

**CHRIST'S  
ETERNAL  
EXISTENCE  
AND THE  
DIGNITY OF HIS  
PERSON**

**ASSERTED AND PROVED,  
IN OPPOSITION TO THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE  
SOCINIANS.**

**Thomas Manton**

## TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

HERE are presented to thy view some of the further profitable and pious labours of that eminent divine, Dr Manton (now with God), who though, like a tree full of fruit, he has already yielded much fruit, yet still more and more falls from him. Since his much to be lamented death, two very large volumes (with some lesser) of his sermons have been published, which give a clear discovery to the world of his great abilities for, and great diligence in, the office and work of the minis try. Now this small piece succeeds, which, in comparison of the former, is but a poor stripling,--but as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is over.' Yet let it not be rejected or slighted upon that account; for though it is not so bulky as they, yet, according to its proportion, it is of equal value, and shows the same head and heart which they do.

My pen (upon this opportunity) would fain be launching forth into the commendation of the worthy author, but I will not suffer it, considering how little he needs that from any, and how much he is above it as from me. Neither will I suffer it to run out in the commending of these sermons; for I hope, to impartial and judicious readers, they will commend themselves (the best way of commending). I only recommend them, as judging them worthy of the perusal of all who are desirous of a fuller knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

For he is the grand subject treated of in them. His person, offices, works, blessings, are here described, asserted, vindicated, and improved. Our redemption by his blood; his being the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; his creating and sustaining all things; his headship over the church, pre-existence before all created beings; his being the first-born from the dead, the union of the two natures in his person; his reconciling of sinners to God through the blood of his cross,--these are the heads insisted upon in these sermons (the author following the apostle, Col. i. 14-20).

And are not these great points, of a very sublime nature, containing the very vitals of gospel revelation? Can ministers preach, print too

much of them? Can private Christians hear, read, meditate too much of them? Oh, they are the ta' ba'the, the deep things of God.' in which is manifested the polupoi'kilos sophi'a, the manifold wisdom of God.' which the angels desire to look into.' which are the wonder and astonishment of heaven, which put such a transcendent excellency upon the knowledge of Christ. Should we not, therefore, thankfully receive and diligently peruse all discourses that may clear up our light in and about these profound mysteries? I hope the consideration hereof will make these sermons acceptable to many gracious souls. They all hanging upon this string, and pointing to this argument (of what Christ is, has done, suffered, and procured for believers), they are not unfitly put together, and printed by themselves, in this small volume.

Several of the points mentioned are controversial; for a long track of time there has been hot disputes about them. What volumes pro and con have been written, both by ancient and modern divines, about them! But our reverend author does not so much concern himself in what is polemical and controversial, but chose rather in a plainer way (as best suiting with sermon-work) to assert and prove the truth by scriptural testimonies and arguments: and that he has done to the full.

Header, whoever thou art into whose hands these sermons shall come, let me assure thee they are the genuine work of the person whose name they bear. They were copied out from, and according to, his own notes, by one who I am sure would be as exact therein as possibly he could. But how earnestly could I wish, if God had not seen it good to order it otherwise, that the author himself might have lived to have reviewed and polished them; for what hand so fit to polish the stone as that which cuts it? But now what is amiss must be left to the understanding reader to discover, and to the candid reader to pardon.

Christian, I commit thee to God; may he bless thee, and all the labours of his faithful servants (whether living or dead), to the promoting of thy spiritual and eternal good. Which he ardently desires, who is,--

Thine to serve thee in our Lord Jesus,

Tho. Jacomb.

# REDEMPTION BY CHRIST.

## SERMON I. - Col. I. 14.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.--Col. I. 14.

THE apostle, in the former verse, had spoken of our slavery and bond age to Satan, from which Christ came to deliver us; now, because sin is the cause of it, he cometh to speak of our redemption from sin: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Here is--

I. The author.

II. The benefit.

III. The price.

The point is this:--

Doct. That one principal part of our redemption by Christ is remission of sins. Here I shall show you:--

1. What remission of sins is.

2. The nature of redemption.

3. That remission of sins is a part, and a principal part of it.

First, What remission of sins is. Both terms must be explained--what sin is, and what is the forgiveness of sin.

For the first, sin is a violation of the law of the eternal and living God: 1 John iii. 4, Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.' God is the lawgiver, who hath given a righteous law to his subjects, under the dreadful penalty of a curse. In his law there are two things--the precept and the sanction. The precept is the rule of our duty, which showeth what we must do, or not do. The sanction or penalty showeth what God will do, or might justly do, if he should deal with us according to the merit of our actions. Accordingly, in sin, there is the fault and the

guilt.

[1.] The fault: that man, who is God's subject, and so many ways obliged to him by his benefits, instead of keeping this law, should break it upon light terms, and swerve from the rule of his duty, being carried away by his own ill-disposed will and base lusts. It is a great and heinous offence, for which he becometh obnoxious to the judgment of God.

[2.] The guilt: which is a liableness to punishment, and that not ordinary punishment, but the vengeance of the eternal God, who every moment may break in upon us. Where there is sin, there will be guilt; and where there is guilt, there will be punishment, unless we be pardoned, and God looseneth the chains wherewith we be bound.

Secondly, Forgiveness of sin is a dissolving the obligation to punishment, or a freedom, in God's way and method, from all the sad and woful consequences of sin. Understand it rightly.

[1.] It is not a disannulling the act, as it is a natural action; such a fact we did, or omitted to do; factum, infactum fieri nequit--that which is done, cannot be undone. And, therefore, though it be said, Jer. 1. 20, The iniquity of Jacob shall be sought after, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve; yet that must not be understood as if God would abolish the action, and make it as if it had never been, for that is impossible. But he would pass by, and overlook it as to punishment.

[2.] Nor is it abolished as a faulty or criminal action, contrary to the law of God. The sins we have committed are sins still, such actions as the law condemneth. Forgiveness is not the making of a fault to be no fault. An accused person may be vindicated as innocent, but if he be pardoned, he is pardoned as an offender. He is not reputed as one that never culpably omitted any duty, or committed any sin, but his fault is forgiven upon such terms as our offended governor pleaseth I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and forgive all their sins,' Heb. viii. 12. They are pardoned as sins.

[3.] Nor is the merit of the sinful act lessened; in itself it deserveth condemnation to punishment. Merito operis, it is in itself damnable, but quoad eventum: Rom. viii. 1, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' &c.; because the grace of the gospel

dischargeth us from it. We must still own ourselves deserving the wrath of God, which maketh for our constant humiliation and admiration of grace; so that he that is pardoned still deserveth punishment.

[4.] It remaineth, therefore, that forgiveness of sin is a dissolving the obligation to punishment, or passing by the fault, so as it shall not rise up in judgment against us to our confusion or destruction: the fault is the sinner's act, the punishment the judge's, which he may forbear on certain terms stated in the law of grace. He passeth by the fault so far, that it shall not be a ground of punishment to us. I prove it:--

(1.) From the nature of the thing; for there is such a relation between the fault and the guilt, the sin and the punishment, that the one cannot be without the other. There can be no punishment without a preceding fault and crime. Therefore, if the judge will not impute the fault, there must needs be an immunity from punishment, for the cause being taken away, the effect ceaseth, and the sin committed by us is the meritorious cause of punishment. If God will cover that, and overlook it, then forgiveness is a dissolving the obligation to punishment.

(2.) From the common rule of speaking used among men, for surely the scripture speaketh intelligibly. Now in the common way of speaking, he cannot be said to forgive or remit a fault that exacteth the whole punishment of it. How can a magistrate be said to forgive an offender, when the offender beareth the punishment which the law determineth? And what do men pray for to God, when they pray for the forgiveness of sins, but that they may be exempted from the punishment which they have deserved?

(3.) It would seem to impeach the justice and mercy of God, if he should exact the punishment where he hath pardoned the offence. His justice, to flatter men with hopes of remitting the debt, where he requireth the payment; his mercy, in making such fair offers of reconciliation, when still liable to his vindictive justice. There may be indeed effects of his fatherly anger, but not of his vindictive wrath.

(4.) The phrases, and way of speaking in scripture, by which forgiveness of sin is set forth, show God doth blot out our sins: Ps.

li. 2, Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' And cover them: Ps. xxxii. 1, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' To cast them behind his back: Isa. xxxviii. 17, Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' And cast them into the bottom of the sea: Micah vii. 19, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' To remember them no more: Jer. xxxi. 34, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' By such emphatical metaphors doth it express God's free and full forgiveness, if we seriously enter into his peace; and do clearly show, that if God punisheth sins, he doth remember them; if he avenge them, he imputeth them; if they are brought into the judgment against us, they are not covered; if he searcheth after them, he doth not cast them behind his back; if he bringeth them into light, he doth not cast them into the depths of the sea; much more if he punish us for them.

Secondly, The nature of redemption.

What is redemption by the blood of Christ?

In opening it to you, I shall prove six things:--

1. A captivity or bondage.
2. That from thence we are freed by a ransom, or price paid.
3. That none but Christ was fit to give this ransom.
4. That nothing performed by Christ was sufficient till he laid down his life.
5. That thence there is a liberty resulting to us.
6. That we do not actually partake of the benefit of this ransom till we be in Christ.

[1.] Our being redeemed supposeth a captivity and bondage. All men in their unrenewed estate are slaves to sin and Satan, and subject to the wrath of God. That we are slaves to sin appeareth by scripture and experience: Titus iii. 3, Serving divers lusts and pleasures;' John viii. 34, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.' Men imagine a life spent in vanity and pleasure to be a very good life; it were so, if liberty were to be determined by doing what we list, rather than what we ought. But since it is not, experience showeth that they are convinced of their brutish satisfactions as

mean and base, yet they cannot leave them, for that true and solid happiness offered by Christ. Now as they are under sin, so they are under Satan, who worketh in the children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2; and hath a great power over wicked men in the world, who fall to his share, as the executioner of God's curse, and are taken captive by him at his will and pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26. This is the woful captivity and servitude of carnal men, that they fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the roaring lion. Now, for this they are liable to the curse and wrath of God; therefore called children of wrath, even as others,' Eph. ii. 3; that is, obnoxious to his righteous displeasure and punishment. Thus were we lost in ourselves under sin, Satan, and the wrath of God, from which we could no way free ourselves; and if grace had not opened a way for us to escape, what should we have done?

[2.] To recover us, there was a price to be paid by way of ransom to God. We are not delivered from this bondage by prayer or entreaty, nor by strong hand or mere force, nor yet by the sole condescension and pity of the injured party, without seeking reparation of the wrong done, but by the payment of a sufficient price, and just satisfaction to provoked justice. This price was not paid indeed to Satan, who detaineth souls in slavery as a rigid usurping tyrant or merciless jailor (from him indeed we are delivered by force), but the price was paid to God. Man had not sinned against Satan, but against God, to whom it belongeth to condemn or absolve. And God being satisfied, Satan hath no power over us, but is put out of office, as the executioner hath nothing to do when the judge and law is satisfied; Now, that redemption implieth the paying of a price is clear, because the word importeth it, and the scripture often uses this metaphor: Mat. xx. 28, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;' 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' Redemption in the general is a recovery out of our lost estate. God could have saved men by the grace of confirmation, but he chose rather by the grace of redemption. This recovery was not by a forcible rescue, but by a ransom. Christ, in recovering his people out of their lost estate, is sometimes set forth as a lamb, sometimes as a lion. In dealing with God, we consider him as the lamb slain, Rev. v. 5, 6: in dealing with Satan, and the enemies of our salvation, he doth as a lion recover the prey. But why was a ransom necessary?



Because God had made a former covenant, which was not to be quit and wholly made void but upon valuable consideration, lest his justice, wisdom, holiness, veracity, authority should fall to the ground.

(1.) The honour of his governing justice was to be secured and freed from any blemish, that the awe of God might be kept up in the world: Rom. iii. 5, 6, and Gen. xviii. 25, That be far from thee, to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' If God should absolutely pardon without satisfaction equivalent for the wrong done, how should God else be known and revered as the just and holy governor of the world? Therefore Rom. iii. 25, 26, it is said, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness. for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

(2.) His wisdom. The law was not given by God in jest, but in the greatest earnest that ever law was given. Now, if the law should be recalled without any more ado, the lawgiver would run the hazard of levity, mutability, and imprudence in constituting so solemn a transaction to no purpose. Paul was troubled when forced to retract his word, 2 Cor. i. 17, 18; that his word should be yea to-day, and nay to-morrow. Therefore, when God had said, Thus I will govern the world, he was not to part with the law upon light terms.

(3.) His holy nature would not permit it. There needed some way to be found out, to signify his purest holiness, his hatred and detestation of sin, and that it should not be pardoned without some marks of his displeasure. His soul hates the wicked, and the righteous God loveth righteousness, Ps. xi. 6.

(4.) His authority. It would be a derogation from the authority of his law, if it might be broken, and there be no more ado about it. Now, that all the world might know that it is a dangerous thing to transgress his laws, and might hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously, God appointed this course, that the penalty of his law should be executed upon our surety, when he undertook our

reconciliation with God, Gal. iv. 4.

(5.) The veracity and truth of God. It bindeth the truth of God, which sinners are apt to question: Gen. iii. 5, 'Hath God said?' and Deut. xxix. 19, 20. We look upon the threatenings of the law as a vain scarecrow; therefore, for the terror and warning of sinners for the future, God would not release his wrath, nor release us from the power of sin and Satan, which was the consequent of it, without a price and valuable compensation.

[3.] None was fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, who was God-man. He was man to undertake it in our name, and God to perform it in his own strength; a man that he might be made under the law, and humbled even to the death of the cross for our sakes; and all this was elevated beyond the worth of created actions and sufferings by the divine nature which was in him, which perfumed his humanity, and all done by it and in it. This put the stamp upon the metal, and made it current coin, imposed an infinite value upon his finite obedience and sufferings. By taking human nature a price was put into his hands to lay down for us: Heb. x. 15, and his divine nature made it sufficient and responsible, for it was the blood of God: Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;' and Heb. ix. 13, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' It was that flesh and blood which was assumed into the unity of his person as a slip or branch grafted into a stock is the branch of the stock, and the fruit of it is the fruit of the stock. A naked creature without this union could not have satisfied the justice of God for us. This made his blood a precious blood, and his obedience a precious obedience. In short, God-man, the Son of God and the son of Adam, was he that redeemed us. So, in short, there were different parties to be dealt with before the fruit of redemption could be obtained: God, satan, man. God was an enemy that could not be overcome, but must be reconciled; Satan was a usurper, and was to be vanquished with a strong hand; man was unable and unwilling to look after the fruits of redemption, and our obstinacy and unbelief could only be overcome by the Spirit of Christ.

[4.] Nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom for this end, unless he had crowned all his other actions and sufferings by laying down his life, and undergoing a bloody and violent death. This was the completing and crowning act. Partly to answer the types of the law, wherein no remission was represented without a bloody sacrifice; partly from the nature of the thing, and the fulness of the satisfaction required until all that was finished, John viii. 20. Death was that which was threatened to sin, death was that which was feared by the sinner. Many ignorant people will say the least drop of Christ's blood was enough to save a thousand worlds. If so, his circumcision had been enough without his death. But Christ is not glorified but lessened by such expressions. Surely his death was necessary, or God would never have appointed it; his bloody death suited with God's design. God's design was to carry on our recovery in such a way as might make sin more hateful, and obedience more acceptable to us.

(1.) Sin more hateful by his agonies, blood, shame, death; no less remedy would serve the turn, to procure the pardon and destruction of it: Rom. viii. 3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh;' that is, by a sin-offering. God showed a great example of his wrath against all sin by punishing sin in the flesh of Christ. His design was for ever to leave a brand upon it, and to furnish us with a powerful mortifying argument against it, by the sin-offering and ransom for souls. Surely it is no small matter for which the Son of God must die! At Golgotha, sin was seen in its own colours--there he showed how much he hateth it, and loveth purity.

(2.) To commend obedience. Christ's suffering death for the sin of man at the command of his Father was the noblest piece of service and the highest degree of obedience that ever could be performed to God--beyond anything that can be done by men or angels. There was in it so much love to God, pity to man, so much self-denial, so much humility and patience, and so much resignation of himself to God, who appointed him to be the redeemer and surety of man, to do this office for him, as cannot be paralleled. The great thing in it was obedience: Rom. v. 14, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' so Phil. ii. 7, 'God was not delighted in mere blood, but in blood offered in obedience. All his former actions, together with his death and sufferings, make but one entire act of eminent obedience;

but his painful and cursed death, so willingly and readily undergone, was the crowning act. The formal reason of the merit was that Christ came to fulfil the will of God, by which will we are sanctified,' Heb. x. 10, therefore his death was necessary.

[5.] From this ransom and act of obedience there is a liberty resulting unto us, for the redeemed are let go when the ransom is paid. Now this liberty is a freedom from sin, that we may become the servants of God: Rom. vi. 22, 'Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.' Christ came not to free us from the duty of the law, but the penalty and curse thereof. To free us from the duty of the law is to promote the devil's interest. No; he freed us from the wrath of God that we may serve him cheerfully, to establish God's interest upon surer and more comfortable terms, to restore us to God's favour and service: to God's favour, by the pardon of sin; to his service by writing his laws on our hearts and minds. Sometimes our redemption from the curse is spoken of: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Sometimes our redemption from sin: Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity;' and so by consequence from the power of the devil, which is built on the curse of the law and reign<sup>^</sup>of sin. Satan's power over us doth flow from the sentence of the condemnation pronounced by the law against sinners, and consists in that dominion sin hath obtained over them. If the curse of the law be disannulled, and the power of sin broken, he is spoiled of his power: Col. ii. 14, 15, 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them.'

[6.] That we are not partakers of this liberty, nor of the benefit of this ransom, till we are in him, and united to him by faith, for the text saith, 'In whom we have redemption by his blood.' Certainly we must be turned from Satan to God before we are capable of receiving the forgiveness of sins, Acts xxvi. 18. We do not actually partake of the privileges of Christ's kingdom till we be first his subjects: 'Who hath delivered us from the power of Satan, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' Christ and his

people are an opposite state to the devil and his instruments. While we are under the opposite power we belong not to Christ, and the privileges of his kingdom belong not to us; but as soon as we are translated and put into another estate, then we have the first privilege, remission of sins.' Look, as in the fall there was sin before guilt, so in our reparation there must be conversion, renovation, or repentance before remission. We are first effectually called or sanctified, and then justified and glorified. Man's recovery to God is in the same method in which he fell from him. It is first brought about by a new nature, and communication of life from Christ. He regenerateth that he may pardon, and he pardoneth that he may further sanctify and make us everlastingly happy.

Thirdly, That remission of sins is a part, and a principal part of redemption.

1. How is it a part or fruit of redemption?

I answer--Redemption is taken either for the impetration or application.

[1.] The impetration or laying down the price, that was done by Christ upon the cross. So it is said, Heb. ix. 12, Christ by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for us.' Then was God propitiated, the deadly blow given to the kingdom and power of the devil, and the merit and ransom interposed, by the virtue of which we are pardoned. The obtained redemption and remission of sins is a fruit flowing from it, and depending upon it as an effect upon the cause.

[2.] The scripture considers redemption in its application. Besides laying down the price, there is an actual deliverance and freedom by virtue of that price. This is either begun or complete. The complete redemption, or freedom from sin and misery, is that which the godly shall enjoy at the last day: Rom. viii. 23, We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;' Eph. iv. 30, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;' Eph. i. 14, In whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.' The inchoate or begun deliverance is that measure of

deliverance which believers enjoy now by faith, which consists of two parts--justification and sanctification. Sanctification: 1 Pet. i. 18, Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' when we are free from the power and weight of sin. Justification, so it is in the text, and Eph, i. 7; when sin is freely pardoned, and our debt cancelled, and we are delivered from evil and wrath to come.

2. As it is a part, so it is a principal part. This will appear if you consider the evil we are freed from.

[1.] The power of the devil is destroyed. All the advantage which he hath against us is as we are sinners, guilty sinners before God. For we are put into his hands when we have forfeited the protection of our righteous Lord, but forgiveness of sins gives us a release from him, Acts xxvi. 18. When Christ came to procure it he destroyed the devil's power; when we are converted we are interested in the privilege.

[2.] The reign of sin is broken, or sanctifying grace is inseparable from pardoning grace; yea, I will venture to say, that the gift of the sanctifying Spirit is a part of our pardon executed and applied; for a part of the punishment of sin was spiritual death, or the loss of God's image: Col. ii. 13, 'He hath quickened you together with Christ, having forgiven all your trespasses.' When God pardoneth he sanctifieth and createth us anew, that we may be fit for his service, so that we are renewed by the Spirit, as well as recovered out of the snares of the devil.

[3.] We are eased of tormenting fears in a great measure. Man can have no firm peace and comfort in his own soul while sin remaineth upon him. Our case is dangerous, whether we be sensible of it or no, because our condition is not to be valued by our sense and feeling, but by the sentence of the law of God, which we have broken and violated. If there be any difference in the case, the more insensible we are, the more miserable. The generality of men indeed are senseless and care less, put far away the evil day from them, and so make light work of reconciling themselves to God. But are they the more safe for this? No; if they will dance about the brink of hell, and go merrily to their execution, it argues not their safety, but their

stupidness. The thought of danger is put off when the thing itself is not put away, but if they be serious they cannot be without trouble: Rom. i. 32, 'Knowing the judgment of God, they conclude that they that do such things are worthy of death.' The very light of nature will revive many unquiet thoughts within them. The justice of the supreme Governor of the world will still be dreadful to them, whose law they have broken, and whose wrath they have justly deserved. They may lull the soul asleep by the stupifying potion of carnal delights, and while conscience is asleep please themselves with stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, which is soon disturbed by a few serious and sober thoughts of the world to come. God is offended, and what peace can they have?

[4.] Death is unstinged. That is the usual time when convictions grow to the height, and the stings of an awakened conscience begin, to be felt, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Then the thoughts of death and judgment to come are very terrible to them, and men begin to see what it is to bear their own sins, and how happy they are who are sure of a pardon.

[5.] The obligation to eternal punishment ceases. Pardon is dissolving and loosing that obligation. Now the punishment is exceeding great; hell and damnation are no vain scarecrows. Eternity makes everything truly great, the poena damni, an everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of the Lord: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Go, ye cursed;' Luke xiii. 27, 'Depart, ye workers of iniquity.' When God turned Adam out of paradise his case was very sad, but God took care of him in his exile, made him coats of skin, gave him a day of patience, afterwards promised the seed of the woman, who should recover the lapsed estate of mankind, intimated hopes of a better paradise. That estate, therefore, is nothing comparable to this, for now man is stripped of all his comforts, sent into an endless state of misery, whence there is no hopes of ever changing his condition. So for the poena sensus, the pain: Mark ix. 44, 'Where their worm never dieth, and their fire is never quenched.' The worm is the worm of conscience reflecting on past folly and disobedience. See here a man may run away from the rebukes of conscience by many shifts--sleeping, sporting, distracting his mind with a clatter of business; but there not a thought free, but is always thinking of slighted mercies, abused mercies, wasted time, the offences done to a merciful God,

and the curse wherein they have involved themselves; the fire is the wrath of God, or these unknown pains that shall be inflicted on body and soul, which must needs be great when we fall into the hands of the living God. If a little mitigation, a drop to cool your tongue be thought a great matter, oh! what a blessedness is it to be freed from so great an evil. Perhaps you coldly entertain the offer of a pardon now, but then to be freed from wrath to come--oh, blessed Jesus! 1 Thes. i. 10.

II. The good depending on it: Luke i. 77, 'To give us the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.' Eternal life dependeth on it, for you are not capable of enjoying God till his wrath be appeased. As all evil was introduced by sin, so all happiness by pardon. This is an initial blessing, which maketh way for the rest.

Use, of exhortation: To persuade you to seek after this benefit. All of us once needed it, and the best of us, till we are wholly freed from sin, still need it.

1. We all of us once needed it; for we are not only criminal persons liable to condemnation, but actually condemned in the sentence of God's law: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' Now, should not a condemned man make means to be pardoned? and should not we accept of God's terms, especially when there is but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution? He that securely continues in his sins, despiseth both the curse of the law and the grace of the gospel. Oh, consider! nothing but a pardon will serve the turn--not forbearance on God's part, nor forgetfulness on yours.

[1.] Not forbearance of the punishment on God's part. God may be angry with us while he doth not actually strike, as the psalmist saith: Ps. vii. 11-13, 'God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not he will whet his sword. He hath bent his bow and will make it ready.' God, who is a righteous judge, will not dispense with the offences of wicked men, by which he is continually affronted and provoked. Though in the day of his patience he doth for a while spare, yet he is ready to deal with them comminus, hand to hand, for he is sharpening his sword; *eminus*, at a distance, for he is bending his bow. The arrow is upon the string, and how soon he may let it fly we can not tell. We are never safe till we turn to him, and enter into





First, His internal relation to God.

Secondly, By his external relation to the creature.

Doct. It is a great part of a believer's work to have a deep sense of the Redeemer's excellency imprinted upon his mind and heart.

Here I shall show:--

I. How it is set forth in this verse.

II. Why this should be much upon our minds and hearts.

I. How it is set forth in this scripture:--

1. That he is the image of the invisible God.'

2. The first-born of every creature.'

For the first expression there I shall consider:--

1. What belongs to an image.

2. In what respects Christ is the image of God.

3. How he differeth from other persons.

1. What belongeth to an image, and that all this is in Christ. In an image there are two things--impression and representation. Both are in Christ. There is a divine impression upon him, and he doth represent God to us.

[1.] For impression, there is:--

(1.) Likeness; for an image must be like him whom it representeth. An artificial image of God, or such as may be made by us, is forbidden upon this account: Isa. xl. 18, 'To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?' What is there among all the creatures that can be like such an infinite and almighty essence? or by what visible shape or figure would they represent or resemble God?

(2.) Deduction and derivation. The image is taken from him whom it is intended to represent. It is not some casual similitude between two men that have no reference or dependence one upon another; hut such as is between a father and his only-begotten son; as it is said of Adam, Gen. v. 1, 'He begat a son in his own image;' and so it is verified in Christ because of his eternal generation. Like him,

because begotten of him.

(3.) There is not a likeness in a few things, but a complete and exact likeness; so Christ, as the second person, is called, Heb. i. 3, 'The express image of his person.' There is not only likeness, but equality. God cannot make a creature equal to himself, nor beget a son unequal to himself.

[2.] Representation; for an image it serveth to make known and declare that thing whose image it is. If light produce light, the light produced doth represent the light and glory producing; and the more perfect and immediate the production is, the more perfect is the resemblance; a lively expression of the pattern and exemplar. And this is the reason why the word invisible is added, because God, who in his own nature is invisible, and incomprehensible to man, revealeth himself so far as is necessary to salvation to us by Christ. Visible things are known by their visible images, with more delight, but not with more accuracy. The image is not necessary to know the thing; but here it is otherwise. We cannot know God but by Christ: John i. 18, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' God is invisible, and incomprehensible by any but Jesus Christ, who being his only Son, and one in essence with the Father, he doth perfectly know him, and reveal unto mankind all that they know of him. Thus you see what belongs to an image.

2. In what respects Christ is the image of God.

[1.] In respect of his eternal generation. So Christ is the express image of his person'--not substance, but subsistence. We do not say that milk is like milk, nor one egg like another, because they are of the same substance; so Christ is not said to be of the same substance, but of the same subsistence. He is, indeed, of the same substance with him whom he doth resemble, but the image is with respect to the subsistence; so he resembleth the Father fully and perfectly. There is no perfection in the Father but the same is in the Son also. He is eternal, omnipotent, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power.

[2.] As God incarnate, or manifested in our flesh; so the perfections of the Godhead shine forth in the man Christ Jesus, in his person, word, and works.

(1.) In his person. They that had a discerning eye might see

something divine in Christ: John i. 14, We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.' There is the as of similitude, and the as of congruity; as if a mean man taketh state upon him, we say he behaveth himself as a king, but if we say the same of a king indeed, we mean he behaveth himself king-like, that is, becoming the majesty of his high calling. So we beheld his glory as, &c., that is, such a glory as was suitable and becoming God's only Son. So Christ was angry with his disciples because they were too importunate to see the Father, though they saw him ordinarily, conversing with him: John xiv. 7, If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him.' The Father is no otherwise to be known but as he hath revealed himself in Christ; and having seen and known Christ, who was his image, they might both see and know him; and when Philip saith Show us the Father and it sufficeth us'--this will convince us all without further argument--Christ answereth, ver. 9, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' They might see the Father's infinite power acting in him, his wisdom teaching by him, his goodness in the whole strain of his life; so that in Christ becoming man, God doth in and by him represent all his own attributes and properties, his wisdom, goodness, and power.

(2.) In his word; where God is revealed to us savingly, so as we may be brought into communion with him, so it is said, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. As God shineth forth in Christ, so doth Christ shine forth in the gospel. There we have the record of his doctrine, miracles, and the end for which he came into the world; and this is the great instrument by which the virtue and power of God is conveyed to us, for the changing of our hearts and lives: 2 Cor. iii. 18, Beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into his image and likeness, from glory to glory.' Some sight of God we must have, or else we cannot be like him: the knowledge or sight of God with mortal or bodily eyes is impossible; the external manifestations and representations in the creature is imperfect, and sufficeth rather for conviction than conversion, or to leave us without excuse, than to save the soul, Rom. xii. 1 (they have not the excuse of fault less ignorance). To know him in the law, or covenant of works, doth but work wrath, Rom. iv. 15, or revive in us a stinging sense of our hopeless condition. To know him

in person, or to see his glorious works, or hear his glorious words, was a privilege vouchsafed but to few, and to many that made no good use of it; therefore there is only reserved his word to bring us into communion with God, or the glass of the gospel to represent the glory of the Lord, that we may be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; there the knowledge of God is held out powerfully in order to our salvation.

(3.) His works--all which in their whole tenure and contexture showed him to be God-man. If at any time there appeared any evidence of human weakness, lest the world should be offended and stumble thereat, he did at the same time give out some notable demonstrations of his divine power. When he lay in a manger at his birth, a star appeared, and angels proclaimed his birth to the shepherds; when he was swaddled as an infant, the wise men came and worshipped him; when he was in danger of suffering shipwreck, he commanded the winds and the waves, and they obeyed him; when he was tempted by Satan, he was ministered unto by the angels, Mat. iv. 11; when they demanded tribute for the temple, a fish brought it to him, Mat. xvii. 26; when he was deceived in the fig-tree (which, was an infirmity of human ignorance), he suddenly blasted it, discovering the glory of a divine power; when he hung dying on the cross, the rocks were rent, the graves opened, the sun darkened, and all nature put into a rout. Though he humbled himself to purchase our mercies, yet he assured our faith by some emissions and breakings forth of his divine power. Well, then, though it be our duty to seek and find out God's track and foot-print in the whole creation, and to observe the impressions of his wisdom, goodness, and power, in all the saints; especially this is our duty to admire his image in Jesus Christ, for in his humanity the perfections of the Godhead shine forth in the highest lustre. Whatever perfection we conceive to be in his person, word, or works, the same may we conclude to be in the Father also. Did the winds and seas obey Christ? the whole creation is at the beck of God. Did Christ show himself to be the wisdom, goodness and power of God? surely God is infinitely wise. Was Christ holy and undefiled? surely so is God--light in whom is no darkness at all. Was Christ loving, pitiful, and compassionate, not abhorring the most vile and miserable, whether in soul or body, that came to him for relief? surely God is love, and he will not be strange to those that seek him in Christ.

3. How he differeth from other persons; for the saints also are made after the image of God: Col. iii. 10, And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;' Eph. iv. 24, And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' I answer, There is a great difference between the image of God in man and the image of God in Christ.

[1.] Man resembleth God hut imperfectly. Man was made, and is now made, after the image of God, but with much abatement of this high perfection which is in Christ, for he hath all the substantial perfection which his Father hath. In other creatures there is some resemblance, but no equality: other creatures are made like God, but he is begotten like God.

[2.] It is derivative from Christ. God would recover man out of his lapsed estate by setting up a pattern of holiness in our nature: 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.' None was fit to restore this image of God that was lost, but God incarnate, for thereby the glory of God was again visible in our nature. God is a pure spirit, and we are creatures, that have indeed an immortal soul, but it dwelleth in flesh; therefore to make us like God, the Word was made flesh,' that he might represent the perfections of God to us, and commend holiness by his own example.

Secondly, The next thing ascribed to Christ is that he is the first born of every creature:' that is, born of God before any creature had a being, or begotten of the Father of his own proper essence, and equal with him before anything was created and brought forth out of nothing. But here the adversaries of the eternal Godhead of Christ triumph, and say, The first-born of the creatures is a creature, one of the same kind. I answer--If we grant this that they allege, they gain nothing, for Christ had two natures--he was God-man. As God, he is the Creator, and not a creature; for the apostle proveth that by him all things were made:' but as man, so he is indeed a creature. This double consideration must not be forgotten: Rom. i. 3, 4. Our Lord Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit;' therefore we must distinguish between Christ and Christ,

what he is according to the Spirit, and what he is according to the flesh.

2. I answer--That metaphors must be taken in the sense in which they are intended. Now what is the apostle's intention in giving Christ the appellation of the first-born?

Four things are implied by this metaphor:--

[1.] Identity of nature.

[2.] Likeness of original.

[3.] Antiquity.

[4.] Dignity.

Nothing else can be insinuated into the mind of man by such a form of speech but identity and sameness of nature between the brethren, which is true as to Christ's humanity: Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same;' or else sameness of stock, which is true also, for the same reason: Heb. ii. 11, 'For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;' or priority of time, for the first-born is before all the rest; or else dignity, authority, and pre-eminence. Now, which of these doth the apostle intend? The two last the pre-existence of Christ before anything was made, as appeareth by this reason, ver. 16, 'For by him all things were made, whether they be in heaven or in earth;' and also his dignity and authority above them, as appeareth by the frequent use of the word. For the first-born in families had authority over the rest. When Jacob had got the birthright, this was a part of Isaac's blessing: Gen. xxvii. 29, 'Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.' Sovereignty was implied in the birthright, so David is called the first-born of the kings of the earth,' Ps. lxxxix. 27, as the most glorious amongst them. So here nothing else is intended but that Christ is in time and dignity before all creatures.

Thirdly, Though Christ be called the first-born of every creature, it doth not imply that he is to be reckoned as one of them, or accounted a creature. It is true, when it is said, Rom. viii. 29, that he is the first-born among many brethren,' it implieth that he is head of

the renewed estate, that he and all new creatures are of the same kind--allowing him the dignity of his rank and degree; for God is his God, and their God his Father and their Father. But here it is not the first-born amongst the creatures, but the first-born of every creature. And for further confirmation, here is not identity of nature, for he is not at all of the same nature with the angels--those principalities and thrones, dominions and powers, spoken of in the next verse--nor issued of the same stock with any of them. Mark, he is called the first-born, not first created, which must be understood of his divine nature and eternal generation of the Father before all creatures. The creatures are not begotten and born of God, but made by him. So Christ is primogenitus--that is, unigenitus, the first-born, that only-begotten. In the following verse he is brought in, not as a creature, but the creator of all things. The first-born is not the cause of the rest of the children. Peter was the first-born, yet may be a brother to James and John, but not a father to them. Now all the rest of the creatures are created and produced by him; he is not reckoned among them as one of them--he is the image of the invisible God.

II. Why this excellency of our Redeemer should be so deeply impressed upon our minds and hearts? For many reasons.

1. This is needful to show his sufficiency to redeem the world. The party offended is God, who is of infinite majesty; the favour to be purchased is the everlasting fruition of God; and the sentence to be reversed is the sentence of everlasting punishment. Therefore there needed some valuable satisfaction to be given to reconcile these things to our thoughts; that we may be confident that we shall have redemption by his blood, even the remission of sins. There are three things that commend the value of Christ's sacrifice--the dignity of his person, the greatness of his sufferings, and the merit of his obedience. But the two latter without the former will little quiet the heart of scrupulous men. His sufferings were great, but temporary and finite--the merit of his obedience much; but how shall the virtue of it reach all the world? And if he be but a mere creature, he hath done what he ought to do. I confess a fourth thing may be added--God's institution, which availeth to the end for which God hath appointed it; but the scripture insists most on the first--the dignity of his person--which putteth a value on his sacrifice: Acts xx. 18; Heb. ix. 13, 14; at least there is an intrinsic worth. This answers all



objections. His sufferings were temporary and finite; but it is the blood of God,--he hath offered up himself through the eternal Spirit.

2. To work upon our love, that Christ may have the chief room in our hearts. There is no such argument to work upon our love as that God over all, blessed for ever, should come to relieve man in such a condescending way: 1 John iii. 16, Hereby we perceive the love which God hath to us, in that he laid down his life for us: that very person that died for us was God. There was power discovered in the creation, when God made us like himself out of the dust of the ground; but love in our redemption, when he made himself like us. The person that was to work out our deliverance was the eternal Son of God. That God that owes nothing to man, and was so much offended by man, and that stood in no need of man, having infinite happiness and contentment in himself, that he should come and die for us! Hereby perceive we the love of God. When we consider what Christ is, we shall most admire what he hath done for us.

Thirdly, That we may give Christ his due honour; for God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father, John v. 23, he being equal in power and glory. The setting forth of his glory is a rent due to him from all creatures. We are to praise him both in word and deed, in mind, and heart, and practice, which we can never do unless we understand the dignity of his person. We are apt to have low thoughts of Christ, therefore we should often revive the considerations that may represent his worth and excellency.

Fourthly, That we may place all hope of salvation in him, and may make use of him to the ends which he came to accomplish. We can hardly consider the work of redemption but some base thoughts arise in our minds, nor entertain this mystery, with due respect to the truth, and greatness, and admirableness of it, without raising our thoughts to the consideration of the dignity of the person who is to accomplish it: Heb. iii. 1, Therefore, brethren, consider the Lord Jesus, the great high priest and apostle of our profession.'

Fifthly, That we may the better understand two things:--

1. The humiliation of the Son of God.
2. The way how we may recover the lost image of God.
  1. The humiliation of the Son of God. Certainly, he that came to

redeem us was the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. Now, how did he humble himself? Was he not still the image of God in our nature? Yes, but the divine glory and majesty was hidden under the veil of our flesh: little of it did appear, and that only to those who narrowly did observe him; the brightness of his glory did not conspicuously shine forth. Was this all? No; his dignity was lessened; there was *capitis diminutio*, the lessening of a man's estate or condition,--as of a man degraded from the senatorian order to the degree of knight, thence to the plebeian. Thus was the eternal Son of God lessened, less than God, as mediator: John xiv. 28, 'My Father is greater than I.' As God incarnate he took an office designed to him by God, and obeyed him in all things. They were one in essence, John x. 30; yet with respect to his office to save souls, he was lessened. Nay, not only less than God, but lesser than the angels: Heb. ii. 7, 'He was made a little lower than the angels.' Not born so, but made so. Man is inferior to an angel as a man in the rank and order of beings; the angels die not: therefore his incarnation and liableness to death is a great lessening of his dignity; so not in respect of office only, but human nature assumed.

2. It showeth us how the image of God may be recovered; if we be changed into the likeness of Christ, for he is the image of God. His merit should not only be precious to us, but his example. It is a great advantage not only to have a rule but an example; because man is so prone to imitate, that an example in our nature maketh it the more operative. His excuse is ready at hand: we are flesh and blood--what would you have us do? Therefore Christ came incarnate to be an example of holiness. He had the interests of flesh and blood to mind as well as we; and so would show that a holy life is possible to those that are renewed by his grace. He obeyed God in our nature; therefore in the same nature we may obey, please, and glorify God, though still in a self-denying manner. The foundation of it is laid in the new birth. The Spirit that formed Christ out of the substance of the Virgin, the same Spirit is ready to form Christ in you. He maketh new creatures; so that there is not only Christ's example, but Christ's power.

Use 1. Then let the excellency and dignity of Christ's person be more upon your minds and hearts; think often of those two notions in the text--that he is the image of the invisible God, that therein you

may be like him. You cannot be the image of God so as he was, but you must be in your measure. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' but you must be partakers of the divine nature.' He showed himself to be the Son of God by his works, when the Jews said he blasphemed when he said he was the Son of God: John x. 27, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.' He allowed them to doubt of them, if he did not those works which were proper to one sent from God. Certainly this is the glory of man, to be the image of God; there is no greater perfection than to live in the nearest resemblance to his Creator. Christ is more excellent, because he hath more of the image of God upon him.

2. Consider, again, that he is Lord of the whole creation, and therefore called the first-born of every creature.' Well, then, we should be subject to him, and with greater diligence apply ourselves to the obedience of his holy laws, and use the means appointed by him to obtain the blessedness offered to us. There is in us a natural sentiment of the authority of God, and we have a dread upon our hearts if we do what he hath forbidden; but we have not so deep a sense of the authority of Christ, and play fast and loose with religion, as fancy and humour and interest lead us. Now, from this argument, you see we should honour the Son as we honour the Father, and be as tender of his institutions as we are of the commandments evident by natural light; for he is not only the messenger of God, but his express image, and the first-born of every creature. Not to believe him, and obey him, and love him, is to sin, not only against our duty, but our remedy and the law of our recovery.

### **SERMON III. - Col. I. 16.**

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.--Col. I. 16.

THE apostle had told us in the former verse that Jesus Christ is the first-born of every creature. The Arians thence concluded that he himself was created out of nothing in order of time before the world.

But it is not the first created of any creature.' but the first-born.' which noteth a precedency, not only in point of antiquity, but dignity; and is as much as to say, Lord of every creature. For the first-born was the lord of the rest, and the title may be given either relatively or comparatively.

1. Relatively; when the rest are of the same stock, or have the relation of brethren to him that hath the pre-eminence. So it is given to Christ with respect to new creatures: Rom. viii. 29, That he might be the first-born among many brethren.'

2. Comparatively only; when several persons or things be compared, though there be no relation between them. So David is called the first-born of the kings of the earth.' Ps. lxxxix. 27--that is, superior in dignity and honour. So here it is taken not relatively, for so Christ is primogenitus, the first-born, that he is also unigenitus, the only-begotten. None went before, or come after him, that are so begotten of God. What he asserteth in that verse, he now proveth by the creation of all things, in ver. 16, and the conservation of all things, ver. 17. We are now upon the first proof. Surely he that created all things is supreme lord of all things, or hath the right of the first-born over them. Two ways is Christ said to have a right to the creatures: as God, and as mediator. His right as God is natural and perpetual; his right as mediator is by grant and donation. It is a power acquired and obtained. His natural right is antecedent to his actual susception of the office of mediator; for it comes to him by creation. He made all, and it is fit that he should be sovereign and lord of all. But the other power and sovereignty is granted to him as a part of his reward and recompense for the sorrows of his humiliation: Phil. ii. 9, 10, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' The apostle speaks not of this latter now, but of the former--his right as the only-begotten Son of God: he is the first-born, that is, Lord of the whole creation. And good reason, for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth,' &c. In the words, the creation of the world is ascribed to Christ. Take notice--

1. Of the object of this creation.

2. Christ's efficiency about it.

1. The object of creation is spoken collectively and distributively.

[1.] Collectively: By him were all things created.'

[2.] Distributively: They are many ways distinguished.

(1.) By their place: Things in heaven, and things in earth.'

(2.) By their nature: Things visible and invisible.'

(3.) By their dignity and office: Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers'--words often used in scripture to signify the angels, whether good or bad. The good angels: Eph. i. 21, Far above all principality and power, and might and dominion;' Eph. iii. 10, That unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' Sometimes this term is given to the bad angels: We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,' Eph. vi. 12; and Rom. viii. 38, Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers.' So that the meaning is, the angelical creatures, together with their degree and dignity, as well among themselves as over the lower world; of what rank and degree soever they are, they are all created by him. He insisteth more on them than on the other branches, because some cried up the dignity of the angels, to the lessening of the honour and office of Christ, and because they were the noblest and most powerful creatures. And if the most glorious creatures were created by him, surely all others had their being and life from him. Well, then, there is a gradation notable in setting forth the object of the creation. Christ made not only things in earth but things in heaven; not only the visible things of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, but the invisible, the angels--not the lower sort of angels only, but the most noble and the most potent--thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers.

2. Christ's efficiency about them; in these words, they were created by him, and for him.'

[1.] By him; as an equal. co-operating cause, or co-worker with God the Father: John v. 19, Whatsoever things the Father doeth, those doeth the Son likewise.' To bring a thing out of nothing belongeth unto God. The distance of the terms is infinite; so must the agent be. Creation is an act of divine power.

[2.] They are for him: they are by him as their first cause; they are

for him as their last end. God is often represented in scripture as first and last: Isa. xli. 4, I the Lord, the first and the last, I am he;' Isa. xliv. 6, I am the first and the last; there is no God besides me;' so Isa. xlviii. 2, I am the first; I am also the last.' Now all this is repeated and applied to Christ: Rev. i. 17, He said unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I have the keys of death and hell;' Rev. ii. 8, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;' Rev. xxii. 13, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.' Now these expressions do imply his eternal power and Godhead. He hath been before all things were made, and shall be when all things in the world are ended. He is the first being from whom all things are, and the last end to whom all things are to be referred. He is the efficient and final cause of all the creatures.

Doct. That all creatures, angels not excepted, owe their very being to Christ, the Son of God, our blessed and glorious Redeemer.

I shall take the method offered in the text, and show you:--

First, That all things were created by him.

Secondly, Why the creation of angels is so particularly mentioned and insisted upon.

Thirdly, That all things were created for him.

First, For creation by him. This is often asserted in scripture: John i. 3, All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.' John begins his Gospel with the dignity of Christ's person; and how doth he set it forth? By the creation of the world by the eternal Word. And what he saith is an answer to these questions--When was the Word? In the beginning;' Where was the Word? With God;' What was the Word? He was God;' What did he then do? All things were made by him;' What! all without exception? Yes, Without him nothing was made that was made.' be it never so small, never so great. From the highest angel to the smallest worm, they had all their being from him. Two things are to be explained:--

1. How he made all things.

2. When he made the angels.

1. How he made all things. Freely, and of his own will: Rev. iv. 11,

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour, and glory, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' They use three words to set forth the honour that is due to Christ for creating the world: glory, because of his excellencies discovered; honour, which is the ascription or acknowledgment of those, excellencies; and power, because the invisible things of his Godhead and power are seen by the things that are made,' Rom. i. 20. For in the creating of the world he exercised his omnipotency. And this they do, not to express their affection, but his own due desert: Thou art worthy, O Lord.' The reason they give is, because he hath created all things for his own pleasure, or according to his own will--not out of necessity. There was no tie upon him to make them, but only he of his good pleasure thought fit to do so. He might have done it in another manner, or at another time, or in another order. There is nothing in the world that hath a necessary connexion with the divine essence, so as, if God be, that must be; nothing external cometh from God by necessity of nature, but all is done according to the counsel of his own will. Some thought all created things did come forth from the Creator by way of emanation, as rivers flow out of their fountain; but there is no stream floweth out of any fountain but it was before a part of that fountain while it was in it. But that cannot be said of any creature in respect of God, that it was any part of God before it came out from him. Others say the creatures came out from God by way of representation, as an image in the glass from him that passeth by or looketh on it; but before the world was made there was no such glass to represent God. Others would express it thus--that the world cometh out from God as a shadow from the body. But yet this will not fit the turn neither: for the shadow doth not come out from the body, but follows it, because of the deprivation of light from the interposition of another body. Others say--all cometh from God as a footprint, or track in clay or sand, from one that passeth over it; but there was nothing on which God, by passing, might make such an impression. Whatever good intention they might have by setting forth the creation by these expressions, yet you see they are not proper and accurate. These expressions may have their use to raise man's understanding to contemplate the excellency and majesty of the Creator; for they all show his incomparable excellency and perfection, together with the vanity, nothingness, or smallness of the

creature if compared with him, as great a bulk as it beareth in our eye. They are but as a ray from the sun, a stream from the fountain, or a drop to the ocean; an image in the glass, or a shadow to the substance; or like a footprint of a man in the clay or sand; and so are but certain signs leading up to the thing signified, or letters and syllables out of which we may spell God--as the streams lead us to the fountain, the image to the man, the shadow to the body, or the track to the foot that made it. But the scripture, leaving those comparisons, showeth us that the world came out from the Creator as the workmanship from the artificer, the building from the architect, Heb. xi. 10. Now every artificer and builder worketh merely out of the counsel of his own will. And herein they resemble God; but only what they do with great labour, God doth with the beck of his own will and word: Ps. xxxiii. 6, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.' A bare word of his immediately created all the world, the heavens and earth, and all that is in them.

2. When did he make the angels? for in the history of Moses there seemeth to be a great silence of it.

I answer--We read, Gen. i. 1, that in the beginning--that is, when God did first set himself to create--that then he created the heaven and the earth; but we read again in the 20th verse, That in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.' I argue, that if within that compass of time, the Lord made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them, angels are included in that number, being the inhabitants of heaven, as men and beasts are of the earth, and fishes of the sea; as here, by things in heaven, the apostle principally understands the angels, and by things on earth, men. Therefore, as things on earth were not made but after the earth, so things in heaven were not created but after the heavens were created. The heavens were not created till the second day, nor perfected and fitted till the fourth. Therefore, as God did furnish the earth with plants and beasts before men, so did he adorn the heaven with stars before he filled it with angels; for he first framed the house and adorned it before he brought in the inhabitants. Therefore, probably they were made the fourth day. If this seemeth too short a time before the fall of the apostate angels, you must remember how soon man degenerated. Some think he did not sleep in innocency,



quoting that Ps. xlix. 12, Man being in honour abides not, but is like the beasts that perish.' The word signifies a night's lodging in an inn--shall not lodge or stay a night. Others make his fall on the next day, the Sabbath, for at the end of the sixth day all was good, very good. The angels fell from their first state as soon as they were created--so short and uncertain is all created glory.

Secondly, All things were created for him--that is, for the honour of the Son, as well as for the honour of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Now this is necessary to be thought of by us, because there is a justice in the case that we should return and employ all in his service from whom we have received all, even though it be with the denial of our nearest and dearest interest. He is worthy of this glory and honour from us, and that we should trust upon him as a faithful Creator in the midst of all dangers.

1. I will prove that the greatest glory the creature is capable of is to serve the will and set forth the praise of its Creator, for everything that attaineth not its end is vain. What matter is it whether I be a dog, or a man, a beast, or an angel, if I serve not the end for which I was made? And that is not the personal and particular benefit of any creature, but the glory of the Creator, for God made all things for himself, Prov. xvi. 4; whether he made beasts, or man, or angels, it was still with a respect to his own glory and service. God is independent and self-sufficient of himself and for himself. Self-seeking in the creature is monstrous and incongruous. It is as absurd and un-beseeming to seek its own glory as to attribute to itself its own being: Rom. xi. 36, Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' God's glory is the end of our being and doing, for being and doing are both from him, and therefore for him alone. Above all, it concerneth man to consider this: who can glorify God not only objectively by the impressions of God upon him, and passively, as God will over rule all his actions to his own glory, but actively, as he is the mouth of the creation--not only to honour God himself, but to give him the praise which resulteth from all his works. It was well said of a heathen, Si essem luscinia--if I were a nightingale I would sing as a nightingale; Si alauda--if I were a lark I would pere as a lark. When I am a man what should I do but know, love, and praise God without ceasing, and glorify my Creator? Things are unprofitable or misplaced when they do not seek or serve their end;

therefore for what use are we meet, who are so unmeet for our proper end? Like the wood of the vine that is good for nothing, not so much as to make a pin whereon to hang anything, Ezek. xv. 2--good for nothing but to be cast into the fire unless it be fruitful. What are we good for if we be not serviceable to the ends for which we were created?

2. The design of God was that the whole creation should be put in subjection to the Word incarnate--not only this lower world, wherein man is concerned, but the upper world also. Our Redeemer, who hath bought us, hath an interest in all things that may concern us, that they may be disposed of to his own glory and our good and advantage. All are at the making and at the disposal of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is said, Heb. ii. 10, For whom are all things, and by whom are all things.' God that frameth all things ordereth all things to their proper end. His works are many, and some are more excellent and glorious than others; and one of the chief of them is the salvation of man by Jesus Christ. Therefore all things are subordinated thereunto, to the glory of the Mediator by whom this is accomplished: 1 Cor. viii. 6, But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.'

Secondly, Why the creation of angels is so particularly and expressly mentioned? I answer--For three reasons:--

1. To show the glory and majesty of the Redeemer. The angels are said to excel in strength,' Ps. ciii. 20, and elsewhere they are called mighty angels.' This potency they have from their Creator, who giveth power and strength to all his creatures as it pleases him. Their strength may be conceived by that instance, that one angel in a night slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand in Sennacherib's camp. Now, these potent creatures are infinitely inferior to our Redeemer, by whom and for whom they were made. Though they are the most excellent of all the creatures, yet they are his subjects and ministers, at his beck and command, both by the law of their creation, as Christ is God, and also by the Father's donation, as he is Mediator and God incarnate: 1 Pet. iii. 25, He is set down on the right hand of God; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.' And again, Eph. i. 21, He hath set him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not

only in this world, but in that which is to come.' They have a great name, but Christ hath a more excellent name than they,' Heb. i. 4, for they are all bound to worship him, ver. 6, and serve him, for he employeth them for the defence and comfort of the meanest of his people. They are subject not only to God, but to Christ, or God incarnate. Look, as it is the glory of earthly kings to command mighty and powerful subjects--(Are not my princes altogether kings?' Isa. x. 8, that so many princes held under him as their sovereign and served him as their commander; and when God speaks of the Assyrian he calleth him a king of princes,' Hosea viii. 10, namely, as he had many kings subject and tributary to him)--so is this the majesty of our Redeemer, that he hath these powerful creatures, the mighty angels, in his train and retinue. These heavenly hosts make up a part of that army which is commanded by the Captain of our salvation.

2. This is mentioned to obviate the errors of that age. Both the Jews and the Gentiles had a high opinion of spirits and angels, as God's ministers and messengers: for he doth not always immediately administer the affairs of mankind. Now, as they were right in the main as to their service, so they added much of curiosity and superstition to the doctrine of angels, and by their vain speculations infected the minds of many in the Christian church, who were but newly come out from among them, insomuch that they fell to the worshipping of angels as mediators to God; as the apostle intimateth, Col. ii. 18. Now, because this was to the disparagement of Christ, the apostles did set themselves to check this curiosity of dogmatising about angels, and the superstition or idolatry of angel-worship thence growing apace. Now this they did by asserting the dignity of Christ's person and office. As Paul, Col. ii., and the author to the Hebrews, chapters i., ii., iii., Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' It is true, Christ was sent from heaven as the angels are, and he came in a despicable way of appearance to promote our salvation and recovery, as they assumed bodies suitable to their message; yet his superiority and pre-eminence above the angels is clear and manifest. He was not

only equal to them, but far above them, Heb. i. 3. Seven things are observable in that verse:--

(1.) Christ came as the eternal Son of God: He hath spoken unto us by his Son.' When he cometh to the angels, he saith, they are servants and ministering spirits. For a short while he ministered in the form of a servant in the days of his flesh--they continue to be so from the beginning to the end of the world.

(2.) He was heir of all things--that is, Lord of the whole creation--they only principalities and powers, for certain ends, to such persons and places, over which Christ sets them.

(3.) He was the Creator of the world. By whom also he made the worlds,' saith the apostle. They are noble and divine creatures indeed, but the work of Christ's hands.

(4.) He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person'--that is, the essential image of God; they only have some strictures of the divine majesty.

(5.) The upholding all things by the word of his power'--that is, the conserving cause of all that life and being that is in the creature. The angels live in a continual dependence upon Christ as their creator, and without his supporting influence, would be soon annihilated.

(6.) By himself he purged our sins.' He was sent into the world for that great and glorious work of mediation, which none of them was worthy to undertake, none able to go through withal, but himself alone. They are sent about the ordinary concernments of the saints, or the particular affairs of the world: he is the author of the whole work of redemption and salvation, and they but subordinate assistants in the particular promotion of it.'

(7.) He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;' they are spirits near the throne of God, ever in his presence, attending on him like princes. God never made any of them universal and eternal king, for he set Christ at his right hand, not the angels. To sit at God's right hand, is not only to be blessed and happy in enjoying those pleasures which are there for evermore, not only to be advanced to the highest place of dignity and honour next to God, but to be invested with a supreme and universal power above all men and angels. Take these, or any one of these, and he is above the

angels, though they be the most noble and excellent creatures that ever God made.

3. Because Christ hath a ministry and service to do by them. He makes use of them partly to exercise their obedience, without which they forsake the law of their creation and swerve from the end for which they were made: Ps. ciii. 20, 'They do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.' They do whatsoever he commandeth them, with all readiness and speed imaginable, and therein they are an example to us: Mat. vi. 10, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' They are our fellow-servants now in the work, hereafter in the recompense, when we are admitted into one society, under one common head and Lord, Heb. xii. 27, 'who shall for ever rejoice in the contemplation of God's infinite excellencies. Well, then, if these excellent creatures, so great in power, be always so ready and watchful to do the will of God, and count it their honour to assist in so glorious a work as the saving of souls, or do any other business he sendeth them about, how should we, that hope to be like the angels in happiness, be like them in obedience also!

2. Because the church's safety dependeth upon it. We stand in need of this ministry of angels. The service of the angels is protection to the people of God--vengeance on their enemies.

(1.) For protection. Christ hath the heavenly host at his command, and sendeth them forth for the good of his people: Ps. lxxviii. 17, 'The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them in Sinai in the holy place.' Mark, that thousands of angels are his chariots, conveying him from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven; and mark, the Lord is among them--that is, God incarnate--for he presently speaketh of his ascending up on high. Thou hast ascended up on high, and led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men,' ver. 18. Among them in his holy place that is, in heaven. It is added, as in Mount Sinai--that is, as at the giving of the law. They were then there, and still attend on the propagation of the gospel. For more particular cases, see Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' So Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'The angel of the Lord eucampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' All that obediently serve and wait on God have the promise of this protection.

(2.) The other part of this ministry and service is to restrain and destroy the devil and his instruments. The scripture often speaks of God's executing judgments by the angels. Their influence doth not always personally appear, yet it is great and powerful. Though the powers and authorities on earth, and their messengers and forces, be often employed against the saints, yet the Captain of our salvation is in heaven, and all the mighty angels are subject to him, and at his disposal. By this means the prophet Elisha confirmed himself and his servant, when the king of Syria sent chariots and horses, a great host, to attack him in Dothan: 2 King vi. 14, 15, And when his servant saw it early in the morning, he said, Alas, my master! what shall we do?' The prophet answered, ver. 16, They that be with us are more than they that be against us.' And then, ver. 17, he prayed, Lord, open his eyes that he may see; and the Lord opened .his eyes, and behold the mountain was full of chariots and horses of fire, round about Elisha.' These fiery horses and chariots were nothing else but the angels of God. Here is force against force, chariots against chariots, horse against horse, if we could open the eye of faith and shut that of sense. We read, Acts xii. 23, that an angel smote Herod in the midst of his pride and persecution: the angel of the Lord smote him.

Use 1. Let us more deeply be possessed with the majesty of our Redeemer. He is the Creator of all things, of angels as well as men, and so more excellent than all the men in the world, whether they excel in power or holiness, which the psalmist expresseth thus: Fairer than the children of men,' Ps. xlv. 29. But also, then, the most excellent and glorious angels; he is their creator as well as ours, head of principalities and powers, as well as of poor worms here upon earth. Surely the representing and apprehending of Christ in his glorious majesty is a point of great consequence.

1. Partly to give us matter for praise and admiration, that we may not have mean thoughts of his person and office. He is a most glorious Lord and King, that holdeth the most powerful creatures in subjection to himself. If Christians did know and consider how much of true religion consists in admiring and praising their Redeemer, they would more busy their minds in this work.

2. Partly to strengthen our trust, and to fortify us against all fears and discouragements in our service. When we think of the great Creator

of heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible, angels, men, principalities, &c., surely the brightness of all creature glory should wax dim in our eyes: Our God is able to deliver us,' Dan. iii. 18, and will, as he did by his angel. This was that which fortified Stephen: Acts v. 55, 56, He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.' It is easy for him who made all things out of nothing to help us. See Ps. cxxi. 2, My help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' The Almighty Creator, ruler, and governor of the world, what cannot he do? As long as I see those glorious monuments of his power standing, I will not distrust he can afford me seasonable help by his holy angels, through the intercession of his Son, who hath assumed my nature.

3. Partly to bind our duty. All creatures were made by him and for him; therefore we should give up ourselves to him, and say with Paul, Acts xxvii. 23, His I am, and him I serve.' His by creation and redemption, therefore everything we have and do ought to have a respect to his glory and service. There is a variety of creatures in the world, of different kinds and different excellencies. In the whole and every kind there is somewhat of the glory of God and Christ set forth. Now this should strike our hearts--Shall we only, who are the persons most obliged, be a disgrace to our Lord, both Creator and Redeemer, when the good angels are so ready to attend him at his beck and command, and that in the meanest services and ministries? Shall poor worms make bold with his laws, slight his doctrine, despise his benefits? Heb. ii. 2, 3, If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

4. And lastly, to make us more reverent in our approaches to him; for he sits in the assembly of the gods, the holy angels are round about him: Ps. cxxxviii. 1, Before the gods will I sing praise to thee'--that is, in the presence of the holy angels: 1 Cor. x. 10; Eccles. v. 6, Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the angel that it was an error.' The angels in heaven observe our behaviour in God's worship--what vows we make to God, what promises of obedience. But, above all, there is our glorious Redeemer himself: Heb. xii. 28, 29, with what reverence and godly fear should we approach his holy presence!

Use 2. Is to quicken us to thankfulness for our redemption; that our creator is our Redeemer. None of the angels did humble himself as Christ did do, to do so great a piece of service, and yet he is far above them. There is a congruity in it, that we should be restored by him by whom we were made; but he made the angels as well as men, but he did not restore them. No; they were not so much as in a condition of forbearance and respite; he assumed not their nature, he created all things, but he redeemed mankind. His delights were with the sons of men; he assumed our nature, and for a while was made a little lower than the angels,' Heb. ii. 9. We cannot sufficiently bless God for the honour done to our nature in the person of Christ, for it is God incarnate that is made head of angels, principalities, and powers--God in our nature, whom all the angels are called upon to adore and worship. The devil sought to dishonour God, as if he were envious of man's happiness: Gen. iii. 5, God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as gods.' And he sought to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so near to God. Now, that his human nature should be set so far above the angelical, in the person of Christ, and be admitted to dwell with God in a personal union, this calleth for our highest love and thankfulness.

Use 3. Is an encouragement to come to Christ for sanctifying and renewing grace. I have three arguments:--

1. The person to whom we come. To whom should we come but to our Creator, God infinitely good, wise, and powerful? The creation showeth him good, and whatever is good in the creatures is wholly derived from his goodness. It is but like the odour of the sweet ointments, or the perfume that he leaveth behind him where he hath been, James i. 19. He is infinitely wise. When he created and settled the world, he did not jumble things in a chaos and confusion, but settled them in a most perfect order and proportion, which may be seen, not only in the fabric of the world, but in the disposition of the parts of man's body, yea, or in any gnat or fly. Now cannot he put our disordered souls in frame again? If the fear of God be true wisdom, to whom should we seek for it but from the wise God? His infinite power is seen also in the creation, in raising all things out of nothing. And if a divine power be necessary to our conversion, to whom should we go but to him who calleth the things that are not as though they were? Rom. iv. 17; According as his divine power hath



given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,' 2 Pet. i. 7.

2. From the work itself, which is a new creation, which carrieth much resemblance with the old: Eph. ii. 10, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works;' 2 Cor. iv. 6, For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' It is such an effect as comes from a being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, that man may be in a capacity to love, please, and serve God. What was lost in Adam can only be recovered by Christ.

3. From the relation of the party that seeketh it: Ps. cxix. 73, Thine hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.' We go to him as his own creatures. This plea hath great force because of God's goodness to all his creatures. (1.) Not only the angels, but every worm and fly had their being from Christ; there is a great variety of living things in the world, but they are all fed from the common fountain; therefore we may comfortably come to him for life and quickening, John i. 4. We need not be discouraged by our baseness and vileness, for the basest worm had what it hath from him. (2.) That Christ, as Creator, beareth such affection to man as the work of his hands: Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands?' Job x. 3. Artificers, when they have made an excellent work, are very chary of it, and will not destroy it and break it in pieces: Job xiv. 15, Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.' As creatures beg relief and help; if you cannot plead the covenant of Abraham, plead the covenant of Noah. (3.) God forsakes none of the fallen creatures but those that forsake him first: 2 Chron. xv. 2, The Lord is with you while you be with him, and if ye seek him he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him he will forsake you;' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, If thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever.' (4.) Especially will Christ be good to man seeking after him for grace, that we may serve and obey him. For he is no Pharaoh, to require brick and give no straw. Creating grace laid the debt upon us, and his redeeming grace provideth the power and help, that we may discharge it. Now, when we acknowledge the debt and confess our impotency to pay it, and our willingness to return to

our duty, will Christ fail us? A conscience of our duty is a great matter, but a desire of grace to perform it is more. Therefore, come as creatures earnestly desiring to do their Creator's will, and to promote his glory. God will not refuse the soul that lieth so submissively at his feet.

### **SERMON IV. - Col. I. 17.**

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.--Col. I. 17.

THE apostle had asserted the dignity of Christ's person by ascribing the work of creation to him: now the work of conservation and providence. By the same divine power by which Christ made all things he doth preserve and sustain all things.

In this verse two things are ascribed to Christ:--

First, His precedency in point of time, or his antiquity before all creatures: and he is before all things--that is, he had an eternal being before anything that now is created.

Secondly, His sustaining all things by his almighty power: and by him all things do consist. All creatures owe their continuance and preservation to him.

The first point is his precedency and pre-existence before all creatures whatsoever.

Doct. That Jesus Christ had a being before any of the creatures were made.

1. That he had a being long before he was born of the Virgin, for he was in the time of the patriarchs, as John viii. 48, Before Abraham was, I am;' to say nothing of that godlike way of speaking--I am; not I was, but I am; that which I now plead for is, that he was before Abraham. The words are occasioned by Christ saying that Abraham saw his day and was glad, which the Jews understood not of a prophetic but of a real vision, and therefore objected the impossibility that he was not yet fifty years old, and how could he see Abraham, or Abraham see him? Christ doth not answer to their ill interpretation, but showeth that their very objection contained no absurdity if taken in their own sense, for he was not only in the time

of Abraham, but long before, and so affirmeth more than that objection required. The Jews thought it absurd that Christ should be in the time of Abraham, but Christ affirmeth more, and that with a strong asseveration. He was not only by the constitution of God, but really existing before Abraham, for the predestination not only of Christ but of Abraham, and all the elect, was before the foundation of the world. If, in respect of special prediction, mark then what must follow. Then Cyrus must be in the time of Isaiah, Josiah must be in the time of Jeroboam, the calling of the Gentiles must be in the time of Moses, for they prophesied of these things.

2. That he had a being at the time of the creation, that is also clear; for it is said, In the beginning was the Word.' John i. 1--that is, when Christ set himself to create all things. The word beginning, signifies many things, but chiefly the beginning of all time, especially when it is put absolutely, without any limitation to the matter in hand. So John viii. 44, The devil was a murderer from the beginning that is, almost as soon as created; Mat. xix. 4, He that made them at the beginning, made them male and female.' So Heb. i. 10, And thou in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth;' and in many other places. Therefore Christ had a being when the world and all creatures were made, visible and invisible. So Prov. viii. 22-31, The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.' There the Wisdom of God, or the eternal Word, describeth the antiquity of his person. All the question is, what this Wisdom is that is there spoken of?

(1.) It is not human, but divine; for the Wisdom there spoken of was before the world was.

(2.) Whatever it be, it is not a divine attribute, but a divine person; for those things which are there ascribed to Wisdom cannot properly belong to an attribute, to be begotten, brought forth, ver. 23, 24. to have the affections of love, ver. 27, delight, ver. 31. All along the expressions agree only to a person. That Wisdom which inviteth sinners, promises the Spirit, threatens eternal destruction to those which hearken not to him, commendeth not the laws of Moses, but requireth obedience to his own laws--what can this Wisdom be but a person? If the intent were only to express that God is wise, what strange expressions would these be! To what purpose were it to give us notice that he was wise from the beginning, if there were no other mystery in it?

(3.) This person was Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24; And in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' Col. ii. 3.

3. Thirdly, That Christ was before the world was, from all eternity: Micah v. 2, His goings forth are from everlasting.' The prophet there speaketh of his birth at Bethlehem, and his eternal generation, and distinguishes the one from the other: But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;' or from the days of eternity. This last clause is added lest any should look upon this ruler as only man, and beginning to be at his incarnation. He that was born at Bethlehem was also true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity.

4. Fourthly, That Christ was God subsisting in the divine nature. I shall bring two places to prove that. The first, Phil. ii. 6, Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation.' He was first in the form of God, before he appeared in the form of a servant. The form of God is his divine glory and blessedness, every way equal to God; the form of a servant is either his coming in the similitude of sinful flesh, or his subjecting himself to the curse of the law, or his humble and mean condition while he lived among men. It consists in

one of these, or in all three. Now before he submitted to this, he existed in the form of God that is, was clothed with divine majesty, and in all things equal with God the Father: his being and existence which he then had was truly divine. The form of God--is the very divine essence, as clothed with glory and majesty; this did justly and naturally belong to him, and was not usurped by him. The other place is Christ's prayer: John xvii. 5, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' God is said to glorify any person when he giveth him glorious qualities and powers; or by revealing and manifesting those glorious qualities which he hath; or when he doth receive him and treat him agreeably to his glory. The meaning of Christ's prayer, then, must be of one or other of all these senses. When he prayeth that the Father would glorify him with that glory that he had with him before the world was, if you take it in the first sense, he desireth that God would bestow upon him as Mediator, or God incarnate, a glory suitable to that glory he had with him from all eternity; if in the second sense, he desireth his glory may be revealed, or become conspicuous in his human nature; if in the third, that God would receive him honourably and agreeably to that glory: which sense is the chiefest, for it containeth the other two. The meaning, then, in short, is, that he might be received to the full enjoyment of that glory which he had before the world was. Christ was from all eternity the glorious God. This glory of his Godhead, by his humiliation was not diminished and lessened, but obscured and hidden; and therefore prayeth that he may be received by the Father, and openly declared to the world to be the Son of God; or that the glory of his Godhead might shine forth in the person of Christ, God-man. Well, then, before any creature was, Christ had a divine glory. How had it he? The enemies of this truth say, By decree or designation, not by possession. But that can not be: he that is not, hath nothing. If he had not a divine being, how could he have divine glory before the world? None can say Paul was an apostle of Christ before the world was, because he was appointed or designed to this work; yea, none can say he had faith and brotherly love when he was yet an unbeliever and persecutor; yet it pleased God to separate him from his mother's womb, and predestinated him to have these things. Again, then, all true believers may thus pray to God, Glorify me with,' &c., for they are thereunto appointed. But this is

absurd. Besides, if he had it then, how could he want it now? The decree is the same. It remaineth, then, that Christ had a being and substance in the Godhead before any of the creatures were made.

Use 1. This serveth for the confutation of those atheists, that say, Christ took upon him the appellation of a god to make his doctrine more authentic and effectual. They confess the morals of Christianity are most excellent for the establishment of piety and honesty, but, men's inclination carrying them more powerfully to vice than virtue, this doctrine would not be received with any reverence if it came recommended to them by a mere man, and therefore Christ assumed the glorious appellation of the Son of God, or pretended to be God--a blasphemy very derogatory both to the honour of Christ and Christianity, and quite contrary to the drift of the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. The Messiah promised in the Old Testament was to be God, all the prophets agree in that. Jesus Christ proved himself to be God by his word and works, and the apostles still assert it. Could they that lived in so many several ages as the prophets and apostles did, lay their heads together and have intelligence one with another to convey this imposture to the world? Surely, if Christ be the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, as clearly he is, then he is God, for that describeth him to be such; and if Christ usurped this honour, how did God so highly favour him with such extra ordinary graces, by inspiring him with the knowledge of the best religion in the world, to authorise him with miracles, to raise him from the dead? And must this religion, that condemneth all frauds, and doing evil that good may come of it, be supported by a lie? Or cannot God govern the world without countenancing such a deceit? Or is it possible that such holy persons as our Lord Jesus and his apostles were, could be guilty of such an imposture? Did they do this by command of God? No, surely; for God, which is the God of truth, would not command them to teach a lie, or to make use of one. He hath power enough to cause the truth to be embraced by some other means; and a greater injury cannot be done him than to go about to gratify him with what he hateth; much less would God have commanded a mere man to call himself his eternal Son, and God equal to him, which is a blasphemy and sacrilege as well as a lie--the greatest of the kind, for mortal man to take upon himself to be the eternal God. If it were not by his express commandment, would he suffer such an attempt to go

unpunished? Would he witness from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'? Would he have raised him from the dead, and so engaged the world to believe in him and adore him? Acts xvii. 31.

2. If Christ were before all things, let us prefer him above all things. This consideration is of great use to draw off our hearts from all created things, and to lessen our respects to worldly vanities, that they may be more earnestly fixed on what is eternal and glorious. He that was before the world was will be when the world shall be no more. Christ is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps. xc. 2. To him should we look, after him should we seek: he is first and last, the beginning and ending. It is for an everlasting blessedness, for the enjoyment of an eternal God, that our souls were made. He that was from the beginning, and will be when all things shall have an end, it is he that should take up our minds and thoughts. How can we have room for so many thoughts about fading glories, when we have an eternal God and Christ to think of? What light can we see in a candle when the sun shineth in his full strength? All things in the world serve only for a season, and then wither; and that season is but a short one. You glory in your riches and pre-eminence now, but how long will you do so? To-day that house and lands is thine, but thou canst not say it will be thine to-morrow. But a believer can say, 'My God, my Christ, is mine to-day, and will be mine to all eternity.' Death taketh all from us--honours and riches, and strength, and life; but it cannot take God and Christ from us. They are ours, and ever lastingly ours.

Secondly, We come now to the second point--his sustaining all things by his almighty power: and by him all things consist.'

Doct. 2. That as Christ made all things, so he doth sustain them in being and working.

Let me explain this, how the creatures are preserved by Christ.

1. This is to be understood not only meritoriously as a moral cause, but efficiently as a natural cause of the creature's sustentation: for the apostle doth not consider here so much what Christ doth as a Mediator, as what he doth as God. It is true Christ, as Mediator, hath reprieved the world from that ruin which might come upon it for man's sin; but here his merit is not considered, but his power: Heb. i.

3, He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.' The weight of the whole creation lieth upon his hands. As Daniel telleth Belshazzar, that his breath and his ways were in the hand of God, Dan. v. 23, so is the being, life, and operation of all the creatures. If he should withdraw his withholding hand, they would quickly return to their first nothing; which showeth the great power of our Redeemer. Moses complaineth, Num. xi. 11, 12, Thou hast laid the burden of all this people upon me. Have I conceived this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom?' But Christ hath the care and charge of all the world, not to rule them only, but to sustain them. A king or a governor hath a moral rule over his subjects, but Christ giveth them being and existence, and doth preserve and keep them in their present state and condition from dissolution.

2. Not only indirectly, but directly. Indirectly, Christ may be said to sustain and preserve the creatures, as he keepeth off evil, or removeth those things that may be destructive to them: as he preserveth a town that repelleth their enemies. But directly, he preserveth them as he continueth his providential influence: Acts xvii. 28, For in him we live, and move, and have our being;' as the root feedeth the fruit, or the breath of the musician maintains the sound: Ps. civ. 29, Thou takest away thy breath, and they die, and return to their dust.' Life, and all the joys and comforts of it, every minute depend upon God. It is by his providential influence and supportation we subsist. The greatest creature cannot preserve itself by its power and greatness, and the least is not neglected; both would sink into nothing without this continued influence.

3. He doth this not only mediately, by means appointed, but immediately, as his efficacy pierceth through all. God preserveth the creatures by means, for he giveth them those supplies which are proper for them: as to man, food and raiment; for other creatures, what may relieve them; and the wise dispensing these supplies, without any care and solicitude of the creatures, is a notable part of his providence. But here we consider his intimate presence with all things, by which he upholdeth their beings; which all the means of the world cannot do without him. God doth as it were hold the creatures in his own hand, that it may not sink into its old nothing, as a man holdeth a weighty thing. This is supposed to be alluded



unto, Job vi. 9, Let him loose his hand and cut me off.' If he doth but loose his almighty grasp, all the creatures fall down.

4. Christ doth this so as that he doth not overturn their nature; he worketh by natural and necessary causes necessarily, with voluntary causes voluntarily. He that enlighteneth the world by the sun, causes man to discourse and reason; the sun would not shine if Christ were not the light of it, nor man discourse if he did not continue the faculty: John i. 4, In him was life, and this life was the light of man.' It is man seeth, man heareth, man talketh, man acteth, but yet the seeing eye, and hearing ear, is of the Lord,' Prov. xx. 12. As God hath made both, so he sustaineth both in their operation and exercise. All that we do naturally and spiritually we have from Christ.

5. He is not the bare instrument of God in sustaining the creature, but as a co-equal agent. As he made the world, and with the Father created all things, so he doth support and order all things. It is as well the work of the Son as of the Father, for he is God, equal with him in glory and power: John v. 17, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' And he hath a command of all the creatures, that they can do nothing without him, how much\* soever they attempt to do against him.

Secondly, Let me give you the reasons of this, why all things must subsist by him.

1. Because preservation is but a kind of continued creation, or a continuance of the being which God hath caused. God's will in creation maketh a thing to be, his will in preservation maketh it continue to be. The same omnipotency and efficacy of God is necessary to sustain our beings as at first to create them. Therefore, it is said, Ps. civ. 2, Thou stretchest out the heavens like a curtain,' which noteth a continued act. God erected them at first, and still sustaineth them by his secret power in this posture; so that, with respect to God, it is the same action to conserve as to create. That the creature may have a being, the influence of God is necessary to produce it; that the creature may continue its being, it is necessary that God should not break off that influence, or forsake the creature so made; for the being of the creature doth so wholly depend on the will of God, that it can not subsist without him. Nothing can be

without the will of God, which is the cause both of the being and existence of all creatures. Therefore their being cannot be continued unless God will; therefore it belongeth to the same power to make anything out of nothing, and to keep anything that is made from returning to its first nothing.

2. It is impossible to cut off the dependence of the creature upon the first cause, for no creature hath a self-sufficiency to maintain and support itself. Things of art may subsist without the artificer, as a carpenter maketh a house, and then leaveth it to stand of itself, the shipwright maketh a ship, and then leaveth it to the pilot to guide it; but all things of nature depend upon God that made them, because they have their whole being from him, matter, and form, which he continueth no longer than he pleaseth, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, visible or invisible. No impression of the agent remaineth in the effect when his action ceaseth; when the effect wholly dependeth on the cause, as when the air is enlightened which receiveth light from the sun, but when the sun is gone the light ceases: so when God withdraws the creature vanishes, for they have no other being than God is pleased to bestow upon them.

3. If it were not so, many absurdities would follow; as, for instance--

[1.] If things do subsist by themselves, then they would always be; for nothing would destroy itself.

[2.] Then the creature would be independent, and whether God will or no they would conserve their being; and then how should God govern the world? Therefore it undeniably followeth, Thou hast made all things, and thou preservest them all.'

4. It would destroy all worship, and our piety and respect to God would be cold and languid. The service we owe to God is reducible to these four heads:--

[1.] Adoration of his excellent nature above all other things.

[2.] Affiance in his goodness, with expectation of relief from him.

[3.] Thankfulness for his benefits.

[4.] Obedience to his precepts and commands.

Now, unless we acknowledge his intimate presence with and preservation of all things, these necessary duties will either be quite

abolished, or degenerate into a vain and needless superstition.

[1.] The adoration we owe to his excellent nature, above all other things in the universe. Alas! we see how little reverence and respect we have for the great potentates of the earth, whose fame we hear of indeed, but are not concerned in their favour or frowns, or have no dependence on them at all. The least justice of peace or constable in our neighbourhood is more to us than all these mighty foreign princes, with whom we have nothing to do but only to hear and read the reports of their greatness, when we have no other business to divert us. So cold and careless would be our respect to God if we did not depend on him every moment, and were neither concerned in his wrath nor love. Those practical atheists that were settled on their lees, and lived in a secure neglect of God, they fostered it by this presumption Tush! he will neither do good nor evil,' Zeph. i. 13. Fine things may be told us of the excellency of his nature, but what is that to us? He hath so shut up himself within the curtain of the heavens, that he takes no notice or care of things here below. How soon would such a conceit dispirit all religion, and take away the life and vigour of it! But if you would plant a reverence and due veneration of God, you must do it by this principle, In his hands is the soul of every living thing^ and the breath of all mankind.' No creature can subsist without him for a moment. Now this respect is due not only to God the Father, but our Lord Jesus Christ.

[2.] As to. trust and dependence on his goodness for relief in all our straits and necessities. This is the grand principle that keepeth up an acknowledgment of God in the world, by prayers and supplications: Ps. lxii. 8, Trust in the Lord at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him.' When you retire your souls from all secular Confidences, and repose all your trust in him, you will be instant in prayer, and earnestly beg his relief; you see all things subsist by him, and it is in vain to expect any real assistance from the creature, but what God will communicate to us by it. Now, if it be not so, but the creatures could stand of themselves, and live of them selves, this would blast all devotion, and prayer be withered and dried up at the root; humbling ourselves to God in our straits and necessities would look like dejection or poorness of spirit, whining to no purpose.

[3.] For thankfulness for benefits received, which is the great means to knit the hearts of men to God, and the bellows which bloweth up

the fire of love and religion in our hearts. How can we ascribe our deliverances to God, if he hath not a hand in all things? But when we acknowledge his sustaining and governing power, we see God in the face of the creature, and every benefit we receive representeth his goodness to us. But, alas! they have no thought or care of praise and thanksgiving that think not themselves obliged to God for the least hair of their heads. God is banished out of their sight, because they look for all from the creature. But they cannot enough praise and bless God, who is the strength of their lives, and the length of their days. They acknowledge that every good gift cometh from him, that he heareth their prayers, relieveth their necessities, continues their lives to them every moment; therefore God is all in all with them, but to others he is a shadow or nothing. His memory is kept up in the world by his benefits, Acts xiv. 17.

[4.] For obedience and service to him. Certainly dependence begets allegiance and observance. We are obsequious to those from whom we expect our dole and portion: Ps. cxxxi. 2, As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes wait on the Lord our God.' The masters gave the men-servants their portion and allowance; and the mistress to the maid-servants: they looked for all from their hands, and therefore to them they performed their service; so do the people of God. What reverence do we owe to him who is our Creator and preserver, as well as Redeemer! As he made all things, so he supporteth all things. Did we see God in us and in all things round about us, these thoughts would be more frequent in us, and we will still be considering what we shall render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us. But obedience soon languisheth where men think they subsist of themselves without God: Ps. lv. 19, Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.' They are not interrupted in their sinful course, and therefore have no reverence and respect to God.

Use 1. This doth strengthen our dependence and reliance on our blessed Redeemer. By him all things do subsist, therefore he can hear all prayers, relieve us in all our straits, supply us in all wants, preserve us in all dangers. All nations are in his hands, our whole life is in his keeping, and upheld by his intimate presence with us; our days cannot be longer nor shorter than he pleaseth. If he were

absent from us, he might forget us or neglect us; but he is within us, and round about us in the effects of his power and goodness. Since he is so near us, why should we doubt of his particular care and providence? All nations are in his hands, the lives and hearts of friends and enemies, therefore our eyes should be upon him: Ps. xvi. 8, I have set the Lord always before me, he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' We set the Lord before us both in point of reverence and dependence--for fear and trust agree in their common nature--and so it may note our care to please him, or our trust and quietness in him. All means are nothing to us, can do nothing for us without him.

2. It teaches us a lesson of humility. We depend on him every moment, can do nothing without him, either in a way of nature or grace; not in a way of nature, for God hath not left us to stand by ourselves on the first foundation of our creation. The creatures are not capable of subsistence without dependence on the first cause, but merely live and act by his power: In him we live and move and have our being.' Ps. civ. 29, Thou takest away their breath and they die, and return to their dust.' The withdrawing his concurrence and supportation is the cause of all our misery. When he sees fit, all the creatures soon return to the elements of which they are compounded; all the strokes and judgments which light upon them are dispensed according to his pleasure. In a way of grace we are nothing, can do nothing without him, John xv. 5. He must have all the praise, Luke xvi. 14, 1 Cor. xv. 10, Gal. ii. 20. The more perfections we have, the more prone we are to fall if he sustain us not: witness the fallen angels, and Adam in innocency.

3. It teaches us a lesson of reverence and obedience. If God be so near, let us observe him, and take notice of his presence. He knoweth what he doth when he sustaineth such a creature as thou art. This thought should continually affect us--that God is with us, still by us, not only without us, but within us, preserving our life, upholding our being. It should be a check to our sluggishness, and mispense of time--Doth God now continue me? to what end and purpose? If God were absent or gone, it were more justifiable to loiter or indulge the ease of the flesh; but to spend my time vainly and foolishly, which he continueth for service, what have we to say?

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## SERMON V. - Col. I. 18.

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.--Col. I. 18.

THE context is spent in representing the dignity and excellency of Christ. He is set forth by three things:--

1. By the excellency of the benefits we have by him--the greatest the fallen creature is capable of for the present, ver. 14.

2. By the excellency of his person; so he is set forth as the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, ver. 15, and proved by his being the Creator and preserver of all things. The Creator, ver. 16; the preserver, ver. 17. Now the apostle cometh to the third thing.

3. The excellency of his office. This is done in the text; where, observe, that next after the Son of God there is nothing more venerable and august than Christ's being head of the church. And again, that Christ hath another title to us than that of Creator: he is Redeemer also. The same God that created us by his power hath redeemed us by his mercy. By the one he drew us out of no thing, by the other he recovered us out of sin. Therefore, after he had declared what Christ is to the world and the church too, he showeth what Christ is particularly to the church. He hath a superiority over angels and all creatures, but he is our head: Eph. i. 22, He hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.' Christ is the sovereign of the world, but, by a special relation to his people, he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead,' &c.

In which words observe:--

1. The titles which are given to Christ with respect to the church: he is the head, the beginning, the first-born from the dead.

2. The consequence of it: that in all things he might have the preeminence.

1. The titles ascribed to Christ. They are three:--

[1.] The first is the head of the body, the church'--where observe two correlatives, the head and the body; the head is Christ, the body is the church. The head is the most eminent part of the body, the noblest both as to nature, and place, or situation. As to nature, the head is the most illustrious throne of the soul, as being the seat not only of the nerves and senses, but of the memory and understanding. In place, as nearest heaven, the very situation doth in a manner oblige the other parts to respect it. These things agree to Christ, who, as to his essence, is infinitely of much more worth than the church, as being the only-begotten Son of God. As to office, in him there is a fulness of perfection to perform the office of a head to such a crazy and necessitous body as the church is. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in our head for the use of the body, Col. ii. 3; and he is also the fountain of life and grace to every particular member, John i. 16. And, for place, he reigneth in heaven with his Father, and from thence he vieweth all the necessities of the body, and sendeth forth such influences of grace as are needful to every particular member.

For the other correlative--the church is the body. By the church is meant the church mystical, or all such as are called out of the world to be a peculiar people unto God. Now, these considered collectively or together, they are a body; but singly and separately, every believer is a member of that body: 1 Cor. xii. 29, Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' All the parts and members joined together are a spiritual body, but the several persons are members of that body. Yea, though there be many particular churches, yet they are not many bodies, but one body, so it is said, 1 Cor. xii. 12, As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.' He is the head, and the many and divers members of the universal Christian church are but one body. The universal invisible church of real believers is one mystical body knit by faith to Christ, their head, and by love among themselves. And the visible universal church is one politic body, conjoined with Christ their head, and among themselves, by an external entering into covenant with God, and the serious profession of all saving truths. They have all the same king and head, the same laws--the word of God--the same sacraments of admission and nutrition, which visibly, at least, they subject themselves unto, and have a grant of the same common privileges in

the gospel. But of this more anon.

[2.] The next title is arche, the beginning. I understand it that he is the root and the beginning of the renewed estate. The same degree which Christ hath in the order of nature, he hath in the order of grace also: he is the beginning both of creation, so also of redemption: he is origo mundi melioris, still the beginning and ending of the new creature as well as the old, Rev. i. 8. He is called, in short, the beginning, with respect to the life of grace; as in the next title, the first born from the dead,' with respect to the life of glory.

[3.] The third title is, the first-born from the dead. He had before called him the first-born of every creature, now the first-born from the dead: Rev. i. 5, The first-begotten from the dead,' because those that arise from the dead are, as it were, new-born; whence also the resurrection from the dead is called a regeneration, Mat. xix. 20: and St Paul referreth that prophecy, Ps. ii. 7, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,' in Acts xiii. 33, to the resurrection of Christ. Things are said to be when they are manifested to be: compare Rom. i. 4, Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' He was declared to be the true, and everlasting Son of, God, and head of the church: so the adoption of believers shall appear by their resurrection: Rom. viii. 19, The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;' ver. 23, We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.'

2. The sequel and consequent of these things: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence--that is, as well in the spiritual estate of the church as in the creation and natural estate of the world: Rom. viii. 29, That he might be the first-born among many brethren.'

I begin with the first.

Doct. 1. That this is the honour appropriate and peculiar to Jesus Christ, to be head of the church.

1. Here I shall show what the church is to which Christ is an head.
2. How is he an head to this body.
3. The reasons why this body must have such an head.



1. What the church is. A society of men called out of the world by God's effectual grace, according to the purpose of his election, and united to Christ by faith and the participation of his Spirit, and to one another by the band of charity that after remission of sins obtained in this world, together with regenerating grace, they may at length be brought to eternal life. Let us a little open this description. By effectual calling God worketh faith, which uniteth us to Christ, and that effectual calling is the fruit of election; and the effect of this union is remission of sins, and the necessary consequence of this communion is salvation or eternal life. This society of men is called a church in the text. The word church is taken in divers acceptations.

First, and most properly, it signifies those whom I have now described, the universal collection of all and every one of those who, according to the good pleasure of God, are, or may be, called out of a state of sin into a state of grace, to obtain eternal glory by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 22--that chosen generation, that royal priesthood, that holy nation, that peculiar people, whom to show forth his praises God hath called out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. This church, most generally and properly taken, is the kingdom of God, the body and spouse of Christ: Cant. vi. 9, My dove, my undefiled one, is but one.' This is that one fold under one shepherd, John x. 16. And it was prophesied of Christ that he should die to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, John xi. 52.

Secondly, Of this universal church there are two parts--one of travellers, the other of comprehensors, or the church militant and triumphant; they both belong to God's family: Eph. iii. 15, Of whom the whole family, whether in heaven or earth, is named;' so Col. i. 10. That part of the family which is in heaven triumpheth with God there--that which is in earth is yet warring against sin, Satan, and the world.

Thirdly, This part, which is the military, comes in the second place to be called by the name of the universal church, because, being scattered and dispersed throughout the whole world, it comprehendeth all and every one that belongeth to Christ's flock, which are found in several folds: known to God they are, and to themselves, and do indeed belong to Christ's body and his kingdom.

This is often and not undeservedly called the invisible church, because, so far as it is the church of God, their reality and sincerity is rather believed by faith than seen by the eyes of the body. This church, this kingdom of God, though it be yet in this world, yet it is not of the world, neither doth it come with observation, for the faithful have this kingdom of God within them, Luke xvii. 20. The world knows them not, other believers know them not, but God knoweth those that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Fourthly, The universal visible church. While they are in the way, and in the midst of their conflicts, it is possible many hypocrites may take up the profession, as in the great house are many vessels, some to honour, some to dishonour. From these ariseth an external promiscuous multitude, who also are called the catholic church, for the sake and with respect to those holy ones among them who truly belong to Christ's mystical body. We read often the kingdom is like to a net wherein are good and bad fishes, Mat. xiii.; to a thrashing-floor wherein is chaff and wheat; to a field wherein groweth good corn and also tares, Mat. xiii. 24, 25. Now all these ways is the universal church taken.

Fifthly, There are particular churches wherein the ordinances and means of grace are dispensed, as the church of Corinth, Cenchrea, Galatia, Greek, Roman. None of these particular churches contain all believers or the elect of God, that out of them or any of them there should be no salvation. Again, the universal church may remain in the world total and entire, though these particular churches, one or other of them, may successively be destroyed, as it hath often fallen out. And it is a great sin so to cry up a particular church as to exclude all the rest from saving communion with Christ; and for any one particular church to arrogate power over the others, they being but members.

This church is called a body in two respects:--

- (1.) In regard of the union of all the parts.
- (2.) Dependence upon one and the same head.

(1.) With respect to union, as in man all the members make but one body, quickened by the same soul, so in the mystical body of Christ all the parts makeup but one body, animated by the same vital principle, which is the Spirit of Christ, and are joined together by

certain bonds and ligaments--faith and love; and all is covered with the same skin--the profession of the faith of Christ. Look, what the soul is in man, the form in the subject, life in the body, and proportion in the building; that in the universal church of God is the union and communion of the several and single parts, with the head among themselves. Take away the soul from man, the form from the subject, life from the body, proportion and conjunction from the parts of the building, and what will man be but a carcase, and the building but ruin and confusion? So take away union and communion from the universal church, then Jerusalem will become a Babel, and Bethel a Bethaven, and for life there will be death, and for salvation eternal destruction. How else shall all that come out from one, return again to one, and all and every one have all things in one, that at length they may acquiesce in the enjoyment of one--that is God--as their chiefest good? Alas! without this union with the head, and among themselves in necessary things, what can they expect but wrath and the curse, and everlasting destruction?

(2.) With respect to dependence on one head: Rom. xii. 5, We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another'--that is, all things make up one body, of which Christ is the head, and are fellow-members in respect of one another. As necessary and as desirable as it is to be united to God, to life and glory ever lasting, so necessary and desirable it is to depend upon Christ, the head; for no man, after the entrance of sin, can return to God, or enjoy God, without Christ the mediator: John xiv. 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' Acts iv. 12; There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but only Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. iii. 11; Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, Jesus Christ.' 1 John v. 12; He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.' God proclaimed from heaven, Mat. iii. 17, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' He being one God with the Father and the Spirit, of the same substance and essence, he only can procure merit, and effect our union with God. He first assumed our nature, and united it to his own person, and so became one flesh with us: but then all those that belong to that nature, if they believe in him, and enter into his covenant, are not only literally one flesh, but mystically one body, and so also one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17--that is, by the bond of the Spirit he hath brought them into the state and

relation of a body to himself. To gather up all: Man's return to God is necessary to his blessedness, that he may be inseparably conjoined to him as his chiefest good. To this purpose the Son of God assumed our nature in the unity of his person, and there by bringeth about the union of the church with himself as our head, and our communion with one another in faith and charity, if we desire to be blessed, and so is according to Christ's prayer: John xvii. 21, That they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;' ver. 23, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' So that as there is one God, and one mediator between God and man,' and one church united to Christ as his body, to this church we must every one of us be united if we mean to be saved, and in the church with Christ, and by Christ with God; therefore out of this mystical body there is no salvation.

2. How is Christ a head to this body? This must be explained by answering two questions:--

[1.] What are the parts of his headship?

[2.] According to what nature doth this office belong to him--divine or human?

[1.] The parts and branches of this headship. He is our head with respect to government and sovereignty; and in regard of causality and influence; he governeth, he quickeneth.

(1.) It implies his authority to govern, as is manifest by Eph. v. 22, 23, Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.' So that to be the church's head implies superiority or right to govern.

(2.) For the other notion, in regard of influence, that is evident in scripture also: Col. ii. 19, Not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.' The head is the root from whence the vital faculty is diffused to all the members. We use to say *Homo est arbor inversa*, a tree turned upside down; if this be so, the head is the root of this tree. So doth life flow from Christ to the church; the Spirit is from him either to begin the union or to continue the influence. But let us speak of these branches apart.

(1st.) His authority and power to govern. His excellency gives him fitness, but his office right to rule and govern the church. When he sent abroad his officers and ambassadors to proselyte the world in his name, he pleadeth his right: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth.' Now the acts which belong to Christ as a governor may be reduced to these heads:--

First, To make laws that shall universally bind all his people.

Secondly, To institute ordinances for worship.

Thirdly, To appoint officers.

Fourthly, To maintain them in the exercise of these things.

First, The first power that belongeth to a governing head is legislation or making laws. Now Christ's headship and empire being *novum jus imperii*, a new right which he hath as mediator for the recovery of lapsed mankind, his law is accordingly. It is *lex remedians*, a law of grace, which is given us in the gospel of our salvation. The sum of his own proper remedial laws are faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance towards God, Acts xx. 21. Without repentance our case is not compassionable, without faith we do not own our Redeemer, by whom we have so great a benefit: yet because this new right of empire is accumulative, not privative, beneficial to us, indeed, but not destructive of our duty to God; therefore the whole law of God, as purely moral, hath still a binding force upon the conscience, as it is explained in the word of God. Now to these laws of Christ none can add, none diminish, and therefore Christ will take an account of our fidelity at the last day, 2 Thes. i. 8.

Secondly, He hath instituted ordinances for the continual exercise and regulation of our worship and the government of his people, that they may be kept in the due acknowledgment and obedience to him, such as the preaching of the word, sacraments, and the exercise of some government. Now all the rules and statutes which Christ hath made for the ordering of his people must be kept pure until his coming. His institutions do best preserve his honour in the world. Great charges are left: 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and his elect angels, that thou observe these things;' where he speaketh of ecclesiastical censures and disciplines; he conjureth him by all that is sacred and holy, that it be rightly

used: 1 Tim. vi. 14, Keep this commandment without spot and unrebukable unto the appearing of Jesus Christ.' The doctrines are so deter mined by Christ that they cannot be changed, the worship not corrupted, the discipline not abused, to serve partial humours and private or worldly interests.

Thirdly, God hath appointed officers, who have all their ministries and services under Christ and for Christ: Eph. iv. 11, He gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' Mark there, he doth not describe all the officers, for the deacon is not mentioned, but only such as labour in the word and sacraments; and observe, he mentioneth ordinary and extraordinary--apostles to write scripture, prophets to attest it, pastors and teachers to explain and apply it. And mark, Christ gave some; it is his prerogative, as head of the church, to appoint the several sorts of offices and officers. He gave them at first, and will raise up some still, according as the exigence of the times requireth it. The end why, to perfect the saints--that is, to help them on to their final perfection--and for the work of the ministry.' All offices under Christ are a ministry, not a power; and imply service, not lordship or domination over the flock of Christ. Lastly, the great end is to prepare and fit men more and more to become true members of Christ's mystical body.

Fourthly, To maintain and defend his people in the exercise of these things, to preserve the verity of doctrine and purity of worship. Alas! many times, where neither worship nor government is corrupted, yet the church may be in danger to be dissipated by the violence of persecutions. Now, therefore, it is a part of Christ's office, as head of the church, to maintain verity of doctrine, purity of worship, and a lawful order of government, for all which he hath plenty of spirit. The papists think this cannot be without some universal visible head to supply Christ's office in his absence; and so are like the Israelites: Exod. xxxi. 1, Make us gods that shall go before us.' They would have a visible head that should supply Christ's room in his absence--an external, infallible head. But that is a vain conceit; for since the pope hath his residence in Home, and cannot perform these functions but by the intervention of ordaining pastors, why should it be more difficult for Christ in heaven to govern the church than for

the pope in Rome--when he sitteth at the right hand of God till he hath made his foes his footstool? Is he less powerful to govern the church, and to preserve and defend his people against the violence of those that would root out the memorial of religion in the world? Who is more powerful than Jesus Christ, who hath all judgment put into his hands? John v. 22.

(2d.) In regard of influence: So Christ is an head to the church as he giveth us his Spirit. That Spirit which gives life to believers is often called Christ's Spirit: Gal. iv. 6, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.' It is purchased by his merit, Titus iii. 6; conveyed to us by his power: John xv. 26, I will send the Comforter from the Father.' The communication is by his ordinances. The word: 2 Cor. iii. 18, Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Sacraments: 1 Cor. xii. 13, For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' To promote the religion which he hath established: John xvi. 13, 14, When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that he shall speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.' He comes to us as his members, and by influence from him, as in the natural body the animal spirits are from the head, are by the members conveyed to all the parts of the body. So Christ in this spiritual union worketh in us a quickening Spirit: Eph. iv. 15, 16, We grow up to him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body joined together maketh increase,' &c. The Spirit is not given to any one believer, but derivatively from Christ to us. First, it is given to Christ, as mediator, and to us only by virtue of our union with him. He is in Christ as radically inherent, but in us operatively, to accomplish certain effects; or he dwelleth in our head by way of radiation, in us by way of influence and operation.

\_ [2.] According to what nature doth this office belong to Christ--divine or human?

I answer--Both; for it belongeth to him as God incarnate.

(1.) He must be man, that there may be a conformity of nature between the head and the rest of the members; therefore Christ and the church have one common nature between them: he was man as we are men--bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,' Eph. v. 30. We read of a monstrous image that was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, where the head was gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet part of iron and part of clay, Dan. ii.; all the parts of a different nature. In every regular body there is a proportion and conformity. So it is in the mystical body of Christ'--because the brethren took part of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same.' The Godhead, which was at such a distance from us, is brought down in the person of Christ in our nature, that it might be nearer at hand, and within the reach of our commerce; and we might have more encouragement to expect pity and relief from him.

(2.) God he also must be. None was fit to be head of the church but God, whether you respect government or influence.

First, For government: to attend all cases, to hear all prayers, to supply all wants, defend us against all enemies, to require an absolute and total submission to his laws, ordinances, and institutions, so as we may venture our eternal interests upon his word: Ps. xlv. 11, He is thy God, worship thou him.'

Secondly, For influence: none else hath power to convey the Spirit, and to become a vital principle to us, for that is proper to God to have life in himself, and to communicate it to others: 1 Tim. vi. 13, I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things.' &c. Whatever men may think of the life of grace, yet surely as to the life of glory he is the only life-making Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Now this honour is not given to the angels, much less is it due to any man, nor can it be imagined by him, for none can influence the heart of man but God.

3. The reasons why this body must have such a head.

[1.] Every society must be under some government, without which they would soon dissolve and come to nothing. Much more the church, which, because of its manifold necessities, and the high ends unto which it is designed, more needs it than any other society.

[2.] The privileges are so great, which are these: pardon of sins and



sanctifying grace, and at length eternal glory.

(1.) Pardon of sins. By this union with him, he is made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Cor v. 21. A sacrifice for sin, that we might be justified and accepted with God.

(2.) Sanctifying grace by the communication of his Spirit. We not only agree with him in the same common human nature, but the same holy nature may be in us that was in Christ, Heb. ii. 11. We are doubly akin, *ratione incarnationis suae, et regenerationis nostrae*.

(3.) At length eternal glory followeth. For what is the condition of the head, that is also the condition of the members. First Christ then they that are Christ's. And also Christ is set up as a pattern, to which the church must be conformed, Rom. viii. 29. Bating the preeminence due to the head, we are to be glorious as he is glorious.

[3.] The duties are far above bare human power and strength therefore we need the influence of our head, John xv. 5. To obey God' to believe in his name, to deny ourselves in what is most dear and precious to us in the world, to be fortified against all temptations are duties not so easily done as said.

[4.] We have so foully miscarried already that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, but hath put the whole treasure of grace into the hands of Christ for our use, John i. 16. So John iii. 35, 36, The Father hath put all things into his hands. He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son hath not seen life.' God would not leave us to ourselves to live apart from him, but hath put all things that belong to our happiness into his hands, that, being united to him, virtue might be communicated to us, even all the gifts and graces of the Spirit. They are not intrusted with us, but with him; and we shall have no more of pardon, grace, and glory, but what we have in and from the Son of God.

Use 1. Is information, to show how much we are bound to God for putting this honour upon us, that Christ should be our head. Christ is over the angels in point of superiority and government, but not properly said to be an head to them, in that strict notion which implies relation to the church. As to influence, he is not a head to them. You will say they are confirmed by him; but the mediation of Christ presupposes the fall of Adam, for Christ had not been

mediator if Adam had never fallen. Now, if Christ should come to confirm angels, if this had not been, is groundless; besides, Christ merited for those that have benefit by him, and the consummate act of his merit is his death. But where is it said that he died for angels?

Use 2. It informs us of the shameless usurpation abetted by the papists, who call the pope head of the church. None can be a head of the church to whom the church is not a body; but it would be strange to say the church is the pope's body. None can be a governing head of the church but he who is a mediatorial head of vital influence. The papists, indeed, distinguish these things--ascribe the one to the pope, the other to Christ; but the scripture allows not this writ of partition. None can be the one but he must also be the other. But they say he is a ministerial head; but a ministerial universal head that shall give law to other churches and Christian societies, and if they depend not on him, shall be excluded from the privileges of a Christian church. This is, as to matter of right, sacrilege; for this honour is too great for any man, and Christ hath appointed no such head, and therefore it is a manifest usurpation of his royal prerogative without his leave and consent. And, as to matter of fact, it is impossible--the church being scattered throughout all parts of the world, which can have no commerce with such an head in matters essential to its government and edification. They that first instituted such an universal head, besides that they had no authority or commission so to do, were extremely imprudent, and perverters of Christianity. Therefore let us consider how it came up at first, and how it hath been exercised. It came up at first for the prevention of schisms and divisions among Christians. They thought fit the church should be divided into certain dioceses, according to the secular divisions of the empire, which at first were thirteen in number, under the names of patriarchs and bishops of the first see, who should join in common care and counsel for the good of the Christian commonwealth. Among these, some who, in regard of the cities wherein they resided, were more eminent than the rest, and began to encroach upon the others' jurisdiction, till at length they were reduced to four. The bishop of Home, being the imperial city, had the precedency, not of authority *super reliquos*, but of place and order *inter reliquos*. It was *potestas honoraria*, a difference or authority by courtesy, afterwards *ordinaria*, an ordinary power; then what was *de facto* given was afterwards challenged *de jure*.

2. Let us consider how this power hath been exercised to the introduction of idolatry, and divers corruptions and superstitions, to the destruction of kingdoms, the blood of the martyrs, and tumults and confusions too long to relate.

Use 3. To persuade you to accept Christ as your head. We are to preach him as Lord, 2 Cor. iv. 5; you are to receive him as Lord, Col. ii. 6; our consent is necessary. God hath appointed him, and the church appointeth him--God by authority, the church by consent. We voluntarily acknowledge his dignity, and submit unto him, both with a consent of dependence and subjection. Some God draweth to Christ and ^ gives them to him, and him to them, John vi. 44. All that live within hearing have means to seek this grace, and if they so do, they shall not lose their labour. God sets not men about unprofitable work: mind but the duties of the baptismal covenant, and the business is at an end, Acts ii. 39.

Use 4. To put us upon self-reflection. If Christ be your head--

1. You must stand under a correspondent relation to Christ; be members of his mystical body, which is done by faith and repentance.

2. None can be a true member of Christ's body who doth not receive vital influence from him, Rom. viii. 9. It is not enough to be members of some visible church; they that are united to him have life, there is an influence of common gifts according to the part we sustain in the body. A common Christian hath common graces, those gifts of the Spirit which God gives not to the heathen world; as know ledge of the mysteries of godliness, ability of utterance about heavenly things, Heb. vi. 4.

3. If Christ be our head, we must make conscience of the duties which this relation bindeth us unto; as obedience and self-denial.

[1.] Obedience to his laws and the motions of his Spirit. His laws Luke vi. 46, Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' The motions of his Spirit: Rom. viii. 14, As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'

[2.] Self-denial. Christ spared not his natural body to promote the good of his mystical body; he exposed his life for our salvation, we should hazard all for his glory. Nature teaches us to lift up the hands

to save the head.

4. There must be suitableness and imitation: 1 John ii. 6, He that abideth in him, ought to walk as he walketh.'

5. If you be planted into this mystical body, you will make conscience of love and tenderness.

Use 5. Let us triumph in this head, depend on him. There are two arguments--his ability and his sympathy.

1. His ability. He can give us life, strength, health: Eph. iii. 16, That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man:' Col. i. 11, Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.'

2. His sympathy. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities: Heb. iv. 15, We have not an high-priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' The head is concerned for the members.

## **SERMON VI. - Col. I. 18.**

Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.--Col. I. 18.

I COME now to consider the first particular title which is given to Christ.

There are two other titles given to Christ--the one respects the state of grace, the other .the state of glory. And,

First, With respect to the state of grace, he is called arche`, the beginning--that is, Origo mundi melioris, the beginning of the new creature as well as the old; for the same place and dignity which Christ hath in the order of nature he hath in the order of grace also. Therefore he is called the beginning of the creation of God.' Rev. iii. 14. The word arche` is not taken there passively, as if it were the first thing that was created, but actively, that he giveth a being and beginning to all things that are created, and by the creation of God is meant the new creation. So that the point is--

Doct. That Jesus Christ is the author and beginning of the new

creation.

I shall briefly explain this, and pass to the next branch. Christ is the beginning two ways:--

I. In a way of order and dignity.

II. In a way of causality.

I. In a way of order, as first and chief of the renewed state. This is many ways set forth in scripture. Two things I shall take notice of:--

1. That he is the builder of the church.

2. The lord and governor of it.

1. As founder and builder of the church: Mat. xvi. 18, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.' Christ challenges it to himself as his own peculiar prerogative to build the church. More fully, the apostle, Heb. iii. 3-5, For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he that builded the house hath more honour than the house; for every house is built by some man, but he that buildeth all things is God. And again, Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house.' The scope of the apostle is to prove that Christ must have the pre-eminence above all others that have been employed in and about God's house. Moses was one of the chief of that sort, that had greater familiarity with God than others, and intrusted by him in very great and weighty matters; yet Christ was not only equal to Moses, but far above him. He proveth it by a comparison taken from a builder and an house, and from a lord of the house and a servant in the house; but Christ is the builder of the house, and Moses but a part of the house. Christ is the Lord, and Moses but the servant, therefore Christ is more excellent and worthy of greater honour. One of the noblest works of God is the church of the first-born; none could build, frame, and constitute this but the Son of God coming down in our flesh, and so recovering the lost world into an holy society which might be dedicated to God. For the materials of this house are men sinful and guilty. Neither men nor angels could raise them up into an holy temple to God; none but the eternal Word or the Son of God incarnate: he that buildeth all things is God'--ta pa`nta, all these things, the things treated of; he doth not speak of the first creation, but the second, the restoring of the lapsed world to God.

2. The other honour is that Christ is Lord of the new creation, as well as the founder and builder of it; for the world to come is put in subjection to him, not to the angels, Heb. ii. 7. By the world to come is not meant the state of glory, but the state of the church under the times of the gospel. It is made subject to God the Redeemer; it is solely and immediately in his power, and under his authority, and cast into a dependence upon him.

II. In a way of causality. So he is the beginning, either as a moral or efficient cause.

1. As a moral meritorious cause. We are renewed by God's creating power, but through the intervening mediation of Christ, or God's creating power is put forth with respect to his merit. The life of grace is purchased by his death: 1 John iv. 9, 'God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him.' Here spiritually, hereafter eternally. For life is opposite to death incurred by sin. We were dead legally, as sentenced to death by the law; and spiritually, as disabled for the service of our Creator. And how by him? That he speaketh of ver. 10--by his being a propitiation. We were in the state of death when the doors of mercy were first opened to us, under the guilt and power of sin; but we live when the guilt of sin is pardoned, and the power of sin broken. But this life we have not without Christ being a propitiation for our sins, or doing that which was necessary, whereby God without impeachment of honour might show himself placable and propitious to mankind.

2. As an efficient cause; by the efficacy of his Spirit, who worketh in us as members of Christ's mystical body. Wherefore it is said, 2 Cor. v. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;' and Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' Whatever grace we have cometh from God through Christ as Mediator, and from him we have it by virtue of our union with him. It is first applied by the converting grace, and then continually supplied by the confirming grace of the Spirit. The influence we have from him as our head is life and likeness.

[1.] Life: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh,' &c. Christ is the beginning of the new life, therefore he is called the prince, or author of life. All life is derived from the head

to the body, so we derive life from Christ: John vi. 57, As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.' We derive life from Christ, as he from the Father.

[2.] Likeness: Gal. iv. 19, My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you,' and 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is for the honour of Christ that his image and superscription should be upon his members, to distinguish them from others. In short, as to life, he is the root: John xv. 1, 2, I am the true vine, and.' &c. As to likeness, he is the pattern: 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.'

Secondly, The reasons of this.

1. It is for the honour of the Son of God that he should be head of the new world. In the kingdom of Christ all things are new. There is a new covenant, which is the gospel; a new paradise, not that where Adam enjoyed God among the beasts and trees of the garden, but where the blessed enjoy God amongst the angels. A new ministry, not the family of Aaron, or tribe of Levi, but the ministry of reconciliation, whom God hath qualified and fitted to be dispensers of these holy mysteries. New ordinances; we serve God not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the Spirit; new members, or new creatures, that are made partakers of the benefits, therefore also a new head, or a second Adam, that must be the beginning of this new creation, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is made a quickening spirit to all his members: 1 Cor. xv. 45, The first Adam was made a living soul, the second a quickening spirit.' Adam communicated natural life to his posterity, but from Christ we have the Spirit.

2. It is suited to our lost estate. We were in a state of apostasy and defection from God, averse from all good, prone to all evil. Now that we might have a new being and life, the Son of God came in our nature to rectify the disordered creation. The scripture representeth man as blind in his mind, perverse in his will, rebellious in his affections, having no sound part left in him to mend the rest; therefore we must be changed. But by whom? who shall make us of unclean to become pure and holy? Not one amongst all the bare natural sons of men, Job xiv. 4. Of carnal to become spiritual? We

must be new made and new born: John iii. 6, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; that we may mind the things of the Spirit, and not of the flesh. Of worldly to become heavenly? He that formeth us for this very thing is God.' 2 Cor. v. 5. He that is the framer and maker of all things; a God of infinite wisdom, power, and love, he frameth and createth us anew.

Use 1. To show us the necessity of regeneration.

Use 2. The excellence of it.

1. The necessity. We must have another beginning than we had as bare creatures: it is one thing to make us men, another to make us saints or Christians. We have understanding, will, affections, and senses as men, but we have these sanctified as Christians. The world thinketh Christianity puts strange names upon ordinary things; but is it an ordinary thing to row against the stream of flesh and blood, and to raise men to those inclinations and affections to which nature is an utter stranger--to have a divine nature put into us? 2 Pet. i. 4. The necessity is more bound upon us if we look upon ourselves not only as men but Christians; for whosoever is in Christ is a new creature. Some are in Christ by external profession, de jure; they are bound to be new creatures, that they may not dishonour their head. Others by real internal union. They not only ought to be, but de facto are, new creatures, because they are made partakers of his Spirit, and by that Spirit are renewed and sanctified. Little can they make out their recovery to God, and interest in Christ, who are not sensible of any change wrought in them, who have the old thoughts, the old discourses, the old passions, and the old affections, and their old conversations still; the same deadness to holy things, the same proneness to please the flesh, the same carelessness to please or honour God; and the drift and bent of their lives is as much for the world, and as little for God and heaven as before.

2. The excellency of regeneration or renewing grace. What a benefit it is, it appeareth in two things:--

1. That it is the fruit of reconciling grace: 2 Cor. v. 18, All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.' God gives grace only as the God of peace, as pacified by the death of Christ. The Holy Spirit



is the gift of his love, and the fruit of this peace and reconciliation which Christ made for us. Our Lord Jesus Christ merited this grace by the value of his sacrifice and bloody sufferings, Titus iii. 5, 6.

2. It is applied to us by the almighty power of his Spirit. Christ is first the ransom for, then the fountain of life to, our souls; and so the honour of our entire and whole recovery is to be ascribed only to our Redeemer, who, as he satisfied the justice of God for our sins, so he also purchased a power to change our hearts; and he purchased this power into his own hands, not into another's, and therefore doth accomplish it by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We should often think what a foundation God hath laid for the dispensation of his grace, and how he would demonstrate his infinite love in giving us his Son to be a propitiation for us, and at the same time showeth forth his infinite power in renewing and changing the heart of man, and all to bring us back to him, to make us capable of serving and pleasing him.

I come now to the other title, which respects the life of glory: The first-born from the dead.' The same appellation almost is given to Christ when he is called, Rev. i. 5, The first-begotten from the dead.' The reason of both is, because those that arise from the dead are, as it were, new born, and, therefore, the resurrection from the dead is called a regeneration, Mat. xix. 28. And as to Christ in particular, the grave, when he was in it, is represented as being under the pains and throes of a woman in travail: Acts ii. 24, *lusas tas odinas tou thanatou*, God having loosed the pains of death, for it was not possible that he should be holden of it;' but which is not only a metaphor, but a higher mystery. St Paul referreth that prophecy, Ps. ii. 7, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' in Acts xiii. 33, to the resurrection of Christ: God hath raised up Jesus from the dead; as it is also written, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' Things are said to be done when they are manifested to be done. Compare Rom. i. 4, Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' So the adoption of believers shall appear by their resurrection: Rom. viii. 19, The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;' ver. 23, And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption,

to wit, the redemption of our body;' 1 John iii. 2, It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' This for the title of First-born from the dead.'

Doct. That Christ's rising from the dead is the evidence and assurance of a Christian's happy resurrection.

1. Let me open the terms.
2. Vindicate the notion.
3. Show you how this is an evidence and assurance to all good Christians of their happy and joyful resurrection.

1. For the terms. He is here called The first-born from the dead.' If the grave was as the womb to him, and his resurrection as a birth, then Christ was in a manner born when he rose again. Only he hath the precedency--he is the first-born, he rises first, and surely others will follow after him. So we read, Acts xxvi. 23, That he should be the first-born that should rise from the dead;' as he saith elsewhere, First Christ, then they that are Christ's.' Christ hath the primacy of order and the principality of influence. So again he is said to be the first-fruits of them that slept,' 1 Cor. xv. 20. As in the consecrating of the first-fruits the whole harvest is also consecrated, so Christ by rising himself raises all others with him to eternal glory and happiness. And so his resurrection is a certain proof that others shall have a resurrection also.

2. Let us vindicate the notion here used by the apostle. How was he the first-born, the first-fruits, the first raised from the dead? Two objections lie against it:--

[1.] That many were raised from the dead before Christ.

[2.] Concerning the resurrection of the wicked. They are not parts of his mystical body, and in respect of them how could Christ rise as the first-born and the first-fruits?

I. For the first objection, how was Christ the first, since many were raised before him? As the widow of Sarepta's son, who was raised to life by Elijah, 1 Kings xvii.; the Shunammite's son by Elisha, 2 Kings iv.; a dead man by the touch of Elisha's bones, 2 Kings xiii. 21. Our Saviour in his lifetime raised the widow of Nam's only son,

Luke vii. 15; Jairus's daughter, Luke viii. 55; Lazarus, John xi. 44; some others at his death, Mat. xxvii. 52. How was he then the first? I answer--

[1.] We must distinguish of a proper and an improper resurrection. Christ was the first-born from the dead, because he arose from the dead by a proper resurrection, which is to arise again to a life immortal; others were raised again to a mortal estate, and so the great disease was rather removed than cured. Christ's resurrection is a resurrection to immortality, not to die any more; as the apostle saith, 'Death hath no more power over him.' They only returned to their natural life, they were raised from the dead, but still mortal; but he whom God raised again shall see no corruption,' Acts xiii. 34.

[2.] Others are raised by the power and virtue of his resurrection, but he hath risen again by his own power, John x. 18, 'I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it up again.' Raising the dead is a work of divine power, for it belongs to him to restore life who gave it at first. Therefore Christ is said not only to be raised again, but to rise from the dead: Rom. iv. 25, 'He died for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' as the sun sets and rises by his own motion.

[3.] All those that rose again before Christ, arose only by special dispensation, to lay down their bodies once more when God should see fit, and rose only as private and single persons; but Christ rose as a public person. His resurrection is the cause and pattern of ours, for head and members do not rise by a different power; he rose again to show the virtue that should quicken our mortal bodies, and raise them at length.

2. The second objection is concerning the raising of the wicked. Christ cannot be the first-born or the first-fruits to them, they belong not to his mystical body. The first-born implieth a relation to the rest of the family; and offering of the first-fruits did not sanctify the tares, the cockle, or the darnel, or the weeds that grow amongst the corn, but only the corn itself. I answer--

[1.] Certain it is that the wicked shall rise again, there is no question of that, Acts xxiv. 15. I believe a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, all that have lived, whether they have done good or evil: Mat. v. 45, 'He makes his sun to rise on the evil and the

good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;' and it is said, John v. 28, 29, All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.' Both must rise, that both may receive a full recompense according to their several ways; and though it be said, Ps. i. 5, The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' it doth not infringe this truth. The sense is, those unhappy miscreants shall not be able to abide the trial, as being self-condemned. To stand in the judgment is to make a bold defence. And whereas it is said, also, they shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous, you must know that at the day of doom there is a congregation or a gathering together of all men, then a segregation, a separating the sheep from the goats, then an aggregation--He shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left'--so that they make up two distinct bodies, one of the good, which is there called the congregation of the righteous, the other of the wicked, who are to be judged by Christ as a just and righteous judge, assisted with his holy angels, and the great assembly and council of saints. Not one of the sinners shall remain in the company of the righteous, nor appear in their society.

[2.] The wicked are raised *ex officio judicis*, not *beneficio mediatoris*; they are raised by Christ as a judge, but not by him as a Redeemer. The .one sort are raised by the power of his vindicative justice, the other by the Holy Ghost by virtue of his covenant: Rom. viii. 11, He shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' The one by Christ's power from without, put forth by him as judge of dead and living; the other by an inward quickening influence that flows from him as their proper head. When the reaper gathers the wheat into his barn, the tares are bound in bundles and cast into unquenchable fire, Mat. xiii. 30.

[3.] The wicked are forced to appear, and cannot shift that dreadful tribunal, the other go joyfully forth to meet the bridegroom; and when the sentence of condemnation shall be executed upon the one, the other by virtue of Christ's life and resurrection shall enter into the possession of a blessed and eternal life, wherein they shall enjoy God and Christ, and the company of saints and angels, and sing hallelujahs for ever and ever.

Thirdly, How is this an evidence and assurance to all good Christians of their happy and glorious resurrection?

1. The resurrection of Christ doth prove that there shall be a resurrection.

2. That to the faithful it shall be a blessed and glorious resurrection.

1. There shall be a resurrection: it is necessary to prove that; partly because it is the foundation of all godliness. If there were not another life after this, there were some ground for that saying of the atheists, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die,' 2 Cor. xv. 32. If there be no future estate nor being after this life, let us enjoy the good things of the world whilst we can, for within a little while death cometh, and then there is an end of all. These atheistical discourses and temptations to sensuality were more justifiable if men were annihilated by death. No! the soul is immortal, and the body shall rise again, and come into the judgment; and unless we live holily, a terrible judgment it will be to us. Partly because we cannot easily believe that the same body shall be placed in heaven which we see committed to the grave to rot there. Of all articles of religion this is most difficultly assented unto. Now there is relief for us in this business in hand: Christ is the first-born from the dead.' There were many preludia resurrectionis, foretokens and pledges of the resurrection given to the old world, in the translation of Enoch, the rapture of Elijah, the reviving of these few dead ones which I spake of before; but the great and public evidence that is given for the assurance of the world is Christ's rising from the grave. This makes our resurrection:--

[1.] Possible.

[2.] Easy.

[3.] Certain and necessary.

[1.] Possible. The least that we can gather from it is this, that it is not impossible for dead men to rise; for that which hath been may be. We have the proof and instance of it in Christ; see how the apostle reasoneth: 1 Cor. xv. 13, 'If there be no resurrection from the dead, then Christ is not risen, and then our whole faith falleth to the ground.' For all religion is bottomed on the resurrection of Christ; if therefore Christ be risen, why should it seem an incredible thing to

us that others should be raised also?

[2.] It is easy. For by rising from the dead he hath conquered death and gotten the victory of it, 1 Cor. xv. 57. A separation there will be of the soul from the body, but it is not such as shall last for ever. The victory over sin is the victory over death, and the conquest of sin makes death an entrance into immortality. The scriptures often speak of Christ destroying the power of death: Heb. ii. 14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death.' The devil's design was, by tempting men to sin, to keep them for ever under the power of death, but Christ came to rescue men from that power by a resurrection from death to life. Again it is said, 'He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel.' He hath voided the power of death by taking a course for the destruction of sin, and made a clear revelation of that life and immortality which was not so certainly known before. We look to the natural impossibilities, how what is turned to dust may be raised again, because we do not consider the power of God; but the moral impossibility is the greater, for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; that which makes sin able to do us hurt is the guilt of sin, otherwise it would be but as a calm sleep; and this guilt is bound upon us by the law of the righteous God, which threateneth eternal death to the sinner. Now get free from sin, and it is easy to believe the conquest of death. I will prove two things--that Christ's resurrection shows both his victory over sin, and his victory over death.

[1.] His victory over sin. That he hath perfectly satisfied for sin, and appeased the wrath of God, who is willing to be reconciled with all those that come to the faith and obedience of the gospel, which could not be if Christ had remained under the power of death; for the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 17, 'If Christ had not risen, ye are yet in your sins'--that is, God is not pacified, there is no sufficient means of atonement or foundation laid for our reconciliation with him. But his resurrection declareth that he is fully satisfied with the ransom paid for sinners by Jesus Christ, for it was in effect the releasing of our surety out of prison; so it is said, Rom. iv. 15, 'He was delivered for our offences, and raised up for our justification.' He died to expiate and do away sin, and his resurrection showeth it was a sufficient ransom, and therefore he can apply the virtue of it to us.

[2.] His victory over death. For he got out of it, which not only shows there is a possibility for a man by the power of God to be raised from death to life, but a facility; as a second Adam he brought resurrection into the world--there were two Adams, the one man brought death, and another brought resurrection into the world. The sentence of death is gone out against all the children of Adam as such, and the regenerate believers that are recovered by Christ shall be raised to immortal life: he hath gotten out of the power of death, so shall we.

[3.] Certain and necessary. For several reasons.

First, Our relation to Christ, he is the head of the body. Now the head will not live gloriously in heaven and leave his members behind him under the power of death. Believers are called the fulness of him that filleth all things, Eph. i. 23. Head and members make up one perfect man, or mystical body, which is called the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. Otherwise it would be a maimed Christ, or a head without a body, and therefore we should not doubt but he will raise us up with him.

Secondly, The charge and office of Christ, which he will attend upon and see that it be carefully performed: John vi. 39, This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day;' as none so nothing; in the prophet's expression concerning the good shepherd, not so much as a leg or a piece of an ear, that he should be careful to preserve every one who belongs to his charge, and what ever befalls them here, he is to see them forthcoming at the last day, and to give a particular account of them to God. Now certainly Christ will be very careful to fulfil his charge and make good his office.

Thirdly, There is the mercy of God through the merits of Christ towards his faithful ones who have hazarded their bodies and their bodily interests for his sake: 1 Thes. iv. 14, If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even those also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' Upon the belief of Christ's death and resurrection depends also the raising of their bodies that die for the testimony of Christ, or by occasion of faith in Christ, and that so certainly and speedily, that they that die not at all shall at the day of judgment have no advantage of those that have lain in the grave so many

years, the raising of the one being in the same twinkling of an eye with the change of the other, for the apostle saith, they that are alive shall not prevent them that are asleep. So 2 Cor. iv. 14, Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also with Jesus, and present us with you.' He gives it as the reason why he had the same spirit of faith with David, who in his sore afflictions professed his confidence in God, because he believed he spake. So they do profess the faith of Christ, though imminent death and danger is always represented to them as before their eyes. Because they steadfastly believed that God would raise them to a glorious estate through Christ, therefore did they openly proclaim what they did believe concerning him. To the same purpose to confirm Timothy against all danger of death: 1 Tim. vi, 13, I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things--that is, as thou believest that God is able and will raise thee from the dead, that thou hold out constantly unto the death, and do not shrink for persecution.

2. It proveth that to the faithful it shall be a blessed and a glorious resurrection.

[1.] Because Christ's resurrection is not only a cause but a pattern of ours; there is not only a communion between the head and members in the mystical body, but a conformity. The members were appointed to be conformed to their head, as in obedience and sufferings, so in happiness and glory; here in the one, hereafter in the other: Rom. viii. 29, He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son.' As Christ was raised from the dead, so we shall be raised from the dead. God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory and honour, that your faith and hope might be in God,' 1 Pet. i. 21. So God will raise us from the dead and put glory and honour upon us. There is indeed a glory put upon Christ far surpassing the glory of all created things; but our glory is like his for quality and kind, though not for quantity, degree, and measure, as to those prerogatives and privileges which his body in his exaltation is endowed withal. Such a glory it is that Christ shall be admired in his saints; the world shall stand gazing at what he means to do.

[2.] By the grant of God. They have a right and title to this glorious estate; being admitted into his family, they may hereafter expect to be admitted into his presence. The Holy Spirit abideth in them as an



earnest, till it be accomplished: Eph. i. 14, Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.' The Spirit of holiness marked and distinguished them as heirs of promise from all others. The mark or seal is the impression of Christ's image on the soul; this seal becomes an earnest or part of payment, which is a security or assurance to us that more will follow, a fuller conformity to Christ in the glorious estate; and this earnest doth continue till the redemption of the purchased possession; the purchased possession is the church, and their redemption is their final deliverance, Eph. iv. 30, when their bodies are redeemed from the bands of the grave. See Rom. viii. 28.

Use 1. Is to persuade you to the belief of two grand articles of faith--the resurrection of Christ, and your own resurrection.

1. The resurrection of Christ. The raising of Christ from the dead is the great prop and foundation of our faith: 1 Cor. xv. 14, If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain.' All the apostles' preaching was built upon this supposition, that Christ died and rose again. Partly because this is the great evidence of the truth of the Christian religion; for hereby Christ was evidenced to be what he gave out himself to be, the eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead,' Acts xxiii. 31, that is the ground of faith and assurance. So Acts xiii. 33, God hath raised Jesus from the dead, for it is written, Thou art my Son,' &c. Partly to show that he is in a capacity to convey life to others, both spiritual and eternal; which, if he had remained under the state of death, could not be. The life of believers is derived from the life of Christ: John xiv. 19, Because I live.' &c. If he had been holden of death, he had neither been a fountain of grace nor glory to us: 1 Pet. i. 3, He hath begotten us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.' Partly because the raising of Christ is the pledge of God's omnipotency, which is our relief in all difficult cases; the power which raised Christ exceedeth all contrary powers, Eph. i. 20, 21. Now the resurrection of Christ, besides the veritableness of the report manifested by the circumstances, when a great stone was rolled at the mouth of the sepulchre, a guard of soldiers set to watch against all fraud and impostures, yet he brake through; his frequent

apparitions to the apostles, yea, to five hundred disciples at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6, a great part of which were alive to testify the truth of it for some competent space of time; his pouring out of the Spirit; the apostles witnessing the truth of it in the teeth of opposition; his appearing from heaven to Paul; the prophecies of the Old Testament foretelling of it; the miracles wrought to confirm it; the holiness of the persons who were employed as chosen witnesses; their unconcernedness in all temporal interests; their hazarding of all; their success. It would make a volume to give you the evidences.

2. Your own resurrection, what may facilitate our belief and hope of it?

[1.] Consider it is a work of omnipotency. We are apt to say, How can it be, that when our bodies are turned into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, and hath undergone many transmutations, that every one shall have his own body and flesh again? Why, consider the infinite and absolute power of God, and this will make it more reconcilable to your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your faith. To an infinite power there is no difficulty at all: Phil. iii. 21, According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' He appeals to God's power, how much God's power outworks our thoughts; for he were not infinite if he might be comprehended. We are not fit judges of the extent of his power; many things are marvellous in our eyes which are not so to his, Zech. viii. 6. Therefore we must not confine God to the limits of created beings or our finite understandings. Alas! our cockleshell cannot empty an ocean: we do no more know what God can do than a worm knoweth a man. He that made the world out of nothing, cannot he raise the dead? He that brought such multitudes of creatures out of the dark chaos, hath he forgotten what is become of our dust? He that gave life and being to that which before was not, cannot he raise the dead? He that turned Moses' rod into a serpent, and from a serpent into a rod again, cannot he raise us out of dust into men, and turn us from men into dust, and from the same dust raise us up into the same men and women again?

[2.] We have a relief from the justice of God. All will grant that God is, and that God is a rewarder of good and bad. Now in this life he doth not dispense these rewards. Many times here instruments of public good are made a sacrifice to public hatred, and wicked men

have the world at will; therefore there is a judgment when this life is ended; and if there be a judgment, men must be capable to receive reward and punishment. You will say, so they are by having an immortal soul; ay! but the soul is not all of a man, the body is a part: it hath had its share in the work, and therefore it is most equal to conceive it shall have its share in the reward and punishment. It is the body which is gratified by the pleasure of sin for a season, the body which hath endured the trouble and pain of faithful obedience unto Christ, therefore there shall be a resurrection of just and unjust, that men may receive according to what they have done in the body. God made the whole man, therefore glorifies and punishes the whole man. The apostle urgeth this as to the godly, 1 Cor. xv. 29,

[3.] God's unchangeable covenant love, which inclines him to seek the dust of his confederates. God hath taken a believer into covenant with himself, body and soul; therefore Christ proveth the resurrection from God's covenant title, Mat. xxii. 31. To be a God is certainly to be a benefactor, Gen. xxv. 26; not Blessed be Shem,' but Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' And to be a benefactor, becoming an infinite eternal power. If he had not eternal glory to bestow upon us, he would not justify his covenant title, Heb. xi. 16. To whom God is a benefactor, he is a benefactor not to one part only, but to their whole persons. Their bodies had the mark of his covenant upon them, their dust is in covenant with him, and wherever it is dispersed, he will look after it. Their death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his care and affection towards them to cease.

[4.] We have relief also from the redemption of Christ, which extendeth to the bodies of the saints, as it is often interpreted in scripture; as where Christ speaks of his Father's charge--this was a special article in the eternal covenant: John vi. 39, 40. This is the will of my Father, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day.' Christ hath engaged himself to this; he is the guardian of the grave, as Rispah kept the dead bodies of Saul's sons, 2 Sam. xxi. 10. Christ hath the keys of death and hell; he hath a charge of the elect to the very day of their resurrection that he may make a good account of them, and may not lose so much as their dust, but gather it up again. What shall I say? When the intention of his death is spoken of: 1 Thes. v. 10, That

whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him;' that is, whether dead or alive; for they that are dead in the Lord, are said to be fallen asleep. Whether we live or die, we should live a spiritual life here, and eternal life in glory hereafter. So where the obligation: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price.' There would be no consequence if Christ had not purchased the body as well as the soul, and Christ will not lose one jot of his purchase; if he expect duty from the body, you may expect glory for the body; so redemption is particularly applied to the body: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' Then is Christ's redemption full, when the body is exempted from all the penalties induced by sin.

[5.] The honour which is put upon the bodies of the saints.

(1.) They are members of Christ: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of an harlot? God forbid.' No members of Christ can for ever remain under death, but shall certainly be raised up again. When a godly man dieth, the union between soul and body is dissolved, but not the union between him and Christ, as Christ's own natural body in the grave was not separated from his person, and the hypostatical union was not dissolved;--it was the Lord of glory which was crucified, and the Lord of glory which was laid in the grave,--so the mystical union is not dissolved between Christ and his people, who are his mystical body, when they are dead.

(2.) They are temples of the Holy Ghost; therefore if they be destroyed they shall be built up again: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 'Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?' As Christ redeemed not the soul only, but the whole man, so the Spirit in Christ's name takes possession both of body and soul; the body is cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit, as well as the soul; and therefore it is quickened by the Spirit: Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you.' The Holy Ghost will not leave his mansion or dwelling-place; the dust of believers belongs to them who were once his temple. So it is a pledge of the resurrection. Now therefore labour with yourselves, think often of it.

## SERMON VII. - Col. I. 19; II. 9.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.--Col. I. 19; with,

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.--Chap. II. 9.

THESE words are produced to prove that there is no defect in the evangelical doctrine, and therefore there needeth no addition to it from the rudiments of men. That there is no defect, he proveth from the author of it, Jesus Christ, who was not only man, but God; and beyond the will of God we need not look. If God will come from heaven to teach us the way thither, surely his teaching is sufficient, his doctrine containeth all things necessary to salvation. This is the argument of these words, For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

In which words, observe three things:--

First, The house: in Him.

Secondly, The inhabitant: all the fulness of the Godhead.

Thirdly, The manner of dwelling: in the word bodily.

First, the house, or place of residence: in Him.' In the man Christ Jesus, or in that human nature in which he carried on the business of our salvation; as despicable and abject as it was in the eyes of men, yet it was the temple and seat of the Godhead.

Secondly, The inhabitant: the fulness of the Godhead;' not a portion of God only, or his gifts and graces (as we are made partakers of the divine nature, 1 Pet. i. 4.), but the whole Godhead.

Thirdly, The manner, *sumbolikos*, bodily.' The word may relate--

1. To the shadows and figures of the law, and so it signifieth essentially, substantially. God dwelt in the tabernacle, temple, or ark of the covenant, *sumbolikos*, because of the figures of his presence. In Christ, *somatikos*, bodily, as his human nature was the true tabernacle or temple in which he resideth. Christ calls his human nature a temple, John ii. 19. Or else,

2. With respect to the intimacy and closeness of the union. So somatikos may be rendered personally; for body is often put for a person. The two natures were so united in him, that he is one Christ.

Doct. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person.

I shall prove the point:--

1. By testimonies of scripture.

2. By types.

3. By reasons taken from Christ's office.

1. By testimonies of scripture. I shall pass by those that speak of the reality of either nature apart, and only allege those that speak of both together. Now these do either belong to the Old Testament or the New. I begin with the former, the testimonies of the Old Testament, because this union of the two natures in the person of Christ is indeed a mystery, but such as was foretold long before it came to pass; and many of the places wherein it was foretold were so understood by the ancient Jews. The controversy between them and Christians was not whether the Messiah were to be both God and man--they agreed in that--but whether this was fulfilled, or might be applied to Jesus of Nazareth. But the latter Jews, finding themselves not able to stand to the issue of that plea, say that we attribute many things to Jesus of Nazareth which were not foretold of the Messiah to come, as namely, that he should be God-man in one person; therefore it is necessary that this should be proved, that the Old Testament aboundeth with predictions of this kind. Let us begin with the first promise touching the Messiah, which was made to Adam after his fall, for the restoring of mankind: Gen. iii. 15, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' That is to say, one of her seed, to be born in time, should conquer the devil, death, and sin. Now, when he is called the seed of the woman it is apparent he must be man, and made of a woman. And when it is said that he shall break the serpent's head,' who can do this but only God? It is a work of divine omnipotency, for Satan hath much more power than any bare man. Therefore it is said, Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' Come we next to the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' In thee, that is, in thy seed, as it is often explained: Gen. xxii. 18, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be

blessed.' This seed was Christ, the Messiah to come. Now he was to be God-man: he was to be man, for he is the seed of Abraham; God, because that blessedness is remission of sins, or justification. For it is said, Gal. iii. 8, The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' Regeneration and the renovation of our natures is also included in it, as a part of this blessing: Acts iii. 25, 26, Ye are children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Therefore unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' There is also redemption from the curse of the law, and the gift of eternal life included in it. Now all these are works proper to God alone. Let us come to the promise made to David: 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever.' It is spoken in the type of Solomon, but in the mystery of Christ, who is true man as David's seed, and true God, for his kingdom is everlasting. And so David interpreteth it: Ps. xlv. 6, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' The kingdom of the Messiah is never to have an end. And the apostle affirmeth expressly that those words are spoken to Christ the Son of God, Heb. i. 7. Let me next allege Job's confession of faith, which was very ancient: Job xix. 25, 26, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God.' His Redeemer was true man, as appeareth by his title Goel; and because he shall stand on the earth, and be seen by his bodily eyes; true God, for he calleth him so: I shall see God.' Go we on in the scriptures: Isa. iv. 2, Christ is prophesied of: In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful, and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely.' When he is called the branch of the Lord,' his Godhead is signified; when he is called the fruit of the earth,' his manhood. So again, Isa. vii. 14, A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and thou shall call his name Immanuel--that is to say, God with us;' which can agree to none but to him that is God and man. So that this mystery of God incarnate was not hid from the church of the Old Testament, for his very name did import God with us, or God in our nature reconciling us to himself. So Isa. ix. 6, To

us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called The Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the ever lasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' Who can interpret these speeches and attributes but of one who is God-man? How could he else be a child and yet the everlasting Father--born of a virgin, and yet the mighty God? So Isa. xi. 1, with the 4th verse, A rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots: therefore man; and ver. 4, He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked: therefore God. So Isa. liii. 8, He shall be taken from prison and judgment:' therefore man; yet who shall declare his generation?' therefore God. So Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, A branch raised unto David from his dead stock: therefore man: yet the Lord, or Jehovah our righteousness;' therefore God. Shall I urge that speech whereby Jesus did silence divers of the learned pharisees? Ps. ex. 1, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.' He was born in the mean estate of human flesh and King David's seed, and yet David's Lord; which he could not be if he were not God himself, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Well, then, he was David's son as man, but David's Lord as he was God. And so do many of the ancient Jewish rabbins interpret this place. So again, Micah v. 2, Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.' He is born in Bethlehem, yet his goings forth are from everlasting. He came out of Bethlehem, and therefore man; his goings forth are from everlasting, and therefore God. So Zech. xii. 10, I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' He is God, because he giveth the Spirit of grace; man, because he is pierced or crucified. So Zech. xiii. 7, Against the man, my fellow.' A man he was, but God's companion, his only-begotten Son, and co-essential with himself, and so God.

Secondly, Come we now to the New Testament, in which this mystery is more plainly and fully demonstrated. There often the Son of Man is plainly asserted to be also the Son of God. Thomas calleth him his Lord, his God, John xx. 28. We are told that the Word was made flesh, John i. 14; that God purchased the church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28, which can be understood of no other but Christ,



by whose blood we are redeemed, and who, being incarnate, hath blood to shed for us. But God, as a pure spirit, hath not flesh and blood and bones as we have: so Rom. i. 3, 4, Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness,' &c. In respect of his divine subsistence, he was begotten, not made; in regard of his human nature, made, not begotten. True man, as David was, and true God, as the Spirit and divine nature is. Again, Rom. ix. 5, Whose are the Father's, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.' Than which nothing can be said more express as to that nature which is most apt to be questioned; for surely he that is God over all cannot be said to be a mere creature. The Jews confessed him to be man, and one of their blood, and Paul asserteth him to be God over all; they accounted him to be accursed, and Paul asserteth him to be blessed for ever; they thought him inferior to the patriarchs of whom he descended; and Paul over all. So that no word is used in vain; and when he saith according to the flesh,' he insinuateth another nature in him to be considered by us. The next place is 1 Cor. ii. 8, They crucified the Lord of glory.' He was crucified--there his human nature is acknowledged; but in respect of the divine nature he is called the Lord of glory:' as in the 24th Psalm, the Lord or King of glory is Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts.' Go we further: Phil. ii. 6, 7, Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.' By the form of God is meant not only the divine majesty and glory, but also the divine essence itself--for without it there can be no true divine majesty and glory. Now this he kept hidden under his human nature, letting only some small rays sometimes to shine forth in his miracles. But that which was most sensible and conspicuous in him was a true human nature in a low and contemptible estate. Again, 1 Tim. iii. 16, Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in our flesh'--that is, the eternal Son of God became man, and assumed the human nature into the unity of his person. Once more: 1 Pet. iii. 18, He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit'--that is, died according to his human nature, but by his divine nature raised from the dead. It is not meant of his soul. Quickened signifies not one remaining alive, but made alive--that power belongeth to

God.

Secondly, By types. Those that come to hand are these:--

1. Melchisedec: Gen. xiv. 18, Melchisedec, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine to Abraham.' Which type is interpreted by the apostle, Heb. vii. 2, 3, First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace; without father and without mother; having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.' What Melchisedec was is needless to dispute. The apostle considereth him only as he is represented in the story of Moses, who maketh no mention of his father or mother, birth or death. Certainly he was a very man; but as he standeth in scripture there is no mention of father or mother, beginning or end, what he was, or of whom he came. So is Christ as God without mother, as man without father; as God without beginning, as God-man without ending of life.

2. Another type of him was Jacob's ladder, the top of which reached heaven, and the bottom reached earth, Gen. xxviii. 12; and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. This ladder represented Christ the Son of man, upon whom the angels of God ascend and descend, John i. 51. The bottom, which reached the earth, represented Christ's human nature and conversing with men; the top, which reached heaven, his heavenly and divine nature; and in both his mediation with God for men. *Ascende per hominem, et pervenies ad Deum.* Christ reaches to heaven in his divine original; to earth in his manhood, and him the angels serve. By his dwelling in our nature, this commerce between earth and heaven is brought about.

The third type is the fiery cloudy pillar: Exod. xiii. 21, And the Lord went before them in the day in a pillar of a cloud; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.' This figured Christ's guidance and protection of his church travelling through this world to his heavenly rest. The cloud signified his humanity, the fire his divinity. There were two different substances, the fire and the cloud, yet but one pillar. So there are two different natures in Christ, his divinity shining as fire, his humanity darkening as a cloud, yet but one person. That pillar departed not from them all the while they travelled in the wilderness; so, while the church's pilgrimage lasteth,

Christ will conduct us, and comfort and shelter us by his presence. His mediatory conduct ceaseth not.

The fourth type is the tabernacle, wherein God dwelt symbolically, as in Christ bodily. There God sat on the mercy-seat, which is called ilaste'rion, Heb. ix. 5. So Christ: Rom. iii. 25, A propitiation.' He there dwelt between the cherubim s, and did exhibit himself graciously to his people, as now he doth to us by Christ. The next shall be of the scape-goat on the day of expiation, Lev. xvi. 10. One goat was to be slain, the other kept alive. The slain goat signified te'n sa'rka, to` patheto'n, his flesh, or human nature suffering; the live goat, to` anathe`s t8es Theo'tetos, his immortal deity, or as the apostle expresseth it, 2 Cor. xiii. 4, That Christ was to be crucified through weakness,' yet to live by the power of God;' or as we heard before, 1 Pet. iii. 18, Put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the Spirit.' Because these two things could not be shadowed by any one beast, which the priest having killed, could not make alive again; and it was not fit that God should work miracles about types, therefore he appointed two, that in the slain beast his death might be represented, in the live beast his immortality. The like mystery was represented also in the two birds for the cleansing of the leper, Lev. xiv. 6, 7.

Thirdly, I prove it by reasons taken from his office, which may be considered in the general; and so it is expressed by one word, Mediator; or in particular, according to the several functions of it, expressed by the terms of King, Priest, and Prophet; or with respect to the persons that are to be considered and concerned in Christ's mediation.

1. His office considered in the general: so he is called, Jesus the mediator of the New Testament,' Heb. xii. 24. It was agreeable that mesi'tes, a mediator, should be mese, a middle person, of the same essence with both parties, and that his operative mediation should presuppose his substantial mediation; that, being God-man in the same person, he should make an atonement between God and man. Sin hath made such a breach and distance between us and God, that it raiseth our fears, and causeth backwardness to draw nigh unto him, and so hindereth our love and confidence in him. How can we depend upon one so far above us, and out of the reach of our commerce? Therefore a mediator is necessary, one that will pity us,

and is more near and dear to God than we are. One in whom God doth condescend to man, and by whom man may be encouraged to ascend to God. Now, who is so fit for this as Jesus Christ, God manifested in our flesh'? The two natures met together in his person, and so God is nearer to man than he was before in the pure deity; for he is come down to us in our flesh, and hath assumed it into the unity of his person; and man is nearer to God, for our nature dwelleth with him so closely united, that we may have more familiar thoughts of God, and a confidence that he will look after us, and concern himself in our affairs, and show us his grace and favour, for surely he will not hide himself from his own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7. This wonderfully reconcileth the heart of man to God, and maketh our thoughts of him more comfortable, and doth encourage us to free access to God.

2. Come we now to the particular offices by which he performeth the work of a mediator, and they all show the necessity of both natures: these offices and functions are those of prophet, priest, and king.

[1.] Our mediator hath a prophetic office belonging to his administration, that he may be made wisdom to us, and therefore he must be both God and man. God, that he may not only teach us outwardly, as an ordinary messenger or minister, but inwardly, putting his law into our minds, and writing it upon our hearts: Heb. viii. 10, and 2 Cor. iii. 3, Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.' Men may be the instruments, but Christ is the author of this grace, and therefore he must be God. To convince men's understandings of their duty, and to incline their hearts to perform it, requireth no less than a divine power. If such an infinite virtue be necessary to cure the blindness of the body; how much more to cure the natural blindness and darkness of the mind! A man he must also be; for the great prophet of the church was to be raised up among his brethren like unto Moses, Deut. xviii. 15. Till such an one came into the world, they were to hear Moses; but then they were to hearken to him. He that was to come was to be a lawgiver as Moses was, but of a far more absolute and perfect law--a lawgiver that must match and overmatch Moses every way. He was to be a man as Moses was in

respect of our infirmities, such an one as Moses was whom the Lord had known face to face; but of a far more divine nature, and approved to the world by miracles, signs, and wonders, as Moses was. Again, it was prophesied of him that, as the great prophet of the world, he should be anointed, that he might come and preach the gospel to the poor, Isa. lxii. 1; which could not be if he had spoken from heaven in thunder, and not as a man conversed with men. Again, he was to approve himself as one who had grace poured into his lips, Ps. xlv. 2; that all might wonder at the gracious speeches that came from his mouth, as they did at Christ's. In short, that Wisdom of the Father, which was wont to assume some visible shape for a time, when he would instruct the patriarchs concerning his will, that he might hide his majesty and put a veil upon his glory, was now to assume our nature into the unity of his person, not a temporary and vanishing appearance; that God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, might in these last days speak to us by his Son,' Heb. i. 1, 2. Then God delivered his will by parcels, now by him he would settle the whole frame of the gospel.

[2.] Jesus Christ, as he is the apostle of our profession, so also he is the high priest, Heb. iii. 1, and so must be both God and man. Man, that he might be made sin for us; God, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Man, to undertake our redemption; God, to perform it. Man, that he might suffer; God, that he might satisfy by suffering and make our atonement full--we are purchased by the blood of God. Man, that he might have a sacrifice to offer; God, that the offering might be of an infinite price and value, Heb. ix. 14. Man, that he might have a life to lay down for us; God, that the power of laying it down and taking it up again might be in his own hands: John x. 17, 18, I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' This was fit that his suffering should be a pure voluntary act, required, indeed, by God, but not enforced by man. He had a liberty, at his own pleasure, as to anything men could do, and thereby commendeth his love to sinners. What shall I say? He was man that he might die; he was God that by death he might destroy him that had the power of death. He was man, that by his death he might ratify the new covenant; God, that he might convey to the heirs of

promise these precious legacies of pardon and life. Man, that he might be a merciful high priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities; God, that we, coming boldly to the throne of grace, might find mercy and grace to help in every time of need, Heb. iv. 15, 16.

[3.] His kingly office. He that was to be King of kings and Lord of lords needed to be both God and man. God, that he might cast out the prince of this world, and having rescued his church from the power of darkness, might govern it by his word and Spirit, and finally present it to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Man he needed to be for his own glory, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.--and head and members might suit, and be all of a piece.--and for our consolation, that we might be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17.--and for the greater terror and ignominy of Satan, that the seed of the woman might break the serpent's head. In short, God, that he might govern and influence a people so scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, and raise them up at the last day; man, that our nature (the dignity of which was so envied by Satan) might be exalted at the right hand of Majesty, and placed so near God, far above the angelical.

Thirdly, With respect to the persons who are to be considered and concerned in Christ's mediation: God, to whom we are redeemed; Satan, from whom we are redeemed; and we ourselves who are the redeemed of the Lord. And you shall see, with respect to God, with respect to Satan, with respect to ourselves, our Mediator ought to be both God and man.

1. God he need to be. With respect to God, that he may be appeased by a valuable compensation given to his justice. No mere man could satisfy the justice of God, appease his wrath, procure his favour; therefore our surety needed to be God to do this. And with respect to Satan, that he might be overcome. Now none can bind the strong one and take away his goods but he that is stronger than he, Luke xi. 21. Now no mere man is a match for Satan; the conqueror of the devil must be God, that by strong hand he may deliver us from his tyranny. And with respect to man, that he may be saved. Not only because of the two former respects must he be God, but also there is a special reason in the cause--the two former respects evince it; for

unless God be appeased, man cannot be reconciled, and unless the devil be overcome, man cannot be delivered. If a God be needful for that, man cannot be saved unless our Redeemer be God; but there is a special reason, because of our own obstinacy and rebellion, which is only overcome by the divine power. It is necessary man should be converted and changed, as well as God satisfied and Satan overcome. Now who can convert himself or change his own heart? That work would cease for ever unless God did undertake it by his all-conquering Spirit. Therefore our Mediator must be God, to renew and cleanse our hearts, and by his divine power to give us a divine nature.

2. Man also he ought to be with respect to these three parties: With respect to God, that the satisfaction might be tendered in the nature which had sinned, that as by man came death, by man also might come the resurrection from the dead,' 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22; that as in Adam all die, so by Christ shall all be made alive.' So with respect to the devil, that he might be overcome in the nature that was foiled by his temptations. And with respect to us, that he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, might be of one,' Heb. ii. 11. The priest that wrought the expiation, and the people for whom it was wrought, were of one stock; the right of redeeming belonged to the next kinsman. Christ is our Goel who redeemed us, not only jure proprietatis, as his creatures--to God as God--but jure propinquitatis, as his kinsmen. So as man we are of kin to him, as he came in our nature, and as he sanctifieth; doubly akin, not only by virtue of his incarnation but our regeneration, as he was made of a woman, and we born of God. These are the reasons.

Use. Let me press you to admire this mystery of godliness. The man Christ Jesus in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. The life and strength of our faith depends upon it, for as he is true man, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, he will not be strange to us, and as he is God, he is able to help us.

Two things I will press you to:--

1. Consider what a fit object he is for your faith to close with.
2. Own him as your Lord and your God.

First, To raise your trust and confidence, consider what a fit object he is for your faith, how he is qualified for all his offices of prophet,

priest, and king.

1. As your prophet, consider how necessary it was that God dwelling in man's nature should set afoot the gospel. Partly because when ever you come seriously to consider this matter, this thought will arise in you, that this blessed gospel could not be without repealing the law of Moses, given with such solemnity by God himself, and it was not fit it should be abrogated by any but him who was far above Moses, to wit, by the Son of God himself, not any fellow-servant equal to Moses. The apostle telleth us that Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house, Heb. iii. 5, 6. The servant must give place when the Son and Lord himself cometh. But rather take it from what Moses foretold himself: Deut. xviii. 18, 19, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him; and it shall come to pass, that he that will not hearken to my word which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' Now these words cannot be verified in any other prophet after Moses until Christ, for that of these prophets there arose none in Israel like unto Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 10. They had no authority to be lawgivers as Moses had, but were all bound to the observation of his law till Christ should come, whom Moses calleth a prophet like unto himself, that is a law-maker, exhorting all men to hear and obey him. None of the prophets did take upon them that privilege; they must let that alone till the Messiah should come, whose office it is to change the law given upon Mount Sinai, and instead thereof to propagate or promulgate a new law to begin at Zion: Isa. ii. 3, The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' And in another place, The isles shall wait for his law,' Isa. xlii. 4. Well, now, this is a mighty confirmation of our religion, and bindeth both our faith and obedience to consider Christ's authority, that a greater than Moses is here. Partly because it concerneth us to receive the gospel as an eternal doctrine that shall never be changed, for it is called an everlasting covenant; and nothing conduceth to that so much as to consider that it is promulgated by the eternal God himself, by him in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily.' Partly because the gospel, if we would profit by it, is to be received by all believers, not only as an everlasting covenant, but as certain, perfect, and saving. Now if the fulness of the Godhead dwelt



in him who gave this covenant, we cannot deny either the certainty or the perfection, or the savingness of it; for if we receive it from him who is truth itself, we cannot be deceived. It is certain if he taught us in person; surely all his works are perfect. Subordinate ministers may mingle their weaknesses with their doctrine; if we have it from a Saviour, surely it is a doctrine that bringeth salvation.

2. Consider what a fit object here is for your faith. As Christ is a priest, so his great business is to reconcile us to God in the body of his flesh through death, who once were strangers and enemies, Col. i. 21. Consider how fit he was for this; God and man were first united in his person, before they were united in one covenant. If you consider the fruits of his redemption and reconciliation; the evil from whence we were to be delivered, the good that was to be procured, Christ is every way a commodious Mediator for us as God-man. If you consider the evil from whence we are delivered, he was man, that the chastisement of our peace might be put upon his shoulders; God, that by his stripes we might be healed, Isa. liii. 5. Or, if you consider the good to be procured, he doth it as God-man. He was a man, that as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many might be made righteous; God, that as sin reigned unto death, so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. v. 19, 21. As he is God, his merit is full; as he is man, we are partakers of the benefit of it.

3. Consider how fit an object he is for our faith as king. For as the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, he is the greatest and most glorious person that ever was in the world, infinitely superior above all power that is named in this world, or in the world to come. The man who is our shepherd is fellow to the Lord of hosts. The thought of Immanuel maketh the prophet startle, and break out into a triumph when Sennacherib brake in with his forces like a deluge in the land of Judah: They fill thy land, O Immanuel,' Isa. viii. 8. Then ver. 9, 10, Associate yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; take counsel together, it shall come to nought; speak the word, it shall not stand: for God is with us.' Or because of Immanuel. Surely Christ is the foundation of the church's happiness, and may afford us comfort in the most calamitous condition; we are in his hands, under his

pastoral care and protection: John x. 28, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' Neither man nor devil can break off totally and finally their union with him. In short, he that assumed our nature to himself, will communicate himself to us. All union is in order to communion--here is a commodious and a blessed Saviour represented unto you.

Secondly, Own him as your Lord and your God. This was the profession of Thomas's faith: John xx. 28, My Lord and my God.' I shall insist on that scripture. In the history there are these remarkable:--

1. Thomas, his absence from an assembly of the disciples, when Christ had manifested himself to them, ver. 24. Being absent, he not only missed the good news which many [32] brought, but also the comfortable sight of Christ, and was thereby left in doubts and snares.

2. When these things were told him he betrays his incredulity, ver. 25. When they told him, he said unto them, Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.' This unbelief was overruled by God's providence for the honour of Christ. His incredulity was an occasion to manifest the certainty of Christ's resurrection. If credulous men, or those hasty of belief, had only seen Christ, their report had been liable to suspicion. Solomon maketh it one of his proverbs, The simple believeth every word.' Here is one that had sturdy and pertinacious doubts, yet brought at last to yield. However, this is an instance of the proneness of our hearts to unbelief, especially if we have not the objects of faith under the view of the senses, and how apt we are to give laws to heaven, and require our terms of God.

3. Christ's condescension in two things:--

[1.] In appearing again, ver. 26, on the first day of the next week, to show how ready he is to honour and bless his own day, and to give satisfaction to poor doubting souls by coming again to them; and it was well Thomas was there at this time.

[2.] In giving Thomas the satisfaction of sense: ver. 27, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and

thrust it into my side.' With what mildness doth our Lord treat him, though under such a distemper. Unbelief is so hateful to Christ, that he is very careful to have it removed, and in condescension grants what was his fault to seek.

4. The next thing is Thomas his faith: ver. 28, And he answered and said, My Lord, and my God.' He presumeth not to touch Christ, but contents himself only to see him, and having seen him, makes a good confession, *ho kurios mou, ho Theo's mou.*

[1.] Observe the two titles given to Christ: God and Lord. He is God, the fountain of all our happiness, and Lord, as he hath a dominion over us, to guide and dispose of us at his own pleasure.

[2.] Observe the appropriation or personal application to himself. *my God and my Lord.*

Hence we may observe:--

1. That God leaveth some to themselves for a while, that them selves and others may be more confirmed afterwards. Thomas his faith was as it were dead and buried in his heart, and now, upon the sight of Christ, quickened and revived. We must not judge of men by a fit of temptation, but stay till they come to themselves again. Who would have thought that out of an obstinate incredulity so great a faith should spring up suddenly?

2. We may observe Thomas, that is with much ado awakened, makes a fairer confession than all the rest. They call him their Lord, but he his Lord and God.

3. We may observe, again, that true believing with the heart is joined with confession of the mouth: Ps. cxvi. 10, *I believed, therefore have I spoken.'*

4. Hence you may take notice of the reality of the two natures in the unity of Christ's person, for he is both *Deus* and *Dominus*. But how cometh he to acknowledge Christ's Godhead? He did not feel the divinity of Christ in hands, or side, or feet. *Videbat tangebatur hominem, et confitebatur Deum, quem non videbat neque tangebatur,* saith Austin. Herein his faith was beyond sense, he felt the manhood and acknowledged the deity.

5. Hence we may observe, that those that are rightly conversant

about Christ and the mysteries of his death and resurrection, should take Christ for their Lord and their God. Thomas saith, My Lord and my God.' and his confession should be the common confession of all the faithful. I shall quit the three first, and insist only on the two last. I therefore begin with the fourth observation.

Fourthly, Hence you see the reality of the two natures in the unity of Christ's person. The name of God is joined with the title of Lord; therefore the name of God belongeth to him no less than the title of Lord. Thomas, when he saith my Lord, he seemeth not to have satisfied himself till he had added this other name and title, my God: now this importeth the reality of his divine nature, for these three reasons:--

1. Those things which are proper to God cannot, ought not, to be transferred to a mere creature; but this title of my God is a covenant title, and so often used in scripture, and therefore Christ was God.
2. To whom truly and properly the names and titles of things do belong, to him that which is signified by those names and titles doth belong also; for otherwise this would destroy all certainty of speech. You cannot speak or write, unless words signify what in vulgar use they are applied unto; there could be no reasoning a signo ad rem significatam, from the sign to the thing signified. If I should call a brute a man, or a creature God, how can we understand what is spoken or written? The argument is the more cogent, because a name is an implicit contracted definition, as a definition is a name explained and dilated. As when I say a man is a reasonable creature, so a God is one that hath power over all, blessed for ever.
3. The greater any person is, the more danger there is of giving him titles that do not belong to him; for that is to place him in an honour to which he hath greater pretensions than others, but no right; especially doth this hold good in religion--it is true in civils. To give one next the king, the title of king, would awaken the jealousy of princes, and breed much inconvenience. But especially doth this hold good in religion, where God is so jealous of giving his glory to another, Isa. xlii. 8. Therefore the greater the dignity of Christ was above all other creatures, the more caution was necessary that the name of God might not be ascribed to him, if he were only mere man, and it did not properly agree to him; for the more dangerous

the error, the more cautiously should we abstain from it.

4. Consider the person by whom this title was given; by a godly man. No godly man would call an idol, or a magistrate, or a teacher, or a king, or an angel, or any created thing above an angel, his Lord and his God. But this was done by Thomas, one bred up in the religion taught by Moses and the prophets; and the chief point of that religion was, that God is but one: Deut. vi. 4, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' This was one of the sentences written on the fringes of their garments, and it is quoted by Christ, whose disciple Thomas also was, Mark xii. 29, and explained by a learned scribe which came to him: Mark xii. 32, Well, master, thou hast said the truth, for there is but one God, and there is none other but him.' Now, Thomas knowing this, and the first commandment, Thou shalt have no other gods before me,' if he were not persuaded of it, would he say to Christ, My Lord and my God'?

5. The person to whom he spake it: He said to him;' not to the Father, but to Jesus of Nazareth: My Lord and my God.' Surely as the saints would not derogate from God, so Christ would not arrogate what was proper to his Father. Therefore as his disciples would have been tender of giving it to him, so he would have refused this honour, being so holy, if it had not been his due. But Christ reprov'd not, but rather approved this confession of faith; therefore it was right and sound. Christ had said to him, Be not faithless, but believing,' and then Thomas saith, My Lord and my God.' And Jesus saith to him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' There is no rebuke for ascribing too much to him.

6. The conjunction of the divine and human nature is so necessary to all Christ's functions and offices, that less would not have been sufficient than to say, My Lord, my God.' The functions and offices of Christ are three--to be a prophet, priest, and king.

[1.] To be a prophet, Mat. xxiii. 10, One is your master, even Christ.' Now to be our master and teacher, it is necessary that he should have the human nature and divine conjoined. The human nature, that he might teach men by word of mouth, familiarly and sweetly conversing with men; and also by his example, for he perfectly teacheth that teacheth both ways, by word and deed. And it is a

mighty condescension, that God would come down, and submit to the same laws we are to live by. His divine nature was also necessary, that he might be the best of teachers; for who is such a teacher as God? and that he might teach us in the best way, and that is, when God, taking the nature of man, doth vouchsafe to men his familiar converse, eating and drinking and walking with them, offering himself to be seen and heard by them; as he of old taught Abraham, Gen. xviii., accepting his entertainment; nothing more profitable, or honourable to men can be thought of. In Christ's prophetic office, four things are to be considered:--

(1.) What he taught.

(2.) How he taught.

(3.) By what arguments he confirmed his doctrine.

(4.) How he received it from the Father.

(1.) What he taught. Christ preached, but chiefly himself; he revealed and showed forth God, but by revealing and showing forth himself, John xiv. 9; he called men, but to himself; he commanded men to believe, but in himself, John xiv. 1; he promised eternal life, which he would give, but to men believing in himself; he offered salvation to miserable sinners, but to be had by himself; he wrought a fear of judgment to come, but to be exercised by himself; he offered remission of sins, but to those that believed in himself; he promised the resurrection of the dead, which he by his own power and authority would bring to pass. Now who could do all this but God? A mere man, if faithful and holy, would have turned off men from himself to God: 2 Cor. iv. 5, For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' They designed no honour to themselves, but only to Christ; they were loth to transfer any part of this glory to themselves; so would Christ if he had not been God. Therefore what should his disciples say, but My Lord, my God'?

(2.) How he taught. There is a twofold way of teaching--one human, by the mouth, and sound of words striking the ear; the other divine, opening and affecting the heart. Christ used both ways. As the human nature was necessary to the one, so the divine to the other. As the organs of speaking cannot be without the human nature, so the other way of teaching cannot be without a divine power. When

the disciples came to Christ, Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5, he did not answer, as Jacob did to Rachel (when she said, Give me children or I die'), Am I in the place of God?' Christ after his resurrection did not only open the scriptures, as was said before, but, Luke xxiv. 45, He opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures.' And he opened the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14; and poured the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii.; and by the same efficacy teacheth the church, wherever it is scattered.

(3.) If you consider by what arguments he confirmed his doctrine. By many, and the greatest miracles, not done by the power of another, but his own; and he required men to believe it: Mat. ix. 28, Believe ye that I am able to do this?' Whence had he the power to know the thoughts of men, to cure all sorts of diseases in a moment, to open the eyes of the blind, to raise the dead, to dispossess devils, but from that divine nature which was in him? Was it in his body and flesh? then it was finite, and in some sort material. Was it in his soul, understanding, will, or phantasy, or sensitive appetite? How could it work on other men's bodies? Therefore it was from his divine nature: My Lord, my God.'

(4.) How he received this doctrine from the Father. Did God ever speak to him, or appear to him? Is there any time, or manner, or speech noted by the evangelists when God made this revelation? None at all. If he were a mere creature, or nothing but a man, surely that should have been done. He revealed the most intimate counsels and decrees of God, as perfectly knowing them; but when or how they were revealed to him by his Father is not said, which, if he had been mere man, would have conduced to the authority of his message and revelation. But all this needed not, he being a divine person, of the same essence with his Father. Therefore, My Lord, my God.'

[2.] His priestly office. The human nature was necessary for that, for the reasons alleged by the apostle, Heb. ii. 14, 17. And also the divine nature, that there might be a priest as well as a sacrifice. There had been no sacrifice if he had not been man, and no priest, if he had not been God, to offer up himself through the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. The sacrifice must suffer, the priest act; and besides, he could not enter into the heavenly sanctuary to present himself before

God for us, Heb. ix. 24. Then the heavenly sanctuary and tabernacle need first to be made before he entered. For as the earthly priest made the earthly tabernacle before he ministered in it, so the true priest was to make the heavenly tabernacle, as the author to the Hebrews saith in many places. But to leave that; the priest was to expiate sins by the offering of a sacrifice instead of the sinner. So Christ was to satisfy the justice of God for sinners by his mediatory sacrifice. Now this he could not do unless he had been God as well as man. The dignity of his person did put a value upon his sufferings. Without this, how shall we pacify conscience, representing to us the evil of sin, and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, and the exact justice of the judge of all the world, Rom. iii. 25, 26; especially when these apprehensions are awakened in us by the curse of the law and the stinging sense of God's threatenings, which are so absolute, universal, and every way true and evident, unless we know a sufficient satisfaction hath been made for us? If you think the promises of the gospel are enough, alas! when the threatenings of the law are so just, and built upon such evident reason, the soul is exposed to doubtfulness. And if the threatenings of the law seem altogether in vain, the promises of the gospel will seem less firm and valid. The truth and honour of God's government must one way or other be kept up, and that will not be unless there be a fair passage from covenant to covenant, and that the former be not repealed or relaxed but upon valuable consideration, as it is when our mediator and surety beareth our sorrows and griefs, and satisfieth for us. But now, if he were mere man, it would not have that esteem and value as to be sufficient for so many men, and so many sins as are committed against an holy God. Therefore he needeth to be God also.

[3.] His kingly office. How can that be exercised without an infinite power? Because by our king and judge, all our enemies are to be overcome; the world, sin, death, and the devil. And what is necessary to do this every man may soon understand. And as an infinite power is necessary, so an infinite knowledge; that all things in heaven and earth may be naked and open to him, and that he search the heart, and try the reins: and then, that he may subject all things to himself, raise all the dead to life, govern and protect the faithful in all the parts of the world; that he may be present with them, in every age and place, to help and relieve them. In short, to



do all things both in heaven and in earth, that fall within the compass of his office. Now what is a divine and infinite power, if this be not? What can the Father do which the Son cannot do also? yea, what doth the Father do which the Son doth not likewise? John v. 19. Is there any work which the one doth that the other cannot do? Besides, there needeth infinite authority and majesty, therefore the king of the church must be infinite. But how is he infinite, if he hath only a finite nature, such as a mere creature hath? Or how could his finite nature, without change and conversion into another nature, be made infinite? For without doubt that nature is infinite which hath an infinite power of understanding, willing, and acting. Well, then, Christ cannot be truly owned, unless he be owned as Lord and God.

Fifthly, Those that are rightly conversant about Christ, and the mysteries of his death and resurrection, should take Christ for their Lord and their God. Every one of them should say, My God, on whom I depend; my Lord, to whose use I resign myself. I shall--

1. Explain in what sense these words may and ought to be used.
2. Give you the reasons why it becomes Christians to be able to say, My Lord, my God.'

1. In what sense these words may and ought to be used, My Lord, and my God.' There are two things considerable in those words:--

- [1.] An appropriation or a claim, and challenge of interest in him.

- [2.] A resignation or dedication of ourselves to his use and service.

Both are implied in these titles, My Lord, my God.' Christ was his God or benefactor, and also his Lord and Master. However that be in the mutual stipulation of the covenant, it is evident: Cant. ii. 16, I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' There is the appropriation of faith, and the resignation of obedience: Ezek. xxxvi. 28, Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God;' Zech. xiii. 9, I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.'

- (1.) The one is the fruit and effect of the other. God saith, I am thy God;' and the soul answereth, I am thy servant.' As when Christ said, Mary,' she presently said, Rabboni.' God awakeneth us by the offer of himself and all his grace to do us good, and then we devote ourselves to his service, and profess subjection to him. If he will be our God, we may well allow him a dominion and lordship over us,

to rule us at his pleasure. We choose him, because he chooseth us, for all God's works leave their impression upon our hearts--he cometh with terms of peace, and we with profession of duty. God loveth first, and most, and purest, and therefore his love is the cause of all.

(2.) The one is the evidence of the other. If God be yours, you are his. He is yours by gift of himself to you, and you are his by gift of yourselves to him. The covenant bindeth mutually. Many will be ready to apply, and call God their God, that do not dedicate and devote themselves to God. If you be not the Lord's, the Lord is not yours. He refuseth their claim that say, Hosea viii. 2, Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good.' In their distress they pleaded their interest in the covenant, but God would not allow the claim, because they denied obedience.

(3.) The one is more sensible and known to us than the other. A believer cannot always say God is mine, but he will always say, I am his: Ps. cxix. 94, I am thine, save me.' I am thine, and will be thine, only thine, wholly thine, and always thine. Appropriation hath more of a privilege in it, resignation is only a duty. We have leave and allowance to say God is my God, but we cannot always say it without doubt and hesitancy, because our interest is not always alike evident and clear. When you cannot say, My God, yet be sure to say, My Lord. We know God to be ours by giving up ourselves to be his. His choice and election of us is a secret till it be evidenced by our choice of him for our God and portion our act is more sensible to the conscience. Be more full and serious in the resignation of your selves to him, and in time that will show you your interest in God.

(4.) God's propriety in us by contract and resignation speaketh comfort, as well as our propriety and interest in God. You are his own, and therefore he will provide for you and care for you: 1 Tim. v. 8, If any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Interest doth strangely endear things to us. The world will love its own,' John v. 19; and will not God love his own, and Christ love his own? John xiii. 1. You may trust him, and depend upon him, and serve him cheerfully, for you are his own. So that if we had no interest in God established by the covenant, if God had not said to us, I am yours, yet our becoming his would make it comfortable. For every one taketh himself to be bound to love his

own, provide for his own, and to defend his own, and do good to his own. Indeed, God is ours, as well as we are his; but our being his draweth along with it much comfort and blessing. But to speak of these apart:--

(1st.) The appropriation or claim of interest is a sweet thing. If God be your God, why should you be troubled? Ps. xvi. 5, 6, The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.' You have a right to God himself, and may lay claim to all that he hath for your comfort and use. His attributes yours, his providences yours, his promises yours, what may not you promise yourselves from him? Support under all troubles, relief in all necessities. You may take hold of his covenant, Isa. lvi. 4, and lay claim to all the privileges of it. It is all yours.

(2nd.) This dedication, this resignation of ourselves to God's use, to be at his disposing without reservation or power of revocation, is often spoken of in scripture: Isa. xlv. 5, One shall say, I am the Lord's, another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' The meaning is, to give up their names to God, to be entered into his muster-roll, and to be listed in his service: Rom. vi. 13, Yield up yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead.' It is the immediate fruit of grace and new life infused in us. A natural man liveth to himself, to please himself, and give satisfaction to his own lusts. Grace is a new being and life, that inclines us to live and act for God. As soon as this life is begotten in us by the power of his Spirit, our hearts are inclined towards God, and you devote yourselves to serve and please him. As your work and business was before to serve the devil, the world, and the flesh, so now to please, serve, and glorify God.

Secondly, The reasons why it becometh Christians to be able to say, My Lord, my God.'

1. Because our interest in him is the ground of our comfort and confidence. It is not comfortable to us that there is a God, and that there is a Lord, that may be terrible to us. The devils believe, and the damned spirits feel there is a God and there is a Lord; but their thoughts of God is a part of their misery and torment, James ii. 19.

The more they think of God, the more their horror is increased; to own a God, and not to see him as ours, the remembrance of it will be troublesome to us: 1 Sam. xxx. 6, David comforted himself in the Lord his God.' There was the comfort, that he had a God to go to when all was lost, and that God was his God. So Hab. iii. 18, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' If God be our God, we have more in him than trouble can take from us. So Luke i. 47, My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' When you make particular application to yourselves, it breeds strong comfort.

2. Because nothing strikes upon the heart with such an efficacy, as what nearly concerns us affects us most. The love of Christ to sinners in general doth not affect us so much as when it is shed abroad in our own hearts by the Spirit: Gal. ii. 20, He loved me, and gave himself for me;' that draws out our hearts to God again, and is a quickening motive to stir us up to the life of love and faith. So Eph. i. 13, In whom ye trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation to others only, but to find it a doctrine of salvation to themselves in particular, that they may apply the promises to their own heart. A Christian is affected most with things according as he is concerned in them himself. It bindeth our obedience the more firmly when we know that we are particularly engaged to God, and have chosen him for our God and our Lord.

3. Because without a real personal entering into covenant, the covenant doth us no good; unless every one of us do choose God for our God and Lord, and particularly own him. Every man must give his hand to the Lord, and personally engage for himself. It is not enough that Christ engage for us in being our surety, but we must take a bond upon ourselves. Something Christ did for us and in our name, he interposed as the surety of a better testament, Heb. vii. 22. Something must be done personally by us before we can have benefit by it. You must give up yourselves to the Lord. It is not enough that the church engage for us, but every man must engage his own heart to draw nigh to God: Jer. xxx. 21, Who is he that engageth his heart to draw nigh to me?' It is not enough that our parents did engage for us, Deut. xxix. 10-12. They did in the name of their little ones avouch God to be their God, as we devote, dedicate, and engage our children to God in baptism; but no man can

savingly transact this work for another. We ratify the covenant in our own persons, 2 Cor. ix. 13, by a professed subjection to the gospel of Christ. This is a work cannot be done by a proxy, or assignees; unless we personally enter into covenant with God for ourselves, our dedication by our parents will not profit us, we shall be as children of the AEthiopians unto God, Amos ix. 7; though children of the covenant, all this will not serve--these are visible external privileges. But there is something required of our persons, every one must say for himself, My Lord, and my God.' And this must not only be done in words, and by some visible external rites that may signify so much. As for instance, coming to the Lord's Supper, that is the new testament in Christ's blood, Luke xxii. 20. It is interpretative--a sealing the new covenant between Christ and us. God giveth, and you take the elements as a pledge and token that God and you are agreed. That he will give you himself, his Christ, and all his benefits; and you will walk before him in newness of life. Now to rest in the ceremony, and neglect the substance, is but a mockery of God. As many rend the bond yet prize the seal, care much for the sacrament, that never care for the duty it bindeth them unto. If your hearts be hearty and well with God, you come now personally to enter into covenant with him; but this business must not be done only externally, but internally also. It is a business done between God and our souls, though no outward witnesses be conscious to it. God cometh speaking to us by his Spirit in this transaction: Ps. xxxv. 3, Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' And we speak to God, Lam. in. 24, The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.' There is verbum mentis, as well as verbum oris. This covenant is carried on in soul language: Ps. xvi. 21 , O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.' So Ps. xxvii. 8, When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' The Lord offereth or representeth himself as our Lord, and we profess ourselves to be the Lord's. No eye seeth, or ear heareth what passeth between God and the soul. Now, without this personal inward covenanting, all the privileges of the covenant will do us no good. And this personal inward covenanting amounts to full as much as My Lord, my God.' Therefore it concerneth every one of us to see whether we have thus particularly owned Christ; if there have been any treaty between God and our souls; and whether it came to any conclusion, and particular soul engagement; that you could thus own

Christ, not only as God and Lord, but as your God and your Lord.  
[32] Query, Mary'?--ED.

### **SERMON VIII. - Col. I. 20.**

And having made peace by the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.--Col. I. 20.

IN these words observe:--

First, What Christ was to do.

Secondly, The manner how he did it; or,

First, The end for which he was appointed. To be our Mediator and Redeemer, and accordingly promised and sent into the world to reconcile all things to God, Whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth.'

Secondly, The means by which he accomplished it: Having made peace by the blood of his cross;' that is, by his bloody sacrifice on the cross, thereby answering the sacrifices of atonement under the law. In the first branch take notice of:--

1. The benefit: reconciliation with God.
2. The person procuring it: by him; and it is repeated again, I say, by him.
3. The persons to whom this benefit is intended, expressed--

[1.] Collectively, pa'nta, all things.

[2.] Distributively: whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

As they are collectively expressed, it teaches us that grace is revealed and offered in the most comprehensive expressions, that none may be excluded, or have just cause to exclude themselves. As it is distributively expressed, the latter clause is of a dubious interpretation. Some by things on earth,' understand men, but by things in heaven' the angels. Surely not the fallen angels, for they are not in heaven, neither was Christ sent to reconcile them, nor relieve

them in their misery and reduce them to God, Heb. ii. 16, *ouk epilambanetai ton angelon*. What then shall we understand by things in heaven? Some think the holy angels, others the glorified saints. (1.) Those that assert the first argue thus: that the angels are properly inhabitants of heaven, and so fitly called things in heaven; and they are enemies to men whilst they are ungodly, idolatrous, and rebels to God (as good subjects hold with their prince, and have common friends and enemies with him), but are reconciled to them as soon as they partake of the benefits of Christ's death, as we are told of joy in heaven among the angels of God, at the conversion of one sinner.' Luke xv. 10. Now if there be so much joy over one sinner repenting, how much more when many sinners are snatched out of the jaws of hell? They make the sense to be thus: before, for the sins of men, they were alienated from them, but then reconciled. But this scripture speaks not of the reconciliation of angels and men, but the reconciliation of all things to God; for so it is expressly in the text, to reconcile all things to himself. Now the good angels cannot be said to be reconciled to God, for there was never a breach between them, *Se nunquam cum matre in gratiam rediisse*. (2.) Therefore, I interpret it of the glorified saints. See the like expression, Eph. i. 10, 'To gather together in one all things to Christ which are in heaven and in earth.' And more clearly, Eph. iii. 15, 'Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.' Meaning thereby the faithful who are already in heaven, and those who are now remaining upon earth. This is a comfortable note, and teaches us:--

1. That the apostle Paul knew no purgatory, or third place for souls after death.
2. That the saints departed are now in heaven as to their souls, and gathered to the rest of the spirits of just men made perfect.
3. The souls now in heaven once needed the merit of Christ, even as we do. None come thither but they were first reconciled to God. By him their peace was made, and they obtained remission of sins by the blood of his cross, as ye do. In short, all that go to heaven go thither by the mediation, sacrifice, and meritorious righteousness of the same Redeemer.

Doct. One great benefit we have by Christ is peace and reconciliation with God. Here I shall show:--

1. What this reconciliation is.
2. How it was obtained.
3. What assurance we have that it is obtained.
4. How and upon what terms it is applied to us.

1. What this reconciliation is.

I answer: It is not an original peace, but a returning to amity after some foregoing breach. Now the breach by sin consisted in two things--an aversion of the creature from God, and an aversion of God from the creature. So before peace and reconciliation can be made, two things must be removed--God's wrath, and our sinful nature: God must be pacified, and man converted. God's wrath is appeased by the blood of Christ, and our natures are changed and healed by the Spirit of grace. First, God's wrath is appeased, and then the Spirit is bestowed upon us; for while God is angry and offended, no saving benefit can be expected from him. This text speaks not how he took away our enmity, but how he appeased God for us, not so much of the application as the impetration of this benefit. The application is spoken of ver. 21, how it is applied to us, but here the apostle more directly speaks of the impetration, how it was procured and obtained for us namely, by Christ's satisfying God's justice for that wrong which caused the breach, or the dying of the Son of God for a sinful world. Now this hath an influence on God's pardon and our conversion, for by virtue of this reconciliation we are justified and pardoned. Therefore, we are said to be justified by his blood, Rom. viii. 9, that is, the price is paid by Christ and accepted by God. There needeth nothing more to be done on the Mediator's part. By virtue of the same peace made we are also sanctified and converted unto God, 2 Cor. v. 18. The gift of the sanctifying Spirit is given us as the fruit of Christ's death.

2. How it was obtained--by the blood of his cross he made peace. This implieth death, and such a death as in appearance was accursed; for the death of the cross is the vilest and most cruel death: Gal. iii. 13, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made accursed for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Now we must see the reasons of this course or way of reconciling the world, that we may not mistake God's design, nor be possessed with any imaginations which are derogatory to



God's honour--as, suppose, if we should hence conceit that God is all wrath and justice, unwilling of himself to be reconciled to man, or that he delighteth in blood, and is hardly drawn to give out grace. Oh, no! these are false misprisions and misrepresentations of God. Therefore let us a little inquire into the reasons why God took this way to reconcile all things to himself, and ordained Christ to bear the chastisement of our peace. I answer: That the justice of God might be eminently demonstrated, the law giver vindicated, and the breach that was made in the frame of government repaired; and God manifested to be a hater of sin, and yet the sinner saved from destruction; and that the love of God might be eminently and conspicuously discerned; and our peace the better secured. As let us a little see these things more particularly. I begin--

[1.] With the holiness of God's nature, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Hab. i. 13,--that is, so as to approve of it, or altogether connive at it, so as to let it go without punishment or mark of his displeasure; therefore some way must be found out to signify his purest holiness, and his hatred and detestation of sin, and that it should not be pardoned without some testimony of his displeasure against it. We are told God hateth the workers of iniquity, Ps. v. 5, and the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Ps. xi. 7; and, therefore, when God was to grant his universal pardon he would not do it without this propitiatory atonement.

[2.] The honour of his governing justice was to be secured, and freed from any blemish, that the awe of God might be kept up in the world. In the mystery of our redemption we must not look upon God only as *pars laesa*, the wronged party; but as *rector mundi*. God was to carry himself as the governor of the world. Now there is a difference between a private person and a governor--private persons may pass by offences as they please, but a governor must do right, and what conduces to the public good. There is a twofold notion that we have of public right, *justum est quod fieri debet*, and *justum est quod fieri potest*. That which ought to be done, or we are unjust; as for instance, to punish the righteous equally with the wicked, that Abraham pleadeth, Gen. xviii. 25, That be far from thee, to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Not that Abraham mindeth God

of his office, but he was confidently assured of the nature of God that he could not do otherwise. But now there is *justum quod fieri potest*, which if it be done, or if it be not done, the party is not unjust. The first part of justice is paying of debts; the second, exacting or requiring of debts. Now the Judge of the world doth all things wisely and righteously. The question is, therefore, whether God, passing by the offences of the world without any satisfaction required, doth deal justly? As a free Lord he may make what laws he pleases; but as a just Judge, with respect to the ends of government, he doth that which is for public good. The right of passing by a wrong, and the right of releasing a punishment, are different things; because punishment is a common interest, and is referred to a common good to preserve order and government, and for example to the future. The government of the world required it that God should stand on the satisfaction of Christ, and the submission of the sinner, that he may be owned and revered as the just and holy governor of the world. A valuable compensation is insisted on for this end: Rom. ii. 25, 26, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

[3.] To keep up the authority of his law. God had made a former covenant, which was not to be quitted and wholly made void but upon valuable consideration; therefore if it be broken, and no more ado made about it, all respect and obedience to God would fall to the ground. The law may be considered either as to the precept or sanction. The authority of the precept is kept up by Christ's submission to the law, and living by the same rules we are bound to live by, and performing all manner of obedience to God; for it behoved him to fulfil all righteousness, Mat. iii. 15, being set up as a pattern of holiness in our nature, to which we are to be conformed. But that which is most considerable in this case is the sanction or penalty. If this should be relaxed, and no satisfaction required, it might leave upon God the blemish of levity, mutability, and inconstancy. The law was not given in jest, but in the greatest earnest that ever law was given; and so solemn a transaction was not constituted to no purpose, therefore God will not part with the law upon light terms: Gal. iv. 4, 5, When the fulness of time was come,

God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' That men may know that it is a dangerous thing to transgress his law, and that they may fear and do no more presumptuously; partly that it might not foster in us hopes of impunity, which are very natural to us, Gen. iii. 5. The devil seeks to weaken the truth of God's threatenings, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. We are apt to look upon the threatenings of the law as a vain scarecrow; therefore, for the terror and warning of sinners for the future, God would not release us from the punishment till our surety undertook our reconciliation with God by bearing the chastisement of our peace.

[4.] Christ's death was necessary to make sin odious, and obedience more acceptable to us.

(1.) Sin more odious or hateful--no other remedy would serve the turn to procure the pardon and destruction of it than the bloody death of the cross, Rom. viii. 3. Surely it is no small thing for which the Son of God must die. When you read or hear of Christ's sufferings, you should never think an extenuating and favourable thought of it more.

(2.) To commend obedience: for Christ's suffering death at the command of his Father was the noblest piece of service, and highest act of obedience that ever could or can be performed unto God. It is beyond anything that can be done by men or angels. There was in it so much love to man, so much self-denial, humility, and patience, so much resignation of himself to God, who had appointed him to be our Redeemer, that it cannot be paralleled. The great and most remarkable thing in Christ's death was obedience: Rom. v. 18; Phil. ii. 7, 8. God delighteth not in mere blood, but blood offered in obedience as the best way to impress upon man a sense of his duty, and to teach him to serve and please God at the dearest rate.

[5.] This death commendeth the love of God to us, for it is the great demonstration of it. Many draw a quite contrary conclusion, as if he were with much ado brought to have mercy on us; but they forget that he is first and chief in the design: 2 Cor. v. 19, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' Christ came from heaven to declare to us the greatness of God's love. God thought nothing too dear for us--not the Son of his love, nor his death, ignominy, and

shame: Rom. v. 8, God commendeth his love in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. When we had alienated our hearts from God, refused his service, and could expect nothing but the rigour of his law and vindictive justice, then he spared not his own Son to bring about this reconciliation for us.

[6.] As God is pacified, so it gives us hopes our business lieth not with a God offended, but with a God reconciled. If we had not to do with a pacified God, who could lift up his face to him, or think a comfortable thought of him? But this gives us hope: Rom. v. 10, For 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.' We were enemies by sin in us, which God hateth, and declareth his wrath against it in the law. Then by the satisfaction wrought by Christ we were restored to his favour, so far that free and easy conditions were procured in the gospel, and his Spirit is offered to prepare and fit us for a life of glory. We have heard what Christ hath done.

Thirdly, What assurance have we that this peace is obtained? Consciences are not easily settled, therefore some visible evidences are necessary that God is pacified. I shall name three or four:--

1. Christ's resurrection and ascension into glory. This shows that God was propitiated, and hath accepted the ransom that was given for souls. We read, Rom. iv. 25, that he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification. His dying noteth his satisfaction, his rising again the acceptance of it. God by raising him up from the dead showed that he had received the death of his Son as a sufficient ransom for our sins--for he died in the quality of a surety, and in that quality was raised up again. By his death he made the payment; by his resurrection the satisfaction of it was witnessed to the world--for then our surety was let out of prison: Isa. liii. 8, He shall be taken from prison and from judgment.' In his death he was in effect a prisoner, under the arrest of divine vengeance; but when he rose again he was discharged. Therefore there is great weight laid upon it as to our acquittance: Rom. viii. 34, Yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.' There is some special thing in his resurrection comparatively above his death which hath influence on our justification--that is, it was a visible evidence given to the world that enough was done for the expiation of sins, and to assure

us of our deliverance if we be capable; and his ascension into glory doth further witness it. He being exalted to the greatest dignity, is able to defend and protect his people, and hath the advantage of interceding with his Father for the supply of all our wants.

2. The grant of the new covenant--which is therefore called the covenant of his peace: Isa. liv. 10, The covenant of my peace shall not be removed;' Ezek. xxxvii. 26, I will make a covenant of peace with them.' It is so called not only because thereby this peace and reconciliation is offered to us, but the terms are stated, and the conditions required are far more equitable, gracious, and commodious for us than the terms of the law covenant. Man, as a sinful creature, is obnoxious to God's wrath for the violation of the law of nature, and so might perish without remedy, and no impeachment to God's goodness can happen thereby. But when God will give bounds to his sovereignty over him, and enter into terms of covenant with him, and give him a bottom to stand upon, whereon to expect good things from him, upon the account of his faithfulness and righteousness--this is a condescension; and so far condescended in the first covenant, that after that man hath cast away the mercies of his creation, and his capacity to fulfil that covenant, this was mere mercy and grace. That God would enter into a second covenant, it is not from any mutableness in God, but from the merit and satisfaction of a Redeemer. Surely there must be some great and important cause to change, alter, and abrogate a covenant so solemnly made and established--to lay aside one covenant, and to enter into another, especially since the former was so holy, righteous, and equal, fit for God to give, and us, in the state we then were in, to receive. Now, what was the important reason? Christ came to salve God's honour in the first covenant, and to secure the ends of his government. Though a second covenant should be set up, the blood of his cross hath made this covenant everlasting, Heb. xiii. 20, and upon gracious terms doth convey great and precious privileges to us.

Thirdly, The pouring out of the Spirit, which certainly was the fruit and effect of Christ's death, and also an evidence of the worth and value of it. The apostle telleth us that Christ was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles by faith in Jesus Christ.' And what blessing was that? The gift of the

Spirit, Gal. v. 13, 14. And in another place, when he interpreteth the types of the law, he telleth us that the fathers did all eat of the same spiritual meat that we do, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink, for they drank of the rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.' If the rock was Christ, the water that gushed out of the rock was the Spirit, often compared to waters in scripture, John iv. 14, vii. 38, 39; and the rock yielded not this water till it was smitten with the rod of Moses--a figure of the curses of the law. Christ was stricken and smitten of God, and so procured the Spirit for us: John vii. 39, The Holy Ghost was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified; that is, had not finished his passion, and the acceptance of it was not yet attested to the world, till he was advanced at the right hand of God, and then this effect declared it. The Spirit was given before, but more sparingly, because it was given upon trust, and with respect to the satisfaction that was afterwards to be made and accepted. And then it was witnessed to the world by a more copious and plentiful effusion of the Spirit. Therefore it is said: Acts ii. 33, Therefore Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.' The merit and value of the sacrifice is thus visibly attested, therefore this is one of the witnesses: Acts v. 30-32, The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' And what was the evidence given to the church in general, is the evidence given also to every particular believer.

Fourthly, Some have obtained the effects and fruits of Christ's death; this peace begun here hath been perfected in heaven. The text saith, He hath reconciled all things to himself, whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth.' Here many are pardoned and accepted with God, and have the comfort of it in their own souls. Others are gone home to God, and have the full of this peace. All were by nature children of wrath, under the curse as well as others. Now, if some in all generations have enjoyed the love, favour, and friendship of God in this world, and upon their departure out of it have entered into glory upon this account, it is evident that Christ is accepted to the ends for which God sent him--thus Abraham, the

father of the faithful, and all the blessed souls who are gathered into his bosom, and are alive with God in heaven. Certain it is they were all sinners by nature, for there is no difference between any of the children of men, and yet God admits them into his peace. Was it a personal privilege peculiar to them only? No; the apostle tells us, Rom. iv. 23, 'It was not written for his sake alone;' and Paul obtained mercy for them that should hereafter believe on Christ for life everlasting,' 1 Tim. i. 16. Therefore all penitent believers may be assured that this sacrifice is sufficient, and will avail for their acceptance with God. We take it for a good token of a healing water when we see the crutches of cripples that had been cured. All the blessed saints in heaven are witness to a sincere soul--they all obtained this blessed condition through the blood of his cross reconciling them to God. There is none in glory but had his pardon sealed through the blood of Christ.

4. How and upon what terms is it applied to us? for we have considered hitherto only how Christ hath made peace or made the atonement. Yet if we receive not the atonement we may perish for ever for all that; besides the work done on the cross by Christ alone, there is a work to be done in our hearts; the work of making peace is sufficiently done by Christ, there needeth nothing to be added to it, no other ransom, nor sacrifice, nor propitiation. Christ hath so fully satisfied divine justice, that he hath obtained the new covenant; but we are not actually admitted into this peace till we have personally accepted the covenant. Now here it sticketh. God hath been in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, there was the foundation laid; but, therefore, we pray you to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20. There is our title, claim, actual right, security. But how do we receive this atonement? or how are we interested in it? The conditions and terms are gracious, such as the nature of the business calleth for. As to our entrance into this peace, no more is required but faith and repentance. The gospel is offered to all; but the penitent believer, as being only capable, is possessed of it.

1. Faith is required; that we believe what the Son of God hath done and purchased for us: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' If we sincerely embrace the gospel, we are reconciled to God and accepted with him. The faith that justifieth is partly an assent to the truth of the

Christian religion, especially the fundamental truth that Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour of the world; and partly an acceptance of Christ as God offers him, a serious, thankful, broken-hearted acceptance of Christ as your Lord and Saviour: serious, because of the weight of the business; broken-hearted, because of the condition of the person accepting, a self-condemning sinner, or one that hath an awakening sense of his sin and misery. Thankful, because reconciliation with God and fruition of them in glory is so great a benefit: and you take him as Lord; for every knee must bow to Christ, he is a Saviour by merit and efficacy. By his meritorious righteousness you obtain all benefits; by the efficacy of his Spirit you perform all duties. The last thing is trust and dependence, Eph. i. 13. Trust is such an expectation of the benefits offered by Christ, that forsaking all other things you entirely give up yourselves to the conduct of his word and Spirit.

2. The next thing is repentance, which is a turning from sin to God. We turn from sin by hatred, and we turn to God by love. We turn from sin by hatred; hatred of sin is the ground of all mortification. There is a twofold hatred--of abomination and of enmity. We turn to God by love, which is the great principle to incline us to God, and is the bottom of vivification or living to God. Now all this is necessary to actual peace, for our refreshing begins in conversion, Acts iii. 19. There is no peace allowed to the wicked; we must take Christ's yoke, or we shall find no rest for our souls, Mat. xi. 29. We are not reconciled to God till our enmity be broken and overcome: then, of enemies, we become friends; of strangers, intimates--then we are reconciled. This, then, is required of you; only let me add this caution, what is at first vows and purposes must be afterwards deeds and practices; and having engaged yourselves to God, to live to him, to keep your selves from sin, and to follow after holiness, this must be your business all the days of your lives, for so you continue your peace and interest in God: Gal. vi. 16, And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.'

Use 1. To exhort you to enter into this peace, that you may be partakers of the fruit of Christ's blood, and the virtue of his cross may be effectual in you.

[1.] Let me reason, a periculo, from the danger. Consider what it is



to be at odds with God, and how soon and how easily he can revenge his quarrel against you, and how miserable they will be for ever that are not found of him in a state of peace: Ps. vii. 11-13, God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and will make his arrows ready.' There the psalmist representeth God and man as in a state of hostility against each other. The wicked man affronts his holiness, questions his justice, slights his wrath, breaks his laws, wrongeth his people, and saith, Tush! I shall have peace though I add drunkenness to thirst. God for a while giveth time and warning; but every moment can break in upon us, for he is able easily to deal with us, *comminus*, hand to hand, for he hath his sword; *eminus*, at a distance, for he hath his bow. He is not only able to deal with them, but ready, for he is whetting his sword and hath bent his bow, the arrow is upon the string, though not as yet sent or shot out. What remedy, then, is there? There is but one exception: if he turn not.' If he be not reduced and brought home to God by a timely repentance, he falleth into the hands of the living God. Now, no persons are in so dangerous an estate as those that have peace offered and despise it: Isa. xxvii. 4, Let him take hold of my strength;' when God is ready to strike. A man that is fallen into the power of his enemy will take hold of his arm. We are always in God's power, his vengeance may surprise us before we are aware. What is our business, but to be found of him in peace?

[2.] *Ab utili*, from the happiness of being at peace with God. Your great work is over, and you have a world of benefit by it--you stop all danger at the fountain-head. When you are at peace with God, you are at peace with the creatures: Ezek. xxxiv. 25, I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land. Danger might waylay us at every turn. Then for men: Prov. x. 17, When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes his enemies to be at peace with him.' Then peace in your own consciences: Rom. xv. 13, Now the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing.' To have a man's conscience settled on sound terms is a great mercy. Peace with the holy angels; instead of being instruments of vengeance, they are ministering spirits.' Heb. i. 14. Lastly, Communion with God himself: Rom. v. 1, 2, Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith,' &c.; Eph. ii.

17, 18, Preaching peace, by whom also we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

[3.] I reason from the confidence we may have of this benefit' if we submit to godly terms.

1. God is willing to give it: ver. 19, It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell.' There is God's authority and good pleasure in it. The first motive came from God, who received the wrong, not from him that gave it. God was in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14. Among men, the inferior should seek to the superior, the party offending to the party offended, the weaker to the stronger, they that need the reconciliation, to him that needeth it not; but here all is contrary.

2. You may be confident of it upon another ground, the sufficiency of Christ to procure all fulness. The whole divine nature did inhabit and reside in the man Christ Jesus, and so he is completely fitted and furnished for this work. He hath paid a full price for this peace when he bare our sins and carried our sorrows; and by his Spirit he changes our hearts as well as pacifies the wrath of God. And then he preserveth this peace by his constant intercession, Heb. ii. 17, 18. Now, shall we doubt of it but that we may get it?

[1.] Let us take the way of entrance by faith and repentance. It concerns us much to see whether we be in peace or trouble: if in trouble, you see the cure; if in peace, the next question is, is it God's peace? That is had by the blood of Christ, the merit of which we must depend upon, and devote ourselves to God, break off our old league with sin, and bind ourselves with a bond to live unto God, to be the Lord's for evermore.

[2.] When this peace is made, be very tender of it, that no breach fall out between you and God: Ps. lxxxv. 8, He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints: but let not them turn again to folly.'

[3.] Let us be thankful to God for this fruit of Christ's death; it is an act of free and undeserved mercy, and to be imputed to nothing but his mere grace that God hath appointed such a way: It pleased the Father to bruise him,' Isa. liii. 9. That he sendeth ambassadors to publish it: Acts x. 36, The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all):' and that he appointeth a ministry. It is a great privilege in itself; for by this peace we have not only the beginnings but the increase of grace till

all be perfected in heaven: Heb. xiii. 20, 21, Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.' 1 Thes. i. 23, The God of peace sanctify you, that you may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This peace doth encourage us in all temptations from the devil: Rom. xvi. 20, The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' From the world: Eph. vi. 15, Shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' Fears of the wrath of God, and doubts about our eternal condition: Rom. xiv. 17, The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Here are three words--comfort, peace, and joy. These succeed one another as so many degrees: comfort is support under trouble, peace a ceasing from trouble, joy a lively sense of the love of God.