

SERMON XIX.

CHRIST, THE ANTITYPE OF THE TEMPLE.

JOHN ii. 21.

“ But he spake of the temple of his body.”

THIS apostle wrote his gospel after the other evangelists had completed their's; and he records many passovers, miracles, actions, sermons, discourses, and circumstances of our most blessed Lord, which are altogether omitted by the others. He begins his divine narrative concerning Jesus, with a most glorious and majestic account of his essential deity, personality, co-equality, eternity, and oneness, with the Father, in the unity of the incomprehensible Godhead, in which the eternal Three possess, enjoy, and partake of one equal and incommunicable life of blessedness and glory, which flows from their mutual existence, and personal relation to each other, in the self-existing essence.

This being laid as his foundation, and having proclaimed the essential Word as God, with all the perfections of Godhead, and given an incontestible proof of his eternal power and God-

head in the creation of all things, declaring that without him was not any thing made that was made; he proceeds to treat of his incarnation, a most stupendous display of grace! and of his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father; who, when he was manifested in the flesh, to take away our sin, and dwelt in our nature, in our world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, was full of grace and truth.

Thus having declared and set forth the person of Christ as God-man, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead personally; he goes on to treat of the actions of this most precious Immanuel, as God in our nature. He produces the testimony, which John the baptist bore, concerning him, as the Son of God, and the Lamb of God, by whose sacrifice the sins of the elect world are borne away out of the sight of God; whose blood, as the blood of Jesus Christ, cleanseth from all sin.

In this chapter before us, the evangelist records a miracle wrought by our most precious Jesus, at a marriage in Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. After which, he went from thence down to Capernaum, with his mother, and his brethren. From hence, he went to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover; at which place and festival, he wrought several

miracles, which are not recorded, and which led many to believe on him. See verse 23.

It would add lustre and majesty to all that is written in this gospel, if the personality, Godhead, incarnation, and glory of Christ, were spiritually apprehended, and closely attended unto. Then it would most divinely and evidently appear, that all the time he lived in his incarnate state, he was just what poor sinners needed him to be, "full of grace and truth."

The passover mentioned here, was the first after our Lord's baptism. As our Lord entered the outer court of the temple, he found there, those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting at their tables. These persons, for a certain profit, changed any foreign coin into that which was current, and large pieces of money into half shekels, which were, on some occasions, to be paid into the sacred treasury. There must have been a great market for oxen, sheep, and doves, on such a time as this; for Josephus tells us, that no less than two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred victims were offered at one passover.

To understand this account before us, concerning our Lord's driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, it is absolutely necessary to attend to what follows. It is to be noticed, that all the courts and appendages, yea, the whole sacred enclosure, called by the jews, the mountain

of the house, is stiled, in the new testament, the temple. It was in the outer court and cloisters of the temple that those persons, under pretence of accommodating such as came to worship there with proper sacrifices, sold oxen, sheep, doves, &c.

Our divine Lord was moved with indignation at the sight of this encroachment, made by these persons, who sold and carried on their merchandize here: and he was pleased to manifest it, and display his divine authority and power, as the great prophet over the house of God. He made a scourge of small cords, out of such as he found scattered up and down on the sacred floor. With these, as with a whip, he drove out these persons; he poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables, at which they were sitting; and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandize." Dr. Lightfoot says, our Lord's appearance at this time, was an accomplishment of the prophecy, Malachi iii. 1, 2. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts: but who shall abide the day of his coming? And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi."

Thus our Lord, acting as one sent of God, shewed his zeal to be most divine and fervent; which brought to the remembrance of his disciples a passage in the 69th Psalm, written concerning the Messiah—"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

This public and remarkable display of our Lord's power, his proclaiming that God was his Father, and forbidding these persons, who had profaned the temple, to make his Father's house an house of merchandize; expressing, at the same time, his holy indignation against such profanity. The report of this reached the ears of the grand sanhedrim, or senate of the nation, and some of them deputed persons; or, perhaps, such persons as were present when Christ thus acted and spake, overawed and thunderstruck, they did not seek to withstand him, or object to what he had done; but demanded his authority for so doing, they knew it was not by a commission from the grand council of the nation. If he pretended to divine authority for doing what he had done, which they supposed he did, then they demanded a sign, or miracle to be wrought, to prove that God was his Father, as he suggested, and that he was the proprietor of the temple, and had a right to purge it, as he had done. "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things?" Verse 18. We are sure if thou hast not a divine commission, which we

require and demand thee to give a proof of, thou hast to our knowledge none from the government. To this our Lord, in a dark and enigmatical, yet in a very proper and pertinent way, replies to their question, (which was with respect to the temple, his power over it, his right to purge it, and a sign required of him to shew and prove his divine power and authority) he says, pointing, as it were, with his finger to his body, (for of that he spake, as appears from verse 21.) “ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” This is not a grant, exhortation, advice, or command to kill him, but a prophecy of what they would do. And by his resurrection from the dead, he would be most gloriously proved to be the Son of God. And this he now gives them as a prophetic hint, or sign of his having power to do what he had now done. On our Lord’s delivering himself in a prophetic manner, which was to them dark, and it appeared they understood it not, because they applied it to the temple literally; they, with derision and contempt, said, ver. 20. “ Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” As much as if they had said, none certainly will be foolish enough, not even thou thyself, to pull it down, and try the experiment.

The temple here was neither the temple of Solomon, nor the temple as built by Zerubbabel, commonly called the second temple, but Herod’s

temple, of which I will give a very short account. Solomon's temple was but seven years in building, 1 Kings vi. 37, 38. The second temple, or that built by Zerubbabel, was begun in the second year of Cyrus, which, to the thirty-second of Darius exclusive, was just forty-six years. Cyrus reigned three years; Artaxerxes Ahasuerus fourteen years; Artaxerxes Darius, thirty-two years: but if these years are begun with the first of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned forty years, and end in the sixth year of Darius, his successor, in which year the temple was finished, (Ezra vi. 15.) there are forty-six years: but Herod's temple, or the temple as rebuilt, or repaired by Herod, was that which was standing in our Lord's time. Of which take the following account.

The second temple having stood five hundred years, had been often injured, broken, and repaired. Herod, the great son of Antipater, an Idumean, attempting to please the people of the jews, after having ruled over them in a very arbitrary and most cruel manner, endeavoured to persuade them to consent that their temple should be demolished, in order to rebuild it; but as they would not consent to this, he assured them that the temple should remain untouched, till all the materials were ready to build the new one, which he provided at a vast expence and labour, in two years time, by em-

ploying ten thousand artificers for the work, a thousand waggons for carriage, and a thousand priests for directions. The work was performed with prodigious cost and splendour, as it is described by Josephus. It was built of large stones, each twenty-five cubits long, twelve broad, and eight in thickness.

The temple, properly so called, consisting of the holy, and the most holy place, was finished in a year and a half, so that divine worship was performed there; and the several walls, galleries, pillars, and courts of it, were completed in eight years more, so that the whole time spent about it, was nine years and a half. It was finished and dedicated on the anniversary day of Herod's accession to the crown, with a vast number of sacrifices, and rejoicing.

It was begun nearly forty-six years before the passover mentioned in this chapter; and though the grand design of it was executed in nine years and a half, yet Herod and his successors were always building outworks round it, even to the very day that Christ was there, and long afterwards.

Hence the jews might, with great propriety say, as they did, "Forty-six years was this temple in building." These jews quite mistook our Lord's design, when he thus expressed himself: they understood him, as speaking of the temple, but he spake agreeably to the well-known usage

of scripture, which calls the type and the thing signified by it, by the same name; yet this they understood not.

The words of my text, "But he spake of the temple of his body," shall be set before you, for your present profit, under these two general heads.

First. I will endeavour to shew you that the temple was a type of the body of Christ.

Secondly. I will shew how Christ is the antitype thereof.

I am first to shew that the temple itself was a type and figure of Christ's body. This appears from our Lord's words before us, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up; but he spake of the temple of his body." His body was the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man; and he here speaks as the scripture also does, which calls the type and the thing expressed by it, by one and the same name.

That the temple was a type of Christ's body, and every part of its furniture a type and figure of him, and of what he was to be, do, and suffer, is now the subject before us; which when I have gone through, will compleat the first head of my present discourse.

The tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple of Solomon, were both one and the same, with regard to their mystical signification. The one was an ambulatory, the other a fixed temple;

both pointed out, and were memorials of the incarnation of the Son of God.

The faithful looked on the temple as a certain pledge that God would be manifest in the flesh. This was what struck Solomon with that great surprize at the dedication of his temple: when the sacred vessels and furniture of it being set in order, the ark being placed in the holy of holies, the service being opened with sacrifices, and the priests blowing the trumpets over them, (as expressive of their triumphing in the future sacrifice of the Lamb of God) the glory of the Lord filled the house, which was altogether supernatural; and thus Jehovah attested his presence with his own divinely instituted emblems and worship, on the sight of which Solomon, in a parenthesis of wonder, cries out, "But will God in very deed, dwell with men on the earth: behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!"

The human nature of Christ is called a tabernacle, Heb. viii. 2. It is stiled the true tabernacle, suggesting it to be the antitype of Moses' tabernacle; and it is further said of it, that the "Lord pitched it, and not man:" shewing that the human nature of Christ was produced wholly in a supernatural way. The pattern of the tabernacle was given by God to Moses, and a pattern of the temple was given by the

Lord to Solomon; after both these sacred types of Christ's body it was formed. It is said of him, "He shall be for a sanctuary," Isaiah viii. 14.

As Bezaleel and Aholiab were divinely filled with the Spirit Jehovah, and instructed by him how to work all the curious work on the curtains, veils, vestments, and other things, which belonged to the tabernacle, and its arks, cherubims, mercy-seat, candlesticks, table, and shew-bread, and other things connected with it: and as the model of the temple, with all belonging to it, was given to David, and the Spirit Jehovah caused him to understand the whole of it, and he gave the same to his son Solomon to execute it; so the eternal Spirit framed, articulated, and reared up the body of Christ, and filled it with the utmost perfection of his gifts and graces. And the Son of God assumed and gave it subsistence by a personal union with it; so that he became hereby true and very man, God and man united in one Christ. By this personal union of our nature to the Son of God, there is a relative holiness which results therefrom, and which stamps all the actions of Christ, and gives them all their worth and efficacy. And as at the dedication of the temple, a supernatural glory, splendour, light, and fire, came down upon it, and consumed the sacrifice, as a token of God's taking possession of the temple, and

of his acceptance of their offerings; so at the dedication of Christ's body, when he entered publicly on his mediatorial work, immediately after he had been baptized, on his praying, the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost descended on him, and the Father uttered his glorious voice, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Mark i. 11. It is probable that the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Lord, and the Father's voice, were seen and heard by Christ and John alone, because in the record which he bore of Christ, of his being the Messiah, he says, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him, and I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost: and I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God," John i. 32, 33, 34.

Now, had all the multitudes who were with John, seen this great sight, the descent of the Holy Ghost on Jesus of Nazareth, they might have borne their testimony also, that he was the Son of God; but the splendour, glory, majesty, and honour of this, with the irresistible evidence it carried with it, concerning Christ's being the essential Word, the only begotten of the Father, seems to me, and so it did to Dr. Light-

foot before, to have been seen by the baptist only.

As the temple was a solemn memorial of Christ's body, the glory of the Lord which filled it at its consecration, was a symbol and evidence that the humanity of Christ would be filled with all the essential glory and perfection of Deity, and that God the Son would dwell with men on the earth; so every part of its service and furniture was expressive of him.

As you entered into the court of the priests, where the brazen altar, sea, lavers, and priests stood, there was every thing suited to set forth Christ crucified. The altar of burnt-offering, with the sacrifices burning on it, and the priests officiating thereat, were very expressive of Christ, as the sacrifice for sin, sustaining the fire of divine wrath, and as the Lamb of God bearing away the sin of the world; the blood sprinkled round about the altar, shewed that the efficacy of it to cleanse from all sin, originated in his eternal Godhead. The priests standing at it, was as it were proclaiming atonement for sin, set forth in the typical sacrifices, as God's ordinance for life and salvation, they being memorials of the future offering of Christ's body and soul, in union with his person, whereby the sins of his people would be for ever done away, and an everlasting righteousness brought in, by which they would be perfected for ever. The molten

sea was very expressive of Christ's blood which swallows up all our guilt ; so that as the prophet Micah expresses it, " The Lord hath cast all our sins into the depth of the sea." The lavers proclaimed the perpetual virtue of the blood of Jesus, they being always uncovered and for use. The temple itself was full of Christ in all its sacred golden tables and candlesticks, and altar of incense. The bread and light were clearly and divinely symbolical of him who is the living bread, and the light of everlasting life ; and the golden altar was typical of Christ's intercession. The ark of the covenant, in the holiest of all, was figurative of Christ, the Holy One of God.

The temple was typical of Christ, as it was the place of God's residence, where he commanded his blessing, even life for evermore ; so that our Lord might, with the greatest propriety, allude unto it, and speak of himself as the very substance, glory, and antitype of it, saying, " Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:" which words were actually fulfilled by him ; for the tabernacle and temple of his body, being by wicked hands crucified and slain, he raised it up from under the power and dominion of death, by the power of his eternal Godhead on the third day, and thereby proved the truth of what he asserted of his own life, and which none but himself could say, " Therefore doth my Father love me, be-

cause I lay down my life, that I may take it up again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again: this commandment have I received of my Father." John viii. 17, 18.

I will now, secondly, shew how Christ is the antitype of the temple. As the temple was the outward visible type of Christ's body, and every part of its furniture a type and figure of him; so he calls the type, and the thing signified, by the same name. His body is the true tabernacle, the living temple, in which Jehovah the Son dwells and inhabits, and which he fills with all the train of heavenly graces, and with all the fulness of the Godhead; so that like as in the holy of holies, (in the cloud of glory, between the wings of the cherubims, by a supernatural light and splendour,) Jehovah was pleased to attest his presence with his own divinely instituted emblems, and sometimes to shine forth in a human form in the holiest of all, prefiguring and fore-signifying the incarnation of the second person in the essence; so in the man Christ Jesus, all this is realized.

In his human nature, the Son of God lives and dwells, as in his temple: and thus the two distinct natures of Christ, with their union in his one most adorable person, are most divinely evidenced. His humanity is the temple: his

Godhead fills it with all the fulness of the divine nature.

All the essential perfections of Jehovah, such as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary, and self-existence, as subsisting in the person of the Son of God, have a perpetual and personal inhabitation in Christ, who is both God and man, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

By the personal union of the divine nature, as subsisting in the Son of God, to a human body chosen and prepared for that purpose, with a reasonable human soul, which is the great mystery of godliness, the glory of our most holy religion, (and one of the deepest and most sublime mysteries of it,) we have all contained in the tabernacle, and temple laid open, and set before us in its highest signification.

The God-man, Christ Jesus, is the true tabernacle, the antitype of Solomon's temple: in him God accepts his people: through his sacrifice and intercession, their prayers and praises come up before him with the most perfect fragrancancy and delight: in him they have everlasting life: their complete salvation, with all the fulness of grace and glory is contained in him: he is to them the bread of life, the light of everlasting life, their hidden manna: his priesthood is an unchangeable one; he is eternally fixed in it,

which was pointed out to the old testament church, by Aaron's rod which budded, blossomed, and bore fruit, which proved his priesthood and his sons' to be of divine authority. As the resurrection and ascension of Christ, proved him to be a priest for ever after the power of an endless life. In Christ God grants his presence to his people: and by him, as the mercy-seat, as the true Urim and Thummim, delivers out his whole mind and will unto them: in him they shine with lustre inconceivable before God, who beholds them in Jesus complete.

Our Jesus, as the antitype of the temple, its furniture and service, is the medium of all our access to God. It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: in him, as his people's treasury and repository, are contained all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: in him God shines, and from him reflects all the beams of his love, all the bowels of his mercy on us; yea, all his manifestative glory is reflected on us, and shines within us, in the face or person of Jesus Christ. As the divine light, splendour, and glory, were reflected, and shone forth from between the cherubims on the high priest, on the day of atonement, when he entered the most holy place, with blood and incense; so Christ is the Sun of grace, to his church on earth, and will be the Sun of everlasting glory to them in

heaven. And, like as Solomon's temple was dedicated just about the time of the feast of tabernacles, so at or near about the same festival, our Lord was probably born; so it will in due season be pronounced by a voice from heaven, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." He will be to them at that season, their heaven of heavens; they will be where he is: they will see him face to face: they will be made like him in body and soul, and enjoy him with every faculty of both: and in this the fullest perfection of eternity consists; and in this its utmost blessedness will be found.

O that Jesus, the Holy One of God, the Most Holy, the anointed and consecrated One, who is our true temple, altar, sacrifice, intercessor, and representative, may most graciously shine forth upon you, and perfume your minds and hearts with what I have been delivering unto you at this time; and give you living and internal evidence, that he is your living bread, your everlasting light, your way of acceptance, access, and communion with God. Grant it, Lord Jesus, for thy own glory. Amen.