent to this person, man is utterly undone, for all the wit of men and angels cannot find out a person fit for so great a business. If it were possible, it is an increase of the crime, and a high presumption for a criminal to stand

upon terms, and refuse the person the prince chooses to mediate for him, when there can be no exceptions against him, which shows the necessity of faith in Christ, in whom God has been reconciling the world, and only in him, and the duty of the creature to acquiesce in God's contrivance and constitution. God has taken a full measure of Christ and all his sufferings, and found him complete, therefore our faith should be complete in him. As God has singled him out from angels and men to be an expiatory sacrifice and a great king, no faith suits itself to this act of God in singling Christ out from all other competitors to be a reconciler and Lord, and the righteousness of God from all other righteousness. This faith must not be a naked assent, as God's act about Christ was not a naked assent, but a full, hearty consent; a joy in him, an acceptance of him with all his affections. So must ours be.

[3.] It shows us the true object of faith. Not God in the simplicity of his own being, not Christ alone in his incarnation and death, but 'God in Christ.' As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so God in Christ is the object of faith. God is the ultimate object of faith, Christ the immediate object: John xii. 44, 'He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me;' not on me ultimately, his faith is directed to God; as he that believes an ambassador does not only give credit to him, but to the prince that sent him. And to God, not as creator, but as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; to God as ordering, to Christ as acting; to God as commissioning, to Christ as commissioned: John xiv. 1, 'You believe in God, believe also in me;' in God as the author of all good, in me as the mediator and purchaser of all grace; in God as the first author, in Christ as the faithful executor. God is the sun, Christ is the beam; our eye ascends to the sun by the beam, but terminates not in the beam, but in the sun. Faith

ascends ultimately to God, as being the head of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3, and the salutation is first, 'Peace from God the Father,' 1 Cor. i. 3, the fountain and spring of all that Christ did. In Christ, we see the smiles of God; in Christ, we hear the joyful sound of his bowels, in Christ, we feel the beatings of his heart. The Father is the reconciler, the Son the reconciled, faith is therefore called faith towards God, Heb. vi. 1, and we are said to 'believe in God through Christ,' 1 Peter i. 21, and 'through his name,' Acts x. 43. God is the primary and principal object, Christ the immediate; both must be taken in. He that believes not in the Son, believes not in the Father; he that believes not in the Son as reconciler, believes not in the Father as reconciled. He that believes not in the satisfaction and mediation of Christ, believes not in the Father satisfied, for 'he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which has sent him, John v. 23, for they are one in the work of redemption, and in all the grace which flows down to us, as well as in nature. As Christ is the Son, equal with the Father, we believe in him as God; as he is mediator, we believe in him as God's servant, furnished by him with authority and ability. He is the proper object of faith, as being one with the Father. If he were not God, he could not be the object of trust: Jer xvii. 5, 7, 'Cursed is the man that trusts in man; blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord.' And a blessedness is pronounced to those that trust in the king God has set upon Sion, Ps. ii. 12, and in the chief corner-stone he has laid in Sion, 1 Peter ii. 6. He is the medium of our faith, as he is God's servant. We believe in God as the author, we believe in Christ as the means. Faith fastens upon Christ as a gift, upon God as the donor. It receives Christ as God's token and gift of transcendent kindness, and from ravishment with this gift, the soul ascends to confidence in the giver. It reads God's heart in Christ,

sees the glory of God in the face of Christ, and mounts up to clasp about one who has declared himself in amity. We eye Christ as the expiation, God as the judge; we see Christ upon the cross and in heaven. But we consider by whose authority he is there, for what ends he is there, and both the authority and the ends lead us naturally to God, to place our confidence in him as the rector, the acceptor, and in Christ as mediator. For faith is a grace that comforts the soul; joy and peace comes in by believing, John xv. `13. What joy can there be in Christ's actions and passion, unless we regard God the Father as concerned in them? God is a God of all comfort, as being a God of all peace. All Christ's sufferings signify nothing but as they refer to God, and have his approbation and concurrence; so our faith is not right, and signifies nothing, which does not make the whole honour redound to God.

[4.] It shows the acceptableness of faith to God, and the high pleasure he takes in it. Faith is an approbation of God's actions herein, and of the whole scheme; it is a sealing the counterpart, as God's act was a sealing the original deed; it is a testimony to the glory of all those attributes he honoured in the mediation of Christ: as Abraham by his faith 'gave glory to God,' Rom. iv. 20. Faith does actively glorify God, and passively too, for every one that trusts in Christ is 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' Eph. i. 12. To his truth and to his power, which were concerned, one in the intention of making good his promise, the other in his ability to perform it; so in believing in God as reconciled through Christ, and that he has taken off the curses of the law, and will bestow an everlasting righteousness, and relying upon him in a way of obedience, as Abraham did in that case, we acknowledge God's veracity, wisdom, holiness, justice, love; and we acknowledge (Christy love, tenderness, and sufficiency. It is an applauding the

wisdom of God in his choice. Certainly, that God gives us so many exhortations to be followers of him, to be like him, is delighted to see men have the same sentiments with himself, to be like him in their judgments of things in regard of knowledge, and like him in the practice of things in regard of holiness; he delights to see that his Son's blood was not shed in vain; to perceive himself and his Son glorified by men in laying down their weapons. Every act of faith is a new glory to God; it is 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' God justifies us by this way of reconciliation, and our acceptance of it justifies God from all charge and imputations from the creature, as the approving of John's baptism, Luke vii. 29, was a justification of God. Next to the joy God has in Christ, he has a joy in the beginnings of faith: there is 'joy in the presence of the angels,' Luke xv. 10. Christ has a joy in the faith and obedience of his people, John xv. 11; and when their faith is perfect, they shall at last be 'presented before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy:' Jude 24, 'The presence of his glory;' God will appear more glorious when he comes to see all the purchased and redeemed ones of Christ, that have approved of his gracious and wise contrivance, and given him the honour of his attributes by a believing obedience to his will. 'With exceeding joy;' since the subject of this joy is not determined in the text, it may be understood of the joy of God, of the mediator, of the saints. 'Presented'; God shall receive the presents en egalaliasei, with an exulting joy.

(4.) Fourth information. We see here the strength and sufficiency of Christ for all the concerns of his mediation. God would not have called him out for this work, had he not been able to accomplish it; he would never have laid the government of things, in order to a restoration, upon unable shoulders. God would no more have chosen him, or been

pleased with any proposition of it, than he was pleased with sacrifice and burnt offerings. God would not fail of his end; his end was reconciliation; Christ therefore was able to pacify the sharpest wrath. It was not agreeable to God's wisdom to choose an unable or unskilful agent. God was certain of the event; he would never have exposed the human nature, united to the second person, to a task wherein it should have utterly sunk under the justice of God. God had more love to his creature, than to venture the eternal concerns of those he was resolved to save, in a weak bottom, that could not have resisted the sturdiest rocks and most blustering storms. God foresaw the vast number of those sins (though numberless to man) that stood in need of pardon, when he singled out Christ to this charge. It was for 'many offences' he intended the merit of Christ, Rom. v. 16, even for as many offences as those for whom he died would be guilty of, and he would not lay them upon the shoulders of one who was not able to bear them. He was every way able, in regard he had the same nature and glory with the Father; he was every way fit, in the affinity he had with both parties, whereby he could reach out his hand to both: the hand of his deity to the Father, that of his humanity to man. As God, he could satisfy for all mankind; as man, he could suffer. Had he not been every way fit and able, the Majesty of heaven, who was desirous of reconciliation, would not have pitched upon him. No creature could satisfy by suffering, because no creature had an infinite dignity in his person to render temporary sufferings of infinite value; nor could any creature present a service as valuable as the offence was provoking. No man can be profitable to God, Job xxii. 2. Good services among men take not off the sentence of the law in a court of judicature, without a pardoning act of the supreme power. Where was there any creature who had strength enough to bear our sins, and dignity enough to satisfy for them? Our

offences were too great a load for a creature's strength, or a creature's suffering, or expiation. Here was the humanity in conjunction with the divinity, to be the sacrifice; and the divinity in conjunction with the humanity, to be the altar for the sanctification of it. The whole method of God's proceedings assures us of the sufficiency of Christ for the work of mediation; had he not been fit, God would never have laid all his honour at stake in the choice of him to it. And the sequel shows that God is fully satisfied with it, since, on the consideration of it, justice forgets the injuries done to the Deity, and treats believers as heirs of heaven instead of rebels.

(5.) Fifth information. It gives an assurance of all spiritual and eternal blessings, since God was in Christ reconciling the world, and was the author of all the methods of it, and the acceptor of the performance. Christ must cease to be a reconciler, before God can cease to be reconciled. God was in Christ from eternity in the resolve of it; he has been in Christ in time in the acting of it; he will be in Christ for rendering the fruits of it fully ripe. Christ is the knot and baulk of the reconciliation, and is gone to heaven in our nature to secure it. God is in Christ approving it, the second person is in the humanity ensuring it; his conducting Christ through the world in human infirmities to eternal glory, is an assurance that he will dignify all those that by faith lay hold on him, and lay down their weapons against him. If he be in Christ reconciling the world, he is in Christ wrapping up all other blessings for us; since it is an everlasting gospel, the womb of it is full of everlasting blessings.

[1.] God's end is not yet perfected. God has not attained his full end; reconciliation was but in order to further blessings. There may be a reconciliation wrought between parties, whereby a party is freed from punishment, without being partaker of a special amity. God did send

Christ to make peace, not simply to be at peace with his creature, but to second it with other mercies which the enmity before was a bar unto. It is a reconciliation that teems with many more inexpressible blessings. The riches of his grace, and the glory of his grace, would not be fully displayed by a single peace. The mystery which he proposed in himself, was, that he might gather together all in one, even in cultist, to the full possession of the purchased inheritance, 'to the praise of his glory,' Eph. i. 10, 14; his glory would not attain its full praise without further blessings at the heels of this. He will rejoice in believers for ever. How can he rejoice in them if they never come to rejoice in themselves; if there be always a defect and indigence in them? The remnants of enmity will drop off, the appearances of anger in his face as a Father will one day for ever vanish, and every frown be smoothed. God is perfectly reconciled, but believers are not yet fully fit for all the fruits of it; but since he has been in Christ laying the foundation in grace, he will be in him rearing the superstructure to glory. God would be at peace with us, that he might bestow the highest kindness upon us. Justice stood in the way, and God would have his justice satisfied, that mercy might flow down without any obstacle. Since, therefore, he has been in Christ contenting his justice, he will be in Christ fully pleasing his mercy. As infinite justice was not contented without the death of Christ, so mercy will not be contented without an efflux of benefits upon the believer. We should not understand God fully appeased, if things stood always at one stay.

[2.] The glory of God is concerned in it. If he be the author of it, he will no less be the guardian of it; the same motives of honour and love which excited him to contrive it, and brought it to this issue, will have the same influence on him to ripen all the fruits of it. As he has

the title of 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,' in regard of the whole interest he has in this affair of redemption, so the apostle gives him another title in relation to the same work: Eph. i. 17, 'The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.' He is the Father of glory, as he is the fountain of all the glory which accrues from this work; as well as he is the Father of glory subjectively, in the glory of the divine essence infinitely glorious; and objectively, as all glory is due to him from his creatures. He is the Father of glory, as all the actions of Christ did centre in the honour of the Father; or the Father of glory, as being the author of an those gracious and glorious communications designed to be bestowed by him, as the Clod of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon his creatures. It is by him, as the Father of glory in Jesus Christ, that a 'spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ' is given, a full and complete knowledge of him, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. If God designs to show himself a Father of glory, as the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if he shows himself a Father of glory in increasing the knowledge of Christ by a spirit of wisdom in the hearts of his people and acquainting them with the riches intended for them, the crown of his glory would be dim if there were only n knowledge of it, and no possession at last, and full enjoyment of all that which Christ has purchased. How little glory would God get by acquainting them with it, if the knowledge of it should not at last mount up into fruition!

[3.] All that remains to be done in this kind is more feasible, and hat less obstacles than what already has been done. The grand obstacle to the fullness of his mercy, in regard of the demands of justice, is quite removed, the merit of Christ has surmounted the demerit of men; and what is behind is a lighter thing to the poller, wisdom, and mercy of God, than the laying the first stone of our redemption was. Since

the delivery of his Son to death, which might have found resistance from the affections of the Father, has been performed, what is there that can be capable of any demur? How is it possible a believer should perish, since Christ has suffered to reconcile infinite justice, by the will of God? How is it possible he should miss of eternal happiness, since for God to give his Son to die for reconciliation, is infinitely more than the justification of him by his blood, and saving him through his life from wrath? Peace is the root of all joy and blessedness, and in the angels' song, good will towards men follows peace on earth. When peace is made, there is no bar to the highest manifestations of good will.

[4.] No enemies can possibly obstruct it. If God were in Christ reconciling the world, who can prevent the execution of his resolution to the full? Since it has been thus far carried on, all the venom of Satan spit out against a Christian, can no more deprive him of what God will do, than it could hinder what God has done. He was baffled in attempting the hindrance of it, though he engaged all the powers of hell in the contest; and was fooled, since the way he took to prevent it did eventually promote it; and in his resolving to be an hinderer, he was, by a reach of infinite wisdom beyond his own wit, made a furthered of it; and if he could not prevent the foundation, he shall be less able to deface the superstructure; and if the greater sins of unregeneracy did not hinder the influence and application of it, the infirmities after regeneration shall not obstruct the full perfection of it.

(6.) Sixth information. It shows us the unworthiness of man's dealing with God. God cannot do anything higher to sweeten our spirits towards him, he has not another or a dearer Son to give; nothing more can be acted upon the world for the security of the creature. There are no

wider channels for the love of God to run in, no higher way to secure his honour from contempt, and his creature from vengeance. He was angry with us, and with good cause; we were children of wrath, and deserved it; God is appeased by the blood of Christ, he delights in the laying aside his anger, he has done his utmost to assure men of it.

Then certainly,

[1.] Our rejecting Christ, and the way of his appointment, is a high contempt of God. It is a slight of God in the glory of his grace, an envying him the honour of the restoration. Adam envied his sovereignty and independence, and every unbeliever envies his wisdom and merciful bowels. Since his heart was set upon this work, that all the counsels of eternity centre in it, a deafness to his proposals is a contradiction to all his counsels, and the great desire of his heart.

As faith in Christ redounds to the honour of God, as being an approbation of all God's acts in this affair, so unbelief of Christ redounds to the contempt of God, as slighting all those gracious manifestations of his grace and wisdom. As the murder of a man, and every degree of murder, in the contempt of him who is the image of God, is a dishonour to God in regard of the relation man bears to God in that respect, Gen ix. 6, so every unworthy usage of Christ, every act of unbelief, redounds to the dishonour of the Father, whose ambassador Christ is, and the exact image of his person. If men do not heartily think reconciliation by Christ worth their highest thoughts and entertainments, they reproach God, as if he were busy from eternity about just nothing, or a sleeveless matter, and run through so many stages in his acts about Christ to no purpose. It is a 'making light' of a rich feast of God's providing, Mat. xxii. 5, it is a self-destroying fury, worse than that of devils. It is a making all other sins against God more sinful: John xv. 22, 'If I had not come and

spoken to them, they had not had sin,' their sin had not appeared with so much malice.

[2.] Our jealousies of God. Men are fond of suspicions of God when they are struck down with a sense of their sin, though this despair is not so ordinary as presumption. This is a measuring God by man, and bringing him down to the creature's model; a contracting God's goodness according to the creature's scantiness. Can there be any just reflections upon God, after the manifestation of his earnestness for the reconciliation of man? If the owning God in those acts be a justifying God, Luke vii. 29, 'They justified God,' the disowning him is a condemnation of God. As Abraham glorified God when he staggered not at the promise, but clasped it in his arms by faith, so we dishonour God inexpressibly, when we stagger not only at one promise, but at his whole scene of amazing, acts in the founding and carrying of his work in Christ. It is unworthy in any truly humbled soul to imagine God an enemy still, after all his mysterious contrivances for the relief of the creature, and his delight in his Son for answering his purposes.

[3.] Our enmity and disobedience to God, though God be in Christ reconciling the world, as therefore we disparage him by our jealousies of him, we also deal unworthily with him by sinful presumptions. There are terms expected to be performed by us; it is not a lazy belief, an assent to this, accompanied with a love of any one sin (which was the cause of God's anger), that gives men a title to it. As God's love in this, and his acceptance was not a lazy love, &c., neither must our faith. The application of it is not but to such a faith that purifies the heart. For us not to leave the love of sin, when God has quenched his wrath in the blood of Christ, is an unworthy usage of God, and cuts a man off from any interest in this reconciliation. Abraham's faith,

whereby he glorified God, appeared eminent in this act of obedience, in a willingness to sacrifice his son. Not to endeavour to please God in a course of obedience, is to keep up our enmity under God's offers of amity. To presume upon his goodness, to act the highest unbelief under pretences of the contrary, to think God will be your friend while you persist in your enmity, is a contradiction to the whole tenor of the gospel. Faith in his promises is never accounted of, without faith in his precepts. As he has been a God in Christ reconciling the world, so he has been commanding in Christ the world to a submission, and it is outrage and high ingratitude not to endeavour to please God, since he has been so careful to please us.

[4.] Omissions of prayer. Has God done so much to render us capable of coming to him, and himself capable to receive us with honour to himself? And is it not very disingenuous and slighting to neglect this privilege, founded upon the counsels of wisdom, and the cost of the blood of Christ? Before, we could with no more comfort approach to God, than a guilty malefactor could to the judge; but since God has laid by his fury in Christ, and discovers an altering glory in the face of Christ, what can we plead for our neglects of his allurements, our seldom approaches to him, or our slight and lazy addresses? He uses his friend unkindly that will not make use of his friendship, and upon urgent occasions desire his assistance. All neglects imply either an inability or unwillingness in God, and both cast dirt upon his reconciling work, since there can be no greater evidences of his power and willingness than he has discovered in the whole working of it. We virtually deny the Father to be the fountain of all grace, when we go not to him; we deny Christ to be the purchaser of all peace, when we go not in his name. God sent Christ to 'consecrate a new and living way for us to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' Heb. x. 19. By

neglects we disparage God's mission, and Christ's consecration, and the liberty he has procured. What should we have done if we had been to approach to God as a judge upon a tribunal of justice, when we will not draw near to him as a judge upon a mercy-seat, through the reconciliation wrought in Christ?

Well, then, let us consider the danger of slighting this reconciliation. Well may that man deserve doubly the curses of the law, that will not believe and obey after God's demonstrations of the riches of grace; well may he deserve to be crushed in pieces under the insupportable burden of his own guilt, that will still be fond of his treason against a reconciling God. Shall the great king descend from the throne of his majesty to become a reconciler, and after that a solicitor, and feel nothing but heels lifted up (John xiii. 18) instead of hearts? Such an one is doubly a child of wrath: first, by nature; and after, by a particular refusal to become a friend. The interest of our souls lies at stake; without changing our unworthy courses, wrath will be executed upon us; God has provided no other reconciler, and is resolved not to let his weapons fall by any other motive than the blood of the Redeemer.

(7.) Seventh information. It shows us the way of all religious worship. If God be in Christ reconciling the world, all our recourse to, and dealing with, a reconciling God, must be in and through Christ. As God's motion to us is in Christ, our motions to God must be through the same medium. He is 'the way, the truth, and the life,' John xiv. 6. 'No man comes to the Father but by me;' as no man has the Father coming to him but by Christ, the way whereby God communicates truth and life to us, the way whereby we must offer up our true and lively services to him. As God is the ultimate object of faith, Christ the medium, so God is the object of worship, Christ the medium. As Christ is equal with

God, he is the object of faith, the object of worship; as Christ is God's servant, he is the way whereby we believe, the way whereby we have access to God. The soul must be carried altogether by the consideration of Christ, in presenting petitions in his name; in expecting answers upon the ground of his merit. Ye must regard him as the meritorious cause of our access to the throne of grace, and our welcome at it. How can we go to God as reconciled, but in the name of the reconciler? We cannot come with any boldness upon any other account. It is by the knowledge of the Son we ascend to the knowledge of the Father, by the merit of the Son we have access to the throne of the Father, by the intercession of the Son we have access to communion with the Father; in the name of the Son, we are to ask what we want, and by the merit of the Son we must only expect what we beg. It is as 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' that he communicates himself to us, Eph. i. 8; it is as the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' we must 'bow our knees' to him, Eph. iii. 14, remembering still, that Christ is the band that links God and us together. What confidence can we have in God, if we respect him not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in him only he is the Father of believers, otherwise he is the Father of the whole world, a provoked Father; in Christ a reconciled Father. As the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our praises must be offered to him, 1 Pet. i. 3. All acts of worship are only acceptable to the Father through Christ: Heb. xiii. 15, 'By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God;' all must have the stamp of this reconciler upon them. It is by his satisfaction we have the privilege to come to the holiest, before the seat of God, with our prayers and services. It is in his blood, the sword, set to prevent our entrance into paradise, has lost both its edge and flame. It is by the blood of Christ only we have this boldness, Heb. x. 19, 20. His blood is our best plea, his flesh our

only screen from the wrath of God in all our services. We must, therefore, in all our services rest in his office, propose him as the mediator of our services.

(8.) Eighth information. There is then no mediator, no reconciler, but Christ. God is in Christ reconciling the world. In him, and none but him; in him, exclusively of all others. He is indeed 'the Christ, the Saviour of the world,' John iv. 42. By way of excellency! in regard of the danger he saves us from; by way of exclusion, in regard of the sole designation of his person, exclusive of all others. We must believe that Christ is he, the only person designed in the prophecies, promises, and types: John viii. 24, 'if you believe not that I am he.' There was none anciently but he; he was set up from eternity, he was the only lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This seed of the woman was only in the promise, only designed by the types; by this band only were the ancient believers united to God; in this Immanuel he was God with them as well as with us. None were courted God's friends before, but by his mediation; none can be since, because God has accepted no other. No ark, but that of God's appointing, could secure Noah and resist the force of the waters. None hereafter, he is 'the same for ever', he is today, as he was before, Heb. xiii. 8. The heart of God is fixed upon him, and his resolution concerning the duration of his office unalterable; he has summed up all the dispensations of former ages in him: Eph. i. 10, 'He has gathered together in one all things in Christ, even in him,' in no others All other things were preparations to him, shadows of him. But the perfection of all was in Christ; and God, who had various ways of communicating himself to men, has summed up his whole will in his Son, and manifested that all his transactions with men did terminate in his Son Christ, Web. ii. 1, 2. These are the last days, God will speak by no other.

[1.] None else was ever appointed by God. No other sacrifice was ever substituted in the room of sinners; none else was the centre of the prophecies, the subject of the promises, the truth of the types, no name erected for a shelter for the nations to trust in but this name: Isa. xlii. 4, 'The isles shall wait for his law;' Mat. xii. 21, 'In his name shall the Gentiles trust.' None else has the title of peacemaker conferred upon him, Eph. ii. 14, which title he has by his death on the cross, Col. i. 20. Those, therefore, that reject this way of mediation, must infallibly perish. He that will have any good by a prince, must go to that minister of state he has settled for that end. God has ordained no other mediator. God has thought none else fit to trust with his concerns, to do his work, restore his honour, receive glory from him. We must acquiesce in God's judgment, and not set up the pride of our reason and will, in contradiction to infinite wisdom. None else was ever honoured by the voice of the Father, testifying him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. None besides him had this testimony, none in conjunction with him, none in subordination to him in the work of mediation; that he might be the first born among many brethren, enjoying all the rights of primogeniture. As God employed no other in the creation, so he employs no other in the restoration of the world.

[2.] None else was ever fit for this. Satisfaction there must be for the honour of God, that the law might be vindicated, justice glorified, holiness illustrated; none but Christ, an infinite person, was able to do all this. Security there must be to the Creator, that the honour of God might not be a gain at a loss. This could not be insured in the hands of a mutable creature; so that by any other mediator we cannot honour God by a suitable satisfaction, nor promise ourselves an unshaken preservation. Without infinite satisfaction, guilt must

remain; without infinite power to preserve it entire, guilt would return. This mediator only had an alliance to both parties: to God, whereby he could call him Father; to us, whereby he could call us brethren. That God and man might be joined in one covenant of grace, the mediator of that covenant is God and man in one person. Had he been only God, he had had no alliance to our nature; had he been only man, he had had no alliance to the divine nature, and had been an insufficient mediator, Incapable of performing what was requisite for our redemption. In this posture of fitness, there is none else in heaven and earth. Had the mediator been only man, he had been incapable of satisfying; had he been only God, he had been incapable of suffering; but being God and man, he was capable of both. No motive was powerful enough to appease the anger of the Father, but the blood of the cross; and no power strong enough to bear; no person worthy to present sufferings, but only this mediator. It was upon no other person that the Spirit descended like a dove, to furnish his human nature with all ability for the discharge of this trust. He is infinite,' and what can be added to infinite? If infinite be not sufficient to reconcile, finite beings must for ever come short of effecting it for us.

[3.] None else was ever accepted, or designed to be accepted, but this Mediator. No other surety was ever accepted by God for the payment of our debts. All sacrifices 'could not make the comers thereunto perfect,' Heb. x. 1, could not set them right in the esteem of God, and make a reconciliation with him; they were an image, not the life, and God accepted them as shadows, not as the substance; the repetition of them was a certain evidence of their inability to effect the reconciliation of man, Heb. x. 2, as the iteration of a medicine daily sheers its inefficacy to cure. The law was not able after our fall, by reason of our disagreement with the terms of it, to bring us near to

God. God's justice and our sins stood in the way of amity, therefore God commanded bounds to be set to the people when the law was given, Exod. xix. 12, that they should not come near the mount. But the covenant of grace, veiled in the ceremonial law, was laid in the blood of Christ, typified by that blood sprinkled by Moses upon the people, Exod. xxiv. 8, to which the apostle alludes, 'the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of Abel,' Heb. xii. 24, than the blood of the firstlings, which Abel sprinkled, Gen. iv. 4, which was the first eminent type of the death of Christ upon record, which the Spirit of God mentions here as the first sacrifice, though no question Adam did not spend all that time between his fall and the growth of Abel to man's stature, without a sacrifice. Those sacrifices were poor and feeble, unworthy in themselves of the acceptance of God, not able to expiate sin, nor ever intended for propitiation, because they had no intrinsic value in them for such an end. But the blood of Christ, being the blood of the Lamb of God without spot, is a worthy and valuable price for the sins of the world. These, nor our own righteousness, were ever intended to be of worth, or strength, to expiate the sin of the soul and reconcile us to God; Christ is the only peacemaker, the only peace-conveyer; no other righteousness is called the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God's appointment, or the righteousness of God's acceptance. Anything in ourselves is too low and sordid to be joined with him. God has accepted none else, and we must have recourse to none else. Whatsoever we would join with him is unworthy of God's acceptance. None else was set forth to be a propitiation, and no means appointed of enjoyment, but faith in his blood. This blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat in heaven, as the blood of sacrifices was in the temple, which stilled justice, refreshed mercy, and revived it towards us.

[4.] None else ever did do that for us which was necessary to our reconciliation with God. None else ever interposed as a shelter between the irresistible wrath of God and our souls. He alone 'bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows,' Isa. liii. 4; he received into his own bowels that sword which was sharpened and pointed for us; 'by his stripes we are healed;' upon him alone did the scorching wrath of his Father fall for our peace. He trod the wine-press alone, none of the people were with him; he endured the bruises of his Father, and the reproaches of his enemies, and would not desist till he had settled the foundation of our peace. He bore the punishment of our sins, all our iniquities there considered by God in his person, and he paid what we owed. 'In one body' he reconciled us, Eph. i. 16; 'his own bode,' says Peter, 1 Peter ii. 24. None drew in the same yoke with him, none were partners with him in his sufferings, none sharers with him in his office. He sealed heaven alone, and alone made the entrance to his Father easy. None ever did, none ever could, answer the demands of the law, silence the voice of justice, by removing the burden of our guilt. He only filled up that gap and gulf which was between God and us; why should anything in our hearts carry away the honour of a Mediator from him, since none else removed the miseries we had deserved, and purchased the mercies we wanted? Till God therefore confers the title of peacemaker, and prince of peace, upon any other, own nothing else as a sharer with him in this honour; that would be to contradict God's order, deny his sufficiency, and contemn his kindness, and turn our backs upon the only tower that can hinder us from being crushed by the wrath of God. But, alas! men delight in their worm-eaten, withered righteousness, which they set up in the room of the Mediator; this, the grand cheat of the world, claims a precedence of Christ.

[5.] None else is appointed, or can secure to us the fruits of

reconciliation. As God is in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ giving out the fruits of that reconciliation, not imputing our trespasses to us. He is not only the Mediator of reconciliation, to make our peace, but the Mediator of intercession, to preserve it. He only took away our sins by his death, he only can preserve our reconciliation by his life. As he suffered effectually, by the strength of his deity, to make our peace, so he intercedes, in the strength of his merit, to preserve our peace. He did not only take away, but 'abolish and slay the enmity,' Eph. ii. 10, 16. He slew it, to make it incapable of living again, as a dead man is; and if any sin stands up to provoke justice, he sits as 'an advocate' to answer the process, 1 John ii. 2. All the gifts of grace, not only in their first purchase, but in their full conveyance and abundant communication, are 'by and through him,' Rom. v. 15. By him only we can come to the throne of grace; in this beloved Son only we are accepted for adopted sons, Eph. i. 6. To none else God gave children for a seed; children to beget, and preserve, and offer up to him at the last day. He rent the veil by his death, opened the holy of holies by his passion, and keeps it open by his intercession, that we may have a communion with God and a fellowship with angels by this only Mediator. Immanuel is a name only belonging to him, Isa. vii. 14; not that this was the name by which only he was called, but that this was his work, to make way for God's dwelling among the sons of men, and communicating to them the richest of his gifts. Not an angel in heaven but has his standing upon the account of Christ as their head; and therefore not a man upon earth can be secure under any other wing, or have the conveyance of grace through any other channel. He is the prosagweuV, the introducer of us into the inward chambers of the Father's goodness, where our bonds are cancelled, our pardon assured, and our Father, who was angry with us,

falls upon our necks and kisses us. Our constant access to the Father is 'by him,' Rom. v. 2, Eph. iii. 12, 'access,' prosagwgh. He sits in heaven to lead us by the hand to the Father for whatsoever we want, as a prince's favourite brings a man into the presence of a gracious prince. The 'grace of Christ' is put in order by Paul before the 'love of God' and the 'communion of the Holy Ghost' in the benedictions, because it is the only band that knits us to God, and the foundation of every expression of love from the Father, and of every act of communion we have with the Holy Ghost. Whatsoever grace God works in us is 'through Jesus Christ,' Heb. xiii. 21; he is therefore 'made to us wisdom and sanctification, as well as righteousness and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. God transmits his virtues through Christ; as the heavens, which impregnate all things, transmit their virtues hither by the sun. Well, then, let us have recourse only to this Mediator; the fire of God's wrath will consume us without this screen. It is the blood of the Lamb of God's appointment which can only secure us from the scorching heat of the wrath to come, typified by the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the posts of the Israelites' doors; not so much to be a mark to the angel, who could have known both the houses and persons of the Israelites from the Egyptians without that sign on the post, as to represent this mediatory blood of the Lamb of God as our only security from destroying fury. Let men make lies their refuge, and hide themselves under falsehood, the false coverings of their own righteousness, and think to shelter themselves from the overflowing scourge, Isa. xxviii. 15-17. It will be a miserable self-deceit, the hail will sweep away such a refuge, and the waters will overflow such a hiding-place. It is the corner-stone which God lays in Zion that is our only security, because he is only elect, 1 Peter ii. 6, chosen by God, and precious in his account, ver. 6; which is inserted (as some

observe) between those two verses to show the miserable shifts of men to provide shelters for themselves, other mediations and mediators, not regarding the foundation God has laid, all which will end in self-destruction, as they began in self-deceit. All human satisfactions, intercessions of saints, refuge in any other righteousness, are weak hiding-places to preserve us from the overflowing waters of divine vengeance. No sure foundation but the stone God has laid in Sion.

One would think there were not so much need to press this information.; but whosoever will look into the world, and into his own heart, will find it necessary. What the papists do one way, many protestants do another; one sets up mediators without him, others set up mediators within them. The great business Christ urged in the days of his flesh was this, that he was the Messiah, the only person sent of God to redeem. Though men profess Christ is so, yet it is too common to bring in some sharer with him.

(9.) Ninth information. We may here see the incomprehensible love of God, in that he did not deal with us *summo jure*, as a severe law-giver. We are not deeply sensible of it; if we had a due sense of this love, we should have little kindness for sin. It was not a low kind of love, but 'exceeding riches of grace in his kindness towards us in Jesus Christ,' Eph. ii. 7. Grace never appeared in all its royalty but in Christ. A sweet combination of grace in the Father and the Son. Had the Son manifested his love in offering himself, nothing could have been done without the acceptance of the Father; had the Father manifested his love in moving it, nothing could have been done without the Son's undertaking it. The first motion was from the Father, as the fountain of the Trinity; the execution was from the Son, by a free and dutiful acceptance of the offer of the Father. In this work God 'set his heart

upon man,' Job vii. 17; the glorifying his name in the redemption of man was that which ran in his mind, and had the chiefest place in his heart from eternity. How great also is the love of Christ, since he was the person that the first sin was particularly against, as well as against the Father; it being an affecting of wisdom to be like God, and Christ was the wisdom of God. Every day's mercy is a miracle, but the mercies of our lives are to this of reconciling us by his Son, as a molehill to a mountain, a grain of sand to the whole frame of nature. When by our offence we were fallen under the sentence of the law, and shut up in the hands of justice, and could not satisfy for the offence, God pays a ransom out of the treasures of his own bowels, opens the heart of his dearest Son, and redeems us by the most precious thing he had: here love does come to the top of its glory, and does perfectly triumph.

[1.] His own love and compassion was the first rise of this reconciliation. This way by Christ was a 'new' as well as a 'living way,' Heb. xi. 20, not known by all the wisdom of man. New to men, new to angels, it could not enter into any of their hearts to conceive of it before it was declared. He purposed in himself, Eph. i. 9. It lay hid in the womb of his own love. There was none beside him from eternity to put up a request. It was the result of his bowels, before the being of any creature was the effect of his power. Though our justification, sanctification, and eternal blessedness be the fruits of the meritorious death of the Redeemer, yet the first source of all, in his mission and commission, was absolutely from the inconceivable love of God; whatsoever is merited by Christ for us, his first mission was not merited by himself; his personal relation to God rendered him fit for the honour and office of a mediator, but as mediator he did not merit his own sending into the world, because he was settled mediator

by God, and sent, too, before he could as mediator merit. Christ did not die to render God compassionate to us, but to open the passage for his bowels to flow down upon us, with the honour of his justice. God's bowels wrought within himself, but the sentence pronounced by justice was a bar to the flowing of them upon man. Christ was sent to remove that by his death, that the mercy which sprang up from eternity in the heart of God might freely flow down to the creature. And when the time came, God looked about and 'saw that there was no man,' none to deprecate his wrath, and therefore 'his own arm brought salvation,' Isa. lix. 16, and 'his own righteousness sustained him,' i. e. his own truth and righteousness engaged in the promises made to the fathers. The satisfaction of Christ does not impair the kindness of God; his pity to us did precede the constitution of Christ. Had there been no compassion, there had been no contrivance, no acceptance of a mediator; but since he had threatened eternal death to sinners, there was need of an honourable reconciliation by death to maintain the honour of God's truth engaged in that sentence, and content his justice, which was obliged to execute the sentence for the honour of his truth. It was by the grace of God that Christ tasted death for us, Heb. ii. 9.

[2.] It is the greatest love that God can show. As Abraham could not skew a greater proof of faith and obedience than by offering his Son, the son of his affections, and his only son, so neither can God show a richer testimony of his affections to us than by making his own Son an oblation for us. How mighty tender was God of our salvation! How valuable was man to him, when he prized him at the rate of his only Son i As high as God did esteem Christ, so highly did he value his own glory in man's reconciliation.

First. His love was more illustrious than if he had pardoned us by his absolute prerogative without a satisfaction. It had been a glorious

mercy, but had wanted that enriching circumstance, the death of his Son; in this way he honours his mercy more than our sin had abused it. His mercy had not appeared in such sweetness had not Christ drunk the bitter cup; mercy sung sweetest when justice roared loudest against the Redeemer. Every attribute had a signal elevation in this way of reconciliation, but especially his kindness. We should have been happy had he pardoned us without a satisfaction, but neither his love nor his justice had been wound up to so high a strain. God did not aim only at the praise of his grace, but the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6; he would have his grace appear in the richest attire, and with all the ornaments heaven could clothe it with.

This is evident,

First, By the condition of the person. He was his Son. Was it not the victorious triumph of mercy to make his Son a sufferer when we were the sinners, to make his own Son a servant to his justice when we were the debtors? He was his 'only begotten Son,' John iii. 16, not merely his own Son, but his only Son; he had but one Son in the world, and that Son he made a sacrifice for the world; he had not another begotten Son in being. He was 'the express image of his person,' one who was equal with God without robbery, or detracting anything from his glory, Philip. ii. 6; an only Son, enjoying the same majesty and perfections in the Deity with the Father; a Son dearer to him than heaven and earth; the Son he solaced himself with from all eternity, Prov. viii. 30, before ever any stone of the world was laid; and if we could suppose numberless worlds created before this, yet all his joy was placed in him. Can there be a greater assurance of the immensity of his love than in sending a Son that lay in his bosom; a Son who never in the least offended him, nor ever could? He always did the things which pleased him; and when he was in the world there was nothing in him that

the devil could fasten upon as any resemblance to himself, John xiv. 30. In this Son was God reconciling the world. The nearer and dearer the Son was to the Father, the greater is the Father's love in pitching upon him to undertake this work. His love bore proportion to the greatness of that Son whom he sent.

Secondly, The condition in which he was sent. He was made lower than angels to stoop to the condition of a servant. To send an only Son out of his bosom to the cross, an innocent Son from glory to ignominy, and not upon a sudden resolve (which might be thought a passion), but by a deliberate counsel, never repenting of it, always glorying in it, even to this day, is a discovery of the most rooted affection. The lower the condition of Christ was, the more wonderful is the kindness of God in sending him in it. If we would walk into the garden and see Christ besmeared with clods of blood, step up to mount Calvary and see him hanging upon the cross, look up to heaven and see the bright sword sheathed in the bowels of the Son of God, see him with his scourged back, his nailed hands, his pierced side, ask then your souls this question, whether here be not bottomless love? whether any affection of God can be more miraculous than this, to give his Son to endure all this for our ransom, the Lord of glory to suffer this for rebellious malefactors? whether this is not greater kindness to you than if he had pardoned you without the sufferings of his only Son?

Secondly, It is a love that cannot be wound up to a higher strain. It is the utmost bound, if I may so speak, of an infinite love: 'God so loved the world,' John iii. 16. So, above the conception of any creature; so, that his affection cannot mount an higher pitch. His power could discover itself in laying the foundation of millions of worlds, and his wisdom could shine brighter in the structure of them; but if he should create as many worlds as there are sands and dust upon

the face of this, and make every one of them more transcendent in glory than this, than the sun is above a clod of earth or an atom of dust, yet he could not confer a greater love upon it than he has done upon this; than to be, upon their revolt, a God in Christ reconciling those worlds to himself. There is not a choicer mercy than to be in amity with God, nor a more affectionate way of procuring and establishing it, than by giving his only Son to effect it: in giving whom, he contracts to give himself to be our God, and live with us for ever. If God should take the meanest beggar that lives upon common alms, and transform him into an angel, and make him the head of that heavenly host, it would be incomparably a far less love than the gift of his Son for him. A more condescending kindness cannot be conceived, unless the Father himself should become incarnate, and die for man; but that cannot be supposed. If the fountain of the Trinity, the Judge of all, should take flesh, and suffer, to whom should the offering be made? The rector and judge is to be satisfied, and it is not fit for the judge to make satisfaction to himself; but the Father has given that person next to himself to be our propitiation; most fit, as having the Father, the fountain of the Trinity, to offer the sacrifice of himself unto.

Thirdly, It is a greater love than has yet been shown to angels. The angels in heaven never did partake of such a vast ocean of love, for the Son of God never died for them, though they came under his wing, as a head exalted to that dignity, as a reward of his death. The angels came under him as an exalted head, but not as a crucified Saviour: they have their grace by the will of God, without the death of his Son; we by the will of God, through the death of his Son. What confirmation they have, they have it from Christ, by virtue of his headship over them, not by virtue of any death for them; and therefore they are, in the opinion of several, understood by the 'things in heaven,' which are

'reconciled to God,' Col. i. 20. What reconciliation is to us, confirmation is to them; yet there is not such an excess of love in their confirmation, as in our reconciliation by the blood of the cross. As the preservation of a life from death is less than the restoring life to one that is dead, the latter argues more of kindness, as well as more of power.

Fourthly, Take a prospect of this love by a review of the condition we were in.

First, Our vileness and corruption. What are we in our being but dust, slight and empty pieces of clay? Is it not wonderful that God, who has angels to attend him, should busy his thoughts about worms; that he, who has the beauty of angels, the most glorious piece of the works of his hands to look upon, should cast his eye upon such noisome dunghills; that he should not rest in the praises of angels, but repair such broken instruments as men are, to bear a part in the concert? If the sun knew its own excellency, it would think it a condescension to bestow a beam upon so dark and miry a body as the earth, that can return to it no recompense, much more is it in God, to look upon such pieces of clay as we are, much more to give out his grace and love to man, who can give him no requital. We would be loath to take a toad into our bosoms, and bestow our friendship upon it. By corruption we are worse than the most venomous toad that creeps upon the ground; yet God entertains thoughts of amity, and establishes it for us in the blood of his Con. We are unworthy of any one thought of unbounded goodness, much more unworthy of a thought of so high a strain. Would not any man think that king distracted, that should send his son to keep company with grooms and scullions, to wear the same livery, to advance them to a better state by his own blood? Nothing but the end fair which he does it, and the love which moved him to it, could excuse

him. How much more condescending is God than the greatest prince in the world would be in this act!

Secondly, Impotence. When we lay wallowing in our blood, and it was the time of our weakness, that was the time of his love; when we had 'no eye to pity' us, nor a heart to pity ourselves, then were we the objects of his compassion, Ezek. xvi. 4-6, &c. When there was not one solicitor for us among all the holy angels, the peace was broken with them as well as with God, and we were justly hated by those holy spirits upon the Creator's account; when not a man in the whole race of mankind had any thoughts of presenting a petition for recovery; when God looked about, and to his astonishment, 'found none' that had any thoughts of interceding and soliciting a restoration, Isa. lix. 16; when there was not a person in heaven or earth besides himself could save us, 'his own arm,' without the least auxiliary force, 'brought salvation.' It is the glory of his love, that he was 'found of us when we asked not for him,' Isa. lxxv. 1. What allurements were there in our nature, unless deformities and demerits could pass for attractives? We had not virtue to merit his love, nor ever shall have power to requite it; both are utterly impossible in a creature. God saw our demerits, it was in his thoughts, otherwise a reconciler had not been appointed; one to merit that for us, which we had forfeited, and never could have recovered. Justice might find cause of punishment in the rebellion of the delinquent, but grace could find no reason but in the pity of our Creator; the amazement of a true believer, when he comes to be seriously sensible of it, does manifest the impossibility of ever thinking of it himself.

Thirdly, Rebellion, which is worse than vileness and impotence. He was a God in Christ reconciling the world, when our enmity to him was as great as our misery; when we had not one spark of love for him, who had

a boundless ocean of compassion for us. We had entered a league with Satan, the only enemy God had, rendered ourselves his bond-slaves, and that presently after our creation by his powerful hand; and it was far worse if Adam did know the sin and state of the fallen angels; howsoever his pride in his aspiring thought to be like his Maker was less excusable than that of the devil's, in regard that he was an inferior creature (though the devil's was greater, in regard of his greater knowledge of the excellency of God above him). Pride in a mean person is more odious than in one upon a throne. Then it is that he contrives with his Son, and by the blood of his Son, to redeem rebels; and though he disrelished and loathed the crime, yet he had a tenderness and pity for the malefactor, assured by an oath: Heb. vii. 28, 'The word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.' As the word of the oath was after the law the declaration of the oath after the declaration of the law, so in the eternal counsel of God, the constitution of the reconciler supposed a law enacted, and a law violated by transgression. After this, the cry of our sins for vengeance could not alter his resolve of sacrificing his Son, and bringing that vengeance upon the sins which they solicited against the sinner. How easy was it for God to have spurned us into hell, when we lay under his foot without all this expense! One touch of his iron rod would have broke us like a potter's vessel; yet he takes occasion to display his grace, where we give occasion to pour out his wrath. He would inflame us by his love, rather than turn us into ashes by his fury; and reconcile us to himself by the blood of his Son, rather than satisfy justice by our own.

Fifthly, It was a love in the freest manner; without cost to us, but expensive to God. We hear of no strugglings in the heart of God, from the first foundation to the topstone; his affections travel through

every stage, without the least relenting; he was in Christ reconciling the world, from one end of his counsel to the other, without any repenting reflections. It cost him the blood of his Son, more expensive than the making millions of worlds. There was no need of any combat in his affections, to make as many worlds as he pleased; but we may wonder (since God represents himself to us often in Scripture according to the manner of men) that there were no pull-backs in his affections to the delivering up of his Son. If there be a conflict in his heart when he is to give up a creature, ó Hosea xi. 8, 'How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? How shad I deliver thee, Israel? My heart is turned within me,' ó could we reasonably suppose less in giving up his Son? (though indeed the one was eternal, the other temporary), yet in this case we read of no such turnings of bowels, no such kindlings of repentings together. His soul was free in it, and let the peace cost what it would, he would procure it, though with the greatest charge.

Sixthly, Consider what it was his love designed in this. Not a petty inconsiderable thing, but a 'propitiation for sin,' 1 John iv. 10, the non-imputation of guilt, the removing all the bars between him and us, the turning the edge of the sword that was pointed against us, reducing us to an eternal amity. He would draw us out of the condition into which we were fallen, and from a wrath we had merited, to elevate us to an eternal life we had rendered ourselves unworthy of, and exposed his Son to the curses of the law, that the edge of them might be turned from us. And that we might have a free converse with him, he makes the mediator of kin to us, that by reason of the communication of our nature we might with more boldness approach to him. All delightful converse is between those of the same species; we could not have conversed freely with a reconciler of a different nature from us.

Seventhly, This love is perpetual. He was in Christ reconciling the

world; he will to the end of the world beseech men to be reconciled to him. Love was the motive, the glory of his grace was the end; what was so from eternity, will be so to eternity. His love is as strong as it was, for infinite receives no diminution; his glory is as dear as it was, for to deny his glory is to deny himself. How great will be the joy of those that accept it i how dismal the torment and sorrow of those that refuse it?

Second use; of comfort. how great may the joy of believing souls be, to be brought by God, and by ways of his own contriving, into actual favour with him, after they had lain in a state of wrath! To have an almighty, infinite, just God at variance with us, cannot but be a matter of sadness; to have a peace struck, and the light of his countenance shine upon us, cannot but beget a transcendent joy; it is in the very notion of it, to the understanding joyful, yea, tidings of great joy, and in the sense and feeling of it triumphant. The publication of it was ushered in with words of comfort in the prophet: Isa. xl. I, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, speak comfortably to Jerusalem; cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' Three words to note the great comfort should be taken in the gospel administration: the matter of it is the ceasing of the war between God and the creature, the pardon of their iniquities upon the satisfaction of Christ, the fruit whereof is received by the believer; the satisfaction of Christ, in regard of the infiniteness of his person, was great, which is expressed by double; and the fruits of it received by the church are great and double, freedom from the wrath of God, from the tyranny of the devil, and the collation of the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Those words, 'for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins,' cannot be meant of the punishment

which they lay under, for that could be no cause of the pardon (as the particle for seems to be causal), neither is it a comfort to think of the greatness of punishment after it is past. But if we consider what follows, ver. 3, &c., it will appear to be a gospel promise, and the believer 'receives of the Lord's hand double:' either it is meant of Christ, who made the satisfaction, the fruits whereof the believer receives; or of the Father, who spared not his own Son, but exacted of him the punishment of our sins, and gives out to us the fruits of his reconciling death. This is the comfort, that the enmity is slain, the war ceased, an end of sin made, and God beheld with comfort, taking away the power of the devil, who first raised this war between God and man; as it is, her. 9, 10, 'Behold your God, behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; he shall feed his flock as a shepherd, he shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.' All this is the fruit of reconciling grace. God is well pleased with those that are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. As after the 'sprinkling of the blood of the covenant,' God appeared to the elders of the people in a clear, not a cloudy and stormy heaven, Exod. xxiv. 8, 10 (a cloudy and stormy heaven is a sign of God's anger), and his feet, the instruments of motion, standing in a clear heaven, show that all the passages of his providence to his people, are mercy, truth, and kindness, upon the account of the blood of the covenant of peace. God cannot hate those who accept of this reconciliation. Though God hates the remainders of sin in them, yet it is not with such a hatred as redounds to their persons, because their persons are reconciled to God; they believe and apply the reconciliation made by God in Christ. If God deny the acceptance of such, he denies his own act and deed, he denies himself and his whole contrivance from one end to the other. This would

be to publish, that he was mistaken in his first design, that it was a fruitless thing, that there was a defect in his wisdom laying the scene of it, or a defect in Christ who undertook to accomplish it, and that things issued not according to his will. If any accept it upon the terms God offers it, nothing can be charged upon him. God must deny his whole contrivance, his commission to Christ, or find some flaw in the execution of it, before salvation can be denied to such a person; but God has already testified again and again how highly pleasing the whole negotiation of Christ was to him, and therefore it is not possible that God (who cannot be deceived in his foresight of events, to whom nothing is contingent) should delight in this before it was acted, please himself with it after it was acted, and yet dart out the frowns of an enemy upon the acceptors of it, who are called 'sons of peace,' Luke x. 6. No; the proper effect of this is non-imputation of sin, as it is in the text, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;' and reconciliation and justification are one and the same thing in the apostle's doctrine; Rom. v. 9, what is called 'justification by his blood,' is called, here. 10, 'reconciliation to God by the death of Christ.' Sincere acceptance of it, with a resolution to obey him, gives an interest in this: Luke ii. 14, 'Good will towards men.' Some read it, 'Peace on earth to men of good will,' actively, that bear a good will to Christ, that are upright in heart towards God in Christ. But the psalmist is clear in it, that where there is no guile in the spirit in accepting this righteousness, God will not impute sin, Ps. xxxii. 2, and though a believing person may not be sensible of his happiness, yet his happiness is ensured upon faith, though not testified to the soul. Reconciliation and the sense of it are two distinct things; a name may be written in the book of life, and the eye not clear enough to discern

it. The prince may have a favour for a malefactor, and his pardon sealed too, yet the prisoner know it not, and perhaps have tattle hopes of it, but casts himself at the foot of the prince's mercy. How comfortable is it to have this peace, and a sense of it too, in our consciences, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! Worldly goods are small; corn, wine, and oil are little things, to the light of God's countenance, shining upon the soul, here is the ground of joy and glorying, that God 'exercises loving-kindness:' Jer. ix. 24, 'Let him that glories, glory in this that he knows me, that I am the Lord which exercises loving-kindness.'

There are several particular comforts arise from hence.

1. The angels, the whole host of heaven, are at peace with the believer. The angels, upon the sin of man, by virtue of their obedience, took part with God, and could not, because of their purity, be friends to a defiled creature; nor because of their affection to God, bear any respect to him to whom the Lord was an enemy. They were placed as a guard to bar man from re-entrance into paradise after his fall, and to 'keep the way of the tree of life,' Gen. iii. 24. Our sins broke the alliance between heaven and earth, so that the good angels could have no converse with the enemies of God; had it not been for this disobedience, they could have had no aversion to man. But since their Lord is satisfied, those obedient spirits cannot be discontented, for this reconciliation ties their hands, and makes all ill intelligence cease between them and believers. The death of Christ expiating our sin, established a good correspondence between the two great parties of the world, angels and men. The monarch being reconciled, the two states of men and angels reassume a mutual commerce. By this they are reduced into one corporation, into one family, and combined under one head: Eph. i. 10, 'All things which are

in heaven and on earth, are gathered together in Christ.' That place, Col. i. 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven,' is understood by some of the reconciliation of things in heaven to (cod, i. e. believers in the promised Messiah, who died before the coming of Christ, showing thereby the extent of the death of Christ which looked backward; by others, of the reconciliation of heavenly spirits unto us, as being a grand state of the world depending upon the universal monarch. Hence the angels rejoice and sing a hymn at the publishing the gospel, Luke ii. 13, and rejoice more in it than men do; for they delight in the glory of God, but men delight naturally in their enmity to God. They rejoice at the repentance of a sinner, and his acceptance of this reconciliation. They cannot rejoice at men's reconciliation to God, and be unreconciled themselves. They are 'ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14, instruments of God in the deliverance of his church and people, furtherers of the conversion of men as to outward means, as in the example of the eunuch, Acts viii. 26; and at last conduct the heirs to the possession of their inheritance 'reserved in the heavens for them,' Luke xvi. 22. They are ministers of wrath upon the unbelieving world, ministers of good to the believing creature, and guard him with those weapons wherewith they fought against him, from whence we have many invisible assistances. As God did not hate his creatures as creatures (for then he had hated man as made by him, which is inconsistent with the pure goodness of God), but as sinners, so the angels followed their great pattern in the hatred of men; but now they are reconciled to man, because God, to whom they pay an obedience, is reconciled. They are put under the government of Christ as their head, as he is the mediator, and cannot be enemies to us till Christ, as

bead, become an enemy to himself as mediator. Their commission for guarding the heavenly paradise against us is cancelled, and should they now obstruct the way, they would be no longer good angels, but impure and disobedient devils. There is one place which some understand of this peace we have with angels: Rev. i. 4, 5, 'Peace from him which was, and which is, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness,' &c. The seven spirits are said to be before his throne, as waiting for the commands of God, as the seven angels are said to stand before God, Rev. viii. 2. But it is more likely it is meant of the Spirit of God; it is not reasonable to think the salutations of creatures to the church should be mixed with the benedictions of the Deity, with the exclusion of the third person, who is here to be understood, and called seven spirits in regard of the variety of gifts and graces, given out by him to the church, seven being a perfect number; and placed in the midst of this benediction, perhaps because of his procession both from the Father and the Son.

2. Peace with all creatures. If the Lord of the creation be the author of this peace, then no creatures which are under his conduct can be at enmity with a believer. When Adam fell, he did deserve that all creatures should act in hostility against him, as the rebel against the sovereignty of their common creator. But when God enters into a new amity with man, and ceases to be provoked, he renews the covenant with the beasts, that all creatures shall be serviceable to the reconciled believer: Hos. ii. 18, 'In that day I will make a covenant for him with the beasts of the field,' in the day of the evangelical espousals, as he had before promised if they continued in obedience, Lev. xxvi. 6. Though no formal covenant can be made between God and irrational creatures, yet they shall hurt no more than if they were tied up by a

formal covenant, and were honest and valise enough to observe it; as in the first covenant made with Adam, while he stood on terms of peace with God, and owned a subjection to him as his Lord, all creatures were spontaneously to be under his dominion, which right depended upon the observance of the terms of the covenant which was between God and him. This right is renewed by the satisfaction of Christ procuring the restoration of that which Adam forfeited, and disarming nature, which was before armed against man. The corn and the wine shall hear Jezreel, the seed of God, Hos. ii. 22. The right to all things presents things to come, 'life, death,' all intermediate things, is restored by Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. The world, universal nature, all is yours for your good, because you are Christ's, who has purchased those things; and Christ is God's, settled by him in this office for the purchase of them, and accepted by God to that end. The right to all creatures is perfect, the possession insured in the head, who has taken livery and seisin of all; and shall be perfect in the members, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; all shall be in an harmonious combination for the glory of the believer. They do yet often instrumentally afflict them, but not hurt them. They hurt the man, not the Christian; they hurt a believer no more than death can, which, though it kills him, yet without a sting, they hurt us, yet without a curse; they are in the hand of a reconciled Father, who uses their natural enmity against us for our good, as the shepherd does the curishness of the dog to reduce the wandering sheep to the fold. The hurts we seem to feel from them issue in mercy, and are so intended by that reconciled God who guides them; they wound us, and thereby break our imposthumes. The same instrument may convey kindness to a believer, which is a mark of wrath upon an enemy; the same knife, which in the hand of an executioner may cut off the arm of a malefactor, in the hand of a chirurgeon may cut

off the gangrened member of a patient; the same knife performs a friend's office to the one and a Wrathful to the other. Since we are not perfect in our services of God, we cannot expect the creatures should be perfect in their services of us; as our obedience is only inchoative here, so the performance of God's promises are here in their blade, not in their full harvest.

3. Access to God is another comfort arising from hence. As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ giving believers access to him. As he was in Christ reconciling our persons, so he is in Christ receiving our prayers. As Christ made satisfaction for us by his death, so he sweetens our services by his merit. As Christ was the means of our reconciliation, so is he the means of our access: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'By whom also we have access.' The word also intimates this freedom of access to be as great a benefit as justification. Though justification is a transcendent mercy, yet it would not complete the happiness of a creature, without communion with God. Peace was not the thing God ultimately aimed at; it was but the medium. He would be our friend, that there might be sweet interviews between him and a believer. Before, guilt on our side, and justice on God's, stood as bars to our access. Guilty souls cannot converse with a severe judge; a provoking creature and an offended God can have no commerce; but when the guilt is taken away, the distance is removed. Now may an humble believing creature come to a reconciled God, whose own heart put him upon laying the foundation of friendship, without any desires, or so much as expectations of the creature. We could no more before endure the presence of God than the devil; but by this the bar is taken from us, though not from him. This access is consequent upon this reconciliation. As there was a communion between God and man in innocence, which was broken off by the entrance of the enmity, so upon

the restoration of the friendship there is a renewing of a mutual converse: that as God reveals his gracious will to the soul, the soul puts up holy desires to God; that as God descends to us in Christ, we may ascend through Christ to him in fruitful meditations, and take a delightful view and prospect of God. It was not only peace that Christ came to procure, but also good will; not only to slay the enmity, but to raise an entire and intimate friendship. The message the angels proclaimed was made up of the one as well as the other: Luke ii. 14, 'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men,' eudokia, a good pleasure in men.

(1.) Access with confidence. We go to our Father, who has had the greatest hand in all this affair. Since he is the author of this peace, what ground of dejection? We have God in Christ to receive us, and Christ by God's order to introduce us. It was the purpose of God, and his eternal purpose, that by the faith of Christ, and in him, we should have boldness and access, with confidence, Eph. i. 12, parrhsian. And what higher ground of confidence than the consideration of God's appointing and giving this mediator to us for that end? How can a faithful, holy, true God deny his own act, in denying us when we come in the way of his own appointment? for since he has settled such an high priest over his house, we may well draw near in full assurance of faith, if we come with sincere and true hearts, Heb. x. 21, 22, flying with a deep humility to his throne of grace, with a plerophory of faith, a full sail filled by this wind of love. It is not meant of a personal assurance, or a certitudo subjecti, but objecti, a full belief of the doctrine of propitiation, and God's setting forth Christ and preparing him to take away sin, which was the cause of the enmity between God and us; for this is but the use the apostle makes of what he had doctrinally in this point delivered in the foregoing part of the

chapter. We may go to God with more confidence upon this account than Adam could in innocence. He had access to a God of goodness, we to a God of grace; he could not look upon God as reconcilable if he should sin; God threatening was a bar to that. If he knew anything of God, he knew him to be just and true to his word, from which knowledge did arise those terrors of conscience upon his face, and his endeavouring to run and hide himself from God; but God in this dispensation hath given us other notions of himself than Adam had, therefore we may go with more confidence than he could, and pour out our souls before him: Lam. iii. 24, 'The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him.'

The Lord is my reconciled friend, therefore will I hope in him for the mercy I beg.

(2.) Delight and joy in our access. We could not come to him before, no, nor think of him, without a slavish trembling; but now we may think of him, and approach to him with joy and comfort, for he deals not with us as an enemy by a strict justice, but as a friend in a way of an obliging mercy. If Adam had a sense that he might fall, he could not come to God without some dejection; the very possibility of falling would not be without fear attending it. But since God was in Christ reconciling the world, we go to him upon the account of an immutable righteousness, a righteousness he settled as an act of grace to us, and security to his own glory; whereas Adam could approach to him but upon the account of a mutable righteousness, which might be as the grass, standing this day and withered tomorrow. Our access to God is with 'a joy in the hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2; and when we take hold of his covenant, this covenant of peace, we have his word that he will make us 'joyful in the house of prayer,' Isa. lvi. 6, 7; actively joyful, full of delight in his service, solacing ourselves in a sweet consideration of the infinite grace of a reconciling God, whereby a

transcendent delight is raised in the soul, which is a direct delight in God as the object of faith, discovered in Christ and apprehended by spiritual reason and sense; passively joyful, by receiving in his service more of the refreshing waters of life, and being fed with the 'hidden manna' which God communicates in and by Christ to his friends. And beside, though our services are imperfect, God expects not a perfect obedience from us, but from his Son Christ. It is a full assurance of faith he expects from us, and a true heart, not a perfect obedience; his promise gives us joy, though the sense of our imperfections create a sorrow. Though we cannot delight in ourselves, we may in God, in his promise, in his gracious condescension, in the compensation he has from his Son for us, in his acceptance of it, and application of it to our souls. You are, upon believing, God's friends, not only his servants. It is Christ's speech to his disciples: John xv. 15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants.' It must not be understood of a freedom from all kind of service, which cannot be conferred upon a creature; (it were injustice in God to free a creature from so righteous and noble a virtue as gratitude to himself; God cannot command a creature not to love him, for he should then command the creature not to love the chief good); but it is a freedom from a bondage and servile fear in duties, and bringing to a filial and more dutiful manner of service, óa service from principles of grace, and encouraged by the views of God's reconciled face. Service is not excluded by admission to this friendship, but perfected to a more delightful garb. Peace opens the way for a delightful and successful trade, which war and enmity locks up.

4. The conquest of Satan is insured by this. When we are at peace with God, the devils themselves are subject to us. When God was in Christ reconciling the world, he was in Christ 'destroying him that had the

power of death,' Heb. ii. 14, and bringing Satan under the feet of the Mediator, and the feet of his members. This was the intent of God in the first promise of a Mediator, to destroy him who had infected mankind, and brought death into the world. The bruising his head was the design of Christ's mission, Gen. iii. 15, that the great incendiary who had broken the league, and set afoot the rebellion, might feel the greater smart of it. And ever since it is by the gospel of peace, and the shield of faith, that we are only able to 'quench the fiery darts of the devil,' and make his attempts fruitless, Eph. vi. 15, 16, by the reconciliation God has wrought and published by the gospel. God, 'as a God of peace,' 'shall tread him under the feet' of believers, Born. xvi. 20. Unless he had been a God of peace, we had never been delivered from that jailer who held us by the right of God's justice. And since we are delivered, God, as a God of peace, will perfect the victory, and make him cease for ever from bruising the heel of the spiritual seed. As God has given peace in Christ, so he will give the victory in Christ. Peace cannot be perfect till it be undisturbed by invading enemies, and subtle adversaries endeavouring to raise a new enmity. Our Saviour spoiled him of his power upon the cross, and took away the right he had to detain any believer prisoner, by satisfying that justice, and reconciling that God who first ordered their commitment. He answers his accusations as he is an 'advocate' at the right hand of God; and at the last, when death comes to be destroyed, and no more to enter into the world, the whole design of the devil for ever falls to the ground. Since we are at peace with God, while we are here, the devil himself shall serve us; and the messenger of Satan shall be a means to quell the pride of a believing Paul by the sufficiency of the grace of God, while he fills the heart of an unbelieving Judas with poison and treason against his Master.

5. Comfort in all afflictions. It is a cordial to cheer in the hottest services and sharpest difficulties. What can the greatest danger signify, while God remains reconciled to the soul in Christ, and the peace remains unbroken? God thought the promise of it support enough in all the standing punishment Adam was to endure; he therefore made this promise to him before he denounced the punishment after the fall. We may as well digest all crosses with this peace purchased, as Adam could do with this peace promised; God was then in Christ promising it, God hath now been in Christ performing it. The peace as designed was offered to the ancient Israelites as a ground of joy and relief under their oppressing calamities, Isa. ix.; Micah v. 5, 'This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land.' The peace God has effected in Christ is a more firm matter of joy under oppressions, by how much the comfort of the performance exceeds the joy of the promise, as the joy of harvest does the joy of seed-time. Mercy was manifested in the making the promise truth as well as mercy glorified in the performing. If it were a ground of joy before he wrought it, what a rise is there for a triumphant joy since he has laid an unalterable foundation for it. This was the armour Christ furnished his disciples with against the injuries of the world: John xvi. 33, 'In me you shall have peace, in the world you shall have tribulation.' This was thought by our Saviour to be a sufficient defence for his weak disciples against all the furies of men and rage of devils, an universal remedy against all discouragements. In Christ, God smiles when the world frowns: 'Cause thy face to shine upon us' is thrice repeated, Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19, as the chief confidence of a gracious soul under smart distresses. Reconciliation with God changes the nature of everything that is terrible, dungeons into palaces and tears into cordials. It is a shield against fears, a treasure against poverty,

physic against diseases, security against danger, and life against death. Indeed, under sharp afflictions a believing soul may not have a strength of faith to discern God as a father, from God as a judge, sense and carnal reason may dispute against faith and stagger it. If he be reconciled, why then does he make me his mark to shoot at? There may be a fatherly displeasure when there is not a wrathful anger, the satisfaction of justice excludes not the rod of mercy. Justice has no plea against a believer, because it is satisfied; mercy is the only attribute that orders all for a reconciled person. The visiting the transgression of the seed of Christ with a rod was knit together with the continuance of God's kindness to them in the covenant of redemption God made with Christ, Ps. lxxxix. 30-33. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world;' it is a less thing for him to be in every affliction, ordering it for good.

6. Comfort in the expectation of all other mercies. If God were in Christ reconciling us to himself, he will be in Christ giving forth all other suitable mercies. If he detains any you seem to want, it is a part of his reconciled wisdom when he sees them not good for you. It is inconsistent with his amity to withhold any you have real need of; it would not be then a much store, as Christ argues, but a much less: Mat. vii. 11, 'If you, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, much more your Father which is in heaven.' But consider, they are only good things he has obliged himself to give, and he in the proper judge of what is good, not we ourselves. If, as a God of patience and goodness, he feeds the unclean birds, will he not, as a God of grace and peace in Christ, feed his friends? Will he let them starve while his enemies fatten? He has struck a covenant of amity and friendship, what may not be expected from a sincere and powerful friend, and one who made it his business from eternity to be casting

about for the working of this peace? If this, which neither men nor angels could have imagined, be effected by his wisdom and grace, all subsequent blessings are far easier to God than this could be, since in this he has conquered his own affection to his Son. What can remain unconquered by him, which stands in the way of a believer's happiness? It was a greater act to be in Christ reconciling the world, than to be in Christ giving out the mercies he has purchased. If he has overcome the greatest bank that stopped the tide of mercy, shall little ones hinder the current of it? Justice, and the honour of the law, were the great mountains which stood in the way. Since those are removed by a miraculous wisdom and grace, what pebbles can stop the flood to believing souls? If God be the author of the greatest blessings, will he not be of the least? If he has not spared his best treasure, shall the less be denied? It is the apostle's arguing, Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' He cannot but be as free in the least as he was in the greatest, there were more arguments to dissuade him from that, than there can be to stop his hands in other things. If anything you desire be refused by God, know it is your Saviour's mind you shall not have it; for God would deny him nothing of his purchase. Oh how little do we live in the sense of those truths; how does our impatience give God the lie, and tell him he is a deadly enemy, notwithstanding his reconciling grace!

7. There will be peace of conscience. If God be reconciled, conscience cannot charge. If God be the author of this peace, conscience, God's deputy, cannot keep up an enmity against us, for that must speak as God speaks. Peace with the viceroys and governors depends upon peace with the prince. The same blood which was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, is sprinkled upon the conscience of the believer. As it procured peace

with heaven, it will produce peace in the soul: Heb. x. 22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' An evil conscience is an accusing conscience; when sprinkled by this blood, it is an acquitting conscience, not from the facts, but from the guilt of them. Whatsoever has a power to satisfy God, cannot be invalid to satisfy conscience. Where infinite knowledge can raise no objection, a purblind conscience is too weak to find out any. If God has been the contriver of this reconciliation, and accepted it as fully finished, conscience must acquiesce. Adam's conscience flew in his face upon his sin, and did not leave quarrelling till its mouth was stopped with the promise of a reconciler. Guilt sets conscience on fire; when the guilt is quenched, conscience must be at ease. Nothing will satisfy conscience but that which satisfies God, and whatsoever satisfies God must satisfy conscience, for that acts by commission and a derived authority. All other things are too weak to take away the conscience of sin: 'the blood of bulls and goats,' of God's institution, could not do it, Heb. x. 2, it is the proper effect of this peace, all the waters in the world cannot quench the flame of conscience, till God be reconciled. The foundation of this peace of conscience is laid in peace with God, though present actual comfort may not be enjoyed; the day may be clouded, though the winds be still; there may be no storms, yet no sunshine.

8. Comfort against death. If God be the author of reconciliation by Christ, then death, which was the fruit of that sin which is now removed, can be no dreadful apparition. God was in Christ, and is still, conquering his enemies; and this is one enemy which must fall under his sword, and be made his footstool As God v, as in Christ reconciling you, he is in death calling for you to enjoy the full-blown felicities of that peace. It is no more than a departure in peace, when

God is a God of peace. Old Simeon thought so, Luke ii. 29; he speaks, says one, like a merchant that had got all his goods on shipboard, and now desires the master of the ship to hoist sail and be gone homeward. Death was before a servant of divine justice; since justice is satisfied, it is the messenger of divine mercy. It was a jailer to enclose us in the prison of the grave, it is now a conductor to the glories of heaven. Where this peace is in maturity, where God's face shines clearly without disguises, veils, and cloudy interruptions, the name death is terrible, but the reconciled soul is beyond the fears of it. It has lost its sting, which was God's justice; Christ satisfying the one, has disarmed the other of what is hurtful. There is a knot between justification (which is termed reconciliation) and glorification; death comes between them, but does not dissolve it: Tom. viii. 30, 'Whom he justifies, them also he glorifies,' which knot cannot be untied by death, though that between our soul and body is: it sends the body to the grave to endure the sentence against sin denounced in paradise, and the soul to heaven, to enjoy the benefit of the promise.

9. This reconciliation is effectual. It is upon this all the other comforts depend. If God was the author of it, contriving, counselling Christ to effect it, furnishing him for the accomplishment of it, it cannot be a weak and imperfect peace. Infinite wisdom would not have spent innumerable 'thoughts, which cannot be reckoned up' (as the expression is, Ps. xl. 5), about a fruitless thing, a peace which might be easily blown away; he would never have sent his Son to shed his blood, and endure his wrath to no purpose, and make his own contrivance to end in a mere chimaera, as though he would be so busy only to deceive his creatures. 'The counsel of the Lord shall stand,' every counsel of his, much more his choicest purpose, to which all his other

resolves are as small rivers which run into this great sea, and combine together for the perfecting this counsel; all other thoughts are lines drawn to or from this centre. As all things in heaven and earth are gathered in one, even in Christ, so all the counsels of God gather into this one of Christ and peace in him. This was the great source and pattern of all the rest, Eph. i. 10, 11. Besides, God has received this reconciler into heaven, whereby he has removed all ground of suspicion of his remaining yet unreconciled. If justice had any exception against his sacrifice, it would not have opened heaven's gates to Christ, but have barred, with a flaming sword, Christ's entrance into heaven, as well as Adam's return to paradise. The honourable title of our peace, had not been conferred upon Christ, had an imperfect reconciliation been all the fruit of his blood. By this name he is called, Mic. v. 5, Eph. ii. 14, and by that of our righteousness, Jer. xxxiii. 16. God is the author, and Christ the prince of peace; the reconciliation must be full, and righteous, and effectual, that has such a contriver, such a procurer. We are apt in our unbelieving moods to suspect God; because we have been unfaithful to him, we are jealous he will be unfaithful to us; but he asks the question, 'What could I have done more for my vineyard?' He appeals to men in that case, as if he should say, If men can tell me what I can do more, I will do it, do it to engage them, do it to encourage them. He has contrived it with the choicest wisdom, laid the foundation of it in the richest blood, given the fullest assurances of his sincerity in it, and never refused it to any that desired it; but it has been rejected by many whom his Spirit has solicited. Christ, whose honour lay upon it, would never have assured his disciples of it, after his return from paradise: John xx. 21, 'Peace be unto you,' had it been imperfect; a salutation he used, which is not recorded to be used by him in the time of his life.

10. This reconciliation is perpetual, as well as perfect and effectual; it is durable and fixed. It was an eternal redemption obtained: eternal in regard of its efficacy, eternal in regard of application, eternal in regard of the good things procured for us by it. Man nor devils cannot undo it, because of their weakness, nor God because of his faithfulness. It is a 'grace wherein we stand by faith,' Rom. v. 1, 2, not a tottering, but stable grace. Believers are received into the grace of God's good will, and God is not a light and unstable friend. All human friendship is perfidiousness in respect of this. The tie is everlasting, and knows no dissolution. His own grace and good will moved him to it, and the same good will in an immutable God will preserve it. Good will made the motion, justice acquiesced in it, but since the death of Christ, the righteousness and mercy of God join hand in hand to keep it entire; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other, mercy and truth have met together,' and congratulated one another for their mutual satisfaction. The mercy of God is as prevalent with him to keep the covenant of peace from being removed, as for the first settlement of it: Isa. liv. 10, 'Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, says the lord, that has mercy on thee.' Such consultations, such expensive accomplishments of it, cannot be mutable; mercy made it, and mercy perpetuates it. He can no more condemn a believing soul when he looks upon Christ, than he can drown the world against his own promise when he looks on the rainbow. His throne is encompassed with a rainbow, an emblem of a perpetual peace. It was so encircled in Ezekiel's time, Ezek. i. 28; with the same garb he appeared to John some ages after, Rev. iv. 3 and the predominant colour was green, that of an emerald, to note that this peace is always green and flourishing, as fresh in after ages as in the first. God was in Christ reconciling the world, God is in Christ as a priest keeping up

that reconciliation. The intercession of Christ, which is a part of his priestly office, was as much in the thoughts of God, for his keeping firm this reconciliation, as the death of Christ was upon his heart to effect it. He confirms his eternal priesthood by an oath, Ps. cx 1, and therefore his intercession for it, otherwise there would be no priestly act for Christ now to perform. Christ by his death quenched the flame of the sword which guarded paradise against us; at his resurrection he sheathed the sword itself; and by his intercession keeps it perpetually in its scabbard, keeps the edge from ever being turned against a believer. Reconciliation is wrought by the death of Christ, and preserved by his merit. Christ's affections remain in his heart to solicit, the Father's affections remain in his heart to grant; Christ has an irrevocable liberty to approach to God to present his reconciling merit. Till, therefore, the unchangeable God change his resolution, and repent of all his counsel, cares, furniture, commission and acceptance of Christ; till Christ's merit become invalid, distasteful, and nauseous to the Father, this peace will stand firm. Christ's merit has been paid, it cannot be unpaid; it has been accepted, it cannot now be refused. If the soul he has redeemed be not safe, Christ can have no satisfaction for all his sufferings. Keep therefore your wills from sin, strive against the motions of it, agree not with it, and the peace will not be broken. As princes enter not into war, but where there is a real affront done, and no satisfaction given, so God breaks not the peace he has made upon every failing. When the will is not engaged, the sin is resisted; but where any give up their wills to sin, and delightfully wear its chains, they are so far from having this reconciliation perpetual, that they never had so much as the least interest in it. It is perpetual to them that embrace it, not by a pretended faith, but a real and obedient faith.

11. The state believers have by this reconciliation is far happier than that Adam had in innocence. It is likely had he persisted in it some time, he might have been confirmed in that state; but how long time he might have lived in that mutable condition, and whether, if he had persisted, he would have enjoyed such a degree of glory, is not upon record. God was in Adam making a covenant of works, he is in Christ making a covenant of peace. Christ came not only to give a simple life or a simple peace, but to give it 'more abundantly,' John x. 10, more abundantly than we had it by creation in innocence. After the fall, we were dead, and Christ restored us to life, but to a more abundant life, not that we had after the fall, for we had none at all, we were dead in trespasses and sins; but more abundantly than we had in Adam before the fall, a better life than man could challenge by the covenant of works.

The second creation must be greater than the first, because the thoughts of God about the first were but a step to a second. In the first creation, mere man was the head, God in him gave out the precepts and promises to his posterity; in the second creation, God is in Christ giving out his covenant. As the means of conveyance are higher, so the things conveyed are more glorious. God would provide a way of peace that should not fail again, the security should be built upon a stronger bottom. The Lord give every one of us an interest in this reconciliation, and the comforts of it!

Third use; of exhortation. Is God in Christ reconciling the world? Then it is fit we should join issue with God, and be in Christ reconciled to him. We must comply with God in this his great ordinance. The consideration of it should work relenting, should work believing. Let the design of God prevail with us. It is in this we shall find expiation of sin, the grace of God, peace of conscience; in a word, whatsoever God as reconciled can give, whatsoever Christ as reconciling

has purchased. Better to be the vilest slave in the galleys, the scoff and reproach of men, spurned by every foot, than be unreconciled. It was tender mercy, bowels of mercy, whereby the day-spring from on high has visited us,' Luke i. 8. When we lay wallowing in a miry sink, ready to be crushed by God's righteous hand, then he pitied us; the more disingenuous to refuse his amity. The dignity of the donor renders a gift more valuable than it is in itself; a present from a prince is more prized than that which is bestowed by an ordinary merchant. The gift of Christ and the offer of peace by him is incomprehensible in itself, and receives a value from that God that prepared and offers it. What pleasure can we taste in any earthly comfort, though we had a confluence of all princely delights, if we have no share in a reconciled God by a reconciling mediator, while we will force that God, who is the author of peace, to stand over us with a drawn sword pointed to our breasts? Corn, wine, and oil are little things to the light of God's countenance

1. Something must be done on our parts. Though God be the author of our reconciliation by Christ, yet something is incumbent upon us. If all men were reconciled without any condition on their parts, the apostle might have held his pen, and not have added the other clause, her. 20, after the text, 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' there had been no need of that inference. In the text, he speaks of the fundamental reconciliation; in this, of the actual. If all men had been reconciled to God, it had not been sense to say, You are reconciled, therefore be reconciled. It would have been an exhortation to do that which had been already done to their hands. If all men be actually reconciled, how come any to miss of the fruit of it? why is it not applied to all? Because all that are called do not comply with their call, answer not God's command and entreaty. The purchase and

application are two distinct things; the purchase was made by Christ alone upon the cross, without any qualification in us; the application is not wrought without something in us concurring with it, though that also is wrought by the grace of God. God has ordained peace for us. But there is a work to be wrought within us for the enjoyment of that peace: Isa. xxvi. 12, 'Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.' The one is grace in the spring, the other is grace in the vessel; the one is the act of God in Christ, the other is the act of God by his Spirit. Though the fire burn, if I would have warmth I must not run from it, but approach to it.

2. This qualification is faith. As grace in God qualified God (if I may use the expression) for effecting it, so faith in us qualifies us for applying and enjoying it. Though Christ be the purchaser, yet faith is the means of instating us in it: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Not a man has peace with God till justified by faith. This inestimable mercy is not conferred but upon men of good will, men that affect it, value it, consent to it. We must lay our hands upon the head of the sacrifice, and own him for ours. This is the band which unites us to Christ as the purchaser, and by him to God as the author of this reconciliation; it gives us a right to this peace, and at the last the comfort of it.

3. The order is, first an acceptance of Christ, then of God in and through him. We must first comply with the means before we can attain the end. Our nearness to God was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is actually conferred by union with Christ: Eph. ii. 13, '~ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are nneade nigh by the blood of Christ.' faith has recourse first to the atoning blood of Christ, and by that blood to God, Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' This blood only quenched the

consuming fire of God's wrath. By him we are reconciled, and by him only we can receive the atonement Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' As God was in Christ reconciling, so we must be in Christ accepting this reconciliation with God. 'You are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 23. We must first be Christ's by the acceptance of him, as Christ was God's by his calling and mission. As God goes out to us in him, our return must be by him to God. He paid the debts, made an end of sin, removed the wrath which we had merited. God was the judge, Christ the mediator; we must first go to the mediator, to be conducted by him to the judge. We had offended the law-maker, we must first go to him who is the repairer of the honour of the law; we must take the redemption of Christ along with us, the pacifying blood to present it to God, by whose authority we were under wrath. It is that blood only joins us to God, no cement without it. If we are not first by faith in Christ satisfying, we are still but as stubble before God, who is a consuming fire. Christ is the only band of union between us and God. Think not of standing secure by absolute mercy; mercy through Christ only saves us; it breathes in no other air. We must first take hold of the strength of God before we are at peace with him: Isaiah xxvii. 5, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me;' of Christ, who is as well 'the power of God as the wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24, where you have a direction how to gain it by laying hold of his strength, the end to be aimed at in the act, 'that he may make peace with me,' and an assurance to obtain it in that method, 'he shall make peace with me.'

Motives.

1. Here is the highest encouragement and ground of acceptation. There is no room for any hard thoughts of God after so signal a discovery of

himself. He is not a God of unquenchable wrath; he is willing his justice should be appeased: he took all the course that was possible for infinite wisdom to invent, for infinite power to effect, for infinite love to propose. What greater security for our blessings, than that he should make his Son a curse, that we might be blessed by him! How should so much love make us change our unworthy opinions of God! Here are the three persons employed in it: the Father contrives it, the Son effects it, the Spirit stands ready to apply it to every believer. A refusal puts a scorn upon all the three persons. As soon as ever Adam sinned, even the same day, Gen. iii. 15, God applies this remedy of a Redeemer. He did not let a day slip, for any thing we know, not an hour, before he made it known to him. His heart was in travail, and longed to be delivered of the gracious promise of a Mediator. He armed our first parents with this cordial, before he subjected them to their standing miseries. What his heart was then, it is the same still. His kindness was desirous to publish the promise, can his truth have less zeal to perform it? His kindness which moved him to assure it, has moved him to effect it, and will move him to apply it to every one that seeks to him for it in and by his beloved Son. His wrath, which we were subject to, is overcome by his love to the mediation of his Son, who has honoured him more than sin had dishonoured him. By accepting this, we own the glory of God, and honour him as much by faith as we have dishonoured him by sin; for thereby we own that satisfaction which was as grateful to him as our sins were hateful. As he honoured himself by the death of his Son, so he honours himself by giving forth the fruits of his death. He delights to honour Christ, and to see him honoured by us: we contribute to God's delight, when we approach to him by faith in his blood. Did God make this provision? Did he contrive an expiatory offering before the world was? And will he not communicate this? Would

he provide him never to bestow him? Did he bruise him for nothing, but to keep him up as a jewel in a cabinet, not to give out? To whom should God give him, but to those that desire him? Would any father lay up treasures for his children, and not dispense them, when they are earnest for them in their necessities? Can there be a greater argument than this doctrine, to overcome our rebellion, extinguish our fears, hasten our approach, and add confidence to our desires?

2. The terms required are as low as can be imagined. Nothing can be objected against the conditions he requires, repentance and faith. Can any malefactor expect peace with his arms in his hand? Is it not fit there should be such conditions to justify God, since we were the guilty offenders? Can there be less than to cast away our weapons, bewail our crimes, receive his Son as our Mediator, serve him with newness of life, all which are desirable privileges? It was in his power to appoint what conditions he pleased, because he was the free and sole benefactor; what could be less than the believing and receiving the reconciliation? It was impossible the benefit could be without it: it is no benefit unless it be esteemed so; no reason any should enjoy a benefit, that does not think it a benefit. All the self-love of men could not have framed more reasonable terms. Men would have thought of 'rivers of oil, and thousands of rams,' mere impossibilities, Micah vi. 6, 7. God requires no more than to lie humbly at his feet, and reach out our hands to receive the assurance he gives. What can be easier? If faith be difficult, it is so, not in regard of itself, but in regard of our natural enmity to God, and the pride of our own wills; it is hard only as 'the law is weak, through the flesh,' Rom. viii. 3; but nothing could be more reasonable, nothing more easy in itself. An ingenuous amazement at unexpected kindness should make us run more swiftly to embrace God, than ever we ran from

him. We should subscribe to his articles. As he is a God to contrive the peace, let him be your God to impose the methods of enjoying it, since he hath given this gift to a brutish world, who he knew would grieve and despise him, yet requires no more at your hands than that you should believe and accept him, which is but a just due to the greatness of the blessing.

3. There is an absolute necessity for this compliance for our happiness. If you have not a peace of God's ordaining, you can have none of your own inventing. There can be no fellowship with God without it. We cannot be happy, because we cannot enjoy God, wherein all the felicity of a creature consists. How can guilt and purity converse together? What society can stubble have with fire, but to its destruction? We cannot see God's face without it; and if the sight of God's face be wanting, felicity is at a distance. The greatest part of hell remains, though there be no positive punishment. This cannot be without a reconciled face. 'How can two walk together unless they be agreed?' Amos iii. 3. What intercourse can there be between a guilty rebel and a frowning judge? between a sinful creature and a provoked Deity? 'If he hide his face, who can behold him?' Job xxiv. 29; but when an agreement is made, there may be mutual endearments. We are enemies to God by birth, God an enemy to us by his law; the enmity will remain on God's part, while enmity remains on ours. Strike up then the treaty with God, since there is a necessity for it, and God has provided all things to that end. Shall not God's love melt you, and your own necessities move you?

4. Wrath is unavoidable without a compliance with God. If we will not enter into these terms of reconciliation, the heart of God, which was before incensed by our sin, cannot but rise with an higher indignation at a resolve to persist in it. Abused love kindles the hottest wrath.

What fence can inexcusable guilt have against an equitable justice?

When man, after his creation, proved perfidious to God, there commenced

u dreadful war, which only can be ended by him who Lath put an end to

sin, or else it will endure for ever in hell. All must have endured

what Christ suffered, had he not stood in their stead; and those that

refuse him, as he is proffered by the grace of God, must endure the

same for ever. If we will not receive him as a friend, eve cannot avoid

him as an enemy; his eye will behold us, 'and his hand will reach us,

in the thickest coverings of darkness,' Ps. cxxxix. 9, 11. Where he is

not accepted as the author of reconciliation in his own way, he will be

the author of judgment in his own way. If the satisfaction of his

justice, which he has provided, be slighted, that Justice will be

satisfied upon our own persons. If we deny him his honour by the

sufferings of Christ, he will vindicate it by the sufferings of our own

persons. The law was in full force against us, whereby God has obliged

himself to inflict death upon the sinner, Gen. ii. 17. It is his law

upon record, that damnation shall be inflicted upon every one that

believes not. There is no discovery out of Christ, but of wrath

prepared against the day of wrath: the day wherein God and his

unreconciled enemies shall meet together, is called a 'day of wrath,'

Rom. ii. 5, 6; a day wherein there shall be an appearance of wrath only

to such. The angel that has a rainbow about his head, has feet as

pillars of fire, Rev. x. i, to consume them that refuse the peace.

Consider, then, we are sunk under infinite guilt, and cannot rise up

without an almighty hand, vie are defiled with an universal filth, and

cannot be cleansed Without infinite purity; sin is strong in its

accusations, our righteousness imperfect in its defence, and can make

no compensation for the wrongs by the other; our duties are bespotted,

and are not fit for a pure eve. An eternal weight of wrath is due to

all those; there is but one way of escape which God has provided, but one city of refuge whereby we may escape the edge of the revenging sword. The sword of divine justice reaches all that are without this shelter, touches none that are under Christ's wings, but like a consuming fire devours every thing else. We cannot perpetuate the war against him, but to our own sorrow, one spark of wrath will be enough to consume stubble; death will put a period to all treaties.

5. All other ways of reconciliation are insufficient. To pretend to any other ways is an injury to divine wisdom, as though his contrivance were not sufficient for the creature's restoration and support. Divine mercy will clasp no man in its arms with a wrong to any one attribute, nor to the dishonour of Christ. It will therefore never receive any who denies Christ and the efficacy of his priesthood. Men naturally are studious of making God compensation, applauding themselves in their own inventions and satisfactions of their own coining, unwilling to acquiesce in the wisdom and will of God. Two great things God would advance in the world by his grace, is his wisdom and authority; these are the things men oppose, his wisdom by the pride of reason, his authority by the perversity of will. But consider, do we need reconciliation or no? If we need it not, how came we fiends with God, since we were born enemies? If we do need it, is it not safer to enter into the terms God has proposed, wherewith he is satisfied, than to stand to our false, or, at best, hilt uncertain methods? The safest way is always the choice of wise men. Let us not be fools then in refusing the gospel method, unless we can meet with anything that has as fair a plea to divine revelation. Had we all the angels on our side, and all the men on earth to entreat for us, it would be ineffectual.. God never was in them reconciling the world; this one mediator, whom God has appointed, has done and can do that which neither men upon earth nor

angels and saints in heaven can do by their joint intercessions. Place no confidence then in your own humiliations, services, duties, God never was in those reconciling any man; all that is done without faith is but enmity, and that in the best part, your minds, Rom. viii. Whatsoever fair colours they are painted with, they cannot please God. The Scripture settles an impossibility on the head of all of them: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' to gain or keep his favour. Were your righteousness of the highest elevation, it is but a creature, and therefore not the object of trust. Though Adam, while he continued in his natural righteousness, might have entered it as a plea, yet because mutable, it was no fit object of trust for him. But since the fall all pleas of a fleshly corrupted righteousness are overruled in the court of heaven. Absolute mercy, without faith in Christ, cannot save you. As God could not, after the sanction of the law, in regard of his truth, pardon the violations of it without a satisfaction, so since he has settled the way of reconciliation by faith in the blood of Christ, he cannot upon the same score of his truth save any in a way of absolute mercy, especially when that way which he has appointed is refused. As it would be against his truth, against his justice, so also against the honour of his obedient Son; for if he be at peace with one man by absolute mercy, why might he not upon the same terms have reconciled others, and then what need of the sufferings of his only Son to make up the breach? If anything else therefore be chosen as the way of this peace, God at the hour of judgment may remit us to our righteousness, services, carnal confidences, saying, Go to the reconcilers that you have chosen, and see whether they can make your peace, as he did to the Israelites: Judges x. 14, 'Go cry to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you;' a dreadful, but a just speech.

6. God seeks it at our hands, and is willing to receive us. He is not only a God in Christ reconciling the world, but he is a God in his ambassadors entreating: 'As though God himself did beseech you by us,' ver. 20, after the text. This is the tenor of his proclamation, 'Be you reconciled to God.' If he had not desired it, he would not have spent so many thoughts about it, and been at such expense to effect it. He was not bound to it; for he might have left Adam to sink into the death he had merited, without exposing his Son to a death he had not deserved, and contracted a necessity of, only as our surety; he was no more bound to seek out Adam and make him a promise of redemption than he was bound to make him a creature. He might have raised a new world, and have filled it with new inhabitants. It must be something of a vast concernment to us, that God has been so busy about, and so desirous of our acceptance of. Both God seek to us to receive wealth and worldly honours? No. This therefore must be a thing of higher value. A God seeks to us, who is infinitely more glorious than we are vile; a God who never did us the least wrong, but has borne with many injuries from us; a God who could as easily send us into hell with his breath, as breathe out a kind invitation to us; a God who needs our friendship no more than he fears our enmity; a God no more benefited by it than the sun by darting a beam upon a grain of sand. Sure that soul never was sensible of the misery his war with God has sunk him into, who refuses to receive the peace he offers, nor can without an Inconceivable shame look God in the face at the last day, after so notorious a rejecting an entreating God. He seeks it this day, perhaps he will not seek it at our hands to-morrow. There is 'a day' wherein we may 'know the things that concern our peace,' Luke xix. 41. When the day is over, peace will not return. There is a day v herein he will pour out his wrath upon the unbelieving world. While he is yet a great way off, and his thunders at

a distance, he sends an 'embassy of peace,' Luke xiv. 33. He yet seeks to his sworn enemies, and those that were in league with Satan: You may be in league with me, I have not yet shut the door. Listen, do you not hear God's voice in the gospel? He shuts out none that do not shut out themselves. What a guilt will the refusal amount to, when we are to answer for not only the first publication, but repeated offers? Besides, he is willing to receive us into favour, more willing to embrace us than we to receive him. The eternal motions in his heart which gave birth to this gracious design, are of the same force and strength still; he can never forget them. As the remembrance of the years of the right hand of the Most High is our comfort in times of trouble, so God's remembrance of the years of his own right hand, the workings of his own heart, has the like force to excite him to a reception of us, as they had to commission Christ for us. He never broke his word; and less will he do it at the upshot of all, when his people are almost gathered, the world near its period, and the proclamation of the gospel ready to be taken down and folded up for ever; he will not at the end be worse than he has been all along. Let us be as willing to be at peace with him as he is to be at peace with us. God sets us a pattern, he seeks to us, it is an imitation of God to seek to him.

2. Exhortation. Is God in Christ reconciling the world? Then we must be at enmity with sin. God was in Christ reconciling sinners, not sin. God and sin are irreconcilable enemies, so that where there is a peace with one, there must be a war with the other. Fire and water may sooner agree than God and Sin, than a peace with God and a peace with sin. The traitor may be reconciled to the prince, and the treason as hateful to him as before. This is the best evidence to any that he is actually reconciled, when he hates that which made the first separation. Christ

expiated sin, not encouraged it; he died to make your peace, but he died to make you holy: Titus ii. 14, 'To purify a people to himself.'

The design of God in the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, was 'to destroy the works of the devil,' 1 John iii. 8. The chief work of the devil was to enter man in a league with himself and rebellion against God. God aimed at the death of our sins, when he aimed at the life of our souls. The ends of Christ's death cannot be separated; he is no atoner, where he is not a refiner. It is as certain as any word the mouth of God has spoken, that 'there is no peace to the wicked.' A bespotted conscience, and an impure, will keep up the amity with Satan, and enmity with God. He that allows himself in any sin, deprives himself of the benefit of reconciliation. This reconciliation must be mutual; as God lays down his wrath against us, so we must throw down our arms against him. As there was a double enmity, one rooted in nature, another declared by wicked works; or rather, one enmity in its root, and another in its exercise, Col. i. 21; so there must be an alteration of state, and an alteration of acts. The end of Christ's death was to reconcile God to us, and bring us back to God. We are not therefore linked in a peace with him, unless we be transformed into the image of his Son. How can we expect to be taken into the bosom of God, when we every day wilfully defile our souls! Can familiarity with God be kept up, when daily bars are laid in the way? Why was God in Christ reconciling the world? Because he was a holy as well as a gracious God; and to show his detestation of sin, as well as his affection to the creature. Shall this encourage any practice against the holiness of God? God is of as pure eyes, and can as little endure to behold iniquity, since the reconciliation, as before. God was sanctified in Christ when he was reconciling the world in him, and he will be sanctified in us if we have interest in this reconciliation. All God s

acts about Christ are the highest obligation to be at enmity with that, for which the Son of God was appointed, and made a sacrifice; to receive encouragement from hence to sin more freely, is to act Judas his part with God's grace, and betray it to serve our lusts. Be afraid therefore to offend God, not so much because of his power to hurt you, as because of his love whereby he has obliged you. The peace was broken by the disobedience of Adam; it was restored by the obedience of Christ. But our obedience is necessary to the joyful fruits of it.

'Great peace have they which love thy law,' Ps. cxix. 165.

3. Be industrious and affectionate in the service of God. Has God been in Christ reconciling the world, manifesting his desire for it and affection to it by such various acts, and shall we put God off with a little service, who has not put us off with a scanty grace? God has done his utmost to engage our affection and encourage us in the choicest services: there could not be an higher way to procure it and deserve it of us. The view of the creatures, and God's goodness in them, raises a common love to God in the more ingenious natural minds. To what heights should our love ascend, who have such steps to mount by? A weak love is less than is due to him who has discovered such an immensity to us. Shall we return not a drop, or but a drop, for an ocean? How much should we think ourselves obliged to a prince who should but stop a torrent of legal penalties deserved by us? God has done this and more. How should we combine all our thoughts and affections together to serve that God acceptably, who has made all his thoughts conspire to reduce us honourably and successfully? 'I am the Lord thy God, which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,' is the preface to the Decalogue, as an incitement of them to a choice respect to all his precepts.; 'I am the God reconciling you in Christ,' is the tenor of the gospel, and much

more an incitement to service, by how much the deliverance in the antitype exceeds that in the type; this being spiritual and eternal, that temporal. If you are actually reconciled, serve God as your friend. As God has given you an higher state, give him a greater honour. Do all things out of love to God as reconciled, without any base ends and sordid designs. God had no other end in being the author of peace but his own glory and your good; have then no other end but God's glory in your own welfare, advancing further to him and enjoying his reconciled favour. Serve him with a delight in him; a dull, slavish spirit becomes not any in his approach to so hearty a friend. Every duty should be performed with a triumph and glory in the God of salvation: Hab. iii. 18, 'I will joy in the God of my salvation.' God would then delight in us; next to the delight he has in his reconciling Son, he has the choicest delight in his reconciled servants, and services springing up from a sense of his love to them.

4. Let all our approaches to God be begun and attended with a sense of this. God in all his communications to his people acted as a reconciled God; we should eye him so in all our approaches to him. As there is not one mercy, one act of grace, God shows to us, but springs from this restored affection, so not any duty we offer up to God but should rise from a sense of it. Whatsoever is not by and through Christ, is not accepted as a duty. This consideration before all addresses would animate them with all those graces necessary, to be acted in them. It would make us humble to consider what we were, and how freely God reduced us. It would make us believing with an holy boldness. What despondency can there be, when God has given so many tokens of his heartiness in it? It would make us earnest; it would be a fetching fire from heaven for the inflaming our souls. Earnestness is grounded upon hope; what greater foundation for hope than the consideration that this

was God's sole act? Think before every duty of the great love God bears to Christ as mediator, greater than to all men and angels; this will be a ground of confidence. For the love of God to Christ as mediator, was with respect to all that believe in him. Think much of the virtue of Christ's death, wherewith he sprinkled the throne of God, and turned the seat of justice into a throne of grace. It is the best way to receive answers; by pleading this, we mind God of all his engagements. Avery act about Christ is an argument fit to be used in prayer. God will never deny his own acts, nor the ends of them, which was to make a way for communicating himself to his creatures. God is only in Christ entertaining us, as well as reconciling us. Let us not lift up an eye to him without faith in him as a God in Christ, and carry this atoning blood in the hands of faith, in every act of communion with him.

5. Look for grace and spiritual strength from God in Christ. The conduct of mercy and grace is unstopped by Christ, to flow freely down to man. This is the foundation of the regeneration of any soul: 2 Cor. v. 17, 18, 'All things are become new, and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.' Having spoken of the new creation, ver. 17, he lays down the true cause, God; the foundation, the reconciliation by Christ. AID things are of God, all the powerful effects and operations of the gospel in the hearts of men are from God as a reconciler by Christ, not from God as creator. The deep meditation of and closing with the promise of God in and through Christ, brings grace into the heart, not a consideration of God's precepts, but of God's promises. The application of the reconciling love of God in Christ by faith, is attended with a powerful benediction of the Spirit, pulling up the foundations of the enmity on our parts; the Spirit is received by the preaching of the gospel, the meditations of the gospel, the applications of the gospel; the Spirit is conveyed with those, not

with the precepts of the law, Gal. iii. 5. Men begin at the wrong end, they would rise from obedience to faith, and deal with God as if he were to be appeased and satisfied by them. But begin at faith, a firm assent, a full consent to the gospel and the offers of redemption, and go down, by virtue of that, to obedience; it is by casting ourselves upon God in Christ that we receive vigour for all spiritual obedience. The spirit of holiness is the principle whereby we obey, not the effects of our obedience. Christ is first redemption, then sanctification; God a God of peace, and then a God of grace. We should look upon God as a God of peace, and under that title implore him for increase of habitual grace. As a God of peace, he 'works in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight' Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Our sanctification depends upon our justification. God promised to be as a dew to his people under the gospel, Hosea iv. 5. Dew descends from a clear sky, and grace from a reconciled God. As God in Adam had conveyed a natural righteousness to his posterity, had Adam stood, so God in Christ only conveys a spiritual righteousness to Christ's spiritual offspring.

6. When any rising of enmity is in the soul, go to God in Christ. As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ reconciling a veal after the readmission of guilt through temptation; not that the guilt of the whole mass of sins of a believer returns upon his far], tent a particular guilt of that sin he has committed lies upon him, for which he must have a fresh application of reconciling mercy. He must go to God in Christ for this; as the first application was made in and through Christ. so must the second and third, as often as we need it, even in our daily pardons. Christ sits an officer in heaven to this purpose, and God Lath constituted him an officer to this end, and is in him in his intercession accepting it, as well as in his first

satisfaction. The Corinthians the apostle writes to, some of them at least, were reconciled, yet he beseeches them to be reconciled to God, i.e. renew their reconciliation upon every new breach, and regain the favour of God which they had forfeited by their sins, for which he had reprov'd them in the former epistle. This must be sued out every day. What was the foundation of the first peace is the foundation of the renewals of it; the same course you took at the first, will be successful for the second. God was not out of Christ in the first, and he will not be out of Christ whenever there is any need. As God was willing and desirous to make reconciliation by the blood of Christ, when all your sins lay before him with their crimson aggravations, much more will he renew it upon a particular fall. But he may hide his face till you sue out a pardon upon his own proclamation and contrivance; and if it be a presumptuous sin, he may deny you the comfort of this peace a long time perhaps as long as you live. Let not any presume upon this, for it belongs not to any man that lives in a course of known sin, which is inconsistent with a reconciled state.

7. How contented should those that are reconciled be in every condition! The peace of God should bear rule in our hearts, to compose them upon any emergency: Col. iii. 15, this will keep the heart and mind from solicitousness Philip. iv 6, 7, this will make us despise the promises of the world alluring us, and the threatenings of the world to scare us. This peace should be the guard of our souls, and will render us happy when the world may account us most miserable, and therefore should render us contented. If you would not have the riches and honours of the world without it, you may well bear the scorns and reproaches of the world with it. The world could not secure you, if you had a war with God, nor defend you from the arrows of his wrath. But since you have peace with God, you are mounted above the enmities of

the world, and your spirits should be guarded by it from any tumultuous passions. If the wrath of God be ceased towards us, we may well bear the strokes of a Father since we are not like to feel his sword as a Judge. How cheerfully may we kiss the afflicting hand of God, when he is at peace with us! Look upon all your mercies too (though they are of a meaner bulk outwardly than others), as flowing from this fountain, which may make you not only contented with them, but highly value them. It gives a sweeter relish to mercy than Adam could have; he had the goodness of God, but not the goodness of a reconciled Father, while he was in innocence. If this makes heaven the sweeter, it should make mercies here more savoury

8. Let us then be reconcilable to others. Not only where we offer, but from whom we receive an injury. God's reconciliation should be our rule in dealing with others. Hard hearts and uncharitable dispositions are unlike to God, who had a heart full of tenderness to them, who will not part with a grain of their right to their brethren, when God parted with his Son to work their peace with him; and had he not been more forward in it than they, they had perished for ever. God sets his own actions to us as a pattern of ours to others: Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful,' if we are irreconcilable to others, we are not imitators of God, but reject the noblest pattern, and discover no sense of the kindness of God to us. Since God has made Christ a propitiation for sin, the apostle makes this inference, that 'if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,' 1 John iv. 10, 11. Did God send his Son out of his bosom, and veil his glory, to be at peace with us, and entreat us to accept his favour, and shall we be upon every occasion at sword's point with our brother? Such a disposition is against the whole tenor of the gospel, and a keeping up a wolfish and brutish nature against the design of the

gospel administration, Isa. xi. 6. Christ came to slay the enmity between God and us, between Jew and Gentile; it is a crossing the design of God, to preserve enmity between Christian and Christian; it is to keep up the partition wall, and frustrate (what in us lies) the end of Christ's death, which was to demolish it. The peace God wrought was a matter of grace, the peace we owe to our brother is a matter of debt; it is due to the command of God. God first laid the scene of our reconciliation, not assisted by the counsels of others; not sought to by ourselves, but seeking us. Our doing the like to others is an imitation of God, whereas to be implacable in revenge is to partake of the devil's nature.

9. Glorify God for this. Since God sends out such a blessing to us, we should send out loud prayers to him. Heaven smiles upon earth, and earth should bless heaven Glorify God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though we have all immediately from Christ, yet Christ has all from the Father. He is the propitiation for our sins, but he was appointed by the Father. He came to redeem, but he was sent by God upon that errand. He paid our debts as a surety, but he was accepted by God. He was a mediator to bring us to God, but he was Commissioned by God to that end. What a love did God retain to his creatures, though he abominated their Sins, and in the midst of his indignation against their iniquities had bowels for their persons! How did God forecast for us, when we were 'prisoners in the pit wherein was no water,' Zech. ix. 11, the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible! Isa. xlix. 25. When the law of God was against us, and his truth taking part with his law, his wisdom and mercy found a way to preserve his truth, and satisfy the curses of the law, that we might enjoy the blessings of the gospel, when we could not in the least deserve it, unless peevishness and perversity, treachery and disloyalty, weakness and

wilfulness could pass for allurements; we had then been inconceivable meriters. Such free and full compassion deserves our thank fullness, though we could not merit his grace. It is not a contracted, half-made, or oppressive peace, It is an extensive, tender, and abundant peace, like a river and a flowing stream, a peace whereby we are borne in his bosom, Isa. lxvi. 12. How should we adore the depth of that wisdom which found a refuge for us, when heaven and earth were at war with us; adore this goodness, that when we were no sooner born, but we were He objects of a cursing law, the scorn of a malicious devil, our Jesus should be sent to pacify the law, and shame the devil our enemy I Angels glorify him for this peace; should we be outstripped by beings less concerned in it? God is only praised in and through Christ; God and Christ are joined together in the saints' praise: Rev. v. 13, 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever;' and so they should be in ours. How beautiful will this whole work appear, when the whole methods of it come to be read in heaven in the original copy, when they shall be seen in the face, in the bosom of God, in fair and plainer characters! To conclude. If all the sparks that ever leapt out of any fire since the creation, and all the drops of rain that have fell upon the world; were so many angelical tongues, their praise would come short of the excess of this love. Let the praise of God for this, be not the business of a day, but the work of our lives, since eternity is too short to admire it.

End.

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