

that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

In which words are contained the following particulars.

1. An exhortation to these saints, that those truths which they had heard from the beginning might abide in them. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.*

2. He expresseth the utility of this, with the benefit they would receive and derive from the same. *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

3. The blessedness of this continuation shall be expressed. If these heads of discourse are properly filled up, we shall have the whole sum-total of each, and every particle and particular of the words before us. May the Lord lead me comfortably through the same, to the real profit of his people, and to the glory of his most holy Name, to the praise of his glory. Amen. So be it, O Lord.

I am to take up these words in my text, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning*; and to enter on the same, and consider them to be as already expressed, viz.

1. An exhortation to these saints, that those truths which they had heard from the beginning might abide in them. It may not be amiss to take up, and enlarge on all contained in this, as it may be the most certain method to unfold the same. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.*

The word *beginning* is used by the apostle in this Epistle in two senses. In the first place he uses it, as it respects *eternity*. In this view of it, he uses it, when he begins his Epistle and speaks of the eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ. "That which was from the beginning."—Here it is expressive of eternity: it is spoken of Christ, and is equal to what he says of himself. "These things saith the Amen the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Rev. iii. 14. The apostle most certainly uses the word *beginning*, in the same sense, when he writes to those whom he entitles *fathers*: to whom he says, "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." Which I conceive respects the eternity of the Person of Christ. Which he expresseth again, saying, "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." The apostle most certainly uses this same word in another sense here, and also in other parts of this Epistle, both before, and after this: and it concerns the commencement of the gospel, as preached by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. I conceive the word *beginning* here hath its peculiar and proper respect to this: they had from the beginning, that is from the commencement of our Lord's personal ministry, heard those eternal invaluable truths, which contained every thing, which could be of use and benefit to them. They might receive increasing light into them, and also have increasing communion with Christ in the spiritual knowledge and apprehension of them; to abide, therefore, in the true knowledge of the same was all which they needed. This they most truly and absolutely needed. He therefore here exhorts them to this—that those truths of the everlasting gospel, which they had heard from the beginning, might abide in them. He had observed before, that such an one as denies the

divine Personality, and Mediatorial office of the only begotten Son of God, denies not only the Father's testimony of Him, as the true and promised Messiah; but also by consequence denies the Father's relation to Him, as the Son, and so takes away the distinguishing characters of both, and the Personal and peculiar glory of both, which belongs to them respectively in the œconomy of salvation. But such as most cordially own, believe, and confess the Son of God to be a divine Person, and the only Saviour, believe and own that he is the eternal Son of the Father, and was sent by Him; and thus, and hereby he pays a suitable honour both to the Father and the Son. He therefore proceeds to exhort the saints in that age, and their successors in all succeeding ages, to stand fast in the faith of the Gospel, according and agreeable to that spiritual unction which they had already received. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning*; especially what concerned the Personality of the Father and the Son, and their concern in the œconomy of grace: the one being most evidently connected with the other: nor could the one be maintained but as founded on the other: they being most naturally and necessarily connected together with each other; so as that to drop the one, was to give up the other also. He therefore delivers to them this exhortation. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning*: concerning the Person, incarnation, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of you have received these important truths from the lips of Christ himself: others, some of you, from us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. And as I have endeavoured to set before you, in this Epistle I now write unto you, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Person, and office of Christ, and the Person, gift, and office of the Holy Ghost, with his indwelling in your souls, and his enlightenings and influences on your minds, I would have you, as you have heard these truths, from the very beginning of the gospel's being preached unto you, *abide in these truths*, and by no means depart from them. That by the term *from the beginning*, here respects the preaching of the everlasting gospel unto them, seems to me to be confirmed, by what the apostle says before in the 7th verse, where he says, "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning:" and in the words before us, he calls upon them, to let that abide in them, *which they had heard from the beginning*. So that I think this is sufficiently cleared, that the word *beginning* as used here, and some other parts of this Epistle refers to the everlasting gospel, and the preaching the same; as in the 1st chapter, and also in verses 13 and 14, of this, it respects the eternity of the Person of Christ. To let that therefore abide in them, which they had heard from the beginning, implies they should not give it up for any new doctrine, which might be proposed by the antichrist of that day. It is an expression made use of by Christ. As our apostle wrote as directed by the Spirit of Christ, so Christ himself was so present with him, and so precious unto him, that he not only writes in the spirit of his Master, but he frequently does in the very words of his Lord. Our Lord had said in his last sermon which he delivered after the institution and administration of his holy Supper, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the

vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 3—5. So that here we have the word *abide* made use of by our Lord, in the same sense, and for the same purpose with our Lord's design in the use of it. He would in an especial manner have them abide in the doctrine which so especially concerned the Personality of the Father and the Son, and their concern in salvation. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.* There is a blessedness in hearing the Truth. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." But they must first hear it : for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is good to hear. It is better to know. It is an additional blessing to receive it, the reality of all this is proved by our retaining the same. We only profit so as to continue in the Truth, as it abides in us, and we abide in it. And we want no new truths : these saints had received the whole system of Truth : they are, therefore, exhorted to let it abide in them. It would be a real and lasting blessing to them : as they would thereby have it on all occasions, influencing their minds and hearts. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.* When we have been led to know, receive, and understand *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, there remains nothing but for us, to let it abide in our minds just as we have received it. Not to be looking out for more truth, but to cleave to and live over what we know and have embraced. I know many are so set upon the search for what they style the Truth, that they are not contented with that which they know, but they are always on the search after what they know not : which hath often led me to say, I do not want to know any more of Christ, than I do already : by which I mean, I do not need to know Christ more truly ; I only need to know him more spiritually, personally, and comprehensively, so as to have more free and immediate access unto Him ; and so as to have Him more advanced in my mind, and the knowledge of Him more effectual and influential on my heart. The true knowledge of Christ draws the whole mind after Him. It fixes the whole soul upon Him. It engages the whole heart with Him. It centres us wholly in Him. This is the very essence and glory of it, Christ is in us, and Christ is to us All in All. This is a very great point in experience. It is absolutely necessary for our establishment and spiritual happiness. Our real saintship is proved hereby. The apostle exhorts to this, when he says to the saints at *Colosse*, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him : Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." chap. ii. 6, 7. It is of the same equal importance with this here, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.* What we have heard concerning Christ, of the Father's everlasting love to us in Christ, of the salvation of Christ, of the glory, perfection, and excellency of the same, and of the way in which it is received into our minds, and how we enjoy the same in our hearts, this should be so retained and remembered by us, as we should never forget it, nor depart therefrom. No ; not on any consideration whatsoever : let the pretence be ever so plausible. We can know no truths which constitute our saintship but these : nor any more essential to our spiritual being and well-being beyond these. We cannot go off them but with

loss and injury to our own minds. We may know them more comprehensively, and enjoy them to a greater extent and enlargement of mind, but if we have been taught them from the word, and by the Lord the Spirit, we can never know them more truly and effectually. Therefore the words before us, are of utility unto us, as they were to the saints to whom they were addressed. As it is necessary the truth of Christ's gospel, and He the substance of the same should abide in us; so it is also absolutely necessary we should abide in Him, and his Truth; and to this the exhortation itself tends. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.* They needed no more. It would be well to have a right knowledge of this. Many there are who do not stand so much in need of hearing Christ preached, as they do of having Christ formed in them; without which they cannot be established. When we have heard Christ preached, and have actually received Him, we then need such preaching as that we may be established in Him. The first great act of the Spirit towards us, is to reveal Christ in us, and unto us: which when he hath done, it is his next great work so to fix our minds on Christ as that we become established in Him, so as not to depart from Him: and this is the very completion of his work within us. Our living Christ, and having communion with Him, and with the Father in Him, is the fruit and effect of this; not the cause of our centering in Christ, it is the fruit and effect thereof. To have heard of Christ from the beginning and the very commencement of the Gospel, be it either from Christ, or from the apostle's ministry, must have been a special blessing. So as it may respect any of us, it most assuredly is to be looked on, as a most special favour, if we were blessed with hearing Christ, most clearly preached, and were blessed with a true spiritual, scriptural apprehension of what we heard, when we were first led to hear preaching. I do esteem it, next to the true knowledge of Christ, the greatest blessing ever bestowed by the Lord on me, that I should be brought under the ministry of *Mr. Romaine*: who so preached Christ, that the Lord the Spirit working with it, the mind was immediately opened to the object, and the heart quickened to believe on Christ to life everlasting. By this very means, the life which follows upon it, is the study and contemplation of the Person and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father's love in Him: and this is so congenial to the enlightened mind, that light cannot suit the eye, more than this subject does the regenerate mind. To have Christ dwelling in us, is the essence of christianity. And he cannot dwell in us, but our minds must be engaged in dwelling on Him. It is very good for us to remember, how we first received Christ—what views we then received into our minds concerning Him; and—what that was in Christ which in a more particular manner affected us. I can say for myself, I was most especially overcome and affected with the bounty and generosity of the Lord Jesus Christ—His bearing down all before Him, with his surprizing, surpassing, and transcendent grace; it was this overcame me; and still has, and will for evermore have its weight, influence, and attraction on me.

It is high time to be proceeding with our subject, I will therefore get to our next head and particular of this discourse, as I conceive I have filled up the present, as well, and so for as my slender abilities will admit.

2. The apostle expresses the utility of what he hath been exhorting

the saints unto, with the benefit they would receive, and derive from the same, saying, *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

There is a real blessedness which is connected with, and follows on a right clear apprehension of Truth, and on being enabled to retain it in the mind. It is so in an especial manner, as it respects fundamental Truth: such as is hinted at in our text: there can be no guard against error of sorts, like having the Truth abiding in us. Hence the apostle says, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide, or remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.* Nothing could be of greater moment, or be of greater utility unto them, than giving themselves up to the practice of that to which they had been exhorted. As their saintship was evidenced by their having heard and received the truth; so it would be most completely evidenced by the abidance of Truth in them, and their constant and uniform abiding in it. They would receive the following benefits from the same—It would render the Lord Jesus Christ increasingly dear and precious to their minds—They would be enabled hereby to maintain their confidence in Him—they would not be easily moved from the hope of the gospel—They would be very free in their accesses unto Him: and have the more free and open communion with Him, and the Father in Him. Hereby they would most blessedly and comfortably be preserved from the antichrists of that time, in the which they lived; and especially from that antichristian doctrine which was levelled at the doctrine which concerned the Sonship and Person of Christ, as the only begotten of the Father. The apostle says to these saints he here writes unto, *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.* It most clearly follows from hence, that they had heard from the beginning, the doctrine of the Trinity, and had been principled in the knowledge of the Personality of the Son, and of the Father, or it could not have been said unto them, *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.* The continuance in the Son, and in the Father, must mean I conceive, a continuance in the doctrine of the true and real Personalities of the Father and the Son, which is confirmed by the former verse; in which the apostle said, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.” If, says he, this doctrine which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, if what ye have heard concerning this mystery which respects God himself, and expresses the distinct, proper, and personal *subsistences* in the incomprehensible Godhead, and which hath been most clearly made known and manifested by the incarnation of the Essential Word, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, so that greater evidence cannot be given of the distinction of Persons, than has been realized hereby: then if you, who have heard concerning all this from the beginning, be stedfast, and what you have heard concerning this, remain and abide in you, the blessed consequence will of necessity be, ye will abide in the belief, and also in the confession, and profession of the same. I would here observe, it absolutely follows from the apostle’s words, that he had, and the rest of the apostles also, preached this gospel

concerning the distinctions in the divine Essence unto them: without it he could not have preached the gospel. We need only read the gospel which he wrote, and we shall have the most abundant evidence of this. He reciting again and again of what our most adorable Lord is; concerning his being personally distinct from the Father, whilst he insists on his coequality with him, saying, *I and my Father are one*: not in Person, but in Essence. Our Lord says, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*. John xiv. 11. The Union of the Trinity in Godhead is an Essential one. There cannot be a greater unity. Nothing can be more *one*, than the *Father, Son, and Spirit are one*. It is an unity that consists with *order and distinction*. The Unity of the Trinity doth not take away the distinction of the Persons, nor confound their order. They are *one*, yet *Three*. They keep their distinct Personalities, and their distinct Personal operations, and their different manner and order of working. It is an everlasting and an inseparable union. For in the Divine Nature or Essence there can be no change. It is from the unity of the Persons in the same Essence, ariseth their Essential Inbeing in each other. All the persons having the same Essence, and being in one and the same Essence, it follows that, in respect of the Essence, one Person is in another. Our Lord says, *The Father is in me, and I in him*. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* — *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*. See John x. 38. chap. xiv. 10, 11.

Now these transcendently glorious truths are scattered up and down in our apostle's writings. They had been delivered by Him expressly in his ministry and gospel; so that he might well refer them to what they had heard from the beginning. He had himself been a preacher, without all doubt to many of them. He had delivered nothing for Truth, but what was founded on, and quite agreeable to the gospel which went under his name; in the which it is expressly said, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand: and the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth*. John iii. 35: v. 20. The Father loveth the Son, as his Son; not merely as Mediator, but as the Son of his Nature, the Son of himself. He is called *the Son of his love*. *His beloved Son*. *His dear Son*. He is said to be *in the bosom of the Father*. See Matt. iii. 17. Col. i. 13. John i. 18. Which last is expressive of intimacy, and oneness, familiarity, and delight. *As the Father loveth the Son, so the Son loveth the Father, and the Holy Ghost loveth them both*. So that we must give up the Bible as containing a true and faithful record for God, when we give up the doctrine of the Father and the Son. The apostle might therefore well say, *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father*. It is a matter of vast importance for Truth to remain in the mind: it is by that mean, we grow into a further knowledge of it, and learn how to value it, and also to apprehend what communion we are to expect from it. In our present day, there are but few who are calculated to hear the gospel, which in its own nature is most profoundly deep: it being the wisdom of God in a mystery. It must therefore of necessity require the exercise of the spiritual judgment to take into the same, those mysteries which are revealed therein, and preached therefrom. Most of the bearers are unacquainted with these; therefore they do not prize them: and many of those who do

profess to know them, have never found the life of their souls contained in them; so that the bare acknowledgment of the same, is all which is to be found in the generality of persons under a profession of the Truth in our present day. We therefore for the general find, very few can be addressed as lovers of Truth. They at the very best are such as have very partial views of the truths contained in the gospel of the blessed God, and it is more a matter floating in their heads, than a true and spiritual knowledge of the same: we could not with any propriety address these, as the apostle doth real saints, saying to them, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father;* because we cannot but doubt of their ever having their understandings opened to receive the Truth: and it cannot be, Truth should remain in the mind into the which it was never received. I will come to my next and last particular, which is this, to consider

3. The blessedness of this continuation of Truth in the mind. It most certainly must be a very blessed evidence of our perseverance in the ways of the Lord.

The continuance of believers in the pure faith of the gospel, proves they are truly united to Christ, and unto the Father in Him, the fruit of which union is everlasting life. Your abiding in the doctrine, which was preached unto you, from the very beginning or commencement of the same; and your perseverance therein to the present, and your life and conversation, proving you have received the grace of God in truth, these are some of the blessings which result therefrom. You as members of Christ, have Him living in you. He dwells and remains in you, by his word of grace and truth, which you have received into your hearts, by the Unction of the Holy One, which teacheth all things; and you have hereby communion with Christ, and the Father in Him, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; so that you have in your own souls, a most blessed evidence of the distinction of Persons, that the Son is not the Father, neither the Father the Son: and if this truth remain in you, then your continuance in the knowledge, belief, and maintenance of the same, will prove that you have the true doctrine of the Person of the Son, and of the Father: which will be of singular advantage unto you: and it will redound to the praise of God. You cannot prosper in your own souls but by this doctrine; neither can you worship God aright but in the scriptural, and spiritually realizing the same, as set before you in the everlasting Gospel. The greatness of the Father's love to you, is recognized in his so loving as to give his only begotten Son: therefore it is absolutely necessary to continue in the belief of this truth, concerning Christ's being *the Son*; otherwise, the great love of God, in so loving as to give his only begotten Son, on which so great an emphasis is laid, must be entirely lost upon you. It is no small blessing for you to continue in this doctrine—that Christ is the Son: and in this which is a branch of the same—that the Father is the Father. You will thereby know, it is not required of you to comprehend the doctrine, nor to ask any question, how the Son is the Son, and the Father, the Father: No; I, for my own part, cannot conceive the angels in heaven, who may be styled saints of the Divine presence, know how it is so. They cannot know it is so, but by the revelation God is pleased to make of the same to

their minds. In the revelation of the same they must heartily acquiesce. In their worshipping the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, they have distinct communion with them, as the one living, true, blessed, and everlasting God; and have all the evidence of the Personalities in the One Essence, they can possibly desire. And our minds should never enquire into this mystery: we should submit unto it; yielding obedience unto it, because the Lord hath revealed it. This is done by our receiving the same into our minds: and believing it with our whole hearts. The Lord be praised for it; I never found any difficulty in believing and resting in the most hearty acknowledgment of this fundamental article of faith, and on which the whole Bible is founded: because I never understood I was called to understand it, any more than I am called upon to understand Godhead. Therefore conceiving I had nothing to believe concerning this mystery but what the Lord himself had been pleased most graciously to reveal of Himself, I have ever been delivered from all sort, and kind of speculation about the mystery of it: nor have I ever found to this present moment a desire to know the same. I ascribe this, under God, to my mother, who when I was but 5, or 6 years of age, taught me, I must never think my own thoughts in reading the Bible; but look on it as the Book of God, and treat it with the utmost reverence; and go to Him for light and instruction into what is revealed and set forth in it.

As it respects what the apostle here speaks, concerning abiding in the doctrine of the Son, and of the Father, as a great part of that blessedness which results therefrom, this is most undoubtedly the case: because without this, we can never have, neither can we maintain, any clear consistent views of gospel salvation. Here I conceive many who profess themselves to be the Lord's, want light, and correction. The covenant of grace originates from a plan conceived in the mind of the Eternal Three: the transactions between the Three in the One Incomprehensible Jehovah, are the covenant itself: the parts acted by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are demonstrative of their existence in the self-existing Essence: and here it is we should rest, and go no further. This which hath been thus briefly stated, I conceive the Lord's people want light into, so as they having more clear views of the acts of the Holy Trinity towards them, and their covenant offices, in and by which they manifest themselves unto them, would see how they are interested in the divine Persons, and how the divine Persons are interested in them; and by this means would know how to worship the divine Persons accordingly. It must be acknowledged, they might receive great light into this part of the subject, by attending to the prayers which are upon record in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament; as by them we should see the accesses of the spiritual mind towards the divine Persons in the Essence. It would lead in prayer, in every ordinance, in preaching, and contemplation to make clear and right distinctions, so as to keep up, and maintain proper acknowledgments of their offices and personal acts in grace and salvation. This would be attended with this advantage, we should hereby give to each their proper praise; we should all be hereby led to make access to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as they stand related to us, and, by presenting ourselves before them, according to their relation unto us; our faith would be led out into particular acts of faith and worship towards them, which would keep up, and also maintain in our minds their personal distinction. Our apostle, in his second Epistle;

which is directed by him to an honourable person, whom he addresses by the title of the elect lady and her children, saith at the 9th verse, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Which is for the substance of it the same with our text: to which he adds, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." v. 10, 11. Of such importance was this doctrine, and the acknowledgment of the same in the view and apprehension of *John*. He looked on him who denied and corrupted it, to be an antichrist. May the Lord the Holy Ghost keep us in the Truth. Let us be contented with expressing ourselves on the momentous articles of our most holy faith, in scriptural terms. Let us not aim to be wise above what is written; nor give ourselves liberty of speculating on such deep and unsearchable mysteries. Let us, as we know the Father in his love, the Son in his salvation, and the Holy Ghost in his revelation of the same, be thankful. Let us reflect on what our Lord said to his divine Father,—"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 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." Matt. xi. 25—27. *Mr. Joseph Hussey*, tells us, there was a time in this land, when whole churches of the saints confessed that the doctrine of the Trinity was the life of their souls, and they were kept alive in their worship by it. I would now leave to your study and for your spiritual consideration what hath been delivered. May the Lord the Spirit make these truths an ordinance unto you. May you be led to look on what is revealed in the sacred page, and by our apostle, to be of the greatest importance, both as it respects the glory of the Godhead, and the Persons in it: and also of infinite concern to our immortal welfare. Attend to the Scriptures of Truth, and avoid cavilling at them. Rest in the full belief of what is revealed. Let the same abide in you, and with you, so shall ye continue in the Son, and in the Father: in communion with whom, ye shall enjoy everlasting life. The Lord bless his word unto you. Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.—
I JOHN ii. 25.

WE are, as I conceive, arrived at the close of our present subject, which the apostle began at verse the 18th concerning antichrist, and his fore-runners. He sets before these saints to whom he wrote, how they were

preserved from such. They had an Unction from the Holy One. They were led into all Truth. He expresseth his full satisfaction in them: and professeth he did not write unto them, as if they were unacquainted with Truth. No; it was because they were so well acquainted with it. They knew no lie could have any connection with it. He then asks a question, to which himself returns an answer—He is a liar, be he who he may, who denies Jesus of Nazareth to be the true Christ of God. He is anti-christ, whoever he be, who denies God to be the Father of Christ, by denying Christ to be his Son: such an one denies the Son directly, and by consequence denies the Father, who testified of Christ by a voice from heaven, and by all the miracles which he had wrought. He exhorts these saints to abide in the doctrine which they had heard from the beginning, and he expresses the blessed effects which would follow therefrom. They would thereby continue in the doctrine of the Son, and of the Father, which would be full proof of their being truly members of Christ and the beloved of God. Then by way of encouragement he says, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* And as sure as you continue in the faith of the gospel, you may be fully persuaded this eternal life is actually bestowed on you, and belongs to you, and shall be enjoyed by you, in uninterrupted communion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the house eternal in the heavens, for ever and ever. What follows in the remainder of this chapter, contains his reason why he wrote as he had done. He exhorts them to abide in Christ, by which we are to understand the doctrine of Christ; for to abide in the one, is to abide in the other. And closes with saying, that such as own and acknowledge Christ to be righteous, know that such as walk in the path of righteousness, are born again. They are regenerated and made new creatures in Christ, and are born of Him. Thus you have the outline from our text, to the end of this second chapter. The words of my text are altogether animating and divine. Life, eternal life, spiritual life, everlasting life, and this promised unto us, bestowed upon us, enjoyed by us, and continued unto us, for ever; surely nothing, *nothing* can be beyond this! The text seems to have the following particulars in it, which are worthy of discussion. Here is a promise. The Promiser. The person to whom the promise is made: with what is contained in the promise. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* In explaining my text, I will set it before you, in the following particulars.

1. By shewing what we are to understand, as included in the term *promise*, as it concerns the scriptures, and God's promises in them. *And this is the promise.*

2. Who the *He* here is, who is spoken of as the Promiser. *He hath promised.*

3. To whom the promise in the text is made. It is to *us*. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us.*

4. What is contained in the Promise. It is, *eternal life*. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* The word *even* is put in by way of explanation; yet it seems here to be unnecessary, as the passage is quite full and complete without it. *This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.* Of these heads and particulars in their order. I am

1. To shew and express, what we are to understand, as included

and implied in the term *promise*, as it concerns the scriptures, and God's promises in them. *And this is the promise.*

God's promise, or promises must imply and contain the good pleasure of his will, to bestow such and such fruits of his grace on such and such, out of his own mere bounty, as the sole and entire prerogative of his royal, divine, and exceeding free grace: out of which he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. The promise is the outward testification of the heart of God, who before all time loved his people: and he foreappointed all things for them, and concerning them. He made an allsufficient provision for their complete salvation. In the Person and work of Christ he sets all this before them. And as he knows all they are, with all their necessities, wounds, wants, miseries, and temptations, so the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath made an ample supply for all this in the everlasting covenant, and this in the fulness of his Son: in whom it hath pleased Him, that all fulness should dwell; and that of his fulness we should receive grace in time, and glory in eternity. To the intent we might have a true, clear, and spiritual knowledge of the same, it hath pleased the Lord, to set it before us, in the exceeding great and precious promises, scattered up and down in the scriptures, as so many stars in that glorious firmament of grace; by the which we may know the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, and take sanctuary in Him accordingly; and by this very mean have real communion with Him in his grace and mercy, at all times, as our cases call for, and require—to sum up this, I apprehend the term *promise*, as applied to God, and as made use of in the holy scriptures of truth, includes and contains the whole good pleasure of his will, respecting his love to our persons, how he will meet with us, how he will bless us, how he will guide us, how he will order all things concerning us, how he will heal us, pardon us, comfort us, strengthen us, and lead us in the way everlasting. Some of the promises extend themselves so far, as to express what the Lord God, in all his Persons, will be to us, in the display of his perfections on us, in glory everlasting. God's promises, are the fruits and expressions of the good pleasure of his will, in Christ Jesus, towards us before all time, and in what way he will make the same known, and realize the truth contained in them, to us in time, and this in being all contained in this one declaration, *I am the LORD thy God. And this is the promise.* And it concludes all others; it is the grand comprehensive promise, in the which they are all contained, in the which they begin, and in which they all issue, and which the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father in Him, hath made in the gospel, and will most certainly fulfil to us, who shall be found to abide in the doctrine of the Father, and the Son—*everlasting life. This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* Cruden in his Concordance, gives this explanation of the word *Promise*. "It is," says he, "an assurance, that God has given in his word, of bestowing blessings on his people. 2 Peter i. 4. The word in the New Testament is often taken for those promises that God heretofore made to *Abraham*, and the other patriarchs, of sending the Messiah. It is in this sense that the apostle *Paul* commonly uses the word promise, Rom. iv. 13, 14, and Gal. iii. 16." The promises of the new covenant, are called better than those of the old, because they are more clear, extensive, and universal, than those of the old covenant were. The whole

revelation of Christ, in all the grace and gospel part of the Old, and New Testament, may be considered as a Promise: and the completion of it, with the gift of Him; and all the blessings of salvation by Him, when actually bestowed on us, revealed unto us, and realized in us, may be considered as the fulfilment of God's promise unto us. The Holy Ghost is the gift of God to us. He is contained in the promise of God, in Christ Jesus unto us. The apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." God in all his Persons hath been pleased to give himself to his Church by promise. The Divine Father says, *I will be thy God*. The Son hath loved us, and given himself for us. The Holy Ghost hath bestowed himself on the Church. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*. And he so loved that he gave the Spirit. The apostle speaking of Christ, says, *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him*. Acts v. 32. I proceed to consider

2. Who the *He* here is, who is spoken of as the Promiser. *And this is the promise that he hath promised*. To find out this, so as to speak clearly and expressly, we must go back to the verses which precede this.

The apostle declared in verse 22nd—he was an antichrist, let him be otherwise whatsoever he might, who confounded or denied the Personalities of the Father, and the Son. *He is an antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son: to which he addeth, Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also*. Then he says to the saints whom he writes unto, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father: on which come in the words of my text, And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*. The Father being spoken of immediately before, who can be the Person to be conceived of, when it is asserted in our present verse, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*, but the Father? Surely it can be understood of none but Him. This I conceive receives confirmation, as we respect, and reflect on the order and œconomy of the sacred Trinity in their operations and actings in the œconomy of grace. The Father plans all. He proposes all. He provides all. He promises all. He gives all. The Son works from the Father. He performs all. He acts all. He obtains all. The Holy Ghost, in the same order and dispensation of grace, witnesseth to all, and sets his seal to all the Father hath revealed, and declared concerning his love in Christ Jesus to the elect: as also concerning the Person, and Mediatorial work, and office of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that it can be only that which belongs to the Father, what is here asserted. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*. It is a peculiar glory which is the very perfection of the sacred writers, and their writings, to keep up in all their discourses, the true and proper distinction of the coequal Persons in the Godhead; and also the order in which they act distinctly one from the

other : as also their distinct way and manner in which they operate in us, upon us, and within us. Now I take it for granted, enough has been expressed to shew the Father is the Promiser in our text. *Paul* most expressly says, writing to *Titus*, “ In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began ; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.” chap. i. 2, 3. So in his writing to *Timothy*, he says, “ be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God ; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” 2 Epis. i. 8, 9. So in the 1st chapter of the *Thessalonians*, and 1st Epis., you have these words, *unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.* The same you have in the 1st chapter of the 2nd Epis. v. 1. “ Unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” And in the 1st chapter to the *Ephesians* you have it thus. “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ : According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” I conceive also from all these quotations of scriptures, undeniable evidence cannot but arise, to prove to a demonstration, it is the Majesty of the divine Nature in the Person of the Father, who is spoken of here, as the Promiser, when it is here said, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*—A promise worthy of Himself : equal to His greatness : in which an infinity of grace is involved ; which can never be fully comprehended, explored, or enjoyed. He who loved the persons of the elect, and gave them being and existence in Christ before all time, and formed them in his own will, and vast designs, for his own glory, to shew forth his praise, blessed them with all spiritual blessings in Christ, suited to the being he gave them *in Christ* : and in the foreviews of the fall, he was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. On the footing of this, when the world was created, man formed, and lost all bestowed on him as a creation natural head, then the divine Father, in the Person of the glorious Saviour promulged his royal grace contained in that first promise or declaration of grace in which it is said that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.* Gen. iii. 15 ; which was fulfilled in due time. And so it might, well be said, that God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. The Father gave the promise of Him to the church. This one and first promise was vastly comprehensive. It contained all others. Life and salvation were in it. All grace and glory were therein. He who is of such worth and excellency, as all the saints and angels in glory, will never be able to comprehend, and whose glory is beyond any conception and ideas which can ever be formed in their minds of the same, throughout the ages of eternity, was to be given by the Father, out of his bosom, to become incarnate—To be a covenant for the people—To live in our nature—To be the sacrifice for sin : and to be life and salvation to the whole election of grace. This gift could only be from the Father's bounty. It originated from his everlasting love. The promise of Him was the fruit of covenant engagements. It was the Father's act to promise Him—To give Him—To send Him—To qualify Him—To

accept Him—To honour and glorify Him—To bear his testimony for Him: and in the issue to crown Him both Lord and Christ. He was wrapt up in the Promise, which the Father gave of Him to an elect world, for four thousand years; and in it all other promises were contained. They all centered in Him, who was promised. All the promises of God were in Him. They were in Him, yea; and they were in Him, Amen. *Peter* says to them who have obtained like precious faith in the righteousness and atonement of God the Saviour, that unto those are given exceeding great and precious promises. It is good for us to take into our minds, that it is the Father who promised Christ; this proceeded from his own free grace and everlasting love. It should be remembered by us, how he hath fulfilled this one great, and the foundation of all other promises unto us. We may well be satisfied with this, and say with the apostle, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that 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. viii. 31, 32.

All the elect angels around the throne of the Divine Majesty in heaven, can never conceive, or apprehend the depth of grace expressed to the elect of human race, in the Promise of Christ; nor the love of God in bestowing Christ on them; and yet we to whom Christ was given, are very seldom raised up to magnify the Lord for this stupendous expression of the Father's love to us. In this promise, and from this Promiser, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have a spiritual, supernatural, and heavenly life, whereby we live unto God: this is the way to eternal life; so says the apostle. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. vi. 23. Christ is the fountain of spiritual and eternal life to his people. He hath promised it unto them. He bestows it on them. Christ himself says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” The eternal happiness, glory, and blessedness, which the saints enjoy in Heaven, all flow into their souls from Him. As the blood, which, with the spirits contained in it, is the support of natural life, so the Promise of God, conveys through the Spirit of God, such knowledge and understanding of the Truth, doctrine, and salvation of Jesus, as supports that life which is conveyed to the inner man, and feeds and nourishes it up unto everlasting life. “I am come,” says our Lord, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John x. 10. Now they could not have this life more abundantly, but as it should please Him to convey more light, and let it in upon their minds, so as they should more and more, receive his Truth in the love of it. The Father is the *He*, who is the Promiser. The promise he made, was the gift of Christ. This promise hath been fulfilled. When it was it drew out the hearts of saints then on earth to bless and magnify the Lord. *Zacharias* filled with the Holy Ghost, said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he

would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke i. 68—75. All this praise is offered to the Divine Father, as all the salutations with which most of the Epistles begin, are addresses to the Father of our Lord Jesus. As for example. "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." 2 Cor. i. 2, 3. But having shewed what we are to understand by the term promise, and also who we are to consider as the *Promiser*, I proceed to my next particular, which is,

3. To shew to whom the promise belongs. It is to *us*. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us.*

It belongs to *us*: that is, to the whole church of Christ. The whole election of grace are included in this *us*: more especially those saints who are here written to, who having received an Unction from the Holy One, and knew the Truth, and were kept sound in the acknowledgment of the doctrine of the confession of the Son's Personality, and the Father's also, and continued in the same, it is to these the apostle addresses these words, *And this is the promise that he had promised us, even eternal life.* And they come in by way of encouragement, to shew them what they will in the issue enjoy; which being by God himself bestowed upon them by promise, and He being that God that cannot lie, they therefore might well anticipate the blessing, even before they had the full realization of it in the world of glory. It is a truth all God's people are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. There is no one promise of grace and glory, of Christ and salvation, but belongs to them all. So of this, even taking it in the sense I have given it, as belonging to the saints here addressed, it may also be said to belong to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's, and our's." It is a most blessed consideration that the promise of Christ was given to his whole church. All his saints were interested in it. His relation to each and every individual member of it is one and the same. His love for them, his mercy towards them, his righteousness and sacrifice, are to each and every one of them, equally the same. They are all equally saved in Him. They all shine alike in Him. They are all equally complete in Him, and God in Christ is their portion, inheritance, and exceeding great reward. So the Holy Spirit is promised to the whole church. *All thy children shall be taught of the LORD.* It is an undeniable truth, the promises are more extensively fulfilled and realized in the cases, and experiences of some saints than others; yet there are no saints, but enjoy and inherit the substance of them. And it is their blessedness, when they view this to be the very essence of them, that hereby they are all assured the Lord is their God; for these words may be looked on, as the sum total of them, *I am thy God.* To have this therefore brought home by the apostle *John*, to the saints to whom he wrote, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life,* must have been very encouraging. It could not but be comfortable unto them, to be confirmed in their views and hopes of a glorious immortality: surely nothing could exceed this, but the full and complete enjoyment of the same. It seems to me, the apostle here expresses himself thus by way of shewing them, they would most cer-

tainly enjoy and partake of all this, in that vision and sight they would have of Christ—God-Man in the kingdom of glory. How most blessed it is, to view the subject which *John* has been treating of, and what it will finally issue in. The *us*, who had communion with the Father and the Son—whose blood was their everlasting purity and perfection—who had Him for their Advocate and Propitiation—who had from Him their Holy One received the Holy Ghost; by whose divine teaching they were preserved from the antichrists who were in that day, these having been exhorted to continue in the doctrines of the ever-blessed gospel they had received from the beginning, and abide in the doctrine of the Son, and of the Father, are comforted with these words, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* Surely nothing can be added unto this: we may see from hence the transcendent excellency of free, sovereign grace; and of the gospel which contains the revelation of it. The blessings of it are so spiritual and divine, that nothing can be set in comparison with the same. The blessings enjoyed in communion with God, and Christ, through the Spirit, exceed all the joys of sense, and are real, permanent, holy and heavenly. It may therefore be well said, “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” There is no love in God’s heart towards us, but he hath expressed it, and set it before us in Christ. There is no blessing he wills to bestow upon us, and will ever communicate unto us, but he hath expressed it, and set it before us, in the word of his grace, and in the exceeding great and precious promises contained therein; and our text is so comprehensive as to include them all. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* It is a most blessed life to live on what is revealed in the promises. I conceive this is to live Christ, and to live in Him, and upon Him. I apprehend Christ to be the jewel, and the promise to be the cabinet in the which he is hid: and that receiving and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, is a real spiritual apprehension of Him. It is as the glass in which we see Him, and by that very means our hearts are drawn out into holy breathings and aspirations after Him. As we see Christ in the promise, and live Him over in our minds as so recorded and testified of in the word, this is to live by faith on Him. We must have a rule for our faith, and a directory also: we must have a warrant for our faith, and a foundation for it also: and where shall we find it but in the written word? and what part of it is it to be found in, but in that, which contains God’s revelation of Christ? and what are the promises but this very revelation? Surely it is in them we have the complete revelation of the whole of Christ. We can have no spiritual apprehension of Christ without them. The whole of Christ is contained in them: and though it is impossible we should ever be able to comprehend the whole of Christ set before us in them, yet He cannot be more fully declared in his church upon earth, than he is by them. May I not here say, and if it be not so, who will make me a liar, and in these particulars, nothing worth. I know it is by the good hand of my God upon me, I thus understand it. Blessed be God, all the elect are one in Christ, and one in Him. They have had being and well-being in Him, ever since He was constituted to be their Head: and that before the foundation of the world. They were then bound up in the bundle of life with Him. They were secured in Him from everlasting. All the promises were made to them in Him be-

fore all time: and all God's love to them in Him, and the whole good pleasure of God's will to them in Him, is all wrapt up in his promises to them. The whole gift of Christ, with all contained in his Person, and salvation, may be said to be given unto them by promise. The apostle speaks most sweetly on this subject, when he says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. iii. 16. Christ and his people are one. He is their head, and they are members in Him. The love of the Father to them, began in Him. The covenant of grace was entered into with Him, on their behalf, and as their representative; yet it so belongs to them, that the divine Father saith to them, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Zech. ix. 11. And all the promises which belong to the church, were made first to Christ. They have been fulfilled in Him, and He is in the actual possession of all the good contained in them. It is out of his fulness we are to receive the communication of the good, be it grace, or glory; be it for body or soul; be it for this time state, or for the glory state; it is to be communicated from Him to us: *Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*: so says our apostle, in his *Gospel*, ch. i. 16: and another apostle says, *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*. Col. i. 19. All our blessedness is in Christ. When we are brought to the knowledge of Him, then he begins in us. We have the blessed commencement of it. Which is increased in our communion with Him, and by the same confirmed. And by his Holy Spirit we increase more and more until we arrive at his everlasting kingdom of glory. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*. The word *even* may as well be omitted now. I did not like it should before; because it was only understood to be, a notifying with an emphasis, the blessing of blessings spoken of in our text: yet it seems to be more emphatical to read it thus, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life*: and being now brought to the last and closing particular of my text, I shall omit it. Whilst I

4. Shew what is contained in the promise. It is *eternal life*. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life*. The Divine Father is the promiser. It is *us*, whom this promise is made unto. We are the heirs of it. The promise contains all which God can bestow: we are the subjects of the same. The promise is altogether of grace. There are no conditions in it. This is wholly and absolutely an unconditional promise. But what I am now to be engaged in, is to shew what is contained, in it, which is *eternal life*. And what eternal life is, much come first under consideration. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life*. This points out who those are who have everlasting life in them; and what is the evidence of everlasting life: but it does not express what everlasting life is. Our Lord says for himself, speaking of the Divine Father, *And I know that his commandment is life everlasting*. But even this is only saying what it is included in, it is not expressing what everlasting life consists in. We must therefore go to what our Lord says to the Divine Father, in his address to him, in the 3rd verse of the 17th chapter of *John*. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*. It is in the revelation it

hath pleased God to make of his Nature, Persons, and perfections, in the Person of Christ, who is both God and Man in one Person, God manifest in the flesh, the true knowledge of God is made known : and it is as the Holy Ghost is pleased to impart this knowledge of God in Christ to our minds we have eternal life. Our eternal life consists in this. Which is made more and more clear unto us, as we are further drawn forth in the exercise of our minds, into further and clearer discoveries of the same. The knowledge of Christ is eternal life. It is in the knowledge of Him, our eternal life consists. It is from the knowledge of Him, eternal life flows in upon our minds. It is in real union and fellowship with Him, we have the manifestative enjoyment of it in our hearts. It is by the same we are nourished up unto everlasting life. The true knowledge of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they stand in relation to us, in the Person of the God-Man, and have shined, and will for evermore shine forth in Him, is the utmost expression of blessedness, and the fountain and spring of immortal joy to all the saints, in the state of glory. It is the exercise of our spiritual minds on this, will be the consummation of our bliss, in heaven, and be our everlasting life when we are in Glory.

I speak thus by way of preface, to what is to be introduced in going over this present part of our subject : which is to shew, what is contained in this promise in the text. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.* Our heavenly Father hath promised us, eternal life. This life is in Christ. And He is our life. It is in Him. He liveth in us : and we live in Him : yet our having the promise of eternal life exceeds all which hath been mentioned ; except it be what this eternal life consists in : which is the knowledge of Him from whom it flows. And I would lay the whole weight and emphasis of this, on the knowledge of the Holy Ones—The Holy Father, the Holy Son, the Holy Spirit, as they have been pleased to make themselves known in the word of revelation, and by the Spirit of revelation unto us ; so as for us to receive the knowledge of the same into our minds from the word of inspiration. This lays the foundation for the true knowledge of God within us. This is our spiritual and everlasting life. All which springs herefrom are the fruits and effects of it. We should know it is only the acts and fruits of it : I conceive in this lies a vast distinction in the blessedness of elect angels, and elect men. The former, it is most probable know the love of God, in its causes and effects, by intuition, in one, and by the same apprehension in one moment : whilst saints of the human race, know the same only by degrees, and in and by its effects. Whilst the former see all in its first, and incomprehensible cause, and the vast and glorious effects which flow from that first cause, and that also at once, I suppose were it to be spoken out in one sentence, is the reason why the minds of elect angels are so swallowed up in God, as that their wills are impeccable, and cannot sin to eternity. Well, so as it respects saints as saints : their blessedness is not in themselves : they have it not in themselves. It consists not in what they are, or ever will be. No ; it is wholly out of them. It will be so, even in Glory. They will have the enjoyment of it in their minds ; but it will be communicated unto them, from Christ, God-Man ; and by, and from him, all their blessedness, glory, immortality, and life eternal will flow : so as their minds will be perpetually engaged on Him, and swallowed up in Him. So that let their com-

munion with Christ, and enjoyments be what they may, it will not take off their thoughts from Christ one single moment. He will be their All. What He is will be their eternal delight. It is in Him, not in themselves their eternal life will be : and their real participation of it, will consist in that perpetual communion they will have with Him, in an uninterrupted manner, and to an unspeakable degree to the ages of eternity. This is eternal life. It will consist in an activity of the mind on the Person of Christ, who will be the one object of his people's blessedness and felicity for ever. Now it is the vision of Christ will be eternal life to his saints in Heaven. Life is the perfection of being. We had a being in Christ from everlasting : but it is life added to it, is the perfection of it. This was given us with it : yet this is only manifested to us in regeneration, and in our living a life of faith on the Son of God, and in real, spiritual, and supernatural communion with Him. This life is all activity. It wholly consists in the exercise of the spiritual mind on Him. So it will be in glory everlasting. The mind will be intensely fixed on Him. The understanding, will, and memory swallowed up in Him : so for them to be filled with such an intellectual comprehension of Him, as to be suited to the expression, of being *filled with all the fulness of God*. By which I apprehend such an extension of the faculties of the mind, and such an intuitive light and apprehension of all of God which can be made known of God, and his love, and wonderful designs in Christ, towards all creatures and the work of his hands, and of what He is in Christ to the whole election of grace, as will swallow up the mind in God for ever and ever. God himself, in the full revelation of himself, in Christ, God-Man, being the subject of the saints' contemplation in glory, so their eternal life is in this. It flows from this. It is from hence it will be maintained in their minds for ever. So that in the apostle's saying, *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life*, he sets before them, what their present blessedness was, as also what their future blessedness would consist in. It was eternal life to know God in Christ. It was eternal life to have fellowship with Him, and with the Father. For he was that eternal life, which was with the Father from everlasting, and was manifested in the fulness of time by his open incarnation. These saints had now present fellowship with Him. This might be interrupted, but it could never be broken off. It cannot but be suspended in the very article of death ; for there must be a momentary suspension of the senses and faculties, or death could not take place : yet this cannot put a stop to that blessed communion or to this fellowship : and on Christ's part, it can be no interruption, no not in death itself ; for he can have and hold communion with us, when we cannot with Him. This is a very comfortable consideration : all-sufficient to carry us above all fear and concern about any thing which may befall us in the article of dissolution. So the views of what we shall be, and enjoy of Christ, are a most blessed mean of excitation of our minds on the glory which is to be revealed in us. We are to see Christ face to face. We are to live in his immediate presence : to live with Him in his glory : to see Him face to face : to behold his glory : to live as He does : to have Him live in us : to dwell in us : to fill us with those joys, which flow from the throne of God, and himself, who is the Lord of glory. In whom, from whom, and by whom, all the glory of God is reflected on the minds of all the elect angels and saints. *This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life. We, us, you*

and myself, says *John*, are the very identical persons to whom this promise is made. We are the persons to whom all in it belongs. It is ours. We are those very *us*, to whom the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath promised eternal life, and this life is in his Son. We are already possessed of it. We have now the enjoyment of it in our own souls. We are looking forward for the fullest enjoyment of the same, and the very uttermost blessedness contained therein, by being admitted to the beatific vision of Christ in his glory, and to such personal communion with God in all his Persons and perfections as is suitable therewith. Thus the apostle closes this very particular part of his subject. We may well conclude it must have made a most blessed impression on their minds, and added weight to all the former subjects. This being drawing Truth into one great and grand focus, so as for the rays of it to shine fully and in its meridian on the whole church in Christ, in his kingdom of glory. It is in its whole design, transcendently glorious. Its impression on the saints could not but be in proportion to the views they received into their minds concerning the same. So it will be with us also. Therefore it becomes us to consider this. We cannot be impressed with Truth, but in proportion to our receiving the knowledge of it into our minds. We may admire Truth, but it is the true reception of the same into our minds, by which we only can be benefitted by it. May the Lord bless what hath now been delivered, if it please Him, and give you to receive the same into your minds, so as to apprehend and digest it, that you, mixing faith therewith, may grow thereby. Amen.

SERMON XXX.

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.
—I JOHN II. 26.

THE apostle being very affectionately concerned for, and disposed towards these saints to whom he here writes, is very desirous they should fully understand his motives for writing to them; especially on the foregoing subjects. It was not that he suspected their defection from the faith, or that they were not sufficiently instructed in the Truth, so as to be able to withstand every artifice of the enemies. No. He was fully persuaded of this. What he had written, was to set in a clear point of view the errors and heresies of those seducers they had to withstand. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* It is not because saints may be well taught and established in all the truths and doctrines of the everlasting gospel, that they are not to be written to, when errors and heresies abound; that they are not to be addressed on the peculiar articles of our most holy faith; that they are not to be addressed on those most momentous points; on the contrary, it is rather a reason why they should. When errors and heresies abound, such churches as are firmly grounded in the knowledge of Christ, are to

he informed of the same. The names, persons, and errors are to be pointed out, and what the particular evil in them consists in : we see this in what is here set before us. In the preliminary verses, we have the apostle speaking to these saints of their having heard that antichrist should come : that there were many antichrists at this time in the world. It was an evident proof the last hour of the apostolic age was come. He scruples not to decipher them, and their doctrines also. They went out from the true churches of Christ. They went forth with their pernicious tares, which they would, if possible, sow, and scatter, so as to disturb, and distress the Lord's beloved ones. In the whole conduct and doctrine of these apostates, it was manifest they never were of the true church of God : yet they had been numbered with them ; but their going out from them, carried its own evidence with it, that they were not all of us, says *John*. To keep up the true and proper distinction, the apostle speaks out what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for these saints. He had bestowed the Holy Ghost upon them. They were led by Him into the knowledge of all Truth, so far as it was necessary for them : that he wrote to them in the full apprehension of this ; not as if they did not know the Truth, but because they knew it : consequently they must be fully persuaded nothing contrary to the faith once delivered to the saints, could be truth. He sets before them who was *a liar*—That man who denied Jesus was the Christ, the true and only Messiah. He declares who is an antichrist—He is, who denieth the true and proper and distinct Personality of the Father, and the Son. He exhorts the saints to abide in this doctrine. He declares if they continued in what they had heard from the first preaching of the gospel unto them, this would be the case. He then comforts them with the assurance of eternal life. They had the promise of it ; and they would in the Lord's time enjoy all contained in it, in the immediate presence of God, and the Lamb, in immediate communion with them, in a sight of the beatific vision, which will be transporting, and which will complete their blessedness for ever and ever. To these he says, *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* Which words are now to be the foundation for our present subject ; which I will set before you in its divisions, and then fill up ; in the which I hope to explain the same, and give you in so doing, real satisfaction, and information.

1. By observing the care of the apostle to preserve the saints from error. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

2. That all erroneous persons are *seducers*.

3. Who these aim and particularly desire to seduce. It is *you, saints*.

4. The only preservative from their seduction. This I shall shew to be contained in the sound knowledge of the Truth : for it is in this it is fixed by the apostle, in verse 20. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* Thus you have the outline of the words, which I am to open as hath been expressed : and which I now enter upon.

1. By observing the care of the apostle to preserve the saints from error. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

To preserve the churches of Christ from error of every sort and kind,

was most certainly the great care of this, and all the apostles, in their particular directions, and as things fell out in the various parts to which they were destined. It was of the utmost importance to deliver the Truth to them: which once done, it was then the next great and most important matter to preserve and maintain it unadulterated amongst the people who had professedly received it. There could be no shadows if there were no substances. It is the reflection is the shadow. So with respect to the Truths of God, the reflections from these, and the false apprehension of these, are the causes of all the errors and heresies in the world. If there was no such doctrine as that of the blessed Trinity in the Bible, there would be no deniers and corrupters of that most sacred and ineffable mystery: yet there is nothing in the revelation of it, which causes the error about it: this comes wholly from men of corrupt minds, destitute and reprobate concerning the Truth. It is from the darkness of the unrenewed mind, and the influence of the devil on it, errors are conceived, received, lived in, and propagated. It is of dangerous consequence to receive into the mind any thing contrary to the truths of God revealed in the scripture. We are to take heed unto them. Not to preach nor receive any thing, word, or doctrine, but what is revealed in them. It becomes the churches of the saints to be very careful to preserve the Truth. So it also does the ministers of the churches, to hold forth the word of life, clearly, and exactly, as it is set before them in the word of truth. The apostle's care to preserve the saints from error, is fully expressed, by all which went before our text, and by all which follows, to the end of this very chapter, so that it supersedes the necessity of a recapitulation of it. He gives his reason here in my text why he wrote as he had unto them. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* What he must be immediately referring unto, must be the persons, and doctrines he had been setting before them. It appears from hence, that persons and errors are not to be concealed. They are, should, and ought to be expressed. Not only Truth, which alone can guard the mind from error, should be freely and fully stated and explained, that it may be fixed on the minds of the godly: but such errors as are, or may be, at any particular time, or place, and by any particular person, or persons broached, should be called up, and named, to the intent the church of God, may be guarded against, and preserved from the same. It is what some cannot bear, to hear errors detected and exposed. The reason is this—too many look on some of the most momentous truths of the gospel, but speculative points, which are of no real importance—that we should not be concerned so much about what is believed as about what persons are, in temper, life, walk, and character. I protest, men and brethren, I must hold up both my hands here, and against this. I do not look on one truth of the everlasting gospel as speculative—which may, or may not be believed. I do not conceive we can with the least safety to our own souls drop one of them. I conceive they form the whole of our knowledge of God. They contain all we are to believe concerning the everlasting love of God: the Person, grace and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ: as also what we are to believe of the Person, office, and work of the Holy Ghost. And we cannot give up one single atom of Truth, but we must be losers thereby, and the glory of God will also be broken in upon. The Truth of God is our *Magna-Charta*. It contains our salvation. It is the bread of life.

Our title to Christ, to heaven, and glory, is in it. I will freely confess, some truths are more clear to some, and other truths to others. I do not think all saints see alike, and are one equally with another, impressed with all Truth. No; I am speaking of my conceiving, that real saints, as such, are not for dropping any one truth made known in the Book of God: but are in their own spiritual minds, for knowing, and receiving all truths into their minds, that they may worship God, in receiving and believing the same. If Truth should be clearly stated in the ministry of the word of the gospel, errors should also be expressed and exposed: and it should be done to the glory of God: for the benefit of saints, and to the confutation of error, and heresy: and in so doing, zeal for the honour and glory of God's Truth is discovered, and love to the real saints of Christ also. Nor should any who profess the true gospel of our Lord and Saviour ever oppose it. One great end in the ministers of Christ, in and throughout every part of their ministry, should be to exalt His Person, to increase his fame, and make his Name glorious. It should ever be engraven on their minds, what the Lord saith, "he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Our apostle had been speaking of the errors, and persons who propagated them in his day; and says to those he wrote unto, *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you*—To guard you from them—To preserve you from their seduction—To keep you in the faith: that my love for you might be manifested; my care for you appear: and that you might have a full proof of my sincere regard for you in Christ Jesus. It is much the same, for the spirit, subject, and meaning of it, with what he says in the ensuing chapter, "Little children, let no man deceive you:" and again in his 2nd Epistle, v. 7. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Here he joins such as denied Christ, such as insisted on it, the true Messiah had not been in the world, with a deceiver and an antichrist. Such an one being an adversary to our most precious and glorious Lord Jesus Christ. I would here repeat it, although it has been observed already, that one way in which the devil shewed his enmity against our Lord Jesus Christ, and his church, and beloved ones, and against his true gospel, was by corrupting the minds of some, who had made a solemn and declarative confession that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Christ, the very Messiah, of whom all the prophets wrote and spake, as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the Prophet of whom *Moses* spake, who was to be like unto him, of whom the multitude when they saw the miracle which Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." John vi. 14. Of whom, and to whom, the Holy Ghost bore testimony on the day of Pentecost, that God had raised him from the dead, set Him at his own right hand, crowned Him with Glory and Power everlasting, and made him both Lord and Christ. Yet toward the close of the apostolic age, many there were, who audaciously denied our Christ to be the true and promised Messiah. This it might be, they attempted to build on the dethroning Him, as it respected his distinct Personality, in the infinite Essence, from the Father. Hence the apostle might well write these one with the other, as he does, when he asks the following question. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the

same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgth the Son hath the Father also." Such an one, or such ones, were in *John's* day, deceivers, seducers, and antichrists. And if such are still to be found, they must be still the same. To guard the saints against these, the apostle wrote to the saints. He expressed and set before them who these persons were—what their errors and heresies consisted in: that they might avoid them, and have no sort of conversation with them. I would here observe, the apostle *Paul* says, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." It becomes us to avoid all erroneous men: to have no fellowship with them. It becomes us to avoid all conversation with them: to hear none of their preachments: none of their false doctrines: to read none of their books. There can be but one Truth: there may be many false interpretations about it; but the whole system of Truth once delivered unto the saints can never alter. Let us therefore closely abide by the same. I proceed to my next particular, which is this:

2. To observe that all erroneous persons, are *seducers*. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

The apostle here expresses more the intent and design of these erroneous persons, than what they had really done. It was their design to seduce such and such from the true doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. By what He had said before, they could gain no ascendancy over these saints to whom the apostle writes. It was because *they had received an unction from the Holy One, and they knew all things*. But I am to speak of these antichrists, in the days of the apostle, as *seducers*. This is the term the apostle gives them: for in saying, *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you*, it is calling them by that name. If they aimed to seduce, they most certainly must be *seducers*: so that we may well acquiesce with the name given them. And there is that which is very important in the term: for these were seducers from the faith: from the doctrine of Christ: from all testified of and concerning Him, by all the prophets which had been, since the world began. What hath been briefly hinted before is sufficient to prove this: for as they disclaimed him as the true Messiah, the Sent One of God, and that he was not Personally, truly, and essentially one in the incomprehensible Essence with the Father; this was all expressed, and contained in it, which was giving the lie to the whole Scriptures of Truth. To be *seducers* of this description must be to be *seducers* indeed! Such, as no words can describe their sin. This must have been to be guilty of the unpardonable sin; for which there is no forgiveness, either in this world, or in the world to come. If you read verses 18, 19, and verses 22, 23, you will not think, or say, I have laid on my colouring too thick: and should we ever arrive at the 8th verse of the ensuing chapter, I conceive we shall have awful evidence of the truth of all this. And if they were *seducers* from the Truth, and aimed to seduce the real saints and children of the most high God, from their faith in Christ, in the profession of the same, and from their close attachment unto Him, then they must have been the worst of seducers: so as no conception or thought, can convey any adequate idea of to our minds. Whilst I should conceive there will never any like these, arise up in the outward visible church of Christ; because these, and their errors and heresies, were very particularly suited for the devil to express his implacable malice and hatred

by, against the Person of Christ; therefore he rose up such as denied His Godhead, His Personality, and Messiahship. And this was the grand error and heresy of that day. It may be these deceivers did not see so much into the devil's end and design in all this, as he himself did. Be that as it might, he worked with and by them, so as that he might, if possible, destroy the very foundation and fundamentals of the gospel. Whilst the essence of the same evil remains, in every doctrine which is contrary to the honour, glory, dignity, and truth of the everlasting gospel of the blessed God, and all who promote any sort of error, be it in doctrine, or worship, are seducers; yet they are variously diversified: and the term *seduce*, or *seducers*, should serve to put the children of God on their guard. I should conceive the term ought to convey this very idea to our mind—That they are all enemies to God, and Christ, and the Spirit—That they act very secretly, and with very great subtilty. How should they act otherwise? Seeing they are all under one and the same agency and influence. Their doctrines may be various; yet they are all deceitful. They may seem to be vastly different; yet they all unite in disfiguring the glorious plan of grace. The Arian robs Christ of his divinity. The Socinian denies the mediatorship of Christ. The Arminian robs the whole Trinity—The Father, of the glory of his grace, in his free and sovereign love, in choosing his people in Christ before the foundation of the world. They rob the Son of God, of the glory, perfection, and efficacy of his life and death. They rob the Holy Ghost of the glory due to him, for his efficacious grace. And the Antinomian, whom I conceive to be only an idealist, robs the eternal Three of their revealed glory, expressed in the scriptures of truth, by turning the whole of it, so as most completely to upset it, and to raise of it universal salvation for the whole human race. *Paul* hints of some, “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Eph. iv. 14. These must have been *seducers*. And it was by their cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive, they gained and accomplished their end and design. He expressed his jealousy for the church of God at *Corinth* thus. “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. In the same chapter, he speaks of “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” v. 13—15. All these must have been *seducers*. They must all have been in the apostle *John's* time, seeing he outlived all the apostles. Yet he was more particularly exercised with antichrist, as the other apostle was exercised with such as corrupted the doctrines of grace, and the ordinances of worship. Thus it is very plain that all erroneous persons are seducers: some to one party to pull down another: some set up one doctrine to set aside another: some one preacher to upset another. All which is only a spirit of contention; which in the general springs out of, and is the fruit of error. Now as in all ages, and throughout all past generations of the church, there

have been in the churches and out of the churches, antichrists and seducers, and the apostle tells us, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived, let us be on our guard, that we be not overcome by them. Which brings me,

3. To set before you who these seducers aim, and particularly desire to seduce. It is *you* saints. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

It is the true saints the devil hates with an invincible hatred. On these he forms his particular attack, and most especially by these seducers. Hence he furnishes them with a spirit accordingly. They are in general cunning men; gifted ones; who are deep, subtile, sagacious; who can penetrate into the mind; are masters of argumentation; who with good works, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. These get amongst the churches of Christ: they sometimes get into them; will when opportunity offers, ask questions concerning the most important truths in the gospel, as if they wanted light and further instruction into the same; whilst their whole intention is only to mark an opportunity to suggest some objection, hoping it will so operate on the minds of those they thus address, as will either cast them into confusion, or administer some doubts to the mind concerning such and such expressions; concerning the statement of such and such articles of faith—would it not be better it should be omitted? Were not these doubtful points? Could we not do as well without them? Were it not best to drop them altogether? It is by such sly insinuations as these, much evil is produced. In such an artful way as this, *seducers* lead off many from the Truth to believe a lie: and by carnal argumentation against the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, the faith of some is shaken, and the faith of others overturned. This is the case in the article of the Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity. Why, say *seducers*, who want, were it possible, to undermine this essential truth, can you tell us how three can be one, and one three? If you cannot, why would you have us to believe such an absurdity; surely we shall never be damned for not believing what we cannot apprehend—which is so absurd in itself, and which we are certain you cannot comprehend. In this way, these *seducers* from true belief in the doctrine of this great article of faith work, and hereby prejudice the mind against it, and thus convey their poison: which wholly consists in working on the mind by their subtile inventions, proposed in their own words and theories. The doctrine of the Trinity is the subject of revelation. It is a truth to be apprehended by faith: not to be comprehended by sense. There is no absurdity in it. We have a demonstration of it in the material system of the universe. The heavens in their three conditions, Fire, Light, and Air, are an outward display of the Essence and Personalities in Jehovah. The Essence of the heavens is one. It is a fluid body. Fire, light, and air, are the heavens in its three distinct conditions. These exist and coexist in one and the same essence, and in each other: yet they have each their respective and distinct properties. We understand the essence of fire, light, and air to be but one: yet we confess the properties of fire, light, and air to be distinct. So that here we believe one in three, and three in one; yet we do not believe that three are one, and one three in any way contrary to sense and rationality. We believe the Godhead to be but One, and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, exist, and coexist in that incomprehensible

Essence. And they are in Jehovah the Self-Existing Essence one and the same. Now this is not believing they are One in Three and Three in One, in a way of contradiction. We believe they are Three in One, and One in Three thus—That Jehovah, the name for the incomprehensible Essence is Essentially One—That the Persons in the Essence, though essentially one with the Essence, are Personally distinct—That the Father is not the Son, nor the Holy Ghost the Father or the Son; but that they are Personal Subsistencies in the Godhead, and their Subsistencies are as eternal as Godhead itself. So that we do not believe three to be one, nor one to be three, in any way of contradiction, nor even to reason itself. We only believe the Lord to be One. And that the Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are, as distinct and distinguished by their personal relations to each other, Three. “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” These *seducers* will at times insinuate, as though we laid all the stress of religion on persons’ believing such doctrines, and they were perfectly safe if they did so. This is also insinuated to corrupt the Truth as it is in Jesus. We do esteem a sound creed. I do indeed: yet I do not conceive that believing all the doctrines of grace, is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation. We cannot believe on Jesus Christ, without the doctrine of Christ: yet we may rest in the theory to the neglect of the substance. I conceive the doctrine of grace, and the grace part of the doctrine are very distinct. We are first made new creatures in Christ, before we can have the faculty of believing: and this faculty must be enlightened, and opened, before we can believe. Nor can we believe, but as we have clear views from the word and Spirit, of what we are to believe. It is the word in which the object and subject of faith is revealed. It is the Holy Spirit shining on the revelation made of Christ, and salvation in the word, is the mean by which he reflects the true apprehension of the same on our minds. It is by his enlightening our minds herewith, that he gives us true and proper apprehensions and perceptions of the same: so that hereby, Christ and his salvation, and what we believe of Him and his most glorious finished work, hath its real existence in us. Christ is hereby in us, both objectively, and subjectively. He is formed in us. He lives in us. He dwells in us. He makes his abode in us. Whilst this is all reality, yet we have, in this our day, such *seducers*, as would fain call all this into question: some, by calling it enthusiasm; others, by saying this is to deny the work of the Spirit; whilst others would by no means admit it could be so, merely because it is no part of their experience: and some, because they clearly perceive, there is nothing which they ventilate as truth, hath the least tendency to promote the least atom of this, in the mind of any of their hearers. Beloved, they are very miserable days we live in: and they will be worse. There are such as I would forbear calling *seducers*, yet most certainly it is, and they themselves make it evident, they are more concerned for their own glory, than they are for the Lord’s. If the people are but pleased with them, and their nostrums, all is well. They are not concerned for the Truth: nor for the purity of Truth: nor to build the people up in the Truth. Their greatest aim is creature affection, and self-admiration, and applause: and this always brings the true gospel of Christ into contempt: and such as preach it are spoken of in an undermining way: any and every thing which may

serve to lessen them in the esteem of their hearers is brought forward; it is freely and falsely reported: all this goes down for a season, until such as look at them narrowly, see there is no truth in one half of it; and sometimes find these defamers are in their own persons, and tempers, by many degrees more faulty than those very persons they have been so very active in criminating. As all *seducers* are dangerous persons, and as they most especially mean, if possible to seduce the people of God, and lead off their minds from the Truth, so the people of God are to be guarded against them. We may therefore see the propriety of the apostle's saying, *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* It is you saints, these *seducers* have their eye upon; they would if it were possible beguile you: they would fain work on your minds: they would get you to hear them: that you might see and take notice of their astonishing gifts and greatness. I would here ask, is it not so with all dissemblers and seducers? Are not their gifts their recommendations? And, what are their gifts? Just like themselves: they all savour of themselves: they consist in crying up themselves, and crying down the true ministers of Jesus Christ; and this is done with so much pious fraud and cunning, that it is not always discernable. It is kept up by some of these for years together; so that sometimes the very lambs of Christ's fold, are overcome by them and think they never heard any thing like unto it: which gives room and reason, for breaking forth, and saying in the words of the apostle unto such, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Gal. iii. 1. But I hasten on to enter on my last particular,

4. To set before you the only preservative, from the seduction of all these *seducers*. For if they were addressed, and asked for in their own names, it must be confessed they might well say, our name is *Legion; for we are many.* So they are indeed. And these in our day, have so many different creeds, that none, no not one of them holds exactly alike. Now the apostle says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv. 4—6. The best preservative from all seduction, and from all seducers from the Truth, is the sound knowledge of the Truth; for it is in this it is fixed by the apostle, v. 20. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." It was by this means these saints to whom our apostle wrote, were preserved from the seducers, and their seducements.

It was on this he founded his exhortation, exciting them to continue in the Truth. Which if they did, they would continue in the doctrine of the Son, and of the Father, and have and enjoy all contained in the promise of eternal life, in communion with the Son, and with the Father on earth, and also in heaven. This was the foundation of his writings to them concerning these *seducers*—To give them to understand there could be no better way of overcoming them, than to avoid all communion and communication with them, and to persevere in the truths of the everlasting gospel, which they had heard, received, and been established in. Here we have reason to complain, very few preach the whole doctrine of the gospel, in all its parts and branches, in all its causes and effects, in all its bearings and dependencies: yet there can be no better

furniture for the spiritual mind than the right and clear apprehension of this. Our preservation from error lies here. So that if the hearers and professors of the glorious gospel of Christ, were but truly and rightly instructed in the great and fundamental doctrines of grace, and apprehended them to be the architectural pillars which sustain and bear up the whole building and superstructure of what we call Truth, they would most clearly know and understand, whatsoever that is, let its appearance be as it may, which weakens Truth, makes way for shaking the whole connected with it. We have for these very many years past, been more for what we call experience, than for the true knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, and for the ordinances of Christ. And we now live to see the fruit and effect of this. We find very few have so much as the very theory of Truth. The preaching Doctrinally is dropt. Nothing goes down but preaching practically and experimentally. Thus the great truths of the everlasting gospel have been brought into contempt. Beloved, Popery is most assuredly making very great progress in our land. It is very probable it will most awfully prevail. If it does, neither you, I, nor any one will be able to overcome it by any experience of our own. No. Indeed we cannot overcome it, but by the doctrines of grace, which as they give us clear conceptions of the whole counsel of God, so these being received into our minds, by the light, teaching, and grace of the Holy Spirit, they produce in us, such an experience of the truth and efficacy contained in them, as makes us strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. What we want in the churches of Christ in our day, is men of truth. Who are valiant for the Truth. Who can cut the very sinews of error and heresy: and as champions for Truth, wield the two-edged sword, to a very good purpose. It is not producing a set and number of scriptures, is either opening the great articles of our most holy faith, or defending them, any more than naming Christ ever so frequently is preaching him. No. It is not. We want such as can open every truth in the Bible: unveil the glorious mysteries of God's everlasting love: the Person and royalties of Christ, God-Man: who can express and declare his heart and bowels of love and mercy: who can set forth the glories of his Righteousness and Salvation: who can present him in all his Robes, with the crown-royal on his head; with all the blessings of Salvation in his fulness; with all his enemies, Sin, Satan, Death and Hell beneath his feet; and the saying, Look unto me, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else. It is such as these we want in the churches in this very present day. And it is only such as these, who can ministerially trample down error, and preserve the churches from heresies. It is such as these only, who can build up the saints, joint them rightly into their proper sockets, as members of churches should be, so as that they may become an holy temple in the Lord. It is by such alone, that saints can be ministerially established in Christ, in Truth, in Church order, in the fellowship of saints, and walk before the Lord unto all well pleasing. You shall have the apostle *Paul's* judgment of this, in his own words, and his words also with which he introduceth it. "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in

the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily :” or, Personally. The whole of this is worthy of being looked over and over, again and again, and I think it is quite to the point we are upon, and for the which it was brought. It is Truth, well founded and stated, just as it is recorded in the word : and it should be confirmed by the same, and all should be bottomed on it. This would be more satisfactory to the spiritual mind, than any other way of treating the subject whatsoever. Truth is mighty and must prevail. It is the honour of God in his truth we stand up for. Not for our own ; nor to shew how ably we can defend it ; nor to let others see how skilful we are in the word of righteousness ; nor for the sake of triumphing in carrying our own cause. No : none of these things are looked at : the Lord forbid they should. It is the honour of the Lord is sought : and that in the maintaining and defending his own truths : as his own manifestative glory lies in them, and comes out of them, as also the good and benefit of his people. It is too little considered, that to pass by in a careless way and manner, any truth in the word of God, let the pretence for it, be what it may, is to cast disrespect on God himself, who is the fountain of Truth, and the author thereof. There are some truths we conceive to be of eternal importance. It becomes us to be very clear in the knowledge of these : to abide by these : to stand fast in the belief of them. This is the only preservative from seduction, and *seducers*. For they generally attack such as they conceive to be wavering, doubtful, and uncertain ; they generally make their attempts on such : being fearful they shall be manfully and as the common phrase is, masterly overcome by such as are more established. There is a truth in this. There are some saints who have hearts like lions, and can through spiritual skill, sling stones from, and use the bow and quiver of, God’s most holy word, in defence of the truths of the everlasting gospel, and also against the enemies of it, to an hair’s breadth and not miss. Such are worthy of being most highly esteemed. And had it not been for the writings of such as these, and which we now inherit, we should not have had Truth so clearly preserved, and so properly secured to us, as it now is. Let us bless God for the same, and seek grace from Him to improve it. We shall all be called upon, to stand up for one particular truth in our day and generation. Let that truth be what it may, it cost the blood of Christ to publish it. He also sealed the truth of it, and confirmed it with his own most precious bloodshedding. Let us therefore value it, and study it down from the word of God ; and seek to be rooted in it from an increasing light into it from thence ; we shall most assuredly find our account therein. It will be the mean of our being rooted and stablished in the same. The apostle says, “ Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.” That is with, and in the doctrine of grace. Heb. xiii. 9. Beloved, we ought to think, and treat with reverence every truth of God. It being of more worth than ten thousand worlds. We ought to seek after such a knowledge of it, as will be the instrumental means, of our having communion with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost thereby. It is by this we are preserved from all, and every thing which is opposite to us, and serves to prejudice our minds

against it ; nor is it a small mercy to be kept in the Truth. Our apostle says to the well beloved *Gaius*, “ I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 Epis. v. 3, 4. We cannot stand fast in the belief of God’s everlasting love to us, in Christ Jesus, but as we abide by the doctrine of eternal election : neither can we abide in the belief of Christ, that He is ours, that we are His, and are saved in Him with an everlasting salvation, but as we abide by the doctrine of this, as recorded and revealed, and set before us in the sacred word. All our true belief of Christ, and our trust and confidence in Him, must be founded upon what is revealed of Him in the sacred scriptures : hence our Lord said to the people of the Jews in the days of his flesh, “ Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.” John v. 39. The scriptures are the sole foundation of all we are to think, speak, and believe, as essential to our salvation. Christ is the sum and substance of them. The Holy Ghost is alone the true Interpreter of them : and the revelation made in them, of the nature, life, blessedness, and glory of Godhead, set before us in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is manifested in the God-Man, is the one and only foundation of the whole contained in, and throughout the same. May the Lord the Spirit give us to see the truth of this. It will be our preservative from every sort and kind of error. It is a blessed thing to be on the search for Truth, and to be seeking to be also established therein. But let the Bible be the book, and what is contained therein the one only ground and standard : so far as it is, we shall not fail of having true and right apprehensions thereof. For it is by it the Holy Spirit inspires the regenerated people of God, and leads them into all truth necessary for them to know, and keeps them from error and heresies. May he teach us Truth, and keep us from error. Amen.

S E R M O N X X X I.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.—1 JOHN ii. 27.

THE apostle had before shewn how these saints had been preserved from errors. It was owing to their having received an Unction from the Holy One. He here declares how they would be continued in the Truth, through the same Unction remaining in them. Christ had shed the Holy Ghost. He had imprinted divine truth on their minds. He had set it on with his own broad seal on their hearts. They were fully acquainted with the same. So that they needed not to be taught these things afresh by any man. Not that they were above and beyond the ordinance of

preaching. No; that they were not. As believers in Christ they needed to be exhorted and warned, to persevere in the Faith, and to avoid errors and heresies: yet as they had the true Anointing, which teacheth, who is the Spirit, and there can be no sort or kind of error or heresy in any part of what He is pleased to enlighten, and influence the minds of his people with, so he gives to all to whom he pleases such spiritual wisdom and judgment, as is sufficient to preserve them from falsehood and deception respecting the truths of the everlasting gospel, and to prevent them from receiving what may be termed lying vanities. As these persons had been taught by the Holy Ghost, so the apostle comforts them, with the assurance that they should abide in Christ, and hold out, and continue in the Truth even to the end. This is the outline of the text, which I will aim to set before you under the following particulars.

1. What the apostle says to these saints by way of encouragement, which is this. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.*

2. That these persons needed not any man's teaching; and in what sense this is to be understood. *And ye need not that any man teach you.*

3. That they were so taught as to be preserved from error. *But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

4. I will endeavour to express the benefit of abiding in Christ, or in the Truth, the one being here equal with the other. I conceive in going over these particulars, the substance of the text will be unfolded. May the Lord be pleased to shine, and bless, and guide me through the same. Even so, Amen. I am

1. To set before you, what the apostle says to these saints, by way of encouragement: which is this. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.*

Nothing could exceed this. They needed encouragement, at a time, when many were leaving the churches and ministers to whom they belonged: when many were come out of the true churches, and had cast off their profession of the true gospel, and had corrupted it; and were employed in speaking lies, in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with an hot iron: for such must have been the case with those apostates who were the antichrists in *John's* day. Now whilst the saints were not in the least danger from them, they being taught and guided by the infallible Spirit of God; yet they needed to be encouraged, and confirmed in the Truth. It is therefore they are here thus addressed. The apostle speaks all out to them, and sets all before them which could possibly contribute unto this: it is one way, pursued by all the sacred writers—They all are for comforting, strengthening, and encouraging the church and people of the Lord, let their personal, or church trials be what they may; and this, as is altogether suited to them. It is evidently so here: what could have been more suited to the case of these saints here addressed, than what the apostle here expresseth? He had warned them of there being many antichrists, of many who were adversaries to Christ. This naturally involved with it, the necessity there was, these saints should be on their guard against them. What could defend them, so as they might not, nor should be carried away with the error of the wicked, and so fall from their own stedfastness, but their being fully and thoroughly established in the Truth? It must have been esteemed by

them of real importance, and what could not but yield satisfaction to their minds, to know what the apostle's own thoughts were concerning them. This he here gives them. And he does this in a very satisfactory way and manner in the words before us. He would have them to know and be fully satisfied they were most truly and divinely illuminated. That they had received their instruction and light into the sublime mysteries of the everlasting gospel from Christ, through the unction of his Holy Spirit. That this unction was altogether without any mixture. It was true and genuine. They could not possibly imbibe any error from it, because it was wholly, and altogether without mixture of any error in, or with it. And what they had received from Christ continued with them: so that there was no kind of danger of their being led off the Truth as it was in Jesus, in consequence of any thing which could start up, and be proposed by the antichrists of that day. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.* Christ is the *him*, here spoken of. He is the Holy One. The Holy Spirit descends from Him. It is He who communicates Him, in his gifts and graces to his members. These saints had received him. He had taught them the true knowledge of Christ, and of the Father in Him. It was from Him alone, they had received the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—How they stood in Personal relation to each other in the infinite Essence: not so as to comprehend it, but so as to believe and acknowledge it; as this was cleared up unto them, as they were led into the acknowledgment of the same, by the scriptural and right apprehensions given them thereof, as clearly discovered by the transactions of the Holy Trinity on their behalf in the Person of Christ for them, and in the transactions of the Father with Christ, on their behalf. What light and knowledge of these deep and profound mysteries of grace, they had been taught concerning these things, in which the life, and everlasting salvation of their souls consisted, remained in them, and with them. The anointing which ye have received of Christ, abideth in you. It is by this you are what you are: and by this you will ever remain to be what all others are not. Now, I would have you, says the apostle, know this for your comfort and encouragement. I have written to you concerning the *seducers* of the present age: concerning those that attempt to seduce you; they cannot; their attempts on you are altogether in vain, and fruitless. The reason of it is this—you are better taught. Your instruction is wholly divine. Christ himself hath taught you: and that since his glorious ascension into heaven. He hath poured out of his Spirit upon you. He hath shed his Spirit richly on you. He hath sent his Holy Spirit into your hearts. He hath formed you as a people for his praise. You have from him received the Unction which teacheth all things; which abideth in you, and with you. And this is allsufficient and effectual: so as that hereby ye know all things, are led into all necessary truth; are built up and established in the same; and have the same holy Inspirer remaining and abiding with you. This is your present case, and I cannot but rejoice in it; and encourage you from it. As there cannot be a greater evidence of your being the Lord's, and of your having been brought nigh unto Him by the blood of the Lamb; I therefore say unto you, by way of excitement and encouragement, and also to distinguish you from all other professors, and such as have been carried away by the false brethren and antichrists of the present day, *But the anointing which ye have received of him abid-*

eth in you. This is an invaluable blessing. It cannot be too highly esteemed. The worth of it exceeds all conception. It transcends all praise. It may not be here unacceptable to recite and shew the connection of these words with the former, going back to the 24th verse. Where the apostle says, *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* You have here the whole connection and coherence of the text; which I am very fond of: because I conceive it reflects light on the text itself. It most assuredly in this before us, serves as full proof and evidence of what the apostle had declared. These persons were most blessedly illuminated. The Lord had fulfilled his new covenant promise in them, and unto them, and hereby proved them to be his beloved and chosen ones. It had pleased the Lord to say to his church by the mouth of his servant *Jeremiah*, “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” chap. xxxi. 33, 34. In the fulfilment and realization of this unto them, the Lord had wrought his work so effectually within them, and upon them, that they were partakers of the divine nature, as *Peter* styles it: 2 Epis. i. 4. In which, everlasting life, with all the seeds and principles of grace and holiness were contained. They were also instructed so effectually by the Holy Spirit’s teaching, as to know every thing which was necessary to their salvation. Our Lord before his Passion, and after that, and before his ascension into his kingdom of glory, said to his apostles—“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John xiv. 16, 17:—“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” John xvi. 13. Now this having been fulfilled at the very commencement of the church, immediately upon, and at, the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and many of these saints having most richly enjoyed this divine benediction, as the apostle also had, he might well say to these, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things:” and as he does in the words now before us. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* Let our Lord’s words as they have been quoted, and our text be compared with them, and the one is the foundation of the other, and they mutually explain each other: and serve to give us the

true meaning of the text. The Spirit bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ, on these persons, together with his own divine unction, or teaching, which they had received from Him, it abode with them. This was evident in their abiding by what he had taught them. They esteemed the Person of Christ. They believed and professed the same of him which they had from the beginning: so they did of the Father also. So that they were steadfast in the Truth, and not to be shaken from it, by any errors or heresies, let them arise from whatsoever men, or quarters they might: yet the apostle would have them sensible from whence this originated, and unto whom they were indebted for all this—It was to Christ their Holy One, and His Spirit which had anointed and consecrated them to be the Lord's, who had led them into the knowledge of all Truth, and also established them in the same. And this brings me to my next particular which is this,

2. To shew these persons needed not any man's teaching, and in what sense this is to be understood. *And ye need not that any man teach you.*

If these persons were taught of God, agreeable to his promise in the 31st chapter of *Jeremiah*, which hath been already quoted, and which for the refreshment of our memories I will recite as it is mentioned by the apostle *Paul* in the 8th chapter of his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where he says, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." v. 10—12: now as this is a new-covenant promise which belongs to gospel times, and which was most gloriously fulfilled to the apostles, and the church of Christ, when the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven, and these persons were then led into all truth, so it may, as thus considered, be thus expressed, *And ye need not that any man teach you.* And so have a very and most especial regard to the express words of the promise; "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother," &c. and this having been so punctually fulfilled, that it was immediately from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost these persons had been taught, it might be the reason why the apostle thus expressed himself in the words before us, *And ye need not that any man teach you.* It could not be with any design to cast off all preaching and ordinances which are for the spiritual instruction of the people of the Most High God. The gifts which our Lord Jesus Christ, since he entered into heaven, hath bestowed, and still continues to bestow on his ministering servants, are expressly said to be for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. iv. 12, consequently our apostle does by no means intend the setting these aside. No; he does not. He only intends to point out the honour Christ had conferred on these persons. Many of these were favoured with the extraordinary illumination of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, so that Christ was so fully revealed in them, and had been realized, and testified of to their minds, as they could not but believe on Him, and abide by Him as the true Messiah, the Son of God which was spoken of by all the prophets in the

scriptures of truth, and who had been manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Others of them, had been fully convinced of all declared by the holy apostles concerning Him, as the Christ of God, that they needed no man to speak unto them concerning these essential, immutable, and eternal verities. In the which view of the subject, we must all confess the propriety of what the apostle says, *And ye need not that any man teach you*: that Christ had been incarnate—That he was the true Christ, the Son of the living God—That he was testified of, and borne witness unto, by the Father and Holy Ghost. Whilst in his incarnate state, at his Baptism, Transfiguration, immediately before his Passion—at his Death—Resurrection—Ascension, Glorification, Coronation; and by the Father and Spirit on the day of Pentecost; these persons were so fully instructed into the knowledge of all this, they needed no man's teaching concerning these great and grand subjects. They had received their knowledge into these most grand, divine, and essential truths, from Christ himself, by the immediate teaching of the Holy Ghost. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.* They might need, they must have needed to be put in remembrance of this. They must also have needed to be put in remembrance of the same, over and over again. They needed continual confirmation in the same, and to abide in Christ, and the doctrine and profession of his truth: yet they needed not to begin anew, as if they had not known Christ; for they could never know Christ more truly and apprehensively, though they might more comprehensively. I conceive I have done the text justice; which at all times I would most certainly aim at. And I should like to have every scripture to be considered as true in the very letter of it, as well as in the substance of the same. Not, it may be, that we can always see it, and make it so clear as to give full satisfaction. Such of the Lord's people as are brought to the knowledge of Christ, it is from the word, and by the Spirit, they receive this knowledge into their minds: where this is truly the case, they know Christ as truly as they ever will even in heaven. Not so fully, nor so immediately, nor so comprehensively; I am not speaking on these subjects, I am speaking of the realities contained in these subjects. Some, as one most justly expresses it, do not want Christ to be preached unto them; they want Christ to be formed in them. Now Christ must be first preached and believed in, or he cannot be received into our minds: and then the Holy Ghost giving us a clear apprehension of Him, as set before us in the everlasting gospel, he forms him in our hearts: then He becomes our *All in All*. Many persons say, they want to know Christ. I must for myself say, I do not. Many startle when they hear me so express myself; yet there is no cause for the same. My friends, I know Christ as really and truly as I ever shall: I shall ever be aiming to know Him more fully, more spiritually, more comprehensively: yet this is not to know Him more truly. If you do not make these distinctions, I do. I can trust on Christ no farther than I know Him. If I did not know Him in his mediatorial Person, love, office, work and power; I could not, nor would I, trust my present and everlasting concerns with Him. It is what I know of Him, from the gospel of his grace, and the teachings of his Spirit, who hath revealed Him in me, is the only ground of all my faith and confidence in Him. We shall all need the continual teaching and inspiration of his Spirit, all

the way to heaven: yet we who are brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ shall never need any new truths, or revelations of Him. No; indeed we shall not; neither can it be. We shall need fresh light into the same truths: we shall need fresh sights and communions with the same most precious Lord Jesus: we shall need the continual renewings of the Holy Ghost: yet the whole of this, is only a very blessed recital of the same truths and subjects. We know Christ; we go on and increase more and more in the knowledge of Christ; we increase more and more in real communion with the Lord Jesus: but we need no new acquaintance or apprehensions of Him, we only want the Holy Ghost continually to re-inscribe in our minds, what he hath already taught us, and to exercise our minds most blessedly on the same: then we have all we can have, this side heaven. The Lord's people will never get to be above the use of ordinances, let them be ever so established, strengthened, and confirmed in Christ. He hath promised his presence to his ministers, and churches in the use and observation of them to the end of the world. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Now were these ordinances to be discontinued, Christ would not have given this promise of his Spirit, blessing, and presence. And none set a more true and proper value on all, and every part of instituted worship, than grown, established saints: so that whilst it may be said to them, *Ye need not that any man teach you*, yet there are none of a more teachable spirit, or more willing to be taught, even of man, than these are, so far as is consistent with the word and truth of God. And we cannot be partakers of a greater blessing than to be taught by the Spirit, and led into the true knowledge of the Father and the Son; for *who teacheth like him?* None; in what sense these persons, *John* here addresseth, needed not any man's teaching, I have aimed to set before us: as also how these words are to be understood, I have shewed you; I will now just join the whole of the period together, hoping thereby the full light of the same, may shine forth, and reflect its whole brightness on your minds. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.* What Christ had taught them, remained in them; so did the holy Teacher, and his teaching also. Hence it was, in the sense as hath been expressed and explained, they needed not that any man should teach them. And this brings me

3. To shew that these persons were so taught, as to be preserved from error. *But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, or it:* for so it is in the margin, referring back to the word *truth*. *But as the same anointing teacheth you of things, and is truth—ye shall abide in it:* that is, in the truth of the everlasting gospel, or Christ who is the substance of the same. In going throughout our present head, we will take in both.

Truth is the alone preservative from error: these saints were taught by the infallible Spirit: they were taught all things. Our apostle seems to have fixed his eye on these words of Christ, who said to his disciples, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." This had been fulfilled, and these very persons were partakers of the benefit: they had the

true Anointing: they needed not to be taught by any man, as if he could bring any truth to them they were not fully acquainted with. The anointing abode upon them, and with them. It, says the apostle, teacheth all things; which is the very expression our Lord himself useth, in the words just quoted from Him. There is no error, nor the least possibility of it, in the teaching of the Holy Spirit: what he teacheth is truth. It is wholly, and nothing but truth: as these persons had been taught the Truth by the Lord the Spirit, so it was certain they would abide in the Truth, even in Christ; and also in the truths and in every truth, of the everlasting gospel. Thus the apostle expresseth himself to these saints on the subject of their continuance in the faith, and perseverance in the same. They knew the Truth: they had received it from the Lord Jesus Christ. He had given them his Holy Spirit who had led and guided them into all Truth: and who was engaged according to the Divine settlements, to keep them in the Truth, and to abide with them for ever. It is on this the apostle both exhorts and encourages them: and it is only on the same foundation we can encourage each other, and thereby go on with alacrity to the city of habitation. It is of great importance to be thus taught of the Lord. It produces many most blessed effects within us. His divine teaching abideth with us: we cannot wholly lose it. He sets it on with his own divine impression. He gives us to see and view it in his own light: by the which the glory of it is so reflected on our minds, as that we cannot reflect, by any communication we may make of it to others, the full glory and splendour we see in it ourselves. When we see the glory of Christ, the excellency of his righteousness, the virtue and efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, in the light, and are led into the true knowledge and apprehension of the same, by the intuitive light and teaching of the Holy Spirit, the whole of these important verities appear far more glorious, and important, than all these do, when only spoken of, and taught us by the mere teaching of men. And while we are not to despise the teaching of men, so far as it is in real unison and conformity to the written and revealed word, and will of God, yet it is the unction, or teaching of the Holy Ghost, which only can make the outward teaching and preaching of the gospel profitable unto our souls: for it is he only who can lead us into the life-giving sense of it, and give us, and make us partakers of, the life-giving meaning of it, so as that we may be quickened up into real communion with the Lord thereby. Such as the Lord the Spirit teacheth, he gives them to distinguish truth from error. He keeps them in the Truth, and hereby he preserves them from error. He gives them to value Truth as truth. He gives them to know, the scriptures are the sacred and grand repository of all Truth—That Christ is the Jewel in this glorious cabinet—That in Him are contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—All which is set before us, in the ever-blessed gospel. It should here be observed, that whilst no man is to be looked on as infallible, nor any, or every thing he says to be so, yet every one, so far as he hath received the knowledge of the Truth, or, any one single truth into his mind, as the Lord the Spirit hath taught it him, so far he is infallibly taught. Which most especially appears, when the Truth and the person's spiritual apprehensions of the same, are altogether congenial with the written word. For whatsoever we receive for Truth into our minds, which is not exactly as the word of God expresses and states it, is not the teaching of

the Spirit of God. It may be for this reason, the apostle here says, *and ye need not that any man teach you.* Alluding to the false teachers in that day; some of whom denied that Christ was come in the flesh; others, who denied the Personality of the Son, by the which they denied the Personality of the Father also. Now these saints had been taught the truth of Christ's incarnation, and his distinctive Personality from the Father, and this by the Unction which they had received from Christ himself, consequently they did not want to learn this from any man. The truth of this always remained in their minds. It abode within them: and all connected with the same, and belonging thereto, it was all incorporated in their renewed minds, by the Anointing which they had received from the Holy One. Let us see if this is not the substance of our text, by reciting it afresh. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* Christ the Person spoken of by the term, *him*, is *yesterday, to-day, and the same forever.* His own promise is like himself, immutably the same. He shed his Holy Spirit, the true Unction on his Church; which abideth for ever. This was agreeable with his promise. Hereby it was his Church, and the true members of the same, knew the Lord, from the least of them to the greatest. They had the Spirit's teaching first, and man's teaching afterwards. The same most blessed anointing they had received, led them into all truth. The Holy Ghost taught them all things. He was Truth. The Spirit of Truth. He led them into all Truth. He guided them into it. There was not the least possibility of mistake in any of his communications of Truth unto them. This amongst the blessings of his teaching is one—that as they had been taught by Him, the true knowledge of Christ, so through the same Teacher, and teaching they should abide in Christ; which the apostle is confident of. He speaks it out unto them for their comfort and encouragement, and that they might be confident in the same also. In the margin, the word is *it*: ye shall abide in *it*. Which, if the word *it*, be admitted, must then refer to the truths of the everlasting gospel, to each and every one of them, as these are set before us in the word of God, as they are particularly stated in the mind and will of God: therefore from the greatest to the least of them, they must be of vast importance to each, and every one of the children of the Most High. And consequently to be assured and confirmed in the belief of a continuation in them, by this assertion from the apostle, must have been very acceptable to the saints here written unto. Christ is the substance of the everlasting gospel, and every truth contained in it, is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The love of the Holy Trinity, with their vast designs of grace towards the whole election of grace, are explained, unfolded, and expressed in the whole, and throughout the whole system of divine truth, which we most commonly express by the term, the doctrines of grace: which the Holy Spirit only, can lead into the true knowledge of, give us true light, and right spiritual apprehensions of; so as that we may receive Christ by them into our minds, have real communion with Him, and the Father in Him, in the knowledge of these, by the grace of the Spirit: and thus be established in Christ, and in the doctrines of his grace, so as to abide in Him, and in his truth, and not to depart therefrom. Which brings me to my next and last particular—

4. To endeavour to express the benefit of abiding in Christ, or in the Truth, the one being here equal with the other. *Ye shall abide in him.* I will once more repeat the text. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

I have done my best in going over, and through the former heads of my discourse, and hope the Lord will be pleased to guide me through this with equal satisfaction. Our apostle seems here, to have our Lord's words and exhortation in view. He said to his disciples in his last sermon with them, immediately before his Passion, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.—If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John xv. 4, 5, 7. All of this is very congenial with our text. Such as have received the true anointing, they abided in the truth, and the truth abideth in them. The teaching they have received they can never lose. They have received the knowledge of all things necessary to their salvation. What the Holy Ghost hath taught them, and every truth they have received from Him, is as true as he himself is, which is the teacher of the same. This being the case, they shall abide in it, agreeable to his teaching: so that all this is positively asserted by the apostle. Ye shall abide in Him; this the apostle asserts shall be the case with all those who are taught of the Spirit. It cannot be otherwise: for as the new-birth in the soul is immutable, so the faculties of it, being opened, enlightened, and taught the truths of the everlasting gospel, by the Holy and infallible Spirit, it must be, that what is received from Him into the spiritual mind, must abide therein for ever. Not that it is always alike operative; yet it is always remaining therein: so that when the Holy Spirit is pleased to breathe afresh, there is an outgoing of heart and soul, of thought and affection toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father in Him. To abide in Christ is to continue in the true faith and confession of Him; and of all which concerns Him—His truths, his ordinances, his worship, and the right confession of Him. To abide in Christ, is to persevere in the truths of Christ's everlasting gospel, and to continue in it unto the end. And there is abundance of real blessedness, contained in this. It is the very *coronis* of manifestative and influential grace. To know the Person of Christ,—it is the greatest blessing which can be made known to us, or which we can enjoy, this side heaven: for the knowledge of the Person of Christ, is the key which unlocks all other mysteries: none of which are rightly and spiritually understood, except his Person, who, and what He is, is first taken into the mind. And this knowledge wholly springs from revelation; "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost:" and the stedfastness of our faith and dependance on Him, depend on our true and right knowledge of Him. We prove we abide in Him, when we are contented with the revelation made of Him in the word: and when we are well pleased, to receive all our real apprehensions, and increasing views of Him, from the same immutable record

concerning Him; this is good evidence for us, that we are taught of the Spirit, and that we abide in Christ; for it proves to demonstration, that we are satisfied with what we know of Him. It does our souls good. It draws out our hearts and souls after Him. He becomes our centre and circumference. We see and perceive by the knowledge, and light let in upon our minds concerning Him, there is that in the Person of the God-Man, which will satisfy our spiritual minds to, and throughout the ages of, eternity.

Now to abide in the views, belief, and spiritual apprehensions of Christ, so as by this very mean to be fixed on Him, and not depart herefrom, must be in and of itself, real blessedness: and as there can be no abiding in Christ, but as there is an abiding in the truths of the everlasting gospel, which is what Christ is, immutably one and the same for evermore; so both are included here. And the blessedness of knowing the Truth, and abiding in the same, is very advantageous to the spiritual mind. To abide in the doctrine of God's act of eternal election, is to continue in the belief of the Father's everlasting love to the persons of the elect, whom he loved in Christ, and chose in Christ, and blessed in Christ, and accepted in his Person before the foundation of the world. There is a blessedness in knowing this, as truths and doctrines of the grace of God, which have their existence in his mind, and which have been put forth towards us, and upon us, which can never be fully comprehended in our minds, no, not in heaven: because the love of the Eternal Three, in Christ, to the Elect in Him, is infinite; and the minds of the whole election of grace, are but finite. Therefore when they are filled through and through with the utmost comprehension of it, the infinite love of God towards them in the Person of Christ, will never be known by them in the uttermost of it: yet what they know of it, and enjoy of the same in their minds, will constitute their complete blessedness and felicity to eternity. So that in proportion to what they know of the same now, their blessedness is, as it respects their real communion with the Eternal Three, in Christ, in God's everlasting love to them, and as it concerns their real enjoyment of the same in their own souls. It is therefore the essence of blessedness, to abide in Christ—To be living over in our minds, what is revealed of Him, and concerning Him, in the sacred word of revelation: we hereby more sensibly enjoy the blessedness of this, than it is in our power to explain. Nay, I am fully persuaded, there are many blessed outgoings of the mind after Christ, many very blessed apprehensions and conceptions formed in the same, by the grace and influences of the Holy Ghost, concerning Christ, and what the Father is to us, in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus, which cannot be spoken out: nor the blessedness either, which is at times enjoyed by the saints of the Lord, in such acts of personal communion with Christ, as they are at seasons favoured with. It is wholly mental, spiritual, supernatural, and intuitive. This accompanies an abiding in Christ: and such as are under the true unction of the Spirit, are more or less favoured with it. The apostle says, *ye shall abide in him, or it.* The Lord's people are here, if I may so say, confirmed in this abiding in Christ, and in the truths of his most blessed word. And for the apostle to set his seal to this, is of vast importance: nor should this be overlooked by us. It is of more importance, than the assertion of all the real ministers of Christ, now on earth. Not but their's, founded

on truth, is worthy of very high respect; yet they not being, or professing to be, apostles, their testimony of Christ falls lower than that of an inspired penman of sacred scripture. Now this word of confirmation, *ye shall abide in him*, with all the blessedness contained in it, is founded on what went before; which is this, *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* Then most assuredly, all the blessedness contained in our abiding in Him, will be produced in us, as the virtue of his Person, love, righteousness, atonement, and salvation is made known in our hearts, by the truths and doctrines of his heavenly grace, as they in all their weight, and authority, are opened and explained inwardly, and spiritually from the word, and by the unction of the Holy Ghost. So that I conceive, I have set before you, the whole contained in the words of my text. I do not mean I have exhausted it; nor do I mean no more can be said of it. No; God forbid such vain thoughts should be mine. I only mean, I conceive you have the outline of all contained in the general subject of it. Now, beloved, I shall leave the whole with you; to reflect and think over the same. And I shall also leave it with the Holy Spirit, for Him to bless it, and make use of it, just as seemeth good to his Divine Majesty.

May He favour you with his continual teachings: and maintain, in a way and manner agreeable to the good pleasure of his will, what he hath taught you concerning Christ, and his great salvation. May He confirm you in the Truth, and confirm the Truth in you. May He keep you in the Truth, and save you from every error and heresy. May He give you to partake of all the blessedness contained in the knowledge of the Person of Christ, and in every truth, and doctrine of his everlasting gospel. And thus I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able "to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." May the Lord bless his Truth to you. Amen.

S E R M O N XXXII.

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.—
I JOHN II. 28.

THE apostle has been warning the saints to whom he wrote concerning the antichrists of that present day. He gave an account of what their leading doctrines were. One sort of them denied Jesus of Nazareth was the true Christ of God: the others denied Christ, to be the true and co-equal Son of God: this broke in upon the Personality of the Father and the Son, which was by no means to be given way to, it being a most destructive and pernicious error, and heresy, which sapped the very

foundation of the whole system of grace. He therefore exhorts the saints to abide in the same truth concerning the Person of Christ, and in the same acknowledgment of the Father, which they had heard and received from the beginning of their hearing and receiving the everlasting gospel, as this would be the mean, by which they would enjoy in their own souls, all contained in the promise which was promised them, eternal life. He wrote what he had written to them, to guard them against seducers. He encourages them from the consideration of their having received the true Unction, that they would most assuredly abide in Christ. His words are these, "But the anointing which ye have received of him" (that is Christ, the Holy One) "abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Then he gives the following exhortation, *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* In which we may observe the following particulars, and in the opening of the same, we shall have the full outline of our text. I would aim to open it thus, we have

1. The exhortation, thus most affectionately addressed. *And now, little children, abide in him.*

2. The reason which the apostle gives for this address. *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

3. What is to be understood concerning Christ's coming.

4. What is meant by these expressions. *That, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

May the Lord lead me through each of these divisions, so as to explain them, without putting any false comment, or gloss on them. I am

1. To open the exhortation, which is thus most affectionately addressed to these saints. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

As these persons had union to the Lord Jesus Christ, interest in Him, and communion with Him, the apostle would have them to abide in the full and constant profession of this; which would be the best outward proof they could give of the reality of the same: and hereby the reality of their grace would most evidently appear. This hath been urged upon them over and over again. We should learn from hence, not to be too scrupulous of expressing the very same terms, truths, and words, over and over as it may be necessary to the subjects which may come before us, in the ministry of God's most holy word. Our Lord sets us an example. According to the sacred evangelists, he delivered over the same sermons, and parables, and expressed many of his divine sentences over and over again, and almost in the same words. We therefore need not be ashamed of following his example in this. We, be we either preachers or hearers, believers or public persons in the congregation of saints, cannot act better in any of our stations, than by expressing ourselves when we set forth the truths of God, in such words as are most suitable to convey our clearest apprehensions of the same to others. Our apostle was all love. It is said in Ecclesiastical History, as he lived to a great age,

as to that of an hundred, so he could say no more when he came into the assembly than this, "Little children, love one another." I cannot think our Lord would keep such a man as the apostle *John* was, here, merely for this. His simple address here, leaving out his reason which he gives for his address, is this, *And now, little children, abide in him.* Every word deserves notice. He is towards the close of his present subject. He gives them an item of it. He knits what he hath to say together, that it may not be lost upon them. *And now*, this is the upshot, and close of my present subject, which you will do well to remember, and make a proper use of. *Little children*, I know not how to speak out my love for you in Christ Jesus, and my bowels of affection for you in Him, but by this most simple expression of my christian regards for you. What I would most earnestly request of you is this, that *ye would abide in him.* *And now, little children, abide in him.* Let Christ be your object. Let Him be your subject. Let Him be your centre, and your circumference. Let Him be your *Alpha* and *Omega*. Let Him be your beginning and your end: your first and last. You have been favoured with the true knowledge of Him. You have been blessed with most clear, free, and blessed communion with Him. You have been kept fast and firm to his cause and interest, notwithstanding all the storms and blasts of hell, and the most awful apostacy of the times. Whilst there are many antichrists, and deceivers, who aim to seduce you from the faith, yet ye have been preserved in the true acknowledgment of the Truth, in the acknowledgment of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. I would you should cleave to the acknowledgment of His Person. I would ye should abide in the confession of His Name, Salvation, Righteousness and Sacrifice. Little children, abide in His truths and doctrines—In His commands and institutions—In His order, fellowship and ordinances, as you have them delivered by Him, just as he gave the commandment for them, and for the observance of them, during the space he abode with his church, from his resurrection to his ascension. My little children, you have the whole of my heart. I love you for the Lord's sake. I can do you no greater service than to bestow on you this exhortation. It contains every thing which can be beneficial to you. No life will ever be to you, this side heaven, beyond contemplation on all contained in Christ. He is Heaven's wonder. He is Heaven's glory. Therefore as you live over Christ in your minds, you will have life everlasting in your hearts. You will have inward fellowship with Him who is your life. Your present life—with Him who is the God of your life, who is your spiritual and eternal life. This will cause you to abide in Him, and not depart in one single instance from Him, so as to seek life, perfection and happiness in any beside Him. This is the substance of the exhortation. Which is as necessary now, in the present time, for us, and to be administered unto us, as it could be for them. It is a blessing, if it can be pronounced of us, that we have received the true knowledge of Christ into our minds, and have the real love of Him in our hearts. If this be so ever so truly, yet we want establishment; so as to abide in the truths and ordinances of the Lord Jesus: and not to be so hot at one time for them, as though our salvation was contained in them. And at some other period to live so, as that we treated these important things, as of very little, or no importance. By looking more distinctly and particularly at these words before us, *And now, little children, abide in him*, it seems to me, as if

the Person of Christ, was the immediate object, and subject the apostle hath his own mind most particularly fixed upon, and which he would have theirs fixed on also—To abide in the true and right belief of the Person of Christ, that He is truly, properly, distinctively, and essentially the Son of the living God, and that by the union of an individual humanity with His Person he is thereby God-Man; and as such is the object of our faith and hope—of our worship, confidence, love, joy and delight—in whom our whole salvation is contained, and who is the rock of our strength; and to have unshaken confidence in Him, at all times, and for all things. This is of the utmost consequence to us in our walk before the Lord, and also as it respects our profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before men. We all need to be well acquainted with the Person of Christ, and this from the scriptures of truth. We all need to be exhorted in the most affectionate manner to abide by them, and the revelation and testimony given and contained in them concerning our Christ—That we may never cease to look at our Lord Jesus Christ, as set most gloriously before us in them: and not in any one instance depart from the same. This abiding in Him, is to receive the doctrine of Christ's Personality: to abide, or continue in the belief of the same: and not to be diverted from it, by any errors, and heresies which may be vented contrary to the true doctrine given thereof, in the volume of inspiration. I am persuaded if you will look back to verse 18th, and proceed on to the verse now before us, you will find it punctually and precisely; you will clearly perceive, the apostle is warning saints against antichristian errors; and encourageth the saints to stand fast in Christ, and in the faith of all the truths, doctrines, ordinances, and holiness of the gospel; his reasons for which are expressed and included in these words, *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* I have gone over these subjects again and again, hoping thereby you will clearly understand the context; which will be a great mean of understanding the true meaning of the text itself; which I cannot conceive can be properly apprehended but by this mean. Therefore if I may have seemed tedious unto you, on this account, I say then unto you, Brethren, forgive me this wrong. I proceed

2. To shew, and give the apostle's reason for this his address, as set forth and expressed by him in these words, *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Person spoken of by *Him* and *He*. It is He who is to appear. The *we* here spoken of may comprehend the apostles and the saints. The abiding in Christ, would give both to the saints and apostles, confidence: so that they should not be ashamed before Christ at his coming. What is meant here of Christ's coming, as also what is to be understood by the expressions *that, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming,* are not to come forward under this present head, as to be fully opened and explained, but are reserved to be the two last closing heads of this discourse. I am now, only to give the apostle's reason, for this his address to these saints, His address to them was, *And now, little children, abide in him.* The reason is this, *that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* It seems to be opened by these words in his 2nd Epistle, verse 8. Where our *John* says, "Look

to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, or, gained, or which ye have gained, but that ye, or but that we receive a full reward." There are many gone forth of whom I have warned you, who preach contrary to the glorious gospel which I have delivered unto you. Should you embrace what they teach, *we* should fall short of the glory, of your having received, embraced, professed, and practiced that gospel which we delivered unto you. *We*, should you fall into their errors and heresies, lose the comfort and glory we hoped to have, in being the honoured instruments of your being effectually called to the true knowledge and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, under our ministration of the true, pure and everlasting gospel unto you. Now to prevent all apostacy from the truths of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that is the reason I write thus unto you. I am fully persuaded for myself that ye will abide in the faith, and persevere unto the end; yet it appears to me right to give you an idea of my being very mindful of you in the Lord. Therefore I would have you to take in to your own minds, what the effects would be, were you to verge from the Truth. We should be ashamed of our confidence in the Lord touching you. We should have no confidence in the Lord, that we should have to present you before Him, as the Seals of our apostolical ministry. And some amongst you, as the first fruits of our ministry unto Christ. We shall be ashamed before Him at his coming, that we have thanked Him, for giving you to us, as seals to the truth of what we have preached to you, concerning Him, should it be found that after all your past profession of Him, you should by any means drop your most holy profession, and not cleave with full purpose of heart unto Him. My beloved, these are the reasons of my so writing thus; not so much out of fear of you, as by way of caution and direction: that by giving you a hint of what consequences would follow, you being forewarned, will be forearmed, against all evils of every sort, and by abiding in Christ, and all which concerns him, all may be well with you. This is my design in the whole, which I have written, or may again write unto you. If you abide in Christ, this will be your security. I therefore do not want to multiply words; I only request you, and this I do with the very uttermost earnestness, to abide in Christ. *My little children*, you are dear to me as mine own soul: some of you are mine, as begotten to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in Christ, under my ministry. I prize your real Spiritual growth into Christ, and your increasing communion with Him, above my chiefest joy. I well know how this is promoted—By what means this is to be kept up—Nothing will be so advantageous to you, as increasing in the knowledge of Christ: there is a sufficiency in the same, to feed, and keep up your minds with perpetual, and everlasting vigour; yea, it will in Heaven, without the least abatement, to the ages of eternity. I therefore say unto you, *And now, little children, abide in him*: be well pleased with Him; study Him; go over his beauties and perfections; look upon, and contemplate what He is, in his Person, beauties, charms, excellencies, graces, fulness, perfections. Survey Him as the Lord your Righteousness, purity, and perfection. Look on yourselves as one in Him, and as complete in Him. Consider what you are in Him. You have life in Him. You have light, righteousness, holiness and perfection in Him. You cannot look on Him, and on your persons in Him, but you must be perfectly satisfied with Christ, and your persons also, as in Him. All the riches of grace and

glory are in Him. He is the glorious Person in whom they are all contained. He hath the key of David. He can give you such views of Himself, as will fix your minds as truly and immutably on Him, as you will never be capable of going off Him for evermore. This will be the case in the state of glory. *My little children*, study his Person. Think on his love. Meditate on his salvation. Go over every part of the same. You will certainly find a glorious allsufficiency in Him, and all which concerns Him, as will be engaging, attracting, assimilating, and influential. I am fully persuaded of all this for myself. And I am fully persuaded of all this for you. I want you to live in the real belief, apprehension, and enjoyment of all this continually. I want you to be so fixed in the belief, as never to wander in the least herefrom. It is on this very account, and with this very view, aim, and end I write unto you. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* Thus I have given you my reason for thus addressing you. It is out of love to you, and for the Truth's sake. That you may go on and "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil. i. 9—11.

As I have given you the apostle *John's* address to these saints, with his reasons for the same, I would, before I enter on the other particular heads of this discourse which are to follow, give you some remarks which may be beneficial to us, as naturally arising out of what hath been delivered. It is very evident from it that the saints' being taught by the infallible Spirit, and guided into all Truth, and knowing all things, does by no means supersede their being instructed, exhorted, directed, and cautioned by those who are over them in the Lord: so far from it, that it is most highly becoming in them, to submit to all this, and be thankful for the same. Nor should the ministers of Christ, even those who have the greatest light and knowledge into the greatest mysteries of godliness, and who have been most free in their communications of the same, think it needless to exhort the saints with whom they are in connection, to hold fast, and cleave with their whole souls, to the truths of Christ's gospel which have been delivered unto them. Our apostle in the words of the text now before us, is giving his reason why he exhorted saints to abide in Christ,—in the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity,—in the true acknowledgment of Christ's person—of his open and manifest incarnation—of the reality of his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and all which was connected herewith; he says, he does it on account of Himself, and the rest of his brethren in the ministry: that they might have confidence, when he, and they should have to appear before the Lord Jesus, and that they might not be ashamed before Him at his coming. Surely it is also implied, these persons to whom He, and they ministered, could not but be involved in the same, with himself, and the other apostles, and ministers of the word. The following passage may serve as a clue to guide us to a right apprehension of what is now before us. "Obey them that have the rule, or guide over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account,

that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. xiii. 17.

Saints cannot fall from the grace of God; yet they may be remiss, and slothful: they may be careless and inattentive to Truth: they may cease to obey, and submit to such as the Lord Jesus Christ hath set and placed over them as their spiritual guides, pastors, and teachers. This ought not to be; because they watch for their souls, as they which must give an account to Christ, and before Him, of what they deliver unto them. Now let the doctrine be ever so purely dispensed, if it be not received as delivered, it cannot produce its proper effects in the mind, and the hearers are not what they ought to be, in proportion to the clear, ever-blessed, and everlasting gospel, which hath been delivered unto them. So that when the ministers give up their account at the Throne of grace, concerning the spiritual and supernatural truth and mysteries of grace they have been delivering to the people, they cannot do it with joy before the Lord. It is with grief. Because though they have delivered the Truth according to God's most holy mind and will, set forth in the word of truth, yet it has not been received by saints, as the word of God, which worketh effectually in them which believe; which is cause of grief, before the Lord, in the minds of ministers in their giving an account of their ministry, before our Lord Jesus Christ: and it is also unprofitable to such, of whom this account is given. As I conceive this cannot but cast light on the subject, so I think the following quotations also may. The apostle speaking of Christ, says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Col. i. 28, 29. *Paul* is speaking of saints, as he is also to them. Those to whom he ministered he warned them—To avoid every error—All sorts of evil—Sin of every kind. He preached Christ to them to the very uttermost of his knowledge of Him. He taught and instructed those who were committed to his charge, in all the mysteries of the kingdom of God. His end was that he might present every man perfect in the knowledge of Christ Jesus: and he laboured to obtain this with might and energy. It hath from hence been concluded, Apostles, and the ministers of Christ, will have to deliver up their flocks in the New Jerusalem state, and give their ministerial accounts of them to the Lord. And if we are thus to understand it, we cannot but confess there is a great and glorious propriety in it. The apostles might well be tenacious of their flocks, and of what reception they gave to the word of Christ; seeing though our Lord could not lose one of his beloved ones—they might. And this may cast light on the apostle's words to the saints at *Thessalonica*; of whom, he was fully persuaded of their election of God. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ? For ye are our glory and joy." 1 Epis. ii. 19, 20. I proceed to our next particular, which is this, to shew and express in this head

3. What is here to be understood concerning Christ's coming. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

My present enquiry is, what is here to be understood in this place concerning the coming of Christ. And this I shall aim to be as clear in

the explanation of, as I possibly may, as the Lord shall be pleased to enable me.

With respect to the coming of Christ, as expressed in the New Testament, it is spoken of under a variety of circumstances. 1. He speaks, and is spoken of as coming, when the destruction of the Jews, Jerusalem, and Judea is foretold by him, and his apostle. The following passages of scripture will confirm this. Our Lord foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem to his disciples, says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 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." Matt. xxiv. 29—31. Our Lord when adjured by the high priest to say, if he were the Christ, the Son of God, affirmed it, and said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. xxvi. 64. What for?—To execute wrath on the Jewish nation. Our Lord when he delivered out what would come on the people of the Jews, and their nation, for their rejection of Him, and putting him to death, said to his own disciples, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke xxi. 36. All contained in this coming of Christ, is now finally past. Before it, *Peter* and the rest of the apostles, on, and after the day of Pentecost spake of it. He called it the "great and notable day of the Lord." *Paul* referring to it, says to the saints at *Philippi*, "The Lord is at hand." chap. iv. 5. And speaking of the Jews, he says, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." This refers to the vengeance executed on them by our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Romans. The apostle *James*, referring to our Lord's coming to avenge himself of his Jewish enemies, and to encourage the suffering saints to the exercise of patience says, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And, "behold, the judge standeth before the door." chap. v. 8, 9. *Peter* refers to it, and calls it "the fiery trial." He expressly says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:" by which he means the temple at Jerusalem, "and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 12—18. It was but a narrow escape of such as believed on Christ. Who if they had not attended to our Lord's words, of leaving Jerusalem and Judea, instantly, when they saw what must follow on the people, who should remain any longer in that land, and if they had not then gone over Jordan into a little village called *Pella*, they must have been consumed. There are other comings of Christ spoken of. As 2. His coming by death and taking his saints to heaven. 3. His coming to the conversion of the body of the Jewish people, which is so expressed, as if there would be a

visible appearance of Him in the heavens, so as that He shall be seen in the open region of the air. 4. He speaks of his coming to bring on the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. iii. 11. 5. He is spoken of as coming with ten thousand of his saints to judge the ungodly. 6. *Paul* speaks of Christ's coming at the end of time, and what is then to take place. And *John* speaks of the church and Christ in the new Jerusalem state. All these are important acts, which complete one vast and immense dispensation of judgment and truth.

I conceive a few brief hints are necessary, as thereby we shall have the more enlarged view of our subject, and the better opportunity of knowing what we are to understand of our Lord's appearing in our text. I will therefore notice Christ's coming to his saints by death. I conceive the following scriptures suited to this. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Luke xii. 35, 36. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 1—3. With respect to our Lord's coming to the conversion of the body, or bulk of the Jewish nation, I conceive the following scripture is very expressive of it. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Rev. i. 7. If every eye is to see him, then it must be a visible appearance. And where can this be but in the open region of the air? And if those who pierced him are to see Him, who are these but the Jews? Place this passage of the prophet *Zechariah* against it, "and I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born;" and say, if the one does not open the other? and if you want more, supply it with these words from the fourteenth chapter, verses, 3, 4, 5. "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Our Lord speaks of his coming in a way of judgment, on such as are professors of Him, yet not in truth nor in love: but altogether otherwise; and promises to preserve the *Philadelphian* church state from it. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. iii. 19. *Enoch* the seventh generation from *Adam*, as quoted by the apostle *Jude*, spoke of Christ's coming. "With ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." v. 14, 15. Christ's coming

at the end of time, is spoken of by the apostle *Paul* thus. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven." "He shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire." The apostle *Peter* says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Pet. iii. 10. The consequence of Christ's appearance will be, the full gathering of the whole election of grace—The resurrection of the elect, in their bodies from the grave and power of death—The change of the bodies of the elect who will remain in them to the very moment that change takes place. And *John* speaks of all the elect as completely glorious, and in the presence of Christ in the new-Jerusalem state, as presented by Him to the divine Father, with, lo, I, and the children thou hast given me. Now the question is this, what does the apostle mean in our text, by these words, *when he shall appear*? Christ is the Person spoken of. His appearance seems to be, either his coming in his wrath against the Jews, and Jerusalem: or his second coming in his kingdom and glory. As the apostle lived in the same age with the former, I should have no objection to conceive it might have respect to that event: nor to the latter also in a qualified point of view. As the destruction of the Jews drew on, the apostacy, or falling off from the profession of Christ, and his gospel very greatly abounded. So *John* might express himself, as he here doth, to denote how little confidence he should have in such and such, should they not abide in the true knowledge of the Truth as it is in Christ; he should not have confidence in presenting them to Christ, as such as his Majesty would approve. This seems to be countenanced by what another apostle says. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Cor. xi. 2. It appears to me, both these apostles, are upon one, and the same subject. I would add, as casting light on *John's* expressions, *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*, that our Lord spoke of his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, under this very term; and of *John's* remaining in the body, until this event should be accomplished. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John xxi. 22. Well then, if we give the meaning of it to be this—That the apostle was very desirous of finding these saints so truly kept from all sorts of errors, that when Christ should come to take vengeance on Jerusalem, and the Jews, he should not be ashamed before him, of these his converts: to which we must add, so far as these were real saints there could be no doubt of this: yet he might thus express himself, as *Peter* doth. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." 2 Epis. iii. 17. The marginal references to scriptures, are most certainly to the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his kingdom and glory, at his Personal appearing. Of which our *John* says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." But there is this most evident difference in the design of the apostle in these, so that they do not exactly suit together. This is to comfort them, and fill them with joy unspeakable, setting before them

what they now are, and what they will be when Christ shall appear. Our text is an exhortation to them to continue and abide in Christ : and whilst he could not speak more highly of them, nor more confidentially than he did of their continuance in the Truth ; yet there might be many in their communion, who might stand in need of understanding the reason of his address, as well as the address and what was contained in it. If we prefer it to respect the second coming of Christ, it must then refer to the personal presentation of saints, by the apostle, and others, to Christ, as the fruits of their own personal ministry. And rather refer to their own thoughts on these subjects now, in this present time state, than any thing which can possibly be the case then. I proceed to my next particular ; and, it may be, more light may be cast on the subject, by

4. Considering what is meant, or we may understand by these expressions. *That, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. And now, little children, abide in him ; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

If we take it of our Lord's second and Personal coming ; when he appears we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. Then we shall be without sin : consequently there will be no want of confidence in Him, nor in ourselves, or others : because we shall be in an immortal state, and be immortal in our bodies and minds. The apostle *Paul* says, " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 4. And in the resurrection state, and in the New-Jerusalem Church, these words will be pronounced on all the saints, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So that here will be nothing to be ashamed of. It must follow from hence, and also from the exhortation, that all this must belong to a time state. And the expressions, that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming, can only suggest, the great affection of our apostle, and all the rest of them, together with all the true ministers in that day, included in word *we*, to impress on the minds of all their beloved spiritual children what pleasure it gave them to impart the gospel unto them. . How earnestly desirous they were that they should be established in every truth and doctrine of the gospel of the blessed God. So far as they saw the fruits of their ministry, instamped on the minds of those whom they looked on as seals to their ministry, they could not but rejoice therein. They were confident many of them were the Lord's—That they would be presented by them as such, when Christ should appear. It would have grieved these holy men to have thought otherwise. It is on this the address is founded, and to this very end it is expressed—To the end that they abiding in Christ, the apostle and others, might not be ashamed of their confidence in these persons : but that by their persevering in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, and by no means going off the same, they thereby appearing to be the Epistles of Christ, known and read of all men to be such, there would be no cause of being ashamed of them, at Christ's coming. I would here add, and wish it to be observed, that just before the destruction of Jerusalem, there were the greatest number of apostates in any period of time. Hence it is, so much is said in the Epistle written to the *Hebrews* on this most tremendous subject. This may give light into these expressions, and what is

simply and really designed by them. *That, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* It would be putting the apostles in their own minds to the blush, to find such and such, who had in appearance, and as far as could be judged, by confessions and acknowledgments made of Truth, really received Christ, and that they were established in the same, to have such fall off, and fall away from their most holy and solemn confession of Christ, and his gospel, and ordinances, this could not but have been very grievous to the apostle. Yet it is more than probable, it was what they all had, from time to time been exercised with. And it proved they had no ground for confidence in all who professed Christ. They had to be ashamed of some who had made a very splendid profession in words and confessions. Therefore this gave room for the apostle to write as he here doth. And to back his exhortation with the reasons which he here assigns. And as he wrote under the immediate teaching of the Holy Ghost, it must fall with weight, and have its uses, even on the minds of the Lord's beloved ones. It would lead them to consider they were all to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. That they were to give account of themselves to God. That the secrets of all hearts were one day to be disclosed. That Christ was to be the judge. That every one is to give an account of himself to God. Therefore it behoved saints as saints, to act as in his immediate view. To be upright and sincere in their profession of Truth. That this would influence them in their whole conduct and deportment. So that whilst the apostle is concerned for himself, and others, who with himself were concerned in the good, spirituality and happiness of the churches of Christ, and in the good and prosperity of every spiritual and individual member of the same, he also gives these saints he here addresses, an opportunity of thinking and considering also for themselves, how much it became them to attend to all this: as it would prevent them from being ashamed the apostle should have confidence in them—That they were holy, and beloved; the partakers of Christ, seeing they proved the truth of all this, by abiding in Christ, and in the truths, and ordinances of his own most sacred institutions. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* His reasons are most cogent and powerful. Such as must have had their proper weight and influence on the minds of those who were thus addressed. If we were to consider it an apostolical address, to all the churches of the saints, reaching down to the second coming of Christ, I conceive we might then understand the meaning of it to be this. That what this apostle had written in this Epistle, was of that importance, he would all saints should attend closely to the same. That at the appearing of the Lord of glory, there might be no cause to be ashamed as though the apostles had not freely and fully made known to the churches, all they were intrusted with: nor be confounded before Him, as if they had been negligent in not giving a full and faithful account of the same. This seems to me to be a tolerable explanation of the verse. It is the best I can give. This I assure you it is. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming:* as though we had not fully set before you, the only preservative against all antichristian doctrines, and all antichrists, let them be who they may, and appear in what periods of time they may. This may be compared

with this exhortation of *Paul*, which is a very extensive one, and reaches down to the very present day, and how much farther we cannot say. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2. It is like for the substance of it, that apostolical charge given in these words to *Timothy*, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season; out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. 2 Epis. iv. 1, 2. The exhortation in my text, and those quoted, may serve to cast light one upon the other. I must now leave what hath been delivered to your consideration. May the Lord bless the same to you, so far as seemeth good in his sight, and lead you to receive into your minds, such light and instruction from the same, as will be beneficial unto you. This is my simple aim and end, together with the advancement of his glory. The Lord's blessing will best appear, as it may produce in you the fruits of faith and holiness; which can only be produced in proportion, as we receive the word into our minds, and it operates within us. Hence our Lord said in the days of his flesh, to one who cried out, blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked: yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. May you be of this number, and enjoy this blessedness in your own souls. Then you will find matter for continual praise, and for giving glory to God. The Lord grant it may be thus with you. Amen.

SERMON XXXIII.

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.—1 JOHN ii. 29.

THE apostle has been speaking to these saints to beware of seducers. He shewed how they were most divinely fortified against them, by the Anointing which they had received from the Lord Jesus Christ. This most divine Unction abode and remained with them. They were taught by Him who is Truth itself. The apostle assures them they should abide in the same. On this he bestows on them this exhortation. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* As this abiding in Christ, in the truths and doctrines of his gospel, and ordinances of his most holy gospel, will most clearly, openly, and manifestatively appear by your unfeigned faith in Christ, and your holiness of walk and conversation, so I cannot but address you, with what you are fully acquainted with, that there is not an individual who knoweth Christ

to be righteousness itself, but he is constrained to be righteous also, in his walk and conduct. And this is an outward evidence that such are born of God. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* Your union unto, and personal interest in Christ, are best proved outwardly, by your continuation in your holy profession of Him: and in your living forth the grace which ye have received from him. Your owning, confessing, and acknowledging Christ to be righteous, this is openly done, by your bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, to his praise and glory. Such hereby declare themselves to be regenerated persons. They are new creatures in Christ: which is all from the grace of the Holy Spirit, who hath wrought effectually and powerfully within them, and upon them, and made them, to use *Peter's* expression, partakers of the divine nature. 2 Epis. i. 4. Hereby real believers are manifested. They know Christ to be *the Righteous One*. They know his gospel in its truth and doctrine, its ordinances, precepts, commands, and injunctions are holy, just, and good. Hence they know that such as perform righteous acts are born of God: and this is the outward evidence of the same. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* In which words we have the following particulars, which if rightly opened will be explanatory of the text, and give us a clear view and apprehension of the same.

1. The apostle here appeals to these saints regarding an immutable truth, concerning Christ; that He is righteous: that they knew He was so. This was a certainty with them. They could not call it into question. He introduces it with an *If*. Yet not as doubting or calling in question the same. He only does it by way of application, or affirmation—Seeing it is so; Or, forasmuch as it is so. *If ye know that he is righteous.* The Person spoken of is Christ. He is the Righteous Branch. The Righteous One. The Lord our Righteousness. He is the Just One. The Holy One.

2. He makes a second appeal to those whom he here addresses. And it is contained in these words. *If ye know Christ to be righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

3. The new-birth is here attributed to Christ, as it is elsewhere to the Father, and the Spirit. See 1 Pet. i. 3. James i. 17. John iii. 3—8. *Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* That is, of Christ.

4. Regeneration is the foundation of all righteousness in the soul, and the principle from whence it originates; and the exercise of it, is an outward evidence of our being born again, and that we are interested in the glorious and most complete righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus you have before you the heads and generals of our present sermon. I am

1. To set before you, how the apostle in the words of my text, appeals to these saints, concerning an immutable truth, which concerns Christ himself. *If ye know that he is righteous.* The word *He* refers to Christ. This is clear from the former verse. *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* The appeal is concerning Him. It is addressed to saints. They are

addressed with an *If*. Not as calling any part of what is contained in the matter expressed into question ; but to fix it the more effectually on their minds. It is as much as though he had said, insomuch as ye know so and so : which as it is immutable truth, I appeal to you as the Lord's witnesses hereof. You have in your own souls, a real conception and apprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was holy and righteous as man. He was so inherently. He was so outwardly. He was purity without spot. He was holy in heart and life. The law of God was inscribed on it. His whole life was the transcript of it, and that in its most consummate perfection. These saints knew this. As also they knew Christ was essentially holy and righteous. They knew He was Personally holy and righteous. They knew and acknowledged Him to be Mediatorially holy and righteous. They also confessed Him to be holy and righteous, as the Head and Surety of His church. He having for all his people been made as their Surety, under the law : and he having fulfilled the same for them, was the end of it for righteousness to every one that believeth. He was the Lord their Righteousness. In whose righteousness they were made the righteousness of God in Him. The prophet says, *In the LORD shall all the children of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Now there can be no saintship without the knowledge of this. Therefore the address is not made to them, as though there were any darkness on their minds respecting it. No ; it is quite otherwise. This is the reason and motive with the apostle for it—That he might deduce such such an inference, as would be fully and freely acceded unto by them ; that all such as apprehended the Lord Jesus Christ, and had actually received Him in into their minds, would make this outwardly and visibly evident, by walking righteously, holily, and godly in this present world : this was his motive, end, and design in what he says in the words before us. He is not here speaking of their knowing Christ to be their everlasting righteousness and perfection in the sight of their heavenly Father ; who beheld them in Him before the foundation of the world, who had most graciously shone manifestatively upon them, from heaven, the habitation of His glory, in the real glory and efficacy of his love on their minds, and admitted them again and again, into real communion with Him, and his Son Jesus Christ. The apostle well knew, these persons had most glorious and realizing evidence of all this in their own souls. He is speaking of the outward evidence of all this ; which appeared in the outward conformity to the righteousness and example of our most precious Lord Jesus. If ye know that He is righteous, and that He is the Lord our righteousness, if ye know what it is, to live in daily meditations on Him, ye cannot but know and acknowledge, this produces conformity unto Him. Thus the apostle secretly and covertly, yet in a most effectual manner, affirms they did know Christ : and that He was both holy and righteous—That all perfection was contained in his life—That every grace was displayed and shone forth, in every temper and expression of his mind—That He was holiness to the Lord for us—And is holiness from the Lord with us—That we cannot converse with Him, but it will produce in us, its most blessed fruits and effects. This the apostle does, to put down, and discountenance that spirit of licentiousness which was predominant amongst some careless professors in that day, of apostacy, and looseness. It should most certainly be kept in remembrance, that the apostles is here

in this very verse, speaking by way of discrimination. This most clearly appears on the very face of the words. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* It is neither our being new-born, or doing righteousness, is our holiness, or righteousness in the sight of God : but it is by these we are distinguished in the sight of men : and by these proof and evidence is given unto them, that we are real believers in Christ, and have Him dwelling, ruling, and abiding in us. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Holy One. The Just One. The Righteous One. He is Jehovah the Righteousness of His whole church. In Him they are holy, righteous, and complete ; without, and abstracted from any thing in themselves but sins and miseries, wants and vanity. But this is not the subject here. The apostle is writing to such as were cleansed in the blood of Christ from all sin ; who had him for their Righteousness, Advocate, and Propitiation ; who were admitted into fellowship with Him, and with the Father in Him. He is speaking of what they knew of the influence and effects of this on their minds, so as to be a mean of regulating their outward walk and conversation before others. Whereby proof and evidence was given that they were true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is that which is here designed by the words before us. If ye know that Christ is righteous—that He fulfilled all righteousness in His life for us—that in Him we have the perfection of all righteousness set before us—that there is nothing contained in His doctrine, precepts, commands, and ordinances, but that which conduces to the outward observance and practice, but that which constitutes and promotes the practice of righteousness, then, as I appeal to you for the truth of this, and am fully persuaded, as sure as you know Christ, you will affirm, and confirm this to be immutable truth : so I shall be bold to make a further appeal unto you, which is this ;

2. *If ye know Christ to be righteous, then ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* This I am also confident you will be very ready to set your seals to.

This, as the former was, is set forth by the apostle, as an outward evidence of such and such being most really and truly the Lord's. Christ the righteous One, who is the righteousness of His whole church, where he dwells, rules, and reigns, produces in his saints a life of conformity to Him. This is the spirit of the present scripture before us. It is hereby the grace of Christ shines forth, and is displayed. What our Lord is in the mind and view of his saints, is hereby evidenced and made known, so that those who are without may so far see and take notice of it, as to confess the truth thereof, as being clearly evidenced by the fruits and effects produced. Such as know Christ, and receive, and are kept looking unto Him, as the Lord their Righteousness, and live on Him as their present and everlasting perfection in the sight of God, do not perform one single act of righteousness, that they thereby may be righteous before the Lord. No ; this is very far from their minds. No ; but the grace, salvation, presence, and teaching of Christ which they are favoured with, have their blessed and powerful influence within them, and upon them, so that they are sweetly drawn and constrained to act as such as are Christ's representatives in this present evil world : and this is one reason why Christ will have his church continued for a season in this present state. Hence the apostle *Peter*

says to the saints, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Epis. ii. 9. They did by no means make themselves what they were: nor could they continue by any means, what the Lord had wrought in them. They could only act as they were acted upon. It was the Lord alone who could work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet they only could be seen and distinguished by others, as they walked righteously and holily in this present evil world. It should ever be understood thus, when we are on these subjects: then we should never turn them as matters which make against us; so far from this, that the more freely and fully we receive the knowledge of Christ into our minds, the more we are excited to live by faith on the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. This produces most holy and blessed communion between Him, and us. In the which holiness and righteousness are produced in our souls: the fruits and effects of which are to be seen in our lives and conversations: so that we are hereby distinguished from those, even from such as profess the same Truth, who yet are not consistent with themselves. They walk carelessly. They yield to their own carnal lusts and passions. They do not by any means study to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. It is in this very point, and to preserve the proper distinction between a real believer, and a mere nominal professor of Christ, the apostle made this appeal. He well knew the true knowledge of Christ, would produce real genuine christianity: therefore says he, *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* I know says *John*, true practical christianity springs from, and is maintained in all its parts and branches, from the knowledge of Christ. His Person, Incarnation, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, and Priesthood in heaven is the foundation and soul of it. He is the Holy One. You have received the Unction from Him. The same Holy Ghost who anointed Him as the Christ of God, hath anointed you also. As our Lord received His Name from the Holy Ghost, so you do also. Ye are the anointed ones: Christians: so called from Christ, whose Spirit hath consecrated you, and set you apart for his worship, service, praise and glory. Now it is to you I appeal. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* Is not this the Truth? If it be so, then such, be they who they may, who walk carelessly, and give way to sin and self, and fall by the same, give no proof and visible evidence of their being taught by Him. It does not appear they have received the Unction from the Holy One. It is by no means evident, that they are led and taught by the Spirit. I would, therefore, this distinction should be kept up amongst you: that you may neither deceive nor be deceived, by looking on such as Christians who are not. No doubt but there was great cause why proper distinctions should be kept up in the apostle's time, between true believers, and nominal ones. Or, he had not dwelt so much throughout his whole epistle on this. He gives us the true portrait of what real personal christianity is, and what it consists in. He also set it forth, and he likewise illustrated the same, in, and by what he says to real saints, in, and throughout this very important document of his, written and sent unto them. He does this very simply, expressly,

and clearly ; so that what he wrote could not be easily mistaken. Real saints would not overlook what he wrote. Others who did, proved themselves thereby to be what they were—destitute of the Spirit. It must have been of great satisfaction to the saints, that the apostle should thus appeal unto them ; as it carried its own evidence with it, of his thinking well of them. And whilst they were by no means elevated by this, yet it could not but be very satisfactory to them, that whilst he was very suspicious of others, yet he wrote to them with much assurance of what the Lord had done for them, and how they gave full proof of this by their outward walk and behaviour. What the Lord had taught them, it abode with them. They were under the mighty power and influence of the same. It produced in their minds, an experimental sense and apprehension of what was contained therein ; which influenced their minds and affections, which produced suitable tempers, dispositions, conversations and practices, answerable to the same. So that he could thus address them, *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* Sirs, an unrighteous man, a man who is unrighteous in his practice, walk, and conversation is not a Christian : nor should he be looked upon by us as such. No ; notwithstanding he may be numbered with us. No doubt many such were in the churches in *John's* time. If not, there could be no propriety in his writing thus ; for the very proof of saintship lay in doing righteousness : in performing righteous acts. Now their performing righteous acts did not make them righteous persons ; yet it proved them to be so. As on the contrary, such as confessed the same Lord Jesus Christ, and did not perform righteous acts, proved thereby they were not righteous persons. As he appears twice over to the saints, saying, *If ye know that he, i. e. Christ is righteous, and hath left us an example that we should follow his steps, so ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him ;* so also he hereby gives them to apprehend the spring, root, and principle, from whence all this proceeded. The material and distinguishing difference between them, and all others whatsoever ; let their profession be what it might ; yea, let it be in words and sounds, equal and exactly like their own, was in the new-birth. The one were born again, the others were not. Mark this ; you have it in the words before you. I will therefore recite them, that you may for your own profit observe it. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* All who are openly of the family of heaven, are distinguished by a heavenly, spiritual, supernatural birth ; which being holy and heavenly, nothing but what is suitable with this can proceed from it. And if you survey the text, you cannot but perceive the apostle fully suggests, this is the very root of all righteousness in life and conversation. For as the regenerate person, in his regeneration is made partaker of a supernatural faculty, suited to a spiritual apprehension of Christ, so he receives by this medium, such views and conceptions of Christ, through the Holy Spirit's illumination, as none without this spiritual birth can. And this brings me

3. To observe this new-birth is here attributed to Christ as the author of it, as it is elsewhere to the Father, and the Spirit. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* This most assuredly is ascribing the new-birth to Christ, as the author thereof. It may be, the apostle speaks thus here, to shew,

the propriety there is, in the conduct of such as are born again and of Christ, as it respects their outward conduct and deportment in the world. He was righteous in all, in every sense. The true knowledge of Him, produces a conformity unto Him. His image is inscribed on the regenerate mind: therefore it cannot but be, there must be a similarity between Christ, and such as receive a new and divine birth from Him: hence the very propriety of what the apostle says in his address to the saints, most strikingly appears. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

Our Lord when he spake on the subject of the new-birth to *Nicodemus*, ascribed it to the Spirit. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 5—8. The apostle *James* attributes the new-birth to the Divine Majesty in the Person of the Father. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." chap. i. 17, 18. And *Peter* blesses God for it, as the first act of God, which he puts forth within us. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Epis. i. 3—5. It is what all Divines unite in, that all the acts of the Holy Trinity, without them, and which are put forth towards us, within us, and upon us, are variously attributed to each of the Divine Persons. This is the reason why regeneration is thus attributed to each of them. *Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* That is of Christ. This is in close connection with the former verses. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* Now as regeneration is here attributed unto Christ, and the spiritual light and unction they had received as regenerated persons from Christ also, so we see the effects of this in walking righteously, are ascribed unto Christ also. It was because they knew Christ they were righteous and holy. Their knowledge of Christ was in their renewed minds. Its being there, sanctified their wills. It influenced their affections. It fixed their hearts on Christ. It led them to look wholly and altogether on Him. So that they could not but desire to follow his steps. This sprung from the inward operation of the Holy Ghost within them. It became congenial unto, yea, it was an evident part of their renewed minds to follow after righteousness. To be

the practitioners thereof. So that it was their continual practice, to clothe their minds, memories, and consciences, by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the garment of salvation; which having done, they could not but give evidence of the influence and effect which this produced in their outward walk. They were righteous in their walk. They having a sight of their real and everlasting perfection in Christ Jesus, lived in a view of it, and under the influence of the same; and this was an outward evidence for them to others, to whom they belonged. It proved they were born again; that they were born of Christ; that they had the Spirit of Christ: whereas, such as were not so walking, let them say of the Saviour, and profess of him what they might, yet it was evident to real saints, let it be as it might in the eyes of others, that such were not the real children of God. This was a truth which was immutable. It could not be given up. It was, and will be so down to the very end of time. It can never vary. *If we know that he is righteous, we know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* We being born again of Christ, receive his Spirit; who makes us acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ; who dwelleth in us. We by that spiritual faculty wrought in us by regeneration, are drawn forth spiritually to think on, converse with, and delight ourselves greatly in Him. We see Him. We converse with Him. We have communion with Him. We walk with Him. We walk before Him. We delight so to do. This is no part of our salvation: we disclaim it altogether in this view of it. As we have Christ for the whole of our salvation, this is the outward effect which the true knowledge of it produceth in us: and we are hereby only distinguished from all other professors of Christ, by the walking even as Christ walked. In reading the whole of this Epistle through and through, it should be noticed, the apostle does not call upon us to be so and so, but he shews we cannot but be so and so, if we are in Christ: if we have communion with Christ: if we have fellowship with his Father and our Father in Him, we walk in the light as he is in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. And the true knowledge and enjoyment of this, produces those blessed inward and outward effects, which the apostle speaks of in and throughout the whole of this, and the former chapters, and in all the following ones. Causes cannot but produce their proper effects. Grant this, and you have the key to this whole Epistle. You may then see clearly into every part of it, and also into the whole design of the apostle in the same. There will not then be found any one thing to stumble you throughout it. For it is only in proportion as Truth prevails and operates on the spiritual mind, such and such blessed fruits and effects are produced. So this is the foundation of all. Real believers being one with Christ, and they having received from Christ, the Holy Spirit, to live and abide with them for ever; who leads them into real communion with the Father, so they are hereby influenced by the same to walk in the light of holiness and truth—To love where Christ, and such as Christ loveth—To hate that which Christ hateth—To have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them—To walk as Christ walked—To express this to be the very sentiment of their souls, and to walk agreeable unto it, and at all times to abide by it—That such as know and acknowledge Christ to be righteous, that He is their everlasting righteousness and perfection, in whom the Divine Father beholds them everlastingly righteous; the true apprehension and belief of this, constrains

them to be righteous in their conduct and walk before men—That this is the outward proof and evidence, by the which they are distinguished from all others: and a most glorious proof that they are born of Him; and are his beloved ones, created in Him unto good works, which he hath foreordained that they should walk in them. I would now proceed to observe, that as the new-birth of these saints is here attributed to Christ, as it is elsewhere to the Father, and the Spirit, which shews how the Eternal Three are jointly concerned in the whole work of grace, and in all, in every gracious act and influence of grace, within us, and upon us. *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* So I would in my last particular of this discourse, set before you,

4. That regeneration is the foundation of all righteousness in the soul, and the very sole principle from whence it originates. And the exercise of it, is an outward evidence of our being born again, and that we are interested in the glorious and complete righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord insists on the necessity of regeneration in these words of his, which are recorded by our apostle, in the 3rd chapter of his gospel. “Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” v. 3. It is our very entrance into the spiritual world, just as our natural birth is our entrance into this natural world. It is by natural generation and birth we are introduced into this present visible world; and it is by spiritual regeneration we are brought into Christ’s spiritual and invisible world. Adam is the root of natural generation. Christ is the root of spiritual regeneration. It is from Him, by virtue of our secret and eternal union to Him, founded on the election of our persons in Him before the foundation of the world, that we receive the Spirit of life from Christ, and are formed for his praise: which as it was an act of the Divine will towards us from everlasting, so it takes place within us, and upon us, in the day of the Lord’s power, when the Holy Ghost, as the breath and Spirit of life enters into us, and makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. The Spirit takes up his residence in us. He is pleased to produce that in us which was not there before. The Scriptures call it a new birth—The inner man—A new creation—A new creature—The new man—The hidden man of the heart: and other terms are used to express it. The apostle *Peter* says to the saints to whom he writes, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” 1 Pet. i. 22—25. He addresses these new-born persons thus. “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” chap. ii. 1—3. He opens and sets before us all contained in this new, divine, spiritual and supernatural birth in these words, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and

godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Epis. i. 3, 4. In this new-birth is contained all the life and grace of Christ, which will ever be inherent in the mind. The Holy Spirit is pleased to draw it out into act and exercise, on Christ, and the Father's love in Him, as it seemeth good in his sight. And this divine nature is the foundation of all inherent righteousness: the very sole principle from whence it originates. This suits with what our most precious Lord Jesus Christ says himself on this subject. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14. The drawing out into open view, act and exercise, what the Holy Ghost hath wrought in the soul, is entirely and alone, the work of the same Holy Ghost who hath wrought this whole work of God within us: and the exercise of our spiritual minds on Christ, is a clear evidence of our interest in the Lord Jesus. It is hereby we are proved to be the beloved of God: called to be saints: that we are interested in the all-glorious and everlastingly precious righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not interested in Christ hereby; nor are we entitled to his salvation in consequence hereof. Yet we are hereby capacitated for the enjoyment of Christ, and all the blessings of his great salvation. Without this new-birth, we can neither spiritually apprehend, nor enjoy the Lord Jesus Christ; for without it, we have no faculty suited to him. This spiritual birth is not our salvation; nor is it any part of our holiness and righteousness before God; but it is our meetness for glory; without which we can have no communion with the Three in Jehovah this side heaven, any more than we could in glory. This should be more closely attended unto, than it is in general. If we have not in us a new nature, it is impossible for us to delight in Christ Jesus. Do we not find we love to hear Christ's voice? To delight in Him? Is it not sweet to meditate on his love? From whence springs all this? Most assuredly from the Holy Spirit. But how is it we feel all this in our own souls? Yea, feel and enjoy what we ourselves are wholly unable to express? Surely it is because we have senses and faculties inherent in our minds, most exactly suited and agreeable to the objects and subjects presented to us, and set before us, in the glass of the everlasting gospel. We may think and talk otherwise, but if we are unregenerate we cannot perform one holy act: and it is expressly said, *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. It is the practice of holiness there, and the practice of righteousness here, both these passages are upon. And when we have an holy and righteous principle wrought in us, in our new and spiritual birth, then we cannot, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, but act agreeable unto it. And where is there any thing in all this to lead us off Christ, or to lead us into ourselves? Nothing; no indeed there is not. 'Tis the universal acknowledgment of all saints, that as surely as we know that Christ is righteous, so we know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Then it follows from the apostle's words, that such have an inward disposition to righteousness. And from whence can this spring and originate, but from the new birth: and how can this detract from Christ, seeing it is here attributed to Him. It is because such are born of Him, that they are disposed to live to Him, and for Him. They cannot live to

Him, but they must in their outward walk be righteous persons. It seems to me to be altogether to ascribe our whole salvation to the Three in Jehovah, and to give them their proper glory for their distinctive acts in the same. The Father is to be praised for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, in giving Christ for us, and giving Him, with all the blessings contained in his great salvation unto us. We may well praise our Lord Jesus Christ, for his love to us, and for his washing us from our sins in his own blood, and saving us in himself with an everlasting salvation. We cannot but love the Holy Spirit, for revealing Christ in us, and unto us; for forming Him in us, and so testifying of Him to our hearts, as to render Him everlastingly precious unto us. We cannot under believing views, but be desirous to shew forth his praise: this is the very spirit of our text. This is to be done before men; then it must be by shewing forth, and declaring in and by our outward walk, and deportment, that He who is the Lord our Righteousness, is pleased to lead us in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. So if we look over the whole of this chapter, we shall find, that the real saints, not being led away by the many antichrists, and their not following these, together with their abiding in the true and only right doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, were all so many proofs of their being the Lord's: who had both taught them, and kept them; who led, guided, and defended them: who was so gracious unto them, that whilst there were on every side, such as were only mere speculists in the gospel, and only nominal professors of the same, yet these had real and spiritual communion with Christ, and proved the reality of this, in being in their walk, tempers, and conduct, what the disciples of Christ should be, righteous persons: by the which, proof was given, there was every thing in the knowledge of Christ, and his gospel, which most effectually disposes to, and effectually promotes, and produces all this. We must confess, it becomes us to acknowledge this, and prove the truth of this in our own persons. It is good for us to look on ourselves, as vastly interested in the whole contained in what the apostle delivers. It would be well were we to consider the whole, so far written to us, that we should attend to the whole of the same. Is it not because we too heedlessly pass over what is written in the inspired Epistles, that we reap no more advantage from them? I confess I look on it for myself, one of my greatest sins, the reading the sacred pages with too little attention, and self application. May the Lord the Holy Spirit lead us to reverence them as the oracles of God: to esteem them as the means of making us wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus. I must now leave what is contained in this present sermon with you; praying the Lord to follow it with his blessing so far as it seemeth good in his sight. The more you receive the light, truth, and knowledge of Christ into your minds, the more you will delight to walk with Him. It is in your walking with Him all grace will abound towards you. This will be your preservative from every evil and error. You will aim to glorify the Lord in all things: and with all you have and are. I cannot put life into God's word: but the Holy Spirit can. He does. He fills it with such an energy as cannot be resisted. May it please Him so to do, at all times, when you hear, read, meditate, and attend on the preaching of his most holy word: giving you to hear his voice in it: to mix faith with it. May you be not only hearers but doers of it. May it be to you the ingrafted word which shall save your souls and bodies

from all sin and evil. Thus I express my good will, and best wishes for your temporal and spiritual welfare. May the Lord himself say *Amen* to the same. May the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Righteousness shine upon us, and shine within you, and invigorate your whole souls with his holy and heavenly influences. May he make your path as the path of the just, as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May the Spirit of Christ and glory rest upon this: then you will confess, *If we know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* The Lord bless his Truth unto you. Amen.

S E R M O N X X X I V .

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.—1 JOHN iii. 1.

IN this verse the apostle breaks forth, in reflecting some glorious beams of light and love, on the minds of such as were born of Christ, and were made partakers of the divine nature, as the apostle *Peter* terms it, 2 Epis. i. 4. As the doctrine of the Holy Trinity runs throughout every article of our most holy faith, and the distinct acts and operations of the Sacred Three, are one grand part of the New Testament, so our apostle in this verse now before us, calls on these he writes unto, to behold, to take into their minds, and consider the love of the Divine Father unto them—To view it in this instance of it: they were called the sons of God. It was but a title; but they had therewith all contained in it: therefore the manner of love, the freeness of it, the sovereignty of it, the eternity of it, with the blessings contained in it most truly deserved their most spiritual and deepest attention. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* It is pure, it is infinite love. It is God's own act of grace towards us. He is a fountain of everlasting love. We are his children by adoption: and our regeneration is the fruit thereof; so that this title and honour do most truly belong unto us. This is the very reason why the whole world out of Christ, unbelievers, and those who know not God, can neither conceive, nor judge, nor have the least apprehension of our state before the Lord. And because they cannot, therefore it is they contemn, and hate us. It is because they knew not our Lord Jesus Christ in his incarnate state; nor do they know us in the state of regeneration into the which we are brought; nor our blessed deliverance from the state of sin, guilt, and condemnation in which we were in our state of unregeneracy, out of which we are now for ever delivered. It is with us as it was with Christ: the world, the people of the Jews, knew not the Lord of Glory, when he appeared amongst them in the form of a servant. *The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* In order, and with a design to open these

words, so as if possible the whole excellence and force of them may be preserved, I will give the outline of them in the following particulars.

1. I will notice the word *Behold* with which they are introduced.

2. What we are called upon to *Behold*. It is *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us*.

3. The speciality of this, what it consists in, as here taken notice of. It is, *that we should be called the sons of God*.

4. That though this be the case, yet the world knoweth us not, as so called, and thus distinguished by free sovereign favour: neither did they our Lord, before us. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not*.

I hope in going through these particulars, we shall have the whole of our text explained and set before us. May the Lord command his blessing on the same. My first attempt is to notice the introduction of the text. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not*. I will

1. Notice the word *Behold*, with which the words of my text are introduced; which gives an item of the vast importance of what is contained in them. It is used by the Lord himself, by the Prophets, and Christ, and the Evangelists on some very particular occasions, both in the Old and New Testament.

When the Lord God is speaking of the Person, Incarnation, and work of Christ, he speaks thus. "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." Isai. xl. 10. When the Divine Majesty in the Person of the Father, is pleased to set forth his coequal Son, in the full glory of his Person and mediation, he is pleased to make use of this word, to fix the attention of the mind on this one grand object and subject: intimating hereby, there is no other object or subject on earth or in Heaven worth consideration but this alone. He uses this word, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Isai. xlii. 1. Again, when the Divine Father would have Joshua, and his fellow priests look on Christ the glorious Mediator, as the foundation stone, and on Him as the one only Mediator and Saviour, and view Him in the complete and glorious accomplishment of his work, this word is made use of. "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Zech. iii. 8, 9. The prophet *Isaiah* when speaking of the Incarnation of Christ, uses this word. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." chap. vii. 14. When our *John* speaking as a Prophet is on the subject of Christ's appearing, he uses this word. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Rev. i. 7. Our Lord himself uses this word on the great subject of communion with himself. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Rev. iii. 20. On the coming down from God out of heaven, of the New Jerusalem, this word is used. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. xxi. 3. Again, v. 5. "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new:" and in the next chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ says, v. 7, "Behold, I come quickly."—v. 12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." So that this word *Behold* is used in the sacred page, by God, Christ, the prophets, and apostles, as introductory to the most grand and important subjects revealed and recorded therein. The Father uses it, when he sets forth Christ, as God-Man, Mediator, and Saviour, and before the church, in the same point of view he takes of Him, and hath in his own vast mind: as also when he would give a view of Him, and his most perfect oblation, by the ministry of his servants, *Isaiah* and *Zechariah*. The prophets and apostles use the same word, when they would express the most important truths to us. Our Lord Jesus Christ doth the same; so doth our apostle here before us. He would have us to contemplate this vast subject—The love of God to us. It is most certainly designed to engage our minds: to fix our thoughts: to fill us with holy wonder: to draw us out into an holy admiration, at the subject he is about to set before us; which leads me to my next particular which is this:

2. To set before you, what we are called upon to behold—It is what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.*

The *us* are saints—The very same us, who had fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; whose blood was their present and everlasting purity before God; whose righteousness was their eternal perfection; whose life of priesthood and advocacy was their everlasting security. The *us* here, are the same who had received an Unction from the Holy One, who were born of Him. As all their blessedness, and blessings were the fruits and effects of the Father's love, the apostle would have them take a view thereof. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* He is not here calling on us to believe the love wherewith God hath loved us; nor is he calling on us to receive the knowledge of it into our minds, that we may receive the same into our hearts. He is calling us to behold it: to look at it: to contemplate it in its original—In its spring and fountain—In its freeness and sovereignty—In the nature of it—In the manner of it—In its gifts and blessings. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!* It was actually bestowed upon them. They had an actual enjoyment of the same: yet, as it exceeded all they could ever have the enjoyment of, either in earth, or heaven, he would therefore have them look off all their real enjoyments of it, to this love, as it was in God the fountain of it. This the very word *Behold* implies. If they were to *behold* this love wherewith the Father had loved them, and what freeness, sovereignty, and greatness was contained in it, then they themselves, or what they enjoyed of the same, made no part of the subject which they are here excited to consider. The elect are the objects and subjects of the Father's love; yet all his love to them is in Himself. It is not in the saints, be they in earth, or in heaven, but by revelation, manifestation, and reflection. It is in God as the fountain of it. He

only is the spring of it: and it is the good pleasure of his will, to love his Elect in Christ. There is no cause to be assigned why he should love them; but because it is the good pleasure of his will. God's love is an act of his will. His predestinating purpose respecting them, is an act of his understanding. The eternal Three in the one incomprehensible Essence, have but one will. They therefore love the Elect with one and the same love. Not one more than the other. It hath pleased them to manifest their loves so as to give full proof of the distinct act of their wills towards them. Yet love in God is but one act: and it is an act in the mind of God. Therefore it is eternal, and immutable. The Elect are the objects and subjects on whom the will of God terminates. He loved them, and therefore he chose them in Christ. This is the first act of his love towards them. All the acts of his grace towards them in Christ, are the effects of his love to their identical persons, as the objects of his eternal love and complacency. He loved them so intensely, as to choose them in Christ, and thereby give them being and well-being in Christ before the world was. And farther to express the same, he blessed them in Christ, their Head, with all spiritual blessings suited to their relationship to the Person of Christ, and which were to remain their's in Him, for ever. Whilst all this originates from the everliving, everblessed Three, in the one same and everglorious Godhead, yet it is generally attributed in the holy Scriptures, to the Divine Father. It is so in the 1st chapter of the *Ephesians*; where all the eternal acts of God's will, in Christ, towards the elect are enumerated. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. v. 3—6. It is here to be observed, all these fundamental acts in the infinite mind, respecting the whole election of grace, are attributed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And also the original of these, is wholly ascribed "to the good pleasure of his will." And, "To the praise of the glory of his grace." The good pleasure of God's will is the fountain cause. The praise of the glory of his grace, is the end and issue of all. So as it respects salvation; according to the express statement of it, as set before us in the everlasting gospel, it originates from the Father: it is executed by the Son, and revealed and set forth, and brought home to us, by the energy and witness of the Holy Ghost. It is the one ever-living, everlasting, everblessed God, in his Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, manifesting himself as the God of all grace, in the glorious œconomy of the same, expressing his everlasting love, so as to give us a blessed apprehension of the obligations we are under to the Holy Trinity, for their Personal acts in the everlasting council and covenant of grace towards us. It is doubtless with a design to this, the apostle directs our views to the love of the Divine Father in the words before us. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! That we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* The love of God is a subject for the minds of God's saints to contemplate. They may well behold, survey, and take a view of it, by

faith. It is the greatest thing in God himself, which we are concerned in. His love to us, is a free love. It is also sovereign love. It proceeds from himself alone. It is a love fixed on us. It is a love of complacency and delight. It is an immutable and an everlasting love. It was in God's heart towards us, before the world was. It will never cease being in his heart towards us, throughout the ages of eternity. The blessings of which we are to enjoy, in communion with Him, now, and for ever. Surely then, the views and reviews we take into our minds of this infinite and inexhaustible subject, cannot but be very profitable unto us. *Behold*; let your minds, then, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, be engaged and exercised on the subject of the Father's love to us. On the greatness of it. The eternity of it. The fixation of it. On the immensity of it. On the blessings contained in it. On the continuation of it. On what we shall for ever and ever enjoy as the objects and subjects of it. On what hath been already bestowed on us, and on what we have enjoyed, and do enjoy out of, and from this infinite Ocean. You will find enough to delight your minds—To comfort your hearts—To fill you with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in the true knowledge of, and exercise of your spiritual faculties on the subject. It is, therefore, I thus address you. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!* not simply conceived towards us, and willed unto us; but hath actually bestowed upon us, and given us the real knowledge, perception, and enjoyment of! To give us to know we are the *us* whom he loved in our own identical persons, in Christ, with such a love, as will know no end. Let us who are the objects and subjects of it, behold the same, in its original: as springing up, and conceived in the infinite mind of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from everlasting: from whence flow all the blessings of the divine favour, and good will of God into our souls. By a true, and spiritual survey of it, we shall have some blessed apprehensions of the same in our minds; so as to see what the prophet says, and have a real and spiritual enjoyment thereof. "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Zeph. iii. 17. To take this into the mind, to have it realized in the heart; to live in the views and belief of this continually, this is to have communion with the Father, in all the blessings of his love. We have not the blessings and consolations which flow from this, and then we know that God loves us: we have the knowledge of his love to us first; then the real enjoyment of it flows into our minds. Then we being led to survey all this in its original and fountain cause, are led into communion with God himself, as our Father. Thus the eternal acts of God in Christ towards us, are opened unto us, by the light and teachings of the Holy Spirit. And we are led to value God's love to us, beyond all the gifts of God's love: and to value the gifts for the giver's sake: and to value them because they all flow, from God's eternal favour and the good pleasure of his good will towards us, in Christ his Son. It is a great attainment in the school of Christ, to apprehend the love of God, in distinction from all his gifts: and these as the fruits of it: and to have a view of them as proceeding one from the other. Election is the first act of God's love to us. This is the greatest act of God towards us. It hath wholly to do with our persons. This contains the very uttermost of the good pleasure of God's good will towards us. The whole and the

very uttermost of God's everlasting love to us, is herein contained. Our being chosen in Christ is the fruit of this. When we behold and survey this in the light of faith, taking in the subject as revealed in the gospel of the grace of God, we cannot but be astonished thereat. As we further survey and proceed in our contemplations of this subject of God's everlasting love to us, in the Father's ordaining Christ to be our Head, and that all the blessings of grace and glory should flow into our souls, by virtue of our union, and relation to and interest in Christ as members in Him, we perceive fresh wonders of everlasting love to us, shining forth upon us in this apprehension of the same; and thus we are led on to know and apprehend the blessings which belong to us, in consequence of Christ's being our Head; which are wholly and altogether supernatural ones. And all the fruits of Election grace: and those which flow on us, from Christ as the Redeemer, and Saviour. It would be well, were the real Church of Christ, led to keep every one of these subjects apart, and place them in their proper and distinct order. I conceive the scripture before us, gives countenance to such an assertion, as the apostle is here only upon one single branch of the love of God, and that as an act of the Father towards us. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.* Survey it in election: in predestination: in adoption: in salvation: in the blessedness of personal communion. It is vast-glorious. It surpasseth all finite understanding. Our apostle is all for positive assertions. We have no argument, or argumentative method of writing in this Epistle. As all is truth, so the apostle treats and builds on it as such. We may here observe the manifold wisdom of God, as illustrated in the variety of gifts which he is pleased to bestow on his ministering servants. We have in the writings of the apostle *Paul*, solid arguments, so laid as the foundation to support what he writes on, as cannot be set aside, or overturned. In this Epistle, we have truths solemnly asserted, and these are carried into experience. And we find the same in the ministry of the word. Some ministers treat their subjects in a doctrinal way. Some in a way of solemn assertion of what Truth is. Yet both are blessed by the Spirit of God, to various hearers. No doubt but all this is in the infinite wisdom of God, suited to the various spiritual capacities the Lord is pleased to bestow on his ministers and people. But I will proceed to my next head of discourse, which is

3. The speciality of this. What in the love of the Father it is which the apostle would have these saints to take special notice of. It is this, *That we should be called the sons of God.* *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*

"It is," says *Dr. Goodwin*, "but a title which is here expressed." "Yet," says *Mr. Romaine*, "God bestows no empty titles." He gives all contained in it. Therefore the greatness of the love of God is contained herein. To be a son of God, is to be an heir of glory; therefore the title of it bestowed by the Lord himself on us, must be to convey assurance of the same to the minds of his called people. It is a confirmation thereof. Hence the apostle would have the saints take notice of it; that they might be led to admire both the love of the Father unto them, and also the manner in which he is pleased to manifest and give them undeniable evidence hereof. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of*

God! It is an high honour to sustain this title. It is the more so as bestowed on us by the Lord. He says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." Isa. xliii. 4. With respect to the grace of adoption, it is the fruit of eternal predestination. It is founded upon the marriage union which subsists between Christ, God-Man, and the church, which is his bride and spouse. The grace of it is contained in the personal election of the Person of Christ to be the Head of his body the church, and the actual election of the church in Christ, before all time. We are made partakers in regeneration of the grace of adoption. We are not made the children, and sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty thereby. But by it we are made manifest to be the Lord's. To this effect we read, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power, or right, or privilege, to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John i. 11—13. This is a very surprising instance and act of divine grace towards us; which draws after it innumerable blessings; all of which are wholly supernatural. It is here ascribed to the Father. He is the author and fountain of it. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* Survey it in all the glorious dimensions as far as you can by faith: the more you see into it, the more the glories of it, will break forth, and shine upon you. The blessing and the grace contained in it, is already bestowed on you, so as that you have had a real and sensible enjoyment of the same. Yet what is contained in the whole of it, and you will one day possess and enjoy in consequence of the same, exceeds your highest conception. The apostle *Paul* speaking on it, and on the Spirit of adoption which is bestowed on the adopted ones, who being born again, receive the Spirit of adoption, and by Him are led to call God their Father, says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii. 16, 17. To be heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, in all the riches of God's communicable grace and glory, this is the fruit and blessedness which flows from the grace and royalty of Adoption. God is our inheritance: and we are his inheritance. The foundation of which as laid in the Divine mind is as follows. The Essential and only begotten Son of the living God, being predestinated into creature-existence, and set up before all time in the will, council, decrees and purposes of the Three in Jehovah, to be God-Man—it was in Him the church was chosen. She was predestinated to be his bride. She was presented to Him—Given to Him—Married to Him—United to Him. He was her Eternal Head, and Husband; thus they were united, and related to each other. As the Father was the God and Father of Christ our Head, so by this union of the elect to Christ, they became the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty: and as such, stand in relation to God and Christ, as none beside do. No; not the elect angels of God in heaven. Hence their union and relation to the Person of Christ, contain the very essence and perfection of all the Father's grace towards them. The whole of this springs from election, and is founded thereon; so doth all the honours, privileges, blessings

and benefits which flow herefrom. God is their Father, they are his children. They are Christ's spouse, He is their Elder Brother. He is their Pattern, they are to be conformed to his glorious likeness. The apostles says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 29, 30. Christ the first-born of many brethren, is the pattern draught, set up, and drawn in the Divine mind, after which all the rest are to be conformed; which will be effected in them by the free grace of God, without their having any concern in it. They will be the subjects of this conformity; but they will never have any hand in it. But I will here go back to my text, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* If we in the light of God's word and Spirit, survey this love, we cannot but be astonished at it. That we should be included in this *us*, if believed and apprehended, must fill us with increasing wonder. It is grace beyond what the church of the first-born in glory can fully comprehend—Even what is contained in this grace and title, that we should be called *the sons of God*. More especially when we add to this, we have not only the title bestowed upon us; but also all contained therein. Surely the subject is beyond the very uttermost of our conception. I should conceive it will be so even in glory. That this with all which cannot but follow it, flows out of the ocean of everlasting love, the knowledge of this, only serves to increase the idea of what it must be, for God to love us in Christ with an everlasting love. Surely this is heaven! this is glory! this is life everlasting! to have the mind perpetually filled with the knowledge of it, and engaged in the perpetual enjoyment of the same. As grace is glory in the bud, it is therefore our only blessedness here in this time state, to have our spiritual faculties exercised on those most blessed subjects, in which they will be engaged when we see and enjoy the love of God, by being admitted to a sight and vision of Christ, face to face, within the veil. It well became therefore the apostle, to call on saints, to *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* This is our title even now, whilst we are here below. Notwithstanding our inherent sin and deformity. It is the excellency of the inspired writers to bring their subjects home. To make an immediate application of them. This they did under the immediate influence and energy of the Holy Ghost; which must have been of great advantage to those to whom they sent their apostolical epistles. Here before us, the apostle brings the whole weight of this vast subject down to the *us* whom he is addressing. Surely they must have felt the influence of the same. It could not have been otherwise. He had before said every thing which could possibly have encouraged their faith. He wrote with the express design to increase their fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. He had been going on to remove every obstruction and impediment out of the way, which might by any means be an hindrance to this; which he did so ingenuously, as to bring no kind of sin, or charge against them. And that he might ministerially let in upon them, all the rays, beams, glory, splendour, and warmth of the love of God on their minds, he says, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that*

we should be called the sons of God! Most assuredly, it must as designed and expressed by the apostle, have been very advantageous to these saints. The subject could not but have entered the more forcibly into their minds; which must have most divinely influenced them. To have the acts of God in Christ towards us, set before us, as stated in the written word, and also the Love of God as the spring of all, in election, predestination, adoption, acceptation in the Person of Christ, with God's beholding us in Him, the Beloved, must be a mean in the hand, and by the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit, of increasing our communion with the Holy Trinity. It therefore should be observed, it being most justly worthy of being remarked, that in, and throughout the whole of this Epistle, every thing is delivered by it, which is calculated to improve, promote, and increase this. I would here insert the most important scripture in all the Bible, in which the gracious act of God's adoption is fully expressed. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph. i. 5, 6. This, with what is mentioned in the two former verses, are wholly and all of them supralapsarian blessings, founded on the relation of the persons of the elect, to the Person of Christ, God-Man: to and in whom by virtue of their election they were united and interested from everlasting. I cannot on these great subjects, but go over the same things again and again, as I wish as far as I possibly may, to make them clear and plain to the lowest and weakest spiritual capacity. I come now to my last particular, which is this

4. That though this be the case, that we are, and are called, *the sons of God*, and this title is bestowed on us, by our heavenly Father, yet the world knoweth us not, as so called, and as thus distinguished by free sovereign favour; neither did they our Lord before us. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* We are at present in our undress. They do not see us shine forth, as we do even now, in the sight of our heavenly Father: nor as we shall one day in theirs, when our Lord shall appear. At which season, we shall also appear with Him in glory. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

The everlasting love of the Father, towards the *us*, and *we* expressed in the words before us, had been made known and manifested to these, by the Incarnation of Christ. The Holy Spirit had led them into the true knowledge of the Person, and salvation of the Son of God, and into real, and spiritual communion with Him, and the Father in Him. The apostle has been calling on these blessed and highly favoured ones, to survey, so far as the eye of faith could, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and agreeable with the revealed account given of the same, in the written word, the love of the Father unto them. He well knew it would refresh their souls: it would increase their esteem and high valuation of the same; it would feed and feast their minds: it would enlarge their faculties: it would give them whilst here below, to partake of the joys of heaven: it would lift them up, above the body of sin, and death: it would enable them to bear and sustain the troubles, trials, and persecutions, they had to encounter in this present state. He would have them know, and clearly understand, the world could not by any means

understand, or know them, to be what they were. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* The *him* is Christ: who when he became Incarnate, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." His Person, his glory, was not known by them; yet it was constantly before them; shining round about them—In his life and actions.—In his ministry—In his miracles, and supernatural arts; yet they saw nothing in Him, or his actions, which led them to confess, and make a true and right acknowledgment of Him. As the case was with Him, so it was with these saints; though the God of all grace had distinguished these saints, by calling them into fellowship with himself, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and bestowed on them the title of sons of God, yet the world did by no means, love or esteem them for this. So far from it, they had not the least perception of the dignity and honour their heavenly Father had conferred on them; nor must these blessed ones, expect they would. Yet to carry their minds above all the insults and contempts they might receive from them, the apostle reminds them, this was so far from being to be wondered at, it was only what might have been naturally and of necessity expected. It being exactly the same, with the carriage of the Jewish world, and people, toward their royal Lord and master. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God! Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! that we should be called the sons of God.* You enjoy the blessing, and blessedness contained in this, in your own souls. You have blessed prospects of eternal glory hereby. You are in consequence of your spiritual and supernatural views of it, advanced into most glorious, high, and exalted communion with your heavenly Father. Yet if you think this, or your expressing the truth and substance of this, will bring you into esteem with the world, you are entirely mistaken. It was not the case with the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It will not be the case with you. Let the love of the Father be unto us, let it be displayed towards us, and let us be distinguished by it as we may, the world will never love or regard us on that account. I would therefore this should be settled in your minds. And I would you should ever remember this is the reason of it—They knew not Christ—They know not us. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* It is the same to the very present moment: yet we wonder at it: whilst there is not the least cause for it, if we but reflect one moment. How can contraries unite? When I first went forth to preach Christ, according to the measure of light given me, I really conceived the spirituality and majesty of the subject, would have captivated and carried all before it. I suppose some of you, know not how to account for it, that truths so sublime and spiritually excellent as those you have received into your minds, concerning the love of the Father towards the Elect in Christ, are not most cordially received, embraced, and very highly esteemed. The longer you live, beloved, the more you will find supernatural truths disrelished. The present day is not that in which any are persecuted for their profession. Yet it is a day when supernatural truth, and the supernatural gospel, and a supernatural profession of them, were never more heartily despised. Nor where there ever, it may be, since the reformation from Popery, more despisers of the everlasting gospel of the blessed God, than are now existing in the United Kingdom. This should be no cause of discouragement to real saints: so far from it, they should only thereby be led to consider what is here de-

clared by the apostle in the words before us. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* Our Jesus was the Lord from heaven. As Man, he was truly heavenly. In his life, all the perfection which will ever be found in heaven, in all the saints and angels, was contained. He was perfectly resigned to the whole will of God. He most cheerfully acquiesced, and was most perfectly satisfied with the whole. No doubt but this will be, in all the saints in glory, both elect angels and saints, their highest grace. Our Lord was all this in every act of his mind, all the while he tabernacled here below. Yet none saw this. It was an internal act of his mind. It shone forth in the whole of what he was, and performed. Yet it was wholly before the Lord, in his sight and view. It was not perceived by the world. They therefore knew Him not: neither in his Person, as the Son of the living God, manifested in the flesh, nor in the wonderful exercises of his grace, nor in his wonderful love to the elect sons of men. The world knew Him not. Therefore they could not love, nor admire Him: neither does it know us: nor as God hath been pleased most graciously to distinguish us. They know not that, in which our chief dignity consists. They know not the way in which the Lord honours us. They know not in what our riches consist. Neither can they have the least perception of our blessedness, which consists in our real, free, and personal communion with the Lord. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* It is herein the great distinction lies. It is this in which we differ from all others, be they whom they may. We have received an Unction from the Holy One. We are the partakers of a new, and supernatural birth. God hath sent forth his Spirit into our hearts, whereby we cry Father, Father. We find all the blessings of grace and glory, and have an inward, true, and actual enjoyment of the same, as we are enabled to survey, and contemplate the love of our heavenly Father, as the original, fountain, and spring, of our eternal life, blessedness, perfection and glory. My beloved, I have gone through the words of my text as well as I could. It may be you will exceed all I have delivered in your own private spiritual contemplations on the same. This will be your mercy. I will again recite the words of my text. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* This is the very reason given why the world knoweth us not; because it knew not our Lord Jesus Christ. If so, then our being unknown, slighted, despised, and opposed by them, is a part of our conformity to him. May the Lord the Spirit lead you daily, and continually, to behold, and survey the love of your heavenly Father, towards you, personally, and individually in the Person of Christ, in all the acts, instances, outgoings, gifts, and blessings thereof. This will be blessedness indeed to your renewed minds. You will in these apprehensions approach God as your exceeding joy. It will give you the best idea of Heaven, of the heavenly state, and of what the happiness and blessedness of the saints in glory consists in, which you possibly can receive, before you enter, to join them in the very same participation of the same ineffable blessedness. May the Lord bless what hath been thus feebly delivered unto you. Amen.

SERMON XXXV.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

THE apostle here reflects in upon the minds of those who were born of Christ, some blessed beams of everlasting love, and sovereign favour; well knowing that contemplations on the same, would do them good: as it would be the mean of their having communion with the Divine Majesty in the Person of the Father thereby, as it would of the Son also. He had begun to speak of the grace of adoption, and here he proceeds with the same most important subject: shewing according to it what we now are—That the further glory of the same doth not yet appear; this is reserved for us, when our Lord shall come the second time without sin unto salvation: then we in consequence of our being the sons of God, shall be like our Lord; for we shall then see him as he is. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* In both these verses, the subject is brought home and applied. It is *us* and *we* in the former verse. It is *we*, in this now before us, which is an explanation of the former; in the which are contained the following particulars.

1. The address. *Beloved.*

2. The subject. *Now are we the sons of God.*

3. That what saints are, and what will be fully manifested, and be in future bestowed on them, *doth not yet appear. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.* But the apostle adds, by way of casting light on the whole of this subject,

4. *But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

May the Spirit of God and of glory, rest upon me, whilst I open these particulars, that the glory of them may appear, and be reflected forth on us. Amen. I am

1. To speak and take notice of the address. *Beloved.* It differs from all the former. It comes in here very pertinently. It is very suited to the subject. For surely if these persons were the sons of God by adoption, and *John* was one of them, contained in the terms *us*, and *we*, he could not but love these, they being *the beloved of God.*

Moses the man of God, speaking of the tribe of *Benjamin*, and pronouncing his blessing on the same, says, *The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him.* Deut. xxxiii. 12. The apostle *Paul* addresses the saints at *Rome* thus—*beloved of God.* When he is addressing the members of the church of Christ at *Colosse*, to the exercise of various graces towards each other, he uses the most endearing terms, saying, *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.* The apostle *Peter* uses the same expression writing to the church of Christ at *Babylon*, he says *Dearly beloved.* And in his 2^d Epis. iii. 17, he addresseth

the saints with the word, *beloved*. The Spirit of Christ in all the apostles, was one and the same. The Lord's people, who were the beautiful flock, the flock of slaughter, redeemed, washed, sanctified, and purified in the blood of Christ, and brought nigh unto God, by the Mediator's blood and obedience, were exceedingly precious unto them, and beloved by them; not more by one, than the other: yet *John* was one whose whole soul seemed to breathe it out in such an affectionate way, as if there had been nothing but love in him, and as if he were swallowed up in it: and as he here uses it, it is very congenial with the subject before him. These persons were the beloved of God. They were the sons of God: on whom the Father had fixed his love from everlasting: whom he *had predestinated to himself, unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will*. This he had manifested unto them, by bestowing this title upon them, that they should be called *the sons of God*. They had the grace of sons. They were born of God. They had the spirit of sons. The Holy Ghost the Spirit of adoption was bestowed upon them, whereby they called God, *Abba, Father*. They had the privileges and blessings, and benefits of adoption bestowed upon, and enjoyed by them; so that they were openly manifested to be the beloved of the Lord, and the blessed of the Lord, which made heaven and earth. The apostle had a most comprehensive view and apprehension of all this in his own mind. He addressed them thus, on the knowledge he had in his own soul of all this. He knew they were accepted in the Beloved; Christ being eminently so: He being the Son of God's love. The Father therefore having accepted their persons in Him, carried the strongest evidence with it, that these persons were the beloved of God. If so, they might well be beloved by the apostle. The elect of God are the beloved of God. And they are the elect of God because they are the beloved of God. They are not beloved because they are elected. But they were beloved, and therefore they were elected. It is an act of electing love towards them, their being the sons of God by adoption: and all the fruits of the same, are to be considered as so many acts of love, and blessing which flow therefrom. This love and grace in the will of God, is immutable. No change can take place there. This therefore having been manifested to these saints, the truth of it could never be broken in upon. The whole heart of God was fixed on the objects and subjects of His love. His grace could not be more gloriously expressed towards these, than it has been in the grace of adoption, and the blessings and privileges bestowed on these, as the beloved. They were now what they would ever remain to be. Neither time nor eternity would make any alteration in what they were as the sons of God. They were by adoption, sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ: so that hereby God himself became their inheritance and their all. To view the title of the address, which the apostle here makes use of, and with which he here speaks to saints, is very cheering and refreshing. *Beloved*. Why my good friends, what can exceed this! To be the beloved of God! To be beloved by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with all the love of everlasting complacency of good will and delight; this must be grace unspeakable! It must be grace which can never be fathomed! No. Not to the ages of eternity. It is no wonder the apostle should break out, as he did in the past verse. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of*

God! If this deserved to be thus introduced, with the word *Behold*, to mark the importance of the subject, surely, unless he would have used the same word, none could be better than the word *Beloved*. Which is here prefixed, when he is going to cast light and explain this most glorious and surprising subject of free, sovereign, and glorious grace. The word grace, and love, are one and the same, as used in the book of inspiration. If there be any difference designed by them, it is only to express the freeness and sovereignty of God's love, in the displays thereof. I might here observe, as the address, *Beloved*, suits the subject, so by it was way made, for the reception of the same into the mind. It was as a preface to set the subject forth in all its glory. It opened the heart to receive what was about to be pronounced, before it was actually delivered. If they were beloved by the apostle, it was for the Lord's sake. If the Lord loved them, it must be from Himself alone. And according to his own heart. Then the blessings of his love, and which he had bestowed on them, must be proportionable to the same. The true apprehension of this, could not but enlarge their minds, and make way, for a more full, and clearer apprehension thereof. But we will proceed

2. To the subject. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* A vast subject. It is a present one. It is *now*: even now, at this present time, and in this present world in the which we *now* are, that we are the sons of God.

The subject contains an immensity of grace: such as can never be fully opened. No; not in all the different and distinct ages, and periods of time, nor in heaven, throughout the ages of eternity. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* If what we were in the former verse said to be, those on whom the Father hath bestowed the grace of adoption, and the title of adoption, so as that we wear it as our proper badge, it being our very peculiar armorial bearings, *the sons of God*: and we in Christ, and with his righteousness on us, and as washed in his blood, possessed by his Spirit, adorned with all his graces, by virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, walk up and down in the name of the Lord of hosts, and wearing this for our coat of arms, *the sons of God*; surely this is honour which is personally and peculiarly ours. Then, seeing we are at present the subjects of sin, and are always discovering and perceiving more of the same in us, than we do of grace, it must be most truly blessed to be informed from good authority, we are even now, the sons of God. We have not only the title and dignity of it, bestowed on us, but we are really so. *Beloved, now*, at this very present time, feel what we may of sin, and corruption in our mortal bodies, *are we the sons of God.* This is by the grace of adoption: let this therefore be remembered. It was opened in the past sermon, Christ is the Son of the living God, in a personal, distinct, and peculiar way, in the which we are not. He is the Son of the living God, by personal distinction from the Father, and Spirit, in the same infinite, incomprehensible Essence. He is *the only begotten Son of God*: of the same Essence, glory, majesty, eternity, and self-subsistence with the Father and the Spirit: one and the same ever-living, everlasting God. He is also God-Man, in one Person. It is as God-Man, He was chosen and appointed to be the Head, Bridegroom, the Lord, the Saviour of his church. It is by virtue of our union to his Person, we are married unto Him, and are the sons of God. This we are now: we have but poor glimmerings of it in this present time state;

for the glory and perfection of this is all to break forth and fully appear in life everlasting; when we shall be admitted into that state, where Christ our Head in glory is; and where he shines forth in the glory of the Father. We are now in our non-age, as it respects our knowledge of the Father, of Christ, of our state and perfection in Him; of what we are as the sons of God: of what we must enjoy and be partakers of, in consequence of all this. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Here by faith we have a certain knowledge of all this. We know Christ to be our Head. We know we are to be like him in glory and blessedness. This is to be with a difference of degrees, between our Head and us. He as Head hath our All. We as members, are to receive our all from Him. We shall never communicate to Him. But He will in heaven, be communicating out of his immensity of glory, all blessedness to us. He will when he appears, so enlarge our spiritual faculties, as that we shall receive into our understandings, such clear knowledge of his glorious Person, as will satisfy our minds, with the fruition and enjoyment of his presence for ever. We shall also have clear apprehensions of his union to us, love and delight in us. This will afford us unceasing joy and consolation throughout the ages of eternity. All this will be enlarged on, as we get into the particular heads of this discourse, to which the same most properly belongs. Here indeed our subject is this particular part and branch of the subject, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* We, us, you, all of us, whether apostles, ministers of the Lord and Saviour, or you believers in Christ: we are all one in Christ: we all equally share in the blessings of adoption. It is an ancient and high act in the mind of our heavenly Father towards us. It is grace beyond the very uttermost extension of our present comprehension. The more we survey it, the more we are lost and swallowed up in what is comprehended in it. We therefore say to you, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Believers in Christ, we are now as truly in Him, as we shall be, when we are with Him in heaven. Now are ye the sons of God, as really, as you will be, when all the glory and perfection of that glory which belongs to this relationship shall break forth towards you, within you, and upon you in eternal Glory. It is good for us to be spiritually engaged in contemplations of these subjects: that is the way, in the which we enjoy and receive the benefit of the same into our minds, and have real communion with the Father, and the Son in our hearts, in the true knowledge and belief of the subject, by the grace and indwelling of the Holy Ghost within us. Our union to the Person of Christ, is in this life as perfect as it ever will be in glory. We are as truly the sons of God, as we ever shall be. Our text lays a mighty emphasis on this. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* Our union and sonship to God, are founded upon our union and marriage to Christ. The glory of sonship which we have is by free gift. *Dr. Goodwin* expresseth himself on this great subject thus: "Christ's being the Son of God, is the highest glory of

Christ, and more than all, even the foundation of all. If we consider Him as Second Person simply, He is the Son of God Personally, as one in distinction from the Father and the Spirit. If we consider Christ as Man, he is the Son of God, by personal union, unto the Second Person. If we consider ourselves as the sons of God, it is by adoption, and union with Him, who is Essentially and Personally, the only begotten Son of God." These are great and most sublime truths: calculated to lift up our hearts to worship, praise, and bless the Lord for what was conceived in the incomprehensible mind of the Three in Jehovah, concerning us before all worlds. The whole volume of revelation, consists in setting before us the will, counsels, decrees, and secrets of the Most High towards us: so that we are hereby led into the knowledge of the same, and thereby also, into real and personal communion with the Three Persons in God. Now as this Epistle was designed to promote, increase, and enlarge the communion of saints with each other, and the Trinity in Unity, it is therefore the apostle brings forth this great truth here. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God*—To suggest to them, there was in the true knowledge and apprehension of this, a cordial which contained in it everlasting consolation. Our apostle seems to be more taken with the grace part of the gospel, than with the doctrinal part of the same. And herein it is, he writes so differently from the other apostles. We may from hence observe, such of the Lord's ministering servants as are led most immediately into personal communion with Christ, are generally led out in the general course of their ministry to express themselves in an heart warming manner on the most glorious and sublime Truths in the everlasting gospel. The truth of the matter if rightly stated is as follows. The doctrinal part of the gospel is the foundation of the grace part of it. Yet the grace part is that in which the essence and marrow of it is to be found. Some are chiefly attracted with the one, and some with the other. *Paul* is by far greater in the doctrine than *John*, and the latter more on some points of grace which are wholly and altogether spiritually experimental than on those very points which are most truly sublime. Some think all ministers of Christ are alike; and that the Lord makes an equal use of them: this is not the case; nor can one minister do the work of another. The work to be done by each of them is, and it must be agreeably with the gifts the Lord hath bestowed on them. For example, take these two apostles, *Paul* and *John*. None were beyond them in the church of the living God, for gifts, grace, and usefulness. Yet *Paul* could no more have written this Epistle, nor expressed what is here recorded, than either of us could. Nor could *John* have written as *Paul*, or *Peter*, or *James*, or *Jude* did, because it was not suited to the gift of grace bestowed on him. If the churches of Christ would notice the gifts of grace, bestowed on those persons whom they have chosen, and set over them in the Lord, and neither contrast them with others, nor expect more from them than they have a right unto, it would be of very great use, and promote very beneficial effects amongst themselves. No minister should aim at going out of the gift, and the way the Lord hath led him, to imitate another. He should be sensible of the gift of grace bestowed on him. He should be thankful for it, and be very industriously employed in the cultivation and improvement of the same; and leave it with the Lord to follow the same with his blessing, as seemeth good in his sight. It is a title given the saints of the Most High,

both in the Old and New Testament, *sons of God*. "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. ix. 25, 26. The promise of God to his church runs thus. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. The title, *sons of God*, seems to have been of very ancient date. We read it as given to the professors of the true faith before the flood. Gen. vi. 2. And in *Job's* time. chap. i. 6. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them." And again, chap. ii. 1. "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD," &c. In the 38th chapter of *Job*, in which the Lord puts such questions to *Job* as it was impossible he should be able to answer, we read thus. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Some by the morning stars, and sons of God in this place, conceive the angels of the Divine presence to be spoken of: if so, then they are called the sons of God. Be it so: I have no objection unto it: but if this be granted; yet they are not here, nor throughout any part of scripture, stiled the sons of God by adoption. This grace, royalty, honour, dignity, and privilege, is bestowed only and wholly, with all included and contained in it on elect men in Christ. And what these will in the issue be, in glory and excellency does not yet appear: nor can it at present be conceived of by them. *Beloved, now are ye the sons of God*: as truly as we the apostles of Christ are. *And it doth not yet appear what we shall be*. The title is great. The new-birth which is the fruit of it is greater. The grace contained in the act of adoption goes beyond all this. The glory which must flow in upon, and be communicated to the saints, as the immediate consequences hereof, far surpasseth what we can possibly conceive: which brings me to this particular,

3. To observe, that what saints are, as the sons of God, and what will be fully manifested, and be in future bestowed on them; doth not yet appear. The apostle says, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be*.

We are now the sons of God; and this founded upon the marriage-union with Christ. So that our very bodies and souls are united to the body and soul of Christ, God-Man. What we shall be when this union is openly declared at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, doth not yet appear. What we shall then be, as the sons of God, can only then be made manifest.

It is in this respect with us, as it was with Christ himself. Or rather what was the case and state of Christ, God-Man, during his incarnate state, may serve to illustrate the subject before us. He was as truly the Son of God manifested in the flesh, the brightness of glory, the heir of all things, in whom the uttermost manifestation of the glory of

Godhead would shine forth to eternity : yet all this glory was suspended whilst he remained in his incarnate state. It was to break forth, and shine in its full splendour, after he should have completed the work of salvation. Having fallen asleep in his body in the arms of death, and been laid in the grave : it was to dawn forth at his resurrection : to shine brighter on his ascension : and He was to be in his Personal Glory in Heaven, and shine forth in the same at the right hand of the Majesty on high. None of this could enter into the minds of his saints and followers, with whom he conversed in the days of his flesh : nor did he give the least hint to any of them, except to *Peter*, and *John* and *James* his brother. He did this by his open transfiguration before them. When his face was like as the sun, and his garments white and glistening. Yet at that season, neither of these highly favoured ones knew what all this meant. So with respect to *us* saints ; for it is to such only I can now appeal—We know to be the *sons of God*, contains what we cannot fully conceive : we have the witness and testimony of our being the sons of God, inherently in our minds from the Holy Spirit. He bears his witness to our spirits that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. He gives us the earnest of this. He feeds our minds at certain times with the prospect of the same. He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. Shews us those words of Christ in the which the glory which is to be revealed in us is contained. He fills our minds at certain seasons, with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; yet all this does not give us the clear and absolute knowledge of what we shall be, at the appearing of Jesus Christ ; any more than Christ's shining forth in glory on the mount, was his shining forth at the right hand of God. It was a glorious pledge and proof of it : so are the communions we are favoured with, of our being predestinated to immortal glory, and eternal blessedness. Christ was as truly God-Man in his incarnate state, as he is God-Man, now that He is in his exalted state. Yet Christ did not on earth, enjoy and shine forth, as he doth now in heaven—He being the Son of the living God ; of whom, He speaking as Mediator saith ; “ For as the Father hath life in himself ; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” John v. 26. He was the Son of God, dwelling personally in the nature of man. His miracles were outward demonstrations, that He was God-Man : God manifested in the flesh ; or the Son of God dwelling Personally in the Man Christ Jesus. Now like as we cannot comprehend the Personal glory of Christ in heaven, no, nor the Mediatorial glory of Christ in which he shines there, no, nor the relative glory of Christ in which he reflects such a lustre, as fills the saints within the veil with bliss which is unspeakable even by them, so neither can we conceive, for it doth not yet appear, what we shall be, when the splendour of our glory union shall appear. We are now the sons of God. We are as truly, personally, individually, perfectly, and everlastingly beloved by each of the Three in Jehovah, now, whilst we are in our present mortal state, as we shall be for evermore. It would be our blessedness to receive the truth of this into our minds, so as to have it always uppermost in our hearts. But how the glories of this are yet to break forth towards and upon us, doth not yet appear. Our thoughts are contracted ; our minds are too narrow at present ; the present body must be laid aside : we must be in a different state : most of us must be in two different states, even

of glory, before we can entertain adequate ideas hereof. We are in a state of regeneration; or, our text itself could not belong to us. At our dismissal from our bodies we shall be admitted into the state of glory, where we shall be present with the Lord. Doubtless we shall there understand and take into our minds, what we shall more fully appear to be in the succeeding state, which will be that of the glorious resurrection. Why may we not conceive that all the states through which the elect pass, they will receive into their minds; and receive that into them, which will fit them for the ensuing state? I see nothing of absurdity in it. The state of purity in creation, was succeeded by the fall; in the which, we are in a state of sin, guilt, pollution, and misery. On this follows the state of life, grace, and salvation, into the which the Lord brings his elect openly and manifestatively, by regeneration: this issues in eternal glorification, which commences by death. It is manifested by the vision of Christ's Person and presence in heaven. It proceeds in the resurrection state, to further and more glorious sights of the God-Man, Christ Jesus: who will then shine on our glorified souls and immortal bodies as he never did manifestatively and apprehensively, in the states passed through before: and even which, when he shines upon us, in the ultimate state, will be everlastingly put down. Now as we cannot but acknowledge, the apostle knew the truth of all he writes, immediately from the teaching and inspiration of the Spirit of God: so he might well say to saints as saints, *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*. It should be remembered, he casts himself, and all the saints into one and the same *us* and *we*: making no distinction. They were but one and the same church to Christ, howsoever they might be otherwise distinguished. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be*, in consequence of being heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ. Surely this could not but draw out their minds to study what they were as the sons of God. What they were entitled unto as the heirs of God. What they might expect and enjoy in the unseen state, in consequence of this. It is our misfortune to scarcely look off ourselves at any time; nor to look above our experiences, and spiritual attainments; yet there is no faith in all this. Here, in what is set before us, we can have nothing to do with the objects and subjects before us, but in the exercise of our faith. We cannot feel ourselves to be the children of God. We receive the knowledge we are so, and enjoy the comfort of knowing and believing that we are so, merely by faith alone. We cannot apprehend our adoption, the grace contained in it, the blessings contained in it, and connected together with the same, and the glory which will ultimately follow thereon, but by faith. Now as the other apostle says, we see through a glass darkly; and know but in part, and shall then only, see face to face, and know even as also we are known: so our apostle *John* says the same. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be*. We know at present that which we cannot communicate to any. We can utter and express what we know of Christ, and of our heavenly Father's love in Him, but we cannot convey the least idea of the same. So far from this, we often find, when we speak the clearest, concerning our views and inward apprehensions of these subjects, those very persons to whom we thus communicate our conceptions, have not so much as the least spiritual apprehensions thereof. So as it respects ourselves, we cannot

apprehend how glorious we are to be, and shall be as the sons of God, when our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear. We must leave all our present views, thoughts, apprehensions, and conceptions of the same, aside, in this point: as falling short, everlastingly short of what will be the case, when the glory of our union to the Person of Christ, and our sonship which is founded on our union with Him shall break forth, and appear. This is the outline of what the apostle here says: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* And this brings me to my last particular head of discourse, which is this.

4. The knowledge saints have, of what they cannot as yet comprehend, and of that which doth not yet appear, concerning the glory which is to be revealed in them, and the glory which will break forth upon them, and what it will produce in their souls and bodies. *But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

We have in our regeneration, those spiritual faculties wrought in our souls, by the which we receive the knowledge of Christ, and have an actual enjoyment of Christ, now, and for ever. The same will remain in us for ever. It is by these the glory of Christ will be let into our minds in heaven, when we see Him face to face. It is by these as the mediums, we shall see and enjoy Christ for ever, in the ages of eternity. The saints of God have a knowledge of the truth and blessedness of the intellectual state of glory. They cannot comprehend it, yet they have spiritual apprehensions of it formed in their renewed minds by the Holy Ghost, of the objects and subjects which they will then have to converse with. If it were not so, the apostle would not express himself as he here doth. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Then it is we are to partake of that glory which belongs unto us, as the fruit of the Father's everlasting love to us. Which he expressed in *choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world. And in predestinating us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.* Saints have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. It is he who hath wrought in their souls a meetness for eternal glory. He is the earnest of it. He gives them foretastes of it. By him they are taught that their completeness of bliss, both in body and soul is to be fully and finally accomplished at the second coming of our Lord; of the which *Paul* says, speaking to the *us* in which he was included, *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Titus ii. 13. The appearing of Christ is believed in by the saints. They expect and wait for it. He will appear in all the glory, majesty, and perfection of his Person, as God-Man, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. Christ shone forth in this glory on the mount of transfiguration. He shines forth more fully now at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He will shine forth in his full orb'd glory, when he shall descend as the Lord from heaven, to 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 unto himself. The glories of Christ's body and soul, will be the subject of all the perfection,

and glory, and blessedness of Heaven. His Godhead being personally united to it, will be the sustainer of it. From this Tabernacle, as it is so called by our apostle in the 21st chapter of the *Revelation*, v. 3, all the glories of Godhead, will shine forth, and be reflected on the saints—on their souls and on their bodies; which will now be like unto his: and that in a suitable proportion and conformity: for Christ's glory and the church's glory are distinct glories. The human nature of Christ, taken into union with the Son of God, will have a glory, which is his Personal glory: wholly incommunicable. The Glory of the Son of God, who is God united to Man, in one Person, and the glory which flows herefrom, is the glory which will be reflected forth on the elect, when Christ our life shall appear. The saints in the resurrection state, will have a participation of their sonship union with Him, in degree and proportion, suited to their relation to Him, and to God in Him. They are now the sons of God. It is then to shine forth, and that in the same glory in which it will be continued in heaven, in the immediate presence of God for ever. It is this will make them like unto Christ. They seeing Him as he is, in his relative glory, in his Mediatorial glory, in his Personal glory, which is his ultimate glory, it will stamp his image so completely on the minds of his saints, and they will be so filled in their supernatural faculties, that they will be like Him, both in body and soul. A most glorious subject. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* To see Christ as He is, must consist in that intuitive sight and apprehension of the Person of Christ, as will consummate the blessedness of the glorified, and keep up their minds in perpetual activity on His Person for ever. It is such a sight of Him, as their Head of union, and communion, as will be to them everlasting life—Immortal bliss—A source of eternal joy. Agreeable with this our Lord says, "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." This request when answered, will issue in such a glorification of the saints, that they will be with Christ, and be made so perfectly like Christ, in their measure and degree, as that the glory of their marriage union with Him will break forth on them, and shine forth in them to such a degree as cannot now be so much as conceived of by them. Our faith at present may contemplate it: and we may thereby have some conceptions of it in our spiritual minds: that is all we can attain unto whilst in the body; this is what the apostle himself here says. We shall never be more united to the Person of Christ, for our bodies and souls, our whole persons consisting of body and soul, are united to the body and soul of Christ, to his whole Person, God-Man, and we shall have all the glory which is contained in this union, shine forth in us, and reflected on us for ever. We shall see his face, and his name will be in our foreheads.

These are subjects worthy of our contemplations and study. They require the closest attention of the spiritual mind. They should be viewed in the light of the word, and in the exercise of faith. The spirituality of the mind is discovered by our love and delight in these subjects. We must leave out all we are, and all we think of ourselves, wholly and entirely, with all our own thoughts of future glory, and con-

fine our thoughts to what is revealed of the same in the gospel. It would be well for us to go over our election union. Our representative union. Our marriage union. Our covenant union. Our manifestative union. Our glory union: and consider what must flow in upon us, sooner or later in consequence of the same. When our Lord removes us to Himself, and we see Him face to face in Heaven, the glory of all these unions will not flow in upon us. We shall then be only in the state of glory. This is our first remove from the state of grace. It will be a most blessed one: nor can we at present have adequate conceptions of it—To be delivered from the whole body, and freed entirely and for ever from the whole inherency of sin, this will be most glorious, and such a blessing as we only can at present anticipate—To be on this presented by Christ, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, immediately on our entrance into Heaven, this will be most glorious and divine. After having been in this state for a season, to be removed into another, which will be the case: for the resurrection state differs from the glory state: whilst both are states of glory, yet there is a distinction in them, and the one will be more glorious than the other: as in the one we shall only be glorious in our souls, and in the other we shall be as truly glorious in our bodies, as they will be like the glorious body of our Lord. It is then we shall be like Him. It is then we shall see Him as He is: for our bodies as well as our souls will then be fitted for the real vision of Him; so that we shall have His full shine on us, which will fill our spiritual bodies, as well as our minds, through and through with His glory. He will shine upon us, and within us, as our Head of Glory. He will fill us with the reflection of the same. We shall shine forth therein, just as we shone forth in Him, in eternal predestination before all worlds, in all the glory and perfection of our divine adoption and sonship. *We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Where, and on whatsoever the sun shines, it leaves its glory on the same—Christ shining on the souls and bodies of his saints in the resurrection morn, and during the resurrection state, he will put his own glory on them: so that they will be like Him. This will be increasing blessedness unto them. Believers, think on these words, *We shall be like him.* Then will be accomplished in us, all the effects of what our Lord expresses in these words to his Divine Father. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” Surely this must be the glory union, which is to shine forth most brightly from Christ on his whole church at the last day. Then it is he will give and present his church, to the Father, and that in the same glory in which he received them at his hands, before the foundation of the world. It is then we shall see the God-Man, as he is, and this will everlastingly satisfy us. Then the glory union will break forth upon the saints, so that he shall be glorified in them, and appear wonderful. This will make them as truly glorious, and like Christ, and as conformable to his glory, as can be admitted of: for the church can never have the Personal glory of Christ on her. No: it cannot be, any more than she can the

essential glory of Christ. She will be admitted to see Christ in his Personal Glory; but she cannot partake of it. "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." Christ's Personal glory is his ultimate glory: and the beholding Him in his glory as God-Man, will be the ultimate glory and blessedness of his saints. The glory he will put on them, is a glory suited to them as his members: and this will be everlastingly sufficient. And that they may never centre in their own communicated glory, blessedness, and perfection, they will be raised up and be admitted to see Christ in his Personal glory, which will so swallow up the whole of their minds, as that God in all his Persons and perfections, will be to them *All in All*. I have gone through this subject to the best of my ability; yet the whole is so much, and so far beyond me, that though I have the scriptures before me, I am vastly short of comprehending what is revealed in them concerning these great, glorious, and most divine subjects. You will therefore pardon me. Study these subjects for yourselves. It will be of very great use and benefit to you. The Lord forgive what is amiss. The Lord bless what is good in his sight. Amen.

SERMON XXXVI.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—1 JOHN iii. 3.

IN the two former verses the apostle had been speaking on these important subjects—on the manifestation of the divine Father's love to us, in adoption, so as to bestow on us the title of sons, and making us such. We are acknowledged and dealt with by God as such; yet carnal, earthly minded professors, neither esteem, nor love us, but hate us on this account, and for our profession of the same; which is very easily accounted for—They knew not Christ—They know not us. If they had known Him, they would have known us. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* It is a blessing beyond our estimation, that we should be graced by God with the title,—sons of God. It becomes us to consider the love from whence it originates. As to what the world think or say of us, it is not worth our notice. They only deal with us, and by us, as they did with and by our most blessed Lord: they knew Him not: so neither do they us. This may well carry us above all, to be informed of what you really are in the view of, and as it respects your relation to God himself. *Beloved, now are we, at this very time, and in the present state you are now in, the sons of God.* You are at present, in this present evil world: there's no visible discovery to you, or others, of the glorious condition which awaits you; of the

glory which ere long will be revealed in you : of what you are to be the partakers of. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* It is only by faith, and the earnest, witness, and testimony of the Spirit, in the word of truth ; and in perfect harmony with the same, his bearing testimony to our spirits concerning what is written in them ; that we look for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we inwardly know, and are assured, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be made like unto Him : we ground it upon this, we are *the called according to God's purpose.* And *whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* We are fully persuaded, that as *we now bear the image of the earthly Adam in our present mortal bodies, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Adam.* And this likewise in complete holiness and happiness. *For we shall see him as he is.* We shall then enjoy him in the most immediate, intimate, personal, and intuitive manner : we shall behold Him in his manhood, in all his glory : this is what *Job* spake of when he said, " I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another ; or not a stranger." *Job* xix. 25—27. The confession respects his seeing God in our nature : or, his glorious Redeemer in a body like our own, as it respects the reality of it, at the last day. These words are to the same effect, " As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." *Psa.* xvii. 15. When the saint should see the Person of Christ at the resurrection-morn, he would then be satisfied : not with his conformity to Him, but with Christ, the image of the invisible God. As in these two verses which begin this present chapter, Christ is not expressly mentioned, it may be asked, why I have applied the *he* to Christ, without giving a reason for the same ? My friends, it is most certain, our Lord is to appear. It is not the Father, nor the Spirit : yet our Lord is not mentioned in the text, but by the term *he* : so that I concluded it might be, the question would be proposed ; and for my own satisfaction, and your's also, I would refer back to the 28th verse of the former chapter, where you read these words, " And now, little children, abide in him ; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." This I think will give you complete satisfaction. The words of my present text are in close connection with the former ones : and may be considered as expressing the fruits and effects, which the hope, and expectation of the appearing of Christ, and seeing Him as he is, and of being like unto Him, produceth in the hearts and lives of such, as are interested in Christ, and have this real and blessed apprehension of the subject. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* I will set before you the particulars contained in the words thus.

1. Christ the Person spoken of under the term *him*, and as the object of the saints' hope, that when he shall appear he will be seen by them, and they shall be made like unto Him.

2. What effect the true knowledge of this vastly important article of our most holy faith, hath on every one that rightly receives and embraces it. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

3. What is contained in this ?

I conceive under these particulars, we may have some general outlines of the verse now before us. May the Lord bless the same, so as that we may be profited thereby. Amen.

A true gospel hope, of seeing Christ ; of being made like unto Him, of seeing Him as He is, hath its most blessed effect on the minds of saints. Such, depending on the sure and certain accomplishment of all this, in the Lord's time, and in the Lord's way, cannot but shun all evil, and aim after the utmost perfection of practical holiness ; hereby proving their meetness for that state, into the which they are to be introduced by Christ, at his coming, and in his kingdom ; that so they may hereby have as glorious a perception of the same, as they possibly can before their personal introduction into it. I am

1. To consider the Person of Christ as spoken of, under the term *him* : and as the object of the saints' hope. And that, when he shall appear he will be seen by them, and they shall be made like unto Him. All this is included in the former verse, and it is the foundation of the present verse ; which is only carried into this, and exemplified in the experience thereof. The former words were, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.* Then follows these words : *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Now it is very evident Christ is spoken of, as the Person that shall appear. His appearance is the object of the saints' hope. It was so in an especial sense, in the apostolic day. This was a great means of increasing their personal holiness—of making them very spiritual in all manner of conversation and godliness. It was this which kept them looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. If it had, and actually produced these effects in them, the same true apprehensions of the coming of Christ, would most certainly produce the same, in us, in our lives and conversations. It could not be otherwise. The saints addressed by *John*, were saints indeed. Their true saintship consisted in their true and supernatural knowledge of Christ, and of the Father in Him : and in the supernatural communion they had, and held with them, by the influence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Christ was their All. His glories had attracted them. His love had yielded an heaven unto them. His salvation was the subject of their song. They found themselves under everlasting obligations unto Him. Therefore their very expectation of his appearing, of their seeing Him face to face, of their seeing Him as he is, of their being with Him, of their being like Him, was very refreshing to their minds. It at some times, transported them : at other times it exhilarated them : and again it encouraged them, and carried them above, and beyond all their present experiences, afflictions, and distresses. “ For I reckon” (says one of them) “ that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Rom. viii. 18. “ Our conversation, or citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Phil. iii. 20. “ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Col. iii. 4. “ Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus,

which delivered us from the wrath to come." 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. From these quotations, and others might be added, it appears that the coming and appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, Personally and visibly, was the object of the hope of saints. It is called by the apostle *that blessed hope*. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Tit. ii. 13. Real saints happily enjoy the prospect and anticipation of this hope. They were encouraged in the expectation of this hope in their observances of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. By the one they were led to commemorate the sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now most assuredly if he rose to immortal life, death can have no more dominion over him. If he lives then, it must be in glory everlasting. If he be on his throne, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, invested with all power in heaven and in earth, He must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The ordinance of the supper, which is a solemn memorial and celebration of the sacrifice and death of Christ, is to remain in the church until the Lord come. A full proof the Lord will come. Or the apostle had never said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew, or shew ye the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26. But when shall he come? At the appointed time. What will he do at his coming? Raise the bodies of the elect dead. Change the living saints. Set fire to this world, and hereby dissolve it. Make new heavens and a new earth. Introduce the saints into it. Then give them all up, most completely perfected to the Divine Father, as a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. As in Adam all die, or as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive. But there will be an order in the resurrection. Christ the first fruits is risen. When he rose, some of the saints were raised together with him, in their bodies to life everlasting, and a state of immortality: yet there is a vast term of time run out, and will still run on between the resurrection of Christ the head, and those saints who were then raised in their bodies, and the general resurrection of the just. So says the apostle. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits." He is risen. He ensures the whole harvest. He is the earnest of the same. He hath consecrated the whole. Afterward, at the appointed season, then they that are Christ's at his coming, will be raised. Then cometh the end, when he, i. e. Christ, shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. It is God the Father is spoken of as *He* who is to put all things under the feet of Christ, and our Lord must reign till all enemies are made his footstool. Even death itself shall be destroyed: which will be by the resurrection of the bodies of the elect from the grave of death to die no more: and by the change which will pass on the bodies of the living Elect, so as they will thereby become immortal. It is written in the 8th *Psalms* concerning the God-Man, the glorious head and only Mediator, that the Divine Father hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. The Divine Father gave and appointed Christ, God-Man, to the whole of his work and office of Mediation: when he hath so completed the execution of the same, as that every

purpose, end, and design of it is accomplished, he is to render up the whole, with an account of his execution of the same, to Him that appointed Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Christ the Mediator, then shall he, the Son, in his official capacity and Mediatorship, be subject unto him, i. e. to Jehovah the Father, that God may be all in all. That is, that the Three Divine Persons in the Godhead, may more clearly and fully appear than they do under the present dispensation of grace. For the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will never cease to be what they are, as it respects their Existence in the Essence: nor in their Personal and Relative Existence in the one Self-Existing Essence. No; nor either in relation to their transactions on the behalf of Christ, and the elect in Him: but when all the present dispensation is completed, and saints are in their resurrection state, then Christ will cease to exercise his mediatory office as he now doth. I thought by casting in this here, we should have the more clear and enlarged view of the subject before us. It serves to shew, and prove, that saints expected the appearing of Jesus Christ: that his appearing was the object of their hope. They expected in, and at, and by his appearing, the consummation of all their hope. They fully and clearly apprehended they should then see Him as he is. That they should be like Him; be with Him; live with Him; reign with Him, and be ever with Him their Lord: this they were fully confirmed in. They only waited for the accomplishment of the same. This their hope in him was founded on the revelation made thereof in the inspired volume. Our apostle, and *Peter*, had full demonstration given them of this, by being admitted to see Christ on the holy mount. They had thereby not only a glimpse of the Personal glory of Christ, but had also hereby an item given them, of the glory in which Christ would shine forth, when he should appear the second time without sin unto salvation. It may be from hence it is, he says in the former verse, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.* *Peter* entitles himself, “a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” 1 Epis. v. 1: and speaking of our Lord’s appearing, says, “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. 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. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Epis. i. 16—19. The apostle freely and fully signifies here, that the transfiguration of Christ, was a discovery of the glory and majesty in the which he will appear, when he cometh to glorify his saints, and make them most fully blessed at his appearing. So that the saints, from what they had heard of this, were fully expecting it. They longed for it. They were fully persuaded of it. And Christ, and his appearing was their hope and joy. Hence the apostle *Paul* speaking of what through grace he had done, and what his own expectations were, expresseth also what was the chiefest and highest

expectation of all the saints. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. We see from all the scriptures, that saints had a most blessed hope and expectation of the coming of our Lord—Of his Personal appearing—That He would appear in his glory, and all his saints with Him. They also expected they should see Him in his glory—That he would reflect it on them—That they should see Him as He is—That they should be made like unto Him both in soul and body. This was the one hope of them all: and this hope and expectation was encouraged in their minds by the writings of the holy apostles: and it produced its most blessed effects. Three of the apostles, *James, Peter, and John*, had seen Christ in the glory in which he would appear. This could not but create longings in their minds, for to behold him in the same glory. The Lord himself had spoken of the glories of the resurrection state, saying, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 43. So that they might well understand they should then be like unto Christ. When he the Sun of Righteousness should shine upon them, and within them, filling them through and through with the beams of his light and glory. This would make them in their souls and bodies like unto Christ. The true knowledge and apprehensions of the same, could not but have their mighty weight, influence, power and authority on their minds. Brethren and beloved, do but consider the subject: every one that hath the expectation of seeing Christ as he is! of being made like Christ! of having the whole image of Christ completely stamped on his soul and body, of being made like unto his glorious body, and thus fitted for the eternal fruition of Christ, and to be for ever with the Lord, what effects must these truths, views, and expectations produce in them? Why verily the same as the apostle here speaks of. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* The knowledge and belief of the same gospel truths, will always, at all times, places, and ages, produce the same most blessed effects. They have not lost, nor will they ever lose any of their virtue and efficacy, nor cease to produce their own genuine and proper effects on the mind: yet they will not produce these effects in unbelieving minds: nor will they produce these most blessed and glorious effects in believing minds, any farther than they are received; and we are led to live in the believing views and apprehensions of them. It is a defect in general with us all. We look to the effect just so far as we have the experience of the same, or see it in others; and judge of the cause thereby. Yet it should be with us to look off all the effects, to the only cause which can produce them: and every truth revealed in the everlasting gospel, spiritually known, believed, and received into the spiritual mind, will produce its proper fruit and effect in the heart, life, and conversation. But I proceed

2. To set before you, what effect the true knowledge of this vastly important article of our most holy faith, hath, on every one that receives and embraces it. The apostle expresseth himself on this part of the subject thus, *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

This is spoken universally. It concerns every saint. It reaches and extends to each and every one of them: for it is such, and only such that have Christ for their *hope*. It is they, and they only, who are now the sons of God. It is they only who are to see Christ as he is. All will see Him: but it is the saints only who will see Him as He is. They will be fitted for this sight so as none besides themselves will be; for elect angels will not see Christ in spiritual bodies; whereas the saints will have spiritual bodies, by the eyes of which they will see Christ; and by the ears of which, they will hear Christ. And the whole body of Christ which is the mirror and compendium of all perfection, will reflect a glory and splendour on all the bodies of the saints; and they will converse with Christ in their bodies; which will afford an infinity of satisfaction; such as will last for ever. All which will be peculiar to the elect of God, of Adam's posterity. The elect angels will be spectators of the joy and blessedness of the saints, and will be attendants on them: yet they will not partake of the same, in their way and manner. All the whole collection and congregation of saints will have a like participation in this sight of Christ—In this one complete and perfect conformity to Christ—In this complete glory union and communion with Christ, and he will shine forth on them manifestatively, as he never did before. It is these only who will be made like unto Him, by seeing Him as He is. It is such, therefore, who, whilst they remain in a time state, alone have in their own souls, the hope and expectation of all this. It is, therefore, only such the apostle is here speaking of. He does not here address them to be so and so; but he declares what such and such are: and that, in each and every one of the individual persons; *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* This text as in union with the former verse, fully contains what this hope is, which every man in the profession of Christ is influenced by, to purify himself even as the Lord is pure; which hath been fully opened in the former part of this Sermon; yet it must not be dropped, because it contains the whole foundation of it. All the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are here included and comprehended; to shew this the apostle uses the term *every man*: which brings it down to each and every individual believer. He speaks of them, of each and every one of them, as alike influenced with the hope and expectation of the glorious and Personal appearing of Christ: of what would follow thereon: of the vision they would have of Him: of the effects it would produce in them. Not that it follows from hence, that all saints in the church militant are in their own individual minds, favoured with the very same glorious apprehensions of what is really contained in these most glorious subjects. No; we cannot admit of this, because it is not found to be the case. Yet this we cannot but allow, that Christ, as Head, Lord, Mediator, Saviour, is one and the same to them all: and they are all one in Christ Jesus: so that though they do not all attain to the same full knowledge and comprehension of Him, and of all which is revealed of and concerning Him in the everlasting gospel, yet they being all equally united, interested in, and related to Him, what the Scriptures give ground and reasons to expect of His glorious appearing, and of the effects which it hath produced, may, or doth produce in any of the saints, may be considered as expressive of what is inherently in the hearts of all saints, be it drawn forth into act and appearance or not. It is in the heart of all saints to expect the

Personal appearing of Christ; yet in such as are babes in Christ, it can only be in embryo: but there it is: there can be no spiritual life without it. Yet it may be without its being drawn forth into act and discovery. So that this universal expression, may be very expressive and descriptive, of what belongs to all saints as saints: of their one common faith and hope—That Christ is their one object and subject—That when he went to glory, and whilst he continues in that state, his heart is here upon earth: so his heart opened to them on earth, in the everlasting gospel, hath carried up their hearts unto Him in heaven, and there is thus a mutual longing after each other, in a real sight of each other, and communion with each other in the world of Glory. Hence the expectation of seeing Him as He is, becomes to them so most truly desirable. Now this produces in those saints in whom this expectation is wrought, effects correspondent herewith. Every one, each individual which hath this hope, or expectation wrought in him, by the Spirit of the living God, that he shall see Christ, Personally, in the kingdom of Glory first, then in the Resurrection state, in the New Jerusalem state, and in the ultimate state; *purifieth himself, even as he is pure*. He does not make himself meet for this sight, but he acts as one who is already made meet for it. He does not purify his body and soul from all sin; but he acts as one who is washed in the blood of Christ, and covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness: and he labours to live, and act, and think, and speak, and walk, as one who expects to be clothed with immortality and eternal glory. This is agreeable to what the Lord hath spoken and commanded. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." Luke xii. 35, 36. The effects of expecting the appearing of Christ, of seeing Him, and of being made like Him, are as follows. Such—it may be brought down to an individual, and be thus expressed; such an one, will aim to be in a state of fitness and readiness to meet his Lord—By dismissing all needless cares of a perplexing nature and kind—He will be laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset him—He will look to Jesus as his object—He will make Him his subject. In a very special manner he will be engaged in true spiritual meditations on the glories of Christ. As he will account all things, seen and unseen, as nothing in compare with Christ; so he will more especially think and exercise his mind on the Essential Glory of Christ—On the Personal Glory of Christ—On the Relative Glory of Christ—On the Mediatorial Glory of Christ—On the Glory of Christ's Saviourship—How He may be expected to shine forth in all these glories at his appearing, and in his brightness of splendour and Majesty, so as to shed and reflect the brightness of all this on his saints. Most assuredly, true and scriptural apprehensions of these, must be very suited to fit the mind of saints for the coming of the day of God: as also an absolute renunciation of this present evil world, and having the heart wholly lifted up above and beyond it. This will be the effect which will be produced in the mind, by holy and close meditations on the things which are most closely connected with these subjects. As he believes "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are

therein shall be burned up;" he will see and feel the propriety of the apostle's address, " Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall meet with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Pet. iii. 10—14. A true spirit, framed according to the true scripture apprehensions of these subjects, and faith in them, must be what *John* speaks of, when he says, *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* It is true, we have to the very present our natural and sinful infirmities: nor shall we ever be without them, until we lay down these bodies of sin and mortality: this we know and expect will shortly be the case: our present meanness in consequence of the same, in our own eyes, and that of others, is very great; yet what we know of the Lord Jesus Christ, of what He is to us, and of what we are to Him, keeps us up. We are now the sons of God; what the consequence of this will be, and what it will produce in us, when our Lord shall appear, we at present know not: but this we know—" that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And we know, from the effects which the knowledge of this hath produced in our own minds, that every one that hath this hope in Christ, in the appearing of Christ, and a real expectation of seeing Christ, and of being made like unto Christ, by seeing Him as he is; such an one will purify himself, even as Christ is pure: this is the very effect which it will naturally and necessarily produce in him. The prospect of eternal glory, to be enjoyed in the vision of Christ, and our real prospect and hope of the same, will infallibly and invincibly increase communion with the Lord, and promote holiness, and conformity to Him. It will be the course and practice of every individual who is a member of Christ, and hath Christ in him, objectively, and subjectively, he will on the footing of his well grounded hope in Christ, of seeing Him, and being like unto Him, by seeing Him as he is, be powerfully influenced to aim, at all possible purity, in heart and life, in imitation, and conformity to Him, in his superlative purity and holiness; and this, not that we might be holy, righteous, and pure, in the sight of the world; but be all this in the sight of fellow saints, and thereby prove to them, and all others with whom we converse, the mighty efficacy which the knowledge of Christ hath in our hearts. This then is the effect the true knowledge of this vastly important article of our most holy faith, hath on every one that rightly receives, and embraces it. It is the means of promoting conformity through the whole man, and the whole of the new man in Christ, a most blessed conformity to Christ. We are not conformed to Christ, and then brought to know Him. No, not so; but we are first brought to know Him; then to walk with Him; then to walk before Him; then to walk conformable unto Him: and as the increasing knowledge of Him is let in upon the renewed and enlightened mind, so our delight in Him is increased: our affection to Him excited. As his glory and unsearchable riches are more and more opened up, and we understand more and more, of what we are to know of Him, and may expect to receive of

Him, and his glory into our minds, and shall enjoy of Him in personal fellowship, this constrains us to purify ourselves, even as he is pure. He hath washed us in his own blood: that is our purity before Him: but we expecting to stand before Him, we would be as a bride adorned for her husband, and put on himself, as our glorious apparel, and be adorned with the full, and in the full exercise of all the heavenly graces of his Spirit, perfumed with every celestial odour and fragrancy to meet our Lord, when it shall be proclaimed, the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And this hath brought me to my last particular, which is this,

3. What is contained in this? *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Mr. Romaine once said, he knew *no greater mistake than by confounding faith, and its fruits together.* It is a great mistake frequently made, to blend Truth and its effects, so as that the one is taken for the other. Christ and his salvation, should be kept in their proper place. The revelation of Christ, the knowledge of Christ, faith in Christ, and communion with Christ, should follow in their order: then the fruits of faith, and these also in their order and degree. It would be for the real benefit of the real saints of the Most High God, were these attended unto, orderly, regularly, and as one actually depends and follows on the other. As in the grace part of the gospel, it is of great importance to have the doctrines thereof stated rightly and properly, as they are recorded in the word; so as it respects the experimental, and practical part of the gospel, it is of real importance to have the same, just as correctly stated, as the grace part; the one depends on the other: and it is by the right state of both in our minds, much of our true experience and practice depends. It is a very sad prevailing error in the present day; our good men are vastly fond of it; they really continue it: and this is it—They all insist on a work of grace, which is not the very exact semblance of the Truth as it is in Jesus; whereas, what the scriptures speak of, is a work which is the exact copy of the grace of God, expressed in the word. It is the foundation of the same, created in the renewed mind, by the Holy Ghost. Hence it is drawn out, fed, nourished, strengthened, and quickened, as the doctrines of grace are preached, opened, and explained. Another error is this—There is too much preached about what is experienced; or as they say, should be felt and known inwardly; or what must be the case, or all cannot be right with the soul: all which is wrong; because this is not preaching Christ to a sinner: and there cannot be any spiritual life in the soul, before Christ is there; and the only way to discover if Christ be in any, is to preach Christ unto them. Another mistake is, to lead people to their own experience, and encourage them in it, and build them up in the same, instead of leading and building them up in Christ. Another is, always insisting on the fruits of faith, to the neglect of setting forth the Person, work, worthiness, righteousness of Christ, and the fountain of his blood. It is a very preposterous way to go by marks and signs, to point out a man's interest in Christ. Some will be ready to say, what do you make of the words before you? Is it not the case here? does not the apostle say, *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Pray what is this, but proving interest in Christ and glory, by an outward walk? Stop you man; it is not so. Indeed, in-

deed it is not. Let you and me think of it as we may, the apostle says nothing of our must be, either this, or that. He is not on any subject here which requires any proof of it from us. He is speaking of the grace of adoption, and to the adopted sons of God—of what they would most assuredly partake of: and that on the appearing of Jesus Christ—of the blessedness of all saints at that time: they would then see Christ: they would be made like Christ. This would be completed in each and every one of them, by their seeing Him as he is. Now, says he, the knowledge of this, and a personal and particular belief of this, have a most blessed effect on all the sons of God. This is the very genuine effect of it: and every one, without exception, that hath this hope in Him, i. e. in Christ, and that when Christ shall appear, he shall be like him by seeing him as he is; such an one, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure. Not, that he may inherit this ineffable blessing; or to obtain a right and title to it; or to ensure it to himself. No; it is free grace; yet it will issue in eternal glory. It is all beyond the attainment of man: yet elect men are to have the full enjoyment of the same. As they cannot but aspire after it, so they cannot but be conforming to Christ in every thing, so far as they are possessed with the true knowledge, faith, and apprehension of the same. Hence it is the apostle saith, *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* He that is pure is Christ. Even He is the Hope of Glory. And it is his blood which purifies the church, and sanctifies it, and makes it clean from all sin. The purity spoken of in my text, is distinct from this: and I am to explain the same. It is the effect of it, and this is what is contained in it; viz. a conversation such as becometh the gospel of Christ: a conformity to Christ: such as can only be produced by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost: and which is the fruit of and flows from his own divine workmanship in the soul: it is a conformity, in the which supernatural grace is both exercised, and openly displayed. I should consider a great part of it may be conceived to consist, in a most devout spiritual outgoing of the soul in fellowship with the Holy Trinity. In high admiring thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in such contemplations on Him as perfume the whole mind: sanctified the affections: made way for free and intimate communion with Him; so that hereby the heavenly and spiritual aspirations of the heart are more and more manifested: this, improving the mind more and more for heaven and glory; hence, I conceive, it is expressed by the term purity: and the saint is here said to purify himself, as hereby he gets above himself, and all carnal entanglements. He delights to draw nigh unto God: to converse with Christ: to view Him. In all these most holy exercises, the Holy Spirit is pleased to shed his most gracious influences on the mind. He lets in such light on it, as makes known more of heaven and glory, than is conceived of, and apprehended any other way. Now this, as I conceive, interprets our text, and gives it its own proper gloss; and this without any mixture of legality, or any thing of self. I will therefore here recite the whole of my text, and then leave you to judge for yourselves, concerning the light I have cast on the same. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* And there is no means by which purity of heart, and holiness in life and conversation are more increased, and enlarged, than by being frequent at the throne of grace, and in free and spiritual accesses to Christ Jesus. The more, and oftener

we are in Christ's company, the more we are assimilated into his likeness. We grow the more dead to all out of heaven, and the more desirous of being in heaven, because our best friend even Jesus is there. This is the way in the which we advance on to the city of the living God : where, when we see him shine, as he now doth at the right hand of the Majesty on high, it will cause us to long to see Him shine forth on his whole church on the resurrection morning. One state of glory will succeed on the other, and doubtless will each exceed the other : so as the glory of Christ will shine out in each, and so as for it to be an increasing shine of glory. May the Lord give the sons of God, the heirs of glory, increasing apprehensions thereof, and make the subject familiar unto them. It is a most overwhelming consideration, that we, the sons of God, are to have the glory of Christ, shine on us, immediately on our entrance into heaven, at the resurrection of our bodies from the grave of death, and during our continuance in the New Jerusalem state, and in the state of ultimate Glory, and that for ever. May the Lord give us such conception hereof, as may increase our desires after it, and whet our appetites for the full fruition of it. Now, my dearly beloved, and longed for, I must leave what I have thus feebly hinted, and put together, with you, to judge of for yourselves. I have aimed to open some of the glories of Christ to your view, and give you little items of what you may with very good reason expect from Him. It is the Holy Spirit only who can give you real and glorious apprehensions of the subject, so as to draw your whole souls with it, into real fellowship with Christ, who is the Lord of Glory, and who will be the fountain and spring of eternal glory unto your souls and bodies for ever. I will therefore leave what is delivered with you, for your instruction, improvement, benefit, and consolation. May the Lord command his blessing on the same. I would just beg your attention to this one remark—You will never have a greater apprehension of what future glory is, than when the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased to shine on your souls, in a way of special and personal communion. It is then you have a foretaste of what must be contained in future glory. May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is blessed for evermore, give you to live much in the thoughts of future glory : of what it will be, to be swallowed up in the vision of God, in the Person of Christ, God-Man. He will be your perpetual Sun, who will shine with everlasting light and splendour on you for evermore. The Lord the Holy Ghost put forth his indwelling presence, glory, and influences within you, and fill you with all the fulness of God. Amen, and Amen. Lord Jesus do thou say, Amen. And thy Name will thereby be magnified. Even so, Amen.

S E R M O N X X X V I I .

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.—I JOHN iii. 4, 5.

I CONCEIVE the apostle here begins a new subject—How such as are the Lord's should avoid all sin: it being a transgression of the law of God: so that in the commission of sin, consists the essence of all evil: and the least sin, as we so express ourselves, is a transgression of the law. In this and in the following verses, to the close of the 10th, the nature and evil of sin are set forth, and that as being a transgression of the law of God: as contrary to grace and holiness, as the work of the devil, and as that which distinguisheth the two seeds, the children of God, and the children of the devil. As this was written as a general, or catholic Epistle, so all through it, the apostle writes unto, and distinguishes between two sorts of people who were under a profession of Christ. One of these were born from above, the other were not. It is true he does not particularly address the latter; yet he fully deciphers them; so as they could not but know his true judgment of them: and most undoubtedly he knew this was the most effectual method of dealing with them. He conceived it also, it seems, from his pursuing this plan throughout the whole of this Epistle, the best way of laying even before the saints, such instructive hints concerning sin, and its exceeding sinfulness, and the danger of committing the least sin, as might be of the greatest use and service unto them; whilst they would not be wounded with his delivery of the same; he not charging it in the least upon them. I would here venture to add, as the apostle, in and throughout this Epistle, writes only to saints, so agreeable to the tenor thereof, he pursues his subject, expressing nothing to alter this view of it. In the words now before us, which are these, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin*, we have the following particulars.

1. Here is a general declaration concerning *whosoever committeth sin*. What he doth. *He transgresseth the law. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.*

2. What sin is in its consequences, even in any act of it. *Sin is the transgression of the law.* It is, therefore, most carefully to be avoided.

3. The antidote these saints had, which was allsufficient to bear up their minds, and lift them up in holy confidence, above and beyond the law, sin, and its curse. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.*

4. The perfection of this, both as it may be attributed to Christ, and his church also. *And in him is no sin.* No; nor in his Church either, under gospel considerations.

This contains the outline of what I shall aim, if the Lord please, to

set before you. May he be with me of a truth, and bless the same both to you, and me. The former part is most awful and solemn and tremendous. The latter is most truly blessed and divine. It may be, the first part may, in the hand of the Spirit, be made use of, that we may receive the latter with the greater affection. I am

1. To observe, here is a general account, or declaration concerning, *Whosoever committeth sin.* What such an one doeth. *He transgresseth the law.*

By the law is here to be understood, the law of God, in and by which he hath commanded perfect and unsinning obedience to every precept of it: and pronounced an eternal curse upon each and every violation of it. Which law is as immutable as the nature and will of God: it can no more change than God himself. What is styled the curse of it, is the righteous displeasure of God against the evil which is expressed by the term sin: and is the transgression of God's most holy law. Sin hath been committed by the angels of God's presence. Some of them transgressed his most holy law, and were everlastingly damned for it. *Adam*, the head of the whole human race, committed sin, and by it he lost the image of God in which he was created, for himself, and all his posterity. And to the present moment, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.* This deserves to be attended unto: to prevent from sinning: to guard us against it: to keep us at the greatest distance from it. The general extension of the words, leaves no one out: all who commit sin are included in it. As in the former verse it was, *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure:* so here it is by way of contrast, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* They come from the apostle's pen, as though he had some great design in them. No doubt but he had some very particular end and design to answer by them. I conclude he must, or he had not thus expressed himself. I conceive thus from his peculiar phraseology, such as he did not use before. *Whosoever committeth sin.* He did not himself allow the saints were without it: they were not delivered from the body of it: the whole inherency of it was in them; therefore if they were overcome with it, and fell by it, this was no more than might be expected. I am in hopes, therefore, we shall not have the saints overcharged: especially by this apostle who loved them next to Christ himself; yet God forbid I should soften his expressions. I know what he saith he will stand to. Let me only say, I think he is here drawing a line of distinction between one professor and another. It was needful so to do in the apostle's day. It is very needful in ours. Yet it needs peculiar light, peculiar grace, and a peculiar spirit; because sharp cutting words must of necessity be used. Therefore to use these in the name, fear, and cause of God, requires us to be under the direction of the Spirit of God, lest our own spirits appear; it being an immutable truth, that the wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God. Our apostle was divinely inspired, therefore what he wrote was divinely directed, and also designed to answer some very important purpose. It doth so in the following way; it informs us what transgression is—That to commit sin is to transgress—That whosoever committeth sin, is a transgressor; be he who he may: he tramples on God's holy commandment: he violates it: he transgresseth the law: he treats it as not worth regarding. *Whosoever committeth sin trans-*

gresseth also the law: just as all other sinners do, who live in the open violation of the same. This leads me

2. To consider what sin is in its consequences: even in any, in the least act of it: yea, in any act of it: *Sin is the transgression of the law*. It is therefore most carefully to be avoided.

It may, therefore, be considered as one reason why the apostle wrote thus—To give even us, and all the saints, to know the nature and demerit of sin—Not to tamper with it: there being more evil in the commission of sin, than we can ever conceive, or express. The true apprehension of which, is, through the grace of God, sufficient to deter us from the same. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*. As the law is holy, just, and good, and sin is the transgression of it, there must be that evil in the act of sin, which can only be known, and estimated by God himself. He only who knows all the good contained in his most holy law, only knows the evil contained in every transgression against the same. Here we can be no judges. Sin in its nature and quality, matter and manner, may seemingly to us, be more or less sinful; yet it is one and the same as to the essence of it. Herein it is we are ourselves so often deceived and overcome by it. If we can dish up the sin we are in our own persons most inclined to, so as to have the gross parts of it, so refined, as to render it palatable, and that it may go down glibly, we are then able to act the same; yet as the nature of sin cannot be changed, so it is not the less pernicious, because we have so contrived as to swallow it most easily. It is in many instances so much the more poisonous. Sin is like a poisonous plant. The root, the leaves, the every part is full of it. Be it weaker or stronger in any part of it; yet it diffuses itself, in, and throughout the whole. There is the nature of sin in every act of it: and this more than we can, or ever shall be able to comprehend. Sin in every act of it, is the transgression of the law. When *David* was visited by *Nathan*, and charged with his transgression, he is condemned for his having despised the commandment of the Lord, and doing evil in his sight, and with giving occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. One sin is big with innumerable ones. The commission of one sin makes way for more: the consequences are sad: they are tremendous. *Sin is the transgression of the law*, which when broken, so it must remain to all eternity. We can never repair the dreadful break: we can never undo what we have done amiss: yea, as it respects the guilt and pollution contracted by thought in our own minds, we can never cleanse ourselves from the same. No; not for ever. It becomes us who are under a profession of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his everlasting gospel, to attend carefully to all this—To avoid the commission of sin—To watch our hearts—To be careful of our thoughts: all sin in us, originates in them: hence the wise man saith, *Keep thine heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*. It is by closely attending to our thoughts, we may know what our hearts are. If we love and delight in thinking on what is sinful, we are most exactly what we are in our thoughts. As we delight to think, such we delight to be. There is more sin in thought than any one of us can imagine. But I am not going to enter into this subject any further; it being but the first part of my text, and as introductory to what is to follow. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*. This is sufficient

of itself, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to keep real saints from transgressing it. The expressions, *committeth sin*, I conceive it will be necessary to notify them, as they seem to me to be big with important meaning; such as is not always before us; yet, I will not touch them now: still I here notify them, to signify, as we shall have words in the next verse near of kin to them, and the very same as here, in verse 8, so it is there I shall aim to throw all the light I can upon them, as I shrewdly guess they are expressive of the devil's sin: or, sinning against the Holy Ghost, that sin, which our apostle styles the sin unto death: it is so, because there is no forgiveness for it, neither in this world, nor in the world to come: which sin was committed in the apostle's day; but it is not now. Why it was then capable of being committed, and why it cannot now, you will have reasons deduced from the scriptures given. Only suspend your thoughts on the same until we come to the 7th, and 8th verses: in the mean season, look on the item dropt, as what will be taken up again in the next Sermon, which will be as an introduction to the 39th Sermon, in which the whole will be explicated. The apostle had said to these saints, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law: and adds, And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* Here is a most suited contrast—Sin—Christ—The transgression of the law by sin—The taking it away by Christ. Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ by his obedience hath magnified it, and made it everlastingly honourable. What, therefore, now lies before me to discourse of, as the remainder to my present text, is this—To speak of Christ, the best of all subjects—Of what the saints knew of Him. This, according to my before mentioned proposal, is to be set before you, under these two following heads. 1st. To observe the antidote these saints had, which was all-sufficient to bear up their minds, and lift up their hearts with holy confidence, above, and beyond the law, sin, and its curse. And 2dly. the perfection of this: both as it may be attributed to Christ; and to his Church. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* In my arrangement of these particulars, they were the 3rd and 4th particulars: as such I must here conduct them, by introducing them in this order. I come therefore in the

3rd. Particular of this present Sermon, to observe the antidote these saints had, which was all-sufficient to bear up their minds, and lift up their hearts with holy confidence, above, and beyond the law, sin, and its curse. The whole of which is set forth in these words, *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

He who was manifested to take away our sins is Christ. His manifestation was by his open Incarnation. He took away our sins, by the substitution of his Person, in the room and stead of his people. Our sins being laid on Him, He took them away by the offering up of Himself: hereby he hath removed sin from us: and from his church also: in the which the whole of our salvation, and purification from sin is completed. And in the true, scriptural, and spiritual knowledge of this, there is an all-sufficiency to bear up the mind, to lift up the heart with holy confidence in God, above, and beyond the law, sin, and its curse. This is to be drawn forth into its distinct parts, and branches in this present head. To be transgressors of the law, is dangerous: to be guilty of the least sin, is to be transgressors of it; to be lawless, or to depart from

that uprightness which the law requires, is to transgress it. Christ was manifested in the flesh, to deliver us from the guilt and power of sin, therefore give yourselves not up to the practice of it: this is the substance of both the verses, which I will here recite, that you may see the truth hereof. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* Whilst not any thing which hath already been suggested before, concerning what is to follow in the subsequent sermons, is to be dropped; yet here I am only to pursue my given order and plan. Therefore, whilst the present affords me abundant matter, and requires very great and correct order also, or much of the peculiarity and beauty of it will be lost; yet the whole of the same, must be introduced as the apostle doth, and with his words. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* It is very much like the apostle to the *Corinthians*, who says to them, *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* It is bringing the whole weight and authority of this great and most important subject on their minds. You saints, says *John*, to whom I write, understand all these things. He of whom I write, and the things concerning Him, of whom I write, have a most blessed residence in your mind. You know all I write of Him, in your own minds, from the word, and by the light and revelation of the Holy Ghost, even before it hath dropped from me, and I have inserted it with pen, ink, and paper, and by that medium conveyed the same unto you; it is very satisfactory to me, it is thus with you: I therefore appeal to you, as those who have inwardly in your own souls the knowledge of Christ, and of what he hath done and completed in the days of his flesh. Ye have an intuitive knowledge of Christ in your minds: it is exactly for the subject and substance of it, with what is recorded in the gospel: and ye know that our Lord Jesus Christ was *manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* I will, this being a most important subject, and also a most precious and delightful one, enter on it: after which I will aim to shew what there is in it, to lift up the mind of real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, with holy confidence in the Lord, above all contained in the law, sin, and the curse, and beyond all they are the subjects of, to an holy confidence in God. These are the effects, but the subject which is first to be set before you, is the cause of producing these: therefore let us give up ourselves, most chiefly to the clear and right apprehensions of the cause. The Person of Christ, the Incarnation of Christ, the Sacrifice of Christ, his putting or taking away our sins, these are the subjects mentioned here. It is recorded in this part of my text. And they are of inestimable worth and value. There is no subject in heaven beyond what is here expressed; nor any blessing in heaven which can exceed this mentioned—To be in Christ—For him to prove the truth of this, that such and such were one with Him, by his becoming incarnate to become their Surety, and to bear their sins, and put them away out of the sight of law and justice: so as that they should not be condemned for them; by the Sacrifice of Himself. Why my friends, you who are best qualified for it, I call on you, to search the rolls of Eternity, the Book of life, the acts and transactions of the Three in Jehovah; and say, if you can find greater displays of grace than

these! *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. When we were without strength, Christ died for us. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* And whilst you are on this subject, pray do not you hurry over it. Let these subjects be viewed and reviewed over and over by you: and when your hearts are warmed through and through with them, then say, if there be any but the elect of Adam's posterity are interested in this grace, as thus displayed, in the Person, and through the most glorious mediation of our most precious Lord Jesus Christ? If there is no subject, no, not in heaven, in which the riches of free, sovereign grace, are more gloriously displayed, than in Christ, and Salvation by Him, then the gospel which is the open revelation of it, is the mystery by the which it is revealed unto us. And in it the unsearchable riches of Christ are contained: by the which the whole is set before us, and made known unto us: the whole of which is our present subject, which the apostle thus sweetly introduces: *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* The elect of God, of Adam's posterity, were in their own persons, in their creation state, without all sin. By their fall in Adam they became sinners. As the elect of God, and one with Christ, and in Him, they were the beloved of God, and loved in Him with an everlasting love. In the everlasting covenant, which obtained between the Three in Jehovah, on their behalf, they were considered to be what they would be, in their own natures, sins, and transgressions, by the fall, and their own actual transgressions. To raise them up above, and beyond all they were viewed and considered to be, under this consideration of them, the Trinity in Unity were pleased most graciously to will to express their mutual loves to them. This gave birth to an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: in consequence of which Christ was foreordained to be the Lamb to be slain for sin. On the footing of this, He was immediately proclaimed on the fall, and entrance of sin into our world. The sacrifices shewed what his work was to consist in. The Prophets declared his wonderful Person: they also expressed his astonishing acts and miracles: and one for all the rest, made known, that He was to be Incarnate, and live to bring in everlasting righteousness, and die to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation, to make his soul an offering for sin, and make peace with the blood of his cross. To carry all this into act, He became incarnate: this wonderful grace as proceeding from the Divine Majesty in the Person of the Father, is thus expressed. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 3, 4. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person in the Self-Existing Essence, who was set up as God-Man, the Head and Mediator of His church and people, before all time, and who was prophesied of by all the prophets which have been since the world began, was manifested in the flesh, in the fulness of time: and this for the express purpose of taking away our sins. This says the apostle ye know. If he was manifested to take away our sins, then how he hath done this, is very desirable for us to know. Now in the present subject the following importan t

particulars are worthy of our consideration—Who hath taken away sins—Whose sins are taken away—How they are taken away. It is our sins are taken away. It is Christ hath taken them away. And it is by the sacrifice of Himself, he hath removed them from us. All this is most assuredly included in these words, *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* Christ, God-Man, was the representative and substitute of his people. The Father laid their sins on Him. He bore them in his own body, and was nailed with them to the tree. He was made all the sin and sinfulness of all his people by imputation. He sustained the whole curse of the law, which was the true and proper desert and demerit of them. He sustained the whole until it had wholly expended itself on Him: then he cried with a loud voice, *It is finished.* It was our sins he bore: the sins of his members. He became incarnate for this very purpose, with this very end and design in view; *He was manifested to take away our sins.* The expression, *to take away our sins*, seems to be borrowed from *John the baptist*, who, pointing to our Lord, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* He could not have taken away our sins, if they had not been on Him. They could not have been on him, if they had not been laid on him. How and by whom they were laid on him, is expressed in the following scripture. “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. liii. 6. Of Him, Jehovah the Father spake to *Joshua* the high priest and said, “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” Zech. iii. 8, 9. This hath been so completely accomplished, that the *Psalmist* says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Ps. ciii. 12. This is most truly glorious and divine. This is Salvation indeed. Our sins are removed from us. He who hath removed them from us, is the Lord Jesus Christ. They are removed from us, as far as the east is from the west: we stand before the Lord without them. Great as all this is, yet if it be possible it is exceeded by what is expressed in the New Testament: the apostle saith, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. v. 21. Again, “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Heb. ix. 26. 28. These are salvation-scriptures. They have salvation in them. They all prove our Lord Jesus Christ to be the true Paschal Lamb of God. The antitypical Scape-Goat, who hath carried all the sins of his people, into a land not inhabited, and abolished them all out of the sight, and from before the Lord. The true gospel-knowledge of this, is the pillar and ground of faith. What is contained in it, is all-sufficient to lift up the mind of real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, with holy confidence in the Lord, above all contained in the law, sin, and the curse: yes, and beyond all they are the subjects of: and this to an holy confidence in God. These blessed effects of a complete and finished salvation, I am now to speak of. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.* A most precious, glorious, and everlastingly comfortable

truth, on which we may with the utmost safety rest our All. There is everlasting purity in the blood of Christ. We have eternal perfection in the Sacrifice of Christ. We have freedom from all condemnation in the Death of Christ: with his stripes we are healed. Here we may safely rest. In this we may be confident. We have herein all-sufficiency, to satisfy all which law and justice could possibly require over and over of us. The righteousness of Christ exceeds all the law could ever have demanded of us. The Death of Christ contains a greater good than there is evil to be found in sin. We have more in Christ than we have lost in Adam. We have more to lift us up in Christ, than we have to be cast down for in ourselves: so that as the Lord the Spirit is pleased to open the subject to our view, we see in every sense, that in Christ, which lifts us out of ourselves, and off ourselves, and raises us above ourselves, and beyond all our sins and miseries, so as that we may triumph over ourselves, in the Lord, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. How can it be otherwise? If we know that Christ was manifested to take away our sins, then we must be without all sin before the Lord. If all our sins have been laid by Jehovah the Father on Christ, and He hath borne them in his own body on the tree, and removed them out of the sight of law and justice by the sacrifice of Himself, then we cannot but be as free from the imputation of them to our persons as Christ now is. It is herein consists our whole Salvation. We are in Christ what He is. He hath borne our sins, and carried our sorrows. We have the benefit thereof. We are now and evermore saved in Him, with an everlasting salvation. The knowledge of this to us, is life everlasting. We receive the knowledge of this into our minds from the word of the gospel, and believe the truth of it in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost: this is manifestative salvation. In our living this, in the real and spiritual exercises of our minds, on the Lord Jesus Christ, we have full, clear, and undeniable evidence of our personal interest in Christ, and all the blessings and benefits of his great salvation. This leads us going on from strength to strength, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. It would be of real and unspeakable advantage to us, were we to view salvation, abstracted from all the benefits which result from it. We should look at it as it is: yea, we cannot see the glory, worth, perfection, and excellency of it, unless we behold it in Christ; and Christ as the whole of it, and the whole perfection of it. We should look wholly at the Person, righteousness, and Death of Christ, and see salvation here: then we should receive hereby such apprehensions of the subject as would lead us off our own centre, and fix us on Christ as our one immediate object and subject. He would then be our All. It is not how often we hear Christ preached is a matter of moment, nor what we hear of Him: it is what we receive into our minds concerning Him. We must first see Him in his complete and finished work, or we shall never believe on Him for life everlasting. It is a question of eternal importance, as it respects the well being of our souls in this present time state, proposed by *Mr. Romaine* in his Preface to his "Walk of Faith:" "Dost thou see the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of his cross? and does this silence guilt in thy conscience?" It is the true knowledge of Christ, as revealed in the everlasting gospel, which alone can remove the guilt of sin: it is this alone can silence the clamours of conscience; produce peace in it. Therefore, this very point well deserves close application of thought: it is more

clearly stated in the word, than we are apprehensive of. We err, in having to do with faith, or experience, or any fruits of grace of any kind, before we have actually received the knowledge of Christ into our mind, and are settled and established in Him. The blood of Christ is our present, and will be our everlasting purification from all sin, in the sight of God for ever and ever: and if He beholds us, everlastingly without all sin in Christ, surely we may well believe ourselves to be so: especially as we have his word for it: and he declaring therein to us, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. The faith of the saints unto whom the apostle here addresseth himself, was founded on knowledge. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.* And the apostle includes himself as one with them, in the same knowledge and faith. This brings me to my last particular, which is

4. To shew the perfection of this, both as it may be attributed to Christ, and his Church also. *And in him is no sin. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

There never was any sin in Christ: there never could be: there never can be. He is, and ever was, and ever will be, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Yet Christ once had all the sins of all the whole election of grace on Him by imputation, with all the various guilts, filths, and demerit contained in them: and he became the one everlastingly efficacious Sacrifice for them: He made his soul an offering for sin: the perfection of which was such, that the whole were removed for ever, from the persons of the Elect, from his own Person, and from before the Lord. Then there can be no sin on Him now, any more than there is sin in Him: this there never was. It may be, the apostle expresseth himself thus, to give an hint of the final abolition of all the sins of the elect before the Lord, by the Sacrifice and Death of the Lord Jesus Christ: as also of the complete purity of the church, in the Person, righteousness, and blood of the Holy and Immaculate Lamb: and this being the immutable perfection of the Church, it was very properly introduced after it had been declared, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* No words could come in better, than these: *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* This was a cordial to real saints: nothing could be more reviving unto them: yea, this last clause of the words, *and in him is no sin,* as they might be attributed to Christ, and to his church also: and so a double satisfaction might be derived from them. Our Lord hath purged away our sins by the Sacrifice of Himself: this he hath proved; because when he had so done he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He had not entered into heaven, if he had not been as truly without all sin imputatively, as he was without all sin inherently. He was as truly without all sin in Him on the cross, as He is without all sin before the Throne. Yet He was not within sin on Him, when He was in the garden, and on the tree. It was there he made an end of it, and washed his whole church in his own blood, and made her clean from all sin. Yea, his own blood cleansed Him from all the sins which had been imputed unto him. He is said to be brought back from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant: and in a sense, it may with safety be said, Christ himself was purified in his own blood: and if it was his acquittance, it must be the church's also. And the church being in Christ, when he was

made her sin, and he being clothed with her transgressions when he made the atonement for her; as he put away her sins by his one offering, he must also have obtained His own discharge from them thereby. So that he being now without all imputation of sin, the church must be so too; and this on the footing of that sacrifice of his which perfects for ever the putting away of all their sin. In Christ is no sin. He is the Head of his body the church. He is the representative of his Church. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27. According to this, the church is so incorporated into Christ, that she in him, is without all spot before him: and what she is in his sight, must be her glory and perfection. It is what he sees her to be, must be what she really is. He says to her, "Thou art all fair, my love: there is no spot in thee." S. Song iv. 7. The apostle sets forth the same important truth, to the saints at *Colosse* in these words, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight." Col. i. 21, 22. The whole, as it respects the perfection of Christ's work, and the perfection of the church in Him, are subjects for faith to be engaged in, and expressed, and exercised on: it should be considered thus, in all our discourses about it, and conversations respecting it: we should thereby avoid multitudes of mistakes concerning these most sublime and important subjects. It is not a carnal apprehension of the same, will be of the least use to us: nor shall we inwardly be the better for these subjects, but as the Holy Ghost is himself pleased, to create proper ideas of them, in our renewed minds, from the Sacred word, which, when he doth, this is his taking of the things of Christ, and shewing the same unto us: and hereby it is, we are established in the mysteries of grace, and are built up in Christ, and rooted and grounded in Him. The work of Christ is perfect: nothing can be added to the same. The church in Christ is perfection itself: nothing can be added to make her more so in Him. Christ is delighted to behold her in his righteousness and salvation. She is delighted in beholding Him, Jehovah her righteousness, and Perfection, and to view herself complete in Him. It is these views give the Spouse of Christ, true contentment; nothing short of this doth. In Christ there is no sin: nor in the church of Christ, as viewed and considered in Him; for if Christ hath removed all her sins from her, and washed her from them in his blood, where are her sins to be seen? If she is clothed with his righteousness, and she shines in his everlastingly glorious, and resplendent righteousness, where is there any deformity to be seen in her? The church was once under an eclipse, so was Christ. She appeared all deformity; but out of this darkness, unto her, light arose, even when she was in this very case. The Sun of Righteousness shone forth upon her: so that it is day with her. She may therefore now well say, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." It is well when we make proper distinctions concerning what the church is in Christ, and what she is in her nature-self. Be she what she may, as considered in her fallen nature, this makes no alteration in the least in her, as considered in Christ. It too often runs it into a natural subject to have so much to do with the

church, abstracted from her relation to Christ. The Lord God never views her, but as one with Christ: surely we should not either. Let us not overlook how *John* treats this subject in this Epistle: he draws a line of distinction between saints and others: he aims to feed the flock of God: in so doing he fills up his office well. The prophet *Isaiah* personating the church of Christ, expresseth himself, as the mouth of the church with this exuberancy of joy thus. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." chap. lxi. 10. The same prophet expressing his zeal for the church, says, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." chap. lxii. 1. All this makes way for saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." chap. lx. 1, 2. May the Lord the Holy Spirit, lead us on, and into an increasing light and increasing knowledge of all revealed truth: so as that we may see Christ's glory shine out in the same, according to what of Him, is revealed therein: by the which I mean, agreeable to what such and such passages reveal, and contain in them of Him: for I do not conceive they all reflect the same light and shine. I should for myself, like to receive into my own mind, clearly and precisely, the particular light conveyed, by the identical revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, contained in each, and exactly according to that very passage of Scripture through the which I view him. May the Lord shine, if it please him, on what hath been set before you, so as that you may receive some light and profit from the same: for that is the design and end of it. Which if it does not promote, why my friends, then the whole falls to the ground. The Truth does not by that means fall. No; it is only the attempts of a labourer in the Lord's vineyard. Truth is mighty and must prevail. Yea, Truth is almighty, and it is immutable; yet the usefulness of an individual Servant of Christ, may, or may not be profitable, whilst the truths of the everlasting gospel are by no means in the least affected thereby. This should be more particularly considered than it commonly is; creatures are but creatures: such as are new creatures in Christ, and some of them are called to be ministers of Christ, and are useful in their place, yet they should not be overrated: neither should they arrogate any thing to themselves: neither should they think too much of themselves: nor want others to think of them, more than is to be found in them. *Paul* did not. I have nothing to do with any one. If I have or may, through the grace of the Spirit, cast any light on the Scriptures, in my poor and weak attempt to explain them, in and throughout this *Exposition*, I would bless the Lord for the same; whilst I would aim at this, being well persuaded nothing depends of life and salvation on my poor performance; I would have the Reader know and remember this also. I leave all to his serious consideration, and the Lord's blessing. Amen.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.—I JOHN iii. 6.

THE apostle lays down this as the evidence of our loving God—our keeping his commandments ; which consists in this, in a very special way and manner—In an abstaining from, and in an invincible hatred against all sin. This ; he makes use of the following motives to work upon them to attend unto—Because sin is a transgression of the pure and undefiled law of God : this was contained in the past Sermon : next, he useth these arguments against it—Sin is the devil's work ; therefore it is abominable. Christ came into our world to destroy it : therefore, it must be incompatible with being the children of God, to commit it. The commission of sin, maketh men, and demonstrates them, to be the children of the devil. Surely then, the children of God will not be found the committers of it. Surely then, such an one as is united to Christ, a believer in Him, who is alive to Him by the power of the Holy Ghost, and is persevering in the good ways of God sinneth not. It must, therefore, be concluded, that let the person be who, or what he may, as to profession, whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. This is the apostle's conclusion on this subject : and this is the general outline of these words before us. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* In the which we have the following particulars.

1. The blessedness of abiding in Christ. It is a preventative to sinning : so says the apostle. He pronounceth this in general terms, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* Under this head I shall take up the term *sinneth*, and aim to cast some light upon the phrase. We have *sin*, and *sinned* before : but *sinneth* is a word we had not before we came to the 4th verse of this chapter. Therefore I shall be for making some remarks on it.

2. A declaration concerning whosoever he, or they be that sinneth or sin. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Christ, neither known him. *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

I will endeavour to explain the whole of this, as it respects the substance of the same. And then give you the general outline of the next sermon, that the general connection may thereby appear, and you may be in part prepared to receive what is then to be set before you. May the Lord bless the design, that it may be both instructive and profitable. Amen. Even so may it be, O Lord Jesus Christ. I am

1. To set forth the blessedness of abiding in Christ ; it is a preventative to sinning : this is the apostle's doctrine. He pronounceth this in the words before us, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.*

He received this from Christ himself ; who said, " Abide in me, and I in you.—If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John, v. 4. 6. We have had our apostle, in the former chapter, speak of what such an one as saith he abideth in Christ, ought

himself to do—It becomes him to walk even as Christ walked. The apostle would, that what the saints had heard from the beginning of the gospel, concerning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity should abide, and remain in them. He would have them to abide in Christ, and in the truths and doctrines of his grace. He exhorts them to abide in Him. But in my text he makes a solemn declaration concerning such as abide in him: and the outward evidence they give of the same, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*. He had just before, in just such general terms said, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin*. Now, closely connected with all this, he says, in the same general words, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him*. It is most undoubtedly decisive of, who are in Christ, and who are not—Who, have not only the profession of Christ; but it is to distinguish such as are, and are not, under the influence of Christ. It must follow, the apostle must have had his reason for thus writing. And it cannot be questioned, but there is to be found the same necessity for discrimination now, as there then was: therefore, it cannot be amiss for us, to take him for a guide in these matters. As it regards abiding in Christ, as here hinted at, it respects a continuance in an holy profession of his Name, Person, righteousness, sacrifice, salvation, and gospel. This is very evident from these words. “*But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* chap. ii. 27, 28. This abiding in Christ is real blessedness. As the Person of Christ, yea, the very doctrine concerning his Person, and the revelation made of Him, to the renewed mind thereby, must render him transcendently glorious; which cannot be the case, where the professor does not abide in the doctrine thereof; so the abiding in the true faith of Christ, as expressed in every truth and doctrine of the everlasting gospel, hath its blessedness: and such persons as abide thus in Christ, enjoy real blessings and blessedness. And this is one blessing—It saves from sin. It is a preventive to sinning. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*. There is a blessed unction and fragrant shed on the mind of one in Christ, whilst he is thinking on, walking with, and holding communion with his Lord. So that the Lord Jesus Christ is his glory. The Name of Christ is perfuming. The righteousness of Christ comforts the mind. It guards and defends from all fainting fits. The work of Christ is very animating. The real possessor of Christ, who lives by the faith of the Son of God, is saved from the love, the guilt, the power, and dominion of sin, as he lives, and walks by the faith of the Son of God. So that the person who walks in Christ, is saved from the practice of sin: from falling into sin: it prevents his sinning. He cannot sin so long as he is kept abiding in the faith of Jesus, alive to the grace of Jesus, dependant on the arm of Jesus, and living in real communion with the Lord Jesus. This is the general and positive declaration which the apostle utters, and expresseth in the words of the text. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*. Whosoever is one with Christ, united to

Him, has a spiritual, experimental knowledge of Him, and acquaintance with Him, and real fellowship and communion with Him, in his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and priesthood and life in glory: such an one sinneth not. Yet we must not suppose such an one without sin. No; nor must we conceive such an one incapable of sinning: nor must we conceive the apostle is here contradicting himself, who said in the 1st chapter of this Epistle, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." v. 8—10. Most assuredly we must not consider the apostle here to contradict himself; yet it must be allowed he speaks most positively in both places: and here in very universal terms, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* As there is no man liveth and sinneth not; and it is here asserted whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not, I think we must be at some pains to clear this up. For most certain it is, the saints of the Most High God fall into sin: yea, into their old besetting sin: neither is there any promise in all the Bible which assures them they shall not. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary we should understand the apostle here, lest we sink under the weight and guilt of our constitutional sin, into the which real saints fall: and, it may be, much oftener than they conceive. There is no evil in the apprehension of a real believer in Christ, like unto sin: his own sin in particular: the inbeing of it in him, is hell: his being at any time carried away with it, is to him a present and perfect hell. He does not sink into desperation under it; yet this is because he knows Christ was manifested to take away the sins of his church, and that in him is no sin; and that he is always, in the full virtue of his most precious blood and righteousness before the throne on his behalf. Yet this is not the subject the holy apostle is here upon. No; it really is not. He had treated on this in the second chapter, in the first and second verses of the same. He is here speaking of a course of sinning: and such is the general interpretation of this scripture. Whilst this cannot be denied, yet I cannot say this satisfies me to be the full meaning of the words. I am, therefore, disposed to take up the words here, and, in a very particular manner, this peculiar term the apostle makes use of, *sinneth*, hoping hereby to find out more precisely and expressly, what he means hereby. He says, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* The *him* is Christ. Whosoever abideth in Him, must be a believer, or believers. The abiding here spoken of, must be a continuation in the profession of his Truth and ordinances: and the apostle says, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.* Now I would observe the word here used, is very singular; and not used by him in this Epistle but once before, and that in verse 4th: it is the word *sinneth*. Our Lord Jesus Christ says in the 8th chapter of *John's Gospel*, to certain Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's children, or seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth

sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth ever. If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." v. 31—36. I conceive the apostle spake the words in my text from his Master; and had in view what our Lord had also in that very chapter. He seems to me to be just as deliberate, to bring it out, as our Lord was. I gave an hint when this *word* was touched upon in the preceding Sermon, that I conceived it seemed to me, to have respect to the unpardonable sin, that I should take it up again, and more fully express myself upon it, when I came to Sermon 39, which will succeed this which I am now upon. I shall here only make some general remarks on it: such as these—The word *sinneth* implies a continuation in it. It is not a mere act of sin, which may never be repeated: but such an act of sinning as can never be exceeded; and which leaves no room nor place of repentance. Again, when the apostle mentions the devil's sinning he doth it by the very same word, *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.* v. 8. And our apostle speaks of a sin unto death. chap. v. ver. 16. Now these expressions sway with me, and by them I am led to conceive, these expressions, *Whosoever committeth sin—Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*, must have some very peculiar meaning in them, which is not obvious to every reader: and I conceive will be confirmed when we come to open the 8th verse. I would also suggest; if it be not so, why does the apostle make mention of the sin unto death, if he no where gives an account of the same, either directly, or indirectly? This is my question to you? Surely he wrote not one sentence in it, but is of vast importance, it being given from the infallible Spirit of God. I will therefore inform you, having made a provision for the same, by these short observations on the word *sinneth* in the past, and in this present discourse, that, if the Lord please to spare me to the next Lecture morning, I intend to give you an account of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which, as I conceive, is the very same, with what our apostle designs by the term which he useth, when he says, *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it:* that is, could it be certain any had fallen into it, they were not to be prayed for. I would have you suspend your thoughts on this subject: wait and hear what may be delivered on the same. I will endeavour to give you my views of it from the word: I will not read any commentary, or commentator on it. And when you shall have heard what I may have to say on the subject, even then, I shall be very far from aiming to sway your judgments. It will be then with you to receive or reject the same, as you yourselves think fit. Having gone over the first part of my text, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*, and shewn you the blessedness of abiding in Christ, with the blessed effects thereof—That it is a preventative to sinning: and having also taken up the word *sinneth*, and made some observation on the same, I proceed to my next general division of this present Sermon which is this.

2. To set forth this declaration of the apostle in the words of my text, concerning whosoever he be, or they be that *sinneth* or *sin*: *whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Christ, neither known him*: this is a very solemn and positive assertion. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

When we read such declarations as these, it becomes us, to set our hearts and souls most seriously to ponder on them. They are not as so

many scare-crows to frighten us : but they are as so many marks to direct us : so as that we may avoid falling on those rocks and quicksands, on which many have foundered. For whilst there can be no falling from the grace of God : nor from the grace of the doctrine of God our Saviour ; yet there may be a falling from the doctrine of grace and salvation, notwithstanding our profession of it. Yea, there may be a falling into damnable sins, and errors, such as may be to the destruction both of body and soul. It is to prevent this, so many scriptures are engaged, and employed, as cautions, warnings, exhortations, and examples. It is not as if the elect could finally miscarry : but it is that none under a profession may deceive themselves : as if a bare, empty, noisy profession of Christ and Truth, were undeniable evidences of interest in Christ : as if this was all the fruits that union to the Person of Christ, salvation in Christ, and communion with Christ produced. The apostle who was as full of these most important subjects as one man could possibly be, is very greatly concerned, that all who were favoured with the true knowledge of Christ, should express and exemplify, the efficacy, and effects of the same, in their lives and conversations. They lived in a day, in the which errors abounded. They were kept from the same. They knew every thing opposite to Christ and his Truth, was a lie. They therefore avoided it. They knew the holiness of his example, gospel, ordinances, and precepts, forbade all acts and sorts of sins, and sinnings. Yet on either hand of them they were surrounded with persons, who were disposed, notwithstanding they professed the same gospel, to live and who lived in sin : were swallowed up in a worldly spirit : some of these were immersed in errors ; even such as were in their nature damnable. Now seeing this was the case in *John's* time, it made way for him to write as he here doth ; so as to make a clear and proper difference between one who feared God, and one who feared him not. And as all the churches had chaff, as well as wheat in them, hence it is, he comes down individually in his discrimination—to *whosoever* : including personally, and comprehensively, each and every one. *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* This is close work. Sin is the object of God's invincible hatred. It is the transgression of his law. It is an opposition to his most holy will. It is contrary to his nature. It is the work of the devil. It was what Christ came into our world to destroy. Therefore, whosoever liveth in the practice of sin ; he never had a spiritual sight of Christ. Such an one never knew Christ. If he had, he could not act as he doth. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* Beloved, this is most truly apostolical. It came from the pen of *John*, the disciple whom Jesus loved. It may be relied on as the truth : yea, it is the very effect which the knowledge of the Truth produces. No one who knows Christ can live in sin. No one who hath communion with Christ, and the Father in Him, can connive at sin. Such an one cannot make a life and business out of sin. Sin is not the element in which he lives : nor can he enjoy himself, in the practice thereof. He is out of the kingdom in the which sin rules and reigns, and carries all before it. He may be overcome by it ; but he cannot be conquered. It is impossible. The promise is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. This is *John's* doctrine, as it was *Paul's*. Therefore, whilst he never saw any one, who was without

sin, except his Lord, yet he is fully persuaded, all who are made acquainted with the Lord Jesus, and brought under the mighty power and influence of his grace, are not under the reigning power and influence of sin. Neither can they be. It is this makes an essential distinction between them and others. There may be no distinction in other respects. They may, for the form of profession, be the same as others; and others as to the form of words, say the same with themselves; yet what makes such a difference as will finally separate each other in the invisible state is this—the one are saved from the guilt, love, and power of sin, the other are not: they have their bye ways of sinning: howsoever they may outwardly appear; even to the churches to which they belong. It deserves here to be mentioned, that as there are two sorts of professors in the church of Christ, so such of them as live in secret sin, and indulge and connive at the same, are thus spoken of by the prophet. “As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.” *Psa. cxxv. 5.* There is no making a profession of Christ, and not being so noticed, as for the Lord himself to make a full discovery of who, and what such and such are. This is discovered in the following way—It pleases the Lord, to leave us to our own wills, and affections: when we are under temptations what we are inherently is discovered: if the power of sin was never broken in our souls, by the omnipotency of divine grace, it will most certainly lift up its head, in such seasons. And as he who contemneth little things will fall by little and little; so tampering with constitutional sin, makes way for falling by it, and falling under it: and in the case of many, they are so brought under the same, as to be slaves hereunto; and the Lord in his righteous providence makes way for the discovery of it: so that it, at times, brings about excommunication, and an extermination out of the churches. In the apostle’s day, there were, as I conceive, some who sinned against the Holy Ghost: of these it must most assuredly be said, they had not seen Christ, neither known him. Yet leaving them aside for the present, I should like to take some notice of these expressions here before us—That such and such had not seen him, neither known him. I will recite the whole of the text, that what I may further say of it, may the more clearly appear. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* To see Christ, I should suppose, does not here refer to a corporeal sight of Christ: but a spiritual sight and apprehension of him. Agreeable to which the apostle *Peter* says to those whom he wrote unto, “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.” *1 Epis. i. 8.* There is a knowledge of Christ, and a sight of Christ, which real saints are favoured with, which hath such a reality in it, as cannot be put down, or exceeded, except it be by a vision of Christ within the veil. When all this is said, it is without the least enthusiasm. We read of seeing Jesus—of looking unto Jesus—of beholding Jesus: and all this believers in Jesus are favoured with; which must wholly come from the Holy Spirit’s making a revelation of the Person of Christ to the mind. This must be from the everlasting gospel. It must consist in the Holy Spirit’s taking of the things of Christ, and shewing the same unto us. Now we cannot believe and trust in an unseen Jesus: if we cannot, then we must have the knowledge of Christ let in upon our minds. This can

be from none but the Holy Spirit. He cannot do so, but by a medium suited to convey the knowledge of the Person and knowledge of Christ, and his salvation to our minds. Now what medium can this be, but the everlasting gospel, in which the whole of Christ is contained; in which his full glories shine forth? surely it must be therefrom: and we may be confident it is from hence: because the apostle says, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is hereby we are enlightened into the true knowledge of Christ, and herefrom may be said, to know him: so from the same, it may be most truly said, we have seen the Lord. We have had spiritual apprehensions formed in our spiritual minds, of his worth, glory, excellencies, and perfections; so as to be drawn after Him; to have our minds engaged with Him, and fixed on Him, for life and salvation, and eternal glory. This is alone peculiar to saints: yet as they cannot but speak out in Church assemblies concerning such sights and apprehensions of the Lord and Saviour; others may take up their words, and make use of the same as their own: yet, says the apostle, there is not one who really knows Christ, that lives in sin—No one who has seen Christ, is a slave to his own lusts. *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* A true knowledge of Christ, gives a death blow to sin. There can be no communion between Christ and us, carried on in us, by the Holy Spirit's taking of the things of Christ, and giving us the true, spiritual knowledge of the same, and we living over the same in our minds; and we living in the commission of sin: it is impossible. And I am exceedingly pleased with the apostle's expression. We are too apt to lay all our emphasis on inherent grace. It is sometimes suggested, as if the knowledge of Christ, and the gospel, were subjects which took us off our guard, and made us careless. Yea, some will almost say, such know too much of Christ, and the gospel, to be afraid of sin, or to be real practical christians. This is to express a great deal of ignorance. The truth of the matter is this. The devil is well pleased if he can keep, by any means, saints as well as sinners, from Christ. And he does this as effectually as he would wish to do, when he can legalize the mind, so as to engage it on any subject but Christ, grace, and salvation. I am therefore very much pleased with the very expressions, of knowing, and seeing Christ: as they convey to the mind, that which is of such vast importance: and also as they shew that it is for want of spiritual knowledge, views, and supernatural perception of Christ, that so many things are amiss in such and such, as are under the profession of Christ, and his gospel. Living on Christ, is the only way to live down sin. This is the way to all practical godliness. To live in sights of Christ, is the very preservative from inward and outward corruptions. To be truly engaged in spiritually beholding the glories and perfections of the most blessed Immanuel, is the only means to preserve us, pure in heart, undefiled in life, and unspotted from the world. It is an eternal truth, and may we receive it as such, that, *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* What is this but saying, that the true knowledge, and real sights of Christ, are the greatest blessings we can enjoy in this world, and during our continuation therein—That nothing can be a greater curse, than to be a Christless professor: none knows what he may fall into: nor when and where he may stop; a bare pro-

fession will not keep him long. He will, he cannot but, if left to himself, become a prey to those lusts and corruptions which are most natural to him : which will all serve to prove he knows not the Lord Jesus Christ : nor ever had the least spiritual idea of him. I fear the present day, and churches in the present time, swarm with such. We have a great deal of natural religion, and very little of supernatural. As to want of the true knowledge of Christ, and spirituality, we cannot but be sensible of the very little of this that is to be found amongst us, and throughout our land at present. If the true knowledge of Christ, is the only preventive of sin, and sinning, then let us make a proper use of this. Let this be the bar with us, to distinguish between one and another—Such an one knows Christ—Such an one does not. How is this to be known? By what he is, and acts. If he being in Christ, acts as a new creature, and lives down the world and sin, by looking to, and living on Christ, this is good, clear, and outward evidence for Him. If he lives in sights of Christ he will be a spiritual man : this he will outwardly evidence, by speaking spiritually of Christ, and as one who really and inwardly knows him. To see Christ, to know Christ, there is a vast importance in this. All the gospel, as it respects what we are made the partakers of is herein contained : for in the knowledge of Christ, we have the Father's love, and the Spirit's grace : and when we have communion with Christ, we enjoy the Father's love, and the consolations of the Holy Ghost. But once more to glance on the last part of my text. *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* Let this be noticed—The apostle is not here speaking of such temptations as are common to man. All the saints are liable to sin : it is the Lord alone who can preserve them from falling. And when they are fallen ; it is the Lord who alone can raise them up. I have already suggested my thoughts concerning this word *sinneth*, and I have yet more to say ; but this is to be omitted here ; only having finished my two general heads of this discourse, I will now give you the general outline of the next Sermon, that the general connection may thereby appear, and you may be in some sort prepared to receive what is then to be set before you. The words of the text will be the two next succeeding verses. The words are these, *Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil : for the devil sinueth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*" It appears to me, this scripture, in the opening and explaining of it, will give a very suitable and proper opportunity of shewing how the devil became a sinner : what he fell from : the consequences of his fall : what is related in the scriptures concerning the same. Then how he overcame us, *i. e.* all mankind in our nature head. Then the nature of the difference between his fall, sin, and sinfulness, and ours. This will lead on to the consideration of his continual sin and sinfulness, and that he never ceaseth to commit sin. You may perceive it will be a long sermon. I hope not an unprofitable one. When the subject of all now suggested is gone through, then I shall give you some account of the state of the church in, and after Christ's ascension, in the days of the apostle—What dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the church was then under—That then in some instances the sin against the Holy Ghost was committed ; yet I shall pronounce, it cannot be, now : reasons will be given for this ; so that you

need not be afraid of any thing which will be delivered, as though it were going to be pronounced you are the subjects who have committed it. I do love to understand what I read : and I most assuredly should be most truly glad to have a more enlightened, and enlarged mind into the whole word of God, that I might be the more useful in my ministrations of the word of Truth. I conceive, that in going through an Epistle, like this before us, there is an opportunity of more enlargement of mind, than when one single text is only preached upon ; because the strain and substance of the whole scope of the Epistle being kept in the mind, the thoughts must be the more particularly exercised : and what is styled practical, experimental divinity, standing in its due place, it appears in its full and proper glory and excellency : no doubt being to be made, of the greatest propriety and regularity, in the placing all these in the Sacred page, seeing the Holy Ghost himself most graciously directed in the arrangement of all these, as He also did to the subjects themselves. And He being the glorifier of Jesus, and his rule to glorify Him by, being the revelation made and given of Him in the everlasting gospel, surely he would not act contrary to this great end, by permitting any one subject, expressed in the scriptures of Truth to frustrate such great and most invaluable end. Indeed, in what is styled the practical and experimental part, Christ is most truly glorified ; yet in a different way, than in what may be styled the revelation part of Him : in the which he shines forth in the fullest blaze of his Mediatorial Majesty, greatness and excellency. As the revelation of Him in the heart, and to the mind, and the eternal Spirit realizing the same, and making it effectual, it is hereby, and from hence, Christ being known, received, and fed and feasted on in the heart, that the life, tempers, and walk, are rendered in some glorious manner, and measure conformable unto Him : which is a glorifying Him, with our bodies and spirits which are His. I consider this Epistle, in very many parts of it, an exemplification of Christ in his Church : so that it may be looked on as a glorious correct model of a saint ; the whole of which, as set forth here, is the fruit of real communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father in Him, through the Spirit. We want to be enlightened into this great subject, and to be under the power and authority of it continually ; this would influence us in all things. There is no love to sin, nor relish for sinful pleasures, when we are engaged in heart-warming-meditations on Christ, and the Father's love in Him : this is the very foundation of what is before us. The apostle began his subject, with calling on us to behold the love of God our heavenly Father, in the grace of adoption : in his giving us the title, and bestowing on us the privilege of calling us, and making us his children. He would have the mind fixed on this great and inestimable grace. *Beloved*, says he, *now are we the sons of God*. Surely nothing can go beyond this : many glories will issue out of it : but the grace of sonship exceeds them all : they being the fruits of it. The cause must ever exceed the effect : if it must here, then all spiritual blessings proceeding from the love of God, should be by us esteemed, from the greatness of that love wherewith the Father hath loved us, out of which they all flow. It is well for us to view them in their great original. The Father having loved us in Christ, and loved us with the love wherewith he loves Christ, hath bestowed on us, all spiritual blessings in Him. We are now in the actual possession and enjoyment of them, in our measure and degree, by the indwelling of the Holy

Ghost. We are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. In the prospect of which, and agreeable with our hopes in Him, we purify ourselves, even as he is pure. We cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: all which is the blessed fruit and effect of *Looking unto Jesus*, and living in close and intimate communion with Him: this keeps us from sin, and sinning. Our whole hopes for everlasting discharge from all sin, yea, from the very inbeing of it, in the Lord's time, and way, are founded on the sacrifice of Christ. We know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. And when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. This is our hope: and from hence we are going on from strength to strength, and from conquering unto conquer. It is from these considerations, the apostle writes as he does: to keep up the true and proper distinction between the true Christian, and nominal one: between him who walketh according to the gospel, and ordereth his conversation aright, and him who doth not. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* Having as well as I could, thus given you the general account of what is contained in the words before us, I leave the whole with you, and for the Lord to bless, as it may seem good in his sight. And would just touch on the outline of our next Sermon, and add to what hath already been said on the subject in this, that when the nature of the sin is opened, and some examples and instances given from scripture of such as have been guilty of the same, I hope the minds of all truly serious persons will be relieved from all fears concerning their having any thing to do with it, or fear from it. I most certainly should not have fallen on it, had it not thus come before me. I shall treat on it as clearly, and scripturally as the Lord may be pleased to assist. I shall lay down my statement of it with the greatest simplicity: and this wholly from the scriptures, and in close agreement with them. This also will be the case, when I may come on to express the guilt of it, and tremendous curse annexed to it. It will I suppose be a long Sermon. It is therefore, I have said so much about what may be conceived by you, in this outline of it, that you may have in your own minds, beforehand, what you are to expect. My friends, the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Christ and his church are one. They cannot be separated. Against neither can the gates of hell prevail. No child of God, can ever commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Lord speaks of as unpardonable: otherwise, the Holy Ghost being God, equal with the Father and the Son, every sin we commit is against him, as truly as it is against them. There is a continual need for all the saints of the Most High God, to be looking off themselves, and all their sins, and sinfulness, and from the whole body of sin, to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Him, they have their complete discharge. It is in Him they are justified from all things, and freely forgiven all trespasses. We should study the everlasting efficacy of Christ's most precious blood. We should labour to apprehend, how we are everlastingly clean in the sight of God, from all sin, by the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the true knowledge of this, which alone can purify our consciences from guilt, stain, and condemnation. It is because

we know so little of this, we at any time give way to doubts and fears. It hath pleased the Lord, to set before us in the everlasting gospel, his own views of Christ, and his salvation, with his own testimony concerning Him, that we receiving the same into our minds, should therewith receive and enjoy everlasting content. May the Lord the Spirit grant us, to receive the Truth, and the whole Truth concerning this, so fully into our minds, that we may enjoy the peace of God in our consciences, so as to come before Him, with holy boldness and delight. I would request your prayers, that I may be conducted and carried on, in what I have proposed, and given you the hint, and outline of, as a workman which needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth; so as neither to say too much, or too little; but quite sufficient for the subject, not in the least omitting any thing which may be absolutely necessary to the same. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits. Amen.

SERMON XXXIX.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—I JOHN III. 7, 8.

THE present discourse stands in connection with the former, and is introduced by the apostle in a very loving manner. It may be, because it contains as awful a subject as is to be found in the whole Scriptures of Truth. Therefore that real saints might not be too much affected with it, as if they were interested therein, and be carried away thereby, as if they were liable to fall away, so as to commit the same sin with the devil, and so be guilty of the sin unto death eternal, he thus most affectionately addresses them. It is not the first time he does it. In all his former ones it is, *My little children; Brethren; Little children; Fathers; Young men; Little children; Beloved;* and here it is, *Little children* again; it is very expressive of the love and affection of the holy apostle towards them, as the Lord's people. I conceive the best manner of my setting forth what is contained in the words before us, so as for you to have a clear and comprehensive view of the same, will be by giving you the following division of them.

1. I will take notice of the address, together with what is connected with it. *Little children, let no man deceive you.* This is a caution. Then follows an infallible evidence of such as belong to Christ—*He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* The *he* is Christ. The *us* must be a righteousness of conformity. It cannot be of equality. I put all this under one head: that when this is dispatched, there may be the more, and larger, and longer scope for the other.