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TO THE READER.

IT is the highest honour that can be enjoyed by any creature to be enabled, under the influence and teaching of the Spirit of God, to speak or write suitably to the majesty and grace of our most adorable Lord Jesus Christ: nor is it, by any means, a blessing of low degree to be assisted under the same divine influence to speak well of, or attempt to recommend to others, the honourable works of the servants and ministers of Christ—seeing that this employ, although secondary, has the same grand and ultimate object in design, under the divine blessing, of setting up and exalting Him, in the view of the Lord's people, “whose name alone is excellent; his glory above the earth and heaven.”

Reader—What is contained in the present publication will be found “a word fitly spoken;” and therefore, “like apples of gold in pictures of silver”—“fitly spoken,” inasmuch as in its *total sum* it is to give glory to the Divine Three in Jehovah, for the exercise of their marvellous grace towards sinners, in the Person, mediation, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ: *in detail*—to glorify God the Father for his love to the elect in Christ—to praise God the Son for his life and death, wherein consists his great salvation—and to magnify the name of God the Spirit, for his ineffable grace in making known to the minds of his called people the love of the Father and the salvation of Christ, and for putting them into the actual possession of the blessings ordained for them.

It moreover is “a word fitly spoken,” seeing that on the warrant of divine writ, it encourages poor convinced sinners to put their full trust in the God of salvation thus revealed to them; and holds up to the view of such, Christ in the perfection of his righteousness and atonement,

as the foundation for the hope of sinners towards God and confidence in him, setting our most adorable Lord Jesus before them in the majesty of his Godhead, and in his all-sufficiency to save; and with equal lustre—in the love of his heart and bowels of compassion towards poor undone sinners who would fain lay hold on him for eternal life.

The manner of the Author's doing this is highly worthy of notice, in that with all spiritual simplicity and wisdom it is a leading the mind, by means of the written word, immediately to Christ, to trust in, make use of, and enjoy him, independently of all that is of self and the creature.

It is indeed most blessed, to be enabled to declare the dignity, majesty, and glory of Christ; nor is it, let it be observed, less glorious and blessed, to be enabled to open to sinners, as our Author does, the very heart of Christ, in setting forth to them his power and readiness to save, and also his mercy, compassion, and tenderness; so that the poor and needy, and he who hath no helper, may understand that there

is no hinderance to their most freely partaking of the rich grace of our most blessed Lord. In the contents of this volume this will be found to be most happily done.

This clear, scriptural exhibition then of the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the grace and salvation of Christ, God-man, is suited, under the divine blessing, to inform the understanding—to engage the affections of the regenerate mind—to lead out of self to high prizings of Christ—and to rest on, enjoy, and be happy in him.

That these invaluable ends may be answered in your perusing the following pages, and the praise be given to the God of all grace, is the earnest prayer of

Yours, in the gospel

Of our LORD JESUS,

W^M HORE.

Pentonville, 1st March, 1818.

A

BRIEF EXPOSITION

ON THE

EIGHTH CHAPTER OF THE PROVERBS

OF SOLOMON.

IN this Chapter the Holy Ghost is pleased to set forth to us the Lord Jesus Christ, in a most engaging way and manner, to the intent that the glories and excellencies of this transcendently great and lovely Saviour may captivate and engage our hearts, and fix them supremely and firmly on him.

To such as are acquainted with their Bibles, and are often employed in reading them, they cannot but observe a very great similarity between this, and the first Chapter of John's Gospel. In both, the Eternity, Person, Divinity, and Glory of the Great Head Mediator, Saviour, and Lord of his Church and People, are unveiled and declared. Thus Christ and his Grace (the subject-matter treated of in this

B

Scripture before us) being of the greatest consequence to them, "*Wisdom*," who is no other than God incarnate, is most graciously pleased, to introduce what he hath to say with a very solemn preface. This is expressed in the following verses. *Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in of the doors.* Then this divine person, Jesus the Mediator, *who is the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, addresseth himself in a very peculiar manner to his auditors, saying, *Unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the Sons of man.* And because poor sinners are apt to turn a deaf ear to the voice of Christ in the everlasting Gospel of his Grace, therefore he speaks in a very particular manner unto them, and calls for their particular attention unto him, saying, *O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.* Sinners are ignorant of God, and of things which concern their everlasting peace. Christ is the fountain of wisdom, and he is most graciously pleased to make the *Simple wise unto Salvation*, by faith in his blessed self. He is pleased to make them spiritually wise. He gives them eyes to see the evil of sin; hearts to know the bitterness of it; minds enlightened

to know him as the complete Salvation, the Almighty friend, of all who betake themselves to him. He speaks, and the dead hear. He continues to speak, and his word gives light and life to such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of Death, his word being to them Spirit and Life. He says, *Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.* Indeed the Lord Christ is truly excellent. His person, his name, his righteousness, his atonement, his offices, his word, his promises, the applications of his grace and mercy, are all transcendently excellent. What is spoken in the Scriptures concerning his essential divinity, his divine personality, as one in the incomprehensible essence with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, is most divinely, unspeakably, yea, infinitely excellent. What he hath to say of himself in this Chapter, of the eternity of his person, of his durable riches and righteousness—of his all-sufficiency to make his people completely and eternally happy—of their being the objects of his infinite love and delight, is transcendently excellent. As these subjects are to be introduced, he may well demand attention. He may well claim our utmost fixation of mind on what he is about to deliver. Blessings on him—his love is unspeakable—his mercy is inexhaustible—his Sal-

vation is perfect—his lips are full of grace and truth. They are as *Lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh*. He speaks to all the cases of his people—to their every fear: *Hear*, says he, *for I will speak of excellent things*. He does so. For he speaks of the excellency of the divine love, which is from everlasting to everlasting; of the excellency of his righteousness, which is everlasting, immutable, and to and upon all them that believe; of his blood, sacrifice and death, which have eternal worth, and are of everlasting virtue and efficacy; of his everlasting Salvation, in which all the spiritual seed of Israel shall be saved, and shall for ever glory. What things our Jesus hath to say to poor sinners in the gospel of his grace, *are right things*. These subjects he speaks freely and fully on, as he proposes. *For my mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips*. Of all which, he may say, *All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to them that understand, and right to them that find knowledge*. They are soul-nourishing words, which convey health to the diseased, and consolation to the mourning heart. *All the words of my mouth* (says he) *are in righteousness*. He is true and faithful. All he speaks may be safely received and depended on. His

promise to receive every one that cometh unto him shall be fulfilled. There is not a word which he speaks shall ever fall to the ground. He may well say of his words, *There is nothing froward or perverse in them.* Our Lord invites poor sinners to receive what he says to them: *Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.* There is not any thing in worth or worthiness will bear comparison with the words, doctrines, instructions, and truths, which Christ is pleased to utter, give, deliver, and express for the benefit of all poor sinners, whose ears and hearts he hath opened to receive him and his words of truth and life. To draw out their hearts to him, and his most precious words of grace; He saith, *for wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to it.* The knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is what is meant, is beyond all things. No words can speak its value, it exceeds in worth ten thousands of gold and silver. The knowledge of Christ is Life eternal. He cannot be known but by his word and by his spirit; when he is rightly known, we, in knowing him, know also our union to, and interest in him. We know his finished and perfect righteousness and blood to be our complete salvation. We know that our sins are pardoned, and persons justified

from all things. We know that we are passed from death unto life: that we are in the kingdom of God's dear Son: that our names are written in heaven: which knowledge is what endears Christ to our hearts: nothing, in point of worth and excellency, can be set in compare with it. He further says, *I Wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions*: signifying that all knowledge cometh from him, who is wisdom itself. And it must be so, because in him are laid up *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. He then shews in what true wisdom consists, *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy; and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate; counsel is mine, and sound wisdom*. If sinners would be wise for time and eternity, they must go to Christ for it. *I*, saith Jesus, *am understanding*. I know the whole of your cases. I am perfectly acquainted with all your maladies. Come to me, I have perfect cure for you. Trust in me, I have the balsam of life; and I will administer it unto you. Lean with all your weight on me. I have strength to bear you up, let what enemy soever be engaged. And, as a further opening to a display of his mediatorial power, love, and unsearchable riches, He says, *By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges*

of the earth. Christ as God-man, mediator, is *King of kings and Lord of lords.* He is seated by his Father on the mediatorial throne, and thus addressed and proclaimed: *I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Thy throne O God is for ever and ever.* He is his church's *King.* He is *King of saints, King of nations, King of kings, and Lord of lords.* Then this blessed prince of the kings of the earth speaks most sweet words, to allure, encourage, draw, and affect the hearts of all his beloved ones, and especially does he in them address himself to such who in their youth are seeking him. *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.* These words are sweet indeed. O that he may speak them to all your hearts, who love him in sincerity and truth. It is not that his love to you is founded on your love to him; no, his love was from before all time. But he is pleased thus to express himself, to show how he esteems your love to him, though it is but the fruit of his own grace. And more especially he thus expresses himself, because he is here speaking to young persons, who being converted to him, the particular evidence of it does not manifest itself by a faith working distinctly and immediately on his person, love, work and word, but in a real love to any, to every thing which belongs to him. To such he

speaks the following words, in which he bids exceeding high for your hearts, you young people that love him. Set your minds on riches, honour, long life, and endless felicity, and seek all this in Christ, then you will never be disappointed: stretch your desires and affections as vast and high as you may, Christ is able to give to and bestow on you all spiritual blessings. He says, *riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness*. Christ's riches are unsearchable, durable and everlasting. He puts honour on all his beloved ones: he takes them into fellowship with himself: he opens his good treasury of grace and glory to their view. He says to them, *All are yours*. Riches which surpass all thought. Honour which truly ennobles, riches which will last to eternity, and righteousness as immutable as Godhead are with Christ, are in Christ, are bestowed by Christ; and he will continue the same on such as he loves, for ever. He says further, *My fruit is better than gold, yea, than choice gold; and my revenue than choice silver*. The love of his heart, the words of his mouth, the righteousness of his life, the efficacy of his death, the fruit of it, which is salvation, peace, pardon, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are better than all things. Better than gold, yea, better than the choicest gold. The inward sense, enjoyment, and experience,

which Jesus Christ gives his people, of these inestimable blessings in their own souls, are better than choice silver. He is the leader of his people into the knowledge of himself, his righteousness and grace. This he does by his word and Spirit: *I lead in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me, to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.* Such as love Christ, having the eyes of their minds opened to take in his glories, to receive his truth, to apprehend his personal and mediatorial fulness, have soul satisfaction, heart content, and real happiness, in what they know of him. In the knowledge of him, the faculties of their renewed minds are filled with substantial peace, the heart with holy joy. They inherit and possess substantial good. We have an example of this in the Apostle Paul, who, speaking on this same subject, saith, *Yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* The mind enlightened to know Christ, the understanding further enlarged to apprehend the person, love, engagements, incarnation, righteousness, sacrifice, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and life of Christ in heaven, where he lives as the representative saviour, friend, high priest, and brother of his people, fills the souls of

such as love him with treasures of greater worth, excellency, and duration, than can be expressed. Jesus had in the name and person of Essential *Wisdom*, even the second Person in the incomprehensible and self-existing Essence, thus spoken, to win the heart, attract the affections, warm the mind, incline the ear, and draw the souls of such as were under the work of the Holy Spirit, and felt the influences of his grace on their minds, to attend to what was to be spoken; and He particularly applied himself to such as love him, and shewed them that he valued a place in their hearts at a very high rate, and therefore proposed his own person, riches, righteousness, and honours, as a portion for them; and plainly declared that here they would find employment for all their spiritual faculties, a sufficiency to yield them everlasting content and holy satiety in the exercise of their minds; on which they would inherit substance, permanent, durable, lasting—yea, everlasting. Their treasures, *i. e.* the faculties of their minds, would hereby be divinely filled with that knowledge of him, which is life everlasting; and in consequence of it, have such communion with himself, as is heaven upon earth; a blessing to be esteemed next to glory—uninterrupted communion with God in all his person and perfections, through the medium of the God-man,

being the consummate blessedness of the state of glory. Next, the Son of God, the essential *Wisdom*, who is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Godhead, speaks of himself; and what he says is most truly wonderful and divine. His essential, personal, mediatorial and relative glories, are the subject. What he was in the Father's view and repute, as the object of his eternal love and complacency, with his interest, concern, and concurrence with the Father, in all his works of creation, providence, and grace, with his own eternal delight and solace in his bride the church as the object of his infinite love, he most freely expresses: *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.* The God-man was the first born of all God's thoughts, ways, and purposes. The essential Three had never gone forth into acts of Creation, had not the second Person in the essential Essence condescended to become a creature. He, according to the will and counsel of the eternal Three, was to be God-man, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was to be displayed, to the manifestative glory of all the three Persons in Jehovah. In the union of the essential Word of God, with the man Christ Jesus, or, in other words, the union of the only begotten Son of God, with the humanity pre-ordained by the Father, to be

assumed into personal union, the uttermost shine of all the essential glory of Jehovah was to break forth, to the utmost stretch of the creature's capacity of beholding and enjoying. This union of God with a creature, God being personally thus manifested in human nature, was what Jehovah's vast mind was employed on before all worlds. And God-man, or the Son of God, predestinated to creature-union, to be God and man in one person, was laid in God as the foundation of all his acts of grace, creation, and providence. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.* The Son of God, who is personally distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost, yet co-equally existent with them in the essential unity and perfection of Godhead, was set up in his personal glory, as God-man, and in his headship and relation to his church, and in his office-character, as mediator, from everlasting. He bore the personage, wore the garb of God-man elect, and was thus treated and considered by the eternal Three before the world was. Jehovah the Father, possessed him as his treasure; and all his purposes, counsels, works, and ways, began in, and with him. *I was* (says this divine speaker) *set up from everlasting; from the beginning, or ever the earth was: when there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were*

no fountains abounding with water. All which prove, the eternity of the person of Christ as God-man: for though he was not incarnate until the fulness of time, yet the Son of God existed before all time. And as the second Person in the incomprehensible Essence, he was set up according to the will of all the Three in Jehovah, as God-man, even from everlasting; and by him, as God-man, God created all things; yea, all things are said to be created by his divine person, who is here under the title of *Wisdom*, and that as God-man. For a proof of it, examine the first chapter of the Colossians; a great part of which may be looked on as a solemn comment on this very part of the chapter now before us. At the 15th verse, the Apostle, speaking of Christ as God-man, says, *who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.* Upon which it follows, *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Verses 16, 17. He himself speaks of his being present with the Father from everlasting; of his being present with him before, and at the creation of all things. *Before the mountains were settled; before the*

hills, was I brought forth. (As God-man elect.) While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the deep; when he gave his decree to the sea, that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth. Next follows an account of the life of blessedness, of union and communion with the Father, which the God-man lived before all time, and in his non-incarnate state: *Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* Which is expressive of that ineffable delight enjoyed in mutual communion with the Father and the Son, in the foreviews they had of all the vast designs, thoughts, counsels, and purposes formed in the Infinite Mind, concerning all their ways and works, acts, ends, and ultimate view in election, creation, and providence, with their eternal purposes towards all the creatures, and the whole creation of God; which plan, drawn in the eternal mind of Jehovah, afforded infinite complacency to all the Persons in God. The God-man, in whom all the elect were chosen, in whom they had life and representative being and existence, from eternity—He, as God-man, the brightness of the Father's glory, and

the express image of his person, wa the eternal head of his body, the church; and as beheld by the Father as God-man, was the object of infinite delight; and as beheld as the head of the whole election of grace, as the foundation, corner-stone, and centre of the whole creation, as the beauty and ornament of the whole universe; as the beginning and end of all the ways and works of God; *was rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth.* In his being to be brought forth upon it, by his open incarnation; rejoicing in living on the habitable parts of Jehovah's earth, in his incarnate state, and expressing in his life and by his death his love to his Father and his people, to the very uttermost; as the person of Christ, *the man of God's right hand, that Son of man, made so strong for his ownself,* that man who is *Jehovah's fellow,* whose name is *The Lord of Hosts,* was the object of ineffable love to all the Persons in Jehovah, so the elect church, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, was the object of Christ's eternal delights. Thus he says himself, in the following words:—*and my delights were with the sons of men.* This opens the very heart of Christ, and shews how it was fixed on his church from everlasting. Yea, in these words, as in a glass, we may view his love to be a love of the utmost complacency and

delight. These words declare how the church was viewed by her heavenly Bridegroom, as his choice one, his social companion, with whom he was for ever to dwell in the state of glory. Our Jesus, having thus opened the holiest of all, and admitted us to a view of his ancient and unspeakable love and complacency which he had for and took in his bride the church, declaring plainly that as he was the supreme object of his Father's love and delight, the elect and chosen ones whom the Father had given to him, were the object and subjects of his invariable love and delight, concludes with a very solemn address, by way of application, saying, *Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.* Christ would have you, as sinners, come to him for the water of life and the bread of life. He wants you to bring nothing to him but your sins, wounds, wants, and miseries. He is full of virtue, to heal the whole of your spiritual diseases. He hath everlasting health and salvation for you, and his wounds and stripes proclaim it; for *by his stripes we are healed.* His fulness of grace is infinite and inexhaustible; you may come and receive your whole salvation, and all the blessings of life everlasting out of it, and be most blessed for ever; you may

approach Christ with all your miseries, he will bear you up under them, and turn them all into an everlasting cause for you to sing aloud of his mercies. O that you may give him your ear! Receive his instruction! it will make you wise with that wisdom which cometh from him. Blessed are they that hear his voice, speaking in his gospel, and by his word to them. He further says, *Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord: but he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me, love death.*

Thus our Jesus closes his most divine and heavenly lecture with a word concerning the exceeding sinfulness of sinning against him by rejecting his gospel, neglecting his great salvation, and living in unbelief. May you who are believers in him have your ears afresh opened, to hear his blessed voice: may the eyes of your minds be opened to take in something of his primordial glory. Look at the account he gives of his own eternity, and how he stood the object of his Father's ineffable love and delight. Consider your election in him, with your union, relation, and interest in him, with his love and delight in your persons from

eternity, and say if the consideration does not warm your hearts!

May the Lord the Spirit bless what is written, and make it the means of endearing Christ unto you! Amen.

A
P A R A P H R A S E

ON THE
FIRST EIGHT VERSES

OF THE
FORTY-SECOND CHAPTER OF THE
PROPHET ISAIAH.

It is exceedingly pleasing to a spiritual mind to have the Lord Jesus Christ most highly exalted. To sit under such ministers as speak highly and honourably of the ever blessed Immanuel, is what believers in Jesus cannot but love and delight in. And sinners, when awakened by the Spirit of God, and brought to see, know, and feel, their own sinfulness, guilt, and apostasy by nature and practice from the Lord, the fountain of living waters, need the best of preachers and the clearest preaching; such as may point out to them the person, the character, the work and office, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and discover to them the love of his heart, and how freely he receives sinners into the arms of his everlasting mercy—how

completely he saves them who fly unto him, and that with an everlasting salvation. We have at this time the greatest of preachers—the best of sermons—the very choicest subject which ever was, or can possibly be delivered. The preacher hath Christ for his text and context—his end and aim is to exalt him. Every thing is said which can possibly be a motive, excitement, and encouragement, to lead convinced sinners to renounce themselves, and trust alone on Jesus; whose mediatorial work, office, grace, and fulness, are so clearly stated and freely explained, as to be all-sufficient to feed the spiritual understanding with delight, and cause the heart to leap for joy.

Jehovah the Father speaks and reveals his co-equal and co-eternal Son, in his complex person as God-man—the object of his ineffable love, complacency, and delight; and calls upon us to *behold* this most adorable Person, as divinely invested, solemnly consecrated, anointed and furnished for acting the part of a glorious Mediator.

VERSE 1st. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

The Son of the living God is essentially one in the Godhead, with the Father and the Spirit,

co-equal and co-eternal with them, in all the essential perfections of the self-existing Essence. He is God—the Son of God—God-man—the Head—Mediator—and Saviour of his church and people. He is the second Person in the incomprehensible Godhead, by a necessity of nature: as truly and absolutely Jehovah, as the Father and the Spirit are. His being God-man—the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts, is by the will, counsel, covenant, and constitution of the Eternal Three. And as God and man, united by personal union, he is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*. As God the Son essentially dwelling in our nature, he is the object of the infinite love and delight of the eternal Father, and the eternal Spirit. God the Father proclaims him as such to an elect world. He would have heaven and earth filled with his glorious praise. He would that his name, person, fame and renown, should sound and be known throughout the churches of his saints, that the whole earth should be filled with the glory of his majesty. As this most adorable Person, who, though equal in Godhead with the Father and the Spirit, was most graciously pleased in the federal transactions of the Divine Persons, to condescend to sustain an office in the covenant of grace, and act the part of a divine Mediator, he is here

published as such. And as the Father would have every eye and heart fixed intensely on him, he therefore makes use of the word *behold*, with a design to fix the mind on him, in whom is all his delight. This is a word most frequently used in the scriptures when Christ is spoken of. It is to call off our attention from all other objects and subjects, to view and consider the matchless and most inestimably precious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. If ever any object or subject was worthy our attention, this before us is. Here is the record of God concerning his Son; he would have us look at him as *he* does; he would have us be as well pleased with Jesus, as *he* is; he would have us take in sights of him from the written word; he would have us trust as fully and confidently on the person and work of this great and all-sufficient Mediator, as his word gives us warrant for; in so doing, we should both glorify the Father and the Son. *Behold* him, in whom *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead personally*—who is the fulness of grace, and the fulness of glory—in whom it hath *pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell*. The God-man—who is the foundation, centre, and object, of all the counsel and thoughts of Jehovah, from everlasting! *Behold* him, who as God-man, is the first-born of all Jehovah's purposes

and decrees; with whom he took counsel, and in whom he laid all his vast and infinite designs. *Behold* him, who is the head of all principalities and powers, the head of his body the church! *Behold* him, as the eternal head of the whole election of grace, the fountain and spring of their supernatural life, grace, and blessings. *Behold* him, as their divine surety, representative, and Mediator, who engaged with his Father on their behalf, and shewed his friendship for them before all time, in engaging as their Covenant-Head, to fulfil the law on their behalf, and make his soul an offering for sin. *Behold* him, as *the Father's servant* in the matchless work of redemption; in which he performed a service to his divine Father, and for the everlasting benefit of his church. His service was, to obey the holy law, to magnify all its precepts, fulfil all its commands, to sustain all its penalties; and so to remove sin from his people, by the sacrifice of himself, as to deliver them from the imputation of all their guilt, and the curse due to their crimes.

This is what the Father calls us here to *behold*. And such as are favoured with this sight are blessed, holy, and happy, in this person, and in his finished salvation. God himself beholds a sufficiency to satisfy his vast and infinite mind for ever. Having called our attention to

his coequal and coeternal Son, as God-man—Head—Mediator—and Surety—he speaks of him as upheld, and furnished for his glorious work and office by him. Saying, *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, or chosen one, in whom my soul delighteth!*—the person of the God-man—such are his glory, perfections, excellency, and fulness, that he is sufficient to satisfy the heart of God, and yield increasing delight to the Infinite Mind, for ever and ever. This testimony the Father bore of him before his incarnation. He bore the same divine testimony of him, and to him, when he was in his incarnate state. At his baptism, and transfiguration, the Lord Christ was sealed as the Messiah, with those very words which the Father pronounced with an audible voice from Heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* They are quoted from the prophet, and the Lord God pronounces them, and they are to the same effect. Read either way, *in whom my soul delighteth*, or *in whom I am pleased*, and it cannot but afford a feast to the believer's mind. “*I have,*” adds Jehovah the Father, “*put my Spirit upon him;*” so that he is completely furnished for his work and office, which will fully appear: for, “*He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*” These words and the following are inserted in the twelfth chapter

of Matthew's Gospel, with some small variation, and applied to our divine Lord; whose life, character, and conduct, realized what is here written of him. Thus the Father sets forth Christ in his office-capacity, as Mediator—as infinitely delighted in his person—well pleased with his office, and discharge of it, as being abundantly qualified for his whole work, and the full and complete performance of it. The Spirit was on him; he was filled with the Holy Ghost, in all the fulness of his gifts and graces; and out of his heart and mouth, he was to *bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*; which was to be the effect of his preaching the everlasting Gospel, in his own ministry, and by the ministry of his apostles. The Gospel is a most glorious display of *the manifold wisdom of God*. In it all the will, counsel, covenant, thoughts, purposes, ends, and designs, of the essential Three, towards the elect, are contained. By it, and the open preaching and publication thereof, the whole of the divine counsel is made known; and sinners, by the enlightening rays of the Holy Ghost shining on the word which reveals Christ as the Father's ordinance of life and salvation, and reflected on their minds as renewed by the Holy Spirit, *are made wise unto salvation, by faith which is in Christ Jesus*. They know him hereby, and the power of his

resurrection, and see him to be *the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth*. They receive him by faith in the promises, which set him forth to their hearts, as made of God unto them *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*: and in believing the record, and receiving the testimony which God hath given of his Son, they set their seals that He is true: they set their seals to the truth of God, and in so doing, honour him. Yea, this is the highest honour that can be done to *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in our world, namely, to behold Jesus as the Father hath set him forth in the everlasting Gospel; to believe on him for life everlasting; to receive the testimony which he hath given in the scriptures concerning him; to look on Jesus as the Father doth; to be as well pleased with him and his perfect work, as the Father is: this is to honour all the Persons in the Godhead; and beyond this, none of the saints in glory can possibly perform any act of worship, nor more acceptable to the eternal Three. O! the riches of grace! Sinners, you are not called to look at yourselves, to look into yourselves, to view your sins and sinfulness. If you were not what you are, you would not need a Saviour: but you are called to look off yourselves, sins, miseries, and every other object and

subject, and to look on Christ, in whom are life and salvation—in whom the springs of eternal blessedness are contained: and that very moment you obey the Lord's command, and through the almighty and sacred energy of the Holy Ghost behold Christ *the only begotten Son of God, the Lamb of God*, the Father's *elect* and chosen one, whom he hath appointed to be the alone Mediator, *his salvation to the ends of the earth*—you are saved for ever. In beholding Jesus, you have manifestative salvation. Believers, you have the same object proposed to you, that fixes God's will, love, and delight on you, and that will continue it fixed on you for ever. Nothing can exceed the blessedness of constantly beholding Christ; it is the life of faith, the death of legality, the mortification of sin; the grand cause of perseverance; it is heaven upon earth, yea, it is the heaven of heavens in glory, to behold Christ, God-man; it yields an eternal feast to all the ransomed of the Lord within the vail.

The Father proceeds in his account of Him *in whom his soul delighteth*, describing the way and manner in which he would perform his mediatorial work.

VERSE 2d, *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.*

This is descriptive of our Lord's conduct;

who, though he spake openly in the street, and in the synagogues, and spake too *as never man spake*; and wrought a variety of miracles on the souls and bodies of men, giving thereby incontestable proofs of his eternal divinity and mission; yet in it he sought not his own glory, but his Father's, who sent him. He did not heal all sickness and all manner of disease among the people, he did not cast out devils, open the eyes of the blind, walk on the boisterous sea, turn it into a calm, raise the dead, foretell future events, in an ostentatious, pompous way and manner; but in so concealed a way, though the facts could not but gain him a glorious name and spread abroad his fame and praise, that it was evident he did not seek outward applause. *He shall not cry*, or complain, or bring any charge or accusation against any; he shall not *lift up his voice* in menaces and threatenings, but be silent, put up with all abuses, and patiently bear every affront, as he most eminently did; *nor cause his voice to be heard in the street*, pronouncing his own praise. He should in all his ministry act agreeably with his mission; whilst his acts proclaimed him to be the Messiah, of whom all the prophets bore witness. Yet he conducted himself in his dispositions and actions agreeably to this divine prophecy. Hence it is, that this is applied to

him by the Evangelist, *Matthew*: and having recorded in his twelfth chapter, how our Lord, having *healed great multitudes which followed him, charged them that they should not make him known*; this apostle is led to make an application of what was written in this prophecy of *Isaiah*, to our most adorable and precious Immanuel. The Father is pleased in the next verse to give us the character of Christ, and it is a most divine and lovely one.

VERSE 3d. *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

All that the Father reveals and hath to say of his beloved Son, is to recommend and endear him to poor, guilty, perishing sinners; he reveals him as the ransom, and with transporting joy says, *I have found a ransom*, or atonement. Job xxxiii. ver. 24. He proclaims his almighty power to save, saying, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty*. Psalm lxxxix. ver. 19. And here he gives us the true character of the Almighty One, on whom he laid his help, that we, receiving it and believing it, may apply to Christ, that he may prove by the display of his own grace and mercy in us and upon us, that he is all this to poor sinners. This scripture hath been of great use, and afforded divine encouragement and support to many sorts of persons in

our world: such as have been awakened by the Spirit of God, and have had a sight and sense of their own sinfulness and weakness, have found what *Jehovah the Father* here says of the tenderness and affection of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be very supporting and reviving to their minds. Such as have closed with Jesus, and been long acquainted with him, have, under the various experiences which they have had of their own wretched hearts and inconstant frames, found it very sustaining to their distressed minds, to reflect on what the Father hath recorded of the bowels of Christ, of his tenderness and compassion to them. And souls who have back-slidden from the Lord God, when brought by the Holy Spirit to loath themselves for it, distressed beyond conception with the peculiar guilt of its being the very essence of sin to depart from the Lord the fountain of living waters, which hath been their case, have found this account of Jesus very salutary, refreshing, and relieving to their poor, guilty, distressed minds. And even the most eminent Saints in the church of the living God, find enough in it to suit and comfort them. I will aim in a particular manner to point out this character of Christ, with the persons mentioned. They are described as *bruised reeds and smoking flax*. Our Lord's character is, that he is tender

and compassionate ; he will not break the one, nor quench the other. Such are the wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God, that there is the utmost display of all the riches, *the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.* The holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, have appointed the man Christ Jesus to be the medium of union and channel of communion with the elect. And by his personal union with the only-begotten Son of God, God became incarnate, taking our nature without all spot of sin into union with his divine personality ; and thus he became one with his people, of the same nature with them. This is the Lord's own act, and it may well be marvellous in our eyes. In the person of Christ Jesus God-man, there is the utmost display of the nature, persons, and perfections of Godhead. *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead.* To him there is the fullest and freest communication made of all the love, mercy, and grace of the Godhead ; and in him, and by him, there is the utmost realizing and manifestation of it. He, as the surety of the everlasting covenant, took our nature, that he might be capable to take to himself, and on himself, our sins, and sustain the punishment due unto them. He, as the alone mediator, who was to be crowned with Glory everlasting, took our nature,

with all the sinless infirmities of it, and lived in our nature in our world, and felt and experienced all sorts of miseries. He felt what it was to be despised by men, to be forsaken of God, to feel the burden of sin, to be encompassed with the fierce wrath of the Lord God Almighty, and to be tempted by the devil. He learnt in the discharge of his office here below, what human nature is; the sorrows, feelings, exercises and temptations to which it is exposed and subject; and He is in his mediatorial office, to exercise and display all the bowels of divine love and mercy. As Mediator, though as such he is *the Holy One of God*, yet in the discharge of his mediatorial office as the Father's servant, He cannot despise any poor sinner who approaches Him, let that sinner's sins, sinfulness, case, and personal circumstances, be what they may. His heart is all love, his bowels are altogether full of mercy, his pity is most truly divine: there is not a sin in any who come to Him, but he most freely pardons; there is no wound sin has given them, but He most effectually heals; there is no feeling they have, but He most kindly observes; there is not a secret motion in their souls towards Him, which He fails to attend unto. Their weakness draws out his strength, which he shews the perfection of in bearing them up, under all their manifold

weaknesses: their complaints draw his ear, their afflictions his eye, their very sinfulness his compassions, their very confession of their exceeding great and inward depravity, his grace; so that his bowels are kindled towards them; He echoes back to the voice of their cry: *I will surely have mercy upon you, saith the Lord.* All which is truly agreeable to his office in the economy of the everlasting covenant by the divine Trinity: therefore the Father here sets him forth in his inexpressible pity, tenderness, and compassion towards poor sinners. Is it the case of any of you, readers, to be brought to feel your sinfulness, misery, and want of Christ; are any of you in your own souls, cases, frames, and experiences, most properly described, as *bruised reeds and smoking flax*? My friends, without entering into any further interrogations with you, I will describe and set forth the case of one, who may be properly denominated a *bruised reed and smoking flax*: and then shew you the compassion and grace of Christ Jesus towards him. A person quickened with spiritual life by the Spirit of the living God, who is inwardly awakened by a sight and sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and his lost state and condition, and bruised in mind with an apprehension of falling into the hands of the living God, before whom

all must appear, may be very justly pointed out by this metaphor. He is as a *reed*, which is very weak, as a *bruised reed*, which is perfect weakness. He can do nothing to save himself, nor to help himself; he feels nothing in himself but sin, bruises, and weakness; how to stir or act, he knows not; he is altogether swallowed up in the thoughts and views of what he is, so that he may in his own account, and that of others, be considered as truly expressed, and very properly denominated a *bruised reed*. If Christ hath compassion on such, it must be rich grace indeed! What is added to this simile, by pointing out the same person as *smoking flax*, as it leads still further into the subject, so it also most gloriously exalts the mercy and compassion of Christ Jesus. Ministers themselves, although they may be clothed with the bowels of Christ, and endued by him with that wisdom which enables them to win souls to him; yet they have neither eyes to see, nor skill to treat, nor compassion to come down and descend low enough to deal with poor souls in the first dawnings of grace and manifestations of God's love towards them; no, it is the peculiar royalty of Christ himself, to have skill to deal with afflicted consciences: to speak a word in season to such as are weary and faint in their minds under soul maladies, spiritual

conflicts and burthens. *The Lord God*, says this glorious Mediator, *hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary*. Isai. l. ver. 4.

A poor creature who is most properly denominated *a bruised reed*, may well be further described under the figure of *smoking flax*; because such, though the work of God's grace is begun by the Holy Ghost within them; though they are truly born of God, and have the Spirit of God within them; yet their views, feelings, frames, and desires, are like *smoking flax*; they neither know their own wants, nor how to express them; they cannot speak out their cases at the throne of grace; nor to God or man give a plain and simple account of themselves. If they express themselves about their feelings and love to Christ, and desires after him, there is nothing but incoherency in it; more smoke than light: yet as there is no smoke, but fire is in it as the cause, so their smoky expressions have an evidence in them, that the love of God is in their hearts; but this at present is only known to God. His ministers and people are often puzzled and perplexed what to say to such, or think of their cases. It may be, such ministers too as we conceive most profoundly skilful in the word of righteousness, are so far above taking notice

of such souls, that they keep at a distance from them; yet whoever is in such, or, if it be possible to conceive, a lower case in spiritual frames, sense, and feeling, is notwithstanding the object and subject of Christ's compassion. Hear it, ye that have ears to hear, and admire the grace of Jesus. *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.* Our Lord looks at the heart, reads the work, and attends to the breathings of his own Spirit therein; understands well the wants, desires, and out-goings of the mind towards him: and though the poor soul cannot utter himself upon any one point or subject about eternal things, so as to gain the ear and attention of real saints, yet our Jesus, the head of them, who knows the inward and spiritual frame and bent of the mind to be towards him, is graciously pleased to increase inward and spiritual strength; to breathe upon the soul, and perfect what he hath begun, by enlightening their understanding into the knowledge of his person, love, salvation, offices, word and promises: and thus *he brings forth judgment unto truth*; he brings forward the work of grace in a gradual way and manner, to a clear and scriptural judgment concerning him, and the Father's love in him, to every soul who trusteth in him; which

work appears evidentially manifested by leading the mind to centre in him, who is truth itself. This divine character of Christ, drawn up by the eternal Spirit, pronounced by the Father, contains every thing that can make Jesus precious to all who know him. I can truly say it has endeared, and will for ever endear him to my heart; and to the present moment I feel, and find I am in myself, but a *bruised reed and smoking flax*: nor do I want to feel or find myself to be otherwise, because this fits me for the merciful compassions of Christ, to be displayed and exercised on me in a most marvellous way as such. O Sirs, whoever of you receive this divine character given by the Father of Christ into your hearts, and most freely and cordially give credit to it, you in so doing honour God more than all your sins ever dishonoured him. Bruised reeds, and mourning souls, you who are as *smoking flax*, more smoke than light, and in your own feelings just ready to expire, as it respects any desire you can at times perceive after Christ and spiritual things; take courage, read it over again, and bind round your hearts what is here written and declared of Christ; it will do your souls good like a medicine to believe it. Who can doubt the mercy, the tenderness, the sympathy, the affection of Jesus to his beloved, in the lowest cases,

frames, and feelings, which they can possibly be in, or can be exercised with, when he finds it recorded to the honour and praise of Christ, that he will be to them all that which their cases call for and require?

Jehovah, the Father, speaks further concerning this illustrious Prince of peace, of life, and love, and describes him in his going forth, and goings on in planting the Gospel, and establishing it in the world. The Father declares that Messiah should persevere in his glorious work, and pursue his glorious exercise of grace, in the free discharge of his mediatorial office, as King of Zion, King of saints, King of nations; as being King of kings, and Lord of lords. This is the subject of the next verse. May the Lord the Spirit shine upon it. Amen!

VERSE 4th. *He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he has set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.* This is a further declaration to the honour of this great and divine Mediator—of the love of his heart—the immutability of his will—and his going on in defiance of all opposition with his great and glorious work.

He shall not fail; no part of his work shall be left undone; no words of his shall fall to the ground; no promise of his shall fail. His

name is from, and will continue to, EVER-LASTING. His throne is eternal: he is seated on it, and fully invested with all power, both in heaven and in earth. *His mediatorial kingdom ruleth over all. He is head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Though this Almighty Jesus had hell and earth against him, yet he bore them down, and they are become his footstool. No seeming or real impediment to his gospel, government, church and people, in this present evil world, discouraged him. He went forth from conquering and to conquer, with the crown on his royal head, and will for ever be Jesus, the almighty and invincible Conqueror. The Father foreshadows it by the prophet, for the support and confidence of his church in Him, saying, *He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he hath set judgment in the earth, i. e. his glorious and everlasting gospel; which being effected by his omnipotent arm, it is added, and the isles shall wait for his law; which is expressive of the same invaluable blessing, viz. the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which being sent into the Gentile world, by the preaching of the Apostles, was to be continued to the elect church, until all the purposes for which it was sent were fully answered. Not the malice of the unbe-*

believing Jews, the tyranny and persecution of the Roman Emperors, the rage of Papists or Mahometans, should put an extinction to it. No; our JESUS ruined the Roman Pagan empire, and rolled up all their Pagan worship as a scroll; so that *there was a great earthquake* in the empire, *i. e.* a total revolution and change in their political and ecclesiastical state and worship; *and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood; and the stars fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.* Rev. vi. ver. 12, 13, 14. The whole empire was overturned as Pagan worship ceased, by means of Constantine the Great, who was, as some historians say, a Briton, and born at York, in this our kingdom. After this great revolution, and the empire became christianized, and the Arian heresy had infected and was admitted into it, our Jesus sent the Goths and Vandals against it, and raised up the Saracens and Turks, and permitted the Pope of Rome, and the false prophet Mahomet, to distress the false-hearted professors of the gospel, and some real saints. Yet all this did not frustrate the vast designs of our Lord—they were the very accomplishment of them.

He has set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.

It pleased our most precious Lord to send his gospel, very early after his ascension, into our isle of Great Britain. Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations on Prophecy, says, “there is some probability that the gospel was preached here by Simon the Apostle; there is much greater probability that it was preached here by St. Paul; and it is an absolute certainty that Christianity was planted here in England before the destruction of Jerusalem. Agreeable to this, Eusebius informs us that the Apostles preached the gospel in all the world, and some of them passed beyond the ocean to the British isles.”

So that it is probable, within thirty years after our Lord's ascension, and coronation in heaven, he sent his everlasting gospel into this isle; and, blessings on him, he has continued it from that time to the present moment. Even under the darkest season of popery, the glorious light has been continued in England, though shut up and confined; and by it our Jesus has done his wonderful acts, which ought to be had in remembrance. By whom he sent it, is not so clear: so that some say it was by Simon Zelotes; others, Joseph of Arimathea; others, the Apostle Paul; and certain it is, there is the name of a British

lady, who was at Rome, when Paul was then and there a prisoner. She is mentioned by him in his 2d Epistle of Timothy, c. iv. v. 21, who requesteth that her Christian salutation might be presented to the Evangelist Timothy. Her name is Claudia. In this land of our nativity, our Jesus hath visited great numbers of our predecessors, when they were sitting in darkness and shadow of death, and guided their feet in the way of peace. In this our own kingdom he raised up that morning star of reformation, John Wickliff. In this land he has had his truth sealed with the blood of a noble company of Martyrs, who loved not their lives unto the death; who were taken to his bosom and mounted thither in fiery chariots. He has raised up some of the greatest lights in his British Israel that ever shone forth since the apostolic age. In the remembrance of some of us, he has raised up some great instruments, by whose ministry he has wrought effects in the souls of multitudes, which will last for ever. Nor will he cease. But in due time the fulness of the Gentiles, and his ancient people, the Jews, shall be brought in to him the true Shiloh. Then all nations shall fall down before him, all kingdoms shall serve him; and the whole earth shall then be enlightened with his glory. Then shall he be great to the ends of the earth.

Our Lord Jesus had the dew of his youth, on his ascension—coronation—and ENTHRONIZATION in Glory, when the Holy Ghost being shed richly on the apostles, and primitive church at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were converted under one sermon, and added to the Lord; and five thousand under another sermon. And this work of conversion increased, and continued to be the case for a considerable time, so that multitudes were added unto the Lord. It was the case even under what is styled the ten Roman persecutions. And though Rome Pagan was exceeded by Rome Papal, in persecuting and drinking the blood of the saints, yet the true church of Christ was continued, and increased even, under the tremendous persecutions of the one, and the martyrdoms of the other. Hence that saying, The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the church.

What the Father here says of the success of Christ—*He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law*, may be compared with what is expressed in the promise to the Mediator, and recorded in the 89th Psalm; where Jehovah the Father saith, *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God,*

and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth, ver. 25, 26, 27. To which may be added, the promise of the Father to the Son, on the performance of his work, and entrance into heaven, Ps. cx. ver. 1, 2, 3. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

This Psalm was written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The person speaking is Jehovah the Father. The person spoken to is Messiah, the Prince of Peace. The true and everlasting high priest, Melchisedec—who liveth after the power of an endless life. What is said runs thus—*Sit on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.* It is a figurative expression of the exaltation of Christ—expressive of the honour, power, dignity, and authority, to which he was raised by the counsel and covenant of the Eternal Three. He was to sit on his mediatorial throne until all his enemies were subdued; and being seated on it, he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. All written in this psalm hath been, or will be

accomplished His sufferings were effectual as an atonement for sin. His priesthood in heaven, founded on the offering of himself, is ETERNAL. His kingdom is an everlasting one. He hath universal empire over all worlds, beings, and things. He ruleth over all. His exaltation is to the highest dignity. He sits at God's right hand, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. His conquest of his enemies is most sure. No arm, no power can withstand his. The gospel must prevail, and have increasing success, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.* And God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? His word is his act and deed. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away. The word of the Lord endureth for ever. It will have its full, final, and everlasting accomplishment. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah.*

The Father is pleased to open most freely the great transactions between him and his coequal Son, concerning the great work of mediation and reconciliation; and because this is an immi-

ment act in God, from which our salvation originated, and that we may have a clear view and spiritual and right apprehension of it, Jehovah introduces it in the following manner, with this most sublime and important preface.

VERSE 5th. *Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.*

The creation of the heavens, the stretching them out, are a visible proof and display of Jehovah's *eternal power and Godhead*. The immensity of space, in which what we call the starry heavens are, exceeds the utmost stretch of thought. The immense distance (says one) of the fixed stars from our earth, and from each other, is of all considerations the most proper for raising our ideas of the works of God; and I add, of giving us an idea of his Almighty power put forth in the creation of the universe. For notwithstanding the earth's orbit, or path, which is at least one hundred and ninety millions of miles in diameter round the sun, the distance of a fixed star is not sensibly affected by it. So that the star does not appear to be any nearer to us when the earth is in that part of its orbit nearest the star, than it seemed to be when the

earth was at the most distant part of it, or, one hundred and ninety millions of miles further from the same star. The star nearest us, and consequently the largest in appearance, is the Dog-star, or Sirius. Modern discoveries make it probable, that each of the fixed stars has planets and comets revolving round it, as our sun has the earth and other planets revolving round him. Now the dog-star appears to be twenty-seven thousand times less than the sun, and as the distance of the stars must be greater in proportion as they seem less, mathematicians have computed the distance of Sirius from us to be two billions, and two hundred thousand millions of miles. A ray of light, therefore, though its motion is so quick as to be commonly thought instantaneous, takes up more time in travelling from the stars to us, than we in making a West India voyage. A sound would not arrive to us from thence in fifty thousand years, which, next to light, is considered as the quickest body we are acquainted with. And a cannon-ball, flying at the rate of four hundred and eighty miles an hour, would not reach us in seven hundred thousand years. The stars which are nearest us seem largest, and are therefore called stars of the first magnitude. Those of the second magnitude appear less, being at a greater distance. And so pro-

ceeding on to the sixth magnitude, which includes all the fixed stars that are visible without a telescope. As to their number, though in a clear winter's night without moonshine they seem to be innumerable, which is owing to their strong sparkling, and our looking at them in a confused manner, yet when the whole firmament is divided, as it has been done by the ancients, into signs and constellations, the number that can at any time be seen with the naked eye is not above a thousand. Since the invention of telescopes, indeed, the number of the fixed stars has been justly considered as immense; because the greater perfection we arrive at in our glasses, the more stars always appear to us. Mr. Flamstead, late Royal Astronomer at Greenwich, has given us a catalogue of about three thousand stars. These are called telescopic stars, from their being invisible without the assistance of a telescope. Doctor *Herschell*, to whose ingenuity and assiduity the astronomical world is so much indebted, has evinced what great discoveries may be made by improvements of observation. In speaking here of his discoveries, I shall use the words of M. de la Lande:—"In passing rapidly over the heavens with his new telescope, the universe increased under his eye; forty-four thousand stars appeared, seen in the space of a few degrees,

seemed to indicate that there were seventy-five millions in the heavens. But what are all these, when compared with those that fill the whole expanse, the boundless fields of ether? Indeed the immensity of the universe must contain such numbers, as would exceed the stretch of human imagination, for who can say how far the universe extends, or point out those limits, where the Creator stayed his rapid wheels, or where he fixed the golden compasses?"—(Quoted from Guthrie's Introduction to his Geographical Grammar.) Well may Jehovah proclaim his Godhead thus, saying, in order to quicken our attention to the subject before us, *Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out.*

Instead of one sun, and one world only, in the universe, as the unskilful in astronomy may imagine, that science discovers to us such an inconceivable number of suns, systems, and worlds, dispersed through boundless space, that if our sun and all the planets, moons, and comets belonging to it, were annihilated, they would be no more missed by an eye that could take in the whole creation of God, than a grain of sand from the sea-shore! the space they possess being comparatively so small, that it would be scarcely a sensible blank in the universe—although the Georgium Sidus, the outer-

most of our planets, revolves about the sun in an orbit ten thousand eight hundred and thirty millions of miles in circumference, and some of our comets make excursions of upwards of ten thousand millions of miles beyond the orbit of the Georgium Sidus; and yet at that amazing distance they are incomparably nearer to the sun than to any of the stars, as is evident from their keeping clear of the attracting power of all the stars, and returning periodically by virtue of the sun's attraction. Sir Isaac Newton computed the heat of the comet that appeared in the year 1680, when nearest the sun, to be two thousand times hotter than red hot iron, and that being thus heated, it must retain its heat till it come round again, although its period should be more than twenty thousand years; and it is computed to be only five hundred and seventy-five. This is the most remarkable of all the comets. This comet at its greatest distance from the centre of the sun, is about four hundred and ninety thousand miles; being less than one part of the sun's semidiameter from his surface. In that part of its orbit which is nearest the sun, it flies with the amazing velocity of eight hundred and eighty thousand miles in an hour; and the sun, as seen from it, must appear one hundred degrees in breadth, consequently forty thousand times as

large as he appears to us. When it appeared in 1680, from its nearness to our earth, it alarmed the inhabitants of our globe. It continued visible from November the 3d, to March the 9th. (Quoted from Guthrie's Geographical Grammar.)

Well might the Psalmist say, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* That which is styled our system, including our own world, with the planets, satellites, and comets, which surround it, and of which our own sun is the centre, may well demand our attention, and fill us with the most profound admiration concerning the majesty, eternity, immensity, and self-existence of the Lord God, who is the Creator of them. They are standing monuments of his Almighty power, infinite wisdom, and boundless goodness.

Astronomers tell us, that in this magnificent fabric of the heavens there is a system, or bright order of stars, the nearest of any others to us, which form a vast circuit one within another, like so many rings or circles, and that these are in continual motion round the sun, which is in the centre or middle of the whole. They name them thus, Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Georgium Sidus. These have their satellites. Saturn has seven, Jupiter four, the Earth one, and the Georgium

Sidus six : and it is computed that there are twenty-one comets belonging to this system. These stars are named planets, to distinguish them from what are styled fixed stars. The sun, which gives light to all the planets, satellites, and comets, the body of it is said to be one million times greater than that of this earth on which we dwell. It is the natural and visible symbol of Christ. He is to his church what the sun is to our system—the centre of rest and glory. He is the fountain of life, light, and glory. As the sun is the centre of the planetary and cometary orbs, so is Christ to his church, and every individual member thereof. Jehovah proclaims his Godhead further, saying, *He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it.* The earth on which we dwell is a planet, or globe, which those skilled in geography tell us turns on its axis, and is poised by its own weight. The wisdom of Jehovah is most illustriously displayed in its formation, shape, parts, and furniture. There is such a just equipoise of the whole globe, that the Northern ballanceth the Southern Ocean; the Atlantic the Pacific Sea; the American dry land is a counterpoise to the European, Asiatic, and African. The circumference of our world is twenty-five thousand miles; its diameter $7,957\frac{3}{4}$ miles; the superficies one hundred and ninety-eight mil-

lions nine hundred forty-four thousand two hundred and six square miles; the solidity of it two hundred sixty-three thousand nine hundred thirty millions of cubic miles. All the seas and unknown parts of the earth, by a measure of the best maps, contain one hundred sixty millions five hundred twenty-two thousand and twenty-six square miles. The inhabited parts, thirty-eight millions nine hundred twenty-two thousand one hundred and eighty: of which Europe contains four millions four hundred fifty-six thousand and sixty-five; Asia, ten millions seven hundred sixty-eight thousand eight hundred and twenty-three; Africa, nine millions six hundred fifty-four thousand eight hundred and seven; and America, fourteen millions one hundred and ten thousand eight hundred and seventy-four.

The Lord God, who created the heavens, and stretched them out, he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, adds, as a further display of his infinite nature, and self-existence, He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. The number of inhabitants computed at present to be in the known world, at a medium, taken from the best calculations, is about nine hundred and fifty-three millions. Europe contains one hundred and fifty-three millions; Asia five hundred millions;

Africa one hundred and fifty millions; and America one hundred and fifty millions. Total, nine hundred and fifty-three millions. The Lord God knows each and every individual; he apprehends them personally and distinctly; he sustains and feeds them: yea, *he giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth for ever.* All which are amazing displays of his essential omnipotence; as are the daily vicissitudes of day and night, summer and winter, spring and autumn.

Our terraqueous globe on which we dwell is poised by its own weight, and turns round, as a wheel, on its axis. And beside the small motion of it, which causes the precession of the equinoxes, it has two great ones, viz. the one by which it turns round its own axis in the space of twenty-four hours, or nearly, and thereby causing the continual succession of day and night; and the other is an absolute motion of its whole mass in a large orbit round the sun, in the space of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, constituting the year, having that luminary for its centre in such a manner, that the axis always keeps parallel, inclined in the same angle to its path, and by that means causing the vicissitudes of seasons, spring, summer, autumn, and winter. All which is stupendously great and wonderful.

This glorious fabric, with all its contents and inhabitants, is perfectly known to Jehovah. And when he stretched out the vast expanse of the universe, and gave being to our globe, and birth to time, he had in view the God-man. In the intuitive knowledge of him, he made all things, and was pleased with the prospect of bringing in his first-begotten into the world, and commanding all his elect angels to worship him. Hence it is he introduces the solemn contract between himself and the glorious Mediator, with an account of the display of his eternal power, in the creation of heaven, earth, and man on it, to shew he could rest in none of these acts and works of his, but as he viewed them all in the person of his co-equal Son, who was to be incarnate, and as he considered them all as created on purpose to illustrate and increase his glorious praise.

VERSE 6th. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.*

These words, which follow the solemn preface in which the Lord God proclaims his absolute sovereignty over the whole creation, visible and invisible—which whilst it gives full proof of his eternal power and Godhead, yet, when compared to his immensity, is less than

nothing and vanity—are an address of the Father to the Son. Jehovah the Father speaks to Jehovah the Son, as invested with and sustaining the office and character of Mediator; and the words are a record and memorial of their covenant transactions, and the great and grand manifesto thereof. So that the foregoing preface, which is introductory to them, calls for, and requires our utmost confidence in the eternal covenant acts and transactions of the coessential Three; and was also designed by the eternal Father, as a ground of confidence, given by way of promise to the Mediator himself, that he should be upheld when the sins of all the elect should meet on him: when the curses of the broken law should be inflicted on him, when the furies of death and hell should surround him, he would then need all the support promised, and the Father would not fail to stand by and defend him, and bring him off victorious. *Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and stretched them out; he that stretched forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein—I the Lord have called thee in righteousness—to work out, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness:—to bear the iniquities of my people:—to sustain the utmost weight of*

my wrath, due to the transgressions of mine elect. *And I will hold thine hand and will keep thee*, when all my vengeance due to sin shall break forth and be executed on thee, *and will give thee for a covenant to my people.*

In thee I will shine forth on my church, in all the meridian splendour of my love. I will bestow thee, my coequal and coessential Son, on my people, as the greatest expression of my love to them. I will give thee to become man, that thou mayest fulfil all my will, expressed and notified in those covenant acts which have been counselled and consented unto between us. Thou shalt be as their covenant head, and fulfiller of every part of the covenant transactions on their behalf, their purifier. I will give thee, with all the blessings of my love, and with all the benefits of thy free, full, complete, and eternal Salvation, to elect Jews and Gentiles, to be a light—teacher—guide—and Saviour to them. Thus the grace of the covenant is opened, and the office of Christ set forth; which are further enlarged in the following words :

VERSE 7th. *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*

As the great work which this divine Mediator was to perform in our nature, and in our world,

was expressed by Jehovah the Father, *in giving him to be a covenant for the people*, who by his obedience was to magnify the broken law—and he, by being made sin and curse, was hereby to remove all the sins of his people out of the sight of law and justice, and from before the Lord for ever—so what he was to do in the souls of his people, whom he was to redeem by his most precious blood-shedding, is here most fully expressed and described. He was to open the eyes of the mind, which were shut by sin, and fast closed through it, ever since the fall of the first man. He was to bring sinners, who were born dead to God, and blind to spiritual things, who were in the prison house, under the power of sin, and the devil, fast bound and fettered with the guilt, pollution, influence and strength of their sins and personal crimes, out of prison: such of them too as were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, out of the prison house. This was to be, and this is, the glorious work of our incarnate God Jesus! His ability to perform it; his love in executing it; his mercy displayed on such wretched objects; his power put forth in their souls, to produce these wonderful effects, will perpetuate his name and praise throughout all time, yea, even in and to the ages of eternity.

Thus we may clearly see, all that was to be

done for us, and all that was to be wrought in us, spring from the grace of the everlasting covenant, from the free favour of the three in Jehovah, and was engaged to be performed for us and produced in us by the glorious surety of this everlasting covenant, Christ Jesus.

The Father having thus set his coequal Son before us ; with his love of him, delight in him, his call of him, his divine covenant transactions and covenant engagements with him ; with an account of fitting and furnishing him with the gift of the Holy Ghost, to fill this divine Mediator with grace, that he might perform the glorious work of mediation, to the everlasting honour of Him who sent him ; closes with a solemn declaration of his immense and incomprehensible essence, and which is done to set the crown of crowns on the head of Jesus the ever blessed Messiah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the alone Mediator.

VERSE 8th. *I am the Lord; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*

The word *Lord* or *Jehovah*, is expressive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It is declarative of the self-existence, immensity, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of God, which exceed, and will for ever

exceed, the utmost conception of all his intellectual creatures.

The whole universe, with all contained in it, is but as the drop of a bucket to the boundless ocean, or as a single grain of sand to the whole creation of God. Yea, less—ininitely less than this idea can possibly convey to our minds, when all in the whole, and throughout the whole universe, is viewed by Jehovah, as compared with his own being, life, self-existence, blessedness, perfections and infinity. He, as Jehovah, claims in the scripture before us, the entire right, rule, and sovereignty, over all the whole empire of created nature, as his own incommunicable prerogative. He informs us that he delighteth in mercy; that he hath raised up a glorious Mediator, beloved, called, chosen, and qualified by him to his work and office, and declares him worthy to wear the crown and sole royalty due to him in his office-character and capacity: He being one essentially in the unity of the self-existing Essence with himself and Spirit. *I am Jehovah*, says the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another*. None shall sustain the office of being the head of the whole election of grace; of manifesting forth all my love to them; of being the foundation, centre, corner-

stone, beauty and lustre of the whole creation ; of being the medium of union and communion between me and mine elect ; of being the mediator of reconciliation ; of wearing the honour and glory of being the saviour of sinners, the conqueror of sin, Satan, the world, death and hell—but the God-man, who is my fellow—He and he alone shall wear the glory of the mediatory office. *My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*

May the Lord the Spirit raise in our minds the most exalted ideas and conceptions of the person, work, office, mediation, love, mercy and fulness of the God-man Christ Jesus, as he is the Father's *All*. O that he may be our *All*. As God had him in view when he made the world, may our views of him raise up our hearts and affections above the world. Amen. Even so be it, O Lord. Amen and Amen.

A
COMMENT
ON THE
TWENTY-THIRD PSALM:
A PSALM OF DAVID.

THIS Psalm was written by David, under the light, and by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. And David in the spirit is speaking of Jesus, under the character of the shepherd of God's flock. David was a type of Christ. The name David, signifies beloved. Christ is God's beloved, his well beloved, his dearly beloved. *This*, says the Father, *is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* David was a shepherd, and so is Christ; David kept his father's flocks, Christ keeps his father's sheep. David delivered the lamb out of the paw of the lion, and slew both the lion and the bear; and Christ delivers his dear people, the lambs and sheep of his flock, out of the hands of law and justice—of death and hell. And it is worthy of notice,

that this Psalm follows the twenty-second, in which the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus Christ have been most wonderfully set forth. What the blessed Shepherd went through, when he bore the sins of many in his own body on the tree, from the law and justice of his Father; how his soul suffered the curse of God due to the sins of his people; and what he suffered in his body, the insults and contradiction of sinners against himself; and how he went through it all victoriously, and came off an everlasting, and an eternal conqueror, are most exactly described in the foregoing Psalm. In it, indeed, Christ is evidently set forth as crucified. Now in the twenty-third Psalm follows an account of this divine Jesus, under the character, title, and office of a Shepherd.

VERSE 1st. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

That divine Person who had been represented in the foregoing Psalm, as having his hands and feet pierced, and as dying for his sheep, in order that he might deliver them from dying eternally, is here called by David, a shepherd. *The Lord is my shepherd.* This character and office Jesus Christ bears in the sacred Scriptures. Old Jacob speaks of the Messiah, under this character, in Gen. xlix. 24. *From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.* Moses was a type

of Christ as a shepherd. Hence it is asked in Isa. lxiii. 11. *Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock?* Let us therefore consider Christ as sustaining the character of a shepherd; and secondly, consider his exercising his pastoral office. And it may be observed, that the spouse in the Canticles addresses Christ under this character, *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest;* and the church, in the 80th Psalm, *Give ear, O shepherd of Israel.* Christ is in the first place, God's shepherd. The Eternal Father has appointed him, and chosen, and set him apart to this office. He has committed all his sheep to the care and charge of Christ. And he received this commandment from the Father, that of all which he had given him, he should lose none. He is called God's shepherd in the 13th of Zechariah: *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd!* He is called in the 34th of Ezekiel, *one shepherd;* *I will* (saith God the Father) *set up one shepherd over them.* He is called by the apostle Paul, *The great Shepherd of the sheep.* He is indeed *the great shepherd*, he being God's shepherd, God's equal. And all the under-shepherds are entirely set up by him, supported and maintained by him; and whatever bowels of mercies they have, and do exercise towards the Lord's flock, they receive all those bowels of

love and tenderness from Christ himself. He is great in the eye of God, being his coequal and coeternal Son. He is great, being God-man, as having every blessing to bestow upon his people. His love towards them, his compassion and care concerning them, are great indeed, and it greatly endears him to his beloved ones. He is likewise the *good shepherd*. He describes himself in this manner, *I am the good shepherd*. His goodness appears, in his drawing near unto his divine Father, in the everlasting covenant, on the behalf of his people—in his engaging to become their surety—to pay their debts—to obey the law—to bear their sins—to endure their curse—to die the death due to their transgressions—to conquer for them all their enemies—to obtain for them eternal redemption—and to keep, feed, rule, govern, and bring them all home to eternal glory, saying unto his Father, *Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me*.

As Christ is a shepherd, so he has all the properties and qualifications of a *great and good* one. He is described by the prophet Isaiah in the following manner: *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd*. His heart is set upon his sheep. He loves them with an everlasting love. His eye is ever upon them. He knows them all, and calls them all by their names, for they are

all written by name in the Lamb's book of life. He knows them to be his own, by his Father's gift, and by his own purchase; for he bought the flock, and redeemed them out of the hands of law and justice with the price of his own blood. He knows all the cases of his flock, administers unto them according to their cases and necessities. His people are compared to sheep, a sheep being a silly creature, very apt to wander from the fold, and quite incapable of finding its way back, when strayed from the fold. Christ the heavenly shepherd came down from heaven, and travelled upon this mountain of our world, in order to seek, and save that which was lost. He finds his sheep wandering from the fold of God, and he takes them up upon his shoulders rejoicing; and having brought them home, he calls together his friends, the angels, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep which was lost. He finds them defiled and polluted with sin, and he washes them from their sins in his own blood. He finds them void of all righteousness, and he spreads the garment of his own righteousness over them, and covers them, and says, I am your near kinsman. And he feeds them with his own flesh and with his own blood, and says, *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* He sets his own mark upon

them, and calls them effectually by his grace, out of darkness into his marvellous light. And they, through his divine love and grace, follow him as their shepherd and leader. Here we may observe, that Christ has all the properties of a *great* and *good* shepherd. The sheep require the shepherd's constant care: The Lord Jesus makes his people his constant care: He takes an infinite delight in exercising the love of his heart, and the bowels of his mercy, towards them. They stand in need of food: Christ constantly supplies his people with spiritual food convenient for them. Their cases require particular consideration: Christ takes particular notice of all the flock, of the lambs as well as of the sheep. *He feeds his flock like a shepherd.* Are any of them lost? Christ goes to seek them. Are any of them driven out of the way, or from the way, the right way? *he brings again that which was driven away.* Are any of them broken in heart, afflicted in their consciences? Christ *binds up that which was broken.* Are any of them sick, under spiritual decays and infirmities? Christ will administer his word unto them, *and will strengthen them.* See Ezek. xxxiv. 16. And as he has lambs in his flock as well as sheep, so he will carry himself with infinite pity and tenderness towards them. They being weak and strengthless, he

will take them up, and carry them in his bosom, so that they shall be near his heart. He will cherish, refresh, and warm them with his heart's love. His arms shall embrace them. His bosom shall be opened for them to lean upon. His heart's love shall be manifested unto them; and as one whom his mother comforteth, so will this divine Shepherd comfort the lambs of his flock. Indeed his love towards them is as great as it is towards the strong. They are near his heart. His soul rejoiceth in them, and he will never leave them nor forsake them. David says, *the Lord is my shepherd*. I am one of his sheep. He loved me, and gave himself for me. He has taken my nature into union with his person, and he has fulfilled all righteousness in his life, and put away the sins of his people by his death. And by his Holy Spirit he has brought me to know him, to believe on him, to love him, and to look to him for every thing. I put myself, by faith, under him for protection. And this, says David, is the inference I draw from the Lord's being my shepherd, *I shall not want*. This is a just conclusion. And here we see the blessedness of a knowledge of Christ, taught us by the word and Spirit of God. The true knowledge of Christ leads us to rest upon him. By faith, the believer looks to the person of Christ for acceptance; for we are accepted

in the beloved. He rests upon the everlasting righteousness of Jesus for justification. He depends upon the bloodshedding, sacrifice, and death of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of his sin, and for his discharge from guilt and condemnation. And he lives upon Christ, for life and light, for grace and holiness, and for every thing. The Lord being my shepherd, I shall not want comfort in life, strength equal to my day, victory over my spiritual enemies, support in the hour of death, nor any manner of thing which is good. And here observe, David derives all his confidence from, and grounds all his hope and expectation on this consideration,—that the Lord was his shepherd. Faith looks to the Lord; depends upon his word, relies upon his faithfulness, and expects all, because God himself has promised it. And what he has promised in the word, faith knows he is able and faithful to perform. And faith sees in the word, a blessed provision made for the supply of all wants in time and eternity.

VERSE 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

Here follows an account of Christ, as exercising his blessed pastoral care and office towards the sheep of his pasture. He not only died for his sheep, and calls them in a day of grace, by his almighty voice, out of the

grave of sin ; but, blessings on him ! he maketh them to lie down in green pastures. His holy word, which, upon the account of the cordials of love and promises of grace contained in it, may well be compared to green pastures—the Lord Christ opens it unto his dear people. He refreshes their souls with the declarations and promises of his grace ; warms their hearts with the discoveries of his love revealed in his word ; and sweetly and powerfully influences their affections with the blessed effect of his word and promises. And this blessed Shepherd maketh them to lie down in green pastures. He feeds their souls with his word—strengthens the inward man herewith—gives them soul-satisfaction from it—and gives them to enjoy blessed rest in their hearts, and blessed spiritual rest in their lives, from what the word reveals unto them of the love and mercy of their beloved Jesus towards them. Their lying down in these green pastures, shows their safety, happiness, and protection, under this good Shepherd. As for their safety, their Shepherd is always with them ; as for their being fed, ruled, and well governed, the Lord Jesus stands to support them, and he feeds in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Micah v. 4. As for their provision, it is most excellent : Jesus is every

moment affording them fresh supplies of grace; they have large, yea, they have abundant supplies from him: and the pastures of his word are always green; always affording proper, nourishing, strengthening, refreshing food unto them. The shepherd leads the flock; so does Christ: he goes before them, and they follow him. The shepherd seeks out the most proper pastures and food for the sheep; so does Christ. The shepherd makes it his business to screen and defend the sheep from harm; so does Christ. He leadeth me (says David) beside the still waters. Jesus makes his people to drink of the water of the fountain of life; and he gives them to drink at this fountain freely. God's love may be compared to water; 1st, Because as water comes from a spring or fountain, so all the goodness which God bestows upon his people, flows from the spring and fountain of his own heart. 2dly, As water refreshes the body, so does the love of Christ refresh the soul. And, 3dly, God's love and grace in Jesus Christ may be represented here by the still waters, to shew how souls, under views and discoveries of them, are filled with holy wonder and admiration, too big for their hearts to utter, or their tongues to express. And the Lord our shepherd leads his people to the still waters of his Father's everlasting love, and leads them to take

fresh views of it; leads them to it for their refreshment, and leads them more and more into the enjoyment of it:—and not only the love of God, but the covenant of God's grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure; the blessings of which, and the promises of it, are as a green pasture to the Lord's flock. That promise of God to his people, Ezek. xxxiv. 14. *I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel*, he does, blessed be his name, make good unto them.

VERSE 3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

David goes on to speak of the goodness of his divine Shepherd unto him. When, says he, that my soul is cold and dead in the good ways of God; when at any time, through the corruption of my nature, the deceitfulness of sin, the malice of the Devil, I backslide in heart and affection from the living God, my heavenly Shepherd, blessed be his name, by his all-powerful grace, he restoreth my soul from the paths of sin and error; he brings me back again unto his heavenly fold; he pardons my sins; he heals my backsliding; he receives me graciously, and loves me freely. I find my heavenly Shepherd's care in a particular manner exer-

cised towards me, in looking upon me, in drawing me from my sinful purposes and sinful ways, by his grace. And when I have lost a lively sense of his love, I find him again graciously returning, and manifesting his love, and affording his gracious presence unto me: my cold heart he warms; my hard heart he softens; my strong corruptions he subdues; my actual sins he pardons; my poor soul he prevents with his mercy. He restoreth my soul, and having restored it, by regenerating and recovering grace, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. His paths are righteous. All his ways towards me are mercy and truth. He does me good, and nothing but good. What ever he exercises me with, is for my real good; he designs my benefit in all. I will expect all things to be working together for my good, and this because he has said it. His fatherly correction and chastisement is to make me a partaker of his holiness. My afflictions are designed by him to prevent my sinning against him; to put me in mind of my dependance upon him; to lead me more to him. O most gracious design! The paths of righteousness in which Christ leads his people, are, first, the path of soul justification before God, which is by means of his own most perfect and spotless righteousness. No other righteousness will God

the Father look at, and justify a sinner in. And the Lord Christ leads his people by his word and by his spirit to the knowledge of this righteousness; to a cordial embracing and rejoicing in this righteousness; to a resting and relying on it; to a confidence in it; to a triumphing in it, saying, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness. He leads the soul to walk before God, as clothed in this robe; to appear in God's presence, and at God's throne of grace, in this robe of our elder brother's righteousness. By faith in this most blessed righteousness, the soul is justified from all things, made perfectly righteous in the sight of God, is entitled to heaven and eternal glory; and being brought to enjoy a sense of its justification, is led by the heavenly Shepherd to walk in Christ as the way to the Father, and to walk in the paths of righteousness in his life and conversation, that he may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. And Christ does all this for his people, for his name's sake. Not for our sakes, but for his own name's sake. This should be considered by us. Christ pardons our sins, casts them behind his back into the bottom of the sea; clothes us with everlasting righteousness; makes us glad with the light of his countenance; leads us by his spirit; prevents us with his mercy. And all for his own name's sake. *To the praise of the glory*

of his grace. And therefore let us learn the following instructions herefrom. Whatever we want, and ask for in prayer, let us plead his great name, as the reason of imploring and importuning the Lord Jesus to grant our petitions and hear our prayers.

VERSE 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Such is the goodness of Jesus Christ towards his dear sheep, the people whom he loves, that the more they are enabled to meditate and consider what he is to them, and what he has done for them, the more they are encouraged to trust in him, and to depend upon him. The Psalmist in faith says, Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Die I must; But (says faith) I do not fear to die, because Jesus Christ has disarmed death of its sting. I look, says faith, at death, as conquered by the Almighty Jesus. And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Why? what is the reason David, why you will fear no evil? The reason, says David, is, because Thou art with me. God is with me, God will be with me. The everlasting arms of Jesus are, and will be underneath me. And how can I fear, Christ himself

being with me? He will support me, and carry me safely through death, and land me safe on Canaan's land, and make me a pillar in the temple of God above, and cause me to go no more out. But how do you know, David, that God will be with you at that time? I know he will, because he has promised it. He has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death. And after death, he will be the everlasting portion of his people, and their exceeding great reward. What is contained in these words, Thou art with me? Surely infinite and unutterable grace. To have God himself to be with us! to enjoy his presence! to taste his love! to be happy in him! O what rich grace is here! And not only art thou, O Jesus, my divine Shepherd, with me, to lead, guide, defend and protect me, but, blessed be thy name! thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Here we must inquire, what is meant by the rod and staff? By the rod and staff, we are to understand the gospel of God's free grace. In the 110th Psalm, you have Jesus Christ seated by his Father upon his mediatorial throne; and the Father says unto him, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. And he goes on to promise him a glorious ingathering of souls: "the Lord shall send the rod

of thy strength out of Zion.” What is the rod of the Redeemer’s strength? It is the everlasting gospel, which was sent forth out of Zion; it was published there by the apostles, and from thence carried by them into all the world: and this gospel being accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, multitudes were hereby brought to believe on the Lord Jesus. “Rule thou (says the Father unto Christ) in the midst of thine enemies.” By means of the gospel, Christ gets himself the victory in many hearts: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” The gospel affords blessed supports to the people of God. It contains a salve for every sore. Here is cleansing for the filthy, pardon for the guilty, a robe for the naked, a Saviour for the lost. Christ, as revealed in the gospel, has every blessing and benefit to bestow upon his dear people. The truths of the gospel, the grace, love, and mercy revealed in the gospel, the promises of the gospel, are a blessed rod of strength to support us: and the promises may well be compared to a staff, and are able to bear us up at all times. From hence the believer is comforted; from hence he fetches his honey; and he finds the promises sweeter to his spiritual taste, than the honey or the honey-comb. I find comfort from them, says David, and am divinely supported by them. The mysteries of

the gospel transport me into holy wonder. The love of Christ in the gospel meets my heart and draws my soul. I find in Jesus every grace and blessing. And, blessed be his name! neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. This is my joy in life, and my antidote in death.

VERSE 5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest mine head with oil, my cup runneth over.

The Lord Jesus prepareth a table, and sets upon it the dainties of heaven, for the food and refreshment of his dear people. He gives them to feed upon himself, the bread of everlasting life; and says, He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. And the preparation, the table-food, the entertainment, are all from himself; it is all the bounty of his own grace. And he does this in the presence of their enemies. Let sin, the Devil, and the world, hate God's people with an implacable hatred, and strive against them with all their might, yet the table of divine ordinances shall be spread; the provisions of God's house shall be administered, and God's people shall be refreshed with it, even in the presence of their enemies. Here we may see the never-failing goodness of the Lord to his chosen ones; here we may see the defence and

protection Christ affords his sheep; here we may behold their security from their enemies. Thou anointest mine head with oil. The high priest was anointed with holy oil; and it being poured upon his head, ran down upon his beard, unto the skirts of his clothing. And this was typical of Christ, who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and from whom the grace and unction of the Holy Ghost descend, and flow down upon all his mystic members; they are all anointed with it; they all partake of it; they are all refreshed by it. And as under the law ointments and perfumes were made use of; and they (says Solomon) rejoice the heart; so the grace of Christ, and the unction and anointings of the Spirit of Christ, refresh and exhilarate the souls of God's people. Under these tokens of divine favour, they are led to say, My cup runneth over. The hearts of the Lord's dear people are sometimes quite overcome, under the sensible tokens, and in the enjoyment of divine love. And when they survey the experience they have had of their heavenly Shepherd's care towards them, both in providence and grace, they must be astonished at his goodness, and, their hearts being overcome with wonder, love, and gratitude, they will praise him with joyful lips.

VERSE 6th. Surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

This is the conclusion I am led to make. Having taken a view of Christ as my shepherd; and having considered his divine care and conduct towards me, how he has fed, clothed, cleansed, comforted, and defended me hitherto; I draw this from all his past dealings with me, and from his holy word of promise, that, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. I am persuaded that his arm will defend me, his providence protect me, his love and mercy will constantly embrace me and follow me all the days of my life. I not only have had his goodness in providence and grace follow me to the present moment, but, I shall have it follow me every future moment. Here is my comfort. This is my stay. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. I will resort to the house of the Lord below, to pray unto him, and to praise and magnify him for what he has done for me. And when this life is ended, when death has done its office, and untied the knot of union between body and soul, I shall dwell in the house of God above for ever, there to behold my Jesus face to face, there to see my beloved in all his glory, and to be led by him to the fountain of living

waters, and God will then wipe away all tears from mine eyes. What a blessed shepherd! How happy must the sheep of his pasture be! May our faith be daily strengthened, and our love to Jesus be daily increased. Amen.

A

SHORT PARAPHRASE

ON THE

FOUR FIRST VERSES

OF

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE
SONG OF SOLOMON.

VERSE 1. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

The subject-matter of this divine song is Jesus Christ, and his transcendent love towards his spouse the church. The Lord Jesus is here described and set forth in his beauties and excellencies, in order to draw the heart and affections of his spouse after him. The Holy Ghost is the glorifier of Jesus, and when he undertakes to set forth the glories of Immanuel, he ransacks heaven and earth for images, in order to pourtray this illustrious fair one. Sometimes he compares him to the sun, which is the cause of all light, and heat, and warmth. What the sun is in the natural, that Christ is in the spiritual world. He is the light of everlasting life !

the sun of everlasting righteousness ! When he shines upon the souls of his people, the eyes of their understandings are enlightened, and in his light they see light ; they see themselves lost and undone by nature and by practice ; and by his light they see their need of him and his great salvation. Sometimes the Lord Jesus is styled the bright and morning star, which is the harbinger of day. Christ, the bright and morning star, when he arises in the heart, is the harbinger of an everlasting day of grace and glory, which will know no setting sun ; for wheresoever, and upon whomsoever Christ arises and shines, such will be brought to enjoy, not only his most blessed influences of grace upon their hearts here on earth, but they will also be brought to enjoy his blessed presence in eternal glory. Sometimes he is compared to a lion, and called the Lion of the tribe of Judah ! to denote his Almighty strength to save his people, and to conquer his and their enemies. And here he is compared to the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. Indeed Jesus Christ is the perfection of beauties : as God, he has all the perfections of Heaven ; and as man, he has all the beauties of earth, meeting and centering in him. Whatever is beautiful or desirable in heaven or earth, borrows its ray of beauty from Jesus Christ. And therefore the Holy Ghost is

pleased to compare Jesus, and set him forth in a way of comparison with other things, that we may see how infinitely he exceeds them all; that, looking upon these things in nature, we might be led to meditate upon him who is the creator of all excellencies. Jesus Christ may be compared to the rose of Sharon, for the following reasons: 1st, The rose is a beautiful flower; and Christ is the perfection of beauty. The rose has a fragrancy in it, and it may serve to put us in mind of the fragrancy and sweet smelling savour of Christ's sacrifice, which scented all heaven with its divine perfume and odour refreshed the heart of God the Father, gave perfect content to divine justice, and renders the prayers and praises of the saints acceptable before the throne. 2dly, The red colour of the rose may put us in remembrance of the Redeemer, who dyed all his garments in blood! who sweat great drops of blood for us in the garden of Gethsemane! and shed his heart's blood for us men, and for our salvation, on the tree! when he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. 3dly, When the rose is dead, yet even then it yields a sweet smell. And the death of Christ yields a sweet smell and blessed refreshment to the saints. If we respect the white rose, it may put us in mind of Christ, who is white and

ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. Christ, in his person God-man, in his work of saving sinners, and in his offices of prophet, priest, and king, is altogether glorious, excellent, and exceedingly precious unto his people. Christ is most undoubtedly compared to the rose of Sharon, as that was the place where the finest roses grew; for it is always the most excellent things in nature that Christ is set forth by. Again he is styled the lily of the valleys. The unspotted whiteness of the lily may point out the immaculate purity of Christ's human nature. He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead. As man, he descended from Jesse's withered stock, and he was David's son, and yet David's Lord. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. Blessings on him! he undertook before all worlds, in the covenant of grace, to become true and very man, and that in order to accomplish the salvation of his people, in his holy life, and by his expiatory death. He that was God over all, blessed for ever, amen; was pleased to assume our nature into a personal union with his divine person, and he is God and man in the person of one Christ. And as God-man mediator, he is the glory of Paradise! the song of angels! the joy of all his redeemed

people in earth and heaven. He is fairer than the sons of men. His lips are full of grace and truth. In him are everlasting life and blessedness, the whole fulness of grace and glory.

The Lord Jesus has been thus speaking of himself, in order to draw out the heart of his spouse, and fix her affections on himself.

VERSE 2d. Here follows a description of the church, what she is in the eye of Christ, and what her present condition is. And first, let us observe what Christ calls her, and next what he compares her to. The Lord calls her 'my love.' The Church is Christ's love. He loved his people from the days of eternity. The eternal Father loved the elect with an everlasting love; his love was fixed upon them, that is, upon their persons, before all worlds. He chose them in Christ before the world began. He sat up Christ his eternal Son, to be their head, and he chose them in Christ, as members in him; and he blessed them in Christ with all spiritual blessings. The Lord Jesus accepted them as the gift of his Father. Thine they were, says Christ, and thou gavest them me. And Jesus undertook to redeem them out of the hands of law and justice. So that the church appears to be Christ's love, and to be dearly beloved by him, in that he loved her from everlasting, and undertook her cause, and became her surety in

the counsel and covenant of the Trinity ; and in that he has been graciously pleased to redeem her by his own blood. The church is the object of Christ's love. He loves her, as his Father's gift to him ; he loves her as his bride and spouse ; he loves her, as he sees her comely, through his comeliness put upon her. She is in his eye as a lily ; fair and comely, beautiful and delightful, as she is one with him united to his person, clothed with his righteousness, washed in his blood, and adorned with the graces of his blessed Spirit. Let us observe, that Christ compares her to a lily ; and it is wonderful to consider, that what Christ is compared unto himself, to the same he compares his church. For the church and Christ are eternally united together, and he puts his own name on her, and adorns her with his own righteousness and graces. Is he called Jehovah our righteousness ? So is the Church ! This is the name wherewith she shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness*. Jerem. xxxiii. 16. Is he called God's beloved Son ? so are the saints called Sons. Is he called an heir, the heir of all things ? the saints are said to be heirs of God, and coheirs with Jesus Christ. And Christ calls his church, *My love*, intimating his propriety in her. For the church is Christ's : 1st, By the Father's gift ; he gave the elect unto Christ before all worlds. 2dly,

They are his by purchase. 3dly, They are his by conquest, he makes them willing in the day of his power. 4thly, They are his by their voluntary surrendering themselves to be the Lord's, this being in a day of grace their language, Come let us join ourselves unto the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. But though Christ compares his church to a lily, yet he describes her present condition as that of a lily among thorns. This points out the enemies of the church and people of God. Every believer has the world, the flesh, and the devil, continually fighting against him; he has a body of sin in him, striving to oppose him; and the more they are opposed, the more they strive for victory. The more the believer is enlightened by Christ, the more he feels his wretched nature; and the more the believer feels what he is as a fallen creature, and the more he knows of the malice and power of his spiritual enemies, the more he sees his need of looking unto Christ for support. And, blessed be the Lord, his church and people, though they are as a lily among thorns, yet are they safely protected and defended. For the Lord of Hosts is as a wall of fire round about them, and he is their glory in the midst of them. Though they are despised by the world, yet they are precious unto Christ. And though

they are in an enemy's country, and are in themselves entirely sinful, fallen, and corrupt, yet they are lilies in Christ's eye; for he has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood. He beholds them righteous in his own most perfect righteousness; he views them pure and spotless, as they are washed in his most precious blood; and he delights in them with his whole heart, and rejoices over them to do them good.

VERSE 3d. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. The spouse, or the church of Christ, in this verse breaks forth into a commendation of her Beloved, and as he had compared her to a lily, so she begins to compare him to the apple-tree; which has the preeminence among the trees of the wood, inasmuch as it yields both food to feast and refresh, and a shadow to delight and recreate and solace persons. The Lord Jesus is compared to a tree, to show how deeply rooted he is in self-existence. He is God over all, blessed for ever. Jehovah! the most high over all the earth. He is the tree of life. All life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, comes from him. He is the living God, who gives us life, and breath, and all things. It is in him, that we

live, and move, and have our being. He is the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; from whom the saints in heaven and earth receive their strength and support. And he bears, for the use of his church and people, the apples of everlasting righteousness, pardon, peace, acceptance, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, comfort, and eternal happiness. What blessed fruits are these! The righteousness of Jesus! what a blessed fruit of his holy life! in it his dear people are made perfectly, eternally, and invariably righteous. The bloodshedding of Jesus! what blessed fruits of peace with God flow into a believer's conscience from it! In the blood of the Lamb, and by faith in the bleeding Lamb, we see all our sins pardoned, God's justice satisfied, and a way of intercourse opened into the holiest of all, and we may by faith boldly enter within the vail to a reconciled God and Father. Christ the tree of life is said to bear twelve manner of fruits, to show the fulness of his salvation, and the abundant blessings and benefits which Christ bestows upon his people. And he yields his fruit once a month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Which denotes his ready and ever gracious communicating of himself to the souls of his people; and that every application unto

Christ, and every fresh application of Christ to the souls of his people, serve to revive, refresh, quicken, heal and strengthen their souls. The church says, As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. Christ is the church's beloved, her well-beloved, her chiefest beloved. Whatever Christ is to others, he is, says faith, *My beloved!* the joy of my heart, the portion of my soul, the delight of my mind, the object of my hope, the foundation of my faith, the foundation of my everlasting life, and consolation. Christ is the beloved of his people, as we consider his person, God and man, united in one Christ. He is the church's beloved, as we consider him in his work and offices; in his work of obedience, and in his work of suffering; in his offices of prophet, priest, and king, he is the beloved of his people. And he is my beloved. This is the language of faith. It sees what Christ is, and has done; it relies on his obedience and death; it lives upon Christ for all, and is enabled to call Jesus *My Lord*, by the Holy Ghost. Christ dwells in the hearts of believers by faith, and they dwell in him. Believers are one with Christ, and Christ is one with them. They share in all Christ's conquests and victories over sin and Satan, death and hell. They are interested in all that Christ has done, and in all that he is doing within the veil. And

they are happy when they consider what Christ is unto them, and what they are in him. He is made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. They are complete in him, are engraven on his heart; a people near unto him, and those in whom is all his delight. We can have no happiness until Christ is our beloved; it is an evidence of the truth of grace, if Christ is precious to our souls. Unto them that believe, he is precious; the chiefest among ten thousand, yea, altogether lovely. One of old said, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. Another, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him. And the language of the dying martyr is still the language of believers, None but Christ, none but Christ. When we are enabled to look upon Christ as ours, and to call him my beloved, then we are led to rejoice in him as Jehovah our righteousness; as our atoning sacrifice; as our great high priest, advocate, and intercessor. We see his fulness to be our own, to supply our wants; his riches to be ours, to make us rich to eternal ages; his Father, to be our Father in him; his Spirit, to be

our guide and comforter; and his heaven, to be ours to receive us; yea, himself, with all his benefits and blessings, to be our own. And it causes the soul to triumph indeed, when enabled by the Holy Ghost to say, My beloved is mine, and I am his.

The spouse goes on further in her account of Jesus, and of the blessed benefit and refreshment she found in him. I sat down, says she, under his shadow with great delight. The Lord Jesus is a blessed shadow, to shelter and screen his people from the scorching flames of God's wrath. Christ is as a screen between his Father's wrath and his dear people. He is a shadow of refreshment, and a shadow of protection unto them. Under his shadow they are safe, safely protected, and safely guarded and defended from every foe. Again, the spouse sat down under Christ's shadow. Sitting is a position of ease, and shows how she received ease and rest from Christ. Resting upon him, she found peace of conscience, and peace with God. Sitting under his shadow, she saw herself completely saved, pardoned, justified, and secured. And here with unspeakable delight she could look over the blessedness of her state in Christ. I sat down to take my ease, to refresh my heart, and solace my soul, in the labours and victories, in the graces and beauties, in the honours and

riches, of my Beloved ; and it afforded me great delight. My heart was warmed, my conscience was satisfied, my affections were inflamed with love to my beloved Jesus, while I was meditating upon his precious love and precious salvation. I took great delight herein. Observe, the believer takes great delight in Jesus Christ. The heart is delighted with the views and discoveries which Christ is pleased to make of himself to the believer, in his word, in his ordinances, and in his promises. The spouse sat down under the shadow of Christ, for rest and refreshment, and here she found great, yea, unspeakable delight. Viewing the blessings and benefits, the glorious fruits which grew upon this apple-tree, this tree of life, she put forth the hands of faith, and partook of the fruit, and found it sweet to her taste. Here it may be observed, that this tree of life is accessible. We may approach it without fear, and take of the fruit of it without danger. Whoever eats of it, will never die eternally. If you inquire after the fruit, what it is, and what is its virtue? the answer is, the fruit is, pardon of sin through the blood of the Lamb, peace with God by faith in Jesus, the robe of salvation to adorn the soul, and grace to help in time of need.—If you ask, what are its virtues? its virtues are wonderful! Sinners are hereby brought to

know, feel, and experience, that God has freely forgiven them all trespasses; that he has blotted out their transgressions; that God's law is magnified and made honourable by Immanuel's obedience—God's justice satisfied by Immanuel's atonement; and that God rests in his love towards them; that he has accepted them in the beloved; that he views them in Christ with infinite delight; that he loves them with the same love he does Christ himself; that they are in Christ complete, and that in blessing, God will bless them with all spiritual blessings. They are brought to partake and enjoy by faith, that peace which surpasseth all understanding. They partake of joy in the Holy Ghost, and have a blessed foretaste of eternal glory. The virtue of this fruit is such, that it makes the soul happy in God, and holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. The spouse had a relish, a blessed appetite, to feed on this fruit. She found her soul nourished thereby, and from her own experience could say, His fruit was and is sweet to my taste. Here it may be observed, what an experimental thing faith in Christ is. It is a living principle, wrought in the heart by the word and spirit of God; drawn out into act by the power of the Holy Ghost. Faith looks to, and lives upon Christ, and his fulness; and the

believer has fellowship with Christ, in his salvation, graces, and benefits.

VERSE 4th. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

The spouse goes on to give an account of the Lord's gracious dealings towards her. And here we may inquire, 1st. What is to be understood by the banqueting house? By the banqueting house, we are to understand the church where the Lord commands his blessing, even life for evermore. In the assemblies of the saints, Christ is pleased to manifest himself. Here he causes his people to rejoice, by making his goodness and his glory to pass before them. This, says Christ, speaking of his church, shall be my rest for ever; here will I stay, for I do like it well. It may be called a banqueting house, because of the blessed entertainment the people of God are here entertained with. Indeed, the Lord of Hosts makes a feast for his people, and it consists of the richest dainties that Heaven itself can furnish out and bestow. This feast, or banquet, is the fruit and effect of God's everlasting love. In and upon the table of divine ordinances, the eternal Father is pleased to set before us, the fatted calf—the slain Lamb—slain by the sword of vindictive justice, and roasted in the flames of divine wrath, that he might become food for immortal souls

to feed upon. Here God the Father appears to his people all in flames of love. Here God the Son shines forth in his mediatorial glory, and is set forth as the true paschal lamb, which was sacrificed for us. Here is Christ the bread of life, to strengthen our hearts. Here is the wine of consolation to refresh our spirits. This wine is a perfect cordial, we need not be afraid of intemperance here; this is the wine which refreshes the heart of God and man. And here, in and at this banquet, we may well remember Christ's love more than wine; God the eternal Spirit encourages believers to make use of this blessed provision. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved. The effects of feeding upon Christ in our hearts by faith are wonderful. Hereby our faith is strengthened, our hope confirmed, our love to Christ inflamed. By faith, we follow Christ, to partake of his spoils; by faith, we tread down and trample upon our spiritual enemies; by faith in Jesus, we go on from conquering unto conquer; for this is the victory that overcometh the world, flesh, and the devil, even our faith. It may be called a banqueting house, because here God unbosoms himself unto his dear people. They here enjoy fellowship and communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Believers enjoy fellowship with God the Father' in all the blessings of his love; they enjoy fellowship with the Son, in all the blessings of his finished salvation; and they enjoy fellowship with the Holy and blessed Spirit, in his gifts and graces, and can say at times, truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 2dly, Observe, the spouse says, that Christ brought her to the banqueting house. This was an act of sovereign grace; an act of free unmerited favour; and as such, she acknowledged it. Her beloved drew her heart by the cords of his love, indulged her with his heavenly and blessed presence, and brought her into his banqueting house, and there entertained her with most intimate and blessed fellowship with himself. His banner over me, says she, was love. The use of banners is to gather persons together. Christ is the Shiloh, and to him shall the gathering of the people be: and those that are gathered unto him, shall be safely defended, protected, and secured. Christ is a banner of defence to his people. He defends them from the devil, and covers their heads in the day of battle. As a banner displayed signifies victory, so Christ's banner is an ensign of his glorious victories over sin and Satan, death and hell. And as Christ has conquered sin, death, and hell, in his

own person, for his people, so he has engaged to conquer sin in them. And Christ does defend his chosen ones. His banner is love; Love is the motto of it. His love is comfortably enjoyed by his people; they have blessed experience of it; their joys and consolations flow from it; and they will one day bask, and bathe their souls in the eternal fountain of their Saviour's love, and be eternally happy by seeing Christ face to face; and by beholding his glory, they will be made like unto him, and see him as he is. What a sight, O my soul! how infinitely beyond all present conception will it be, to see Jesus Christ face to face! then will our joy be full. In the new Jerusalem we shall enjoy Godhead in the face and person of Jesus Christ, to the utmost stretch of our wishes. I will conclude in the words of Mr. John Brown, Minister of the gospel at Haddington in Scotland. There (in glory) God is the matter of our joy; and our gladness approacheth as near as possible to his. With what transporting pleasure shall we think of the hell we have escaped! of the troubles and temptations we have overcome! of the holiness and everlasting felicity we have obtained! With what pleasure shall we behold our blessed companions, and hear the unceasing Hallelujahs! With what joys shall we recount the

deeds, and behold the glory of our days-man, that miracle of wonders! that compend of all things, that beauty, honour, and triumph! nay Eclipser of the glory of creation! that marrow of our love! life of our joys! fountain of our comfort! and centre of our hearts! that ravishment of angels and men! that delight of Jehovah! and brightness of the Father's glory! that everlasting excellency and joy of all generations. O could my soul leap out and drop her duller clay! scarce should a harp above aim at a sweeter song. Hosanna to the son of David; Hosanna in the highest.

(151)

A

VERY SUITABLE

MOTTO FOR A NEW YEAR

THE SUBSTANCE OF A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT

EAGLE AND CHILD ALLEY,

ON THE MORNING OF THE FIRST LORD'S DAY,

JAN. 3, 1808.

But our eyes are upon Thee. 2 Chron. **xx.** 12.

SERMON,

&c.

LOOK THOU UPON ME. PSALM CXIX. 132.

WE have been admitted to enter on a new period of time, and we have a word from the book of the Lord which cannot fail of being most exactly suited to every person here present, who is born again, and made a partaker of the Holy Spirit of God. Such as are hungering and thirsting after Christ, have, in the words of my text, a very suitable scripture proposed for them to take up, and enter with on this new year; yea, it cannot but suit them every day and hour of their lives, and also express all they can possibly want to express, in the article of death. They need nothing now, they will need nothing then, but for Christ Jesus to look upon them. They cannot request any thing beyond this, each in their individual persons—Look thou, O Jesus, upon me. Every person present, as far as they belong to Christ, and are taught of him, be they young or old, either children or babes in Christ, are here

suited with a text. If advanced to be young men and fathers in Christ, it will also suit them. If they are young or old, if in health or in sickness, let them be weak or strong, nothing can be more adapted to their case. Let any of us belong to Christ Jesus, be rich or poor, be in pleasant or discouraging circumstances, let us have long to live, or let it be the Lord's will we are soon to die, here is all we need, here is all we can pray for, here are all our spiritual desires summed up in this comprehensive request, *Look thou upon me.*

I doubt not but many of you see the propriety of what hath been expressed, and are big with expectations of receiving further edification and consolation also from a larger explanation and further opening of them. I would add, this we must look to the Lord for. You will reply, Somuch the better ; because it is the very language of the text. We shall therefore, by keeping this in view, have our own cases opened; which being done, the words will necessarily be opened also.

I like, for my own part, on the beginning of the new year, to look up to the Lord, and pray him to direct me to such a portion of his most holy word, as may serve to keep up my faith on him throughout the whole year. Blessed be his great and holy name, which is exalted above

all blessing and praise, here is one. I now want nothing but his gracious presence, and his Holy Spirit, that I may open it, suited to all your frames, experiences, cases, and circumstances of life. Then he that soweth and he that reapeth will rejoice together. I shall aim, the Lord being my teacher and guide, to treat the subject in an experimental and practical manner.

Some of you know, I began the first morning of this year with a discourse on these words, *I will be with thee, and will bless thee* Gen. xxvi. 3. I told you, who were then present how I dealt with the words for myself. I looked on them as belonging to me, as truly as they did to *Isaac*. I considered them as spoken by the Lord as truly to me, for the support of my faith in him, as they were delivered with that express design to the antient patriarch. That I read them over at the throne, mixed faith with them, and thus looked up to the Lord for the real good of all contained in them. I mention this, because my life of faith consists in nothing more nor less than in such exercises. I live on Christ in the word; I believe on him as he is revealed in the word; I receive him into my mind through the word; I grow into Christ through it: therefore every word of Christ is sweet unto me, yea, sweeter than the honey

and the honey-comb, because it serves to nourish my faith up unto life everlasting. Now the words before us are the prayer of faith. They are spoken by one who had *tasted that the Lord is gracious*. As so considered, they suit the whole household and family of faith. They are the very index of your minds and mine. If we have but one petition to put up to the Lord, it is this, *Look thou upon me*. As method and order are useful to engage the attention and fix the mind, also as it respects the memory, I will endeavour to treat the subject before us thus:

First, Give a brief view of the text, *Look thou upon me*.

Secondly, Set forth the case, experience, state and frame, of a believer in Jesus.

Thirdly, I will show the heart of Christ towards the believer, under all sorts of cases and frames which he can possibly be in. And also how exactly suited Christ is to all these things.

Fourthly, How freely the believer may have access to Jesus, let his case be what it may.

And lastly, The support which is contained in all this, for every believing mind.

May the Holy Spirit most graciously teach and influence my mind, to fill up these particulars as may be agreeable to scripture, experience, and a sound judgment in all things!

And first for the text itself, *Look thou upon me*. It is a short address to the living God, in which much is contained. It implies that the petitioner knew the Lord, and also had free access to him. It contains an absolute necessity which the praying person felt, for immediate audience with the Lord, and for the Lord's immediate grace to be displayed. It shows also that the request was put up by one who was used to immediate dealing with Jehovah in all his persons and perfections in a covenant way; otherwise, the heart had not been so fully and openly expressed. It is a short prayer; it comes from the very heart; it is offered up with energy; all contained in it is most truly desirable; all in it requested, is the whole we at any time want with the Lord. *Look thou upon me*, says the Psalmist. The Lord had looked upon him from everlasting, with a look of love. The Lord loved him in Christ Jesus with an everlasting love. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ had beheld him in his person with entire complacency before the foundation of the world. Christ had looked upon him, and shone within him, both manifestatively and influentially, and filled his soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The prophet had been favoured again and again with such shinings from Christ, the day-spring from on high; therefore, feeling

himself dark, dead, and lifeless, and like a bottle in the smoke, he cries out, *Look thou upon me*. When Christ looks on us, all is well. A believer in Jesus offers up the same request: he says, *Look, O Christ, upon me*. A believer in Christ is one who is born of God; he has been brought to know, see, feel, and apprehend his exceeding sinfulness by the corruption of his nature through the fall of the first man; he has been enlightened with the supernatural, spiritual, scriptural, and saving knowledge of Christ Jesus; he has been enabled to believe on him to the saving of the soul: he therefore knowing Christ, knows his voice in distinction from all beside: Jesus looks on him, and says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*. He does, and therefore says to his most blessed Lord, *Look thou upon me*. Thus we see how Christ and believers speak one and the same language: it is no marvel, because they are *one spirit*; the same Holy Spirit who dwells in the Head, dwells in all the members. Thus being joined to the Lord they are one spirit with their head. As it pleases Christ to look on his believing people, so his believing people are well pleased to have him look on them: it is day with their souls when he shines on them; it is life, health, and salvation, to their minds, when he arises as the sun of righteousness upon them, with healing in his beams; all is well with them

when he looks with a look of love, in a manifestative way and manner on them. The saint who uttered the words of our text found it so, therefore he needs no more. All his soul is contained in this, *Look thou upon me*. It also implies, Christ cannot look on a child of his, but it draws out all his heart. If it be asked, Why do you apply the words all to Christ? are not the Father and the Spirit the objects of worship equally with the Son? I answer, Yes, verily they are. Yet in worshipping Christ they are included, as all the love of the Father and the love of the Spirit are set before us and displayed towards us in the glorious person of the God-man Mediator. The Father's everlasting love, the Son's finished work, the love of the Holy Spirit, are revealed fully, and we apprehend the same as we take in spiritual views of the most blessed mediation of Jesus Christ. And our faith is more generally and distinctly exercised on Jesus the mediator, and on the Father and Spirit, as revealed in him; that is the reason. Otherwise our faith, and every act of worship are to be exercised on the Father and Spirit, equally as on Christ. In the economy of the Divine Persons, in their covenant transactions, the Father appoints all, the Son performs all, and the Holy Spirit works all. In the revelation of this, the Son is the one alone mediator. Our approach to the throne of grace

is in his most precious name, and most adorable person; our access to the Father is through him; we can only worship him through the influence of the Holy Spirit. We have it summed up in these words, *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Eph. ii. 18. All the love of the persons in the Godhead towards the elect, is in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is in him the Father beholds us, and resteth in his love towards us; it is in him our whole salvation is completed; it is in him, it hath pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell. He is the mercy-seat,—the throne of grace,—the true propitiary. It is the delight of the Holy Spirit to exalt him, and to glorify him in our hearts. As in him the Father beholds us, so it is in him we apprehend the Father's love to us; and in believing on him, the Holy Spirit is pleased to shed abroad a sense of it in our minds. Thus in the true knowledge of Christ, we know the Father and the Spirit; and in the true worshipping of Christ, we worship the Father and the Spirit. Thus we have God, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the object of worship, as we rightly know and apprehend our most precious Immanuel. *No man cometh to the Father but by me,* says our Lord. John xiv. 6. And, *No man can call Jesus Lord,* and worship him as Jehovah, *but by the Holy Ghost.* 1 Cor. xii. 3. Thus I

have endeavoured to give a brief view of the text. It contains a most important request. It is, believer, all you and I need. If we have access to Jesus, we have the utmost desire of our hearts; if he looks on us, it is well indeed with us; then his heart will be drawn out towards us as ours is towards him, when he vouchsafes to look on us. But as this will occur again and again in this present discourse, I will therefore proceed,

Secondly, To set forth the case, experience, state, and frame of a believer in Jesus. As from hence it will naturally follow, how much these words suit him, and how that in them is contained all he needs.

It is a believer in Christ I am speaking of, and speaking to; I am to speak of his case as such. Now he is the subject of a fallen nature; he has a whole body of sin inherent in him; he feels it, at times he groans under it, at times he falls by it, and falls under it. This is, then, his case, to find himself completely lost in himself; as such, he hath the constant and abiding sense of this in his own mind; he carries it about always with him. Were you to ask the believer what his case is; he would immediately reply, *I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.* Were you to ask how, or what he feels; his reply would be, *The heart knoweth its*

own bitterness ; I am vile. As it is the general state of the believer to find himself full of misery, to find himself all emptiness, this makes way for him continually to put up this prayer, *Look, Lord Jesus, upon me.* Say, you who are taught of God, if it be not thus. Is it not your case to see, to feel, to know, you are inwardly polluted, that you feel and find yourselves all wounds and emptiness? You say, Yes: then your experience and mine are one and the same. Let us therefore express what this experience consists of. Surely, in a knowledge of sin and self. This most certainly constitutes what a man in Christ knows of himself. And this knowledge of himself fits him for receiving Christ; and also for living on, and for triumphing in him. This being his experience, his state, therefore, that is, the state of his mind, is very frequently dark and uncomfortable, made up of many frames, feelings, and disquietudes, very sorrowful and distressing. His frame is very variable; he knows not what to think or say of it, so far as he attends to it, and follows his own views of it. As none of us are freed from the inbeing of sin, nor from the personal and natural consequence of it, so neither are we from the sensible sorrows and distresses which are the consequences of being the subjects hereof. As we feel sin, we cannot but feel sorrow. As we feel

misery, we cannot but experience great and manifold disquietudes of mind. And as the miseries of our bodies and minds are at times many and great, so they serve to increase our manifold distresses, we being the subjects of sense. Hence almost every thing, not only affects, but it too greatly affects us, and Satan loves to fish in troubled waters; he puts his own comments on our cases, experiences, state and frame: hence he makes his own advantage out of it. This is always the case whensoever we are left to reason on ourselves, to exercise our own natural thoughts, on what we are in ourselves, and on what passes in our own minds. As the general experience of what is constant with us, and continually before us, is what we chiefly attend unto; hence we lose a sight of Christ, and are too often reasoning concerning the state of our souls before the Lord, seeing things are, in our feeling and apprehension, so uncomfortable and unpromising. We are too apt to live in these views, to walk under these gloomy apprehensions, and, as the effect of it, to overlook Christ, and cast away our confidence in him. Whilst this is the case of many, and with several who are the real people of the most high God, yet it ought not so to be. We are, believers in Jesus, frequently brought into such cases as I have been describing, and it is the

Lord's will too, on purpose that we may practise the words of my text, crying out, *Lord, look thou upon me*. When, O ye people of the Most High, do you need Christ to look upon you, but when you feel sin? then, *Lord, look thou upon me*, becomes very seasonable: never more so. Indeed we never saw our need of Christ so much before. We have the present sight, sense, and feeling of what we are, given us from the Holy Spirit, that we may look to Jesus. We have a sense and experience of all we are in ourselves, made known to us from time to time, to wean us from ourselves, and to bring us into such circumstances as constrain us to call on the Lord, and make more use of him. We are led to an acquaintance with what is contained in our own personal experience, to the intent we may learn from it the absolute need we are in of Christ continually. It seems to us, that all we expect to make for us, makes against us: indeed, the Lord the Spirit's hand is in this, though we do not always perceive it. He means to lead us out of ourselves, and off ourselves, to center on Christ. Were we sensible of this, we should go to the throne with, *Look thou upon me*. Yet through our ignorance and legality we start back, we think we ought not to go now: why not? because we feel every thing making against us; whereas, the truth of the matter is, every

thing makes for us, had we but eyes to see it, inasmuch as every thing we have, are, and feel, all proclaim the absolute necessity we are under of flying to Christ continually with *Look thou upon me*. The state of our minds, they being so variable, so uneven, so uncomfortable, proves the necessity for us to distinguish between what we are in ourselves, frames, and cases, and what we are in Christ. Surely if we cannot in one single instance trust in ourselves, there is the greater reason why we should trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Were we skilful in the word of righteousness, we most certainly should do so. It is this use of it our text refers to; for, were we not sensible of our wants, when would there be any occasion for us to go to Christ with such a prayer as this, *Look thou upon me?* I will therefore proceed,

Thirdly, to set forth the heart of Christ towards the believer, under all sorts of cases and frames he can possibly be in, and also how exactly suited Christ is to all these things. Hence it will follow, how a believer ought to encourage himself in the Lord his God.

It is the work and office of the Holy Ghost to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ: he hath done it in the word: there the whole of Christ is set forth; in it he is fully revealed; from it the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and

shews them unto us. This being an immutable truth, it follows from hence, Christ must be set forth in it, exactly as he is, a Saviour, a free Saviour, an accessible Saviour, a compassionate Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, a suitable Saviour, able to do in us and for us exceeding abundant above all we ask or think. If our blessed Jesus was not all this, he would not be equal, Beloved, to us and our cases; but he is all this to us. Therefore I ask you, To whom should you and I go, but to him? He only hath the words of eternal life. Blessings on our Christ! from everlasting he looked upon us as the objects of his Father's everlasting love, and was pleased to look upon us as such with inconceivable delight. Our Christ looked upon us as the gift of his Father's love to him; as such, he delighted in us and rejoiced over us. He viewed us and looked upon us as his bride and spouse, as his social companions and partners in all his communicable grace and glory. Thus he expressed his delights in the elect sons of men; he looked upon us, and beheld us shining forth in all the glory we shall shine forth in, in glory, and his heart was fixed so immutably on us, that he can never cease to love us. He looked upon us, and viewed us in our creation state; he looked upon us in our fallen state; he looked upon us when we were in our sin and misery, and it drew out

his heart to such a degree, that he most willingly became our surety. All he foresaw in his people, did not abate his love, nor withdraw his eye from them. He saw us in and with the whole of our sinfulness and demerit; and when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. He looked on us, believers, when we were *dead in trespasses and sins*, and said unto us, *Live*. It is in consequence of it, we have spiritual life in our souls to the present moment. You and I therefore, who are quickened by the Holy Ghost, and made partakers of Christ, should know that our blessed Christ is most divinely suited to us, and that his heart is always towards us, under all sorts of cases and frames we can at any time be in. Herein consists the grace of Christ. His heart is love. He comprehends all his people; their every case is known unto him; there is no sorrow, no misery, no one thing can possibly befall them, but it is before him; yea, he is deeply interested in these things. They serve to draw out his heart, to shew forth his grace, to display his compassion, to exalt his mercy, to manifest his all-sufficiency, to get himself a glorious name, and to endear himself hereby to the hearts of his people. Christ's heart is fixed on us, his soul delighteth in us, his eye and his heart are perpetually on us for good; therefore none of our

miseries make against us, but they all make for us, as it respects sending us to our most precious Immanuel. Not one of us, who belong to Christ, but is the invariable object of his unceasing love; and the love of Christ is one incessant activity of his infinite mind towards us. He looks upon us, when we do not look on him, or to him: and as he looks on us, he also looks within us, and he views all the sin inherent in us; all our guilt, all our wants, all our miseries, all our emptiness, all our weakness. Now our Jesus looks on us, and all this in us, and remembers us for good! Our Jesus takes up nothing against us; neither should we take up any thing we see, feel, and experience in ourselves, against him. No, nor against ourselves either, because it only proves our exceeding need of Christ, let us feel and see in ourselves what we may. He, blessings on him! knows us thoroughly; he comprehends the whole sinfulness and misery contained in our natures and frames. We are never disposed to give full credit to this: yet, if it were not so, Christ would not be all-sufficient for our cases. It is a wonderful relief to our minds to view the subject thus; it serves to save us from many embarrassments which must accompany our thoughts until we view it in this light. If our Jesus looks upon us, we are sure to be the better for it; he

cannot look upon us, but he must, believer, know us to be his own; he cannot thus look upon us, but he must remember us with the favour he beareth to his people; he cannot look upon us, but he must make our very cases his own. O this is sweet! it is grace indeed! such as at times inflames our souls, and makes as deep impression on them as salvation itself doth. This we must acknowledge; indeed it is manifestative salvation; hereby the Holy Ghost leads us into the real knowledge of Christ, and also into real communion with Christ; hereby we have inward and undeniable evidences of our Lord's love to us; in this way we experience his mercy towards us—in this manner he proves that his compassions towards us fail not. There is nothing in us, believers, but Christ is suited unto; there is every thing in Christ suited to us. He loved us before we loved him; he loved us when there was nothing but sin in us; he loved us, when we were full of misery. We can readily assent to this, as true doctrine; but when in experience we feel what we are, then we begin to draw back from giving most hearty, free, and full assent and consent unto it. Why? how so? Because, when we feel, and see with our own eyes, that we are to the present moment just as sinful and miserable in our fallen natures as ever, we know not how to account for

it; therefore we neglect then the simple act of the mind, which consists in looking unto Jesus, so that we come not, at least we too often neglect coming, to Jesus, saying, *Look thou upon me*. Yet where or to whom should we go, but to our precious Christ? on whom can he shine, agreeably to his work and office, but on such as us, yea upon us? Are any persons in greater need of him? Surely not. Then as he can get his highest glory by shining on us, we may well make use of it as a plea, saying, *Look thou upon me*. Are we dead in our frames and feelings; Jesus is our life, he is our quickening head; how suited then, and becoming us to go, saying, *Lord, look upon me*; Lord, quicken me. Are we led to see and feel more than ever of the apostasy of our hearts, of the sinfulness of our natures, there is the greatest opportunity to go to Jesus, saying, *Look thou upon me*. Jesus Christ loves you and me, believers, so well, he would not suffer us to feel sin, misery, and emptiness, if it would not be for our real benefit. It is so, when from it the Lord the Spirit is pleased to glorify Jesus in our hearts hereby. As he exalts Christ in the view of our minds, we get more into clear and spiritual apprehensions of his love. As he exalts the blood and sacrifice of Christ in our understandings, we get above our sins, and all the emptiness contained in self. As he exalts

the righteousness of Christ in our hearts, we learn to trust in it more. In these discoveries of Jesus, he leads us into fellowship with Jesus, and thus he builds us up and establishes us in Christ by the very experience which seems to us to be the most distressing. Christ keeps his eye on us continually; he looks within us; he fully understands the whole of us; he knows his own love wherewith he hath loved us; he knows the full perfection and virtue of his own blood and righteousness, in which we are washed, and clothed; he knows the representation he makes of us in the high and holy place, to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God. He says every thing in his word, to comfort and encourage us, that he possibly can: *I have graven thee on the palms of mine hands. I will remember thee with everlasting kindness. I have loved thee. I will never turn away from you from doing you good.* It well becomes us believers to remember, Christ beholds us as his own; as members of his mystic body; as his brethren and beloved ones; as his sons and daughters: we may therefore cry out, *Look thou on us, and each for himself, Look thou on me.* As the Holy Spirit is pleased to enlighten our minds, and enable us to apprehend from the written word, that Christ is suited to all our sins, wants, frames, experiences, state, and circumstances, and also that he can

exalt his glorious grace within us, by displaying his love, mercy, salvation, and presence, exactly as suited to every thing either in, or which now passes in our minds, we set the crown of salvation on his blessed head. In so acting we give him his glory. My fellow believers, feel what you may, suffer it not to take off your eye from, or weaken your confidence in the Lord. What you are, or feel, makes no alteration in him; if it does in you, as most assuredly it does, go with it to Jesus. Learn to look the more to him, because you cannot bear a sight of yourselves, abstractedly from the views of what you are in him. Because you are always changing in your cases, frames, experiences, circumstances, make the more and greater use of the unchangeable Saviour. Our Lord himself directs you to act thus, when he says, *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath, for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.* Isa. li. 6. Beloved, our most precious Lord Jesus Christ beheld his people from eternity with the same love and complacency he will to everlasting. He beholds each and every individual of them, every moment throughout a time state, with the same love and complacency he did before

all time. He loves them every moment of their continuation in a time state, and continues them on earth on purpose to express his love and mercy to them; to fulfil his promises to them; to fulfil the good pleasure of his will in them, and the work of faith with power. We may therefore at all times, in all cases, under all frames, and let our particular experiences be what they may, say, *Look thou upon us! Look thou upon me!* And as, from what hath been delivered, it most naturally and necessarily follows, that a believer hath great reason, and ought to encourage himself in the Lord God, at all times, and in direct opposition to all things, I come,

Fourthly, to shew how freely the believer may have access to Jesus Christ, let his case be what it may. The case of the believer in Christ is in a certain sense always one and the same; yet he has not this view of the subject, therefore he does not always live on Christ in one and the same way; that is, does not always live on Christ as a sinner on a Saviour—in the full persuasion of this, that without Christ he can do nothing. No, many of the Lord's beloved ones strive to attain such a gift, such a frame, such a feeling, such an evidence of grace in themselves, as may afford them comfort. Whereas the truth is, could we be any thing in ourselves, or enjoy or see any thing in our-

selves, which might give you, or me, real satisfaction, it would lead off our eyes, and take off our hearts from our most beloved Lord Jesus. To prevent us, who of ourselves are naturally disposed to all this, the Lord is pleased to give us to experience the very contrary. And we are forced to go to, and make free with our Lord Jesus, because we are what we are in ourselves, and because we find what we do in ourselves. Blessings on our Jesus! he is that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. He is all love to his friends. He is all eye to see them; he is all heart to love them; he is all ear to hear them; he is all mercy to compassionate them; he is all fulness to supply them; he is all power to sustain them. As such, he also is always accessible unto them. It is true blessedness for them to come before him; to speak out their hearts unto him; to spread their cases before him; to look up to him; thus to address him, *Look thou upon me*. Blessings on him! as, when we behold him, a sight of him draws our eyes and hearts after him; so when he takes a sight of us, it is an attractive; it draws out his eye and heart towards us. The believer says, *Look thou upon me*. He says, *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my*

spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. Cant. iv. 9, 10, 11. The believer no sooner speaks, but Jesus is pleased thus graciously to express himself. Indeed this is the real blessedness of it. Believers in Jesus, you may go to him as freely as though you had never sinned, and say, *Look thou upon me.* Am I not thine? Is not thine heart set upon me? Doth not thy whole soul delight in me? *Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?* Didst thou not bear all my sins in thine own body on the tree? Hast thou not sustained the curse, and redeemed me from the curse of the law, by being made a cure for me? Hast thou not loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own blood?

Now, my beloved, to carry this subject into every part of the present new year; yea into every day, hour, and moment of it; yea, throughout the whole of our time in the present state; is what true godliness consists in. And this is what you and I long for, is it not? May we, therefore, be going continually to Jesus, casting our every care on him, saying, *Look thou upon me!* This, as we vary it, according to the

various cases and frames we are the subjects of, contains a proper address, by which we go forth in our minds and hearts towards the Lord. It is a blessed stimulus, to consider the freedom our most blessed Lord is pleased to admit us to and indulge us with at his throne, especially in private prayer, and also the free access of him to us, in opening his own heart, in shewing us his glory, in revealing himself unto us, in supping with us, in his making his abode with us, drawing the whole of our minds after him, and fixing our whole hearts on him. He opens his heart most freely unto us; he admits us to open our hearts and speak out our cases most freely unto him. Thus he gives us every possible evidence of his love and of his friendship, and at the same time undeniable proof that his compassion fails not. It is very well for us to be familiar with our Jesus; to come to him as our light and life; to look on him as our righteousness and purity; to consider him to be life to our death, light to our darkness, purity to our impurity, righteousness to our unrighteousness, wisdom to our ignorance, riches to our poverty, strength to our weakness. It is very good for us to live on him, *as made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Then, in these views, we crying out, *Look thou upon me*, we have this

blessed reply from him, *I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely, for mine anger is turned away from you.* We want nothing to carry us on safely and comfortably all through life, but the eye of Christ upon us. We want nothing in sorrow, and temptation seasons, but the eye of Christ on us. If we enjoy a good measure of health and strength, we need cry out, *Look thou upon me;* to the end it may be used to the Lord's praise and glory. If we are in our own sense and feeling almost swallowed up with the power and influence of our own corruptions, we need apply to Jesus, crying to him, and calling upon his name, saying, *Look thou upon me.* If we are on the mount, it must be, *Look thou upon me.* If we are so low in our frame, and as it respects our sense of corruption and soul distresses, as to be in, and even cry out of the belly of hell, as *Jonah* did, it suits us well, even in such a case and state, to say, *Look thou upon me.* If we are on beds of sickness and pain, exhausting and languishing, even then it will suit us well to say, *Look thou upon me.* If we are, and when we are, in the very article of dissolution, it will be very suitable then to address our dear Lord, with *Look thou upon me.* Blessings, everlasting blessings on him! None of his people will ever be in any of these cases, states, frames, and circum-

stances, but he will look upon them as his own ; he will be to them exactly what they need him to be ; he will never leave them, he will never forsake them ; he will be continually with them ; he will uphold them by their right hand ; he will guide them with his counsel, he will afterwards receive them to glory ; he will look upon them in heaven with unceasing delight ; he will be there to them *their everlasting light, and their everlasting glory.*

I come therefore, lastly, to shew what support is contained in all this for every believing mind.

If the heart of Christ is, towards the believer in him, one and the same at all times ; if Christ is most exactly suited to the believer in his every case and circumstance, and the believer may have free access to him, let his case be what it may, then surely here is such support as is all-sufficient to the believing mind. Believers, is it not so ? You cannot but be constrained to say, It is indeed. Let us consider the subject. You are one with Christ, and he is one with you ; he hath taken away all your sin, and you are without all sin in him ; he hath finished the obedience which the law required, and you are righteous thereby ; he is the Lord your righteousness ; you are made the righteousness of God in him ; you stand in God's sight as Christ doth ; his Father is your Father, his God is

your God. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* His relation to you is so close and indissoluble, that neither life nor death can part Jesus and you. His salvation is yours. His word is the very index of his heart; his promises are the very purposes of his heart towards you. He brings you into such cases, that he may accomplish his purposes in you, by fulfilling his promises unto you. He permits such and such trials to befall you, that way may be made for discovering his gracious heart towards you. His promises are full of everlasting consolation. It all belongs to you. It would be well to study your own cases; to search the scriptures; to consider your age and standing in Christianity; to search out such promises and declarations of grace as are just exactly suited to what you are the subjects of, then carry them to the Lord, then mix faith with them, then pray over them, then look to the Lord Christ for the fulfilment of them. This is the way to live to the praise and glory of Christ's grace. You can be in no case but there is a promise of Christ suited to it; you can be in no place where you cannot converse with Jesus; you can have no wound, but Christ will be to it, and you the subject of it, health and cure; you cannot have a want but Christ will supply. Well therefore

may you say, *Look thou upon me.* All your wants lie upon him. He is by office engaged to make your every case his own. He is interested in your bodies and souls; he is engaged for you as it concerns both spirituals and temporals. The whole of your journey through life is before him: the hour of your deaths is well known to him; he is engaged for you; he is engaged to you; his everlasting arms are underneath you; he, the eternal God, is your refuge. Trust in him therefore, and fear not; such is his grace, that *he giveth power to the faint, and to such as have no might he increaseth strength.* His promise is, *that they that wait upon him, shall renew their strength.* May the Lord bring each of you believers up *out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant, leaning on the arms of our beloved.* Even so, Lord Jesus, Amen. Blessed Jesus! do thou thyself say Amen.

