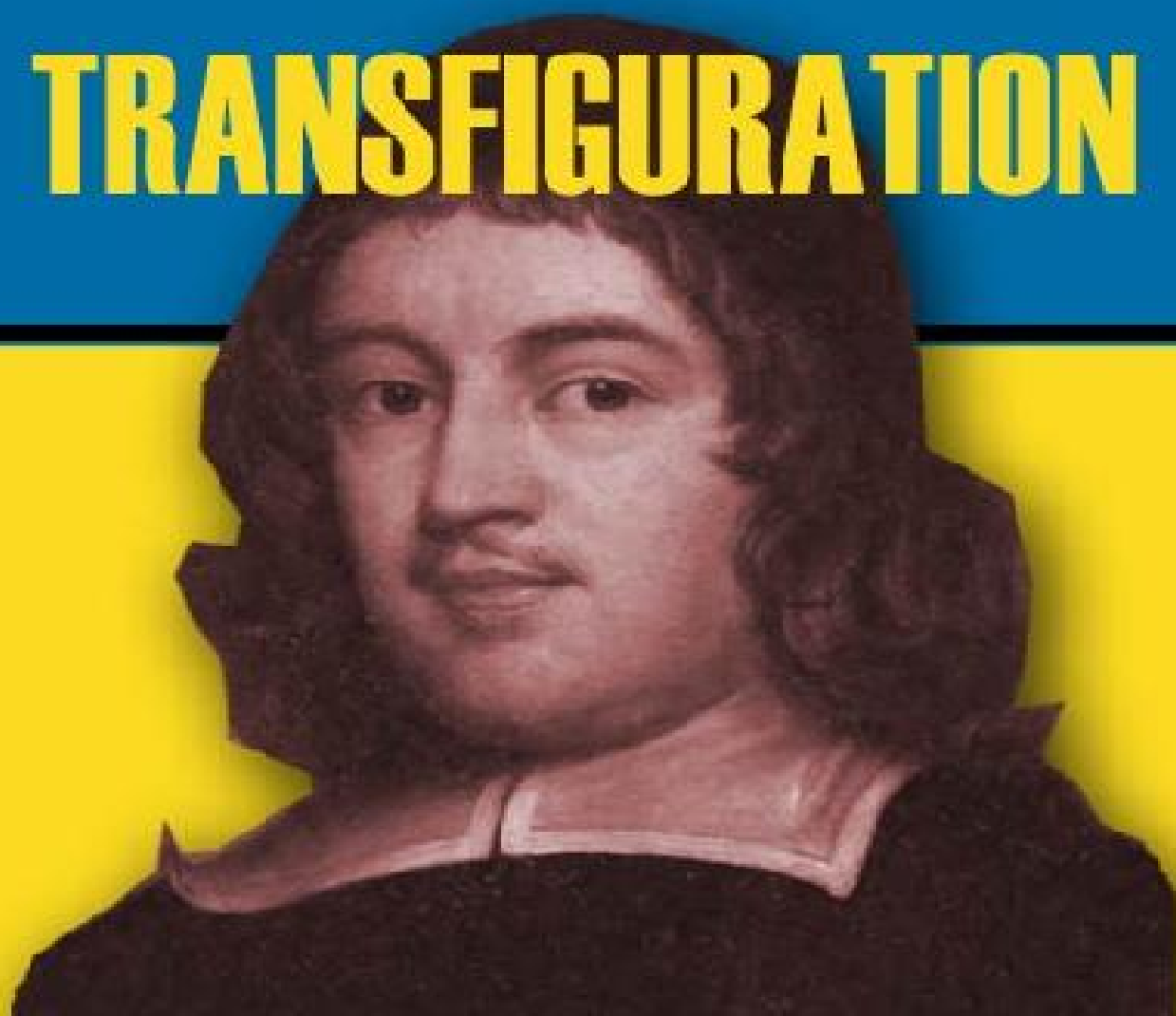


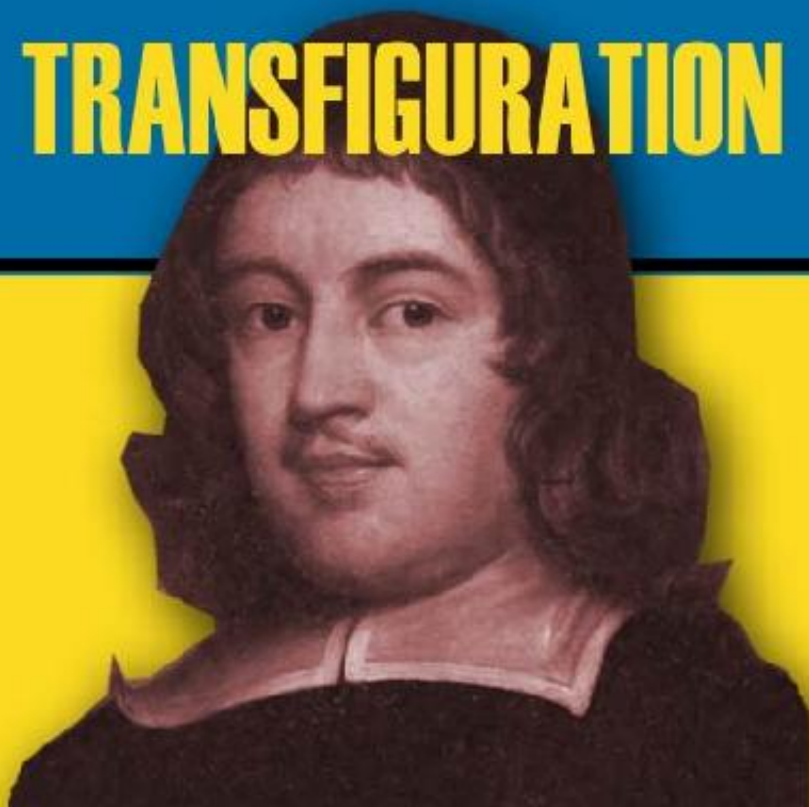
**THOMAS
MANTON**

**CHRIST'S
TEMPTATION AND
TRANSFIGURATION**



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**Christ's Temptation and
Transfiguration**

**Practically Explained And
Improved in Several Sermons**

by Thomas Manton

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TO THE READER

THE following discourses on those important subjects of the temptation and transfiguration of our blessed Saviour having been, carefully perused, and transcribed from the reverend author's own manuscripts, are now, at the earnest request of divers persons that were the happy auditors thereof, offered to public view. Had the author lived to publish these himself, they had come forth into the world more exact; but yet as they are now left, I doubt not but they will be very acceptable to all that have discerning minds, for the peculiar excellency contained in them.

Thus much was thought necessary to be said by way of preface, the work sufficiently commending itself, especially coming from such an author as Dr Manton.

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

SERMON I

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.—MAT. 4:1.

THIS scripture giveth us the history of Christ's temptation, which I shall go over by degrees.

In the words observe:—

1. The parties tempted and tempting. The person tempted was the Lord Jesus Christ. The person tempting was the devil.
2. The occasion inducing this combat, Jesus was led up of the Spirit.
3. The time, then.
4. The place, the wilderness.

From the whole observe:—

Doct. The Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to submit himself to an extraordinary combat with the tempter, for our good.

1. I shall explain the nature and circumstances of this extraordinary combat.
 2. The reasons why Christ submitted to it.
 3. The good of this to us.
- I. The circumstances of this extraordinary combat. And here—

1. The persons combating—Jesus and the devil, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. It was designed long before: Gen. 3:15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel;' and now it is accomplished. Here is the Prince of Peace against the prince of darkness, Michael and the dragon, the Captain of our salvation and our grand enemy. The devil is the great architect of wickedness, as Christ is the Prince of life and righteousness. These are the combatants: the one ruined the creation of God, and the other restored and repaired it.

2. The manner of the combat. It was not merely a phantasm, that Christ was thus assaulted and used: no, he was tempted in reality, not in conceit and imagination only. It seemeth to be in the spirit, though it was real; as Paul was taken up into the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body we cannot easily judge, but real it was. I shall more accurately discuss this question afterwards in its more proper place.

3. What moved him, or how was he brought to enter into the lists with Satan? He was 'led by the Spirit,' meaning thereby the impulsion and excitation of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. For it is said, Luke 4:1, 'Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.' He did not voluntarily put himself upon temptation, but, by God's appointment, went up from Jordan farther into the desert.

We learn hence:—

[1.] That temptations come not by chance, not out of the earth, nor merely from the devil; but God ordereth them for his own glory and our good. Satan was fain to beg leave to tempt Job: Job 1:12, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand;' there is a concession with a limitation. Till God exposeth us to trials, the devil cannot trouble us, nor touch us. So Luke 22:31, 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath

desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.' Nay, he could not enter into the herd of swine without a patent and new pass from Christ: Mat. 8:31, 'So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.' This cruel spirit is held in the chains of an irresistible providence, that he cannot molest any creature of God without his permission; which is a great satisfaction to the faithful: all things which concern our trial are determined and ordered by God. If we be free, let us bless God for it, and pray that he would not 'lead us into temptation:' if tempted, when we are in Satan's hands, remember Satan is in God's hand.

[2.] Having given up ourselves to God, we are no longer to be at our own dispose and direction, but must submit ourselves to be led, guided, and ordered by God in all things. So it was with Christ, he was led by the Spirit continually: if he retire into the desert, he is 'led by the Spirit,' Luke 4:1; if he come back again into Galilee, ver. 4, 'Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.' The Holy Ghost leadeth him into the conflict, and when it was ended leadeth him back again. Now there is a perfect likeness between a Christian and Christ: he is led by the Spirit off and on, so we must be guided by the same Spirit in all our actions: Rom. 8:14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'

[3.] That we must observe our warrant and calling in all we resolve upon. To put ourselves upon hazards we are not called unto, is to go out of our bounds to meet a temptation, or to ride into the devil's quarters. Christ did not go of his own accord into the desert, but by divine impulsion, and so he came from thence. We may, in our place and calling, venture ourselves, on the protection of God's providence, upon obvious temptations; God will maintain and support us in them; that is to trust God; but to go out of our calling is to tempt God.

[4.] Compare the words used in Matthew and Mark, chap. 1:12, 'And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.' That shows that it was a forcible motion, or a strong impulse, such as he could

not easily resist or refuse, so here is freedom—he was led; there is force and efficacious impression—he was driven, with a voluntary condescension thereunto. There may be liberty of man's will, yet the victorious efficacy of grace united together: a man may be taught and drawn, as Christ here was led, and driven by the Spirit into the wilderness.

3. The time.

[1.] Presently after his baptism. Now the baptism of Christ agreeth with ours as to the general nature of it. Baptism is our initiation into the service of God, or our solemn consecration of ourselves to him; and it doth not only imply work, but fight: Rom. 6:13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments, ὄπλα, of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;' and, Rom. 13:12, 'Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' Christ's baptism had the same general nature with ours, not the same special nature: the general nature is an engagement to God, the special use of baptism is to be a seal of the new covenant, or to be to us 'the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' Now this Christ was not capable of, he had no sin to be repented of or remitted; but his baptism was an engagement to the same military work to which we are engaged. He came into the world for that end and purpose, to war against sin and Satan; he engageth as the general, we as the common soldiers. He as the general: 1 John 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, ἵνα λύσῃ, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' His baptism was the taking of the field as general; we undertake to fight under him in our rank and place.

[2.] At this baptismal engagement the Father had given him a testimony by a voice from heaven: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and the Holy Ghost had descended upon him in the form of a dove, Mark 3:16, 17. Now presently after this he is set upon by the tempter. Thus many times the children of God, after

solemn assurances of his love, are exposed to great temptations. Of this you may see an instance in Abraham: Gen. 22:1, 'And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham;' that is, after he had assured Abraham that he was 'his shield, and his exceeding great reward,' and given him so many renewed testimonies of his favour. So Paul, after his rapture, 'lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him,' 2 Cor. 12:7. So Heb. 10:32, 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;' i.e., after ye were fully convinced of the Christian faith, and furnished with those virtues and graces that belong to it. God's conduct is gentle, and proportioned to our strength, as Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear it. He never suffers his castles to be besieged till they are victualled.

[3.] Immediately before he entered upon his prophetic office. Experience of temptations fits for the ministry, as Christ's temptations prepared him to set a-foot the kingdom of God, for the recovery of poor souls out of their bondage into the liberty of the children of God: ver. 17, 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Our state of innocency was our health, the grace of the Redeemer our medicine, Christ our physician; for the devil had poisoned our human nature. Therefore, when he sets a-foot his healing cure, it was fit and congruous that he should experimentally feel the power of the tempter, and in what manner he doth assault and endanger souls: Christ also would show us that ministers should not only be men of science, but of experience.

[4.] The place or field where this combat was fought, the wilderness, where were none but wild beasts: Mark 1:13, 'And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.' Great question there is in what wilderness Christ was; their opinion is most probable who think it was the great wilderness, called the desert of Arabia, in

which the Israelites wandered forty years, and in which Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights. In this solitary place Satan tried his utmost power against our Saviour.

This teacheth us:—

(1.) That Christ alone grappled with Satan, having no fellow-worker with him, that we may know the strength of our Redeemer, who is able himself to overcome the tempter without any assistance, and to 'save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him,' Heb. 7:25.

(2.) That the devil often abuseth our solitude. It is good sometimes to be alone; but then we need to be stocked with holy thoughts or employed in holy exercises, that we may be able to say, as Christ, John 16:32, 'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' Howsoever a state of retirement from human converse, if it be not necessary, exposeth us to temptations; but if we are cast upon it, we must expect God's presence and help.

(3.) That no place is privileged from temptations, unless we leave our hearts behind us. David, walking on the terrace or house-top, was ensnared by Bathsheba's beauty: 2 Sam. 11:2–4. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, yet committed incest in the mountain, where there were none but his own family: Gen. 19:30, 31, &c. When we are locked in our closets, we cannot shut out Satan.

II. The reasons why Christ submitted to it.

1. With respect to Adam, that the parallel between the first and second Adam might be more exact. They are often compared in scripture, as Rom. 5, latter end, and 1 Cor. 15; and we read, Rom. 5:14, that the first Adam was τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, 'the figure of him that was to come.' And as in other respects, so in this; in the same way we were destroyed by the first Adam, in the same way we were restored by the second. Christ recovereth and winneth that which Adam lost. Our happiness was lost by the first Adam being overcome by the tempter; so it must be recovered by the second

Adam, the tempter being overcome by him. He that did conquer must first be conquered, that sinners might be rescued from the captivity wherein he held them captive. The first Adam, being assaulted quickly after his entrance into paradise, was overcome; and therefore must the second Adam overcome him as soon as he entered upon his office, and that in a conflict hand-to-hand, in that nature that was foiled. The devil must lose his prisoners in the same way that he caught them. Christ must do what Adam could not do. The victory is gotten by a public person in our nature, before it can be gotten by each individual in his own person, for so it was lost. Adam lost the day before he had any offspring, so Christ winneth it in his own person before he doth solemnly begin to preach the gospel and call disciples; and therefore here was the great overthrow of the adversary.

2. In regard of Satan, who by his conquest got a twofold power over man by tempting, he got an interest in his heart to lead him 'captive at his will' and pleasure, 2 Tim. 2:26; and he was made God's executioner, he got a power to punish him: Heb. 2:14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Therefore the Son of God, who interposed on our behalf, and undertook the rescue of sinners, did assume the nature of man, that he might conquer Satan in the nature that was conquered, and also offer himself as a sacrifice in the same nature for the demonstration of the justice of God. First, Christ must overcome by obedience, tried to the uttermost by temptations; and then he must also overcome by suffering. By overcoming temptations, he doth overcome Satan as a tempter; and by death he overcame him as a tormentor, or as the prince of death, who had the power of executing God's sentence. So that you see before he overcame him by merit, he overcame him by example, and was an instance of a tempted man before he was an instance of a persecuted man, or one that came to make satisfaction to God's justice.

3. With respect to the saints, who are in their passage to heaven to be exposed to great difficulties and trials. Now that they might have

comfort and hope in their Redeemer, and come to him boldly as one touched with a feeling of their infirmities, he himself submitted to be tempted. This reason is recorded by the apostle in two places: Heb. 2:18, 'For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' Able to succour; that is, fit, powerful, inclined, effectually moved to succour them. None so merciful as those who have been once miserable; and they who have not only known misery, but felt it, do more readily relieve and succour others. God biddeth Israel to pity strangers: Exod. 22:21, 'Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.' They knew what it was to be exposed to the envy and hatred of the neighbours in the land where they sojourned: Exod. 23:9, 'For ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.' We read that when King Richard the First had been, on the sea near Sicily, like to be drowned, he recalled that ancient and barbarous custom, whereby the goods of shipwrecked men were escheated to the crown, making provision that those goods should be preserved for the right owners. Christ being tossed in the tempest of temptations, knows what belongs to the trouble thereof. The other place is, Heb. 4:15, '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.' Christ hath experienced how strong the assailant is, how feeble our nature is, how hard a matter it is to withstand when we are so sorely assaulted. His own experience of sufferings and temptations in himself doth entender his heart, and make him fit for sympathy with us, and begets a tender compassion towards the miseries and frailties of his members.

4. With respect to Christ himself, that he might be an exact pattern of obedience to God. The obedience is little worth, which is carried on in an even tenor, when we have no temptation to the contrary, but is cast off as soon as we are tempted to disobey: James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' And Heb. 11:17, 'By faith Abraham, when he

was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son.' Now Christ was to be more eminent than all the holy ones of God, and therefore, that he might give an evidence of his piety, constancy, and trust in God, it was thought fit some trial should be made of him, that he might by example teach us what reason we have to hold to God against the strongest temptations.

III. The good of this to us. It teacheth us divers things, four I shall instance in.

1. To show us who is our grand enemy, the devil, who sought the misery and destruction of mankind, as Christ did our salvation. And therefore he is called ὁ ἔχθρος, the enemy; Mat. 13:39, 'The enemy that sowed them is the devil.' And he is called also ὁ πονηρὸς, the wicked one, Mat. 13:19, as the first and deepest in evil. And because this malicious cruel spirit ruined mankind at first, he is called 'a liar and murderer from the beginning,' John 8:44. A liar, because of his deceit; a murderer, to show us what he hath done and would do. It was he that set upon Christ, and doth upon us, as at first to destroy our health, so still to keep us from our medicine and recovery out of the lapsed estate by the gospel of Christ.

2. That all men, none excepted, are subject to temptations. If any might plead for exemption, our Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, might; but he was assaulted and tempted; and if the devil tempted our Saviour, he will be much more bold with us. The godly are yet in the way, not at the end of the journey; in the field, not with the crown on their heads; and it is God's will that the enemy should have leave to assault them. None go to heaven without a trial: 'All these things are accomplished in your brethren that are in the flesh,' 1 Pet. 5:9. To look for an exempt privilege, or immunity from temptation, is to list ourselves as Christ's soldiers, and never expect battle or conflict.

3. It showeth us the manner of conflict, both of Satan's fight and our Saviour's defence.

[1.] Of Satan's fight. It is some advantage not to be ignorant of his enterprises: 2 Cor. 2:11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' Then we may the better stand upon our guard. He assaulted Christ by the same kind of temptations by which usually he assaults us. The kinds of temptations are reckoned up: 1 John 2:16, 'The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.' And James 3:15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' With these temptations he assaulted our first parents: Gen. 3:8, 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for fruit, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' And with the same temptations he assaulted Christ, tempting him to turn stones into bread, to satisfy the longings of the flesh; to fall down and worship him, as to the sight of a bewitching object to his eyes; to fly in the air in pride, and to get glory among men. Here are our snares, which we must carefully avoid.

[2.] The manner of Christ's defence, and so it instructeth us how to overcome and carry ourselves in temptations. And here are two things whereby we evercome:—

(1.) By scripture. The word of God is 'the sword of the Spirit,' Eph. 6:17, and 1 John 2:14, 'The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' It is good to have the word of God abide in our memories, but chiefly in our hearts, by a sound belief and fervent love to the truth.

(2.) Partly by resolution: 1 Pet. 4:1, 'Arm yourselves with the same mind,' viz., that was in Christ. When Satan grew bold and troublesome, Christ rejects him with indignation. Now the conscience of our duty should thus prevail with us to be resolute therein; the double-minded are as it were torn in pieces between

God and the devil: James 1:8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' Therefore, being in God's way, we should resolve to be deaf to all temptations.

4. The hopes of success. God would set Christ before us as a pattern of trust and confidence, that when we address ourselves to serve God, we might not fear the temptations of Satan. We have an example of overcoming the devil in our glorious head and chief. If he pleaded, John 16:33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;' the same holdeth good here, for the enemies of our salvation are combined. He overcame the devil in our natures, that we might not be discouraged: we fight against the same adversaries in the same cause, and he will give power to us, his weak members, being full of compassion, which certainly is a great comfort to us.

Use. Of instruction to us:—

1. To reckon upon temptations. As soon as we mind our baptismal covenant, we must expect that Satan will be our professed foe, seeking to terrify or allure us from the banner of our captain, Jesus Christ. Many, after baptism, fly to Satan's camp. There are a sort of men in the visible church, who, though they do not deny their baptism, as those did, 2 Pet. 2:9, 'Who have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins,' yet they carry themselves as if they were in league with the devil, the world, and the flesh, rather than with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; with might and main they oppose Christ's kingdom, both abroad and at home, in their own hearts, and are wholly governed by worldly things, the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. Now these are the devil's agents, and the more dangerous because they use Christ's name against his offices, and the form of his religion to destroy the power thereof; as the dragon in the Revelation, pushed with the horns of the Lamb. Others are not venomously and malignantly set against Christ, and his interest in the world, or in their own hearts, but tamely yield to the lusts of the flesh, and go 'like an ox to the

slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks,' Prov. 7:22. We cannot say that Satan's work lieth about these. Satan needeth not besiege the soul by temptations; that is his already by peaceable possession; 'when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace,' Luke 11:21. There is no storm when wind and tide goeth together. But then there is a third sort of men, that begin to be serious, and to mind their recovery by Christ: they have many good motions and convictions of the danger of sin, excellency of Christ, necessity of holiness; they have many purposes to leave sin and enter upon a holy course of life, but 'the wicked one cometh, and cateheth away that which was sown in his heart,' Mat. 13:19. He beginneth betimes to oppose the work, before we are confirmed and settled in a course of godliness, as he did set upon Christ presently upon his baptism. Baptism in us implieth avowed dying unto sin and living unto God; now God permitteth temptation to try our resolution. There is a fourth sort, of such as have made some progress in religion, even to a degree of eminency: these are not altogether free; for if the devil had confidence to assault the declared Son of God, will he be afraid of a mere mortal man? No; these he assaulteth many times very sorely: pirates venture on the greatest booty. These he seeketh to draw off from Christ, as Pharaoh sought to bring back the Israelites after their escape; or to foil them by some scandalous fall, to do religion a mischief: 2 Sam. 12:14, 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme;' or at least to vex them and torment them, to make the service of God tedious and uncomfortable to them: Luke 22:31, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat'—to toss and vex you, as wheat in a sieve. So that no sort of Christians can promise themselves exemption; and God permitteth it, because to whom much is given, of them the more is required.

2. The manner and way of his fight is by the world, per blanda et aspera, by the good or evil things of the world. There is 'armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,' 2 Cor. 6:7, as there are right-hand and left-hand temptations. Both ways he lieth in

ambush in the creature. Sometimes he tempts us by the good things of the world: 1 Chron. 21:1, 'And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel,' so glorying in his might, and puissance, and victory over neighbour kings. So meaner people he tempteth to abuse their wealth to pride and luxury; therefore we are pressed to be sober: 1 Pet. 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' The devil maketh an advantage of our prosperity, to divert us from God and heaven, and to render us unapt for the strictness of our holy calling. Sometimes he tempts us by the evil things of this world: Job 1:11, 'Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.' Satan's aim in bringing the saints into trouble is to draw them to fretting, murmuring, despondency, and distrust of providence, yea, to open defection from God, or blasphemy against him; and therefore it is said, 1 Pet. 5:9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions,' &c., because temptations are conveyed to us by our afflictions or troubles in the flesh.

3. His end is to dissuade us from good, and persuade us to evil. To dissuade us from good by representing the impossibility, trouble, and small necessity of it. If men begin to apply themselves to a strict course, such as they have sworn to in baptism, either it is so hard as not to be borne, as John 6:60, 'This is a hard saying, who can bear it?' Whereas, Mat. 19:29, 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, &c., for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Or the troubles which accompany a strict profession are many. The world will note us: John 12:42, 'Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' Whereas we must not be ashamed of Christ: 2 Tim. 2:12, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us,' Or that we need not be so strict and nice, whereas all we can do is little enough: Matthew 25:9, 'Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.' In general, the greatest mischiefs done us by sin are not regarded, but the least

inconvenience that attendeth our duty is urged and aggravated. He persuadeth us to evil by profit, pleasure, necessity; we cannot live without it in the world. He hideth the hook, and showeth the bait only; he concealeth the hell, the horror, the eternal pains that follow sin, and only telleth you how beneficial, profitable, and delightful the sin will be to you: Prov. 9:17, 18, 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.'

4. While we are striving against temptations, let us remember our general. We do but follow the Captain of our salvation, who hath vanquished the enemy, and will give us the victory if we keep striving: 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly,' Rom. 16:2. Not his feet, but ours: we shall be conquerors. Our enemy is vigilant and strong: it is enough for us that our Redeemer is merciful and faithful in succouring the tempted, and able to master the tempter, and defeat all his methods. Christ hath conquered him, both as a lamb and as a lion: Rev. 5:5, 8. The notion of a lamb intimateth his sacrifice, the notion of a lion his victory: in the lamb is merit, in the lion strength; by the one he maketh satisfaction to God, by the other he rescueth sinners out of the paw of the roaring lion, and maintaineth his interest in their hearts. Therefore let us not be discouraged, but closely adhere to him.

SERMON II

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. And he answered and said, It is written, Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.—MAT. 4:2–4.

IN these words there are three branches:—

First, The occasion.

Secondly, The temptation itself.

Thirdly, Christ's answer.

First, The occasion of the first temptation, in the second verse, 'When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered.' Where take notice:—

I. Of his fasting.

II. Of his hunger.

And something I shall speak of them conjunctly, something distinctly and apart.

1. Conjunctly. In every part of our Lord's humiliation, there is an emission of some beams of his Godhead, that whenever he is seen to be true man, he might be known to be true God also. Is Christ hungry? There was a fast of forty days' continuance preceding, to show how, as God, he could sustain his human nature. The verity of his human nature is seen, because he submitted to all our sinless infirmities. The power of his divine nature was manifested, because it enabled him to continue forty days and nights without eating or drinking anything, the utmost that an ordinary man can fast being but nine days usually. Thus his divinity and humanity are expressed in most or all of his actions: John 1:14, 'The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God.' There was a veil of flesh, yet the glory of his divine nature was seen, and might be seen, by all that had an eye and heart to see it. He lay in the manger at Bethlehem, but a star appeared to conduct the wise men to him; and angels proclaimed his birth to the shepherds: Luke 2:13, 14. He grew up from a child, at the ordinary rate of other children; but when he was but twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors: Luke 2:42. He submitted to baptism, but then owned by a voice from heaven to be God's beloved

Son. He was deceived in the fig-tree when an hungered, which shows the infirmity of human ignorance; but suddenly blasted, this manifested the glory of a divine power: Mat. 21:19. Here tempted by Satan, but ministered unto and attended upon by a multitude of glorious angels: Mat. 4:11; finally crucified through weakness, but living by the power of God: 2 Cor. 13:4. He hung dying on the cross; but then the rocks were rent, the graves opened, and the sun darkened. All along you may have these intermixtures. He needed to humble himself to purchase our mercies; but withal to give a discovery of a divine glory to assure our faith. Therefore, when there were any evidences of human frailty, lest the world should be offended, and stumble thereat, he was pleased at the same time to give some notable demonstration of the divine power; as, on the other side, when holy men are honoured by God, something falleth out to humble them: 2 Cor. 12:7.

2. Distinctly and apart. Where observe:—

[1.] That he fasted forty days and forty nights; so did Moses when he received the law: Exod. 34:28; and at the restoring of the law Elias did the like: 1 Kings 19:8. Now what these two great prophets had done, Christ, the great prophet and doctor of the Christian church, did also. For the number of forty days, curiosity may make itself work enough; but it is dangerous to make conclusions where no certainty appeareth. However this is not amiss, that forty days were the usual time allotted for repentance: as to the Ninevites, Jonah 3:4; so the prophet Ezekiel was to bear the sins of the people for forty days; and the flood was forty days in coming on the old world: Gen. 7:17. This was the time given for their repentance, and therefore for their humiliation; yet the forty days' fast in Lent is ill-grounded on this example, for this fast of Christ cannot be imitated by us, more than other his miracles.

[2.] At the end of the forty days he was an hungered, sorely assaulted with faintness and hunger, as any other man at any time is for want of meat. God's providence permitted it, that he might be

more capable of Satan's temptations; for Satan fits his temptations to men's present case and condition. When Christ was hungry, he tempteth him to provide bread, in such a way as the tempter doth prescribe. He worketh upon what he findeth: when men are full, he tempteth them to be proud, and forget God; when they are destitute, to distrust God: if he sees men covetous, he fits them with a wedge of gold, as he did Achan; if discontented, and plotting the destruction of another, he findeth out occasions. When Judas had a mind to sell his Master, he presently sendeth him a chapman. Thus he doth work upon our dispositions, or our condition; most upon our dispositions, but here only upon Christ's condition. He observeth which way the tree leaneth, and then thrusteth it forward.

Secondly, The temptation itself, verse the third. Where two things are observable:—

I. The intimation of his address, 'And when the tempter came to him.'

II. The proposal of the temptation, 'If thou be the Son of God,' &c.

I. For the address to the temptation, 'And when the tempter came to him,' there two things must be explained:—

1. In what manner the tempter came to Christ.

2. How he is said to come then to him.

[1.] How he came to him. Whether the temptations of Christ are to be understood by way of vision, or historically, as things visibly acted and done? This latter I incline unto; and I handle here, because it is said, προσελθὼν αὐτῷ ὁ πειράζων,—'The tempter came to him.' This importeth some local motion and accession of the tempter to Christ, under a visible and external form and shape. As afterwards, when the Lord biddeth him be gone, 'then the devil leaveth him,' ver. 11; a retiring of Satan out of his presence, not the ceasing of a vision only. Yea, all along, he 'taketh him,' and 'sets him

on a pinnacle of the temple,' and 'taketh him to an high mountain.' All which show some external appearance of Satan, and not a word that intimateth a vision. Neither can it be conceived how any act of adoration could be demanded by Satan of Christ—'fall down and worship me'—unless the object to be worshipped were set before him in some visible shape. The coming of the angels to Christ when the devil left him, ver. 11, all understand historically, and of some external coming. Why is not the coming and going of the devil thus to be understood also? And if all had been done in vision, and not by converse, how could Christ be an hungered, or the devil take that occasion to tempt him? How could answers and replies be tossed to and fro, and scriptures alleged? So that from the whole view of the frame of the text, here was some external congress between Christ and the devil. If you think it below Christ, you forget the wonderful condescension of the Son of God; it is no more unworthy of him than crucifixion, passion, and burial was. It is true, in the writing of the prophets, many things historically related were only done in vision; but not in the Gospels, which are an history of the life and death of Christ; where things are plainly set down as they were done. To men the grievousness of Christ's temptations would be much lessened, if we should think it only a piece of fantasy, and imaginary rather than real. And if his temptations be lessened, so will his victory, so will our comfort. In short, such as was Christ's journey into the wilderness, such was his fast, such his temptation; all real. For all are delivered to us in the same style and thread of discourse. Yea, further, if these things had been only in vision and ecstasy, there would have been no danger to Christ in the second temptation, when he was tempted to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Surely then he was truly tempted, and not in vision only; yea, it seemeth not so credible and agreeable to the dignity and holiness of Christ, that Satan should tempt by internal false suggestions, and the immission of species into his fancy or understanding; that Christ should seem to be here and there, when all the while he was in the desert. For either Christ took notice of these false images in his fancy, or not. If not, there is no temptation; if so, there will be an error in the mind of Christ, that he should

think himself to be on the pinnacle of the temple, or top of an high mountain, when he was in the desert. It is hard to think these suggestions could be made without some error or sin; but an external suggestion maketh the sin to be in the tempter only, not in the person tempted. Our first parents lost not their innocency by the external suggestion, but internal admission of it, dwelling upon it in their minds. To a man void of sin, the tempter hath no way of tempting but externally.

[2.] How is this access to Christ said to be after his fasting, when, in Luke 4:2, it is said, 'Being forty days tempted of the devil, and in those days he did eat nothing; and when they were ended, he afterward hungered'?

I answer—(1.) Some conceive that the devil tempted Christ all the forty days, but then he tempted him invisibly, as he doth other men, striving to inject sinful suggestions; but he could find nothing in him to work upon: John 14:30. But at forty days' end he taketh another course, and appeareth visibly in the shape of an angel of light. He saith he came to him, most solemnly and industriously to tempt him. This opinion is probable.

(2.) It may be answered, Luke's speech must be understood: 'Being forty days in the wilderness, and in those days he did eat nothing, and was tempted;' that is, those days being ended. There is, by a prolepsis, some little inversion of the order. But because of Mark 1:13, where it is said, 'He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts,' take the former answer.

II. The proposal of the temptation, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' Certainly every temptation of the devil tendeth to sin. Now where is the sin of this? If Christ had turned stones into bread, and declared himself by this miracle to be the Son of God, there seemeth to be no such evil in this. Like miracles he did upon other occasions; as turning water into wine at a marriage feast, multiplying the loaves in the

distribution for feeding the multitude. Here was no curiosity; the fact seemed to be necessary to supply his hunger. Here is no superfluity urged—into bread, not dainties or occasions of wantonness, but bread for his necessary sustenance. I answer, Notwithstanding all this fair appearance, yet this first assault which is propounded by Satan was very sore and grievous.

1. Because manifold sins are implied in it, and there are many temptations combined in this one assault.

[1.] In that Christ, who was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast, and so to be tempted, must now break his fast and work a miracle at Satan's direction. The contest between God and the devil is, who shall be sovereign? therefore it was not meet that Christ should follow the devil's advice, and do anything at his command and suggestion.

[2.] That Christ should doubt of that voice that he heard from heaven at his baptism, 'Thou art my beloved Son;' and the devil cometh, 'If thou be the Son of God.' That it should anew be put to trial by some extraordinary work, whether it were true or no, or he should believe it, yea or no. No temptation so sore, no dart so poisonous, as that which tendeth to the questioning of the grounds of faith; as this did the love of God, so lately spoken of him. Therefore this is one of the sharpest arrows that could come out of Satan's bow.

[3.] It tendeth to weaken his confidence in the care and love of God's fatherly providence: being now afflicted with hunger in a desert place, where no supply of food could be had, Satan would draw him to suspect and doubt of his Father's providence, as if it were incompatible to be the Son of God and to be left destitute of means to supply his hunger, and therefore must take some extraordinary course of his own to furnish himself.

[4.] It tended to put him upon an action of vainglory, by working a miracle before the devil, to show his power; as all needless actions are but a vain ostentation.

2. Because it was in itself a puzzling and perplexing proposal, not without inconveniences on both sides, whichsoever of the extremes our Lord should choose; whether he did, or did not, what the tempter suggested. If he did, he might seem to doubt of the truth of the oracle, by which he was declared to be the Son of God, or to distrust God's providence, or to give way to a vain ostentation of his own power. If he did not, he seemed to be wanting, in not providing necessary food for his sustentation when it was in his power to do so; and it seemed to be unreasonable to hide that which it concerned all to know, to wit, that he was the Son of God. And it seemeth grievous to hear others suspicious concerning ourselves, when it is in our power easily to refute them; such provocations can hardly be borne by the most modest spirits. This temptation was again put upon Christ on the cross: Mat. 27:40, 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.' But all is to be done at God's direction, and as it becometh our obedience to him, and respect to his glory. Satan and his instruments will be satisfied with no proofs of principles of faith, but such as he and they will prescribe, and which cannot be given without entrenching upon our obedience to God, and those counsels which he hath wisely laid for his own glory. And if God's children be surprised with such a disposition, it argueth so far the influence of Satan upon them, namely, when they will not believe but upon their own terms: as Thomas, John 20:25, '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.' If we will not accept of the graces of faith as offered by God, but will interpose conditions of our own prescribing, we make a snare to ourselves. God may in condescension to a weak believer grant what was his fault to seek, as he doth afterwards to Thomas, ver. 27; but there is no reason he should grant it to the devil, he being a malicious and incorrigible spirit, coming temptingly to ask it.

3. This temptation was cunning and plausible; it seemed only to tend to Christ's good, his refectation when hungry, and his honour and glory, that this might be a full demonstration of his being the Son of God. There is an open solicitation to evil, and a covert; explicit and implicit; direct and indirect. This last here. It was not an open, direct, explicit solicitation to sin, but covert, implicit, and indirect, which sort of temptations are more dangerous. There was no need of declaring Christ's power by turning stones into bread before the devil, and at his instance and suit. It was neither necessary nor profitable. Not necessary for Christ's honour and glory, it being sufficiently evidenced before by that voice from heaven, or might be evident to him without new proof. Nor was it necessary for Christ's refectation, because he might be sustained by the same divine power by which hitherto he had been supported for forty days. Nor was it profitable, none being present but the devil, who asked not this proof for satisfaction, but cavil; and that he might boast and gain advantage, if Christ had done anything at his instance and direction. And in this peculiar dispensation all was to be done by the direction of the Holy, and not the impure spirit. I come now to the third branch.

Thirdly, Christ's answer, ver. 4, 'And he answered and said, It is written, Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Christ's answer is not made to that part of the proposal, 'If thou be the Son of God,' but to the urgent necessity of his refectation. The former was clear and evident, the force of the temptation lay not there; but the latter, which Satan sought to make most advantage of, is clearly refuted. Christ's answer is taken out of Deut. 8:3; and this answer is not given for the tempter's sake, but ours, that we may know how to answer in like cases, and repel such kind of temptations. In the place quoted, Moses speaketh of manna, and showeth how God gave his people manna from heaven, to teach them that though bread be the ordinary means of sustaining man, yet God can feed him by other means, which he is pleased to make use of for that purpose. His bare word, or nothing; all cometh from his divine power and virtue,

whatever he is pleased to give for the sustentation of man, ordinary or extraordinary. The tempter had said that either he must die for hunger, or turn stones into bread. Christ showeth that there is a middle between both these extremes. There are other ways which the wisdom of God hath found out, or hath appointed by his word, or decreed to such an end, and maketh use of in the course of his providence. And the instance is fitly chosen; for he that provided forty years for a huge multitude in the desert, he will not be wanting to his own Son, who had now fasted but forty days. In the words there is:—

I. A concession or grant, that ordinarily man liveth by bread; and therefore must labour for it, and use it when it may be had.

II. There is a restriction of the grant, that it is not by bread only: 'But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' The business is to explain how a man can live by the word of God, or what is meant by it.

1. Some take word for the word of precept, and expound it thus: if you be faithful to your duty, God will provide for you. For in every command of God, general or particular, there is a promise expressed or implied of all things necessary: Deut. 28:5, 'Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store;' and Mat. 6:33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Now we may lean upon this word of God, keep ourselves from indirect means, and in a fair way of providence refer the issue to God.

2. Some take the word for the word of promise, which indeed is the livelihood of the saints: Ps. 119:111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; they are the rejoicing of my heart.' God's people in a time of want can make a feast to themselves out of the promises; and when seemingly starved in the creature, fetch not only peace and grace and righteousness, but food and raiment out of the covenant.

3. Rather, I think, it is taken for his providential word or commanded blessing; for as God made all things by his word, so 'he upholdeth all things by the word of his power': Heb. 1:3. His powerful word doth all in the world: Ps. 147:15, 'He sendeth forth his commandment on the earth; his word runneth very swiftly; he giveth snow like wool.' And then, in the 18th verse, 'He sendeth out his word, and melteth them.' As the word of creation made all things, so the word of providence sustaineth all things. This word is spoken of Ps. 107:20, 'He sent his word, and his word healed them; and delivered them from all their destructions.' It is dictum factum with God; if he speak but the word, it is all done: Mat. 8:8, 'Speak but the word, and thy servant shall be whole.' So Luke 4:36, 'What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.' So of Joseph it is said, Ps. 105:19, 'Until the time that his word came; the word of the Lord tried him;' that is, his power and influence on the hearts of the parties concerned for his deliverance. Well, then, the power of sustaining life is not in bread, but in the word of God; not in the means, but in God's commanded blessing, which may be conveyed to us by means, or without means, as God pleaseth. There is a powerful commanding word which God useth for health, strength, sustentation, or any effect wherein the good of his people is concerned. He is the great commander of the world. If he say to anything Go, and it goeth; Come, and it cometh.

Thus you have the history of the first temptation. Now for the observations.

Observe, first, That God may leave his children and servants to great straits; for Christ himself was sorely an hungered: so God suffereth his people to hunger in the wilderness before he gave them manna. Therefore it is said, Ps. 102:23, 'He weakeneth the strength of the people in the way.' He bath sundry trials wherewith to exercise our faith, and sometimes by sharp necessities. Paul and his companions had continued fourteen days, and had taken nothing: Acts 27:33. Many times God's children are thus tried: trading is dead, and there

are many mouths to be fed, and little supply cometh in; yet this is to be borne: none of us more poor than Christ, or more destitute than was Christ.

Secondly, That the devil maketh an advantage of our necessities. When Christ was an hungered, then the tempter came to him; so unto us. Three sorts of temptations he then useth to us, the same he did to Christ:—

[1.] Either he tempteth us to unlawful means to satisfy our hunger; so he did to Christ, who was to be governed by the Spirit, to work a miracle to provide for his bodily wants at Satan's direction; so us. Poverty hath a train of sinful temptations: Prov. 30:9, 'Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' Necessities are urging, but we must not go to the devil for a direction how to supply ourselves, lest he draw us to put our hand to our neighbour's goods, or to defraud our brother, or betray the peace of our conscience, or to do some unworthy thing, that we may live the more comfortably. You cannot plead necessity; it is to relieve your charge, to maintain life; God is able to maintain it in his own way. No necessity can make any sin warrantable. It is necessary thou shouldst not sin; it is not necessary thou shouldst borrow more than thou canst pay or use any fraudulent means to get thy sustenance. If others be unmerciful, thou must not be unrighteous.

[2.] To question our adoption, as he did the filiation of Christ: 'If thou be the Son of God.' It is no wonder to find Satan calling in question the adoption and regeneration of God's children, for he calleth in question the filiation and sonship of the Son of God, though so plainly attested but a little before: Heb. 12:5, 'Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as children, My son,' &c. Certainly whatever moveth us to question our interest in God's fatherly love, bare afflictions should not; for to be without afflictions is a sign of bastards. God hath no illegitimate children, but God hath degenerate children, who are left to a larger discipline.

[3.] To draw us to a diffidence and distrust of God's providence: this he sought to breed in Christ, or at least to do something that might seem to countenance it, if he should upon his motion work a miracle. Certainly it is Satan's usual temptation to work in us a disesteem of God's goodness and care, and to make us pore altogether upon our wants. A sense of our wants may be a means to humble us, to quicken us to prayer; but it should not be a temptation to beget in us unthankfulness, or murmuring against God's providence, or any disquietness or unsettledness in our minds. And though they may be very pinching, yet we should still remember that God is good to them that are of a clean heart: Ps. 73:1. God hath in himself all-sufficiency, who knoweth both what we want, and what is fittest for us, and is engaged by his general providence as a faithful Creator: 1 Pet. 4:19, 'Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator;' but more especially as related to us as a Father: Mat. 6:32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.' And by his faithful promise, Heb. 13:5, 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And he will give us every good thing while we fear him: Ps. 34:9, 10, 'O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' And walk uprightly: Ps. 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' And seek it of him by prayer: Mat. 7:11, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'

But you will say, You preach only to the poor and destitute. I answer, I speak as my subject leadeth me: it will put the point generally; Satan maketh an advantage of our condition. Christ had power to do what was suggested; every condition hath its snares, a full condition most of all: Ps. 69:22, 'Let their table be a snare, their welfare for a trap.' He hideth his snares and gins to catch our souls. In all the comforts men enjoy they are apt to grow proud, to forget

God, to become merciless to others who want what they enjoy; to live in vain pleasures, and to forget eternity; to live in sinful security, in the neglect of Christian duties; to be enslaved to sensual satisfactions, to be flat and cold in prayer. This glut and fulness of worldly comforts is much more dangerous than our hunger.

Thirdly, observe, In tempting, Satan pretendeth to help the tempted party to a better condition; as here he seemeth careful to have bread provided for Christ at his need, yea, pretendeth respect to his glory, and to have him manifest himself to be the Son of God, by such a miracle as he prescribeth. This seeming tenderness, counselling Christ to support his life and health, was the snare laid for him. Thus he dealt with our first parents: he seeketh to weaken the reputation of God's love and kindness to man, and to breed in the woman's mind a good opinion of himself. That his suggestions might make the greater impression upon her, he manageth all his discourse with her, that all the advice which he seemeth to give her proceeded of his love and good affection towards her and her husband, pretending a more than ordinary desire and care of man's good, Gen. 3:5, as if he could direct him how to become a match for God himself. So still he dealeth with us; for alas! otherwise 'in vain is the snare laid in the sight of any bird,' Prov. 1:17. He covereth the snare laid for man's destruction with a fair pretence of love to advance man to a greater happiness, and so pretendeth the good of those whom he meaneth wholly to destroy. He enticeth the covetous with dishonest gain, which at length proveth a real loss: the sensual with vain pleasures, which at length prove the greatest pain to body and soul: the ambitious with honours, which really tend to their disgrace. Always trust God, but disbelieve the devil, who promoteth man's destruction under a pretence of his good and happiness. How can Satan and his instruments put us upon anything that is really good for us?

Fourthly, That Satan's first temptations are more plausible. He doth not at first dash come with 'fall down and worship me;' but only pretendeth a respect to Christ's refectation, and a demonstration of

his sonship. Few or none are so desperate at first as to leap into hell at the first dash, therefore the devil beginneth with the least temptations. First men begin with less evils, play about the brink of hell: a man at first taketh a liking to company, afterwards he doth a little enlarge himself into some haunts and merry meetings with his companions, then entereth into a confederacy in evil, till he hath brought utter ruin upon himself, and what was honest friendship at first proveth wicked company and sure destruction at last. At first a man playeth for recreation, then ventureth a shilling or two, afterwards, by the witchery of gaming, off goeth all sense of thrift, honesty, and credit. At first a man dispenseth with himself in some duty, then his dispensation groweth into a settled toleration, and God is cast out of his closet, and his heart groweth dead, dry, and sapless. There is no stop in sin, it is of a multiplying nature, and we go on from one degree to another; and a little lust sets open the door for a greater, as the lesser sticks set the greater on fire.

Fifthly, There is no way to defeat Satan's temptations but by a sound belief of God's all-sufficiency, and the nothingness of the creature.

[1.] A sound belief of, and a dependence on, God's all-sufficiency: Gen. 17:1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' We need not warp, nor run to our shifts, he is enough to help to defend or reward us; he can help us without means, though there be no supply in the view of sense, or full heaps in our own keeping. God knoweth when we know not: 2 Pet. 2:9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,' &c., or by contrary means, curing the eyes with spittle and clay. He can make a little means go far. As he blessed the pulse to the captive children, Dan. 1:15, and made the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil to hold out, 1 Kings 17:14, and his filling and feeding five thousand with a few barley loaves and a few fishes, Mat. 14:21; on the other side he can make abundance unprofitable: Luke 12:15, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' No means can avail unless God giveth his blessing; therefore we should not distrust his providence, nor attempt anything without

God's warrant, lest we offend him, and provoke him to withdraw his blessing.

[2.] The nothingness of the creature: 'Not by bread alone.' It is nothing by way of comparison with God, nothing by way of exclusion of God, nothing in opposition to God. It should be nothing in our esteem, so far as it would be something separate from God, or in coordination with God: Isa. 40:17, 'All nations before him are as nothing, less than nothing and vanity;' Job 6:21, 'Now ye are nothing.' All friends cannot help, our foes cannot hurt us, not the greatest of either kind: Isa. 34:12, 'All her princes shall be nothing.' In regard of the effects which the world promiseth to its deluded lovers, all is as nothing; not only that it can do nothing to our needy souls to relieve us from the burden of sin, nothing towards the quiet and true peace of our wounded consciences, nothing to our acceptance with God, nothing for strength against corruptions and temptations, nothing at the hour of death; but it can do nothing for us during life, nothing to relieve and satisfy us in the world without God. Therefore God is still to be owned and trusted.

SERMON III

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.
—MAT. 4:5, 6.

IN this second temptation I shall give you—(1.) The history of it; (2.) Observations upon it.

I. The history of it. There,

1. What Satan did.

2. What he said.

3. The soreness of the temptation.

1. What he did: 'Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.' There—(1.) Take notice of the ground which the devil chose for the conflict: 'He taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple.' By the holy city is meant Jerusalem, for this name is given to it in other scriptures: Isa. 58:2, 'They call themselves of the holy city.' And Isa. 52:1, 'O Jerusalem, the holy city;' and in many other places. It was so called, because it was the seat of God's worship, and the place where God manifested his gracious presence with his people. If you ask why now it was called the holy city, since it was a city of blood, the seat of all wickedness, in which the law of God was depraved, their religion corrupted, their religion polluted? I answer, Yet there was the temple of the Lord. Some relics of good and holy men, some grace yet continued, and the only place that owned the true God, though with much corruption. The more especial place which the devil chose for the conflict was πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ, 'the pinnacle of the temple,' or 'the wing of the temple;' meaning the border round about the flat covering of the temple to hinder any one from falling off easily, which might be adorned with pinnacles and spires, from whence one might easily fall. (2) How the devil got him there? Whether Christ was carried through the air, or went on his feet, following him of his own accord? The last seemeth to be countenanced by Luke; that he led him to the pinnacle of the temple, Luke 4:9, ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν; yet the former is preferred by most ancient and modern interpreters, and not without reason. For Christ voluntarily to follow the devil, and to go up to the top of the temple, and stand on one of the pinnacles thereof, it seemeth improbable, and would take up more time than could be spent on this temptation. He that would not obey the devil persuading him to cast himself down, that he might not tempt God, would not voluntarily have gone up with him, for that would have been the beginning of a temptation, to yield so far. Most probably, then, Satan was

permitted to carry him in the air, without doing him any hurt, to Jerusalem, and one of the pinnacles of the temple and battlements thereof. But how Christ was carried in the air, visibly or invisibly, the scripture showeth not: it affirmeth the thing, but sets not down the manner. We must believe what it asserteth, reverence what it concealeth. Here was a real translation, a transportation from place to place, not imaginary, for then Christ had been in no danger. And again, not violent, but voluntary—a carrying, not a haling—a leading, not a forcing, as the wrestler is drawn on to the combat. As he suffered himself to be drawn to death by Satan's instruments, so by the devil to be translated from place to place. The officers of the high priest had power to carry him from the garden to Annas, from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate again, and then from Gabbatha to Golgotha, which could not have been unless this power had been given them from above, as Christ himself telleth Pilate, John 19:11. So God, for his greater glory and our instruction, permitted this transportation; therefore this translation is not to be imputed to the weakness of Christ, but his patience, submitting thus far that he might experience all the machinations of Satan; and the transporting is not to be ascribed to the tempter's strength, but his boldness. Christ did not obey him, but submitted to the divine dispensation, and would fight with him not only in the desert, but in the holy city: and no wonder if Christ suffered Satan to carry him, who suffered his instruments to crucify him.

2. What he said to him, ver. 6, where take notice—(1.) Of the temptation itself, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.' (2.) The reason alleged to back it, 'For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee,' &c.

[1.] The temptation itself: 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.' Mark what was the mote in the devil's eye, that Christ was declared to be the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world. He would have him to put it to this proof in the sight of all Jerusalem, wherein, if he failed, and had died of the fall, the Jews

would think him an impostor; if he had escaped, he had submitted to the devil's methods, and so had run into the former sins mentioned before in the first temptation, his doing something at the devil's direction; his disbelief of the divine oracle, unless manifested by such proof as Satan required; and besides a tempting of divine providence—the ordinary way was down stairs. He would have him leap, and throw himself over the battlements. It would be too long to go down stairs; he will teach him a nearer way: to cast himself down and fear no hurt, for if he were the Son of God he might securely do so. But chiefly Christ was not to begin his ministry by miracles, but doctrine—not from a demonstration of his power, but wisdom. The gospel was to be first preached, then sealed and confirmed by miracles; and Christ's miracles were not to be ludicrous, but profitable—not fitted for pomp, but use—to instruct and help men, rather than strike them with wonder. Now this would discredit the gospel, if Christ should fly in the air; besides, we must not fly to extraordinary means, where ordinary are present.

Only, before I go off, observe that Satan did not offer to cast him down; that God did not suffer him to do, because he sought to bring Christ to sin. If Satan had cast him down, Christ had not sinned.

[2.] The reason by which he backeth the temptation. It is taken from scripture: 'For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.' The scripture is in Ps. 91:11, 12, where the words run thus: 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Where,

First, Observe the devil's cunning in citing scripture. The apostle telleth us that Satan is sometimes transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14. And we read that once he took the habit and guise of a prophet, 1 Sam. 28:18; and indeed he deceiveth more by the voice of Samuel than by the voice of the dragon. We read of τὰ βᾶθη τοῦ Σατανᾶ, 'The depths of Satan,' Rev. 2:24. Here he cometh like a divine, with a Bible in his hand, and turneth to the place; here the

enemy of God cometh with the word of God, and disguiseth the worst of actions with the best of words, opposeth God to God, and turneth his truth to countenance a lie. Being refuted by scripture, he will bring scripture too, and pretendeth to reverence that which he chiefly hateth. Christians, you have not to do with a foolish devil, who will appear in his own colours and ugly shape, but with a devout devil, who, for his own turn, can pretend to be godly.

Secondly, That he citeth such a scripture, which exceedingly conduceth to commend the happiness of the godly; for God will not only be the keeper and guardian of them that fear him, but hath also appointed the ministry of angels; and the argument of the tempter seemeth to be taken from the less to the greater; for if it be true of every one that trusts in God, and dwelleth in the shadow of the Almighty, that God will have such a care of him, much more will he have a care of his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. Therefore, you that are declared to be so from heaven, and having such an occasion to show yourself to be the Son of God with so much honour and profit, why should you scruple to cast yourself down?

But wherein was the devil faulty in citing the scripture? Some say in leaving out those words, in all thy ways. This was Bernard's gloss—in viis, non in præcipitiis; will keep you in your ways or duties, not in your headlong actions; these were none of his ways, to throw himself down from the battlements of the temple. This is not to be altogether rejected, because it reaches the sense; yet this omission was not the devil's fault in citing this scripture; for, all thy ways signifieth no more but in all thy actions and businesses, and that is sufficiently implied in the words cited by Satan. But the devil's error was in application. He applieth the word of God, not to instruct, but deceive; rather to breed a contempt, disdain, and hatred of scriptures, than a reverent esteem of them; to make the word of God seem uncertain; or if a reverence of them, to turn this reverence into an occasion of deceit; more particularly to tempt God to a needless proof of his power. We are not to cast ourselves into

danger, that providence may fetch us off. God will protect us in the evils we suffer, not in the evils we commit—not in dangers we seek, but such as befall us besides our intention.

3. The soreness of this temptation, which appeareth in several things.

[1.] The change of place. For a new temptation, he maketh choice of a new place; he could do no good on him in the wilderness, therefore he taketh him and carrieth him into the holy city. Here was a public place where Christ might discover himself with profit, and the edification of many, if he would but submit to the devil's methods. In the temple the Messiah was as in his own house, where it was fit the Messiah should exhibit himself to his people. There was an old prophecy, Mal. 3:1, 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.' And he was to send forth his rod out of Zion, even the law of his kingdom: Ps. 110:2. If he would yield to this advice and vainglorious ostentation of his power before that numerous multitude which continually resorted to the holy things performed in the temple, how soon should he be manifested to be the Son of God, or the power of the great God. The devil doth not persuade him to cast himself from a rock or top of a tree in the desert—that had been temerity and rashness—but from a pinnacle of the temple, an holy place, and a place of much resort. But the Son of God was not to be discovered to the world by the devil's methods. That had been such a piece of ostentation and vainglory as did not become the Son of God, who came to teach the world humility. But, however, the temptation is grievous: in so good a design, in such an holy place, there could no ill happen to the Son of God, nor a better occasion be offered of showing himself to many, so to confirm the Jews in the truth of the oracle they had of late heard from heaven.

[2.] The change of temptations. Since he will trust, the devil will put him upon trusting; he shall trust as much as he will. There he tempted him to the use of unlawful means to preserve his life, here

to the neglect of things lawful. There, that God would fail him if he were still obedient to the Spirit, and did not take another course than divine providence had as yet offered to him; here, that God would not forsake him, though he threw himself into danger. There, that he would fail though he had promised; here, that he would help though he had not promised. That faith which sustained him in his hunger would preserve him in this precipice; if he expected his preservation from God, why not now? He had hitherto tempted him to diffidence, now to prefidence, or an over-confident presumption that God would needlessly show his power. It is usual with the tempter to tempt man on both sides; sometimes to weaken his faith, at other times to neglect his duty. He was cast out of heaven himself, and he is all for casting down.

[3.] The temptation was the more strong, being veiled under a pretence of scripture, and so Christ's weapons seem to be beaten back upon himself. The devil tempted him to nothing but what he might be confident to do upon the promise of God. Now it is grievous to God's children, when the rule of their lives and the charter of their hopes is abused to countenance a temptation.

II. The observations.

1. Observe, that the first temptation being rejected by Christ, Satan maketh a new assault. Though he get the foil, he will set on us again; like a troublesome fly that is often beaten off, yet will return to the same place. Thus the devil, when he could do no good upon his first patent against Job's goods and children, cometh and sueth for a new commission, that he might touch his flesh and bones; Job 2:4, 5, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.' Satan is incessant in his attempts against the saints, and is ready to assault afresh upon every occasion. Now this cometh to pass by Satan's unwearied malice, who is a sworn enemy to our peace and welfare—he still 'seeketh to devour' us, 1 Peter 5:8; also from God's providence, who permitteth

this that we may not be careless and secure after temptation, though we have gotten the victory; for our life is a continual warfare: Job 7:1, 'Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth?' The same word signifieth also a warfare. Man's life is a perpetual toil, and a condition of manifold temptations and hazards, such as a soldier is exposed to; therefore we must perpetually watch. We get not an absolute victory till death. Now this should the more prevail with us, because many of God's people have failed after some eminent service performed for God. Josiah, after he had prepared the temple, fell into that rash attempt against Pharaoh Necho which cost him his life: 2 Chron. 35:20, 'After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him.' And Peter, after he had made a glorious confession, giveth his Master carnal counsel: Mat. 16:18, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church,' &c.; and yet, ver. 23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Many, after they have been much lifted up in consolation, do readily miscarry. First, he made a glorious confession, a sign of great faith; then carnal wisdom vents itself in some counsel concerning the ease of the flesh. Oh, what need have we to stand upon our guard, till God tread Satan under our feet! As one of the Roman generals, whether conquering or conquered, *semper instaurat pugnam*, so doth Satan.

2. Observe, God may give Satan some power over the body of one whom he loveth dearly. For Satan is permitted to transport Christ's body from the wilderness to the holy city, and to set it on a pinnacle of the temple. As it is very consistent with God's love to his people to suffer them to be tempted in their souls by the fiery darts of Satan, so he may permit Satan to afflict their bodies, either by himself, or by witches, who are his instruments. Thus he permitted Satan to afflict Job, chap. 2:6, 7, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand, but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.' The devil may have a threefold power over the bodies of men:—

[1.] By transportations, or carrying them from one place to another, which usually is not found but in those that give up themselves to his diabolical enchantments. Or,

[2.] In possessions, which were frequent and rife in Christ's time: 'My daughter is sorely vexed with a devil,' Mat. 15:22. Or,

[3.] In diseases, which is more common. Thus he afflicted Job's body with ulcers; and what we read, Ps. 41:8, 'An evil disease cleaveth fast unto him.' It is דָּבַר-בְּלִיעַל 'a thing of Belial,' as if it were a pestilential disease from the devil. So some understand that, Ps. 91:3, 'Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.' As if those sudden darts of venom by which we are stricken in the plague came from Satan. Certainly evil angels may have a great hand in our diseases: Ps. 78:49, 'He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.' But I press it not much. Only,

(1.) A word of patience, that we would submit to God, though our trials be never so sharp. We must yield to that measure of humiliation which it shall please God to prescribe. If he should give leave to Satan to inflame our blood and trouble the humours of our body, we must not repine; the Son of God permitted his sacred body to be transported by the devil in the air.

(2.) A word of comfort. Whatever power God permitteth Satan to have over our bodies, or bodily interests, yet it is limited; he cannot hurt or molest any further than God pleaseth. He had power to set Christ on a pinnacle of the temple, but not to cast him down. He had a power to touch Job's skin, but a charge not to endanger his life: Job 2:6, 'Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life.' God sets bounds and limits to the malice of Satan, that he is not able to compass all his designs. Job was to be exercised, but God would not have him die in a cloud, his life was to be secured till better times.

(3.) A word of caution. Let not the devil make an advantage of those troubles which he bringeth upon our bodies, or the interests of the bodily life, yet let him not thereby draw you to sin. Here the devil may set Christ upon a precipice, but he can do him no further hurt; he may persuade us to cast down ourselves, but he cannot cast us down unless we cast down ourselves, *Nemo læditur nisi a seipso*. His main spite is at your souls, to involve you in sin. God may give him and his instruments a power over your bodily lives, but he doth not give him a power over the graces of the saints. The devil aimeth at the destruction of souls; he can let men enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, that he may deprive you of delight in God and celestial pleasures; he can be content that you shall have dignities and honours if they prove a snare to you. If the devil seek to bring you to poverty, trouble, and nakedness, it is to draw you from God. He careth not for the body but as it may be an occasion to ruin the soul.

3. Observe, If Satan lead us up, it is to throw us down. He taketh up Christ to the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, 'Cast thyself down,' He bringeth up many by little and little to some high place, that by their aspiring they may at length break their necks. Thus he did Haman, and so he doth many others, whose climbing maketh way for their greater fall. The devil himself was an aspirer, and fell from heaven like lightning: Luke 10:18, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' And though in show he may seem to befriend many that hearken to his temptations, yet in the end he crieth, 'Down with them, down with them, even to the ground,' God's manner is quite contrary; when he meaneth to exalt a man, he will first humble him, and make him low: Mat. 23:12, 'Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' But the devil's way is to lift them up to the clouds, that he may bring them down to the lowest pit of destruction. Adam, in conceit, must be like God, that indeed he may be like the beasts that perish: Ps. 49:20, 'Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.'

4. Observe, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.' The temptation is quite contrary to what it was before. Then it was to preserve life by unlawful means, now to endanger life by the neglect of means lawful; there to distrust God's care of our preservation when he hath set us about any task or work, here to presume on his care without warrant. The devil tempts us sometimes to pamper the flesh, sometimes to neglect it in such a way as is destructive to our service. Thus the devil hurrieth us from one extreme to another, as the possessed man 'fell oft-times into the fire, and oft into the water,' Mat. 17:15. Those that are guided by Satan reel from one extremity to another; either men slight sin and make light of it, or sinners are apt to sorrow above measure, as the incestuous Corinthian: 2 Cor. 2:17, 'Lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' And the apostle showeth there that these were the enterprises of Satan. Some men are careless of God's interest in the world, or else heated into the activity of a bitter zeal. Some are of a scrupulous spirit, that they may make conscience of all things; and the devil hurrieth them into a large atheistical spirit, that they make conscience of nothing. How often have we known a fond scrupulosity to end in a profane licentiousness, when they have been wearied out of that kind of frame of spirit! Some are dead and heartless, like Gallio,—'care for none of these things;' fight Christ, fight Antichrist, it is all one to them; and usually they are such as formerly have been heated with a blind and bold madness: as Peter at first refused to have his feet washed by Christ, and then would have head, hands, feet and all washed, John 13:8, 9, being out in both. What sad work is there made in the church of God by Solifidians and Nullifidians: heretofore it was all faith and free grace misapplied and misunderstood; and now it is all morality and virtue, while Christ is neglected, and the mystery of the gospel little set by or valued. It is ever the devil's policy to work upon the humour of people. If they will reform the church, it shall be to a degree of separation, and condemning all churches and Christians that are not of their mode; if they be for uniting, Christ's unquestionable interests must be trodden underfoot, and all care of truth and reformation must be

laid aside. If he can destroy religion and godliness no other way, he will be religious and godly himself; but it is either, as to private Christians, to set them upon overdoing, that he may make them weary of the service of Christ; or, as to the public, by crying up some unnecessary things, which Christ never commanded. If men be troubled with sin, and see a necessity of the gospel, and prize the comforts of it, the gospel must be over-gospelled, or else it will not serve their turns; and that over-gospel must be carried to such a length as to destroy the very gospel, and free grace itself. The devil first tempted the world to despise the poor fishermen that preached the gospel; but the world, being convinced by the power of the Holy Ghost, and gained to the faith, then he fought by riches and grandeur to debase the gospel; so that he hath got as much or more by the worldly glory he puts upon Christ's messengers as by persecution. Then, when that is discovered, the devil will turn reformer; and what reformation is that? the very necessary support and maintenance of ministers must be taken away. All overdoing in God's work is undoing. If Christ will trust, the devil will persuade him to trust, even to the degree of tempting God.

5. Observe, That the devil himself may pretend scripture to put a varnish upon his evil designs; for here he seeketh to foil Christ with his own weapons: which serveth to prevent a double extreme.

[1.] One is, not to be frighted with the mere noise and sound of scriptures, which men bring to countenance their errors. See whether they be not wrested and misapplied; for the devil may quote scripture, but he perverts the meaning of it. And usually it is so by his instruments; as that pope, who would prove a double power to be in himself, temporal and spiritual, by that scripture, *Ecce duo gladii!* 'Behold, here are two swords!' Luke 22:38. It is easy to rehearse the words of scripture, and therefore not the bare words, but the meaning must be regarded.

[2.] The other extreme is this: Let none vilify the scriptures, because pleaded by Satan; for so he might as well vilify human reason,

which is pleaded for all the errors in the world; or law, because it is urged sometimes to justify a bad cause. For it is not scripture, that is not a nose of wax, as Papists say. It is a great proof of the authority and honour of scriptures, that Satan and his greatest instruments do place their greatest hopes of prevailing by perverting and misapplying of it.

6. Observe, That God hath given his angels a special charge about his people, to keep them from harm. Here I shall show:—

[1.] That it is so.

[2.] Why it is so.

First, That it is so is evident by the scripture, which everywhere shows us that angels are the first instruments of his providence, which he maketh use of in guarding his faithful servants: Heb. 1:14. The apostle saith, 'Are they not all, λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation?' Their work and employment is to attend us at God's direction, not to be worshipped and served by us by any devotion. They are 'ministering spirits,' not ours, but Christ's; he that serveth hath a master whom he serveth, and by whom he is sent forth: their work and employment is to attend us indeed, but at the command and direction of their own Master. They are not at our beck to go and come at our pleasure, neither do they go and come at their inclination, but at the commission of God: their work is appointed by him, they serve us as their Master's children, at his command and will; and whom do they serve? 'The heirs of salvation.' They are described, Titus 3:7, 'That being justified by grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' They are not ministers of conversion and sanctification: to this ministry Christ hath called men, not angels; but in preserving the converted the angels have a hand. Therefore it is notable they are sometimes called God's angels: Ps. 103:21, 'Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure;' sometimes their

angels: Mat. 18:10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.'

But whether every one hath an angel-guardian is a curious question. Sometimes one angel serveth many persons: Ps. 34:7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' and sometimes many angels are about one person: 2 Kings 6:17, 'And, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha.' And here in the text quoted by Satan, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.' There is not mention made of one, but many angels, and the angels in general are said to be ministering spirits. When soldiers are said to watch for a city, it is not meant that every citizen hath a soldier to watch for him.

The only place which seemeth to countenance that opinion is Acts 12:15, 'Then said they, It is his angel.' But if Peter had a peculiar angel to guard him, and look after him then, when he was in great trouble, and detained in prison, it doth not follow that every person and everywhere should have an angel-guardian. Besides, an assertion in scripture must be distinguished from men introduced speaking in scripture. It showeth, indeed, that it was the opinion of the Jews at that time, which these holy men had imbibed and drunk in. Or it may be the word angel is only taken for a messenger sent from Peter. Why should an angel stand knocking at the door, who could easily make his entrance? And is it credible that the guardian angels do take their shape and habit whose angels they are? It is enough for us to believe that all the angels are our guardians, who are sent to keep us and preserve us, as it pleaseth God.

But what is their ministry and custody? It is not *cura animarum*, care and charge of souls; that Christ taketh upon himself, and performeth it by his Spirit; but *ministerium externi auxilii*, to afford us outward help and relief: it is *custodia corporis*, they guard the bodily life chiefly. Thus we find them often employed. An angel brought Elijah his food under the juniper-tree: 1 Kings 19:5. An

angel stirred the waters at the Pool of Siloam: John 5:4. An angel was the guide of the way to Abraham's servant: Gen. 24:7, 'He will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.' Angels defend us against enemies: Ps. 34:7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' 2 Kings 19:35, 'The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand.' An angel opened the prison doors to the apostles: Acts 5:19, and 12:7.

But were not all these services extraordinary and miraculous, which we may not now expect?

Ans. The visible ministry was extraordinary, proper to those times; but the invisible is perpetual and ordinary, as Abraham's servant did not see the angel in the journey. The devil worketh in and about wicked men invisibly, so do the good angels.

Secondly, Reasons why it is so.

(1.) To manifest the great love and care which God hath over his people; therefore he giveth those blessed spirits, which behold his face, charge concerning his people on earth; as if a nobleman were charged to look to a beggar by the prince of both.

(2.) We understand the operation of finite agents better than infinite. God is so far out of the reach of our commerce, that we cannot understand the particularity of his providence.

(3.) To counterwork the devil: evil angels are ready to hurt us, and therefore good angels are ready to preserve us. Well might the devil be so well versed in this place; he hath often felt the effects of it; he knew it by experience, being so often encountered by the good angels in his endeavours against the people of God.

(4.) To begin our acquaintance, which in heaven shall be perfected: Heb. 12:22, 'Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels.'

Use 1. To show the happy state of God's people. No heirs of a crown have such guards as they have. Christ dwelleth in their hearts as in a throne: Eph. 3:17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' The Holy Spirit guardeth them against all cares and fears: Phil. 4:7, 'And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' And the good angels are as a wall and camp about them: Ps. 34:7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' Mat. 18:10, 'Despise not one of these little ones, for verily I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' If the angels make an account of them, surely men should not despise them; yea, rather, God esteemeth so much of the meanest of these little ones, that the good angels, who daily enjoy God's glorious presence, are ministering spirits appointed to attend them. If the Lord and his holy angels set such a price on the meanest Christians, we should be loth to despise and offend them.

2. It should breed some confidence and comfort in Christians in their sore straits and difficulties, when all visible help seemeth to be cut off. This invisible ministry of the angels is matter of faith: 2 Kings 6:16, 17, 'And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open the young man's eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the young man's eyes, and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' These were no other but the angels of God, which were as an host to defend them. Open the eye of faith, you may see God, and his holy angels to secure you.

3. Take we heed how we carry ourselves, because of this honourable presence. In congregations there should be no indecency, 'because of the angels,' 1 Cor. 11:10. In all our ways let us take heed that we do not step out of God's way. Do nothing that is unseemly and dishonest; they are spies upon us. And it is profitable for us, that they may give an account of us to God with joy, and not with grief.

SERMON IV

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.—MAT. 4:7.

HERE is Christ's answer to the second temptation, where two things are observable:—

First, That Christ answered.

Secondly, What he answered.

First, That Christ answered. Christ answered, the more to convince and confound this old deceiver, that he might not think that he was ignorant of his sleights, or that he fainted in the conflict; as also to instruct us what to do in the renewed assaults of the devil, to keep up our resistance still, not letting go our sure hold, which are the scriptures.

Secondly, What he answered, 'It is written,' &c. But would it not have been more satisfactory to have said, It is sufficiently manifest to me that I am the Son of God, and cared for by him, and that it is not for the children of God to run upon precipices?

I answer: It is not for human wisdom to interpose and prescribe to Christ, who was the wisdom and power of God. His answer is most satisfactory, for two reasons:—

1. It striketh at the throat of the cause.

2. It doth with advantage give us other instructions.

1. Christ cutteth the throat of the temptation by quoting a passage of scripture, out of Deut. 6:16, 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.' If we must not tempt God, then it doth not become Christ to tempt his Father's providence for a new

proof of his filiation and care over him. Therefore the devil's temptation was neither good nor profitable, to put either his sonship or the care of God's providence to this trial; as if he had said, I shall not require any more signs to prove my filiation, nor express any doubt of his power and goodness towards me, as the Israelites did: Exod. 17:7, 'And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?' To which story this prohibition of tempting God alludeth.

2. He doth with advantage give us other instructions; as,

[1.] That we must not esteem the less of scripture, though Satan and his instruments abuse it; and that nothing is more profitable to dissolve doubts and objections raised from scripture, than to compare one scripture with another. For scripture is not opposite to scripture; there is a fair agreement and harmony between the truths therein compared; and one place doth not cross another, but clear and explain another. One place saith he hath a great care of his people, and useth the ministry of angels for that end and purpose; but another place saith, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;' they must not seek out dangers, and forfeit their protection by unreasonable presumption.

[2.] It teacheth us that what the scripture speaketh to all, is to be esteemed as spoken to every singular person, for they are included in their universality. In Deuteronomy it is, 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God;' but Christ accommodateth it to his own purpose, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' He that is not to be tempted by a multitude, is not to be tempted by any one. So Ps. 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' God's words invite all, but David maketh application to himself.

[3.] Christ subjects himself to the moral law, and did apply the precepts thereof to himself, no less than to us; and so is a pattern of obedience to us, that we ought to direct and order all our actions according to the law and word of God.

Doct. Tempting of God may be a usual, but yet it is a great and heinous sin. In speaking to this point, I shall show:—

I. What this tempting of God is.

II. The heinousness of the sin.

I. What is this tempting of God? And here let me speak:—

1. To the object.

2. To the act.

First, The object, The Lord thy God. To us Christians there is but one only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Now sometimes we are said to tempt God, and sometimes Christ, and sometimes the Spirit of God.

[1.] In scripture we are said to tempt God, as Ps. 95:9, 'When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works.' We tempt God either explicitly or implicitly.

(1.) Explicitly, by plain and direct words, which tend to God's dishonour; or a doubting of his prescience, power, and providence, if they have not all things given them according to their fancies and humours. As Ps. 78:18, 19, 'They tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lusts. Yea, they spake against God, and said, Can God provide a table in the wilderness?' So Exod. 17:7, 'Is the Lord in the midst of us, or no?' They doubted whether God's presence were among them, when they had continually such pregnant proofs of it. The words may either bear this sense, Who

knows that God is present? or, Now see whether God be present, or takes any care of us, yea or no.

(2.) Implicitly, or by interpretation, which is a more secret way of tempting God, when the act speaketh it, whatever be the intention of the doer. As those who were about to lay the burden of the rites of Moses's law on the new converts of the Gentiles: Acts 15:10, 'Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?' That is, why do you not acquiesce in the will of God, apparently manifested, as if ye did go about to try whether God did require anything of his servants besides faith in Christ? His will was clearly evident in the case by what happened to Cornelius; or as if ye would try whether God will take it well that ye should impose upon his disciples a yoke that he approveth not.

[2.] We are said to tempt Christ; and he may be considered either as in the days of his flesh, or in his state of glory, and with respect to his invisible presence:—

(1.) In the days of his flesh he was frequently tempted by the scribes and Pharisees, who would not be satisfied in his mission, notwithstanding all the signs and wonders that he had wrought among them; or else sought to accuse and disgrace him, and prejudice the people against him; so Mat. 16:1, 'The Pharisees with the Sadducees came, and tempting him, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.' So Mat. 22:18, 'Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?' when the Pharisees and the Herodians came to question him about paying tribute. So Luke 10:25, 'A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him,' &c.

(2.) In his state of glory, and with respect to his invisible presence. So the Israelites in the wilderness tempted him before his coming in the flesh, and Christians may now tempt him after his ascension into heaven. Both are in one place: 1 Cor. 10:9, 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of

serpents.' What was their tempting of Christ in the wilderness? If he be considered as God, he had a subsistence before he was incarnate of the Virgin; and in this sense, as they tempted God, so they may be said also to tempt Christ; for all the affliction, shame, and disgrace done to that people are called the reproach of Christ: Heb. 11:25, 26, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' So their murmuring might be called a tempting of Christ. Christ was the perpetual head of the church, who in his own person did lead the people, and was present in the midst of them under the notion of the angel of the covenant. The eternal Son of God guided them in the wilderness: Exod. 23:20–23, 'Behold, I will send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries; for mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the land of the Amorites,' &c. This angel can be no other than Christ, whose office it is to keep us in the way, and to bring us into the place which Christ hath prepared for us; he it is that must be obeyed by the people of God, and pardon their transgressions; in him is God's name, for he will not communicate it to any other that is not of the same substance with himself: God is in him, and he in the Father, and his name is 'Jehovah our Righteousness.' So Exod. 33:14, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' My presence, that is, my angel, spoken of before, called 'the angel of his presence:' Isa. 63:9, 'In all their affliction he was Afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them.' This angel is called Jehovah: Exod. 13:21, 'And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud,' &c. This angel of God's presence was no other than Jesus Christ, the conductor of them in the wilderness, who safe-guarded them, and secured them all the way from Egypt to Canaan. And we Christians may also tempt Christ, for the apostle warneth us against it: we tempt Christ, now he is ascended into heaven, when we

disobey his laws, question his authority, doubt of his promises, after sufficient means of conviction, that he is the Messiah, the Son of God; grow weary of his religion, loathing spiritual manna, and begin to be gluttoned with the gospel, and are discouraged in the way to our heavenly Canaan, whither we are travelling.

[3.] The Holy Ghost is said also to be tempted: Acts 5:9, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'—namely, by their hypocrisy and dissimulation, putting it to the trial, whether he could discover them in their sin, yea or no; they had endeavoured, as much as in them lay, to deceive the Spirit by keeping back part of the price; that is, by that practice they would put it to the trial, whether the Holy Ghost, yea or no, could find out that cheat and fallacy. It is not barely to deceive the apostles, who were full of the Holy Ghost, and had a discerning spirit, though to them they brought their lie. No, saith the apostle, 'Ye have not lied unto men, but unto God,' ver. 4; and therefore they are said to 'tempt the Holy Ghost,' whether he could find them out or no, though they had so many experiences of his care and respect to the church, and all affairs belonging thereunto; and so the injury was done, not to the apostles, but to the Holy Ghost himself.

Secondly, The act. What is this temptation of God? Temptation is the proving and making trial of a thing or person, what he is, and what he will do. Thus we tempt God when we put it to the trial whether God will be as good as his word, and doubt of the comminatory and promissory part thereof, or whether he will be such an one as he is taken to be. Now, this is lawful or unlawful according as the trial is made humbly and dutifully, or else proudly and sinfully, whether God will do such a thing as we have prescribed him. And again, as the trial is made necessarily or unnecessarily. Sinfully we are said to tempt God when we make an unnecessary experiment of his truth, goodness, and power, and care of us, having had sufficient assurance of these things before.

[1.] There is a tempting or proving of God in a way of duty. So we are bidden, Mal. 3:10, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now therewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' God there submitteth to a trial upon experience; though we are to believe him upon his bare word, yet he will have us to wait for the good things promised; and in this sense it is said, 'The word of the Lord is a tried word, he is a buckler to all them that trust in him,' Ps. 18:30. All those that build any hope upon it, and wait to see what the Lord will do, will find that God will stand to his word. This is a constant duty to observe God's truth and faithfulness. To suspend our belief till the event is distrust; but to wait, observing what God will do as to the event, is an unquestionable duty.

[2.] There is an allowed trying of God in some cases. I cannot say it is a duty, because it is only warrantable by God's special indulgence and dispensation; and I cannot say it is a sin, because of God's gracious condescension to his people: Judges 6:39, 'And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.' The request was not of distrust and malice, but of infirmity and from a weak faith; not out of infidelity to tempt God, but out of humility; being sensible of his own weakness, he desired this help, for the further confirmation of his faith concerning his calling to this work, as an instrument authorised, and the issue and success of it; and also to assure others who followed him. To this head I refer Thomas his proof and trial: John 20:25, 'Except I see in his hand 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.' Here was weakness in Thomas, to suspend his faith upon such a condition; but an apostle was to be *ἀυτόπτης*, an eye-witness of those things which were done, especially of his resurrection; and, therefore, Christ meekly condescended to his

request, ver. 27, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' I put it among infirmities: he alloweth him his trial of sense, but with some rebuke. To this head may be referred that of Hezekiah, who, when he was sick of a mortal disease, and the Lord had extraordinarily promised him, on his mourning, that he should be recovered again, he asks a sign for the confirmation of his faith, and God grants it him: 2 Kings 20:8, 9. And the instance of Ahaz, who, when the prophet bid him 'ask a sign,' he said, Isa. 7:12, 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.' He believed nothing of what the prophet had spoke, and was resolved to go on in his way, but he pretended a reverent and religious respect to God. This kind of tempting God is tolerable, being an act of condescension in God to the weakness of his people.

[3.] There is a sinful tempting of God, and this is done two ways:—

(1.) Generally every transgression, in a general sense, is a tempting God: Num. 14:22, 'They have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice.' Every eminent and notable provocation of theirs is called a tempting of God. Hereby they make trial of God's justice, whether he will execute vengeance upon them or no. Thus we tempt Christ when we fall into any voluntary and known sin, we put it to the trial what he will or can do; we enter into the lists with God, provoke him to the combat: 1 Cor. 10:22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' We try whether God will be so severe as his threatening speaks him to be, as if we would make some experiment of his anger, justice, and power. This kind of tempting of God is compounded of infidelity and presumption. There is infidelity in it when we dare sin against the clear light and checks of conscience, and venture upon his threatenings. You cannot drive a dull ass into the fire that is kindled before him: Prov. 1:17, 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' And there is presumption in it, therefore these voluntary acts of rebellion are called presumptuous sins: Ps. 19:13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.' Gross and

scandalous sinners are described to be such as tempt God: Mal. 3:15, 'And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' And Ananias and Sapphira are said to 'tempt the Holy Ghost,' Acts 5:9. By open voluntary sins men dare God to his face; by secret sins we put it to the trial whether God be an all-seeing God, and will discover this hypocrisy. Both conclude they shall do well enough, though they break his laws, and run wilfully upon evil practices forbidden by his law.

(2.) More particularly we tempt God two ways—in a way of distrust or presumption. Both these arise from unbelief, though they seem to be contrary extremes; for though presumption may seem to arise from an over-much confidence, yet if it be narrowly searched into, we shall find that men presume upon unwarrantable courses, because they do not believe that God will do what is meet to be done in his own time or in his own way. As, for instance, had the Israelites believed that God, in his own time, and in his own way, would have destroyed the Canaanites, they would not have presumed, against an express charge, to have gone against them without the ark and without Moses, as they did: Num. 14:40, to the end: they presumed to go up unto the hill-top, and then they were discomfited. But presumption in some being most visible, in others distrust, therefore we make two kinds of them.

[1st.] In a way of distrust. And that is done several ways, but all agree in this: not content with what God hath done already to settle our faith, we prescribe means of our own, and indent with him upon terms of our own making. So the Israelites, Exod. 17:7, 'And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?' They had sufficient signs of God's presence—the pillar of a cloud and fire, that went before them by day and by night; but they would have signs of their own. So the Jews are said to tempt Christ, because they sought a sign from heaven: Mat. 16:1, 'The Pharisees also, with the Sadducees, came,

and, tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.' He had given sufficient evidence of his mission and divine power in casting out devils and healing the sick and diseased; but they would have a sign from heaven, some sign of their own prescribing. The devil is ready to put such thoughts into our minds. If God be with us, let him show it by doing this or that; and we are apt to require stronger proofs of God's power and presence with us than he alloweth. This is a frequent sin now-a-days, and men are many ways guilty of it.

First, Some will not believe the gospel except they see a miracle or hear an oracle. Christ representeth their thoughts, Luke 16:30, 'Nay, father Abraham, if one went to them from the dead, then they would repent.' They would have other ways of assurance than God alloweth, and are not content with his word and works, by which he revealeth himself to us, but will, at their own pleasure, make trial of his will and power, and then believe. These tempt God, and therefore no wonder if God will not do for them that which they require.

Secondly, Some will not believe God's providence, but make question of his power and goodness, and care over us and our welfare, when he hath given us sufficient proof thereof. When he hath taken care to convince our infidelity by supplying our wants, and hath done abundantly enough already for evidencing his power, justice, and truth, and readiness to help us, we will not believe unless he give us new and extraordinary proof of each, such as we prescribe to him: Ps. 95:9, 10, 'When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.' They saw his works, were fed with miracles, and clothed with miracles, yet they must have new proof still. Two ways of tempting him as to his providence the scripture mentions:—

One was their setting God a task of satisfying their conceits and carnal affections: Ps. 78:18, 'And they tempted God in their hearts, by asking meat for their lusts.' Of this sin they are guilty that must be maintained at such a rate, must have such provision for them and theirs, or else they cannot believe his truth and care of them. As the Israelites, God must give them festival diet in the wilderness, or else they will no longer believe his power and serve him.

The other way of tempting God, with respect to his providence, was by confining him to their own time, manner, and means of working: Ps. 78:41, 'Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.' To limit the Holy One is to confine him within a circle of their own making, and if he doth not help them by their means, and at their time, as those in the text, they will not tarry God's leisure, they think there is no depending on him for any succour. Thus they set bounds to his wisdom and power, as if he could do no more than they conceive to be probable. Thus also we prescribe means and time to God, take upon us to set rules to him how he should govern the world. And one usual way of tempting God now is, when we will not go fair and softly in the path and pace of God's appointing, but are offended at the tediousness thereof, and make haste, and take more compendious ways of our own: Isa. 28:16, 'He that believeth will not make haste;' but he that believeth not is precipitant, must have God's mercy, power, and goodness manifested to them in their own way and time.

Thirdly, Some will not be satisfied as to their spiritual estate without some sensible proof, or such kind of assurance as God usually vouchsafeth not to his people. As suppose they must be fed with spiritual dainties, and overflow with sensible consolation in every holy duty, or else they are filled with disquieting thoughts about their acceptance with God. We must have matters of faith put under the view and feeling of sense, or else we will not take comfort in them. But we must not limit God to give proofs of his love, nor prescribe such signs as are not promised by him, but study our case in the word. For God will not always treat us by sensible experience.

Thomas is allowed to touch Christ, but Mary is not allowed to touch him: John 20:17, compared with ver. 27.

[2dly.] In a way of presumption; so we tempt God when, without any warrant, we presume of God's power and providence. As here the devil tempted Christ to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, to try if he would take the charge of him in the fall; whereupon Christ replieth, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Now this is done several ways.

First, When we presume upon God's help, forsaking the ordinary way and means. Christ would not throw himself down, when he could go down by the stairs or steps of the temple. Down-stairs and over the battlements is not all one. Christ, that could walk upon the sea in the distress of his disciples, in ordinary cases taketh a ship. Whosoever will not use the ordinary means that God hath appointed, but in ordinary cases expects extraordinary supplies, tempteth God. God is able to bring water out of the rock, when there is nothing but rock and stone; but when we may hope to find spring-water, we must dig for it. God can rain manna out of heaven; but when the soil will bear corn, we must till it. When Elisha was in a little village, not able to defend him from the Syrians, he had chariots and horsemen of fire to defend him, 2 Kings 6:17; but when he was in Samaria, a strong, walled town, and the king of Israel sent to fetch his head, he said to those that were with him, 'Shut the door,' ver. 32. Christ in the wilderness miraculously fed many; but near the city he 'sent his disciples to buy bread,' John 4:8. When the Church of God had need of able helps at first, gifts were miraculously conferred; but afterwards every man to his study, 1 Tim. 4:15, 'Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all'. In short, God's omnipotency is for that time discharged, when we have ordinary means to help ourselves. To disdain ordinary means, and expect extraordinary, is as if a man should put off his clothes, and then expect God should keep him from cold.

Secondly, When we expect the end without the means. If Hezekiah had refused the bunch of figs, or Paul's companions to tarry in the ship, they had tempted God. When we desire any blessing, we must not refuse or neglect any good means for attaining of it. In spiritual things this is very usual; men hope to have the end without the means. In temporal things we will soon confess there must be means used, for 'if any would not work, neither should he eat,' 2 Thes. 3:10. In warfare no victory is to be hoped for without fighting; only in spiritual matters we think to do well enough, though we never put to our endeavours to cry for knowledge, and to dig for it; this is a tempting of God: Prov. 2:3–5, 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.' We dream of heaven when there is no mortification, no exercising ourselves unto godliness. A great many say as Balaam did, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' Num. 23:10; but they care not for living the life of the righteous. If they can but charm themselves into a secure presumption of salvation, they never give diligence to make their calling and election sure. This cometh from hardness of heart, not strength of faith. Many defer their conversion to the last, and then think that in the twinkling of an eye they shall in a trice be in heaven with Elias in whirlwind. It was a prayer of Sir Thomas More, Domine, Deus, fac me in iis consequendis operam collocare, pro quibus obtinendis te orare soleo—'Lord! make me to bestow pains in getting those things, for the obtaining of which I use to pray to thee.' Otherwise we tempt God.

Thirdly, When without call we rush into any danger, or throw ourselves into it, with an expectation God will fetch us off again. As if Christ, when nobody went about to thrust him down, should wilfully have cast himself down. Whether the danger be certain, or inevitable, or very probable, we must not throw ourselves on it; but, when God calls us, then we may expect his help according to his promise; as to go into places or houses infected. In spiritual cases it

is often done; men that by often experience have found such and such things to be occasions to them of sinning, yet presume to do the same again; these tempt God, ride into the devil's quarters, go into dangerous places and companies where they are like to be corrupted; as Peter went into the high-priest's hall, and those that go to live in Popish families. We pray that we be not led into temptations, but when we lead ourselves, what shall become of us? as we do, when we cast ourselves upon temptations, and dangerous occasions of sin.

Fourthly, When we undertake things for which we are not fitted and prepared, either habitually or actually: as to speak largely without meditation. When an unlearned man undertakes the handling a weighty controversy, and a good cause wanteth shoulders, we tempt God. When we undertake things above bodily strength, all will condemn us; so to undertake things that we have no ability to perform is unlawful. The sons of Sceva would take upon them to exorcise the devil, 'And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded,' Acts 19:16.

Fifthly, Another sort of tempting God is, when we come to him with an idol in our hearts; that is, when people are resolved of a thing, they will go and ask counsel of God. In all matters we resolve on we are to take God's leave, and counsel, and blessing; but they first resolve and then ask God's counsel. And, therefore, God saith, Ezek. 14:4, 'Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols.' Balaam had a mind to the wages of unrighteousness, but yet he durst not go without God, and, till God had permitted him, he would be asking again and again: Num. 22:12, compared with the 20th and 22d verses. God answered him in wrath, according to the idol of his heart. Thus you see men tempt God, when, either out of diffidence or presumption, they seek an experience of his wisdom, power, justice, truth,

goodness, against his word and command, and the order he hath established; as the Israelites, when means failed, murmured and prescribed time, means, and manner of deliverance, as if they would subject God to their lusts.

II. The heinousness of the sin.

1. Because it is a great arrogancy when we seek thus to subject the Lord to our direction, will, and carnal affections. Prescribing to God argueth too great an ascribing to ourselves. Certainly the Lord cannot endure that his people, who ought wholly to depend upon him, submit to him, and be ruled by him, should prescribe as they please how and when he should help them; and that his power and goodness should lacquey upon, and be at the beck of, our idle and wanton humours. The direction of the affairs of the world is one of the flowers of God's crown. Now to dislike of his holy government is a presumptuous arrogancy in the creature; we will take upon us to model our mercies and choose our means, and will not tarry the time that he hath appointed for our relief, but will anticipate it, and shorten it according to our own fancies. God is sovereign, we are as clay in his hands; he is our potter, and must prescribe the shape in which we must be formed, and the use we must be put to, Jer. 18:6: 'O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as the potter, saith the Lord? Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.' He hath full right to dispose of the creature as he pleaseth, and according to the counsel of his own will, to which we are to be subject without murmuring or repining. We cannot say to him, 'What makest thou? or why dost thou this?' Isa. 45:9 'Woe unto him that striveth with his maker! let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands.' Tempting before the event is the same almost with murmuring after the event.

2. It is great unbelief, or a calling into question God's power, mercy, and goodness to us. We should entirely depend upon God for

salvation, and whatsoever is necessary to salvation, and that he will supply our wants, and bring us out of every strait, in a way most conducing to our own welfare and his honour. But now we are not satisfied with the assurance God hath given us in those laws of commerce, which are established between him and us; we must have extraordinary proofs, or else we question all. Tempting God seemeth rather to be opposed to the fear and reverence that we should have of him; yet, primarily and in itself, it is rather opposite to our trust. And though we take it for a sin which argueth too much trust, or an unwarrantable boldness in expecting unusual ways of help from God, yet generally it belongeth to unbelief and diffidence, and ariseth from it. For, therefore, we put him to proof, tempt, or make trial of God, because we distrust his help, and are not satisfied with his goodness and power, till we have other testimonies thereof, than are ordinarily dispensed. Therefore this reason is given of their tempting God, because 'they believed not God, and trusted not in his salvation,' Ps. 78:22. They must have their own salvation, their own way of supply or deliverance, or else they cannot trust God if he doth not help them at their time and by their means.

3. It looseneth the bonds of all obedience, because we set up new laws of commerce between God and us; for when we suspect God's fidelity to us, unless he do such things as we fancy, we suspect our fidelity to him. Therefore disobedience is made the fruit of tempting God: Ps. 78:56, 'Yea, they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies.' They that tempt God cast away God's rule, and God's terms of obedience, and make others to themselves. The question is, whether God shall direct us, or we him? We say, unless God will do thus and thus, we will no longer believe his power and serve him.

4. It is great ingratitude, or a lessening God's benefits and works already done for us: Ps. 78:20, 'Behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?' As if what he had done

formerly were nothing. Now, God cannot endure to have his benefits lessened, or his former works forgotten and despised.

5. It is wantonness, rather than want, puts us upon tempting of God. There is a humour in men; we are very desirous to try conclusions, condemning things common, and are fond about strange novelties. It was told the Israelites, as plain as could be, that they should not reserve manna till the morning; and they need not to have reserved it, they had fresh every day; yet they would needs keep it for experiment's sake, to try whether it would stink or no: Exod. 16:20. And though they were forbidden to gather it on the Sabbath-day, having on the evening before enough for two days, and it was told them they should find none on the Sabbath-day, yet they must try. Where need is, there a man may commit himself to the providence of God, and rely upon him; and where means fail us, God can help us by prerogative, that we may say with Abraham, when we have no help present, 'In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,' Gen. 22:14; and with Moses, when the Red Sea was before them, and the enemy was behind them, 'Fear ye not, stand still, and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day,' Exod. 14:13. When Elias was in distress, the angel brought him meat, 1 Kings 19:5, 6; when Hagar and Ishmael were in the wilderness, and the bottle spent, then God comforted her from heaven, Gen. 21:17; when the three children were in the fiery furnace, then God sent an angel to be their deliverer, Dan. 3:28. But now, in wantonness to desire extraordinary proofs of God's care over us, when he hath in ordinary ways provided for us, is to tempt the Lord: Ps. 106:14, 'They lusted exceedingly in the desert, and tempted God in the wilderness.' When they had so many convictions of God's power and providence over them, which should in reason have charmed them into a full and cheerful resignation and dependence upon him, they, remembering the flesh-pots in Egypt, must have their luxuriant appetites gratified; and because they had not that festival plenty, which could not be expected in the wilderness, they reproached Moses for having brought them out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness; and now God must show them a miracle, not for the

supply of their wants, but to pamper and feed their lusts: Ps. 78:18, 19, 'And they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust: yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' A table must be prepared; he must give them festival diet in the wilderness.

6. It argues impatience: Ps. 106:13, 14, 'They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.' The word signifies they made haste, took it ill they were not presently brought into that plenty that was promised: Num. 20:5, 'Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink,' which was the plenty that was promised in the land of Canaan. Thus they made haste, were impatient of staying God's time of giving them this inheritance; and because they had it not presently, they wished themselves back again in Egypt. Tempting is because we cannot attend the performance of God's promise in his own time. They went out passionately in the pursuit of their plenty, which they looked for; and as soon as they discovered any difficulty, conclude they were betrayed, not waiting with patience God's time, when he should accomplish his promises made to them.

7. The greatness of the sin is seen by the punishments of it. One is mentioned: 1 Cor. 10:9, 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.' They were bitten of serpents, because they tempted God, and murmured because of the length of the way, that they could not get presently into Canaan; and the apostle tells us that all the things which happened to Israel of old happened to them *ὡς τύποι*, as patterns of providence. A people might easily read their own doom and destiny, if they would blow off the dust from the ancient providences of God, and observe what proofs and characters of his justice, wisdom, and truth are engraven there. The desert of sin is still the same, and the exactness of divine justice is still the same; and therefore what hath

been is a pledge and document of what may be, if we fall into like crimes. God is impartially and immutably just; he is but one: Gal. 3:20. God is one, always consonant unto himself, and doth like unto himself: his power is the same, so is his justice. Even the historical part of the word is a kind of prophecy, not only a register and chronicle of what is past, but a kind of calendar and prognostication of what is to come. As other histories in scripture are left upon record for our learning, so especially the history of Israel's passage through the wilderness into Canaan.

Use. Let us not tempt God in any of the kinds mentioned.

1. Not by requiring new grounds of faith, when God hath given sufficient already; not by cherishing scepticism and irresolution in point of religion, till new nuncios come from heaven, with a power to work miracles, and to be endowed with extraordinary gifts, as the Seekers do. Many waver in religion, would fain see an apparition, and have some extraordinary satisfaction, which God would not give them upon every trifling occasion. The Pharisees must have a sign from heaven; the Papists would have the Protestant teachers show their commission by miracles; the Jews would believe if Christ came down from the cross. To suspend our faith till God gives us our own terms is to tempt God; and to dispossess you of this conceit, consider:—

[1.] Signs and wonders done in one age and time for the confirmation of the true religion, should suffice all ages and times afterwards; and it is a tempting God to ask more signs and wonders for the confirmation of that truth, which is sufficiently confirmed already, if there be a good and safe tradition of these things to us. The giving of the law was attended with thunderings and lightnings, and the sound of a terrible trumpet, Exod. 19, by which means the law was authorised, and owned as proceeding from God. Now, it was not needful this should be repeated in every age, as long as a certain report and records of it might convey it to their ears. In the setting up a new law, signs and wonders are necessary to declare it to be of

God; but when the church is in the possession of it, these cease. So in the Christian church; when the gospel was first set on foot, it was then confirmed with signs and wonders, but now they are unnecessary. See the law and gospel compared: Heb. 2:2–4, 'For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?'

[2.] If you had lived in the age of signs and wonders, there were hard hearts then, unbelievers then, and blasphemers then, and tempters of God then: Ps. 78:22–24, 'Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation, though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven,' &c., to ver. 32, 'For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.' Extraordinary works will not work upon them upon whom ordinary works will not prevail.

Object. But for them that have to do with the conversion of Indians and remote parts of the world, is it a tempting of God to ask the gift of miracles?

Ans. I cannot say so. God may be humbly sought unto about direction in the gifts of tongues, and healing, being so necessary for the instruments employed, as well as the conviction of the nations. I dare not determine anything in the case, but I am satisfied with Acostus his reasons why miracles are not afforded by God now, as well as in the primitive times. Then simple and unlearned men were sent to preach Christianity among the nations, where many were armed and instructed against it with all kind of learning and philosophy; but now learned men are sent to the ignorant, and are superior to them in reason, and in civility and authority; and,

besides, present them a religion far more credible than their own, that they cannot easily withstand the light of it.

2. Do not run into any wilful and known sin, as if you would try how far the patience of God will go, nor abuse his fatherly goodness by going on still in your trespasses. When a man will try the patience of God without any regard of his threatenings, or the instances of his wrath, which are before his eyes, he puts it to the proof whether God will punish him, yea or no. Remember you are no match for him: Isa. 45:9, 'Woe unto him that striveth with his maker! let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth.' As Abner said to Asahel: 2 Sam. 2:21, 22, 'Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. 'And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?' So if you will needs be tempting and trying conclusions, and making experiments, let men meddle with their match, those who are equal to themselves, not challenging one infinitely above them; let frail man cope with man, but let him take heed of meddling with God: Ezek. 22:14, 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?' Many foolish people say, as those in the prophet, 'It is an evil, and I must bear it;' endure it as well as I can. What! endure the loss of heaven! endure the wrath of the Almighty God! If Rachel could not endure the loss of her children, nor Jacob the supposed loss of Joseph, but, says he, 'I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning,' Gen. 37:35. If Achitophel could not endure the rejectment of his counsel, and Haman could not endure to be slighted by Mordecai, and many cannot endure the loss of a beloved child; how wilt thou endure the loss of eternal happiness? The disciples wept bitterly when Paul said, 'Ye shall see my face no more,' Acts 20:38. What will ye do, then, when God shall say, Ye shall see my face no more? Ah wretch! how canst thou endure the wrath of God? Thou canst not endure to be scorched a few days with feverish flames; thou canst not endure the acute pains of stone and gout, when God armeth the humours of thine own body against

thee; thou canst not endure the scorching of a little gunpowder casually blown up; thou canst not endure the pains of a broken arm or leg; and can you endure the wrath of God, when God himself shall fall upon you with all his might?

3. When we are destitute and sorely distressed, let us wait upon God with patience, according to the tenor of his promises, and tarry his leisure, without prescribing time and means. God knoweth the fittest season, and delighteth oftentimes to show our impatience and try our faith: Mat. 15:28, 'O woman, great is thy faith!' And that his help may not be ascribed to chance or our industry, and that we may the more prize blessings, consider you cannot be more distressed than Christ was, who seemed abandoned to Satan's power, distressed with sore hunger through his long fasting. The devil was permitted to have power over his body, to carry him to one of the pinnacles of the temple, and yet he discovered an invincible confidence and trust in God, that he would not step the least step out of God's way for his preservation in so imminent a danger.

Now that you may not tempt God:—

[1.] Let your heart be deeply possessed with apprehensions of the goodness, wisdom, and power of God. The scripture telleth us for his goodness: Ps. 119:68, 'Thou art good, and doest good;' and again, Ps. 145:9, 'The Lord is good to all.' For his wisdom: Isa. 28:29, 'He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.' His purposes are often hidden from us, but he doeth all things well; God can do more for us than seemeth probable at the present; and therefore let us not tempt him by confining him to our time, means, and manner. He may love us, and yet delay our help: John 11:5, 6, 'Jesus loved Lazarus,' and yet, ver. 6, 'When he heard that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.' Then, for his power and sovereign dominion, there is not a better argument for confidence than the preface and conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. Whatsoever state you are reduced to, God is still to be trusted, who is 'Our Father, which is in heaven,' and 'whose is the kingdom,

power, and glory:' 2 Tim. 1:12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' Whatsoever our straits be, he is a God still to be trusted.

[2.] Be firmly persuaded of God's care and providence over his people, and so careth for you in particular. This is assured to us by promises and by experiences. By promises: 1 Pet. 5:7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you;' Phil. 4:6, 7, 'Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' By experiences: Mat. 16:8, 9, 'O ye of little faith! why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?' Christ was angry with his disciples, that they should be troubled about bread, since they had lately such experience of his power to provide bread at pleasure. Use the means God puts into your hands, and refer the success to him. You need not be anxious about anything in this world.

[3.] Let all this produce in you an holy obstinacy of trust and obedience, or an invincible confidence in God, and close adherence to him, whatever your dangers, straits, and extremities be, and this will guard your heart against all tempting of God:—

(1.) A resolute trust and dependence: Job 13:15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' This is the soul that is prepared to be true to God, and contentedly to bear whatever he sendeth.

(2.) A constant adherence to our duty: 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way,' Ps. 37:34. Do not go one step out of God's way for all the good in the world. The greatest extremities are to be borne rather than the least sin yielded to: Dan. 3:17, 18, 'Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he

will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' Please God, and God will be always with you, when you seem to be left destitute: John 8:29, 'And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.'

SERMON V

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.—MAT. 4:8, 9.

THIS is the third temptation. In handling it I shall use the former method, give you the history of the temptation, and observations thereupon.

In the history.

I. The introduction, ver. 8.

II. The temptation itself, with the grievousness of it, ver. 9.

III. Christ's reply, ver. 10.

First, In the introduction we have—

1. The place the devil taketh him unto: an exceeding high mountain.
2. The fact: he showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

1. The place chosen for the conflict, 'an exceeding high mountain.' For the mountain, the scripture would not name it, and we need not anxiously inquire after it, whether any near Jericho, as some say, or as others, some mountain near Jerusalem; and possibly the highest above the rest was chosen by the tempter. The pinnacle of the temple was not proper, because Jerusalem was surrounded with higher mountains on all sides: Ps. 125:2, 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,' &c. He chose an high mountain, because of the fairer prospect, where the horizon might be as spacious as was

possible, and the sight not hindered by any interposing object. God took Moses into Mount Pisgah, and showed him the land of Canaan, Deut. 34:1. The devil, who affecteth to do in evil as God doth in what is good, taketh Christ into a mountain. He leadeth us high, and promiseth us high things, that suiteth with his disposition; but it endeth in a downfall that suiteth with his condition. The close is still 'cast thyself down,' or else, as here, 'fall down and worship me.' The devil's taking him up thither is to be explained the same way with his taking him up to the pinnacle of the temple.

2. The fact, and 'showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.' But how could the devil from one mountain show him all the kingdoms of the world, when there is none so high as that we can see the latitude of one kingdom, much less through all, partly through the unequal swellings of the earth, and partly through the weakness of the eye, which cannot reach so far? The sight could go no further than the horizon, and the other hemisphere is not to be seen at all; that part which we see is much less than that part which we see not. Therefore how could he show him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof? Ans. These words must not be taken rigorously; but that he showed them:—(1.) In compendio. (2.) In speculo. (3.) In colloquio.

[1.] In compendio. It may be understood of so many kingdoms as could fall under the sight of a man looking round about him from some eminent place; as God is said to show Moses all the land of Canaan, when he did actually see only a part thereof. From that high mountain the devil gave him a view of all that was to be seen from thence; many castles, towns, and fruitful fields might be seen as a sample of the rest. It is a synechdochical hyperbole, he that showeth a part of a thing, and the chiefest part, may be said to show the thing itself.

[2.] In speculo, besides what he might reach by his sight. By way of representation and external visible species, he represented to Christ all the rest of the kingdoms of the world and the pomp and glory

thereof as in a map. For Satan can object to the eyes of men the species and images of divers things; and there is no absurdity to think that this way he showed his utmost art and cunning to represent the world to Christ in as splendid and inviting a manner as he could. If you ask, therefore, why he carried him to a high mountain—he might have done this in a valley or any other place as well? I answer, it is true if the discovery had been only by representation, or if the devil could have deluded Christ's fancy or imagination, so as to impress these species upon it so far as that he should seem to see what he did not see, a valley would have served turn as well as a mountain; but this was done without it, and with it, showing the glory of the world as in a map and picture, and therefore a convenient place is chosen.

[3.] In colloquio, by discourse. The temptation might be helped on by the devil's pointing at the several quarters of the world, with words relating the glory thereof, what splendour and glory the kings and nations had which adored him, all which Christ should have if he would fall down and worship him. Now all this while Satan is but making way for his purpose, thinking Christ would be ravished with this glorious sight. Possibly it was not a mere dumb show, but the tempting objects were amply set forth by Satan's speech.

Secondly, The temptation itself, where we may consider the nature and the grievousness of it.

1. The nature of the temptation, where observe two things:—

[1.] An offer or a promise: all these things will I give thee.

[2.] A postulation or demand: if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

[1.] An offer or promise: 'all these things will I give thee.' This is a vain boast of the tempter, who ascribeth to himself that which was proper to God, and promiseth to Christ those things which were all his before. God had said, Ps. 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth

for thy possession.' This the devil, who affecteth to be like God, arrogateth unto himself, as if he would make him the universal king of the world. In Luke it is, chap. 4:6, 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.' But you must not always look for truth in the devil's speeches: he is not lord of the world to dispose of it at his own pleasure. And yet it is not to be supposed he would come with a downright untruth to the Son of God, if there were no pretence or varnish for it. Therefore we must distinguish between the devil's lie and the colour thereof.

(1.) Certain it is that God doth govern all the affairs of this world, and doth put bounds and limits to Satan's power, beyond which he cannot pass, and doth often hinder his endeavours, and turn them to the quite contrary end and purpose; and if he doth not hinder them, yet he directeth them for good to his, people. Therefore that power that Satan hath is not given, but permitted; not absolute, but limited. It is a lie that Satan can give these things at pleasure; see these scriptures: Ps. 24:1, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein; Dan. 2:21, 'He changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings;' and ver. 37, 'The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.' All the alterations that are in the earth are of the Lord; he pulleth down, and raiseth up, as seemeth good unto him. Therefore this power of disposing kingdoms belongeth unto God.

(2.) That the Son of God is the right heir of the world: Heb. 1:2, 'Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.' To whom the nations are given: Ps. 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;' Mat. 28:18, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' And therefore it was impudence in him to arrogate this power, and to promise these things to the Lord which were his before.

(3.) Though this was a lie, yet here is the colour of the lie. God permitteth that men sometimes by indirect means become great in honour and dignity in this world; all which are done by the instinct of Satan and his help. And evil men often succeed in their attempts, and from hence Satan is called the prince of this world: John 12:31, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out;' John 14:30, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;' John 16:11, 'Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' Yea, Paul goeth higher, and calleth him 'the god of this world:' 2 Cor. 4:4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.' But this is by usurpation, not just right. And the devils are called, Eph. 6:12, 'The rulers of the darkness of this world,' as the wicked consent to his empire and evil suggestions. But all this implieth but a limited and restrained kingdom; and the devil's impudence and falsehood lieth in this, that he interprets God's permission for a commission, his connivance for a conveyance. Indeed, there are two lies in the devil's offer: one assertory, as if the power and glory of the world were at his disposal; the other promissory, as if he would invest Christ in the full and peaceable possession thereof; whereas indeed he went about to divest and dispossess the Son of God of his right, or to tempt him to do a thing contrary to his kingdom; for he knew the abasement of Christ was the way to his glory, the cause of man's happiness, and the ruin of the kingdom of the devil; therefore he seeketh to prevent this by these magnificent promises.

[2.] The postulation or demand: 'if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Here the devil appeareth in his own likeness. Before it was, 'if thou be the Son of God;' now it is, 'fall down and worship me.' Before he appeared as a friend to advise him in his hunger; then as a divine to instruct him how to discover himself as the Messiah; now as a plain usurper of God's worship. And he demands but one act of prostration, such as was given to the kings of the East; and the Jews in that manner did worship God. Therefore this was the vilest and most blasphemous suggestion which Satan could devise, that the

Son of God should stoop to God's rebel. Here we see the devil not only importunate, but impudent.

2. The grievousness of the temptation, that will appear in these considerations:—

[1.] Because it was represented in a matter grateful and pleasing. It was unnecessary to turn stones into bread, dangerous to throw himself down from a pinnacle of the temple; but it might seem sweet and grateful to behold the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof; for surely the glory of the world is a bewitching object, and would much move a carnal heart. And therefore he produceth this tempting object, and sets it before Christ himself. Mark, he showed him the glory only, not the burdens, the labours, the cares, those storms of jealousy and envy which those encounter with who are at the top. This way did he now choose wherewith to assault Christ. Had he really represented the world, with all the vexations attending it, the temptation had not been so great; but he showeth the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof: the bait, not the hook; he talketh highly of small things, commendeth what is pleasing, but hideth the bitter of these luscious sweets; he offereth Christ the glory of the kingdoms of the world, but dissembleth the cares, the troubles, the dangers. Alas! we see the best side of those that live in courts, their gorgeous apparel, their costly entertainments, their power and greatness; but their fears of being depressed by superiors, jostled by equals, undermined by inferiors, are hidden from us.

Therefore the temptation was dexterously managed by the devil, in that he showed him the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof, Temptations of the right hand are more dangerous than those of the left hand.

[2.] He showeth the bait before he offereth the temptation, that the world might speak for him before he spake for himself, and prepared the mind of Christ by this bewitching object before he

cometh either with his offer or demand. And then afterwards, before he maketh his demand, he premiseth his offer: 'All these things will I give thee.' The offer is made before the spiteful condition is mentioned. Observe the different methods of Christ and Satan:—Satan maketh show of glory first, but Christ of the cross. Satan offereth the benefit before he seemeth to require the service, as here he doth first offer and then ask; but fallaciously, for indeed he requireth a present act, but only promiseth a future compensation: 'I will give thee' all these things. Christ telleth us the worst at first: Mat. 16:24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' The issue showeth the fraud of the tempter, and the misery of those poor deluded souls who hearken to him. On the contrary, the sincerity of our Lord, and the happiness of those who obey him, will soon appear. The devil will have all paid before he part with anything; no worship, no glory. But I am carried too far: my purpose was only to show his dexterity and cunning, how he sets a colour upon sin before he mentions it, by glorious promises, and the manifold pleasure and profit which comes by it.

[3.] He doth not seek to move him by naked words, but by the sight of the thing itself. Objects move the senses, senses draw away the mind; nor are they the porters of the soul so much as the corrupters: Ps. 119:37, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.' If we let loose our senses without a guard, we soon, contract a deadness of heart. There is nothing so soon led away as the eye, it is the broker between the heart and the object; the eye gazeth and the heart lusteth; this is the window by which Satan hath crept in, and all manner of taint hath been conveyed into the soul. In the first sin, Eve was corrupted this way: Gen. 3:6, 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, &c., she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' Gazing on the fruit with delight, her heart was ensnared. We read of Potiphar's wife, 'She cast her eyes on Joseph,' Gen. 39:7; Achan, Josh. 7:21, 'When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge

of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them.' First he saw, then he coveted, then he took them, then he hid them, then Israel falls, and he is attached by lot. So it is said of Shechem and Dinah: Gen. 34:2, 'He saw her, and took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.' So of Samson: Judges 16:1, 'He went to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.' David was ensnared by his eyes: 2 Sam. 11:2, 'From the roof he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.' Naboth's vineyard was ever in Ahab's eye, as being near his palace, therefore he is troubled and falls sick for it, 1 King 21:1, 2. Now, because so many have been betrayed by their senses, the devil taketh this way to tempt Christ, as knowing this is the next way to the heart.

[4.] He taketh him into an high mountain, that he might look far and near, and see the more provinces, cities, and kingdoms, to move him the more. The devil was sensible that small things were not to be offered to Christ, and therefore dresseth out the temptation in as glorious a manner as he can. The chapman of souls is grown thirsty of late, he doth not offer all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof, he knoweth that we will accept of less with thanks. The devil buyeth many at a very easy price; he needeth not carry them so high as the mountain; they are contented with a little gain that is got by a fraudulent bargain in the shop. If we stand in our window, or at our doors, we meet with temptations enough to carry us away. He needeth not come with kingdoms, or with the glory of all the world: thirty pence, the price of a slave, is enough to make Judas betray his master, Mat. 26:15; and the prophet telleth us of some that will transgress for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, Ezek. 13:19. And those pretended prophets, too, making God the author and maintainer of their lies and deceits. And, again, of those that respect persons, whether magistrates or ministers: Prov. 28:21, 'To have respect of persons is not good, for for a piece of bread will that man transgress.' And another prophet telleth us of those that 'sell the poor for a pair of shoes,' Amos 2:6, and 8:6. Those will take any price. And the apostle saith of Esau, Heb. 12:16, 'For one morsel of meat he sold his birthright.' So that the devil may abate a great deal

of what he offered Christ. He need not say to such, You shall have 'all these things.' Nay, hold you! You shall have this petty gain, that slight pleasure and carnal satisfaction. It is a wonder to consider what small things make up a temptation to many, yea, to most. The world is so corrupt that they will violate conscience with a small hire. We are not tempted with great things, less will serve the turn. But the devil knew that small matters were no temptation to Christ, therefore he carrieth him to the mountain, that he might see the glory of all the earth, to make the temptation the more strong.

[5.] He showeth him the kingdoms of the world, ἐν στυγμῇ χρόνου, Luke 4:5, in a moment of time,—that circumstance is not to be passed over. When many objects and glorious come together of a sudden, they do the more surprise us. Therefore, the more to affect Christ with the splendour of these things, and on a sudden to prevail upon him, which otherwise he was not likely to do, he did not represent the glory of these kingdoms of the world to Christ that he might see them one after another, but all together, that there might be less time for consideration, that so his mind might be the more blinded by the appearing splendour of the tempting object, and his heart the more captivated thereby. Diverse things seen in one view do more surprise us than if viewed by a leisurely contemplation. Alas! we are sometimes overborne by the violence of a temptation, sometimes overtaken by the suddenness of it: Gal. 6:1, 'Brethren, if one be overtaken in a fault,' προληφθῆ, inconsiderately and suddenly surprised by a sin. We do many things preposterously and in haste, which we repent of by leisure. Thus the devil thought to surprise Christ, but he was aware of him.

[6.] In other temptations the tempter doth only ask a thing to be done, but here he doth ask and promise things glorious, profitable, and pleasing to carnal sense, and such as seem every way desirable. The offers of gain and glory are promised to the temptation.

[7.] He craveth but one thing, a very small thing, and this under the hope of the greatest advantage: one act of external adoration, easy

to be performed; if Christ would but kneel to him, not as supreme God; an inferior adoration would have contented him: yield but a little, do but 'fall down and worship,' it shall be enough. As the heathens of old said to the Christians, Do but touch the censer. The commendation of God's servants was, that 'they had not bowed the knee to Baal,' Rom. 11:4. The devil knoweth if he can get us to a little he shall get us to more; and the least reverence is too much to such an impure spirit.

Secondly, The observations.

I. Observe from that again the devil taketh him, That we must expect not only to be tempted, but to be often tempted. Satan hath both his wiles and darts: Eph. 6:11, 16. He sometimes assaulteth us with the one, sometimes with the other. Therefore—

1. Be not secure, but watch, and stand upon your defence. It is a careless soul that can sleep in so great a danger. There is yet a malicious tempting devil alive, who would 'sift you as wheat,' Luke 22:31; and somewhat within you which would betray you to him if you be not wary; and you may meet with such snares as you have not yet met withal.

2. Be not overmuch troubled and dejected if you be assaulted afresh. You must make your way to heaven almost every step by conflict and conquest. Remember your baptismal vow, the obligation of which ceaseth not till your life be ended; and then you shall be out of gunshot and harm's way. Therefore still follow the captain of your salvation wherever he leadeth you. The more trials the more glory.

3. Avoid rash judgment and censure, if the same happen to others. Pirates do not use to set upon an empty vessel. The best are most assaulted. God permitteth it for their trial, and Satan hath the greatest spite at them.

II. Observe, That the more grievous temptations follow the lighter ones, and the last assaults and trials are usually the greatest. This is so, if you respect either the dexterity and cunning of the tempter, represented before, or the foulness of the temptation, viz., to idolatry. The best of God's children may be tempted to the most execrable sins. Thus usually doth Satan reserve his worst assaults for the last, and his last temptation is commonly the sorest. Dying beasts bite shrewdly; so Satan rageth most when he hath but a short time. Therefore, since our warfare is not over, let us prepare for the worst brunt, and the last efforts of Satan. If God will crown us fighting, we have no cause to complain. Many of God's servants, whom he could not draw to worldliness, sensuality, or vainglory in their lifetime, he will seek to inject blasphemous thoughts into their minds at last. But, though it be grievous, be not dismayed, your conquest is sure and near.

III. Observe, The world and worldly things are the bait and snare which the tempter offereth to Christ and his followers. As here, when he would make his last onset upon Christ, he sets before him 'the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,' as the matter of the temptation.

1. There are three enemies of our salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh:—they are reckoned up together, Eph. 2:2, 3, 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' The devil is the deceiver and grand architect of all wickedness; the flesh is the principle that he worketh upon, or that rebelling faculty within us that would be pleased before God; the world is the bait by which the devil would deceive us and steal away our hearts from God, for it suiteth with our fleshly appetites and desires. More distinctly that Satan is an enemy appeareth from his name, that signifieth an adversary, and in many places of scripture he is so called; as Mat. 13:25; 'While men

slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat,' compared with the 39th verse, 'the enemy that sowed them is the devil.' He is the great enemy to God and man: 1 Pet. 5:8, 'Your adversary the devil like a roaring lion walketh about,' &c. The flesh is an enemy, yea, our greatest enemy, for it warreth against the soul: 1 Pet. 2:11, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' If you indulge the flesh, you are willing to lose your souls. Yea, it warreth against the spirit or better part, as contrary to it: Gal. 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh:' other things could do us no harm without our own flesh. We are tempted to sin by Satan, encouraged to sin by the example and custom of the world, but inclined to sin by our own flesh. The world is an enemy of our salvation, as well as the devil and the flesh; all the other enemies get strength by it. By the bait of worldly things the devil pleaseth the flesh; we are in continual danger of being everlastingly undone by it. Whosoever is a lover of the world is presumed to be a professed enemy of God: James 4:4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;' 1 John 2:15, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' It is an enemy, because it keepeth us from God, who is our chief good, and the enjoyment of him among his blessed ones, which is our last end. There is a neglect of God and heavenly things where the world prevaieth.

2. The devil maketh use of the world to a double end.

[1.] To divert us from God and heavenly things, that our time, and care, and thoughts may be wholly taken up about things here below: Luke 12:19, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;' Phil. 3:19, 20, 'They mind earthly things; but our conversation is in heaven.' These are perfectly opposite. Some are of the world, and speak of the world, and wholly mind the world, and are governed by the spirit of this world, seldom look higher, or very coldly and slightly. Thus that which should be thought of in the first place is scarce thought of at

all. But, remember, he doth but offer you worldly things to deprive you of heavenly.

[2.] To draw us to some open sin for the world's sake, as here he tempted Christ to idolatry, and Demas to defection from the faith: 2 Tim. 4:10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' Others to some carnal, fraudulent, oppressive course, whereby they are spotted by the world. The whore of Babylon propoundeth her abominations 'in a golden cup,' Rev. 17:4; and the great motive here is, 'All this will I give thee.' Though the devil cometh not in person to us with his offers, he doth by his instruments; as Balak, when he sent to Balaam to curse the Israelites, he promised him great rewards: Num. 22:17, 'I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.' So when he doth entice you by the motions of your own hearts to anything that is unlawful, to falsehood, deceit, or unjust gain, or to get and keep wealth by any base or unjust means, or doing something that is base and unworthy of your religion.

[3.] I observe that temptations from the world may prevail with us. Satan maketh use of a twofold artifice. The one is to greaten the worldly object, the other is to make us large promises of success, happiness, and contentment in our evil enterprises.

(1.) He useth this sleight here; he doth in the most enticing manner lay the world before Christ as a splendid object, to greaten it in Christ's thoughts and apprehensions. Therefore, when we begin to magnify the riches, pomp, and pleasures of the world, the devil is at our elbow, and we are running into the snare. And therefore, if we begin to say, 'Happy is the people that is in such a case,' it is time to correct ourselves and say, 'Yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. 144:15. Take heed the devil doth not gain this advantage over you, to make you follow the world with the greatest earnestness, and spiritual and heavenly things in a slight and overly manner. Esteem, desires, resolutions of worldly greatness, though

not upon base conditions, begin the temptation. You think it is a fine thing to live in pomp and at ease, to swim in pleasures, and begin to resolve to make it your business. The devil hath you upon the hip, it is an hour of temptation.

(2.) His next course is to make large offers and promises by his instruments or your own thoughts, that though you neglect God and heaven, and do engage in some sinful course, you shall do well in the world, and enjoy full satisfaction. There is a double evil in Satan's offers and promises:—

First, They are false and fallacious: 'All these things will I give thee.' Satan maketh fair offers of what he cannot perform. He promiseth many things, but doth only promise them. He offereth the kingdoms of the world to Christ, but cannot make good his word; he showeth them to Christ, but cannot give them. And this is the devil's wont, to be liberal in promises, to fill the minds of those that hearken to him with vain hopes, as if he could transfer the riches and honours of the world to whom he pleaseth, whereas they are shamefully disappointed, and find their ruin in the very things in which they sought their exaltation, and their projects are crossed, for 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,' 1 Cor. 11:26.

Secondly, All the devil's offers and promises have a spiteful condition annexed. He pretendeth to give, but yet selleth at the dearest rates. It is but a barter and exchange; a flat bargain, but no gift. He must have our souls, God is dishonoured, his laws broken, his Spirit grieved. The devil staineth his grant with unjust covenants, and exacteth more than the thing is worth.

Two ways then must we defeat the temptation:—

(1.) Not believing his promises, that I must be beholden to sin to make me happy. Those that by unlawful means get up to honour and wealth seem to have accepted the devil's offer; they think he is lord of the world, and all the kingdoms and the glory thereof. Do not

look upon wealth as the devil's gift, as a thing to be gotten by fraud, flattery, corruption, bribery: alas! it is put into 'bags with holes,' Hag. 1:6. It is called the 'deceitfulness of riches,' Mat. 13:22. They promise that contentment and happiness which they cannot give. There is sure dependence on the Lord's, but none on Satan's promises. Young men that are to begin the world, take up this resolution: take what God sendeth, but resolve never to take wealth out of Satan's hands; what God sendeth in the fair way of his providence, by his blessing on your lawful endeavours: Prov. 10:4, 'The hand of the diligent maketh rich;' and ver. 22, 'The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.' When you deal righteously, and do not barely heap up treasure to yourselves, but seek to grow rich toward God, to subordinate all to heaven and a better pursuit: otherwise God can find a moth and a thief for your estates.

(2.) The other way is, to consider what a sad bargain you make by gratifying the devil, and hearkening to his counsel: Mat. 16:26, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' A man never gets anything with Satan, but he shall lose that which is more precious; he never maketh a proffer to our advantage, but to our loss and hurt. Follow the world as hard as you can, lie, cozen, cheat, and you shall be rich; put the case, It is so, but I must lose my soul, not in a natural, but legal sense: Job 27:8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though, he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' He hath far better things from us than we have from him; a birthright for a mess of pottage, the hopes of heaven for an opulent condition here below. The bird buys the fowler's bait at a dear rate when his life must go for it. Thy soul must be lost, which all the gold and silver in the world cannot redeem and recover.

[4.] I observe again that Christ by his refusal hath taught us to tread the world under our feet, and all the glory of it should be an ineffectual and cold motive to a sanctified soul. If we have the same spirit that was in Christ, it will be so. All the kingdoms of the world,

and the glory of them, was far too little to make up a temptation to him. A mortified heart will contemn all this in comparison of our duty to God, and the comfort of a good conscience, and the hopes of glory. Surely they have not the spirit of Christ who are taken with small things, with a Babylonish garment, or some petty temptation.

Uses. The use is to teach us how to counterwork Satan.

1. Since he worketh upon the fleshly mind, we are to be mortified and grow dead to the world. We profess faith in a crucified Lord; we must be like him, crucified as he was crucified; then shall we glory in the cross of Christ, when we feel the virtue of it, and are planted into the likeness of it: Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Grow more dead to the riches, honour, pomp, pleasure, the favour, fear, love, wrath, praise and dispraise of men, that we may readily deny these things, so far as opposite to the kingdom of Christ, or our duty to God, or as they lessen our affections to him. We die as our esteem of those things doth decay; till the man's temper be altered there is no hope to prevail by argument. Only they that are made partakers of a divine nature do escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2. Since he worketh by representation and promise, you must be prepared against both.

[1.] As he worketh by representation of the fair show and splendid appearance of worldly things, you must check it:—

(1.) By considering the little substance and reality that is in this fair appearance: 1 Cor. 7:31, 'The fashion of this world passeth away,' *σχημα*. It is but a draft, an empty pageantry; so it is called, Ps. 39:6, 'A vain show;' an image, shadow, or dream, that vanisheth in a trice. So Prov. 23:5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' It was not a while ago, and within a little while it will not be again, at least to us it will not be; we must shortly bid good-night to all the

world: 1 Pet. 1:24, 'All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the grass.' David saith, Ps. 119:86, 'I have seen an end of all perfection.' It is good often to intermingle these serious thoughts of the frailty of all sublunary enjoyments, to keep us modest in what we have, or desire to have, that we may not be blinded with the delusions of the flesh, and enchanted with an admiration of worldly felicity.

(2.) As the devil seeketh to open the eye of sense, so must we open the eye of faith: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Things unseen must be every day greatened in our eyes, that all our pursuit after things seen may be subordinated to our desires of, and labour after, things unseen. There we must see the greatest reality, or else we have not the true Christian faith: Heb. 11:1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' It is such an evidence of the worth and reality of the unseen glory as draweth off the heart from things seen, which are so pleasing to the flesh. Faith sets it before the eye of the soul in the promises of the gospel: Heb. 6:18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Heb. 12:2, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,' &c.

[2.] As he dealeth with us by promise. Everything we hope to get by sin is a kind of promise or offer of the devil to us; as suppose by unconscionable dealing in our calling. Here consider two things:—

(1.) The falsity of the devil's promises.

(2.) The truth and stability of God's promises.

(1st.) The falsity of Satan's promises. Either he giveth not what he promised, as he promised our first parents to be as gods: Gen. 3:5, 'Ye shall be as gods;' and what ensued? Ps. 49:12, 'Man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;'

degraded to the beasts, as the brutish and bestial nature prevailed in him when he fell from God. Or else, if we have them, we were better be without them; we have them with a curse, with the loss of better things: Jer. 17:13, 'O Lord, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth.' They are condemned to this felicity: we have them with stings of conscience: —Mat. 27:4, 5, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood; and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself;'—which are most quick and sensible when we come to die: Jer. 17:11, 'He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' Now rise up in indignation against the temptation. Shall I sell my birthright? lose my fatness to rule over the trees?—as the olive-tree in Jotham's parable, Judges 9:9.

(2dly.) The sufficiency and stability of God's promises.

First, Sufficiency: Gen. 17:1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect;' 1 Tim. 4:8, 'Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;'—of heaven and of earth: Mat. 6:33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' It may be you have less than those that indulge themselves in all manner of shifts and wiles, but you shall have enough, not to be left wholly destitute: Heb. 13:5, 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And you shall have it with contentment: Prov. 15:6, 'In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble;' and 'better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues with sin,' Prov. 16:8. And you have it so as not to lose other things.

Secondly, Stability: 2 Cor. 1:20, 'All the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen;' and Heb. 6:18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation,' &c.; Ps. 119:111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: they are the rejoicing of my heart.'

IV. Observe—Fall down—The pride of the devil: he sinneth from the beginning, 1 John 3:8. The sin of pride was fatal to him at first, and the cause of those chains of darkness in which now he is held; yet still he sinneth the same sin, he requireth adoration, and would be admitted into a partnership of divine worship. He obtained it from pagans and idolaters, not from Christ. The angel deprecates and detests it: Rev. 19:10, 'And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship thou God.' So Rev. 22:9, 'I fell down to worship before the face of the angel that showed me these things. And he said to me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book: worship God.' Paul, when the priests at Lycaonia were about to sacrifice to him: Acts 14:14, 15, 'When the apostles heard of it, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do you these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.' But the evil angels they are apt to invade the right of God.

SERMON VI

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.—MAT. 4:10.

THIRDLY, Christ's answer and reply, which is double:—

I. By way of rebuke, defiance, and bitter reprehension: Get thee hence, Satan.

II. By way of confutation: For it is written, &c.

1. The rebuke showeth Christ's indignation against idolatry: 'Get thee hence, Satan.' This was not to be endured. Twice Christ useth

this form of speech, ὕπαγε Σατανᾶ,—to Satan tempting him to idolatry here, and when his servant dissuaded him from suffering: Mat. 16:23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence to me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' This suggestion intrenched or touched upon the glory of God, the other upon his love to mankind; and Christ could endure neither; Satan is commanded out of his presence with indignation. The same zeal we see in his servants: in Moses in case of idolatry, Exod. 32:19, He brake the tables; so in case of contradiction to the faith of Christ, Paul taketh up Elymas, Acts 13:10, 'O full of subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?' Open blasphemy must be abhorred, and needeth not only a confutation but a rebuke. Besides, it was an impudent demand of Satan to require adoration from him, to whom adoration is due from every creature; to ask him to bow down before him, to whom every knee must bow: and therefore a bold temptation must have a peremptory answer. There is no mincing in such cases. It is no way contrary to that lenity that was in Christ; and it teacheth us, in such open cases of blasphemy and downright sin, not to parley with the devil, but to defy him.

2. By way of confutation: 'For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Where observe:—

[1.] Christ answereth to the main point, not to by-matters. He doth not dispute the devil's title, nor debate the reality of his promises; to do this would tacitly imply a liking of the temptation. No; but he disproveth the evil of the suggestion from this unclean and proud spirit: a better answer could not be given unto the tempter. So that herein we see the wisdom of Christ, which teacheth us to pass by impertinent matters, and to speak expressly to the cause in hand in all our debates with Satan and his instruments.

[2.] He citeth scripture, and thereby teacheth that the word of God, laid up in the heart and used pertinently, will ward off the blows of

every temptation. This weapon Christ used all along with success, and therefore it is well called, 'The sword of the Spirit,' Eph. 6:17. It is a sword, and so a weapon both offensive and defensive: Heb. 4:12, 'The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' And 'a sword of the Spirit,' because the Spirit is the author of it: 2 Pet. 1:21, 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' He formed and fashioned this weapon for us; and because its efficacy dependeth on the Spirit, who timeously bringeth it to our remembrance, and doth enliven the word and maketh it effectual. Therefore it teacheth us to be much acquainted with the Lord's written word. The timely calling to mind of a word in scripture is better than all other arguments,—a word forbidding or threatening such an evil: Ps. 119:11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;' pressing the practice of such a duty when we are slow of heart: Ps. 119:50, 'Thy word hath quickened me;' or a word speaking encouragement to the soul exercised with such a cross: Heb. 12:5, 'Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him;' Ps. 119:92, 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction;' still it breaketh the strength of the temptation, whatsoever it be.

[3.] The words are cited out of the book of Deuteronomy. Indeed out of that book all Christ's answers are taken, which showeth us the excellency of that book. It was of great esteem among the Jews, and it should be so among all Christians, and it will be so of all that read it attentively. The church could not have wanted it.

[4.] The places out of which it is cited are two: Deut. 6:13, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and swear by his name;' and again, Deut. 10:20, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and to him shalt thou cleave.' Christ, according to the Septuagint, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only

shalt thou serve.' Μόνω, only, which is emphatical, seemeth to be added to the text, but it is necessarily implied in the words of Moses; for his scope was to bind the people to the fear and worship of one God. None was so wicked and profane as to deny that God was to be feared and worshipped; but many might think that either the creatures or the gods of the Gentiles might be taken into fellowship of this reverence and adoration. Him is only him; αὐτῷ is exclusive, if μόνω were left out. See the place, Deut. 6:13, 14, 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name; ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you.' And in other places it is expressed; as 1 Sam. 7:3, 'If you prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only.' The devil excepts not against this interpretation, as being fully convinced and silenced by it. And it is a known story that this was the cause why the pagans would not admit the God of the Jews, as revealed in the Old Testament, or Christ, as revealed in the New, to be an object of adoration, because he would be worshipped alone, all other deities excluded. The gods of the heathens were good-fellow gods, would admit partnership; as common whores are less jealous than the married wife: though their lovers went to never so many besides themselves, yet to them it was all one, whensoever they returned to them and brought their gifts and offerings.

[5.] In this place quoted by our Saviour there is employed a distinction of inward and outward worship. Fear is for inward worship, serve is for outward worship, and the profession of the same. Fear in Moses is expounded worship by Christ; so Mat. 15:9, compared with Isa. 29:13, 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men;' but in the prophet it is 'Their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men.' He that worshippeth feareth and reverenceth what he worshippeth, or else all his worship is but a compliment and empty formality. So that the fear of God is that reverence and estimation that we have of God, the serving of God is the necessary effect and fruit of it; for service is an open testimony of our reverence and worship. In this place you have worship and service, both which are due to God only. But that

you may perceive the force of our Saviour's argument, and also of this precept, I shall a little dilate on the word service, what the scripture intendeth thereby. Satan saith, 'Bow down and worship me:' Christ saith, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Under service, prayer and thanksgiving is comprehended: Isa. 44:17, 'And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipping it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god.' This is one of the external acts whereby the idolater showeth the esteem of his heart: so Jer. 2:27, 'Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth.' So, under serving, sacrifice is comprehended: 2 Kings 17:35, 'Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them.' Again, burning of incense: Jer. 18:15, 'My people have forgotten me, they have burnt incense to vanity.' Preaching for them; Jer. 2:8, 'The pastors also have transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal.' Asking counsel of them: Hosea 4:12, 'My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.' So building temples, altars, or other monuments unto them: Hosea 8:14, 'Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples;' and 12:11, 'Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.' Erecting of ministries, or doing any ministerial work for their honour: Amos 5:26, 'Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chium your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves;' as God appointed the Levites to bear the tabernacle for communion in the service of them: 1 Cor. 10:18, 'Are not they that eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' ver. 21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.' So 2 Cor. 6:16, 17, 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' In short for it is endless to reckon up all which the scripture comprehendeth under service and gestures of reverence: Exod. 20:5, 'Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.' Bowing the knee: 1 Kings 19:18, 'I have left me seven thousand in Israel, which have not bowed the knee to Baal.'

Kissing them: Hosea 13:2, 'They kiss the calves.' Lifting up the eyes: Ezek. 18:15, 'He hath not lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel.' Stretching out the hand: Ps. 44:20, 'If we have stretched our hands to a strange God.' So that you see all gestures of reverence are forbidden as terminated to idols. Thus strict and jealous is God in his law, that we might not bow down and worship the devil, or anything that is set up by him.

Doct. That religious service and religious worship is due to God only, and not to be given to saint, or angel, or any creature.

Thus Christ defeateth the devil's temptation, and thus should we be under the awe of God's authority, that we may not yield to the like temptation when the greatest advantages imaginable are offered to us. Here I shall show:—

I. What is worship, and the kinds of it.

II. I shall prove that worship is due to God.

III. Not only worship, but service.

IV. That both are due to God alone.

1. What is worship? In the general it implieth these three things: an act of the judgment, apprehending an excellency in the object worshipped; an act of the will, or a readiness to yield to it, suitably to the degree of excellency which we apprehend in it; and an external act of the body whereby it is expressed. This is the general nature of worship, common to all the sorts of it.

2. The kinds of it. Now worship is of two kinds—civil and religious. Religious worship is a special duty due to God, and commanded in the first table. Civil honour and worship is commanded in the second table. They are expressed by 'godliness and righteousness,' 1 Tim. 6:11; and 'godliness and honesty,' 1 Tim. 2:2.

[1.] For religious worship. There is a twofold religious worship. One when we are right for the object, and do only worship the true God; this is required in the first commandment. The other when we are right for the means, when we worship the true God by such means as he hath appointed, not by an image, idol, or outward representation. Opposite to this there is an evil idolatrous sinful worship, when that which is due to the Creator is given to any creature; which is primary or secondary. Primary, when the image or idol is accounted God, or worshipped as such, as the sottish heathens do. Or secondary, when the images themselves are not worshipped as having any godhead properly in themselves, but as they relate to, represent, or are made use of, in the worship of him who is accounted God. We shall find this done by the wiser heathens, worshipping their images, not as gods themselves, but as intending to worship their gods in these and by these. So also among some who would be called Christians. Thus the representing the true God by images is condemned, Deut. 4:15–17, 'Take ye good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.' Again, sinful worship is twofold: more gross of idols, representing false gods, called worshipping of devils; or more subtle, when worship is given to saints or holy men: Acts 10:25, 26, 'As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.' Acts 14:14, 15, 'Paul and Barnabas, when they heard this, rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do you these things? we also are men of like passions with you,' &c. Or to angels: Rev. 22:8, 'When John fell at the angel's feet to worship him, he said, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets.'

[2.] Civil worship is when we give men and angels due reverence, and—

(1.) With respect to their stations and relations, whatever their qualifications be, as to magistrates, ministers, parents, great men; we are to reverence and honour them according to their degree and quality: according to the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother;' 1 Thes. 5:13, and to 'esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.' Or,

(2.) A reverential worshipping or esteeming them for their qualifications of wisdom and holiness: Acts 2:47, Good men had 'favour with all the people.' Such respect living saints get, such angels may have when they appear: Gen. 18:2, Abraham 'bowed himself towards the ground:' and Gen. 19:1, Lot 'rose up to meet them, and bowed himself with his face towards the ground.'

Now, whether the worship be civil or religious may be gathered by the circumstances thereof; as if the act, end, or other circumstances be religious, the action or worship itself must be so also. It is one thing to bow the knee in salutation, another thing to bow in prayer before an image.

II. That worship is due to God. These two notions live and die together—that God is, and that he ought to be worshipped. It appeareth by our Saviour's reasoning, John 4:24, 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' He giveth directions about the manner of worship, but supposeth it that he will be worshipped. When God had proclaimed his name and manifested himself to Moses, Exod. 34:8, 'Moses made haste,' and bowed himself and worshipped.' It is the crime charged upon the Gentiles, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God,' Rom. 1:21. They knew a divine power, but did not give him a worship, at least competent to his nature. God pleadeth his right: Mal. 1:6, 'If I be a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my fear?' And God, who is the common parent and absolute master of all, must have both a worship and honour, in which reverence and fear is mixed with love and joy; so that if God be, worship is certainly due to him. They that have no worship are

as if they had no God. The psalmist proveth atheism by that: Ps. 14:1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;' and ver. 4, 'They call not upon God.' The acknowledgment of a king doth imply subjection to his laws; so doth the acknowledgment of his God imply a necessity of worshipping him.

III. That both worship and service is due to God: 'Him shalt thou worship, and him shalt thou serve.' The worship of God is both internal and external: the internal consisteth in that love and reverence which we owe to him; the external, in those offices and duties by which our honour and respect to God is signified and expressed: both are necessary, both believing with the heart, and confession with the mouth: Rom. 10:9, 10, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' The soul and life of our worship and godliness lieth in our faith, love, reverence, and delight in God above all other things; the visible expression of it is in invocation, thanksgiving, prayers, and sacraments, and other acts of outward worship. Now, it is not enough that we own God with the heart, but we must own him with the body also. In the heart: 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling,' Ps. 2:11. Such as will become the greatness and goodness of God; with outward and bodily worship you must now own him in all those prescribed duties in which these affections are acted. The spirit must be in it, and the body also. There are two extremes. Some confine all their respect to God to bodily worship and external forms: Mat. 16:8, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their hearts are far from me.' They use the external rites of worship, but their affections are no way suited to the God whom they worship: it is the heart must be the principal and chief agent in the business, without which it is but the carcase of a duty, without the life and the soul. The other extreme is, that we are not called to an external bodily worship under the gospel. Why did he then appoint the ordinances of preaching, prayer, singing of psalms,

baptism, and the Lord's supper? God, that made the whole man, body and soul, must be worshipped of the whole man. Therefore, besides the inward affections, there must be external actions, whereby we express our respect and reverence to God.

IV. That both these, religious worship and service, are due to God alone. I prove it by these arguments:—

1. Those things which are due to God as God are due to him alone, and no creature, without sacrilege, can claim any part and fellowship in that worship and adoration, neither can it be given to any creature without idolatry. But now religious worship and service is due to God as God: 'He is thy Lord, and worship thou him,' Ps. 45:11. Our worship and service is due to him, not only for his super-eminent excellency, but because of our creation, preservation, and redemption. Therefore we must worship and serve him, and him only: Isa. 42:8, 'I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images.' God challengeth it as Jehovah, the great self-being, from whom we have received life and breath, and all things. This glory God will not suffer to be given to another. And therefore the apostle showeth the wretched estate of the Galatians, chap. 4:8: 'When ye knew not God, ye did service to them that by nature are no gods;' that is, they worshipped for gods those things which really were no gods. There is no kind of religious worship or service, under any name whatsoever, to be given to any creature, but to God only; for what is due to the Creator as Creator cannot be given to the creature.

2. The nature of religious worship is such, that it cannot be terminated on any object but God; for it is a profession of our dependence and subjection. Now, whatever invisible power this worship is tendered unto must be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Omniscient, who knows the thoughts, cogitations, secret purposes of our heart, which God alone doth: 1 Kings 8:39, 'Give unto every one according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the

children of men.' It is God's prerogative to know the inward motions and thoughts of the heart, whether they be sincere or no in their professions of dependence and subjection. So omnipresent, that he may be ready at hand to help us and relieve us: Jer. 23:23, 24, 'Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' The palace of heaven doth not so confine him and enclose him but that he is present everywhere by his essential presence, and powerful and efficacious providence. Besides omnipotent: Ps. 57:2, 'I will cry unto God most high, unto God who performeth all things for me.' Alas! what a cold formality were prayer if we should speak to those that know us not, and who are not near to help us, or have no sufficiency of power to help us! Therefore these professions of dependence and subjection must be made to God alone.

3. To give religious worship to the creatures, it is without command, without promise, and without examples, and therefore without any faith in the worshipper, or acceptance of God. Where is there any command or direction, or approved example, of this in scripture? God will accept only what he commanded, and without a promise it will be unprofitable to us: and it is a superstitious innovation of our own to devise any religious worship for which there is no example at all whereby it may be recommended to us. Certainly no action can be commended to us as godly which is not prescribed of God, by whose word and institution every action is sanctified which otherwise would be common; and no action can be profitable to us which God hath not promised to accept, or hath accepted from his people. But giving religious worship to a creature is of this nature.

4. It is against the express command of God, the threatening of scripture, and the examples recorded in the word. Against the express command of God—both the first and second commandments, the one respecting the object, the other the means; that we must not serve other gods, nor go after them, nor bow down unto them. It is against the threatenings of the word in all those

places where God is said to be 'a jealous God.' God is said to 'put on jealousy as a cloak,' Isa. 59:17; that is, the upper and outmost garment. He will be known, and plainly profess himself to be so. So Exod. 34:14,' The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. 'Things are distinguished from the same kind by their names, as from different kinds by their natures. Now, from the λεγόμενοι θεοὶ, God will be distinguished by his jealousy, that he will not endure any partners in his worship. It is against examples: Rev. 19:10, and 22:8, 'When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. And he said unto me, See thou do it not,' &c. The argument is, 'I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.'

Use 1. To condemn those who do not make conscience of the worship of God. There are an irreligious sort of men that never call upon him, in public or in private, in the family or in the closet; but wholly forget the God that made them, at whose expense they are maintained and kept. Wherefore had you reasonable souls, but to praise, honour, and glorify your Creator? Surely if God be your God, that is, your Creator and preserver, the duty will presently fall upon you: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.' If you believe there is a God, why do not you call upon him? The neglect of his worship argueth doubting thoughts of his being; for if there be such a supreme Lord, to whom one day you must give an account, how dare you live without him in the world? All the creatures glorify him passively, but you have a heart and a tongue to glorify him actually. Man is the mouth of the creation, to return to God the praise of all that wisdom, goodness, and power which is seen in the things that are made. Now you should make one among the worshippers of God. A heathen could say, Si essem luscinia, &c. Are you a Christian, and have such advantages to know more of God, and will you be dumb and tongue-tied in his praises?

2. To condemn the idolatry of the Papists. Synesius said that the devil is εἰδωλοχαρῆς, that he rejoiceth in idols. Here we see what

was the upshot of his temptations, even to bring men to worship and bow down before something that is not God. Herein he was gratified by the heathen nations, and no less by the Papists. Witness their worshipping of images, their invocation of the Virgin Mary and other saints, the adoring before the bread in the Eucharist, &c. I know they have many evasions; but yet the stain of idolatry sticketh so close to them, that all the water in the sea will not wash them clean from it. This text clearly stareth them in the face, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Not saints, not angels, not images, &c. They say, Moses only said, and Christ repeateth it from him, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;' but not only, so that the last clause is restrictive, not the first, but some worship may be given to the creature. Civil, we grant, but not religious; and worship is the most important word. They distinguish of *Λατρεία* and *Δουλεία*. The devil demanded of Christ only *προσκυνήσαι*, 'fall down and worship me;' not as the supreme author of all God's gifts, but as subordinate: 'all these things are delivered unto me.' But then Christ's words were not apposite to refute the tempter's impudency. Besides, for the distinction of *Δουλεία* and *Λατρεία*, the words are promiscuously used; so their distinction of absolute and relative worship; besides that they are groundless, they are unknown to the vulgar, who promiscuously give worship to God, saints, images, relics. Some of the learned of them have confessed this abuse, and bewailed it:—Espencæus, a Sorbonnist: 'Are they well and godly brought up, who, being children of an hundred year old, that is, ancient Christians, do no less attribute to the saints, and trust in them, than to God himself, and that God himself is harder to be pleased and entreated than they?' So George Cassander: 'This false, pernicious opinion is too well known to have prevailed among the vulgar, while wicked men, persevering in their naughtiness, are persuaded that only by the intercession of the saints whom they have chosen to be their patrons, and worship with cold and profane ceremonies, they have pardon and grace prepared them with God; which pernicious opinion, as much as was possible, hath been confirmed by them by lying miracles. And other men, not so evil, have chosen certain

saints to be their patrons and helpers, have put more confidence in their merits and intercession than in the merits of Christ, and have substituted into his place the saints and Virgin mother. Ludovicus Vives: 'There are many Christians which worship saints, both men and women, no otherwise than they worship God; and I cannot see any difference between the opinion they had of their saints, and that the Gentiles had of their gods.' Thus far he, and yet Rome will not be purged.

3. Use is to exhort us to worship and serve the Lord our God, and him only.

[1.] Let us worship him. Worship hath its rise and foundation in the heart of the worshipper, and especially religious worship, which is given to the all-knowing God. Therefore there must we begin; we must have high thoughts, and an high esteem of God. Worship in the heart is most seen in two things—love and trust. Love: Deut. 6:5, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' We worship God when we give him such a love as is superlative and transcendental, far above the love that we give to any other thing, that so our respect to other things may give way to our respect to God. The other affection whereby we express our esteem of God is trust. This is another foundation of worship: Ps. 62:8, 'Trust in the Lord at all times, pour out your hearts before him.' Well, then, inward worship lieth in these two things—delightful adhesion to God, and an entire dependence upon him. Without this worship of God we cannot keep up our service to him. Not without delight, witness these scriptures: Job 27:10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?' Isa. 43:22, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel!' They that love God, and delight in him. cannot be long out of his company, they will seek all occasions to meet with God, as Jonathan and David, whose souls were knit to each other. So for dependence and trust, it keepeth up service, for they that will not trust God cannot be long true to him: Heb. 3:12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in

departing from the living God.' They that distrust God's promises will not long hold out in God's way, for dependence begets observance. When we look for all from him, we will often come to him, and take all out of his hands, and be careful how we offend him and displease him. What maketh the Christian to be so sedulous and diligent in duties of worship? so awful and observant of God? His all cometh from God, both in life natural and spiritual. In life natural: Ps. 145:15–20, 'The eyes of all things wait on thee, and thou givest them their food in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing,' &c.; 'The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him,'—implying that because their eyes are to him, the author of all their blessings, therefore they call upon him and cry to him.

[2.] Serve him. That implieth external reverence and worship. Now we are said to serve him, either with respect unto the duties which are more directly to be performed unto God, or with respect to our whole conversation.

(1.) With respect unto the duties which are more directly to be performed unto God, such as the word, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, sacraments, surely these must be attended upon, because they are acts of love to God, and trust in God; and these holy duties are the ways of God, wherein he hath promised to meet with his people, and hath appointed us to expect his grace, and therefore they must not be neglected by us. Therefore serve him in these things; for, Mark 4:24, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.' It is a rule of commerce between us and God.

(2.) In your whole conversation: Luke 1:74, 75, 'That we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' A Christian's conversation is a continual act of worship; he ever behaveth himself as before God, doing all things, whether they be directed to God or men, out of love to God, and fear

of God, and so turneth second table duties into first table duties. 'Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,' James 1:27, Eph. 5:21, 22, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God;' and next verse, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.' So alms are a sacrifice: Heb. 13:16, 'But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

[3.] Worship and serve God so as it may look like worship and service performed to God, and due to God only, because of his nature and attributes. His nature: John 4:24, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' When hearts wander, and affections do not answer expressions, is this like worship and service done to an all-seeing Spirit? His attributes: Greatness, goodness, holiness—

(1.) His greatness and glorious majesty: Heb. 12:28, 'Let us serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' Then is there a stamp of God's majesty on the duty.

(2.) His goodness and fatherly love: Ps. 100:2, 'Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with singing.'

(3.) His holiness: 2 Tim. 1:3, 'I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with pure conscience;' 2 Tim. 2:22, 'With them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.'

SERMON VII

Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.—MAT. 4:11.

IN these words you have the issue and close of Christ's temptations. The issue is double:—(1.) In respect of the adversary; (2.) In respect

of Christ himself.

I. In respect of the adversary: then the devil leaveth him.

II. In respect of Christ himself: behold angels came and ministered unto him.

I shall consider in both the history and the observations.

First, The history of it, as it properly belongeth to Christ: and there —

1. Of the first branch, the recess of Satan: 'Then the devil leaveth him.'

[1.] It was necessary to be known that Christ had power to chase away the devil at his pleasure; that, as he was an instance of temptations, so he might be to us a pattern of victory and conquest. If Satan had continued tempting, this would have been obscured, which would have been an infringement of comfort to us. The devil being overcome by Christ, he may be also overcome by us Christians: 1 John 5:18, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. 'That is, he useth all care and diligence to keep himself pure, that the devil draw him not into the sin unto death, and those deliberate, scandalous sins which lead to it. Christ having overcome Satan, in our name and nature, showeth us the way how to fight against him and overcome him.

[2.] Christ had a work to do in the valley, and therefore was not always to be detained by temptations in the wilderness. The Spirit, that led him thither to be tempted, led him back again into Galilee to preach the gospel: Luke 4:14, 'Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.' All things are timed and ordered by God, and he limiteth Satan how far and how long he shall tempt.

[3.] In Luke it is said, chap. 4:13, 'He departed from him, ἄχρι καιροῦ, for a season.' He never tempted him again in this solemn

way hand to hand; but either abusing the simplicity of his own disciple: Mat. 16:22, 23, 'Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me Satan! thou art an offence unto me;' or else by his instruments, laying plots to take away his life; as often, but especially in his passion: Luke 22:53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' So John 14:30, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' Satan shall join with the Jews to destroy me, but they shall find nothing to lay to my charge; nor, indeed, have they power to do me any hurt, but that, in obedience to my Father's will, I mean voluntarily to lay down my life for sinners. So he had a permitted power over him, and was the prime instrumental cause of his sufferings; set aside his voluntary condescension to be a ransom for sinners, Satan had not any power over him, or challenge against him. Well, then, though he lost his victory, he retained his malice.

2. The second branch, the access of the good angels: 'And behold the angels came and ministered to him.' There observe three things:

[1.] The note of attention: behold. The Holy Ghost would excite our minds, and have us mark this: the angels are always at hand to serve Christ, but now they come to him in some singular manner—some notable appearance there was of them, probably in a visible form and shape; and so they presented themselves before the Lord to minister to him, as the devil set himself before him to molest and vex him. As Christ's humiliation and human nature was to be manifested by the devil's coming to him and tempting assaults, so the honour of his divine nature by the ministry of angels, lost his temptations should seem to derogate from his glory. When we read the story of his temptations, how he was tempted in all parts like us, we might seem to take scandal, as if he were a mere man; therefore his humiliation is counterbalanced with the special honour done to him: he was tempted as man, but, as God, ministered unto by angels.

[2.] Why they came not before the devil was departed? I answer:—

(1.) Partly to show that Christ had no help but his own when he grappled with Satan. When the temptations were ended, then the good angels came, lest the victory should seem to be gotten by their help and assistance. They were admitted to the triumph, but they were not admitted to the fight: they were not spectators only in the conflict (for the battle was certainly fought before God and angels), but partners in the triumph: they went away to give place to the combat, but they came visibly to congratulate the conqueror after the battle was fought and the victory gotten. Our Lord would alone foil the devil, and, when that was done, the angels came and ministered unto him.

(2.) Partly to show us that the going of the one is the coming of the other. When the devil is gone, the angels come. Certainly it is true on the contrary: 1 Sam. 16:14, 'The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him;' and it is true in this sense, if we entertain the temptation, we banish the good angels from us: there is no place for the good angels till the tempter be repulsed.

[3.] Why now, and to what end, was this ministry?

(1.) To put honour on the Redeemer, who is the head and lord of the angels: Eph. 1:20, 21, 'He hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, &c., and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.' So 1 Pet. 3:22, 'Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him.' Christ, not only as God, but as mediator, hath all of them subject to him: Heb. 1:6, 'And unto the Son he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him.' They, as subjects and servants, are bound to obey him. Therefore, on all occasions they attend on Christ; at his birth: Luke 2:13, 14, 'A multitude of the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men.'

Now, in his temptations, 'The angels came and ministered unto him.' At his passion: Luke 22:43, 'There appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.' At his resurrection, 'An angel rolled away the stone from the grave,' and attested the truth of it, Mat. 28:2. At his ascension, the angels declared the manner of his going to heaven, and return to judgment, Acts 1:10, 11. So now they come to attend Christ, as subjects on their prince, to tender their service and homage to him, and receive his commands.

(2.) For his consolation, inward and outward.

First, Inward, as messengers sent from God; and so their coming was a token of God's special love and favour to him, and care over him. The devil had mentioned in one of his temptations, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee.' This is a truth, and in due time to be verified; not at Satan's instance, but when God pleased. Therefore it was a comfort to Christ to have solemn messengers sent from heaven to applaud his triumph.

Secondly, Outward, they were sent to serve him, either to convey him back from the mountain, where Satan had set him, or to bring him food, as they did to Elijah: 1 Kings 19:5, 6, 'And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.' Διακονεῖν, the word here used, is often taken in that sense in the New Testament: Mat. 8:15, 'She arose and ministered unto them,' that is, served them at meat. So Mat. 25:44, 'When saw we thee an hungered, &c., and did not minister unto thee?' The name of deacons is derived hence, as they 'served tables,' or provided meat for the poor, Acts 6:2. So Luke 10:40, 'My sister hath left me, διακονεῖν, to serve alone,' meaning, to prepare provisions for the family: so Luke 17:8, 'Gird thyself and serve me,' that is, 'at the table: again, Luke 22:27, 'Whether is greater, he that sits at meat, or he that serveth?' or ministereth. So John 12:2: 'They made a supper, and Martha served, but Lazarus

was one of those that sat at the table with him.' Thus the angels ministered unto Christ. This sort of ministry agreeth with what was said of his hunger, which was the occasion of Satan's temptations.

Secondly, The observations. As Christ is a pattern of all those providences which are dispensed to the people of God.

Doct. 1. That the days of God's people's conflicts and trials will not always last.

There are alternative changes and vicissitudes in their condition upon earth; sometimes they are vexed with the coming of the tempter, and then encouraged and cheered by the presence of angels; after storms come days of joy and gladness,—'the devil departeth, and the angels came and ministered to him:' So Ps. 34:19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' Here is their present conflict and their final conquest. Look on a Christian on his dark side, and there are afflictions, and afflictions many for number and kind; look on his luminous part, and there is the Lord to take care of him, to deliver him; and the deliverance is complete,—'the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' God will put an end to their conflict sooner or later; sometimes visibly in this life, or if he doth not deliver them till death, or from death, he will deliver them by death; then he delivereth them from all sin and misery at once, for death is theirs. The reasons are these:—

1. God considereth what will become himself, his pity and fidelity.

[1]. His own pity and mercy: James 5:11, 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.' God will give an happy end to our conflicts and trials, as he did to Job, that he may be known to be a God pitiful and merciful: Job is set up as a public visible instance and monument of God's tender mercy. We must not measure our afflictions by the smart, but the end of them; what the merciful God

will do at length: the beginning is from Satan, but the end from the Lord. If we look to the beginning, we draw an ill picture of God in our minds, as if he were harsh, severe, and cruel to his creatures, yea, to his best servants; but in the end we find him very tender of his people, and that sense hath made lies of God. At the very time when we think God hath forgotten us, he is ready to hear and to remove the trouble: Ps. 31:22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications.' The Son of God was hungry, transported and carried to and fro by the devil, from the pinnacle of the temple to a high mountain, tempted by a blasphemous suggestion to fall down and worship the impure spirit; but at length 'the devil leaveth him, and the angels came and ministered to him.'

[2.] His fidelity, which will not permit him to suffer you to be tempted above measure. We do not stand to the devil's courtesy, to tempt us as long as he list, but are in the hands of the faithful God: 1 Cor. 10:13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but what is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' What a heap of consolations are there in that one place—as (1.) That temptations are but ordinary and to be looked for: there is no *πειρασμός*, but it is *άνθρώπινος*, incident to human nature; it hath nothing extraordinary in it. If the Son of God in human nature was not exempted, why should we expect a privilege apart to ourselves, not common to others? (2.) That God's conduct is gentle; he inflicteth nothing and permiteth nothing to be inflicted upon you beyond measure, and above strength; but, as Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear, so God proportioneth trials to our strength. Before you have final deliverance, you shall have present support. (3.) That he will, together with the temptation, give *έκβασην*, a passage out, a way to escape. And all this is assured to us by his faithfulness; the conflict shall be tolerable when it is at the highest, and the end comfortable. God doth bridle the malice and hatred of Satan and his instruments; he hath taken an obligation upon

himself to do so, that he may omit no part of his care towards us. A good man will not overburden his beast.

2. The Lord considereth also our frailty, both with respect to natural and spiritual strength.

[1.] Natural strength. The Psalmist telleth us, that 'He will not always chide, and keep his anger for ever,' Ps. 103:9. Why? One reason is, that 'He knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are dust,' ver. 14. He may express his just displeasure, and correct us for our sins for a while; but he taketh off his punishing hand again, because he knoweth we are soon apt to faint and fail, being but a little enlivened dust, of a weak constitution, not able to endure long troubles and vexations. Job pleadeth, chap. 6:12, 'Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?' We have not strength to subsist under perpetual troubles, but are soon broken and subdued by them.

[2.] With respect to spiritual strength, the best are subject to great infirmities, which oft betray us to sin, if our vexations be great and long: Ps. 125:3, 'The rod of the wicked shall not rest on the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity.' The oppressions of wicked men shall not be so lasting and durable as that the temptations should be of too great force; this might shake the constancy of the best. He knoweth nothing in divinity that knoweth not that God worketh congruously, and attempereth his providence to our strength, and so will not only give an increase of internal grace, but lessen and abate the outward temptation; that his external government conduceth to the preservation of the saints, as well as his internal, by supporting their spirits with more liberal aids of grace. Therefore God will cause the temptation to cease when it is over-pressing. But all must be left to his wisdom and holy methods.

3. With respect to the devil and his instruments, to whose malice he sets bounds, who otherwise would know no measure.

[1.] For the devil, see Rev. 2:10: 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold! the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.' Mark how they are comforted against the persecution coming upon them: Partly because the cause was clearly God's, for all this trouble was by the instigation of the devil, making use of his instruments;—Eph. 2:2, he is called 'the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience:' Partly because the persecution raised would not be universal—some of you, not all—and those not persecuted unto the death, but only cast into prison: Partly from the end, that they should be tried—it was not penal or castigatory, but probatory;—the devil would destroy you, but God would suffer you only to be tried, so that they should come forth like the three children out of the furnace, without singeing of their garments, or like Daniel out of the lions' den, without a scratch or maim, or as Christ here—the devil got not one jot of ground upon him: Partly from the duration, ten days—that is, in prophetic account, ten years, reckoning each day for a year: Num. 14:34. It was not long; the saddest afflictions will have an end. All which showeth how God bridleth and moderateth the rage of Satan, and his evil influence.

[2.] For his instruments, God saith, Zech. 1:15, 'I am very sorely displeased with the heathen that were at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.' The instruments of God's chastisements lay on without mercy, and being of cruel minds and destructive intentions, which are heightened in them by Satan, are severe executioners of God's wrath; and if God did not restrain them by the invisible chains of his providence, we should never see good day more. Well, then, you see the reasons why the children of God, though they have many troubles and conflicts, yet they are not everlasting troubles.

Use of instruction to the people of God. It teacheth them three lessons—comfort, patience, obedience.

1. Comfort and encouragement to them that are under a gloomy day. This will not always last. He may try you for a while, and you may be under great conflicts, and wants, and difficulties, as he tried the woman of Canaan with discouraging answers; but at last, 'Woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt,' Mat. 15:28. He tried his disciples when he meant to feed the multitude: John 6:5, 6, 'Whence shall we buy bread that all these may eat? This he said to prove them, for he himself knew what he would do.' A poor believer is tried, children increase, trading grows dead in hard times; how shall so many mouths be filled? He promiseth Abraham a numerous posterity, but for a great while he goeth childless. He promiseth David a kingdom, yet for a while he is fain to shift for his life, and skulk up and down in the wilderness. He intended to turn water into wine, but first all the store must be spent. He meaneth to revive the hearts of his contrite ones, but for a while they lie under great doubts and fears. Moses' hand must be made leprous before it wrought miracles. Jesus loved Lazarus, and meant to recover him, but he must be dead first. But I must not run too far. There will be tedious conflicts and trials, but yet there is hope of deliverance: God is willing and God is able. He is willing, because he is sufficiently inclined to it by the grace and favour that he beareth his people: Ps. 149:4, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation.' The Lord loveth their persons, and he loveth their prosperity and happiness: Ps. 35:27, 'He hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.' He is able either as to wisdom or power. Wisdom: 2 Pet. 2:7, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.' Many times we know not which way, but God knoweth; he is never at a loss. Then for his power: power hath a twofold notion, of authority and might. He hath authority enough. The sovereign dominion of God is a great prop to our faith. All things in the world are at his disposal to use them for his own glory: Ps. 44:4, 'Command deliverances for Jacob.' Angels, devils, men, the hearts of the greatest men, are all at his command. He hath might and strength: Dan. 3:17, 'Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us,' and what then can let?

2. Patience: we must be contented, with the Son of God, to tarry his leisure, and undergo our course of trial, as Christ patiently continued, till enough was done to instruct the Church: Isa. 28:16, 'He that believeth will not make haste.' The people of God miscarry in their haste: Ps. 31:22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off, but thou heardest the voice of my supplication:' Ps. 116:11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars;' even Samuel and all the prophets who had assured him of the kingdom. It will come in the best time when it cometh in God's time, neither too soon nor too late; it will come sooner than your enemies would have it, sooner than second causes seem to promise, sooner than you deserve, soon enough to discover the glory of God to you: Ps. 40:1, 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.' God will not fail a waiting soul; his delay is no denial, nor a sign of want of love to you: John 11:5, 'Jesus loved Lazarus;' and yet, ver. 6, 'When he had heard that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.' It may come sooner than you expect: Ps. 94:18, 'When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.' David was apt to think all was gone, help would never come more to him, and in that very season God delivered him.

3. Obedience: the son of God submitted to the Holy Spirit while the impure spirit tempted him. If you would look for a ceasing of the conflict, do as he did, carry it humbly, fruitfully, faithfully to God.

[1.] Humble carriage will become you under your conflicts: 1 Pet. 5:6, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' The stubbornness of the child maketh his correction double to what it otherwise would be. The more submissive you are, the more the cross hath its effect; whether you will or no, you must passively submit to God.

[2.] Carry it fruitfully, otherwise you obstruct the kindness of the Lord. He proveth us, that we may be fruitful: John 15:2, 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more

fruit.' The rod hath done its work when it maketh us more holy; then the comfortable days come: Heb. 12:11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' Righteousness brings peace along with it, inward and outward. This maketh amends for the trouble. Then God beginneth to take it off.

[3.] Carry it faithfully to God, still opposing sin and Satan; for the more you give way to Satan, the more you are troubled with him, and your misery is increased, not lessened. But if you repel his temptations, he is discouraged: Eph. 4:27, 'Neither give place to the devil.' The devil watcheth for a door to enter and take possession of your hearts, that he may exercise his former tyranny. If he gaineth any ground, he makes fearful havoc in the soul, and weakeneth not only our comfort but our grace. Therefore imitate Christ's resolution and resistance here. But this will deserve a point by itself. Therefore:

Doct. 2. When the devil is thoroughly and resolutely resisted, he departeth.

As here, when the adversary was put to the foil, he went his way. Therefore this is often pressed upon us in scripture: James 4:7, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' If you resist his suggestions to malice, envy, and strife, he is discouraged; so 1 Pet. 5:9, 'Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.' We must not fly nor yield to him in the least, but stoutly and peremptorily resist him in all his temptations. If you stand your ground, Satan falleth. In this spiritual conflict Satan hath only weapons offensive, cunning wiles, and fiery darts, none defensive; a believer hath weapons both offensive and defensive, sword and shield, &c.; therefore our safety lieth in resisting.

About which is to be considered:—

1. What kind of resistance this must be.
2. Arguments to persuade and enforce it.
3. What graces enable us in this resistance.

1. For the kind of resistance.

[1.] It must not be faint and cold. Some kind of resistance may be made by general and common graces; the light of nature will rise up in defiance of many sins, especially at first, before men have sinned away natural light; or else the resistance at least is in some cold way. But it must be earnest and vehement, as against the enemy of God and our souls. Paul's resistance in his conflicts was with serious dislikes and deep groans; Rom. 7:9, 'The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do;' and ver. 24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' In apparent cases a detestation and vehement indignation is enough,—'Get thee behind me, Satan!' in other cases there need strong arguments and considerations, that the temptation may not stick when the tempter is gone, as the smutch remaineth of a candle stuck against a stone wall. When Eve speaketh faintly and coldly, the devil reneweth the assault with the more violence: Gen. 3:3, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' As to the restraint, she speaketh warmly, and with some impatience of resentment, 'not eat' 'nor touch,'—in the commination too coldly, 'lest ye die,' when God had said, 'ye shall surely die.' A faint denial is a kind of grant; therefore slight Satan's assaults with indignation. Though the dog barketh the traveller passeth on. Satan cannot endure contempt. At other times argue for God stoutly; thy soul and eternal concernments are in danger. No worldly concernment ought to go so near to us as that which concerneth our eternal good and the salvation of our souls. What would the devil have from thee but thy soul, and its precious enjoyments, peace of conscience, hope of everlasting life? What doth he bid?—worldly vanities. As the

merchant putteth up his wares with indignation when the chapman biddeth an unworthy price.

[2.] It must be a thorough resistance of all sin, 'take the little foxes,' dash 'Babylon's brats against the stones.' Lesser sticks set the great ones on fire. The devil cannot hope to prevail for great things presently. At first it is, 'Hath God said?' and then, 'Ye shall not surely die.' The approaches of Satan to the soul are gradual, he asketh a little, it is no great matter. Consider the evil of a temptation is better kept out than gotten out. Many think to stop after they have yielded a little; but when the stone at the top of a hill begins to roll downward, it is hard to stay it, and you cannot say how far you shall go. 'I'll yield but once,' saith a deceived heart; 'I'll yield but a little, and never yield again.' The devil will carry thee further and further, till he hath not left any tenderness in thy conscience. Some that thought to venture but a shilling, by the witchery of gaming have played away all; so some have sinned away all principles of conscience.

[3.] It must not be for a while, but continued; not only to stand out against the first assault, but a long siege. What Satan cannot gain by argument he seeketh to gain by importunity; but 'resist him, stedfast in the faith,' as his instrument spake to Joseph, 'day by day,' Gen. 39:10. Our thoughts by time are more reconciled to evil. Now we must keep up our zeal to the last. To yield at last is to lose the glory of the conflict. Therefore rate away the importunate suitor, as Christ doth.

2. Arguments to persuade it.

[1.] Because he cannot overcome you without your own consent. The wicked are 'taken captive by him at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. 2:26, because they yield themselves to his temptations; like the young man, Prov. 7:22, 'He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks.' There is a consent, or, at least, there is not a powerful dissent.

Satan's power lieth not in a constraining efficacy, but persuasive allurement.

[2.] The sweetness of victory will recompense the trouble of resistance. It is much more pleasing to deny a temptation than to yield to it; the pleasure of sin is short-lived, but the pleasure of self-denial is eternal.

[3.] Grace, the more it is tried and exercised, the more it is evidenced to be right and sincere: Rom. 5:3–5, 'Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.' It is a comfortable thing to know that we are of the truth, and to be able to assure our hearts before God.

[4.] Grace is strengthened when it hath stood out against a trial; as a tree shaken with fierce winds is more fruitful, its roots being loosened. Satan is a loser and you a gainer by temptations wherein you have approved your fidelity to God; as a man holdeth a stick the faster when another seeketh to wrest it out of his hands.

[5.] The more we resist Satan, the greater will our reward be: 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' The danger of the battle will increase the joy of the victory, as the dangers of the way make home the sweeter. There will a time come when he that is now a soldier will be a conqueror: Rom. 16:20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'

[6.] Where Satan gets possession, after he seemeth to be east out, he returneth with the more violence, and tyranniseth the more: Mat. 12:45, 'Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.'

[7.] The Lord's grace is promised to him that resisteth. God keepeth us from the evil one, but it is by our watchfulness and resistance; his power maketh it effectual. We are to strive against sin and keep ourselves, and God keepeth us by making our keeping effectual.

3. What are the graces that enable us in this resistance? I answer, the three fundamental graces, faith, hope, and love, so the spiritual armour is represented: 1 Thes. 5:8, 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.'

[1.] A strong faith: 1 Pet. 5:9, 'Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.' This is, in the general, a sound belief of eternity, or a deep sense of the world to come: when we believe the gospel with an assent so strong as constantly to adhere to the duties prescribed, and to venture all upon the hopes offered therein.

[2.] A fervent love, arising out of the sense of our obligations to God, that we do with all readiness of mind set ourselves to do his will, levelling and directing our actions to his glory. 'Love is strong as death, and many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it,' Cant. 8:6, 7. This love will neither be bribed nor frightened from Christ.

[3.] A lively hope, that doth so long and wait for glory to come, that present things do not greatly move us, either delights: 1 Pet. 1:8, 'Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' or the terrors of sense: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.'

Doct. 3. That those that come out of eminent conflicts are usually delivered by God in a glorious manner.

Christ was a pattern of this: 'The devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.' When God delivered his

people, after a long captivity, he delivered them with glory, and some kind of triumph, when he turned the Egyptian captivity: 'They borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required; and they spoiled the Egyptians,' Exod. 12:35, 36. So, in the Babylonian captivity, Cyrus chargeth his subjects, in the place where the Jews remain, to furnish them with all things necessary for their journey: Ezek. 1:4, 'And whosoever remaineth in any place, where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God, that is in Jerusalem.' So, in a private instance: Job 42:10, 11, 'And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.' It is said, 'The Lord turned the captivity of Job,' because he had been delivered to Satan's power till the Lord set him at liberty again, and then all his friends had compassion on him, even those that had despised him before relieved him. So Isa. 61:7, 'For your shame you shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess the double, everlasting joy shall be unto them.' They should have large and eminent honour, double honour for their shame, such a reparation would God make them for all the troubles and damages they had sustained. So, in an ordinary providence, God raiseth up comforters to his servants after all the injuries done them by Satan's instruments. And so also in spirituals; the grief and trouble that cometh by temptation is recompensed with more abundant consolation after the conquest and victory; and God delighteth to put special marks of favour upon his people that have been faithful in an hour of trial. Now God doth this:—

1. To show the world the advantage of godliness, and close adhering to him in an hour of temptation: Ps. 119:56, 'This I had, because I kept thy precepts.' And Ps. 58:11, 'So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.'

2. To check our diffidence and murmurings under trouble. Within a while and God's children will see they have no cause to quarrel with God, or repent that they were in trouble. For sometimes God giveth not only a comfortable but a glorious issue. There is nothing lost by waiting on providence; though we abide the blows of Satan for a while, yet abide them; God is, it may be, preparing the greater mercy for you: Isa. 25:9, 'And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' Afflictions are sharp in their season, but the end is glorious.

Use. Do not always reckon upon temporal felicity, refer that to God, but do as Jesus, who, in his sharp trials, Heb. 12:2, 3, 'For the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' There is a sure crown of life: James 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' That is enough to content a Christian, the eternal reward is sure. In this world he shall receive with persecution an hundred-fold, but in the world to come eternal life: Mark 10:29, 30, 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.'

Doct. 4. That God maketh use of the ministry of angels in supporting and comforting his afflicted servants.

He did so to Christ, he doth so to the people of Christ. Partly for the defence and comfort of the godly: Ps. 34:7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' Heb. 1:14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation?' Their ministry is now invisible, but yet certain. And partly also for the terror of their enemies. When David had said, 'The Lord hath chosen the hill of Sion to dwell in,' Ps. 68:16, he adds, ver. 17, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;' implying that no kingdom in the world hath such defence, and such potent and numerous armies as the church hath, and the kingdom of Christ. God hath fixed his residence there, and the angels serve him, and attend upon him; and he will be no less terrible to his foes in Sion, that oppose the gospel, than he showed himself in Sinai, when he gave the law. Where the king is there his attendants are; so where Christ is the courtiers of heaven take up their station. Now Christ is with his church to the end of the world, therefore these thousands of angels are there, ready to be employed by him. Now we may be sure of this ministry.

1. They delight in the preaching of the gospel, and the explication of the mysteries of godliness: 1 Pet. 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into;' Eph. 3:10, 'To the end that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.'

2. They delight in the holy conversation of the godly, as they are offended with all impurity, filthiness, and ungodliness. If good men be offended at the sins of the wicked, as 'Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their ungodly deeds,' 2 Pet. 2:8, much more are these holy spirits, especially when all things are irregularly carried in the worship of God: 1 Cor. 11:10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' 1 Tim. 5:21, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.'

3. They fight against the devil, and defend the godly in their extreme dangers. When the devil cometh into the church of God, like a wolf into the flock, they oppose and resist him. Therefore there is said to be war in heaven, that is, in the church, between Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels: Rev. 12:7, 'And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels.' In the highest heaven there is no war. In short, the angels and believers make one church, under one head, Christ; and at length shall both live together in the same place.

Why doth God make use of the ministry of angels? and how far?

1. To manifest unto them the greatness and glory of his work in the recovering mankind, that their delight in the love and wisdom of God may be increased. All holy creatures delight in any manifestation of God, the angels more especially: 1 Pet. 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into;' Eph. 3:11, 'To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, may be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' Though they themselves be not the parties interested, the spectators, not the guests; yet they are delighted in the glory of God, and are kindly affectionated to the salvation of lost men; and that they may have a nearer view of this mystery, God gratifieth them by sending them often to attend upon the dispensation of the gospel, and to assist in it so far as is meet for creatures. They are present in our assemblies: see 1 Cor. 11:10, 1 Tim. 5:21. They see who is negligent in his office, who hindereth the preaching of the gospel; they observe what is the success of it, and when it obtaineth its effect: Luke 15:7, 'There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' They are hereby more excited to praise and glorify God, and are careful to vouchsafe their attendance about the meanest that believe in him: Ps. 91:11, 12, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'

2. To maintain a society and communion between all the parts of the family of God. When God gathered together the things in heaven and in earth, he brought all into subjection and dependence upon one common head, Jesus Christ: Eph. 1:10, 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Men by adoption, angels by transition, are taken into the family of Christ. Now there is some intercourse between the several parts thereof. Our goodness extendeth not to them, but is confined to the saints on earth, in whom should be our delight; yet their help may be useful to us, they being such excellent and glorious creatures; but we are forbidden to invoke them or trust in them. God doth employ them in the affairs of his people. Their help is not the fruit of our trust in them, but their obedience to God; and it is seen in frustrating the endeavours of Satan and his instruments, and other services wherein Christ employeth them. God showed this to Jacob in the vision of the ladder, which stood upon earth, and the top reached to heaven—a figure of the providence of God, especially in and about the gospel: John 1:51, 'Hereafter you shall see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;' to carry on the work of the gospel, and to promote the glory and interest of Christ's kingdom in the world. Thus far in the general we may be confident of.

3. To preserve his people from many dangers and casualties, which fall not within the foresight of man, God employeth 'the watchers,' as they are called in the Book of Daniel, chap. 4:13, 17, for he is tender of his people, and doth all things by proper means. Now the angels having a larger foresight than we, they are appointed to be guardians. This they do according to God's pleasure, preventing many dangers, which we could by no means foresee. They observe the devil in all his walks, and God useth them to prevent his sudden surprisals of his people, as instances are many.

4. Because they are witnesses of the obedience and fidelity of Christ's disciples, and, so far as God permitteth, they cannot but assist them in their conflicts. Thus Paul, 1 Cor. 4:9: 'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men.' Now the angels, that are witnesses to their combats and sufferings, cannot but make report to God: Mat. 18:10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' The angels which are appointed by God to be their guardians have their continual recourses, and returns to God's glorious presence. Now, being so high in God's favour, and having continual access to make their requests and complaints known to him, they will not be silent in the behalf of their fellow-servants, that either the trial may be lessened, or grace sufficient may be given to them.

5. They do not only keep off hurt, but there are many blessings and benefits that we are partakers of by their ministry. As the angel of the Lord delivered Peter out of prison: Acts 12:7, 'And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly; and his chains fell off from his hands,' &c. But he doth not give thanks to the angel, but to God; ver. 11, 'Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me,' &c. He directeth it to God, not to the creature. The angels do us many favours; all the thanks we do them is that we do not offend them by our sins against God; other gratitude they expect not.

6. Their last office is at death and judgment. In death, to convey our souls to Christ: Luke 16:22, 'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' that so we may enjoy our rest in heaven. In the last day they will gather the bodies of Christ's redeemed ones from all parts of the world, after they have been resolved into dust, and mingled with the dust of other men, that every saint may have his own body again, wherein he hath obeyed and glorified God: Mat. 24:31, 'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather

together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' That is, from all parts and quarters of the world, that their souls may return to their old beloved habitations, and then both in body and in soul they may be for ever with the Lord.

Use. Now this is a great comfort to the church and people of God, when the powers and principalities on earth are employed against them, to consider what powers and principalities attend upon Christ. We serve such a master as hath authority over the holy angels, to employ them at his pleasure; and in their darkest condition his people feel the benefit of it. As the angel of the Lord appeared to Paul in a dreadful storm: Acts 27:23, 24, 'There stood by me this night the angel of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul,' &c. So to Christ in his agonies: Luke 22:43, 'There appeared an angel to him from heaven strengthening him.' So against Satan, the good angels are ready to comfort us, as the evil angels are ready to trouble and tempt us. Let us then look to God, at whose direction they are sent to help and comfort us.

Doct. 5. If God taketh away ordinary helps from us, he can supply us by means extraordinary, as he did Christ's hunger by the ministry of angels. Therefore till God's power be wasted there is no room for despair. We must not limit the Holy One of Israel to our ways and means, as they did: Ps. 78:41, 'They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.'

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

SERMON I

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them into an high mountain apart.—MAT. 17:1; with,

It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.—LUKE 9:28.

I MEAN to handle the transfiguration of Christ, which was:—

1. A solemn confirmation of his person and office.
2. A pledge of that glorious estate which is reserved for us in heaven.

1. It was a confirmation of his person and office, as appeareth Mat. 17:5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' So Peter, who was one present, urgeth it, 2 Pet. 1:16–18, 'We have not followed cunningly-devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.' And John also: John 1:14, 'We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.' They were eye and ear witnesses, and therefore could affirm the certainty of this doctrine.

2. It is a pledge of our glorious estate; for Christ's body was adorned with heavenly glory, and he had spoken, chap. 16:27, of his coming in the glory of the Father; and now he gives his disciples a pledge and earnest of it.

In this introduction four things are observable:—

1. The time: after six days.

2. The persons whom he takes with him: Peter, James, and John.
3. The place he brings them to: into an high mountain apart.
4. The preparative action: he went up into a mountain to pray.

First, The time. The evangelist Luke saith, 'about an eight days;' Matthew and Mark, 'after six days.' The reconciliation is easy. Matthew and Mark spake of the space of time between the day of prediction, and the day of transfiguration exclusively; Luke includeth them both. The Jews called that flux of time between one Sabbath and another, eight days, including not only the intervening week, but both the Sabbaths. According to their custom Luke speaketh; Matthew of the time between.

Secondly, The persons chosen to attend him in this action: 'Peter, James, and John.'

1. Why three?

2. Why those three?

1. Why three? So great an action as this was needed valuable testimony; for the law saith, 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses everything shall be established,' Deut. 17:6. Now Christ would go to the utmost of the law, and would have, not two only, but three witnesses, as the apostle speaks of three witnesses in heaven and three on earth, 1 John 5:7, 8; so here are three and three—three from heaven, God the Father, Moses, and Elias; and three from earth, Peter, James, and John.

2. Why those three? Many give divers reasons. Peter had led the way to the rest in that notable confession of Christ, Mat. 16:16, and is conceived to have some primacy for the orderly beginning of actions in the college of the apostles. James was the first apostle who shed his blood for Christ, Acts 12:2; and John was the most long-lived of them all, and so could the longer give testimony of those things

which he heard and saw, till the church was well gathered and settled. Others give other reasons. But to leave conjectures, it is certain that these had many singular favours afforded them above the rest of the twelve, as appeareth partly in this, that Christ changed their names, calling Peter, Cephas, or a stone; and the other two Boanerges, sons of thunder, which was a token that Christ loved these more than the rest. Tea, among these, John was his bosom favourite, and therefore called often 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' partly because he was in the whole course of his life more intimate with these than with the rest of the disciples. You shall see when he raised Jairus's daughter from death to life, Luke 8:51, he suffered nobody to go in but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden. So these very persons were those who in Mount Olivet were conscious to his agonies: Mat. 26:27, 'He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.' Now these who were to be conscious to his agonies are first in Mount Tabor beholders of his great majesty and glory, for their better encouragement and preparation for his and their own sufferings.

Thirdly, The place: 'He bringeth them into an high mountain apart.' This mountain is supposed to be Tabor, though not named by the evangelists—a fit place both for height and secrecy, both which were necessary to the double action that was to be performed there, either his transfiguration or prayer.

1. To his transfiguration height and secrecy were necessary.

[1.] Height: This work required not only a mountain, but a high mountain, for his transfiguration was a middle state between the infirmity of his flesh and the glory that he now possesseth. So the top of a very high mountain was chosen; it is as a middle place between heaven, the habitation of God, and earth, the habitation of men. Besides, since Moses and Elias were to appear in this action, and that with bodies above the state of those natural bodies which we have here below, it was more agreeable this should be done in a

mountain than in the lower parts of the earth; yea, moreover, they were so nearer to heaven, to which they went back again.

[2.] Secrecy was necessary to his transfiguration, for Christ was about a business which he would not have presently to come abroad, and therefore it was to be confined to the knowledge of a few, who were to be called up from the rest into an high mountain: ver. 9, Jesus 'charged them that they should tell the vision to no man till the Son of man was risen from the dead;' and what was done before many will hardly be concealed. The due time for the general and public manifestation of the divine glory was not yet come, therefore he would not have it unseasonably divulged. And hereby he teacheth us modesty. Christ was crucified in the city before all, but transfigured in the mountain only before a few.

2. The other action, of prayer, doth very well agree with height and secrecy.

[1.] For height: Though God heareth us everywhere, wheresoever we 'lift up pure hands, without wrath and doubting,' yet a mountain is not altogether disagreeable to this duty. It is good to be as near heaven as we can. I am sure it is good to get up the heart there. We have a freer prospect of heaven from a mountain, and may look up to those blessed regions where our God is; therefore Christ often chose a mountain to pray in, not only now, but at other times: Mat. 14:23. Certainly when we pray we should turn our backs upon all earthly things, and have our hearts and minds carried up to him to whom our prayers are directed, and that place where he dwelleth.

[2.] Secrecy is necessary for this duty, partly to avoid ostentation: Mat. 6:6, 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy doors.' Public prayer must be performed before others, but not private, for fear of hypocrisy; so also to increase fervency. Secret prayers are usually most ardent. *Ille dolet verè qui sine teste dolet.* 'My soul shall weep sore in secret places,' Jer. 13:17. And Peter went out and wept bitterly,' Mat. 26:75. And Jacob wrestled with God

alone, Gen. 32:24. Frequency of objects draws away the mind, obstructeth our affections, abates the vehemency of our zeal, fills us with carnal thoughts; therefore Christ retireth himself and his three disciples, that being separated from all distractions, they might attend the prayer and the vision without interruption.

Fourthly, The preparative action. In Luke it is, 'He went into a mountain to pray.' Christ had two ends; he told his disciples the one, but concealeth the other. He spake only of prayer, the more to hide the thing from the rest of the apostles, which would soon be evident enough to those whom he took along with him. Now this telleth us that every weighty business should be begun with prayer. When we go about the performance of weighty and serious duties, we should withdraw ourselves from all occasions which may hinder us and distract us therein, as our Lord, being to give himself to prayer, goeth apart into a mountain.

In this introduction I shall only take notice of two things:—

1. The choice of his company.
 2. His preparative action: he prayed, and whilst he prayed he was transfigured.
1. Of the choice of his company: he took Peter, James, and John. That Christ doth not use all his servants alike familiarly in everything, partly because he had his liberty; for in matters of free favour it is not acceptance of persons to pass by some and admit others—no, not in the most necessary spiritual dispensations: Mat. 11:27, 'All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whomsoever the Father will reveal him.' The plea of the Lord of the vineyard will ever hold firm and valid: Mat. 20:15, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?' But this is a thing of another nature. The dispensing of his arbitrary respects, acceptance of persons in judgment, is a violation of justice, but not in matters of free favour, partly because

he would consecrate and hallow spiritual friendship, and commend it to us by his own example; and, therefore, though he loved all his disciples, yet he chose out some for intimacy and special converse. These were ἐκλέκτων ἐκλεκτότεροι, the flower of the apostles, either because, of their suitableness, he had a special inclination to them, or, for their sincerity and eminency in grace, he delighted in them more than in the rest. Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis, ad magis: if I love all that are godly, I love those most who are most godly. Now as Christ consecrated holy friendship in his own person, so was it exemplified in his disciples, for I find a great friendship between two of these mentioned in the text, John and Peter. You find them mostly together: John 20:2–4, Mary Magdalene runneth and cometh to Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved; Peter went forth and the other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So Acts 3:1, 'Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer:' John 21:7, 'The disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord;' and John 21:21, 22, 'Peter, seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved, said, Lord, and what shall this man do?' as willing to know the future state of his friend. So Acts 8:14, Peter and John go to Samaria to confirm the disciples. See John 18:15, 'And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple, and that other disciple was known unto the high priest,' meaning himself. So that in these and other places you still find Peter and John together as very near and fast friends: they always keep together, possibly for spiritual assistance; for Peter was of an hot temper, John the disciple of love; Peter hasty and of a military valour, John all for lenity and peace. Well, then, though we ought to seek peace with all men as much as is possible, Rom. 12:18, and there should be special concord and communion with all Christians—Φιλαδελφία riseth higher than Αγάπη, 2 Pet. 1:7—yet friendship and inward conversation should only be with a few, such as may be helps to us in godliness, and may promote our mutual good, temporal and spiritual. So did Christ, who had twelve disciples, single out three of them for greatest intimacy; and so did Peter, who, though he had eleven colleagues, and held concord with all, yet his intimate friendship was with John, the disciple whom

Jesus loved. It is good to hold friendship with those who are beloved of God, and one who, by his love and lenity, might cool his heats and abate his hasty fervours, which were so natural to him.

Now, having so fair an occasion, I shall treat of spiritual friendship, for an heavenly, faithful friend is one of the greatest treasures upon earth. A friend is valuable in secular matters, much more a spiritual friend: Prov. 27:17, 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend,'—that is, when he is dull his friend setteth an edge upon him.

[1.] Friendship is necessary for every one that would live in the world, because man is ζῶον πολιτικὸν, a sociable creature. Man was not made to live alone, but in company with others for mutual society and friendship; and they that fly all company and live to and by themselves are counted inhuman: Eccles. 4:9–12, 'Two are better than one, for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they have heat; but how can one be warm if he lie alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him.' Thus far Solomon. The Egyptians in their hieroglyphics expressed the unprofitableness of a solitary man by a single millstone, which alone grindeth no meal, but with its fellow is very serviceable for that purpose. The Lord appointed mankind to live in society, that they might be mutually helpful to one another. Surely God never made them to live in deserts; the wild beasts love to go alone, but the tame in flocks and herds. The Lord doth give variety of gifts to the sons of men; to all some, but to none all, that one might stand in need of another, and make use of one another; and the subordination of one gift to another is the great means of upholding the world. Man is weak and insufficient to himself, and wanting the help of others, needeth society, and is inclined to it by the bent of his nature.

[2.] Though man affecteth society, yet in our company we must use choice, and the good must converse with the good, for these

reasons:—

(1.) Partly because like doth best sort with like. Friendship is founded in suitableness and maintained by it—*eadem velle et nolle*, to will and nill the same things, breedeth an harmony of minds; the godly will have special love to the godly, and they that fear God will be companions of them that fear him, Ps. 119:63; they must needs be more dear and precious to them than others, as a wicked man easily smelleth out a fit companion for him: Ps. 50:18, 'When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.' Like will to like; every man showeth his temper in his company. The fowls of heaven flock together according to their several kinds; ye shall not see doves flocking with the ravens, nor diverse kinds intermixed. Men that delight in excess of drink choose company suitable to their brutish humour; those that delight in gaming choose such as make no conscience of their time, or have no care of their souls. That which every one is taken withal he loveth to do with his friends, therefore they that love God delight in those that love him, those that are most apt to stir them up to the remembrance of everlasting things and the preparation necessary: so they are of singular use to us.

(2.) If they be not like to us, intimacy and converse will make us like to them. Every man is wrought upon by his company; we imitate those whom we love and with whom we frequently converse: Prov. 13:20, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' As a man that walketh in the sun is tanned insensibly, so, if we are not aware, we adopt their manners and customs, and get a tincture from them, especially in evil; for we are more susceptible of evil than of good—as the sound get a sickness from the diseased sooner than the sick get health from the sound. Or in the types of the law: that which was clean, by touching the unclean became unclean, but the unclean were not purified by touching the clean: Prov. 22:24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' A man would think

that of all sins wrath and anger should not be propagated by converse, the motions and furies of it being so uncomely and indecent to any beholder; yet secretly a liking of the person breedeth a liking of the sin, and a man is habituated into such a frame of spirit as they have whom he hath chosen for his companions. Now this should be regarded by us, because we are sooner made evil by evil company than good by good company; therefore how careful should we be to converse with such as may go before us as examples of godliness, and provoke us by their strictness, heavenly-mindedness, mortification, and self-denial, to more love to God, zeal for his glory, and care of our own salvation. Especially doth this concern the young, who, by the weakness of their judgment or the vehemency of their affections and want of experience, may easily be drawn into a snare.

(3.) Because our love to God should put us upon loving his people and making them our intimates; for religion influenceth all things—our relations, common employments, friendship, and converse: 1 John 5:1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.' The new nature inclineth to both: there is an inward propension and inclination needing no outward provocation and allurements: 1 Thes. 4:9, 'As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another.' God's teaching is by effectual impression or inclining the heart. It is a smart question that of the prophet, 2 Chron. 19:2, 'Shouldest thou hate the godly, and love those that hate the Lord?' Surely a gracious heart cannot take them into his bosom: he loveth all with a love of good will, as seeking their good, but not with a love of complacency, as delighting in them. Our neighbour must be loved as ourselves—our natural or carnal neighbour as our natural self, with a love of benevolence, and our spiritual neighbour as our spiritual self, with a love of complacency. We have hated our sinful neighbour as we hate ourselves; much more as to love of benevolence—we must neither hate ourselves, our neighbour, nor our enemy. But it is complacency we are speaking of, and so 'the wicked is an abomination to the righteous,' Prov. 29:27. The hatred

of displacency is opposite to the love of complacency, as the hatred of enmity to the love of benevolence. We cannot enter into a confederacy and intimate kindness with them.

(4.) Because that love which is built upon holiness is the most durable and lasting. There is a confederacy in evil, as between drunkards with drunkards, and robbers with robbers: Prov. 1:14, 'Cast in thy lot amongst us, let us all have one common purse.' Or when men conspire against the truth and interest of Christ in the world; as Gebal and Ammon and Amalek leagued themselves against God's people, divided in interests but united in hatred; as the Pharisees and Herodians agreed together to tempt Christ; and Herod and Pilate, though otherwise no very good friends, agreed to mock him. This is *unitas contra unitatem*, as Austin; or *consortium factionis*, a bond of iniquity. Now this friendship is soon dissolved, for these men, though they agree in evil, yet have contrary lusts and interests; and besides, partners in evil are usually objects reviving guilt; their very presence upbraids the consciences of one another with the remembrance of their past sins; and sin, though it be sweet in the committing, yet it is hateful and bitter in the remembrance of it. Again, there is a civil friendship built on natural pleasure and profit. Certainly men are at liberty to choose their company as their interests and course of employments leads them. This may be a society for trade or civil respect; it cannot be a true and proper friendship, for riches, which are so frail and slippery, can never make a firm tie and bond of hearts and minds: Prov. 14:20, 'The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends;' Prov. 19:6, 'Many will entreat the favour of a prince, and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts: all the brethren of the poor do hate him,' &c. And as it is a fluid, so it is a base and sordid friendship that is built upon riches, for that concerneth the estate rather than the soul. Well, then, religious friendship, which is built upon virtue and grace, and is called 'the unity of the spirit,' Eph. 4:3, is the most firm bond of all. Sinful societies are soon dissolved, and the profane, though they seem to hold together, yet upon every cross word may fall out and break; and civil friendship, which is

only built upon pleasures and profit, standeth upon a brittle foundation. Certainly the good and the holy are not so changeable as the bad and the carnal. Besides, that friendship which is built upon honesty and godliness, is *amicitia per se*, the other is *amicitia per accidens*. It cometh from constitution of soul and likeness of spirits, and the good we seek may be possessed without envy; the friends do not straiten and intrench upon one another. Again, there is a virtuous friendship, which consists in a harmony of minds, or an agreement in some common studies. This is more noble, and more like true friendship than society for trade and temporal interests; but yet this friendship is not so durable, for at last it must be broken off by death; but the godly are everlasting companions. Besides, self-love and envy are more apt to invade other friendships; but the godly, if they be true to the laws of spiritual friendship, they seek the good of one another as much as their own, and rejoice in the graces of one another as much as in their own.

[3.] Though we owe this religious friendship to all that fear God, yet some few may be chosen for our intimacy and spiritual solace. We owe it in some respects to all that fear God, and must dispense the general acts of friendship to them: Acts 4:32, 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.' And Christian love is called *σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος*, 'the bond of perfectness,' Col. 3:14, because it is the band by which holy and Christian societies, called churches, are bound together and preserved; otherwise, like a besom unbound, they fall all to pieces. But yet this doth not hinder but that some may be chosen for our intimacy. Christ, that denied himself to many of the commodities of human life, would not live without special friends, and would enjoy this virtuous solace; and in David and Jonathan we have an instance of it: 1 Sam. 18:1, 'And the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.' Certainly too many cannot perform the acts of intimate friendship to us, nor we to them. The love being like a river dispersed into several channels, must needs be shallower and weaker; therefore our choice friends must be but few: *inter binos et bonos* was the old rule, though it need not be so straitly confined.

[4.] In the choice of these few friends we must use caution. (1.) Such as are near to us, with whom we have frequent and familiar converse, and perform a mutual interchange of all offices of love: Prov. 18:24, 'A man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.' Consanguinity and affinity is not so near a tie as this friendship. (2.) Not only near, but those who are holy, prudent, and good: Prov. 13:20, 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' (3.) Such as are most likely to be faithful: Job 6:15, 16, 'My brethren have dealt deceitfully with me as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away'—pools in winter, when less need of water, but dried up in summer, when water in those parched countries was a great commodity. So many seem to be great friends, heighten our expectation; but in our necessities and straits leave us destitute. 'Ye see me cast down and are afraid,' saith Job, 'as if I should be a burden to you.' Dearest friends may disappoint us; their affection wants an inward principle; it is a winter brook, and not a spring. Therefore, since the heart of man is so deceitful, and not only deceitful, but though sincere for the present, very changeable; and this is so important an interest of human life, and the vexation of a disappointment in a bosom friend is so grievous, and involveth us in many inconveniences, natural and spiritual; for Solomon telleth us, Prov. 25:19, 'Confidence in an unfaithful friend in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.' When we think to eat with the broken tooth, or to walk with the foot out of joint, we are put to grievous pain and torment; therefore we should go to God, and pray him to direct us in the choice of intimate friends. David sadly regrets a disappointment in a friend: Ps. 55:12–15, 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: nor was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance,' &c. A deceitful friend may become the greatest foe, and we resent their ingratitude more than the injuries of others, when they abuse their trust and the familiarity they had with us. The worst that a professed enemy can do is not so

grievous as the treachery of a professed friend. This is more piercing, less to be avoided; therefore, whom we have used most familiarly and freely, loved as our soul and life, from such we expect the same firm and hearty friendship. Therefore it concerneth us to seek to God that we may have a godly wise man with whom we may be free in all cases of mind or conscience, and to whom we may freely open ourselves, and be strengthened in the service of God. It is a great part of our contentment and happiness, therefore, that we may not be deceived in our choice. Let us go to God who knoweth hearts, and God hath a great hand in this: Ps. 88:8, 'Thou hast put away my acquaintance from me; thou hast made me an abomination to them.' By the providence of God they left him as a man whose condition they were afraid to look upon. And again, ver. 9, 'Lover and friend hast thou put far from me; they stand aloof from me as an execrable thing.' He owneth providence in it.

[5.] When friends be thus chosen, there must be a faithful discharge of the duties of friendship, both in counsels and reproofs; for the godly use this friendship chiefly for spiritual ends.

(1.) In counsel, for Solomon telleth us, Prov. 22:9, 'As ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.' As sweet perfumes are a reviving, so to be supported in good resolutions, or directed and guided in our way to heaven by a faithful friend, is very cheering and comfortable. And we read, 1 Sam. 23:16, 17, that 'Jonathan went to David, and strengthened his hand in God.' Whereas, on the contrary, a carnal friend is the greatest bane that may be, who doth strengthen us in evil; an instance whereof we have in Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, 2 Sam. 13:3, 4, and 'Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, and Jonadab was a subtile man;' and he gave him counsel how he should surprise his sister, to defile her, and satisfy his incestuous lust. Such a friend is really and truly our greatest foe. He was a friend to his vice, but a foe to his person and soul; whereas a true friend, whose friendship is grounded on godliness, will be a foe to

our sins, by wholesome admonition and rebukes, and a friend to our soul's salvation.

(2.) Reproofs: that is also a part of friendship: Prov. 27:6, 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.' A faithful friend's wounds are a more sincere testimony than an enemy's kisses, and so afterwards they will be interpreted: Prov. 28:23, 'He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.' For this we must trust God, though for the present we displease our friends. So Lev. 19:17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart by suffering sin upon him.' It is kindness to his soul to reprove him. In the general, holy friendship must be improved to the use of edifying: Rom. 1:11, 12, 'I long to see you, to impart some spiritual gift unto you, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith of you and me.'

[6.] After the best care is used, you must remember that our friends are but an outward help, which God can continue or withdraw at his pleasure; and that our chief help, comfort, and counsel cometh of God. So it was with Christ: John 16:32, 'Behold the hour is come that ye shall be parted every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' Christ was forsaken of his disciples, but not forsaken of his Father. So Paul, 2 Tim. 1:16, 'At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me;' Ps. 41:9, 'My familiar friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against me.' Those that have been acquainted with the secrets of your soul may not only grow strange to you, but betray you; therefore, do not over-value any earthly friend. Man will be man still, that God may be God, all in all unto his people: and when we are deserted of men, we must learn to trust in God, who never faileth us, fail who will: Ps. 27:10, 'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;' and 142:4, 5, 'I looked on my right hand and beheld, and no man would know me: refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and portion in the land of the

living.' We are left alone for God to help us. The defectiveness of all worldly friends shows us more of the goodness of God.

2. The preparative action: he went up into a mountain to pray, and whilst he prayed he was transfigured.

[1.] In that he prayed, it teacheth us to hallow all our actions by prayer. We do not bid ourselves God speed, unless we recommend our affairs to God; whatsoever assurance we have of the blessing, yet we must pray: Jer. 29:10–12, 'For thus saith the Lord, After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place, &c. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you;' Ezek. 36:37, 'I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.' Therefore we should be daily in the practice of this duty, and not look upon it as a work that may well be spared. If Christ, who as to his divine nature was equal with God, surely we should often come and prostrate ourselves before him in this act of holy adoration. Christ had right and title to all, all was his due, yet he was much in prayer. How dare we go about any business without his leave, counsel, and blessing; and usurp any of his blessings without begging them by prayer?

[2.] While he prayed he was transfigured, Luke 9:29; which teacheth us two things:—

(1.) That we have the highest communications from God in prayer, for then Christ's shape was altered. By prayer the soul hath the most familiar converse with God that possibly it can have, and also by the means of this duty God hath most familiar converse with us. In our prayers to God we have experience of the operations of the Spirit: Rom. 8:26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself helpeth us with groanings which cannot be uttered;' Jude 20, 'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost;' and in God's answering our prayer we have

experience of the comforts of the Spirit, and those spiritual solaces which he secretly giveth to his people. Hannah, when she had prayed, went away, and 'her countenance was no more sad,' 1 Sam. 1:18. In praying we put forth the groans of the spirit; in the answer God gives the joys of the spirit: Ps. 34:5, 'They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.'

(2.) That we should pray so as that the heart may be raised and lifted up unto God, and in some sort made like God. When Christ prayed to God, he is made partaker of the divine glory, as Moses also, by conversing with God, his face shined, Exod. 34:29, 30. This was extraordinary; but sure the oftener we converse with God the more holy and heavenly should we grow, more like him in spirit, be changed into the glory of the Lord spiritually; and so we are, if we be instant and earnest in prayer. If we have communion with God, there will be some assimilation to God.

Use. It reproveth our remiss, feeble, benumbed souls. There is no life in prayer, no working up the heart to God and heaven; either our prayers are formal and cursory—James 5:16, *δέησις ἐνεργουμένη*—or our prayers are doctrinal, instructive rather than warning. We get lightly over duties, but we should get life by prayer. This duty is not to inform the judgment, but to raise the affections, that they be all in a flame; or else we content ourselves with a dull narrative, without getting up the heart to a sight of God and heaven; or are seldom in praises or adoration of the excellences of God.

SERMON II

And he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.—MAT. 17:2; with,

And, as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.—LUKE 9:29.

IN both these texts, compared together, you may observe two things:—

1. The circumstance of time: during prayer.
2. The transfiguration itself.

[1.] More generally propounded, he was transfigured before them.

[2.] More particularly explained by the change of his face and raiment. The form of any man is most seen in his face. There was a glorious shining brightness. Luke saith, 'The fashion of his countenance was altered;' Matthew, that 'His face did shine as the sun.' And in the glorious description of God in the prophet Habakkuk, it is said, chap. 3:2, 'And his brightness was as the light.' For his garments, Luke saith, 'His raiment was white and glistening;' Mark, chap. 9:3, 'White as the snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them;' but Matthew, 'white as the light,' which carrieth it higher. The works of nature exceed those of art. The transfiguration that was plainly to be seen in his face was accomplished also in other parts of his body. All his body was clothed with majesty, so as it could not be obscured and hidden by his garments.

Now, first I shall speak of the circumstances of time, and then of the transfiguration itself.

I. Of the time: 'and as he prayed.' Now what Christ prayed for is not specified. (1.) If he asked common blessings, and prayed only in order to his usual solace and converse with God, it showed the success of vehemency in prayer. Christ prayed at such a rate as that he was transfigured and changed into the likeness of God in prayer. (2.) If He asked to be transfigured for the confirmation of his disciples, it showeth God's readiness to answer fervent and earnest prayers.

1. Of the first consideration. If Christ's prayer were of ordinary import, it teacheth us that we should pray so that the heart may be

raised and lifted unto God in prayer, and in some sort made like unto God. Let us state this matter aright

[1.] It must be granted that this shining of Christ's countenance as the sun, while he prayed, was extraordinary, and a dispensation peculiar to the Son of God. So also was the shining of Moses's face while he conversed with God in the mount, Exod. 34:29, 30. And for ordinary Christians to expect the like is to put a snare upon themselves, for these things are proper only to the end for which God appointed them.

[2.] This must be also considered, that the eminent and extraordinary passions and affections in the soul do discover themselves in the body, especially in the face; for it is said of Stephen, that when he was heightened into a great zeal for Christ, Acts 6:15, that 'All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.' Angels have not bodies or faces, but they often assume bodies, and then they appear with a glorious and bright countenance, as the angel of the Lord that appeared at the sepulchre: Matthew 28:3, 'His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.' Now such a glory and gladness did God put upon the countenance of his servant Stephen, that he looked like an angel. Something extraordinary there might be in the case, but yet there was an ordinary reason for it. Stephen's mind was filled with such an incredible solace in the sense of God's love, that he showed no troubledness, but a mind so unconcerned and freed from all fear and sorrow, as if he had been among the angels of God in full glory, and not among his enemies, who sought his blood; and so may God raise the hearts of his people sometimes, as if they had put their heads above the clouds, and were in the midst of the glory of the world to come among his blessed ones. If that were extraordinary, Solomon tells us, Eccles. 8:1, that 'a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine,' as it gives him readiness and tranquillity of mind, and cheerfulness of countenance. Guilt and shame cast down the countenance, but righteousness and wisdom embolden it, more

particularly in prayer. As our confidence and joy in God is increased, it bewrayeth itself in the countenance: Ps. 34:15, 'They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.' They are revived and encouraged, and come away from the throne of grace other manner of persons than they came to it.

[3.] That some kind of transformation is wrought by prayer, appeareth by these considerations:—

(1.) That as God is glorious in himself, so he maketh him that cometh to him partaker of his glory. For certainly all communion with God breedeth some assimilation and likeness unto God. It is clear in heavenly glory, when we see him as he is, we shall be like him, 1 John 3:2; and it is clear also in our communion with him in the Spirit; for the apostle telleth us, that by 'Beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. 3:18. Not only doth vision or immediate intuition produce this effect, but also spiritual specular vision, or a sight of God in the ordinances, produces a divine and God-like nature, inclining us to hate sin and love righteousness. The more we are above with God, the more we are like him. We see it in ordinary converse: a man is as the company that he keepeth. 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise,' saith Solomon, 'but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' Prov. 13:20. Now it is not imaginable that a man should converse often with God fervently, seriously, and not be more like him. He that liveth in a mill, the dust will stick upon his clothes. Man receiveth an insensible taint from his company. He that liveth in a shop of perfumes, often handleth them, is conversant among them, carrieth away somewhat of the fragrancy of these good ointments; so by conversing with God we are made like him.

(2.) Nearer we cannot come to God, while we dwell in flesh, than by lifting up the heart to him in fervent prayer. This is the intimate converse and familiarity of a loving soul with God; therefore it is called a lifting up the heart to God. He will not come down to us,

therefore we lift up the heart to him: Lam. 3:41, 'Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens.' So Ps. 25:1, 'Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;' and Ps. 86:4, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant, for unto thee do I lift up my soul;' so Ps. 143:8, 'Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.' All these places show that there can be no sincerity and seriousness in this duty, unless there be this ascension of the soul to God; it is an act of spiritual friendship, therefore called an 'acquainting ourselves with God,' Job 22:21. Now as acquaintance is kept up by frequent visits, so prayer is called a giving God a visit: Isa. 26:16, 'In their trouble they have visited thee.' Well, then, here is the greatest intimacy we have with God. In the word, God speaks to us by a proxy and ambassador—another speaketh for him. In the Lord's Supper we are feasted at his cost, and remember him; but we are not admitted into his immediate presence, as those that are feasted by the king in another room than he dineth in. But prayer goeth up to God, and speaketh to himself immediately; and therefore this way of commerce must needs bring in much of God to the soul.

(3.) In fervent prayer we have a double advantage—we get a sight of God, and exercise strong love to God; and both conduce to make us like God.

(1st.) We get a sight of God, for in it (if it be seriously performed) we turn our back upon all other things, that we may look to God as sitting upon the throne, governing all things by his power for his glory. By faith we see the invisible one, Heb. 11:27. Surely if we do not see God before the eye of our faith when we pray to him, we worship an idol—not the true and living God, who is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Our hearts should be shut up against the thoughts of any other thing, and confined only to the object to whom we direct our worship. I reason thus: If a Christian foreseeth the Lord before him in all his ways, and keepeth always as in his eye and presence, surely he should set the Lord before him in his worship and in his prayers, Ps. 16:8. A good

Christian doth always keep as in God's eye and presence, much more when he calleth upon his name. Now every sight of God doth more affect and change the heart. As none but the pure in heart see God, so none see God but are most pure in heart. There is a self-purifying in moral things; purity of heart maketh way for the sight of God, Mark 5:8. So the sight of God maketh way for the purity of heart: 3 John 11, 'He that doth evil hath not seen God.' A serious sight of God certainly worketh some change in us.

(2dly.) In prayer, a strong love to God is acted, for it is the expression of our delight in him: Job 27:10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?' Now we are changed into the likeness of him in whom we delight in. Love transformeth and changeth us into the nature of what is loved. There is the difference between the mind and the will: the mind draweth things to itself, but the will followeth the things it chooseth, and is drawn by them as the wax receiveth the impression of the seal. Carnal objects make us carnal, and earthly things earthly; and heavenly things heavenly, and the love of God godly: Ps. 115:8, 'They that make them are like unto them, so are all they that put their trust in them,' stupid and senseless as idols: it secretly stamps the heart with what we like, and esteem, and admire.

[4.] There are agents in prayer to help us to improve this advantage.

(1.) The human spirit.

(2.) The new nature; and,

(3.) The Spirit of God.

(1.) The human spirit, or our natural faculty, so that, by our understandings, we may work upon our wills and affections: surely God maketh use of this, for the Holy Ghost doth not work upon a man as upon a block; and we are to rouse up ourselves, and to attend upon this work with the greatest seriousness imaginable. The prophet complains, Isa. 64:7, 'There is none that calleth upon thy

name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' Without this it is but dead and cold work, and if there be no more than this, it is but dry literal work: not that fervent effectual prayer which will change the heart, δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, James 5:16. The ἐνεργούμενοι were those that were inspired and possessed by a spirit; therefore it must be a prayer that not only hath understanding and will in it, but spirit and life in it. However, we are to put forth our utmost endeavour; and raise the natural spirit as far as we can.

(2.) The second agent is the new nature, which inclineth us to God as our chief good and last end. This also must be taken in, for the Holy Ghost doth not blow as to a dead coal; the new nature is made up of faith, hope and love, and all these must be acted in prayer: faith, or the firm belief of God's being, and providence, and covenant; 'For how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. 10:14. Then love to God, or the desire of the fruition of him in heavenly glory, praying in the Holy Ghost: 'Keep yourselves in the love of God,' Jude 20, 21. If I do not love God, and desire to enjoy him, and delight in as much of God as I can get here, certainly there will be no life in prayer, or no ravishment and transport of soul, no spirit of desire animating our requests, and no spiritual solace and delight in our converse with God. Hope is also necessary to fervent praying, for a man coldly asketh for what he doth not hope for. Hope respecteth both means and end—supplies of grace by the way, and our final fruition of God in glory. This is called trust in scripture, and is the great ground and encouragement of prayer: Ps. 62:8, 'Trust in the Lord at all times; pour out your souls before him.' Prayer is the act of a trusting soul. Now these graces quicken our natural faculties, as they elevate and raise our hearts and minds to God and heaven.

(3.) The third agent in prayer is the Holy Spirit. He is sometimes said to pray in us, Rom. 8:26; sometimes we are said to pray in him, Jude 20. The divine Spirit exciteth those graces in us which incline us to God; he raiseth our minds in the vision and sight of God. 'In thy light shall we see light,' Ps. 36:9; and he raiseth our hearts to a

desire after and delight in God, for all that spiritual solace and joy is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost;' for both unutterable groans and unspeakable joys are of his working: Rom. 8:26, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;' compared with 1 Pet. 1:8, 'In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Well, then, these work a kind of an ecstasy. If you would pray so as to be transported, transformed in prayer, something you must do as reasonable creatures, something as new creatures, and the Spirit influenceth all, and causeth the soul to follow hard after God. We must put forth our utmost endeavour, stir up the gift of God in us; and though we cannot command the influences of the Spirit, yet he is never wanting to a serious soul as to necessary help. Pray thus, and you will find, as the help of the Spirit in prayer, so the comforts of the Spirit as the success of prayer.

[5.] As there is daily and constant prayer in which we must ever bewray a seriousness and sincerity for these daily supplies of grace, so there are extraordinary occasions, because of some great business, conflict, or temptation: in those the heart and mind must be more than ordinarily raised and stirred. In every prayer of Christ there was not a transfiguration; and we read of our Lord Jesus, that in his agonies he prayed, ἐκτενέστερον, more earnestly than at other times, Luke 22:44; and upon eminent occasions, as the necessities of the saints are greater, so their acts of prayer are more earnest. On these weighty occasions many Christians are wholly swallowed up with the thoughts of God, and carried beyond themselves by their high love to God, and earnest desires of the spiritual blessings they stand in need of, so that they seem to be rapt into heaven in their admiration of God and delight in him.

APPLICATION

Use. To reprove our feeble, remiss, and benumbed requests. There is no life in our prayers, no working up of the heart to God and heaven, no flames of love, no transports of soul by the vision and

sight of faith, no holy and ardent desires after God, or spiritual solace and delight in him.

Reasons—1. We pray cursorily, and go about prayer as a customary task for fashion's sake; we come with a few cold devotions morning and evening, and so 'God is near in our mouths, and far from our reins,' Jer. 12:2. Oh, take heed of this! Nothing breeds slightness and hardness of heart so much as perfunctory praying. The rule is, 'Continue instant in prayer,' Rom. 12:12. And it is said of the saints that they 'Served God instantly night and day,' ἐν ἔκτενείᾳ, Acts 26:7, that they might come to the blessed hope, with the united service of all their powers and faculties.

2. Our prayers are doctrinal and instructive, rather than affectionate and warming. We get light by other duties, but we should get life by prayer. This duty is not to inform the judgment, but to raise the affections, that they may be all flame. Other duties are feeding duties, but this is a spending duty, an egression of the soul after God: Ps. 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' A man may better spend two hours in hearing than half an hour in praying, if the heart be employed in it as it ought to be, in the sight of God, and an earnest desire after him. The prayers in scripture are all supplications or doxologies; there is no excursion into doctrines and instructions.

3. Else we are lamenting sin, and spend the time in confessing sin, which also hath its use in the seasons thereof; but are seldom in praises or adorations of the excellences of God, and the wonderful mysteries of his love in our redemption by Jesus Christ. Yet it is said, Ps. 22:3, 'O Lord, that inhabitest the praises of Israel.' These are the things that do most ravish the heart, and raise it in the contemplation of that glorious God to whom we speak; and fill us with the ecstasies of love, that we may be more like him—holy, wise, and good, as he is holy, wise, and good.

4. We think a dry narrative to be enough; that is, the fruit of a human spirit, or a mere product of memory and invention is a sufficient prayer, without acting faith, hope, or love in it, or those spiritual and heavenly desires which are the life of prayer: Ps. 10:17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' The ardency of humble addresses is God's own gift, and he will never reject and despise those requests that, by his own Spirit and appointment, are direct and brought to him.

But what if I have not those strong and earnest desires? I answer, Yet keep not off from prayer: for,

[1.] Good desires must be asked of God, for it is said, he prepareth the heart.

[2.] Such desires as we have must be expressed, and that is the way to increase them, and to quicken us more. A sincere heart, that would serve God with his best, findeth more in a duty than he could expect, and by praying gets more of the fervency and ardours of praying: as a bell may be long a-raising, but when it is up, it jangleth not as it did at first.

[3.] Those cold affections which we have are killed by disuse and turning away from God; therefore go to him to get thy heart warmed.

2. Of the second consideration. If he prayed for this transfiguration, observe:—

That God often answereth his people in the very time while they are praying: Isa. 58:9, 'When they call I will answer, and when they cry he shall say, Here I am.' This hath been the course of God's dealing with the prayer-makers all along: Abel, Gen. 4:4, 'God had respect to;' it is ἐνεπύρισεν, set his offering on fire. Daniel prayeth, and saith he, Dan. 9:21, 'While I was speaking in prayer, the angel Gabriel was sent unto me;' and he said, 'At the beginning of thy

supplications the commandment came forth.' While many of the disciples were gathered together praying, God sent Peter to them, Acts 12:12, 13. While Cornelius was in the act of prayer, 'At the ninth hour of the day,' which was the hour of prayer, 'he saw in a vision the angel of God,' Acts 10:3–9. While Peter went up to the house-top to pray, then he had the heavenly-vision. So when Paul was in prayer, Ananias was sent to him: Acts 9:11, 'Behold he prayeth;' and then God taketh care of him. So Acts 4:31, 'When they had prayed, the house was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Thus God delighteth to honour his own ordinance, and to reward the waiting soul, that is frequent and constant in this way of waiting upon God, which should encourage us to be more frequent and serious in this work. You shall see how, in the very act of prayer, God hath—(1.) averted judgments; (2.) bestowed mercies and favours.

[1.] He hath put a stop to judgments: Ps. 99:6–8, 'Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the Lord, and he answered them; he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar; they kept his testimonies and the ordinance that he gave them. Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God; thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.' The drift of the Psalmist in this place is to show, by eminent instances of holy men that were most notable for prayer, how they have stopped judgments when they began to be executed. Moses, at his prayer God was propitiated, after the provocation of the golden calf; for it is said, Exod. 32:11, 'Moses besought the Lord his God;' ver. 14, 'The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do.' The second, Aaron's making an atonement for the people, whereby the plague was staid: Num. 16:46, 'Take a censer quickly, for wrath is begun;' and ver. 48, presently the plague was stayed. Upon Samuel's prayer the Philistines were discomfited when they were overrunning Israel, 1 Sam. 7:5, with ver. 9, 10. With every one of these God was pleased to talk and commune as a friend. Such honour was God pleased to put on these his faithful servants; and when the people had provoked

God, and God's wrath was already gone out against them for their crying sins, their prayers were so effectual as to divert the plagues and obtain remission.

[2.] So powerful, also, are they for obtaining blessings: Elijah (James 5:17, 18), though 'a man of like passions with us,' yet he could lock heaven and open it at his pleasure; 1 Kings 18:42, 45, the rain came as soon as Elijah put himself into a zealous posture to obtain it. Often success hath overtaken the prayer, and the blessing has been gotten before the supplication hath been ended. Isaac went out to meet with God, to meditate or pray, and he espied Rebecca afar off. Isa. 65:24, 'Before they call I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking I will hear.' Oh, therefore, let us not entertain hard thoughts of God, as if he did not regard our suits and requests, and prayer were a lost labour.

II. I come now to the transfiguration itself, as it is here propounded and explained.

Doct. That one necessary and solemn act of Christ's mediation and manifestation to the world was his transfiguration before competent witnesses.

This was one solemn act, and part of Christ's manifestation to the world, for we have the record of it here; and it was necessary, for Christ doth nothing in vain. And here are competent witnesses,—three persons of eminent holiness, before whom all this was done, and they were eye-witnesses of his majesty, and ear-witnesses of the oracle which they heard from heaven, or the voice from the excellent glory.

I shall open:—

First, The nature of this transfiguration.

Secondly, The ends of it.

First, The nature of this transfiguration. It was a glorious alteration in the appearance and qualities of his body, not a substantial alteration in the substance of it. It was not a change wrought in the essential form and substance of Christ's body, but only the outward form was changed, being more full of glory and majesty than it used to be or appeared to be.

Two things are to be handled:—

1. How it differed from his body at another time, whilst he conversed here on earth.

2. How this change differed from the state of his body as it is now in glory.

1. How his body, now transfigured, differed from his body at other times during his conversing with men. Though the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him always, yet the state of his body was disposed so as might best serve for the decency of human conversation; as the sun in a rainy, cloudy day is not seen, but now, as it might, discover his divine nature, it would break out in vigour and strength.

[1.] It was not a change or alteration of the substance of the body, as if it were turned into a spiritual substance. No; it remained still a true human, mortal body, with the same nature and properties it had before, only it became bright and glorious.

[2.] As the substance of the body was not changed, so the natural shape and features were not changed, otherwise how could it be known to be Christ? The shape and features were the same, only a new and wonderful splendour put upon them.

[3.] This new and wonderful splendour was not in imagination and appearance only, but real and sensible. If it had been in imagination, show, and appearance, it would make Christ like those deceivers who would dazzle the eyes of beholders with a false appearance, as

magical impostors, or those apish imitators of divine glory; as Herod Agrippa, of whom we read, Acts 12:21–23, how he appeared in royal state and made an oration, and they said, 'The voice of a God, and not of a man.' Josephus telleth us the manner, how he sat in the sun with glistening garments of cloth of silver, and when the sunbeams did beat upon it, the people cried him up as κρείττονα τῆς θνήτης φύσεως, as something higher and more excellent than a mortal creature. No; this was not a phantastical representation, but a real impression of divine glory on the body of Christ.

[4.] Although this appeared in the face chiefly, as the most conspicuous part of the body,—the text saith his face did shine as the sun,—yet more or less the other parts of his body were clothed with majesty and glory, and thence was the splendour derived to his garments.

2. How his body transfigured differed from his glorified body. This must be stated also, for Christ, by his transfiguration, was not admitted into the fulness of the state of glory, but only giveth some glimpse and resemblance of it. These two estates agree in the general nature, but some clarity, glory, and majesty is put upon Christ's glorified body that was not now. But the difference is:—

[1.] Partly in the degree and measure; the clarity and majesty of Christ's glorified body is greater and more perfect. Here is a representation, some delineation, but not a full exhibition of His heavenly glory.

[2.] Partly in continuance and permanency. This change was not perpetual, but to endure for a short time only, for it ceased before they came down from the mount.

[3.] The subject or seat of this glory differed, the body of Christ being then corruptible and mortal, but now incorruptible and immortal. If Christ's body had been immortal and impassible, then Christ could not die.

[4.] Here are garments, and a glorified body shall have no other garments than the robes of immortality and glory in heaven. Christ shall be clothed with light as with a garment.

Secondly, The ends of it. By this transfiguration God would show:—

1. What Christ was.
2. What he should be; and also,
3. What we shall be.

1. What Christ was. The dignity of his person and office. That he was the eternal Son of God, and the mediator of the new covenant; the great prophet whom God would raise up to his people.

[1.] The dignity of His person was seen, for the transfiguration was a ray of the divine glory. It was not the addition of any glory to Christ which he had not before, but a manifestation of the glory which he had, though obscured under the veil of our flesh; for the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, Col. 2:9, 'And we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God,' John 1:14. But it is said, 2 Pet. 1:17, that he received from God the same honour and glory. This is spoken of him as mediator; the glory of the Son of God incarnate was so obscured, for our sakes, that he needed this solemn act to represent him to the world.

[2.] His office: the great prophet of the church, 'Hear ye him.' A greater prophet than Moses. Moses saw the face of God, but he was in the bosom of God. Moses, his face shone, but not as Christ's, for it could be hidden by a veil; Christ darts his glory through his garments. Moses, his shining was terrible; Christ's was comfortable—the apostles were loath to lose the sight of it.

2. To show what Christ should be; for this was a pledge with what glory he should come in his kingdom, Mat. 16:27: it prefigured the glory of his second coming. Thus, for the confirmation of their faith,

Christ would give his disciples a glimpse of his glory; he knew they would be sorely assaulted and shaken by the ignominy of his cross. But what is all this to us? We see not his glory.

[1.] What was once done and sufficiently attested needs not to be repeated; but it is a great satisfaction to us that we have a glorious head and chief; when we suffer for him we need not be ashamed of our sufferings. The apostles urge this concerning us as well as them.

[2.] The immediate manifestations of him who dwelleth in light inaccessible would undo us while we are in our mortal bodies. Blessed be God that he hath chosen fit means to reveal himself to us, that we may behold the glory of the Lord in a glass, 2 Cor. 3:18, by the ministry of the word and other ordinances. The Israelites were sensible how little they could endure him who is, as it were, all sun, and all light, and all fire: Exod. 20:18, 19, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die.' Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle when God appeared unto him, 1 Kings 19:13; when Christ appeared to Paul from heaven he trembled and was astonished, and was three days without sight, as you may see, Acts 9:9. There was a special reason why an apostle should see him in person.

[3.] We shall see this glory when fit for it: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' The queen of Sheba took a long journey to behold the glory of Solomon, that was but a temporal, fading, and earthly glory. Now much more transcendent is the glory of Christ's body in heaven; this we shall see to all eternity.

3. To show what we shall be; for Christ is the pattern, *primum in unoquoque genere*, &c.

[1.] It showeth the possibility of our having a glorified body. When the Lord is pleased to let forth and communicate his glory, he is able to adorn and beautify our earthly and obscure bodies. The body of

man in its composition hath a great mixture of earth, which is dark and obscure. Now God can make this clod of earth to shine as the star or sun for brightness: Phil. 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' We are apt to say, How can it be? If we consider the infinite and absolute power of God, and this instance of Christ, it will make it more reconcilable to your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your faith.

[2.] The certainty of it, as well as the possibility; for Christ assumed our body, not for passion only, but for glorification, that therein he might be an instance and pattern to us. For if the head be glorious, so will the members also. How base soever the people of God seem to be in this world, yet in the life to come they shall be wonderfully glorious: Matthew 13:43, 'The righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' So Col. 3:3, 4, 'Now our life is hidden with Christ, but when he who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;' 1 John 3:2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 2 Thes. 1:10, 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.' All these places show we shall be partakers of this glory.

[3.] The manner. Glorification taketh not away the substance and natural properties of the body, for there is a glorious transfiguration, but no abolition of the substance of Christ's body; it was the same body of Christ before and after transfiguration. Glory freeth us from natural infirmities, but it doth not strip us of natural properties. Christ hath showed in his own body what he can or will perform in ours—these same bodies, but otherwise adorned, τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως: and 'with these eyes shall I see God,' Job 19:26, 27: Τοῦτο τὸ φθαρτὸν, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,' 1 Cor. 15:53.

Use 1. Be transformed that you may be transfigured: 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds,' Rom. 12:2. The change

must begin in the soul (2 Cor. 3:18), and thence it is conveyed to the body. The lustre of grace maketh way for the splendour of glory: Prov. 4:18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more to the perfect day.' The way of the wicked is an increasing darkness—ignorance, sin, outer darkness.

2. Be contented to be like Christ in reproaches, disgraces, and neglect in the world, that you may be like him in glory. Bear the reproach of Christ: Heb. 13:13, 'Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach;' Heb. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Prefer it before all earthly honour: Acts 5:41, 'And they departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;' and 2 Sam. 6:22, 'I will yet be more vile and base in my own sight.' Your Lord is a glorious Lord, and he can put glory upon you.

3. To wean our hearts from all human and earthly glory. What is a glorious house to the palace of heaven, glorious garments to the robes of immortality? The glory of Christ should put out the glory of these petty stars that shine in the world, as the sun puts out the fire. We have higher things to mind; it is not for eagles to catch flies, or princes to embrace the dunghill.

4. Since this glory is for the body, do not debase the body, to make it an instrument of sin: 1 Thes. 4:4, 'Possess your vessels in sanctification and honour.' Do not offend God to gratify the body, as they do, Rom. 14:13, 'who make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Do not spare the body to do God service: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope for to come; for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews:' 2 Cor. 7:1, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

SERMON III

And behold there appeared unto him Moses and Elias talking with him.—MAT. 17:3; with,

And behold there talked with him two men, Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.—LUKE 9:30, 31.

HAVING spoken of Christ's transfiguration, we come now to speak of those special accidents and adjuncts which happened at the time of his transfiguration. Here are two mentioned:—

1. The extraordinary apparition of Moses and Elias.
2. Their conference with our Saviour.

In the first:—

1. The persons who appeared: Moses and Elias.
2. The manner of their appearing. Luke saith, 'They appeared in glory.' Since the scripture affixeth a behold, or note of attention, wherever this history is mentioned, it will not be unprofitable for us to consider it a little.

First, Who appeared: Moses and Elias. These were there in person, as well as Christ was there in person; for it is not a vision, but a thing really done and transacted. Christ would have but two, being to give us a glimpse only, not the full lustre and splendour of his glory and majesty, as he will at the last day, when he shall come in the glory of the Father, and all his holy angels with him.

But why these two?

1. With respect to the gospel or new law which he was to set up, it is for the confirmation thereof that Moses and Elias appear talking with him, showing the harmony and agreement between them, and the subordination of their dispensation to Christ and salvation by him. Moses was the person by whom the law was given, and Elias was a principal prophet. The law is represented by Moses, and the prophets by Elias. Both did frequently foretell and prefigure the death and resurrection of Christ, and all the scripture which was then written was usually called by this term, law and prophets: Acts 24:14, 'Believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets;' and Mat. 11:13, 'For all the law and the prophets prophesied until John;' Luke 16:24, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them;' so Acts 26:22, 'I witness no other things than those which Moses and the prophets say should come to pass;' so Mark 7:11, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you the same to them, for this is the law and the prophets.' Well, then, the books of the Old Testament are frequently and solemnly thus called law and prophets; the Messiah was spoken of and foretold in both, and the godly before his coming waited for him as such. One place I had almost forgotten: Rom. 3:21, 'The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.' Which showeth that not only the person of Christ was set forth, but also his institution and gospel dispensation. Well, to manifest this consent, here is law and prophets, Moses and Elias friendly conferring with Christ, or rather attending upon him, as servants upon their Lord. Christ and Moses, Christ and the prophets, are not at variance, as the Jews suppose, but here is a fair agreement betwixt them.

2. With respect to the persons themselves, there are many special reasons. These had been the most faithful and laborious servants of the Lord, and public eminent instruments of his glory: Moses a giver of the law and Elias a restorer of the law; Moses faithful in all the house of God, and Elias zealous for the glory of God. Both had ventured their lives: Moses by encountering Pharaoh, and Elias Ahab. Both had seen the glory of God in Mount Horeb, and spake

with God also: Moses, Exod. 33:11, 'He saw the Lord face to face, and spake with him as a man doth with his friend;' and Elias, 1 Kings 19. Both had fasted forty days, as Christ also did; therefore conveniently were these chosen.

3. With respect to our profit and instruction, Christ would not choose two angels for this service, but two men. Here the business was not to see glorified spirits, but glorified bodies; therefore the angels, having no bodies of their own, and must appear in assumed bodies, if in any, are not fit; therefore two men that had bodies wherein they might appear.

But you will say, If two men must appear in glorified bodies, why not Enoch rather than Moses, who was translated into heaven, and remaineth there with a glorified body as well as Elias?

Ans. Enoch had no public charge; Enoch lived before the legal dispensation. These both belonged to it, and were chief in it, of great authority among the Jews. Enoch hath an honourable testimony in the word of God, but had no public office and charge in the church, which the other two had, and managed with great fidelity. By the appearance of Moses the whole legal economy is supposed to appear in his person, and by the appearance of Elias the prophetic ministry, which was a kind of chancery to the law, is supposed to appear also. Both do, as it were, deliver over to Christ their whole dispensation, and lay it down at his feet, as the magistrates that are to go out of office solemnly resign the ensigns of their authority to him that succeedeth; and also they come both to reverence the majesty of their supreme Lord. In short, it is for our comfort that one that died, and one alive in glory, should come to show that Christ is Lord of quick and dead, Rom. 14:9. Moses was dead, Elias translated: these two come, the one to give a pledge of the glory of the world to come, the other of the resurrection of the dead, which is the way and introduction to it; and both these persons come to attend and adore our Saviour and do homage to him.

Secondly, They appeared in glory, that is, in a corporeal shape, shining with brightness and glory as Christ's body did, bating only for the degree and proportion, that there might be a difference between the Lord and his servants. Now, whether they appeared in bodies formed and assumed for the present purpose, and to be laid down again, as we do our garments, or in their own proper bodies, is often disputed by interpreters, upon this occasion. That they appeared in bodies is certain, for bodily acts and properties are ascribed to them—as their talking with Christ, their being seen by the apostles; for a spirit cannot be seen. If in bodies, why not their own? It is as easy to the Lord to cause them to appear in their own bodies as in a body assumed for this special purpose and service; and they were known by the disciples to be Moses and Elias, not by the external lineaments, for they never saw them in person before, but either were made known to them by some internal revelation, or by Christ's words, or by some words of Moses and Elias themselves; but which way soever they knew them, certain it is they knew them, and took them to be Moses and Elias, therefore Moses and Elias they were, both as to soul and body. The apostles that were admitted to this transfiguration were not to be deceived by a false appearance, for they were admitted to be confirmed in the truth of Christ's person and office, that by what they saw they might confirm others. How would it weaken the testimony if what they saw appearing before them in glory were not the bodies of Moses and Elias, but only other bodies assumed! Concerning Elias the matter is without difficulty, for since he saw not death, but was translated both body and soul into heaven, why should he lay down his own body and take another to come and serve Christ upon this occasion? Cause sufficient there was why he should come from the blessedness of heaven to Mount Tabor; no cause why he should lay aside his own proper body. It is no loss nor trouble, but advantage, to blessed and heavenly creatures to be serviceable to their Redeemer's glory, though it be to come out of the other into this world. But concerning Moses the matter is more doubtful. We read that he died in Mount Nebo, and his body was buried by God in the plains of Moab, so that his grave was known to no man unto this day, Deut.

34:5, 6. Some think it was preserved from putrefaction by the extraordinary power of God, that he might resume it at this time. The Jews say that God sucked out Moses's soul from his body with a kiss, and afterwards restored it again, and so he liveth in immortality; but he that looketh for divinity among the Jewish rabbins will much sooner find a ridiculous fable than any sound doctrine. Suffice it to us that he was really dead and buried, and his body mouldered into dust as our bodies are, and now, on this special occasion, raised out of the dust; but after this, whether it were laid down in dust again or carried into heaven, it is not for us to determine: it may be either, according to the analogy of the Christian faith. If his body returned to corruption again, surely it is a great honour that it was raised up for this special use: I say it was a great joy to these prophets to see all their predictions fulfilled in Christ. If we say it entered into glory, what inconvenience was there if God would indulge him this peculiar prerogative, to be raised from the dead and enjoy blessedness both in soul and body before the last day? He granted it to Enoch and Elias, and those who came out of their graves after Christ's death, Mat. 27:53: the great harvest is at the last day, but some first-fruits before.

Secondly, Their conference with our Saviour: they 'talked with him,' saith Matthew; they 'spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,' saith Luke. They talked with Christ, not with the apostles. Here is an apparition to them, but no parley and intercourse between them and the glorified saints. The saints that are glorified are out of the sphere of commerce of the living; nay, it is a question whether they heard at all what was said to Christ; but of that in the next verse.

Here observe three things:—

1. What they spake of Christ's death.
2. The notion by which his death is set forth: it is ἔξοδος.

3. The necessity of undergoing it, in the word πληρεῖν, 'which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.'

1. What they spake of none could divine, unless it had been told us, and the evangelist Luke telleth us that it was of his death. This argument was chosen:—

[1.] Because it was at hand. The next solemn mediatory action after this was his death and bloody sufferings. After he was transfigured in the mount he went down to suffer at Jerusalem.

[2.] This was an offence to the apostles, that their master should die: Mat. 16:22, 23, 'Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.'

[3.] This was the Jews' stumbling-block: 1 Cor. 1:23, 'We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block.'

[4.] This was prefigured in the rites of the law, foretold in the writings of the prophets. In the figures of the law it was represented: Heb. 9:22, 'And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission;' especially the apostle urgeth the entering of the high priest with blood to the mercy-seat, ver. 23, 24. All the legal sacrifices were slain, and their blood brought before the Lord. So the predictions of the prophets: Isa. 53:10, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make thy soul an offering for sin,' &c.; and Dan. 9:26, 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' In short, that Christ should die for the sins of the world, was the great thing represented in the law and prophets. Rabbi Simeon and Rabbi Hadersim out of Daniel, that after Messiah had preached half seven years he shall be slain.

[5.] It was necessary that by death he should come to his glory, of which now some glimpse and foretaste was given to him: Luke 24:46, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and rise from the dead the third day'—that is, with respect to the

predictions; ver. 44, 'All those things which were written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the book of Psalms, concerning me may be fulfilled;' and again, Luke 24:25, 26, 'Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?'

[6.] The redemption of the church by Christ is the talk and discourse we shall have in heaven; the angels and glorified spirits are blessing and praising him for this: Rev. 5:9, 'Thou art worthy, for thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' The angels, ver. 12, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honour, and blessing.' The redeemed church, and glorified saints and angels, have all one song, and one praise—the honour of the Lamb that was slain.

[7.] It is an instructive pattern to us, that Christ, in the midst of his transfiguration, and the glory which was then put upon him, forgot not his death. In the greatest advancements we should think of our dissolution. If Christ in all his glory discoursed of his death, surely it more becometh us, as necessary for us to prevent the surfeit of worldly pleasures, we should think of the change that is coming; for 'Surely every man at his best estate is vanity,' Ps. 39:5. In some places they were wont to present a death's head at their solemn feasts. Merry days will not always last, death will soon put an end to the vain pleasures we enjoy here, and the most shining glory will be burnt out to a snuff.

2. The notion by which his death is expressed: his decease, ἔξοδον, which signifies the going out of this life into another, which is to be noted:—

[1.] In respect unto Christ his death was ἔξοδος, for he went out of this mortal life into glory, and so it implieth both his suffering death and also his resurrection: Acts 2:24, 'God hath raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible he should be

holden of it.' The grave was like a woman ready to be delivered; it suffered throes till this blessed burden was egested.

[2.] With respect to us. Peter calls his death ἔξοδον: 2 Pet. 1:15, 'I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease.' The death of the godly is a going out but from sin and sorrow to glory and immortality, as Israel's going out of Egypt (whence the second Book of Moses is called Exodus) was no destruction and cessation of their being, but a going out of the house of bondage into liberty. Paul saith, 'I desire to be dissolved,' ἀναλῦσαι, Phil. 1:23—a setting sail for the other world. In scripture language the body is the house, the soul is the inhabitant: 2 Cor. 5:1, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The soul dwelleth in the body as a man in a house, and death is but a departure out of one house into another—not an extinction, but a going, from house to house.

3. The necessity of undergoing it, in the word πληρεῖν. This word accomplish noteth three things:—

[1.] His mediatorial duty, with a respect to God's ordination and decree declared in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which when they are fulfilled are said to be accomplished. Whatsoever Christ did in the work of redemption was with respect to God's will and eternal decree: Acts 4:28, 'To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done.' Now this was the more binding, being it was a declared counsel in the prophecies and figures of the Old Testament, therefore Christ cried out at his death, John 19:30, 'It is finished,' or accomplished—meaning principally that the prophecies, and figures, and types which prefigured his death were all now accomplished.

[2.] His voluntary submission, 'which he should accomplish,' noteth his active and voluntary concurrence. It is an active word, not passive, not to be fulfilled upon him, but by him; for though his

death in regard of his enemies was violent and enforced, yet he voluntarily underwent it for our sakes; no man could have taken his life from him unless he had laid it down, John 10:18; it was not forced upon him, but he yielded to it by a voluntary dispensation. As to men, it was an act of violence; but as to his Father, it was an act of obedience; as to us, an act of love. On Christ's part his enemies could not have touched him against his will, as indeed they cannot also one hair of our heads but as God permitteth.

[3.] That it was the eminent act of his humiliation, for this cause he assumed human nature. His humiliation began at his birth, continued in his life, and was accomplished in dying: all was nothing without this, for less could not serve the turn than the death of the Son of God. Then all sufferings were undergone which were necessary to take away sin; therefore there is a consummation or perfection attributed to the death of Christ: Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There is done enough to expiate sin, to open a way to heaven and happiness. This accomplisheth all that is necessary by way of merit and satisfaction.

Now what shall we learn from hence, for surely such solemn actions of Christ were not in vain?

I. A notable argument to confirm the Christian faith, namely, the consent between the law and the prophets and Christ; for Moses and Elias are all Christ's ministers and servants, agreeing in one with him, and therefore appear at his transfiguration, where he is proclaimed to be the beloved Son of God, and the great doctor of the church, whom all are bound to hear under pain of damnation.

I will prove two things:—

First, The necessity of this appearance, both to the Jews and us Gentiles.

1. To the Jews in that age; for there were three opinions concerning Christ. Some had a blasphemous opinion of him, as if he were an imposter, and called him Samaritan and devil. So the chief priests and Pharisees, Mat. 27:63, 'We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again;' and Mat. 12:24, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.' Generally they looked upon him as an enemy to Moses: John 9:29, 'We know that God spake to Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' Others had a more moderate opinion, who were alarmed by his miracles, and convinced by his holiness: Mark 6:14–16, 'Some said it is Elias, others said it is a prophet, Jeremias, or one of the prophets; but Herod said it is John whom I beheaded, who is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.' Herod's conscience could not digest John's murder, therefore he twice saith it is John, it must needs be John. The third opinion was that of the disciples, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' John 6:69. Now, to set all at rights, to confute the blasphemous Jews, to rectify the moderate Jews, to confirm the disciples, here come Moses and Elias to justify him. They would not have owned him if a blasphemer and imposter, nor have come from heaven to honour him and do him homage if he had been an ordinary prophet; therefore they appear in glory, and talk with him of his death.

2. With respect to the modern Jews, and us Gentiles, this apparition was necessary to confirm us in the faith both of Christ's person and office; that he was the great teacher sent from heaven to make known the way of salvation to lapsed mankind; and Moses and Elias must be hereafter silent. Now the great prophet and doctor of the church is brought forth; and no other revelation or dispensation is to be expected or regarded, now he is brought forth. There is need that this should be sufficiently evidenced, partly because Christ had the law of Moses to repeal, which was well known to the Jews to be God's own law, else they and every true subject of God might refuse to obey him: partly because he had a new law to promulgate, even the law of faith and gospel ordinances, and so must manifest his

authority before they can be received and submitted unto with that firm assent and consent which is necessary: partly because he himself was to be received and entertained as the Redeemer of the world, who had expiated our sins by his decease at Jerusalem, which was a new work, yet man's salvation lay upon it. And his death there was clouded with many prejudices; for they put him to death as a false prophet, guilty of blasphemy and sedition. Therefore it needed to be made manifest that such a man of sorrows, reckoned among transgressors, was the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Secondly, The sufficiency of this evidence. For if Moses and Elias appear in glory to countenance this dispensation, and declare their hearty concurrence and consent, there is no reason Jew or Gentile should scruple it. If Moses the lawgiver, and Elias, so zealous for the law, consent, why should the Jews refuse the gospel so agreeable to their dispensation, or the Gentiles question a doctrine so long ago manifested to the church by God, long before Christ and his apostles were in being? Those that lived in so many different ages could not lay their heads together to cheat the world with an untruth. There is a double argument may be drawn hence:—

1. The matter of fact. Moses and Elias did appear to witness their consent. Now this dependeth upon the testimony of the apostles present, whose testimony was by other means ratified and made valuable: 2 Pet. 1:16–18, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.'

2. Their consent in doctrine, which is obvious in all their writings. The apostles related nothing concerning Christ but what Moses and the prophets had foretold, and what was history in the New Testament was prophecy in the Old, either as to the person of

Christ, or as to his kingdom—the duties and privileges thereof: John 5:39, 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.' So ver. 45–47, 'Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how will ye believe my words?' The Old Testament beareth witness of Christ's person, natures, offices, birth, life, sufferings, and the glory that should ensue: 2 Pet. 1:19–21, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The apostles taught the same things the prophets had written, only applied them to Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, that they might know that he was Lord and Christ. The heathens take notice that at that time when Christ appeared, there was *Vetus et constans fama* (Sueton.); *Ex antiquis sacerdotum libris* (Tacitus)—that their King, Messiah, should come.

Use 1. For confutation of the Jews, and to show their obstinacy in not receiving Christ as the Messiah. God had told Moses, Deut. 18:18, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and whosoever will not hearken unto him, I will require it of him;' which cannot be understood of any other prophet but Christ the Messiah; for it is said, Deut. 34:10, 11, 'There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, who knew the Lord face to face, in all the miracles and wonders which the Lord sent him to do.' But the Messias doth match and overmatch him. He was a man as Moses was; for the promise was made on that occasion, 'Let me hear the voice of the Lord God no more, nor see this great fire, that we die not.' Saith God, 'They have well spoken: I will raise up a prophet like unto thee

from among their brethren.' He must be a lawgiver as Moses, but of a more perfect law; he must be such an one as should see God face to face; he is of a divine nature, approved to the world by miracles, signs, and wonders. As Moses was, so Christ. Moses divided the sea as dry land, Christ walked upon it; Moses healed the bitter waters that were sick, Christ raised the dead. All the prejudice is, that he changed the law of Moses into the rites and institutes of the Christian religion. Ans. That was necessary, the substance being once come, that the shadows and ceremonies should be abolished; and besides, these were proper and peculiar to one nation in the world, namely, Judea; the exercise permitted but in one only place of that country, namely, Jerusalem, whither they were all to repair three times each year. But the Messiah's law was to be common to all men—serves for all countries, times, places, persons, for he was to be the light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel. How should nations so far distant from Jerusalem repair thrice every year? or a woman dwelling in England or America repair thither for purification after every childbirth? Lev. 12. When Moses delivered the law to them: Deut. 18:15, 'The Lord thy God will raise thee up a prophet like unto me, unto him shalt thou hearken.' And the prophets, when they prophesy of his law: Isa. 2:3, 'The law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of God from Jerusalem.' Moses's law was published from Sinai, not from Sion; but the preaching of the gospel began at Jerusalem, and from thence was spread over all the world. Again it is said, Isa. 42:4, 'The isles shall wait for his law;' that is, the maritime countries. I pursue it no farther now.

2. To us Christians. Our religion is true: oh, let us be true in the profession of it; otherwise it will little help us in the day of our accounts: 2 Thes. 1:8, 'Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' You stand upon the vantage-ground, but are not taller in stature than heathens and Jews. Disciples in name, not in deed: John 8:31, 'If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed:' Christians of letter, not of the spirit. Oh, reverence Christ, if Moses and Elias

did him homage. When we have found truth, let us look after life; and having owned the true religion, express the power of it.

II. The next thing we learn is the necessity and value of Christ's death. For Moses and Elias insist upon 'his decease at Jerusalem; which quite contradicteth the Jewish deceit, and establisheth the Christian hope. The death of Christ for our redemption is the great article of the Christian faith, the thing foretold and prefigured by law and prophets, Luke 24:44; and the ground of our comfort and peace: Isa. 53:4, 5, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.'

Let us consider:—

1. The notions by which Christ's death is set forth.
2. The necessity of it.

First, The notions by which Christ's death is set forth. Two solemn ones: a ransom, and a mediatorial sacrifice.

1. A ransom, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, Mat. 20:28; ἀντίλυτρον, 1 Tim. 2:6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.' A ransom is a price given to a judge, or one that hath power of life and death, for to save the life of one capitally guilty, or by law bound to suffer death, or some other evil and punishment. This was our case: God was the supreme judge, before whose tribunal man standeth guilty, and liable to death; but Christ interposed that we might be spared, Job 33:24, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.' There is a price or recompense given in our stead.

2. A mediatorial sacrifice: Isa. 53:3, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin;' Eph. 5:2, Christ 'hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-

smelling savour.' He hath undertook the expiation of our sins, and the propitiating of God. God's provoked justice would not acquit the controversy it had against us till it were appeased by a proper sacrifice: 1 John 2:2, 'He is the propitiation for our sins.'

Secondly, The necessity of it.

1. The sins and guilty fears of mankind needeth such a remedy. We are naturally sensible that the punishment of death is deserved and due to us by the law of God: Rom. 1:32, 'They which commit such things are worthy of death.' Now these fears are not easily appeased: Micah 6:6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Christ came and died to free us from them, that we might serve God cheerfully: Heb. 2:14, 15, 'Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;' Heb. 9:14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through, the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?'

2. The glory of God requires it:—

[1.] To declare his justice: Rom. 3:25, 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.' If God will pardon sin, there must be a fit means to keep up the honour of his justice, and the authority of his law; for sin is not a wrong done to a private party offended, but a disobedience to authority, and disturbeth the order of government.

[2.] To declare his holiness, that he is a pure and holy God, hating sin. This was demonstrated in the sufferings of Christ, and the dear rate at which it was expiated; for if this was done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Use 1. Oh, then, be affected with this great mystery, the death which the Son of God accomplished at Jerusalem; look upon it under a double notion. With respect to his Father's command, it was an act of obedience, carried on with such humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of himself to God, charity, pity, as the like cannot be done by man or angel: Rom. 5:19, 'By the obedience of one many were made righteous;' Phil. 2:8, 'He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' This commendeth obedience to us. It was an act of love: Gal. 2:20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Rev. 1:5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' He thought no price too dear for our salvation. Let us love him, again, who loved us first: 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he first loved us;' and be contented to suffer with him and for him, that we may enter into his glory: Rom. 8:17, 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,' if he call us thereunto.

2. Feel the virtue of it in heart and conscience. In heart: by our dying to sin, then we are planted into the likeness of his death, Rom. 6:5. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof,' Gal. 5:24; 'Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.' Then glory in it: Gal 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' In conscience: 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself,' &c.; Heb. 12:24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel'—doth it appease our guilty fears, and purge our consciences from the stain and guilt of sin.

III. The state of future glory and felicity.

1. The dead in the Lord are not perished, but live for ever with God in heaven; for here they appear long after their departure hence: Luke 20:38, 'He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.' They all live to God. Though they are gone out of the sphere of our commerce, they have another life with God. Now fix this in your hearts, for many carry it so as if there were no immortality or life to come: we do not vanish into the air when we die. Moses is somewhere, and Elias somewhere, in the hand of God, and can appear when God will have them.

2. The saints appeared in a true, and in their own bodies, to establish the faith of the resurrection; their bodies were reserved for this use. One of them was already in glory in soul and body, the other now raised out of the dust after many years' burial. And why cannot God gather up our dust again and enliven it, that we may accompany Christ at his coming?

3. This instance showeth also the degrees of glory. All the saints have their portion in bliss, but not a just equality. Moses and Elias appeared in glory, not Enoch; nor were any of the rest admitted to this solemnity. Here were three choice disciples, when the rest stood at a remote distance; so two glorified saints, but the rest not admitted to this honour, but stood waiting for his glorious ascension. There is difference on earth in the worldly state—some have greater riches, honours, and dignity than others; difference in the church, both in gifts and graces; yea, a difference in hell—some have a hotter, others a cooler punishment. So in heaven, according to eminency in holiness and faithfulness with God; otherwise there would not be a suitableness in God's dispensations.

4. The perfect subjection of the glorified spirits to the will of God, either to remain in the vision of God, or to be employed in the service of their Redeemer. We should think that a self-denial which they count an happiness, to come from heaven to Mount Tabor;

they take up or lay down a body as God pleaseth. Heaven is a state not only of perfect happiness, but of exact conformity to God.

5. We shall have the company of the blessed saints in heaven. The disciples here did not only enjoy the company and sight of Christ, but the company and sight of Moses and Elias, being glorified saints. So in the heavenly life: Mat. 8:11, it is made a part of our blessedness in the kingdom of God to 'sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;' and Heb. 12:23, 'Ye are come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Here we are joined to them by faith and hope; there by sight and fellowship. The company of wicked men is now grievous and tedious to us, Ezek. 2:6; but we shall have better company hereafter. Here we often part with our choicest friends and acquaintance, but there we shall meet and never part more. It is not to be imagined but that we shall have the comfort of our glorified fellow-creatures. The body hath its objects and felicity fit for a body.

6. The saints shall know one another, as the disciples knew Moses and Elias, though not by countenance, having never seen them before, but by revelation. Christ told them who they were, and we who have known before our old acquaintance shall know them again. Memory is not abolished, but perfected; we shall make one body, one society. Now we shall not converse as strangers; Abraham knew Lazarus, Luke 16:25. Ministers, 1 Thes. 2:19, 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' Christ's argument, Luke 16:9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Angels know not only themselves, but all the elect now; how else do they minister about them? They know the least believer: Mat. 18:10, 'Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' And they are at length to gather them from the four winds: Mat. 13:41, 'The

Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend.'

7. The conference of the blessed saints. We shall be with them, speak to them, hear them speak to us, though not after an earthly manner. We have now bodies, and so tongues and lips, which are the instruments of speech; ears, which are the instruments of hearing. Now these would seem vain and to no purpose if there were no use of speech and hearing. It was a blessed thing for Peter, James, and John to stand by and hear the conference between Christ, Moses, and Elias: 1 Kings 10:8, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.' Much more may it be said here.

Use. Well, then, Christian religion is true, Christ's death necessary, eternal life certain. Oh let our time, and hearts, and care be taken up about these great and glorious things; meditate on them, seek after them. First begin with the sureness of Christian doctrine, that you may lay a good foundation; that Christ is the teacher of the church, who hath 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,' 2 Tim. 1:10; then penitently sue out your pardon, in the name of Christ, depending on the merit of his death; and make this eternal life and happiness your choice, and the scope of your life and conversation: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

SERMON IV

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for

thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.—MAT. 17:4; with,

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.—LUKE 9:32, 33.

WE are upon the adjuncts of Christ's transfiguration.

The first was the appearance of Moses and Elias talking with him.

The second is the entertainment which the apostles gave to this glorious dispensation, or their behaviour under it. Three things are observable:—

1. Their posture for some while: and Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.
2. Peter's motion when they were awake: let us build here three tabernacles.
3. The censure of it: not knowing what he said.

First, Their posture after the transfiguration was begun: 'And Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.' This sleep might arise either from a common natural cause, or from a special cause peculiar to this dispensation.

1. A common natural cause, being tired with labour in ascending the mountain, for it was ὑψηλὸς λῖαν, 'exceeding high.' Or it was with watching, for they tarried there all night, and Christ continued long in prayer, and possibly being a little withdrawn from them, as in his agonies, he was transfigured before them.

2. The special cause of this sleep was the extraordinary apparition, as the prophets often were in a deep sleep and trance when they saw the like: Dan. 8:18, 'As the angel Gabriel was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face towards the ground.' Again, Dan. 10:9, 'When I heard his voice, then was I in a deep sleep.' So the prophet Zechariah, in the midst of his visions: Zech. 4:1, 'The angel of the Lord wakened me as one in a deep sleep.' Any eminent passion causeth sleep, and they were astonished so with these visions and representations, that nature fainted under them, and they fell into a sleep; so the apostles seeing Christ, in the midst of fervent prayers, transfigured before them.

Now, whether it came from the one cause or from the other, we must conclude this sleep was a weakness on their parts, but directed and overruled by God for just and wise reasons.

1. It was a weakness and infirmity on their part, for questionless they were to attend with all vigilancy to this manifestation of our Saviour's glory, and observe the passages of it. Why else did he take them into the mountain apart, but as witnesses of it, as they were to watch in his agonies? So in his transfiguration. It was a fault then: Mat. 26:40, 'When he cometh he findeth them asleep. What! could you not watch with me one hour?' But the best men are clogged with human infirmities, in the most glorious manifestations of God to them.

2. The providence of God is to be observed in this sleep. That which came to pass through their fault was ordered by God's providence; for if they had been awake, they had heard all the discourse that passed between Christ and the two great prophets, which neither their present condition nor the state of the time did permit. Christ had told them that he should suffer an ignominious death, which they did not thoroughly understand; nor could they reconcile it with the present thoughts which they had of the Messiah; nor was it fit for them to hear all, how the death of Christ was foretold in the prophecies, prefigured in the sacrifices, shadowed out in all the rest

of the types of the law, and sung of in the book of Psalms, to satisfy the justice of God, and open a way for his mercy and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ would not have the great work of his dying hindered, and these things they were not to learn from Moses and Elias, but he would teach them himself after the resurrection: Luke 24:44–46, 'These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their eyes that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.' And the full knowledge of them was reserved till the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. If they had heard them now, they would have begotten scruples and troublesome thoughts in their minds, and hindered the present service.

Observe hence our weakness during the time we are environed with mortality, that we cannot bear up long under spiritual duties; either our hearts are soon overcharged with wonder and astonishment, or else we yield to natural infirmities. However, let it be a warning to us against sleepiness in the worship of God. It is true the best may be surprised with it, as here Christ's disciples. Yet it was a sin in them to be asleep when Christ was at prayers, and it is a sin God hath severely punished; witness Eutychus: Acts 20:9, 'And there sat in the window a young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.' Mark, though the sermon continued till midnight, and it was a youth that slept, yet he fell down as dead. It was a small sin—a sin of infirmity—a boy's sin; yet God would leave this warning. I do not animadvert too severely upon this infirmity, only give you caution. Christ praying all night on Mount Tabor, this weakness prevailed on these choice apostles, and elsewhere during the time of Christ's agonies. Yet we are to strive against it, and be sure it may be said of us as of them: Matthew 26:41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Make conscience of avoiding this sin; do not compose

yourselves to sleep; do not come to these duties spent with labours and worldly cares, nor clogged with excess of meat or drink, nor having defrauded ourselves of necessary refreshing by sleep, by vain pleasures the night before.

Secondly, Their carriage when they were awake. When they awaked, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with them; they saw Christ transfigured before they fell asleep, but I think they saw not Moses and Elias before, but now saw them, that they might give testimony of it to the church, not by common fame and hearsay, but as eye-witnesses; and they knew Moses and Elias either by information from Christ, or some secret instinct and revelation of the Spirit, or as hearing some part of the discourse, they heard enough to show what they were, or what the general matter of their discourse was. But that which is most remarkable is Peter's motion and proposal, 'It came to pass, as they departed from him'—just as they were parting—'Peter said, Lord, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.' He mentioned no distinct tabernacle for himself and fellow-disciples, because they would be with Christ, attending on their master in his tent.

The motion in the general is rash, sudden, and unadvised; but being made by a good man, though under a passion, there is something good and something bad in it.

1. That which was good in it is, he yet retaineth his reverence.

[1.] That he submitteth his proposal to the judgment of his Lord and Master, wherein he expresseth his reverence of Christ—'Lord, if thou wilt.' He desireth a continuance of this dispensation, leaveth it to his consent, acknowledging herein his wisdom and authority.

[2.] It showeth the valuableness and felicity of conversing with Christ and the glorified saints; for when but two of them appear in glory, talking with Christ, Peter said it is good to be here, to

continue and abide in this place together with thyself, Moses, and Elias. What a blessed dignity is this! The glory of heaven is so ravishing and satisfactory to the soul, that the soul can rest in the least glimpse and degree of it! If a glimpse, what is the fulness? If the splendour of his humanity not yet glorified be so great, what is the glory of his Godhead? If a sight of these things at a distance, what is the participation when the glory shall be revealed in us, or we shall appear with him in glory? If Moses and Elias, what is the company of all the saints and angels? If it be thus at Mount Tabor, what will it be in heaven, when all the world is renewed and refined, and the church gathered together in one great assembly?

[3.] The nature of a state of glory, and how easily it maketh us to forget all things here below. Peter had a family, and household affairs to mind; for we read in the Gospel that his wife's mother was sick and cured by Christ: Mat. 8:14. He had friends, and a brother called Andrew, who was one of the disciples of Christ, left below in the valley: John 1:40. Nay he forgot his own present condition of life, which could not long brook his remaining in that mountain, without the supply of food, and other necessaries. Now all this showeth that when we are translated to heaven, we shall be so ravished with that kind of life we shall have there, as that all sense and memory of things that we have left behind shall cease, as Peter being ravished with this sight and spectacle, thinketh not of kindred, friends, or household, or any kind of worldly comfort, but saith only, it is good to be here; so that it teacheth us that the delights of the other world make us forget all our concernments here below: all shall be forgotten and swallowed up in that heavenly delight we shall have there.

2. That which was evil in it.

[1.] That he mistook the nature of the present dispensation. This was to be a representation, not a fruition, to be transient and momentary; for confirmation, not possession; rather a viaticum, a bit by the way, than a feast. It was good and commendable to be

affected with joy and delight in the presence and company of Christ, and Moses, and Elias, but it was not to be rested in as their full reward.

[2.] If this request had taken place, the work of our redemption had been hindered. What had become of Christ's death and passion, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem? All our happiness dependeth on that, and if God should give way to our carnal desires, what mischief would ensue! If Christ had hearkened to him, he would not have gone up to Jerusalem to suffer, nor would any man living have dared to lay hands upon him while he continued in this glory and majesty.

[3.] This request was injurious to Moses and Elias, that they should utterly forsake their heavenly mansions for an abode on earth, and therefore to desire their continuance there was to desire their loss. They were a little time to appear on earth with Christ, and then to return to their blessedness, or to the enjoyment of the sight of God in the third heavens.

[4.] It was injurious to Christ. To hope to learn something from Moses and Elias which Christ could not teach them, and to equal them with his Lord and Master, in building tabernacles for all three alike and without difference, was some lessening of his respect to Christ. If they were to learn anything from them, they were to consult the books, not the persons: Luke 16:29, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And the desires of extraordinary means argueth a contempt of ordinary.

[5.] It was an error to imagine that tabernacles were necessary for Moses and Elias, who now appeared in such heavenly glory in the mount. They needed not earthly houses and tents to dwell in, to defend them from the injuries of the weather, neither had they such present conveniencies to prepare them.

Thirdly, The censure of the Holy Ghost: Luke saith, 'not knowing what he said.' In Mark, chap 9:6, 'He wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.' They were words of a man in a rapture, or surprised with great astonishment. There were two affections, dazzled with the majesty of this glory, and transported with joy. There was also a great fright. Usually, τὰ λύπηρα φοβερά, such things as bring a hurt, occasion fear, and also things of excellent glory; such as surpass our present meanness; as here the change of Christ's person, and the glorious appearance of the great prophets, so long since separated from the commerce of mankind.

Observe, before we proceed, the inconvenience of great and excessive passions: they make us speak we know not what. Peter is an instance in scripture. Let us keep to him. You see him surprised with a great passion of fear, when at Christ's command a great draught of fish came to hand in an unlikely time: Luke 5:8, 9, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes that they had taken.' You find him at other times transported with a passion of excessive reverence or humility: John 13:8, 'Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet.' With a passion of love, or pity to his Master: 'Lord, let it be far from thee; this shall not be unto thee,' when his Master had foretold his death: Mat. 16:22, in case of contempt of Christ. Here with a passion of joy or ravishment, or transport of soul, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' Now all these passions were religiously exercised; but it is dangerous when religion, which should bridle and govern our passions, is made the matter and fuel of them. Passionate joy, or passionate fear, passionate reverence, or passionate zeal, and anger, may easily transport us to some uncomely action or motion; for though in all these there was religion at top, yet sin at the bottom; and, therefore, you see how much it concerneth us to moderate and reduce ourselves to a due temper; for passion causeth us to do things without and against reason; yea, to speak and do we know not what; and when religious matters overheat our affections, we may err exceedingly.

Now, having opened this part of the history, let us observe something that conduceth to our practical instruction.

Doct. 1. That the state and condition of the glorified saints is a most delightful state and condition.

For when Peter had but a glimpse of it in the transfiguration of Christ, it seemed so ravishing and transporting, that here would he abide and stay by it; so was he affected with joy in the company and presence of Christ, and Moses and Elias appearing with him, that all his natural comforts and relations were forgotten. This would compensate all. If once we be gotten into this blessed estate, we shall never desire to come out of it, and part with it. This which the disciples had was but a little glimpse and taste of the life to come. This must needs be so; it is called joy: Mat. 25:21, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' and fulness of joy: Ps. 16:11, 'In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' No better estate can be expected. The soul is at rest, as having obtained its end. And it is also proved by the privileges and benefits the saints shall enjoy in the world to come.

1. A freedom from all evil, which here are matter of grief to us. And
2. The fruition of all good, which may any way bring joy, and delight, and contentment.

1. There is a freedom from all evil. There is a twofold evil, either of sin or punishment. In heaven there is neither sin nor misery.

[1.] To begin with sin, that is the worst evil, because it maketh us hateful to God, and grieveth the saints most: Rom. 7:24, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more, being often imprisoned, whipped, stoned; but his lusts troubled him more than scourges; and his captivity to the law of sin more than prisons. God's children are most weary of the world, because they are sinning here whilst others are glorifying of God,

and enjoying God and the company of his blessed ones. Now in heaven there is no sin: Eph. 5:27, there is neither spot nor blemish, nor wrinkle on the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as yours, but now they are washed in the Lamb's blood and fully cleansed; now with much ado we mortify sin, but then it is nullified. But if we subdue the power of sin, we do not get rid of the being of it, but then we are rid of all at once—of all sin, and temptation to sin. There was a serpent, a tempter in Paradise, but there is none in heaven; the devil is shut out, and the old man is left in the grave never to rise more.

[2.] There is not the least, evil of affliction: Rev. 21:4, 'All tears shall be wiped away from their eyes.' Whatsoever is painful and burdensome to nature, is a fruit of sin, a brand and mark of our rebellion against God. Therefore, when sin is done away, affliction, which is the fruit of it, is done away also. In hell there is evil, and only evil; in heaven, happiness, and only happiness. Here our wounds are healed, but the scars remain—something to put us in mind that we have sin yet dwelling in us; but there all the effects of it cease—there is neither death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain.

2. They shall enjoy all good things, which shall bring joy and comfort to them. In blessedness there is a confluence of all good; our joys are full and eternal.

[1.] There is the immediate sight and presence of God and Jesus Christ, who shall be all in all to them: 1 Cor. 13:12, 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know as also I am known.' And John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' We are brought into the presence of him who is blessedness itself.

[2.] The society of all the blessed angels and saints glorified: Mat. 8:11, 'Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.'

[3.] The perfection of all heavenly gifts both in soul and body.

(1.) In soul: that is the heaven of heaven: 1 John 3:2, 'Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' Ps. 17:15, 'When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy image and likeness.' By knowing we come to love, and by loving God we know him. There is vision, assimilation, satisfaction. The object is efficacious, the intimation vigorous and clear, the subject prepared for the impression.

(2.) In body: Phil. 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.' The body shall be endued with all glorious qualities, as brightness, strength, agility. It is a body wholly impassible and incorruptible, fit for the operations of a glorified soul, and with it shall forever remain, a glorious temple of the Holy Ghost; therefore it is good to be here.

Use 1. Let this draw forth our love to such a blessed estate, which is so full of delight and contentment, and wean us from these things which are most pleasing in the world.

1. The best estate in the world is but vanity, altogether vanity, Ps. 39:5, mingled with some grievances. Wealth hath its incident cares, and honour its tortures, and all pleasures here are but bitter sweets; there is a worm that feedeth on our gourd, and will in time wither it. At last death cometh, and then the lust of the world is gone: 1 John 2:17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.' The godly themselves have but a mixed estate, because of remaining infirmities, they live here in a vale of tears and snares, and sin doth not gasp its last till death removeth us from this sinful flesh, and puts us into the sight of God himself. Wherefore the saints are

groaning and longing for the parting day, when putting off the flesh we shall put off sin, and come and dwell with God for ever.

2. None are translated into heaven but such whose hearts are there first: 2 Cor. 5:2, 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' Phil. 1:23, 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ;' Rom. 8:23, 'We that have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.' A Christian waiteth and longeth for a purer state of bliss and immortality. The first-fruits show what the harvest will be, and a taste what the feast will prove; though they are thankful for this refreshing by the way, yet they are longing to be at home—cannot be contented without it.

3. The excellency of this estate requireth it: if it be not worth your desires and best affections, it is little worth. Christ procured it for us by a life of labours and sorrows, and the pangs of a bitter, cursed death; and when all this is done shall not we desire it and look after it?—that is foul ingratitude. Oh then let your hearts be upon it; desire must go before delight.

Use 2. To move us to labour for it, and seek it in the first place, and to get it assured that we have a part in this blessed and joyful condition: Mat. 6:33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof;' Luke 13:24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate;' so 2 Pet. 1:10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' What profit is it to know that there is such a blessed and joyful estate, if we have no interest in it? Heaven is worth our pains, and will bear all the cost we can lay out upon it. So the children of God thought: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' If we do not desire it, we do not believe it; if we do not labour for it, we do not desire it.

Use 3. Let us comfort ourselves with the hopes of this blessed and joyful condition.

1. Against all the miseries and afflictions of this present life. These are necessary; we would sleep too quietly in the world if we did not sometimes meet with thorns in our beds; we should be so pleased with our entertainment in the way as we should forget home. But God awakeneth us out of our drowsy fits by sharp afflictions, as if he said, 'Arise, depart hence, this is not your rest,' Micah 2:10. While we wallow in sensual comforts our hearts say, it is good being here.

2. When there is a joyful and blessed condition beyond them, it is some comfort in this shipwreck of man's felicity that we can see banks and shores, a landing-place where we may be safe and enjoy our repose. 'To you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,' 2 Thes. 1:7. Here our days are sorrow and our travail grief, but there is our repose.

3. That our joy and contentment is so infinitely above our sorrow and trouble, 2 Cor. 4:7, so that in all the troubles and sorrows of this life, we may look beyond them and through them to the joy and comfort of the life to come. This joy is set before us in the promises of the gospel: Heb. 12:2, Christ, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross,' &c., and Heb. 6:18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us,' we see it by faith, though not by sense.

Doct. 2. That one of the diseases of mankind is that we catch at felicity, without considering the way that leadeth to it.

Peter seeing and apprehending this estate to be an estate of happiness and glory, doth not consider what he must first do and first suffer before he could come to converse with Christ and the glorified saints. Our Saviour had lately told him that he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow him; but Peter overlooketh all this, and saith, 'It is good to be here.' He would be glorified before he was abased and had suffered all the afflictions foretold, and would have his wages before he had done his work. Every one

would enjoy Christ's glory and happiness, but we do not like his yoke—are loth to submit to his cross. If we would enjoy happiness with Christ and the glorified saints, we must be humbled with them and suffer with them first. But we would triumph before we had fought any battle, and receive the crown before we have run our race, and reap in joy before we have sowed in tears, or performed that necessary work that God requires at our hands.

Now the reasons of it are these:—

1. Because by nature we love our own ease and contentment: Gen. 49:15, 'He saw that rest was good.' We are loth to undergo the cross, and desirous to enjoy happiness and glory before and without afflictions; but this is an untimely and preposterous desire, proceeding from self-love. God hath appointed another order, that the cross should go before the crown: Rom. 8:17, 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together.'

2. From the libertinism and yokelessness of our natures, and that spirit of unsubmission which is so natural to us: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' Ps. 2:3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' Duties are more displeasing to the flesh than happiness, and we like pardon and life more than we like strictness, purity, and that watching and striving, and waiting, and exercising ourselves unto godliness which the scripture calleth for.

Use. To press us to get this disease cured, and our hearts reconciled to our duty as well as to our happiness. These considerations may be a help to you.

1. God is a governor as well as a benefactor, and must be respected in both relations; and therefore we must not only desire and wait for his benefits, but submit to his government. His government is seen in his laws and providence. In his laws he appoints our duty, in

his providence he appoints our trials; to refuse either is to question his sovereignty: Ps. 12:4, 'Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail: our lips are our own: who is lord over us?' Exod. 5:2, 'And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go;' so also not to submit to his trials. Therefore now, if we love God as a benefactor, we must be subject to him as our true and proper sovereign, who will bring us to heaven in what way he pleaseth.

2. The terms and means appointed conduce to mortify our love to the false happiness, for one great part of religion is to draw off our hearts from the vain pleasures and honours of the world, the other part is to carry us on in the pursuit of the true happiness—a recess from the world and an access to God, mortification and vivification. We shall sit down with present things if we abandon ourselves to our sensual inclinations, Luke 16:25, so that our desires of the true happiness will be feeble and easily controlled if we submit not to the means.

3. The care and due observance of the means showeth the value and respect to the true happiness. If we do not labour for it and suffer for it, we do not value it according to its worth. There is a simple, naked estimation, and a practical esteem. Naked approbation, Rom. 2:18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law.' The practical esteem is a self-denying obedience, Rom. 2:7, 'To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory,' &c. Then they respect means and end together, and submit to the one to obtain the other. If the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness, nor as eternal, for they that love themselves would be happy, and everlastingly happy; but it is in conjunction with the means, as the Israelites despised the pleasant land, and murmured in their tents: Ps. 106:24, 'Yea, they despised the pleasant land; and they believed not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord.' The land was a good, fertile land, but afar off, and because of giants and walled towns, and so

not thought worthy the pains and difficulties to be undergone. Heaven is a good place, but out of indulgence to the ease of the flesh we dislike difficulties and strictness of holy walking.

4. The difficulty of salvation lies not in a respect to the end but the means, and therefore the trial of our sincerity must rather be looked for there. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity; but that may be done in part by reason, but savingly and thoroughly by the Spirit of revelation: Eph. 1:18, 'The eyes of your understandings being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' But man is sooner convinced than converted, than drawn off from worldly vanities, that he may seek after this happiness; and usually we have a quicker ear for offers of happiness than precepts of duty and obedience. Balaam, Num. 23:10, 'Oh that I could die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end were like his!' John 6:34, 'Evermore give us this bread' of life; but a true Christian, 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. 3:11.

5. The necessity of this self-denying resignation of ourselves to God, to bring us to heaven in his own way, is necessary. That we may begin with God: Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' And also that we may be true to him, and go on with him, and be fortified against all the difficulties we meet with in the way to heaven: Heb. 11:35, 'Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.' 'But none of these things move us,' Acts 20:24: Mat. 20:22, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

6. There is such an inseparable connexion between the end and means, that God will not give us the one without the other. If we

believe, mortify, wait, suffer, then shall we reign with him—otherwise not.

Doct: 3. Much evil would ensue if we had our desires in all those things that we think good for us.

Peter said, 'It is good for us to be here;' but, alas! how ill would it have been for the world if Christ had abode still in the mount. Peter's instance showeth us two things:—

1. That we are apt to consult with our own profit rather than public good. The world needed him, he had great business to do in the valley; but he would be in the mount. It is our nature, if it be well with ourselves, to forget others. Peter little minded his fellow-apostles, the redemption of the world, the conversion of nations, &c.

2. How much we are out when we judge by present sense and the judgment of flesh. We consult with the ease of the flesh, and so desire rest more than pains and labour; what pleaseth rather than what profiteth. Peter saith, 'It is good to be here,' but he must labour first, suffer first, before he entereth into glory.

Well, then, let us learn by what measure to determine good or evil.

1. Good is not to be determined by our fancies and conceits, but by the wisdom of God; for he knoweth what is better for us than we do for ourselves, and the divine choices are to be preferred before our foolish fancies; and what he sendeth and permitteth to fall out is better for us than anything else. Could we be persuaded of this, how would we be prepared for a cheerful entertainment of all that is, or can, or shall come, upon us. God is wiser than we, and loves us better than we do ourselves. The child is not to be governed by his own fancy, but his father's discretion, nor the sick man by his own appetite, but the skill of the physician. It is expedient God should displease his people, for their advantage: John 16:6, 7, 'Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go

away.' We are too much addicted to our own conceits: Christ's dealing is expedient and useful, when yet it is very unsatisfactory to us. He is to be judge of what is good for us, his going or tarrying, and not we ourselves. We are short-sighted creatures, distempered with passions; our requests many times are but ravings, we ask of God we know not what, as the two brethren, Mat. 20:22, we pray ourselves into a mischief and a snare, and it were the greatest misery if God would carve out our condition according to our own fancies and desires.

2. That good is to be determined with respect to the chief good and true happiness. Now what is our chief happiness, but the enjoyment of God? Our happiness doth not consist in outward comforts, riches, health, honour, civil liberty; or comfortable relations, as husband, wife, children; but our relation to and acceptance with God. Other things are but additional appendages to our happiness: Mat. 6:33, προστεθήσεται, 'they shall be added to you.' Therefore poverty is good, afflictions are good; they take nothing from our essential, solid happiness, rather help us in the enjoyment of it, as it increaseth grace and holiness, and so we enjoy God more. Surely that is good that sets us nearer to God, and that evil that separateth us from him. Therefore sin is evil because it makes an estrangement between us and God: Isa. 59:2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' But affliction is good, because many times it makes us the more earnestly to seek after him: Hosea 5:15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early.' Therefore every condition is good or evil, as it sets us farther off or draweth us nearer to God; that is good that tendeth to make us better, more like unto God, capable of communion with him, and conduceth to our everlasting happiness. So it is good that man 'bear the yoke from his youth,' that he be trained up under the cross, in a constant obedience to God, and subjection to him, and so be fitted to entertain communion with him. If afflictions conduce to this end they are good, for then they help us to enjoy the chief good.

3. That good is not always the good of the flesh, or the good of outward prosperity; and, therefore, certainly the good of our condition is not to be determined by the interest of the flesh, but the welfare of our souls. If God should bestow upon us so much of the good of the outward and animal life as we desire, we could not be said to be in a good condition: if he should deny us good spiritual, we should lose the one half of the blessings of the covenant by doting upon and falling in love with the rest. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, but God will not serve our carnal appetites. We are more concerned as a soul than as a body: Heb. 12:10, 'He verily chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Certain it is God will chasten us for our profit. What do we call profit? the good things of this world, the great mammon which so many worship? If we call it so, God will not; he meaneth to impart some spiritual and divine benefit, which is a participation of his own holiness. And truly the people of God, if they be in their right temper, value themselves, not by their outward enjoyments, but by their inward improvement of graces: 2 Cor. 4:16, 'For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' A discerning Christian puts more value upon holiness wrought by affliction than upon all his comforts; so that though affliction be evil in itself, it is good as sanctified.

4. A particular good must give way to a general good, and our personal benefit to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the glory of God. The advancement of Christ's kingdom, or the good of the church, must be preferred before our personal benefit or contentment. Paul could want the glory of heaven for a while, if his continuance in the flesh were needful for the saints: Phil. 1:24, 'To abide in the flesh is more needful for you.' We must not so desire good to ourselves as to hinder the good of others. All elements will act contrary to their particular nature, for the conservation of the universe, so for the glory of God. That may be good for the glory of God which is not good for our personal contentment and ease. Now the glory of God is our greatest interest; if it be for the glory of God

that I should be in pain, bereft of my comfort, my sanctified subjection to the will of God must say it is good: John 12:27, 28. Here you must have the innocent inclination of Christ's human nature, 'Father, save me from this hour;' and the overruling sense of his duty, or the obligation of his office, 'but for this cause came I to this hour.' We are often tossed between inclination of nature and conscience of duty; but in a gracious heart the sense of our duty and the desire of glorifying God should prevail above the desire of our own comforts, ease, safety, and welfare. Nature would be rid of trouble, but grace submits all our interests to God's honour, which should be dearer to us than anything else.

5. This good is not to be determined by the judgment of sense, but by the judgment of faith; not by present feeling, but future profit. That which is not good may be a means to good. Affliction for the present is not pleasant to natural sense; nor for the present is the fruit evident to spiritual sense; but it is good, because in the issue it turneth to good: Rom. 8:28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' &c. While God is striking, we feel the grief and the cross is tedious; but when we see the end, we acknowledge it is good to be afflicted: Heb. 12:11, 'No affliction for the present seems joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised therein.' A good, present, is the cause of joy; and an evil, present, is the cause of sorrow. But there are two termini diminuentes, terms of abatement, πρὸς τὸ παρὸν, and δοκεῖ, present sense, and the conceits of the sufferer. When we are but newly under the affliction, we feel the smart, but do not presently find the benefit; but within a while, especially in the review, it is good for me. It is matter of faith under the affliction, it is matter of sense afterwards. God's physic must have time to work. That which is not good may be good; though it be not good in its nature, it may be good in its use; and though for the present we see it not, we shall see it. Therefore good is not to be determined by feeling, but by faith. The rod is a sore thing for the present, but the bitter root will yield sweet fruit. If we come to a person under the cross, and ask him, What! is it good to feel the

lashes of God's correcting hand? to be kept poor, sickly, exercised with losses and reproaches, to part with friends and relations, to lose a beloved child? he would be apt to answer, No. But this poor creature, after he hath been exercised, and mortified, and gotten some renewed evidences of God's favour; ask him, then, Is it good to be afflicted? Oh yes, I had been vain, neglectful of God, wanted such an experience of the Lord's grace. Faith should determine the case when we feel it not.

Well, then, let us learn to distinguish between what is really best for us and what we judge to be best. Other diet is more wholesome for our souls than that which our sickly appetite craveth. It is best many times when we are weakest, worst when strongest: all things are good as they help on a blessed eternity: so sharp afflictions are good. That part of the world that is governed by sense will never yield to this. You cannot convince a covetous man that the loss of an estate is good; or a worldly, rich man that poverty is good; or an ambitious man that it is good to be despised and contemned; or a sensual, voluptuous man that it is good to be in pains, that the body be afflicted for the good of the soul: they will never believe you. But those that measure all things by eternity, they know that poverty makes way for the true riches, and ignominy for the true glory, want for fulness of pleasures, and misery mortifies sin.

SERMON V

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in, whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.—MAT. 17:5.

IN this branch of the story two things are remarkable, and there is a behold prefixed before either of them to excite our attention. First, they see a bright cloud, and then they hear a voice out of the cloud.

First, Of the cloud: and while he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. It was not a dark cloud, as upon Mount Sinai, when God gave the law, but a bright one, yet not so bright and lightsome but that it was mixed with some obscurity. It was no natural and ordinary cloud, such as are commonly engendered in the air above us, but extraordinary and supernatural, created by God for this occasion. The use of it was double.

1. To convey Moses and Elias out of their sight when this conference was ended. Therefore some expound that which is said, Luke 9:34, 'They feared as they entered into the cloud,' after this manner, the disciples feared when they saw Moses and Elias entering into the cloud—that is, involved and covered in it. It is said of Jesus Christ himself, when he ascended into heaven, Acts 1:9, 'A cloud received him out of their sight.'

2. To be a token of the extraordinary presence of God, whose voice immediately came out of the cloud, as also to veil the glory thereof, which was best done by a cloud, a thing of a middle nature between terrestrial and celestial bodies. When Solomon builded the temple the Lord showed his special presence there by filling the house with a cloud, 1 Kings 8:10. This way of apparition God useth to moderate the splendour of his excellent glory. We are not able to behold God as he is, and must not pry into his glory; there is a cloud and veil upon it.

Secondly, They heard a voice: and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

1. Observe, That there was a voice distinctly and audibly heard. Though God did sensibly now manifest his presence in the mount with Christ, and did audibly speak to them, yet he did not appear in any distinct form and shape, either of man or any other living creature, but all was done by a voice out of the cloud; so Deut. 4:12, 'Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude,' and ver. 15,

'Take good heed to yourselves, for ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb, lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make to you any graven image.' The similitude of any figure, &c. The voice of God may with less danger come to us than any sight or representation of him.

2. The matter, or what this voice said: This is my beloved Son; hear ye him. By this voice there is:—

[1.] A testimony given to Christ.

[2.] A command to hear him; or,

(1.) The dignity of Christ. He is the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased.

(2.) A suitable respect bespoken for him.

The words are few, but yet contain the sum of the whole gospel, and they are spoken, not by a man, nor by an angel, but by the Lord himself, and therefore they should be entertained with the more reverence. The apostle Peter, who was one of the parties present, could never forget this testimony of the Father concerning his Son Jesus Christ: 2 Pet. 1:17, 'He received from the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and besides, what Christ speaketh of another voice from heaven is true of this: John 12:30, 'This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,' not so much to encourage him in his suffering as to our edification and instruction. All the testimonies given unto Christ from heaven tended to point him out to sinners as the true Messiah, approved and accepted of God; therefore these words should ever be in our minds, especially when we draw nigh to God in solemn duties.

I shall begin with the dignity, honour, and glory of Christ, solemnly declared from heaven. There are three things in it:—

1. The relation between him and the Father: he is a Son.
2. The dearness of that relation: his beloved Son.
3. The complacential satisfaction which he taketh in him, and the price of our redemption paid by him: in whom I am well pleased.

Doct. That it is the main and principal point of the gospel, and of great necessity to be known and believed to salvation, that Jesus Christ is the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased.

1. I shall open this testimony given to Christ.
2. Speak of the importance and weight of it.

I. Of the testimony given to Christ.

1. Let me open the term that expresseth his filiation, that he is God's Son. Christ is the Son of God properly so called, a Son only-begotten: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son;' eternally begotten, Prov. 8:22, 23, 'I was set up from everlasting, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.' A Son co-equal with his Father, John 5:18. The Jews sought to kill him because he said God was his Father, making himself equal with God, πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν, his own proper Father. So co-essential, of the same substance with his Father, John 1:1, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Now thus is he the Son of God.

Why is it mentioned there?—

[1.] To show the special dignity of Christ above all others. He is the Son of God: Christians are the sons of God, but in a different manner—he by nature, we by adoption. Though God have many sons by creation and adoption, yet Christ is his Son in a peculiar and proper way, by eternal generation, and communication of the same

essence, ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαπητὸς, that Son, that beloved Son; so a Son as none else is; the Son of God, properly so called.

[2.] To distinguish him from Moses and the prophets. From Moses, Heb. 3:5, 6, 'Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house we are,' &c.; so from the rest of the prophets: Heb. 1:1, 2, 'God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, but hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world.' This is the great doctor of the church; now as to meekness above Moses, as to zeal above Elias, as to familiarity and communion he was with God and was God.

[3.] To show the old prophecies were fulfilled, which foretold the union of the two natures in his person, the predictions concerning one whose name should be Immanuel, God with us, and who should save and redeem the church, Isa. 7:14; and of a child that should be 'the mighty God, the everlasting Father,' Isa. 9:6. This the prophets foretold, that he should be God, and the Son of God: Micah 5:2, 'His going forth is from everlasting,' though born at Bethlehem; so the bud of the Lord and the fruit of the earth, Isa. 4:2. The man God's fellow, Zech. 13:7; and in many other places the union of the two natures is asserted.

2. He is the beloved Son.

[1.] That God loved Christ. Christ is the object of his Father's love, both as the second person and as mediator. As the second person of the Trinity—two things are wont to attract love, nearness and likeness, they are both here. Nearness, he was in the bosom of the Father: John 1:18, 'The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' Likeness is another loadstone of affection: Heb. 1:3, He is 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' Such as the Father is so is Christ.

[2.] As mediator, so God loveth him on the account of his obedience: John 10:17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep;' John 3:35, the Father hath loved him and put all things into his hand. The Father approved Christ's undertaking for sinners, delighted in it as an excellent way of glorifying his name, and recovering poor creatures out of their lost condition; and rested satisfied, and was pleased with his death, as a sufficient ransom for poor souls. Well, then, God loved him so as to trust the souls of all mankind in his hands, and to appoint him to be the great mediator, to end all differences between him and us; and the more he doth in pursuance of his office, the more beloved he is and acceptable to God.

[3.] The testimony of his love to him as mediator; for his unspeakable rejoicing in him, as second person in the Trinity, we are not competent judges of. It is described: Prov. 8:30, 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.' The mutual complacency which the divine persons take in one another is there set forth; God delighted in Christ, and Christ in God. But in the second love as mediator, God expressed his love to him in two things: the gift of the Spirit, and the glory of his human nature.

(1.) The gift of the Spirit: John 3:34, 'God giveth not the Spirit in measure to him, for the Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands.' This was the great expression of his love to Christ as mediator, not to make him a visible monarch of the world, but by the gift of his Spirit to be head of the church.

(2.) The other expression of his love to him as mediator was the gift of everlasting glory: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me should be where I am, and behold my glory, for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.' God's love to Christ, as mediator, was manifested in exalting him to glory, and this everlasting. These are the great expresses of God's love to Christ, as God incarnate, or appearing in our nature.

Why is it put here?—

[1.] To show the end for which Christ came; to represent the amiableness of God—that he is love, 1 John 4:8, and hath love for his children. Christ is the pattern of all, for he is first beloved, and the great instance and demonstration of God's love to the world.

[2.] To intimate the redundancy of this love; it overfloweth to us for Christ being beloved, we are beloved also: Eph. 1:6, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved,' to the praise of his glorious grace. It is an overflowing love; he is loved, and all that have an interest in him are loved. There is a twofold love in God—the love of benevolence and complacency. The elect from all eternity are loved by God with a love of benevolence, whereby he willed good unto them, and decrees to bestow good upon them; but the love of complacency and delight is that love whereby God accepteth us, delighteth in us, when he hath made us lovely as his own children, reconciled them by the death of Christ, renewed them by the Spirit of Christ, and furnished them with all the graces which make us acceptable to him, and precious in his sight.

[3.] To show the kind and manner of the expressing of his love to his redeemed ones. Christ prayed: John 17:23, 'That the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' And ver. 26: 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,' that is, by the gift of the Spirit and everlasting glory. Though Christ was the beloved. Son, yet his state was but mean and despicable in the world; 'he was afflicted,' 'a man of sorrows,' pursued to the death, even a shameful, painful, accursed death; yet all this while he was full of the Holy Ghost, of his graces, comforts, and afterwards received to glory; and so will he love us. At this rate and tenor, his love bindeth him not to give us worldly greatness, but if we have the Spirit, and may be welcomed to heaven at the last, we have that which is the true discovery of God's love. So he manifested his love to the only-begotten Son, and therefore the adopted children should be contented with this love, if by the Spirit they may be enabled to

continue with patience in well-doing, till they receive eternal glory and happiness.

3. The next thing is ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα, 'in whom I am well pleased.' This is to be interpreted of Christ as mediator, or God incarnate; for this was twice spoken—at Christ's baptism, Mat. 3:17, and now at his transfiguration. Both imply his mediatorship; for his baptism had the notion of a dedication; he did then present himself to God as a mediator for us, to be the servant of his decree, as we in baptism dedicate ourselves to fulfil the precepts which belong to us, and as we are concerned to promote his glory in the world. Christ presented himself as a mediator, that is, as a prophet to acquaint us with the way of salvation, as a priest to pay a perfect ransom for us, as a king to give us all things, and defend and maintain all those who submit to his government till their glory be perfected, and they attain unto their final estate of bliss and happiness. Now, then, God from heaven declared himself well pleased; and now, again, when Christ had made some progress in the work, confirmeth it for the assurance of the world.

This, then, must be interpreted:—

[1.] As to Christ.

[2.] As to those who have benefit by him and interest in him.

[1.] As to Christ. He was well pleased; partly, as to the design—the reparation of lost mankind; partly, as to the terms by which it should be brought about; partly, as to the execution and management of it by Christ.

(1.) As to the design. God was well pleased that lapsed mankind should be restored. At the first, God was pleased with his creation, Exod. 31:17. 'On the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed;' that is, recreated in the view of his works, as the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness. And Ps. 104:31, 'The Lord shall rejoice in his works.' The Lord saw all to be good in the beginning and working,

not to be repented of. This was God's rest and Sabbath, to take delight in his works. When he looked on it altogether, behold it was exceeding good; but afterwards man, the ungrateful part of the creation, though the masterpiece of it in this visible and lower world, fell from God his creator, and preferred the creature before him, to his loss and ruin; then God was so far displeased that he had reason to wish the destruction of mankind. It is said, Gen. 6:6, that 'it repented God that he had made man;' that is, he was displeased with us, estranged from us, no more contented with us than a man is in what he repenteth of. For, properly, God cannot repent; but this is an expression to show how odious we were grown to him: Ps. 14:2, 3, 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and did seek after God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' Alas! there is a lamentable appearance of mankind to God's sight, now nothing good to be found in them; an universal defection, both in piety and humanity. But then Christ undertook the reparation of mankind, and the design was pleasing to God, that he might not lose the glory of his creation, and all flesh be utterly destroyed: Col. 1:19, 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.' The restoring of fallen man to friendship with God, and all things tending to it, were highly pleasing to God, namely, that Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity, should become a mediator; for that end he had a great affection and liking to this thing: *εὐδόκησε*, it is the same word used here, the thing is highly pleasing to God, that the breach should be made up; that man, who had lost the image, favour, and fellowship with God, should be again restored, by renewing his heart, reconciling his person, and admitting him again into communion with God, who was so justly provoked by him. God stood in no need of our friendship, nor could any loss come to him by our hatred and enmity; only it pleased the Father to take this way: Isa. 53:10, for 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall

prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.'

(2.) He is pleased with the terms. God, who is the supreme governor of the world, and the offended party, stood upon these terms, that the honour of his governing justice should be secured, and the repentance and reformation of man carried on. Strictly these must be done, or else man must lie under his eternal displeasure; if one be done and not the other, no reconciliation can ensue. Now that God is highly pleased with the satisfaction and compensation made to his governing justice: Heb. 10:6, 7, 'In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;' ver. 10, 'By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all.' God rejected all other sacrifices, but was fully satisfied with this, as enough to expiate the sin of man. Christ delighted to give it, and God delighted to accept of it. He paid a perfect ransom for us, besides or above which he craved no more, but rested fully content in it. For the other, the renovation of man's nature, to put him into a capacity to serve and please God, for God would not admit us to privileges without change of heart and disposition: Acts 5:31, 'God exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' In short, God is so satisfied with these terms, that (1.) He seeketh no further amends for all their wrongs: Rom. 3:25, '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;' (2.) No further price for what they need: 1 Pet. 1:18, 19, 'Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish.' The repentance of a sinner is pleasing to him, there is joy in heaven: Luke 15:7, 'Joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that is converted.' A feast was made at the return of the prodigal: 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner.' Our conversion is more pleasing to God than our destruction.

(3.) He is pleased with the execution and management of it by Christ. He carried himself in the office of the mediator according to what was enjoined him: John 8:29, 'I do always the things that please him.' John 5:30, 'I can of myself do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just; because I seek not my will, but the will of the Father which sent me.' And did finish all that was necessary for the redemption of the elect before he died: John 19:30, 'When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.' Evidences of this are his resurrection from the dead: Acts 5:30, 31, '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, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' Heb. 13:20, 'The God of peace brought again the Lord Jesus from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' As pacified in Christ, 'received into glory,' 1 Tim. 3:16. Certainly God is well pleased, since he hath given not only a discharge, but a reward. The gift of the Spirit, for renewing the heart of man, which is the great pledge of God's being satisfied: John 7:39, 'This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;' a sure evidence that our ransom is paid: Acts 5:32, 'And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him.' A sacrifice of infinite value and esteem.

[2.] That he is well pleased with us who have an interest in him. In our natural estate we are all displeasing unto God. Whatever we are in the purpose of his decree, we must look upon ourselves as we are in the sentence of his law; so 'Children of wrath,' Eph. 2:3: 'Enemies by our minds in evil works,' Col. 1:21: 'Estranged from the womb,' Ps. 58:3; so that all of us were cut off from the favour of God, obnoxious to his wrath; this is our miserable condition by nature, that we were no way pleasing to him, 'for without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. 11:6. A sinner as a sinner can do nothing acceptable; indeed, God having found a ransom, is placabilis, but not placatus, not actually reconciled to us till we are

in Christ; and he is placandus antequam placendus, to be appeased before he can be pleased; he is not actually reconciled till we are in Christ.

(2.) Awakened sinners are not easily satisfied, so as to look upon themselves as pleasing unto God; for the conscience of sin is not easily laid aside, nor is the stain soon got out. And though the grant be passed in heaven, yet we have not the sense of it in our own hearts; for it is the blood of Christ can only do it: Heb. 9:14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' The carnal offer thousands of rams, and rivers of oil, and 'the fruit of the body for the sin of their soul,' Micah 6:6, 7. They would give anything for a sufficient sin-offering; yea, the renewed and pardoned have not so firm a peace as to be able always to look upon themselves in a state of well-pleasing, therefore often beg that God would dissipate the clouds and cause the light of his countenance to break forth upon them: Ps. 80:19, 'Turn us, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.' So that when there is a grant of pardon, and peace, and access to God, we have not always the sense.

(3.) Yet the ground is laid. As soon as we have an interest in Christ, God is well pleased with us; if you consent to his mediation, and take him in his three offices, as a prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, hear him; the business is put out of all question, that God will love you because he loved Christ. When you depend on him as a priest, you have reconciliation and access to God: Rom. 5:1, 2, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand.' When you subject yourselves to him as a king, Col. 1:13, 'He hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Christ is dear to God, and to him all the subjects of his kingdom are dear also. So that if you will be more explicit in your duty, you may be more explicit in your comforts; if you will receive his doctrine, so as it may have authority over your hearts; if in the

anguish of your souls you will depend on the merit of his sacrifice, and give up yourselves to live in a constant obedience to his laws; you will find him to be a dear Son indeed, one very acceptable with God, for you also will be accepted with him, for his sake.

II. Concerning the weight and importance of this truth.

1. It is propounded as the foundation upon which God will build his church: Mat. 16:16–18, 'And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

2. It is the question put to those that would enter upon Christianity: Acts 8:37, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest: and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.' When they were serious in the profession, that was enough: 1 John 5:1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.'

3. This engaged the hearts of the disciples to tarry with him when others murmured at his doctrine. He that cleaveth to this profession carrieth himself accordingly, whatever temptations he hath to the contrary: we believe and are Sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

4. For this end the scriptures were written: 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name,' John 20:31. By obedience to his laws, dependence on his promises.

5. This is the ground of submission to Christ in all his offices, why we should hear him as a prophet in this place (which I shall more fully make manifest in the next sermon), why we should depend on him as a priest, for the virtue of his oblation and intercession: 'If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how

shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Rom. 8:32. 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 1 John 2:1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' The blood of Christ is of high esteem and infinite value, both as to merit and satisfaction, to purchase all manner of blessings for us, and to satisfy God's provoked justice for our sins. And if the Father be so well pleased with him, what can he not obtain at his hands? which is an encouragement in our prayers and supplications. So for our improvement of his kingly office, which respects duties and privileges; our duty with respect to the kingly office is subjection: Ps. 2:12, 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and you perish in the midway.' Because Christ Jesus is the Son of God, he should be submitted unto and embraced with the heartiest love and subjection; for to kiss, is a sign of religious adoration, Hosea 13:2; as they kissed the calves, and offer homage and hearty subjection; as Samuel kissed Saul, because God had anointed him to be king over his people, 1 Sam. 10:1. So for privileges; he is God co-equal, coeternal with his Father, able to protect all those that apply themselves to him, till he bring them to eternal glory and happiness; and, therefore, it is said, 1 John 5:5, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' That is the fortifying truth; this both cautioneth us against all the delights and snares, and supports us against all the terrors and fears of the world. If we have the Son of God for our prophet, priest, and king, we ought to carry ourselves with greater reverence, trust, and subjection.

Use 1. Believe it, lay up this truth in your hearts by a firm and sound belief. There are in faith three things—assent, acceptance, dependence. The matter in hand calleth for all these.

[1.] A firm assent; for here we have the testimony of God concerning his Son. The apostle tells us, that 'he that believeth not hath made God a liar, because he believeth not the testimony of God concerning his Son,' 1 John 5:10. The great testimony is this,

that we have in hand that Jesus is his beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased; that he will give pardon and life to all that hearken to him, embrace his person, receive his doctrine, believe his promises, fear his threats, obey his precepts, the strictest of them. Oh! labour to work it into your hearts that indeed it is so. In matters of fact we receive the testimony of men, two or three credible men; why not in matters of faith?—the testimony of God evidenced to us by this solemn action, an account of which we have from ear-witnesses and eye-witnesses, who were men that hazarded their all for the delivery of this truth, and yet referred us to the surer word of prophecy, 1 Pet. 1:19. He was owned as a Son: Ps. 2:7, 'Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee.' As a beloved Son, in whom God is well pleased: Isa. 42:1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delighteth.' If you be not wanting to yourselves, you may have this witness in your hearts: 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' Oh! let us not give the flat lie to God. Rouse up this languid faith. Is this true, or is it a cunningly devised fable?

[2.] Faith is an acceptance of Christ, or an entering into a covenant with God by him. You must have the Son: 1 John 5:12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' John 1:12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.' Receiving, respects God's offer. God gives Christ, and we receive what God giveth,—to what end? Why, he giveth him as king, priest, and prophet, to dwell in our hearts by faith, to rule us and guide us by his word and Spirit, and maintain God's interest in us against the devil, the world, and the flesh, till we come to everlasting glory.

[3.] Dependence. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him; therefore on him alone should we depend for all things necessary to salvation. Two things persuade this dependence:—

(1.) That nothing can be done without Christ: Acts 4:12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under

heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Nothing can be done without Christ that may be effectual to our recovery, either for the paying of our ransom, or for the changing of our hearts. Alas! what could we do to please God, or profit our own souls? The work would cease for ever if it should lie upon our hands.

(2.) That he can do what he pleaseth for the good of his redeemed ones: John 17:2, 'As thou hast given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' All that Christ did for our salvation did highly content and please the Father; he is satisfied with him; he can make us lovely in his sight: Eph. 1:6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' And will now joy in his people, Isa. 65:19, and rest in his love, Zeph. 3:17. Well, then, let us believe; faith is a ratifying God's testimony concerning his Son; we believe what God hath said, that Christ is his Son; we receive him as he is freely offered, and subscribe to this declaration. The Father saith from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.' So penitent believers must answer back again, 'This is our beloved Redeemer, in whom we are well pleased; let the Father hear him. He hath somewhat to say to the Father as well as to us; his doctrine concerneth us, but his intercession is made to God.'

Use 2. Entertain it with thankfulness. That such a remedy should be provided for us argueth the unspeakable love of God: 1 John 4:9, 'In this was manifested the love of God to us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him.' That God should bestow his Son upon us to procure our salvation. God tried Abraham's love in sacrificing his son, but manifested his love to us in sending his own Son; 'He spared him not, but delivered him up for us all.' Now that such a remedy and ransom is found out for us, it should leave an impression of God's love on our hearts, that we may love him again who first loved us, 1 John 4:19. Think nothing too dear for God, who thought no rate too dear to purchase our life and peace. As our salvation was precious to him, let his glory be dear to us; only let me tell you, this love must not be

confined to a bare act of our reason, but you must pray to God to shed abroad this love in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, Rom. 5:5, that so you may study to love and please God, prize Christ and his precious benefits above all things in the world, and live to him who died for you, that you may feel the constraining efficacy and force of love.

SERMON VI

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him.—MAT. 17:5.

I. THE design and intent of this scripture is to set forth the Lord Jesus as the great mediator, as appeareth—

1. From the occasions upon which this voice came from heaven. At his baptism, which was Christ's dedication of himself to the work of a redeemer and saviour; and now at his transfiguration, to distinguish him from Moses and the other prophets, and publicly to instal him in the mediatory office.

2. The matter of the words show his fitness for this office, for here you have:—

[1.] His dignity: not a servant, but a Son: Heb. 3:5, 6, 'Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house.' Now the old prophecies foretold the union of the two natures in his person, and necessary it was that our mediator should be God-man. There is a congruity between his person and office, one fit to be familiar with man, and naturally interested in his concerns, and yet so high and near the Father as may put a sufficient value upon his actions, and so meet to mediate with God for us.

[2.] The dearness between God and him: 'My beloved Son.' Christ is the object of his Father's love, both as the second person in the

Trinity and mediator. The one is the ground of the other, for because he loved him he intrusted him with souls: John 3:35, 'The Father hath loved him, and put all things into his hands'—the elect and all things else, all power that conduceth to their salvation. Afterwards loved him as mediator: John 10:17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.' Now such a beloved Son is fittest to mediate for us, and to come upon a design of love, to demonstrate God's great love to wretched sinners, and to be a pledge of that love which God will bestow upon us who are altogether so unworthy of it.

[3.] His acceptableness to God, who is well pleased with the design, the terms, the management of it.

II. This work of mediator Christ executeth by three offices, of king, priest, prophet. For he is head and lord of the renewed state; a priest to offer a sacrifice for sin, which, having once offered, he for ever represents in heaven; he was also to be teacher of mankind, to acquaint us with the way of salvation. These offices are often alluded unto in scripture: Rev. 1:5, 'The faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth;' So Heb. 1:2, 3, 'God hath spoken to us by his Son, he having by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.' The effect of them is more briefly described: John 14:6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' The way was opened by his passion, and is kept open by his intercession. Truth as a prophet. Life we have from him, as prince of life, or head of the renewed estate. So the effects: 1 Cor. 1:30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' Wisdom as a prophet to cure our ignorance and folly; righteousness and sanctification as a priest; redemption as the king and captain of our salvation. The same benefits which he purchaseth as a king, he bestoweth as a priest, revealeth as a prophet. These three offices were typed out by the first-born, who were heads of families, and also prophets and priests.

That though all the three offices be employed, yet the prophetic office is more explicitly mentioned, partly as suiting with the present occasion, which is to demonstrate that Christ hath sufficient authority to repeal the law of Moses, which the prophets were to explain, confirm, and maintain till his coming. But now Moses and Elias appear in person to certify their consent, and God his approbation, from heaven, to that new law of grace which Christ should set up; partly because it is not necessary that in every place all the offices should be mentioned; sometimes but one, as where Christ is called either king, priest, or prophet; sometimes two together, Heb. 3:1, prophetic, sacerdotal: 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; sometimes his prophetic and kingly, Isa. 55:4, 'Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, and for a leader and commander to the people:' partly because if Christ be received in this one office he will be received in all the rest; for as a prophet he hath revealed that doctrine which establisheth his kingly and priestly office, for he hath revealed all things necessary to salvation, and therefore his own sacrifice and regal power. Lastly, some think all expressly mentioned here. Thus Christ is God's beloved Son, and therefore the heir of all things, and lord and king, in whom he is well pleased—that is, pacified and satisfied with his offering as a priest, or appeased by his complete sacrifice. Hear him as the great prophet and doctor of the Church.

This premised, I come now to observe:—

Doct. That Christ is appointed by God the Father to be the great prophet and teacher, whose voice alone must be heard in the Church.

I. That Christ is the great prophet and teacher of the Church appeareth:—

1. By the titles given to him. He is compared with Moses the great lawgiver among the Jews: 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee

a prophet from the midst of you like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken,' Deut. 18:15. He was to be like a Moses, but greater than Moses. A lawgiver as he, a man as he, one that saw God face to face as he, a mediator as he; but far other in all respects—a better law, a more glorious person, a more blessed mediator, working greater miracles than ever did Moses. So he is called our rabbi or master: Matthew 23:8, 'One is your master, even Christ, and ye are brethren.' The supreme authority, the original right is in Christ. We are not leaders and teachers, but fellow disciples; so Heb. 3:1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Again, he is called the angel or messenger of the covenant, Mal. 3:1. Christ with a great condescension took upon him the office of his Father's ambassador to the church, to promote the covenant of reconciliation between God and man, and make offers of it in preaching the gospel; and he it is that doth by his Spirit persuade the elect, and doth make his covenant sure to them. Once more, he is called 'Amen, the faithful and true witness,' Rev. 3:14. There can be no prejudice against his testimony; he can never deceive nor be deceived; it is so, it will be so, as he hath said, Amen is his name.

2. By the properties of his office: he hath three things to qualify him for this high office:—

[1.] Absolute supreme authority: and therefore we must hear him and hearken to him. This is usually made the ground and reason of the gospel invitation, to invite sinners to submit themselves to seek after God in this way: as Mat. 11:27, 28, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' &c. There is no true knowledge of God but by Christ and the gospel revelation which he hath established, therefore here we must seek rest for our souls: so John 3:35, 36, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son hath not seen life, but the wrath of God

abideth on him.' First, his mediatorial authority is acknowledged; and then faith and obedience to the gospel is called for, for to the sentence of the Son of God we must stand or fall. So when Christ instituted and sent abroad his messengers to invite the world to the obedience of the gospel: Mat. 28:18–20, 'All power is given to me both in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' He hath absolute and supreme authority to gather his church, to appoint ministers and ordinances, to bestow the Spirit, to open and close heaven and hell as he pleaseth, to dispose of all affairs in the world for the furtherance of the gospel, and to enjoin the whole world obedience to his commands, and to embrace his doctrine.

[2.] All manner of sufficiency and power of God to execute this office: John 3:34, 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.' The former prophets had the Spirit in a limited measure bestowed on them by God, for such particular purposes as best pleased him; therefore all their prophecies begin, Thus saith the Lord, as having for every particular message and errand new revelation. But on Christ the Spirit descended once for all, and commanded the belief of all and obedience to all that he should say. Therefore it is said, Col. 2:3, 'In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' He is ignorant of none of those things which are to be known and practised in order to our eternal salvation; they are deposited with him to be dispensed to us.

[3.] There is in him, a powerful efficacy. As he hath absolute authority to teach in his own name, and fulness of sufficiency to make known the mind of God to us; so he hath power to make his doctrine effectual. As when he dealt with his disciples, after he had opened the scriptures, he 'opened their understandings,' Luke 24:25; so he 'opened the heart of Lydia,' Acts 16:14. He can teach so as to draw, John 6:44, 45. He can excite the drowsy mind, change

and turn the rebellious will, cure the distempered affections, make us to be what he persuadeth us to be. There is no such teacher as Christ, who doth not only give us our lesson, but an heart to learn; therefore to him we must submit, hear nothing against him, but all from him.

II. About hearing him, that must be explained also.

First, What it is to hear; it being our great duty, and the respect bespoken for him. In the hearing of words there are three things considerable—the sound that cometh to the ear, the understanding of the sense and meaning, and the assent or consent of the mind. Of the first the beasts are capable, for they have ears to hear the sound of words uttered. The second, is common to all men, for they can sense such intelligible words as they hear. The third belongeth to disciples, who are swayed by their Master's authority. So that, Hear him, is not to hear as beasts, nor barely to hear as men, but to hear as disciples; to believe him, to obey him; to believe his doctrines and promises, and to obey his precepts. For his authority is absolute, and what he doth say, doth warrant our faith, and command our practice and obedience. I gather this partly from the word 'hear,' which not only signifies attention and belief, but obedience: as 1 Sam. 15:22, 'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,' where to obey and hearken are put as words of the same import and signification. Partly from the matter of Christ's revelation; he hath revealed not only doctrines to inform the mind, but precepts to reform the heart and practice. If we assent to the doctrine, but do not obey the precepts, we do not hear him. Therefore to hear him is to yield obedience to what he shall teach you; and when Christ cometh to take an account of the entertainment of the gospel, 'he shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Partly too from the intimate connexion there is between his prophetic and regal office. Christ is so a prophet, that he is also a sovereign; and doth not only give us counsel and direction, but a law, which we are to observe under the

highest penalties. If the gospel were an arbitrary direction, which we might observe or not observe, without any great danger to ourselves, surely it were folly to despise good counsel; but it hath the force of a new law from the great king and lawgiver of the world, therefore it must not only be believed but obeyed: Heb. 5:8, He that is the chief prophet of the church is also the king of saints. Partly also from the near connexion that is between faith and obedience. The matter which we believe is of a practical concernment, and doth not require only a simple faith, or bare belief, which were enough in points merely speculative, but a ready obedience. It is said, Rom. 16:26, 'The mysteries of the gospel are made manifest to all nations for the obedience of faith.' They are not matters of speculation and talk, but practice; and blessedness is pronounced on such as hear them and keep them: Luke 11:28, 'Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' Many hear and talk, hear and stuff their minds with notions, but they do not frame themselves to the practice of what they hear. Many question not Christ's authority, but yet they do not regard his doctrine. Now, faith doth not only silence our doubts, but quicken our affections and enliven our practice.

Secondly, How can we now hear Christ, since he is removed into the heaven of heavens, and doth not speak to us in person?

Ans. Surely it doth not only concern the believers of that age, who conversed with Christ in the days of his flesh, but it is the general duty of all Christians to hear Christ; for during the whole gospel dispensation, God speaketh to us by his Son, Heb. 1:2: the revelation is settled, and not delivered by parcels, as it was to the ordinary prophets. Now we hear Christ in the scriptures: Heb. 2:3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which was first spoken by the Lord, and afterwards confirmed to us by them that heard him.' He began to speak and to declare the gospel both before and after his resurrection; and they that heard him were especially the apostles, who, being induced by the Holy Ghost, declared it first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, to whom it was continued by

divers signs and wonders, as to the apostles, and to extraordinary messengers. Christ saith, Luke 10:16, 'He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' The despising of the messenger is the despising him that sendeth the message. A man's apostle is himself, is a Jewish proverb. As to ordinary ministers he saith, 'Lo, I am with you to the end of the world,' Mat. 28:20; they are taken into part of the apostolical commission and blessings; they preach in Christ's name, and we, as in his stead, pray you to be reconciled, 2 Cor. 5:20; so that it is his voice and his message; he affordeth his presence and assistance unto the world's end. If you receive it with faith and obedience, you are in a course and way which will bring you to everlasting blessedness; but if you stand out obstinately against his message, you are in the way to everlasting misery, for refusing God's methods for your redemption.

Thirdly, The properties of this hearing or submission to our great prophet.

1. There must be a resolute consent or resignation of ourselves to his teaching and instruction. All particular duties are included in the general. First, we own Christ in his offices, before we perform the duties which each of those offices calleth for at our hands and from us—before we depend on him as a priest, or obey him as a king. As we receive him with thankfulness and love as our dearest Saviour, and with reverence and a consent of subjection as a sovereign lord, so also with a consent of resolution to follow his directions as our prophet and teacher, being convinced that he is sent from God to show us the way of life and happiness: John 6:63, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' His doctrine showeth that there is such a thing, how it was purchased, which way it may be had, by God's offer, and the terms prescribed. Before we take any particular direction from Christ about this or that duty, we must first consent in the general that he shall be our teacher and prophet. A particular consent to Christ in this relation is as necessary as to any of the rest.

2. This resignation of our souls to Christ as a teacher, as it must be resolute, so it must be unbounded and without reserves. We must submit absolutely to all that he propoundeth, though some mysteries be above our reason, some precepts against the interest and inclination of the flesh, some promises seem to be against hope, or contrary to natural probabilities. There are some mysteries in the Christian religion, though not against reason, yet above natural reason. Now we must believe them upon Christ's word, *captivantes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi*: 2 Cor. 10:5, 'Bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.' All our disputings and reasonings against the Christian doctrine must be captivated by a submission to the authority of our teacher and prophet. A disciple is to be a learner, not a caviller; and some principles are not to be chewed, but swallowed as pills on the credit of the physician, when it appeareth on other grounds that Christ is the great teacher sent from God. And as there are mysteries above our reason, so there be duties against the interest and inclination of the flesh. Many of Christ's precepts are displeasing to corrupt nature—to deny ourselves, to take up the cross, to mortify our appetites and passions, to cut off right hands, and to pluck out right eyes; that none shall be saved that are not regenerate and holy; that non-condemnation is the privilege of those that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; that if we live after the flesh we shall die; that we must not seek great things for ourselves; that we must hate father and mother, and our own life, if we will be Christ's disciples. Flesh and blood can hardly down with these things—that there shall be such an exact day of account, such eternal torments in the other world; yet if this be revealed by our great prophet, as reason must not be heard against Christ, so the flesh must not be heard against Christ, nor the world heard against Christ; so if some of our hopes exceed the probability of natural causes: Rom. 4:18, he 'against hope believed in hope,' as the resurrection of the body. We must believe and obey him in what he offereth and commandeth, notwithstanding the contradiction of our carnal minds and hearts, in what is hard to be believed and practised, as well as in what is easy.

3. It must be speedy as to the great solemn acts of submission. Do not delay to hear him: Heb. 3:7, 'To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Christ must not be put off with dilatory shifts; if we refuse to hear to-day, Christ may refuse to speak tomorrow. The Father hath his time of waiting, the Son of his gospel-offers, the Spirit of his earnest motions: it is dangerous to slip our day; therefore, if you will hear him, hear him now! Hear him betimes; the season falleth under the precept as well as the duty: 'Now, while it is called to-day.'

4. Your consent to hear him must be real, practical, and obediential, verified in the whole tenor and course of your lives and actions; for Christ will not be flattered with empty titles. 'Why call ye me lord and master, and do not the things which I say?' Luke 6:46. If you pretend to hear his word, you must do it also, for you do not hear to please your minds with knowing, but that you may make it your serious care and business to serve, love, and please God. Many study Christianity to form their opinions rather than reform their hearts and practice. The great use of knowledge and faith is to behold the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that our own love may be quickened and increased to him again. If it serve only to regulate opinions, it is but dead speculation, not a living faith. A naked belief is but the sight of a feast,—it is the gracious soul doth eat and digest it; when our faith is turned into love and obedience, that is the true faith.

III. The reasons why this prophet must be heard.

1. Consider whose voice it is who speaketh—the only beloved Son of God, or God himself—and surely when he speaketh he must be heard: Heb. 12:25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake from earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.' It is Christ doth speak, and God by him, commanding us to repent and believe the gospel; now to refuse him is a high contempt. God, when he gave the law, he spake on earth; but when

he spake by Christ, he spake from heaven; for Christ came from heaven to acquaint us with the mind of God, and having done it, is returned to heaven again, from whence he sent down his Spirit on the apostles, who revealed his gospel to the world. This was a mystery hidden in the bosom of God, and brought to us thence by his only-begotten Son. Surely, with all humble submission, we should attend unto and obey his word: Ps. 103:20, 'Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.'

2. The matter which he speaketh and we hear—the doctrine of the gospel; it is the most sweet, excellent, and comfortable doctrine that can be heard, or understood by the heart of man: Prov. 8:6, 'Hear,' Saith Wisdom, 'for I will speak of excellent things: and the opening of my lips shall be of right things.' This is the brightest light that ever shone from heaven, the profoundest wisdom, the greatest love and mercy that ever was or can be shown to sinful wretches, of the highest concernment to man; because his everlasting state lieth upon it, a state of everlasting woe or weal.

Three things I shall take notice of:—

[1.] The way of reconciliation with God manifested and discovered out of his intimate love to us. Man had fallen from the love of God to the creature, and was conscious to himself of having displeased his Maker, and so lay under the fears of his vindictive justice. Now God by Christ declareth his love to the offender in the fullest and most astonishing way, reconciling himself to him, and showeth his readiness to forgive and save him: 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: of whom I am chief;' and, 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' Oh, what should be more welcome to the creature than this news of this pardoning covenant founded in the blood of Christ!

[2.] Our duty exactly stated, with convenient motives to enforce it. Not only the comfort of man is provided for, but also our subjection to God, and that upon the freest and most comfortable terms, that we should serve him in love, and glorify and please him, that we may be happy in his love to us; for the sum of religion is to love him, and keep his commandments: John 14:21, 23, 'He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me: and if any man love me, he will keep my words.' To love him is our work, and to be beloved of him is our happiness; and ver. 24: 'He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.' The gospel is the very word of God, both the Father's and the Son's; it is an act of loving, serving, and pleasing God; for this is the word Christ preached, that we love God, and Christ loveth us again.

[3.] A prospect of eternal happiness: 2 Tim. 1:10, 'He hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' This is news, but darkly revealed before, and without this man knew not how to satisfy all his capacities and desires, but was like Leviathan in a little pool. Nay, we have not only a prospect of it, but the offer of it as a reward appointed, if we will be sincere in our faith, love, and obedience: 1 John 2:25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Everlasting joy and blessedness is propounded to us; Oh, then, hear him, if this be that he speaketh of.

3. The danger of not hearing this prophet.

[1.] For the present: to continue to slight and contemn the gospel is the mark that you are in a carnal, perishing condition: 2 Cor. 4:3, 'If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost;' John 10:3, 'My sheep hear my voice;' and ver. 16, 'Other sheep are there which are not of this fold, and they shall hear my voice.' Christ's sheep, whether Jew or Gentile, they have all the same character, they all hear his voice; and ver. 27, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' They distinguish his voice, own his voice, obey his voice. So John 8:47, 'Whosoever is of God heareth God's

words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God;' so that you lose all this comfort if ye do not hear the voice of Christ and his faithful servants.

[2.] For the future: Deut. 18:19, 'Whosoever will not hearken to the words which that prophet shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;' that is, he must look to answer it another day. Peter rendereth it: Acts 3:23, 'Whosoever will not hearken to that prophet shall be destroyed among the people.' It is not a bodily punishment, but eternal torment: John 3:36, 'The wrath of God abideth on him;' Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' Thus you see how dangerous it is to refuse this prophet.

Use 1. Of conviction to the carnal Christian for not submitting to Christ's authority. All Christians do it in pretence, but few that do it in reality. Doth his word come to you not only in word but in power?

[1.] Do you seriously come to him that you may have pardon and life. When Christ had proved that he was the Son of God, the great prophet of the church, by the testimony of John, the testimony of his works, the testimony of his Father, and the testimony of the scriptures: John 5:40, 'And ye will not come unto me that ye may have life;'—though John, his works, the Father, the scriptures, will prove him to be what he was, the Messiah, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world, yet they would not come to him, nor believe, but wilfully rejected him, and their own blessedness. What the Jews did wilfully, carnal Christians do lazily; they prize his name and slight his office, do not come to him to be taught, sanctified, and drawn to God.

[2.] Do you respect the word of the gospel, entertain it with, reverence and delight, as the voice of the great prophet? Do you meditate on it, digest it as the seed of the new life, as the rule of your actions, as the charter of your hopes? A good man is described to be one that 'delighteth in the law of the Lord, and meditateth

therein day and night,' Ps. 1:2; and, again, Ps. 119:97, 'Oh, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day long.' But, alas! few are of this temper: Hosea 8:12, 'I have written to them the great, things of thy law, but they were counted as a strange thing, they contemned the word of God,' as if its directions were of little importance, or did not concern them. Most men live like strangers to the word of God, little conversant in it, as there were no great hazard in breaking it.

[3.] Do you mingle it with faith in the hearing, that it may profit you, Heb. 4:2, and feel the power of it for your good? But rather you shun it—run from it: John 3:20, 'They that do evil hate the light, and will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. The word is a torment rather than a comfort to you; you are afraid it will be found too true.

[4.] Do you receive it as the word of God? 1 Thes. 2:13. It may be you do not contradict the divine authority in the scriptures, but do you soundly believe them, and know the certainty of those things wherein you are instructed? Luke 1:4. Have you done anything to prove the supreme truth that Jesus is a teacher sent from God? Most men's faith is so weak and slight, because it is taken hand-over-head, there is no deepness of earth, Mark 13:6. You have some light sense of religion, but slight impressions are soon defaced, and truths easily taken up are as soon quitted; the more we search into the grounds of things the more we believe, Acts 17:11. The Bereans 'sought the scriptures whether those things were so or no.'

[5.] Doth it come to you as the Mediator's word?—'not in word only but in power,' 1 Thes. 1:5. There is a convincing power in the word: Acts 2:37, 'When they heard these things, they were pricked in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Many have not felt this power, but they fear it: John 3:20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' A converting power when it becometh the seed of a new life: 1 Pet. 1:23, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word

of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' A comforting power, giving the heirs of promise strong consolation, Heb. 6:18. Do you find anything of this in your hearts? is it engrafted in your souls? James 1:21, 'Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.'

[6.] Do you hear him universally? It is said of the great prophet, Acts 3:22, 'Him shall ye hear in all things that he shall say unto you.' Many will hear him in the offers of pardon, but not in the precepts of duty: you must take his whole covenant, the promises for your happiness, the duty for your work.

[7.] Do you hear him so as to prefer God and Christ and the life to come above all the sensual pleasures and vain delights and worldly happiness which you enjoy here? Religion is obstructed, not soundly received, if your hearts be not taken off from these things: Luke 8:14, 'That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' He is not a scholar of Christ who is not more devoted to the love and obedience of God than any sensual satisfaction here below—unless you can renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and give up yourselves to Christ, to be taught, sanctified, and saved, and brought home to God, to enjoy him in everlasting glory, and taught how to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, Titus 2:12.

Use 2. Advice to weak Christians:—

[1.] To excite themselves to obedience by this hear him, when dead and lifeless. Many times the heart is dull and needeth quickening. Conscience groweth sleepy and needeth awakening—you are too bold in sinning, cold and careless in spiritual and heavenly things. Now the first means to quicken us is Christ's divine authority: 2 Pet. 1:16, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty, when there came

such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' When you are customary in prayer and hearing,—It is Christ's will; I must do it as I will answer it to him another day.

[2.] When you do renounce some beloved lust or pleasing sin, urge your hearts with Christ's authority. Remember who telleth you of cutting off your right hand, and plucking out your right eye. How can I look the Mediator in the face, if I should wilfully break any of his laws, prefer the satisfaction of a base lust before the mercies and hopes offered me by Jesus Christ.

[3.] In deep distresses, when you are apt to question the comfort of the promises. It is hard to keep the rejoicing of hope, without regarding whose word and promise it is: Heb. 3:6, 'Whose house are ye, if ye hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.'

SERMON VII

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, be not afraid. And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.—MAT. 17:6–8.

IN this part of the history are three things:—

I. The disciples' fear and astonishment, ver. 6.

II. Their comfortable and gracious recovery by Christ, ver. 7.

III. The event and issue of all, ver. 8.

I. Their astonishment: They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. Their falling on their faces was not out of worship and reverence, but consternation, as those John 18:6, 'As soon as he said to them I

am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.' The causes of their fear must be inquired into. These were holy men, the flower of Christ's disciples; they were men in an holy action—(for Belshazzar in his cups to tremble were no news)—they were not in the presence of an angry God, it was a gospel-voice that they heard: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' They had not a full dispensation of his glory, but only a glimpse of it, and that under a cloud and revealed in mercy; yet they were sore afraid. Upon any visions and apparitions of the divine majesty, God's servants fell to the earth: Ezek. 1:28, 'When I saw the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God, I fell on my face.' Paul, when Christ appeared to him from heaven, he fell to the earth, Acts 9:4: Rev. 1:17, 'When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.' Abraham was cast into great horror, Gen. 15:12, when God appeared solemnly to enter into covenant with him. So Isa. 6:5, 'Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone.' So Daniel 10:8, 9, 'When I saw this great vision, there was no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: then was I in a deep sleep upon my face, and my face was towards the ground.'

Now I shall give—(1.) The special reasons why the manifestation and appearance of God to his great prophets did breed this astonishment and fear; (2.) What general note and observation may be concluded hence for our profit.

1. The special reasons why these manifestations and appearances of God to his great prophets do breed this astonishment and fear—they are two:—

[1.] To humble them to whom he vouchsafed so great a favour. To humble them lest the glory of these heavenly visions should too much puff them up. Therefore there was ever some weakness discovered in those that did receive them. Jacob wrestled with God, but came off halting and maimed, though he prevailed, Gen. 32:31. When he came off from seeing God face to face, he halted on his

thigh. Paul was rapt into the third heaven, yet presently buffeted with a messenger of Satan, lest he should be lifted up with the abundance of revelations, 2 Cor. 12:7. Corruption remaineth in us, and we are not able to bear these favours which God manifesteth to his choice servants, and therefore there is something to humble them in the dispensation, and to keep them from being puffed up with pride, something that is a balance to the great honour wherewith God hath honoured them.

[2.] All those that received visions from him to teach his people, God would season them by leaving a stamp and impression of his excellency upon them. This was the preparation of the prophets, and a preparation of the disciples to fit them for the work of the gospel. A due representation of God's glory and excellent majesty doth qualify them for their duty; they are fittest to carry God's message and describe him to others who are thus qualified and prepared, and have some reverence and awe of God impressed upon their own hearts, and have felt the power of his great majesty: 2 Cor. 5:16, 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.'

The general conclusion and observation which we may draw from thence is this:—

Doct. That God is of such glorious excellency and majesty, that we are not able to bear any emissions or extraordinary representations thereof in this state of frailty.

1. I will prove that God is a great God and of glorious majesty.
2. Give you the reasons why we are not able to bear the extraordinary manifestations thereof in this state of frailty.
 1. That God is a God of great majesty, and ought to be revered by all that have to do with him. The point being a matter of sense, and evident by natural light, needeth not to be proved so much as improved.

[1.] Scripture representeth him as such: Dan. 9:4, he is called 'the great and dreadful God;' so Deut. 7:21, 'A mighty God and terrible;' and Nahum 1:5, 'A great and terrible God is he;' and, again, Job 37:22, 'With God is terrible majesty.'

[2.] This eminently shineth forth both in his works of creation and providence. (1.) Creation, in the stupendous fabric of the heavens: Jer. 32:17–19, 'Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and outstretched arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee,' &c. In that mighty collection of waters in the sea: we cannot look upon that vast expansion of the firmament, that huge body of waters in the sea, without some religious horror. What is the God that made all this? Jer. 5:22, 'Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for a bound to the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?' (2.) Providence, whether in his way of mercy or judgment. Mercy: what a majestic description of God is there, Ps. 50:1–5, yet there his presence in his church is described. The drift of the psalm is, to set forth God's power and majesty when he comes to call the Gentiles, and to set up the evangelical way of his worship, when the light of the gospel shall shine forth from Sion: Ps. 65:5, 'By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God, thou God of our salvation.' Though God is a God of salvation, yet the way of his delivering them carrieth majesty and terror with it. So his works of judgment: Ps. 119:120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments, when the wicked of the earth are put away like dross.' A lion trembleth to see a dog beaten before him, and it is imputed as a fault to the wicked that they do not take notice of it: Isa. 26:10, 'They will not behold the majesty of God.'

[3.] His greatness and majesty is such that we cannot comprehend it: Job 36:26, 'Behold, God is great, and we know him not, nor can the number of his years be searched out.' The greatness of God cannot be known, but only by way of negation, that he hath none of

those infirmities which may lessen his being in our thoughts; or by way of comparison, that he is above all, God is greater than man, Jer. 36:12.

[4.] So great that he is fain to put a covering on, to interpose the clouds between us and him, for we are not able to bear his glorious and majestic presence: Job 26:9, 'He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.' What would become of us if he should discover all his glory? This is his condescension to the lower world to appear under a veil, and cover his throne with clouds.

But though we do not know his full majesty, yet there is enough discovered both to faith, reason, and, sense, that God is great and glorious, both in himself and in all his works. Scripture declareth it to faith, and reason will soon subscribe to so evident a truth, that he that made and sustaineth all things must needs be a great God. What other conceptions can we form of him when we look to the heaven and this earth which he sustaineth by his great power, and he declareth himself to sense by his daily providence to be a God of great majesty.

The proof of it needeth not so much to be spoke to as the improvement of it, which we are called upon for everywhere.

(1.) It is a mercy that, being so great, he taketh notice of us: Ps. 8:3, 4, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' When we consider how the majesty of God shineth forth in the heavenly bodies, and those many glorious creatures God hath made besides us, we may wonder that God should esteem of man, and take care of man, and be so solicitous about man's welfare, who was formed at first out of so vile materials as the dust of the earth, and is still of so very frail, infirm, and mortal condition, and hath carried himself so unthankfully to God, that he should take care of him above his whole creation: Ps. 113:6, 7, 'The Lord our God dwelleth on high,

who humbleth himself to behold the things in heaven and earth.' That the great God of such glorious majesty should take notice of worms, and behold us not only by visiting, over-seeing, and governing the affairs of this lower world, but should condescend to this low estate of ours in taking our flesh, whose excellency and majesty is so great that he might despise the angels, of whom he hath no need; but to stoop so low towards men is matter of wonder, praise, and adoration.

(2.) We should be humble in our conversing with him, considering what he is and we are: Job 42:5, 6, 'I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' This should keep his children in a holy awe. Oh! how low should we lie before this great God: Gen. 18:27, 'Who am I, that am but dust and ashes, that I should speak unto God?'

(3.) That we must not please ourselves with the performance of ordinary service to him, but we should raise it to an eminent degree of worship and adoration: Ps. 48:1, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God;' and Ps. 145:3, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.' Alas! the best we do is much beneath God. What low thoughts had Solomon of his stately temple 2 Chron. 2:6, 'Who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens is not able to contain him? who am I that I should build him an house?' Thus should we see that our best resolutions and performances come much short of the excellency and greatness of God. All formality and lifeless service proceedeth from hence, that we have not due and raised thoughts of his majesty and being: Mal. 1:14, 'I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.' The greatness of God calleth for other service than usually we give to him—he gets nothing from us that is perfect. But surely we should not put him off with our refuse, but spend the best of our strength, time, parts, and affections, in his service. Superficial dealing in it argueth mean thoughts of God, it is a lessening of his majesty.

(4.) We serve a great master, and so may expect great things from him. He discovereth himself unto his people according to the greatness and majesty of his being: Ps. 126:2, 3, 'The Lord hath done great things for them, yea, the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.' Kings or princes do not give pence or brass farthings, but bestow gifts becoming their magnificence. The heathens were forced to acknowledge it, and the people of God do willingly acknowledge it. So Joel 2:21, 'Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things.' Be the mercies never so rare, the way never so difficult, God is able to accomplish them.

(5.) This should banish the fear of man, as to any danger can come from them to us, or to any attempts against God: Mat. 10:28, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell fire.' They may threaten great things to us, but God threateneth greater. See Exod. 18:11, 'Now I know that God is greater than all gods for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly God was above them.' There is a greater being we have to depend upon.

(6.) Because God is of such majesty and greatness, we should quarrel at none of his dealings, for he is too high to be questioned by the creature, and his counsels are carried on in such a way as we cannot judge of them, no more than a worm can judge of the affairs of a man; he is great in counsel, and wonderful in working.

(7.) This should keep his children in an holy awe: Heb. 12:28, 29, 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.' When we come in the holy assemblies: Gen. 28:17, 'How dreadful is this place!' In our general course we must not slight his frowns nor despise his favours, all comes from a great God; nor behave ourselves irreverently in his presence, but still walk as those that have to do with a great and glorious God.

2. That in this present state we are not able to bear any extraordinary manifestation of his greatness and majesty.

[1.] Because of his glory, which would consume and swallow us up. This was a voice 'from the excellent glory,' 2 Pet. 1:17. Now if this excellent glory by the vail of the firmament were not obscured, man were not able to bear it: Job 37:20, 'If man speak, he shall be swallowed up:' 1 Tim. 6:16, 'He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see,' till we are received to heaven. Thus it is, his glory would kill us, his voice confound us. There is a mighty disproportion between mortal creatures and the infinite majesty of God; the brightness of his glory soon burdeneth and over-burdeneth the infirmity of the best creatures.

[2.] Because of our weakness.

(1.) Natural. We faint when we meet with anything extraordinary, and therefore no wonder if we are astonished with the near approach of the excellent majesty of God, and made unfit for any action of body or mind. If we cannot look on the sun, how can we see God? our felicity in heaven would be our misery on earth. This wine is too strong for old bottles.

(2.) Sinful infirmity, consciousness of guilt is in it also, and our disconformity to God through sin: Isa. 6:5, 6, 'Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.' So Peter: Luke 5:8, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' This raiseth a fear in us upon every eminent approach or discovery of God's glory. Before the fall, God and Adam were friends; he would have endured God to speak to him; yet after the fall, the appearance of God became terrible. When he heareth his voice, he is afraid, and hideth himself; and something of this fear sticketh to the best of his people, and when God is eminently near it is discovered; for persons that have sin in them, to be near to so

holy and glorious a majesty, that is a part of the reason of this fear and trouble. Well, then, both these causes go together, the representation of the majesty of God, and the sense of our own frailty and weakness.

Use. Is to press us to two things:—

1. To press us to an holy awe and reverence when we come near to God.
2. To take heed that our fear of God do not degenerate into a slavish fear.

First, To press us to an holy awe and reverence of God, when we draw nigh unto him. Surely we should in all our worship have such thoughts of God as may leave a stamp of humility and some impressions of the majesty and excellency of God upon us; and we should fall upon our faces, though not in a way of consternation, yet in a way of adoration. And because usually we bewray much slightness and irreverence in our converse with God and approaches to him, I shall press it a little.

1. I will show how the scriptures in the general do call for this holy awe of the majesty of God in all our worship: Ps. 111:9, 'Holy and reverend is his name,' and therefore never to be used by us but in an awful and serious manner: Ps. 96:4, 'The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.' Whether we pray, or whether we praise God, still the heart must be deeply possessed with a sense of his excellency; and we must admire him above all created or imaginable greatness whatsoever, and so mingle reverence with our most delightful addresses to him. Again, Ps. 89:17, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.' Holy angels and sanctified men, who of all creatures have nearest access to God, should most adore and reverence him, because they are best acquainted with him, and have the clearest sight of him that mortal

creatures are capable of. The angels are an assembly of holy ones, that always behold his face, therefore always lauding and glorifying God. So God is said to be terrible in his holy place, Ps. 68:35, whether heaven or the church. Indeed, the awful carriage of his people in his worship should be one means to convince of the excellency and majesty of God, 1 Cor. 14:25. The apostle showeth there that an unbeliever, coming into the Christian assemblies when they are managed with gravity and awe, is 'convinced and judged, and will fall down on his face and worship God, and say, God is in you of a truth;' that is, seeing their humility, brokenness of heart, hearing their praises and admirations of God, and seeing their orderliness and composedness of spirit; whereas rudeness, slightness, and irreverence doth pollute and stain the glory of God in their minds.

2. Other addresses will not become faith and love.

[1.] Faith, for whosoever cometh to God must fix this principle in his mind, 'that God is,' Heb. 11:6. We do not worship God aright if we do not worship him as believers; and if we worship him as believers, we will worship him with reverence and godly fear. Faith giveth us not only a thought of God, but some kind of sight of God, and sight will leave an impression upon the heart of reverence and seriousness. Surely a sight or believing thought of God should be able to do anything upon the soul. It is the great work of faith 'to see him that is invisible,' Heb. 11:27. We should in our whole conversation live as in his sight, and live as those that remember God standeth by and seeth all that we are about: but especially in our worship—we then set ourselves as before the Lord. Pray as to our Father that seeth what we do: Mat. 6:6, 'Pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret will reward thee openly.' Hear as before the Lord: Acts 10:33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God;' then the soul should turn the back upon all other things, that the mind may be taken up with nothing but God.

[2.] No other worship will become love. Worship is an act of love and delight. Now love is seen in admiring the excellencies of that glorious being whom we love, and ascribing all to him, as being deeply affected with his goodness: Rev. 4:10, 'The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' They fell down, not out of astonishment, but reverence, and cast their crowns before the throne. Whatever honour they have, they had it from God, and are content to lay it at his feet, from whom they have life, and being, and all things. They have such an high esteem of God that before him they cannot be too vile. They are unworthy to wear any crown in God's presence, and are content that their honour be a footstool to advance and extol his glory. Certainly those that are heartily affected to God will go about his worship, as with cheerfulness, so with humility and reverence.

Secondly, To take heed that our humility and reverence do not degenerate into servile fear and discouragement. It is apt to do so even in the best of God's people. We can hardly keep the middle between the extremes; our faith is apt to degenerate into presumption, and our humility into despondency of spirit, and our fear into discouragement and distrust. So hard a matter is it to 'serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling,' Ps. 2:11, or to walk in the fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, to avoid this consternation, do two things:—

1. Consider how amiable God hath represented himself in Jesus Christ, and how near he is come to us; and within the reach of our commerce there is 'a new and living way through the veil of his flesh,' Heb. 10:20. So that, though our God be a consuming fire, yet there is a screen between us and this fire; though if he should draw away the veil, a glimpse of his glory would kill us, yet this glory being veiled, we may have 'access with confidence,' Eph. 3:12. There

are naturally in our hearts fears, estrangedness, and backwardness from God. But now God is incarnate, and hath been manifested in our flesh, we may have more familiar thoughts of him, and they are made more sweet and acceptable to us.

2. Get your own peace with God made and confirmed to you more and more: Rom. 5:1, 2, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' So Eph. 2:18, he 'preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh, for through him we both have an access by one Spirit to the Father.' See the breach made up between you and God, and be very tender of putting it to hazards any more. God, that is a consuming fire to guilty souls, is a Sun of righteousness to the upright. When we are accepted in the Beloved, those thoughts of God which guilt will make amazing and terrible, will be through peace comfortable and refreshing.

II. Their comfortable and gracious recovery by Christ, ver. 7, 'And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, be not afraid.' He relieveth and helpeth them by three things:—(1.) His approach; (2.) His touch; (3.) His word.

1. His approach. He came to them, you must understand, having laid aside his glory which he had in the transfiguration, that he might more familiarly converse with them, and without prejudice. Because of their weakness and infirmity he layeth aside his majesty, and reassumeth the habit of his humiliation; as Moses did put a veil upon his face, that the people might endure his sight and presence. God's appearing at first may be terrible; but the issue is sweet and comfortable: a still, calm voice followed the earthquake, wind, and fire, 1 Kings 19. And God doth good to his people after he hath humbled them and proved them, Deut. 8:16. Here, when the apostles lay like dead men, Christ came and put new life and strength into them. He came out of love and pity to them, that nothing more grievous might happen to them, either loss of life or senses. He would not let them perish in these amazements.

2. His touch. He touched them. Christ's touch is powerful, and a means of application. Usually thus Christ conveyed and applied his power: Mat. 8:3, He touched the leper and cleansed him. Mat. 8:15, He touched Peter's wife's mother and cured her of a fever. So Mat. 9:19, He touched the two blind men and they received their sight; and in many other places. So this touching of the apostles was to apply his power, and to recover them out of their trance.

3. His speech: 'And said, Arise, and be not afraid.' The glorious voice of the Father affrights them, and the gracious voice of the Son reviveth and refresheth them. He comforts those whom the terrors of the Almighty had cast down. He doth not chide them for their fear or little faith, as he doth at other times; he considered the greatness of the cause, their natural infirmity, the governing of which was not in their power, and the terribleness and suddenness left no time for deliberation; therefore he doth not chide them, but encourageth them. The like was done in other cases, as to Ezekiel in his trance: Ezek. 2:1, 'Son of man, arise, stand on thy feet, and I will speak to thee.' So too the apostle John: Rev. 1:17, 18, 'When I saw him, I lay at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last.' So here, be not afraid. We must reverence Christ, but not be scared at him. Such a fear as may stand with our duty is required, but not that which disableth us for it, or discourageth us in it; that is no more pleasing to God than security.

[1.] Observe Christ's tender care over his disciples in their faintings and discouragements.

(1.) That he comforteth and reviveth his disciples. Christ alone can help us, and confirm us against our fears; the disciples did not stir, but lay prostrate upon their faces, till he came and touched them, and said, 'Arise, be not afraid.' In all the troubles and perplexities of his people, he will be owned as the causer and curer of them: Hosea 6:1, 'Come, let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' So Job 5:18, 'He

maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth and his hands make whole.' As all our troubles and perplexities are from his hands, so must the healing be. If he make the wound, all the world cannot find a plaster to heal it; and no wound given by himself is above his own cure; and he woundeth not as an enemy, but as a chirurgeon, not with a sword, but a lancet. All other means are blasted till we come to him.

(2.) That he is exceeding ready, and hath great pity and tenderness towards them. As appeareth by laying aside his glory, and coming to the disciples, when they came not to him; and speedily, that he might not leave them long in the trance, lest worse effects should follow. And is he not like affected to all his people in their perplexities and troubles? Yes, verily. See Isa. 57:16, 'I will not contend for ever, nor will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' He speaketh as if he were afraid lest man's spirit should fail, being long overwhelmed with terror and trouble. So the apostle, 2 Cor. 2:7, 'Comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' The Lord Christ is full of bowels and compassions, pitieth his people in their infirmities, fears, and troubles.

[2.] The manner and way which he taketh is considerable also—by touch and speech. The touch noteth the application of his power; and in his speech he saith, 'Arise, be not afraid.' Christ doth not love to confound, but comfort, his servants, and therefore taketh this double course, by secret power enlivening and strengthening their hearts: Ps. 138:3, 'I cried unto the Lord, and thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul;' that is, God did secretly support him and strengthen him under the trouble. He doth it also by a word; therefore we read of God's speaking peace to his people: Ps. 85:8, 'I will hear what God will say, for he will speak peace to his people and his saints.' Besides an inward strengthening, there is a necessity of a word from Christ's own mouth ere we can cast off our discouragements. Besides his touching or his laying his right hand upon us, there is need of his word to us.

Use. It teacheth us what to do when we have serious thoughts of appearing before God. For the case in hand is about those that were affrighted and disquieted with divine visions, which was occasioned by natural frailty, and partly by a sense of sin. Now all of us must shortly come into God's presence, but who can dwell with devouring burnings? If your thoughts be serious, you will find that it is no slight thing to appear before God, who is our creator and our judge, and who is an holy and glorious God, to whom we have carried it very unthankfully and undutifully. Now who can relieve you in these perplexed thoughts but the Lord Jesus Christ? Get a word from him that your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged, Isa. 6:7; and wait on him till he setteth your souls in the peace and hope of the gospel, Isa. 57:14; and then you are relieved in your agonies of conscience; stand up, be not afraid: the gospel is a sovereign plaster, but his hand must make it stick.

III. The event and issue of all, ver. 8, 'And when they had lift up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.' This intimateth two things:—

1. That this testimony from heaven did only concern Jesus Christ, for Moses and Elias vanish out of sight, and Jesus is left alone, as the person in whom God is well pleased, and all the church must hear him. When they are withdrawn, Christ remaineth as Lord and head of the church, and so it showeth the ceasing of Moses's law, and the continuance and authority of the law of Christ. The apostle telleth us, 'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.' They only prophesied, prefigured Christ to come, but now, upon the exhibition, the legal ordinances vanished.

2. That God manifesteth himself, for time, measure, and degree, as he himself seeth fit for our good; for the vision is removed when the intent of it is obtained. Here the spiritual banquet doth not always last; heaven is a perpetual feast, but we must not look upon earth to be feasted always with spiritual suavities. There is no permanency, but perpetual vicissitudes, in our enjoyments within time; we have

clear and cloudy days in the world, a feast, a desertion: Cant. 5:1, 2, 'I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' And ver. 6, 'I opened to my beloved; but my beloved hath withdrawn himself and was gone.' After the greatest manifestations of Christ's love, there may be a withdrawing; we cannot bear perpetual comforts, and God reserveth them for a better time, when we are more prepared for them. There must be day and night in this world, and winter and summer; but in heaven it is all day, there is a perpetual sunshine, never clouded nor overcast.

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