

A Description of Christ

by Richard Sibbes

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgement to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets," &c.—Matt. 12:18.

The words are the accomplishment of a prophecy, taken out of Isaiah 52:1,2, as we may see by the former verse, 'that it might be fulfilled.' Now the occasion of bringing them in here in this verse, it is a charge that Christ gives, verse 16, that they should not reveal and make him known because of the miracles he did. He withdraws himself; he was desirous to be concealed, he would not allow himself to be seen over much, for he knew the rebellious disposition of the Jews, who were eager to change their government, and to make him king. Therefore, he laboured to conceal himself in various ways. Now, upon this injunction, that they should tell nobody, he brings in the prophet Isaiah prophesying of him, 'Behold my servant, &c.; he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.' Other kings labour that their pomp and magnificence may be seen; but he does not desire ostentation, he shall not be contentious nor clamorous. For these three things are meant when he says, 'he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets;' he shall not yield himself to any ostentation, for he came in an abased state to work our salvation; he shall not be contentious, nor yet clamorous in matter of wrong; there shall be no boasting any kind of way, as we shall see when we come to the words. You see, then, the inference here.

The purpose of the prophet Isaiah is to comfort the people, and to direct them how to come to worship the true God, after he had preached against their idolatry, as we see in the former chapter, 'Behold my servant,' &c. Great princes have their ambassadors, and the great God of heaven has his Son, his servant in whom he delights, through whom, and by whom, all dealings between God and man are.

As is usual in the prophecies, especially of Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, when he foretells anything to comfort the people in the promise of temporal things, he rises to establish their faith in better things. He does this by adding to them a prophecy, a promise of Christ the Messiah, to assert thus much: I will send you the Messiah, and that is a greater gift than this that I have promised you; therefore you may be sure of the lesser one. As the apostle reasons excellently, 'If he spared not his own son, but delivered him to death for us all, how shall he

not with him give us all things?' Rom. 8:32. So here, I have promised you deliverance out of Babylon, and this and that; do you doubt of the performance? Alas! what is that in comparison to a greater favour I intend for you in Christ, that shall deliver you out of another type of Babylon? 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen;' and in Isaiah 7:14, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,' &c. I will send you the Messiah; God shall become man; therefore, I will not stand for any outward favour or deliverance whatsoever. So he goes on to the grand promise, that they might reason from the greater to the less.

There is another purpose, why in other promises there is mention of the promise of the Messiah: to uphold their faith. Alas! we are unworthy of these promises, we are so laden with sin and iniquity. It is no matter, I will send you the Messiah. 'Behold my servant in whom my soul delighteth,' and for his sake I will delight in you. I am well pleased with you, because I am well pleased in him; therefore, be not discouraged. All the promises are yea and amen in Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. 1:20; for all the promises that be, though they be for the things of this life, they are made for Christ, they are yea in him, and they are performed for his sake, they are amen in him. So much for the occasion of the quotation in the evangelist St Matthew, and likewise in the prophet Isaiah.

To come more directly to the words, 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased,' &c.

In the words you have a description of Christ, and his nearness to God: Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased.' And then his calling and attainments: 'I will put my Spirit upon him.' And the execution of that calling: 'He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.' Then the quiet and peaceable manner of the execution of his calling: 'He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets,' &c.

Behold!—This word is as it were a lighted beacon. In all the evangelists you have this word often repeated, and the prophets likewise when they speak of Christ; there is no almost prophecy but there is this word, 'Behold.'

Why? The use of it in the prophet, especially out of which these words are taken, was to present Christ to the hearts of the people of God at that time; therefore he says, 'Behold,' for Christ was present to the believers then. Christ did profit them before he was, he did good before he was exhibited, because he was 'the Lamb of God slain from the beginning of the world,' Rev. 13:8; he was yesterday as well as to-day, and tomorrow as well as to-day, 'yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. 13:8. He was present to their faith, present to them in types and sacrifices, and present in God's acceptance of him for them. Therefore, the prophets mount up with the wing of prophecy, and seeing the certainty of the

things to come, they speak as if they were present, as if they had looked on Christ before them, 'Behold my servant,' and 'Behold a virgin,' &c.

But that is not all. Another purpose of this word 'behold,' was to call the people's minds from their miseries, and from other abasing objects that dejected them, which might force them to despair. Why do you dwell upon your unworthiness and sin? Raise up your mind, 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen,' &c. This is an object worth beholding and admiring, especially by a distressed soul that may see in Christ whatsoever may comfort it.

A third purpose of it is to raise the mind from any vulgar, common, base contentments. You look on these things, and are carried away with common trivial objects, as the poor disciples when they came to the temple; they stood wondering at the stones. What wondrous stones! What a great building is here! (Mark 13:1) So shallow-minded men, when they see any earthly excellency, they stand gazing. Alas, says Christ, do you wonder at these things? In the same way the prophet here raises up the minds of men to look on an object fit to be looked on, 'Behold my servant,' &c. He intends that the Holy Ghost would have them from this saving object, Christ, to receive satisfaction to their souls in every way. Are you dejected? Here is comfort. Are you sinful? Here is righteousness. Are you led away with present contentments? Here you have honours, and pleasures, and all in Christ Jesus. You have a right to common pleasures that others have, and besides them you have claim to others that are everlasting pleasures that shall never fail, so that there is nothing that is dejecting and abasing in man, but there is comfort for it in Christ Jesus; he is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; therefore, 'Behold my servant.'

My servant.—Christ is called a servant, first, in respect of his creation, because being a man, as a creature he was a servant. But that is not all.

He was a servant in respect of his condition. Servant implies a base and low condition, Philip. 2:7. Christ took upon him the form of a servant; he emptied himself; he was the lowest of all servants in condition: for none was ever so abased as our glorious Saviour.

And then, it is a name of office, as well as of base condition. There are ordinary servants and extraordinary, as great kings have their servants of state. Despite his abasement, Christ was a servant of state, he was an ambassador sent from the great God; a prophet, a priest, and a king, as we shall see afterwards; an extraordinary servant, to do a work of service that all the angels in heaven, and all the men on the earth joined together, could not perform. This great masterpiece of service was to bring God and man together again, that were at variance, as it is, 1 Peter 3:18, 'to bring us to God.' We were severed and scattered from God. His office was to gather us together again, to bring us all to

one head again, to bring us to himself, and so to God, to reconcile us, as the Scripture phrase is, Col. 1:20. Now, it being the greatest work and service that ever was, it required the greatest servant; for no creature in the world could perform it. All the angels of heaven would have sunk under this service. They could never have given satisfaction to divine justice; for the angels themselves, when they sinned, could not recover themselves, but sunk under their own sin eternally. Thus we see how Christ is God's servant, who set him apart, and chose him to this service.

And then he was a servant to us; for the Son of man came to minister, not to be ministered unto, Matt. 20:28. He washed his disciples' feet. He was a servant to us, because he did our work and suffered our punishment; we made him serve by our sins, as the prophet says, Isa. 53:24. He is a servant that bears another man's burden. There was a double burden— of obedience active, and obedience passive. He bore them both. He came under the law for us, both doing what we should have done, and indeed far more acceptably, and suffering that we should have suffered, and far more acceptably. He being our surety, being a more excellent person, he did bear our burden, and did our work, therefore he was God's servant, and our servant; and God's servant, because he was our servant, because he came to do a work on our behalf.

Herein appears the admirable love and care of God to us wretched creatures, here is matter of wonderment.

Whence comes it that Christ is a servant? It is from the wondrous love of God, and the wondrous love of Christ. To be so abased, it was wondrous love in God to give him to us to be so abased, and the wondrous misery we were in, that we could not otherwise be freed from; for such was the pride of man, that he, being man, would exalt himself to be like God. God became man, he became a servant to expiate our pride in Adam, so that it is wondrous in the spring of it. There was no such love as Christ's to become a servant, there was no such misery as we were in, out of which we were delivered by this abasement of Christ becoming a servant; so it is wondrous in that regard, springing from the infinite love and mercy of God, which is greater in the work of redemption and reconciliation than in the creation of the world, for the distance between nothing and something was less than the distance between sin and happiness. For nothing adds no opposition; but to be in a sinful state there is opposition. Therefore it was greater love and mercy for God, when we were sinful, and so obnoxious to eternal destruction, to make us of sinners, not only men, but to make us happy, to make us heirs of heaven out of a sinful and cursed estate, than to make us of nothing something, to make us men in Adam, for there God prevailed over nothing, but here his mercy triumphed over that which is opposite to God, over sinfulness and cursedness. To show that the creature cannot be so low but there is somewhat in God above the misery of the creature, his mercy shall triumph

over the basest estate where he will show mercy. Therefore there is mercy above all mercy and love above all love, in that Christ was a servant.

Is the Lord Christ a servant? This should teach us not to stand upon any terms. If Christ had stood upon terms, if he had refused to take upon him the shape of a servant, alas! Where had we and our salvation been? And yet wretched creatures, we think ourselves too good to do God and our brethren any service. Christ stood not upon his greatness, but, being equal with God, he became a servant. Oh! we should dismount from the tower of our conceited excellency. The heart of man is a proud creature, a proud piece of flesh. Men stand upon their distance. What! Shall I stoop to him? I am thus and thus. We should descend from the heaven of our conceit, and take upon us the form of servants, and abase ourselves to do good to others, even to any, and account it an honour to do any good to others in the places we are in. Christ did not think himself too good to leave heaven, to conceal and veil his majesty under the veil of our flesh, to work our redemption, to bring us out of the cursed estate we were in. Shall we think ourselves too good for any service? Who for shame can be proud when he thinks of this, that God was abased? Shall God be abased, and man proud? Shall God become a servant, and shall we that are servants think much to serve our fellow-servants? Let us learn this lesson, to abase ourselves; we cannot have a better pattern to look unto than our blessed Saviour. A Christian is the greatest freeman in the world; he is free from the wrath of God, free from hell and damnation, from the curse of the law; but then, though he be free in these respects, yet, in regard of love, he is the greatest servant. Love abases him to do all the good he can; and the more the Spirit of Christ is in us, the more it will abase us to anything wherein we can be serviceable.

Then, again, here is comfort for us, that Christ, in whatsoever he did in our redemption, is God's servant. He is appointed by God to the work; so, both God and Christ meet together in the work. Christ is a voluntary in it, for he emptied himself, he took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. 2:6, he came from heaven voluntarily. And then withal the Father joins with him, the Father appointed him and sent him, the Father laid him as the corner-stone, the Father sealed him, as it is, John 6:27, the Father set him out, as it is, Rom. 3:25. 'He has set him out as the propitiatory.' Therefore, when we think of reconciliation and redemption, and salvation wrought by Christ, let us comfort ourselves in the solidity of the work, that it is a service perfectly done. It was done by Christ, God-man. It is a service accepted of God, therefore God cannot refuse the service of our salvation wrought by Christ. Christ was his servant in the working of it. We may present it to God, it is the obedience of thy servant, it is the satisfaction of thy servant. Here is that will give full content and satisfaction to conscience, in this, that whatsoever Christ did, he was God's servant in it. But we shall better understand the intent of the Holy Ghost when we have gone over the rest of the words, 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen.'

Christ was chosen before all worlds to be the head of the elect. He was predestinated and ordained by God. As we are ordained to salvation, so Christ is ordained to be the head of all that shall be saved. He was chosen eternally, and chosen in time. He was singled out to the work by God; and all others that are chosen are chosen in him. There had been no choosing of men but in him; for God saw us so defiled, lying in our filth, that he could not look upon us but in his Son. He chose him, and us in him.

Here is meant, not only choosing by eternal election to happiness, but a choosing to office. There is a choosing to grace and glory, and a choosing to office. Here, it is as well meant, a choosing to office, as to grace and glory. God, as he chose Christ to grace and glory, so he chose him to the office of Mediatorship. Christ did not choose himself; he was, no usurper. No man calls himself to the office, as it is in Heb. 5:4; but Christ was called and appointed of God. He was willing, indeed, to the work, he took it voluntary upon him; but as Mediator, God chose him, God the Father. If we respect eternal salvation, or grace, or office, Christ was chosen in respect of his manhood; for, as it is well observed by divines, Christ is the head of all that are predestinated; and the human nature of Christ could not merit its choice, it could not merit its incarnation, it could not merit union with the Godhead, it was merely from grace. How could Christ's manhood deserve anything of God before it was? Things must have a subsistence before they can work: our blessed Saviour is the pattern of all election, and his manhood could not merit to be knit to the second person; as how could it, being a creature? Therefore the knitting of the human nature of Christ to his divine, it is called the grace of union. The choosing of the human nature of Christ to be so gracious and glorious, it was of grace.

This adds to our comfort, that whatsoever Christ did for us, he did it as chosen; he is a chosen stone, as St Peter says, I Peter ii. 6, 'a precious corner-stone;' though refused of the builders, yet precious in God's sight.

Was Christ a chosen servant of God, and shall not we take God's choice? Is not God's choice the best and the wisest? Has God chosen Christ to work our salvation, and shall we choose any other? Shall we run to saints' mediation, to the virgin Mary, and others, for intercession, which is a part of Christ's office? Who chose Mary, and Peter, and Paul to this work? There is no mention in Scripture of them for this purpose, but behold my servant, whom I have chosen.

God in paradise did choose a wife for Adam, so God has chosen a husband for his church; he has chosen Christ for us: therefore it is intolerable sacrilegious rebellion and impudency to refuse a Saviour and Mediator of God's choosing, and to set up others of our own, as if we were wiser to choose for ourselves than

God is. We may content ourselves well enough with God's choice, because he is the party offended.

And this directs us also, in our devotions to God, how to carry ourselves in our prayers and services, to offer Christ to God. Behold, Lord, thy chosen servant, that thou hast chosen to be my Mediator, my Saviour, my all in all to me, he is a mediator and a Saviour of thine own choosing, thou canst not refuse thy own choice; if thou look upon me, there is nothing but matter of unworthiness, but look upon him whom thou hast chosen, my head and my Saviour!

Again, if Christ be a chosen servant, O let us take heed how we neglect Christ. When God has chosen him for us, shall not we think him worthy to be embraced and regarded; shall we not kiss the Son with the kiss of love, and faith, and subjection? He is a Saviour of God's own choosing, refuse him not. What is the reason that men refuse this chosen stone? They will not be laid low enough to build upon this corner stone, this hidden stone. The excellency of Christ is hidden, it appears not to men, men will not be squared to be built upon him. Stones for a building must be framed, and made even, and flat. Men stick with this and that lust, they will not be pared and cut and fitted for Christ. If they may have their lusts and wicked lives, they will admit of Christ. But we must make choice of him as a stone to build upon him; and to be built on him, we must be made like him. We like not this laying low and abasing, therefore we refuse this corner stone, though God has made him the corner of building to all those that have the life of grace here, or shall have glory hereafter.

The papists admit him to be a stone, but not the only stone to build on, but they build upon him and saints, upon him and works, upon him and traditions. But he is the only corner stone. God has chosen him only, and we must choose him only, that we may be framed and laid upon him to make up one building. So much for that, 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen.'

My Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased.— How do we know that these words in the prophet Isaiah are fitly applicable to Christ? By the greatest authority that ever was from the beginning of the world, by the immediate voice of God the Father from heaven, who applies these words in Isaiah to Christ, Matt. 3:17, in his inauguration when he was baptized, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' this is that my Son, that beloved, agaphtoV, the beloved Son, so beloved that my soul delights in him, he is capable of my whole love, I may pour out my whole love upon him. 'In whom I am well pleased,' it is the same with that here, 'in whom my soul delighteth,' the one expresses the other.

How, and in what respect is Christ thus beloved of God?

First as he is God, the Son of God, the engraven image of his Father, so he is *primum amabile*, the first lovely thing that ever was. When the Father loves him, he loves himself in him, so he loves him as God, as the second person, as his own image and character.

And as man he loves him, for as man he was the most excellent creature in the world, he was conceived, fashioned, and framed in his mother's womb by the Holy Ghost. It is said, Heb. 10:5, God gave him a body. God the Father by the Holy Ghost fashioned and framed and fitted him with a body, therefore God must needs love his own workmanship.

Again, there was nothing in him displeasing to God, there was no sin found in his life any way, therefore as man he was well pleasing to God. He took the manhood and ingrafted it into the second person, and enriched it there; therefore he must needs love the manhood of Christ, being taken into so near a union with the Godhead.

As God and man mediator especially, he loves and delights in him. In regard of his office, he must needs delight in his own ordinance and decree. Now he decreed and sealed him to that office, therefore he loves and delights in him as a mediator of his own appointing and ordaining, to be our king, and priest, and prophet.

Again, he loved and delighted in him, in regard of the execution of his office both in doing and suffering. In doing, the evangelist says, 'He did all things well,' Mark 7:37. When he healed the sick, and raised the dead, and cured all diseases, whatsoever he did was well done. And for his suffering, God delighted in him for that, as it is in John 10:17, 'My Father loves me, because I lay down my life;' and so in Isa. 53:12, 'He shall divide him a portion with the great, because he poured out his soul unto death;' and in Phil. 2:9, 'Because he abased himself to the death of the cross, God gave him a name above all names:' therefore God loves and delights in him for his suffering and abasement.

Now, that Christ's sacrifice was so acceptable to God, there is a direct place for it in Eph. 5:2, 'Walk in love, as Christ has loved us, and has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smell.' And indeed how many sweet savours were there in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross! Was there not the sweet savour of obedience? He was 'obedient to the death of the cross,' Phil. 2:8. There was the sweet savour of patience, and of love to mankind. Therefore God delighted in him, as God, as man, as mediator God-man, in his doings, in his sufferings, every way.

Does God delight thus in Christ, in his person, or considered mystically? I answer; both. God loves and delights in Christ mystical, that is, in Christ and his

members, in whole Christ. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' not only with whom alone by himself, but 'in whom,' in him as God, in him in body and soul, in him as head of the church, in him mystically, in all that are under him any kind of way. God delights in him, and all his.

Is it possible that he should delight in the head, and refuse the members? that he should love the husband, and dislike the spouse? O no; with the same love that God loves Christ, he loves all his. He delights in Christ and all his, with the same delight. There is some difference in the degree, 'that Christ in all things may have the pre-eminence,' Col. 1:18, but it is the same love; therefore our Saviour sets it down excellently in his own prayer, he desires 'that the same love wherewith his Father loved him may be in them that are his,' John 17:20, that they may feel the love wherewith his Father loves him, for he loved him and his members, him and his spouse, with all one love.

This is our comfort and our confidence, that God accepts us, because he accepts his beloved; and when he shall cease to love Christ, he shall cease to love the members of Christ. They and Christ make one mystical Christ. This is our comfort in dejection for sin. We are so and so indeed, but Christ is the chosen servant of God, 'in whom he delighteth,' and delights in us in him. It is no matter what we are in ourselves, but what we are in Christ when we are once in him and continue in him. God loves us with that inseparable love wherewith he loves his own Son. Therefore St Paul triumphs, Rom. 8:35, 'What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?' This love, it is founded in Christ, 'therefore neither things present, nor things to come (as he goes on there gloriously), shall be able to separate us.' You see what a wondrous confidence and comfort we have hence, if we labour to be in Christ, that then God loves and delights in us, because he loves and delights in Christ Jesus.

And here is a wondrous comfort, that God must needs love our salvation and redemption when he loves Christ, because 'he poured out his soul to death to save us.' Does not God delight that we should be saved, and our sins should be forgiven, when he loves Christ because he abased himself for that purpose? What a prop and foundation of comfort is this, when the devil shall present God to us in a terrible hideous manner, as an avenging God, 'and consuming fire,' &c., Heb. 12:29; indeed out of Christ he is so. Let us present to ourselves thoughts of God as the Scripture sets forth God to us; and as God sets forth himself, not only in that sweet relation Ps a Father to Christ, but our father, 'I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God,' John 20:17, having both one God, and love and care. There is none of us all but the devil will have a saying to us, either in the time of our life, in some terrible temptation, especially when any outward abasement comes, or at the hour of death; and all the cordials we have gathered out of the word will then be little enough to support the drooping soul, especially in the hour of temptation. O beloved, what a

wondrous anchor and satisfaction to a distressed conscience does this yield, that Christ in all that he has wrought for us is God's chosen servant, 'whom he loves and delights in,' and delights in him for this very work, that he abased himself and gave himself for us, that he wrought God's work, because he wrought reconciliation for us! If we can believe in Christ, we see here what ground of comfort we have, that God loves and delights in us, as he does in his own Son.

And what a comfort is it now, in our daily approach to God, to minister boldness to us in all our suits, that we go to God in the name of one that he loves, 'in whom his soul delights,' that we have a friend in court, a friend in heaven for us, that is at the right hand of God, and interposes himself there for us in all our suits, that makes us acceptable, that perfumes our prayers and makes them acceptable. His intercession is still by virtue of his service, dying for us. He intercedes by virtue of his redemption. If God love him for the work of redemption, he loves him for his intercession, therefore God must needs regard the prayers made by him, by virtue of his dying for us, when he loves him for dying for us. Be sure therefore, in all our suits to God, to take along our older brother, to take our beloved brother, take Benjamin with us, offer all to God in him, our persons to be accepted in him, our prayers our hearing, our works, and all that we do, and we shall be sure to speed; for he is one in whom the soul of God delights. There must be this passage and repassage, as God looks upon us lovely in him, and delights in us as we are members of him. All God's love and the fruits of it come to us as we are in Christ, and are one with him. Then in our passage to God again we must return all, and do all, to God in Christ. Be sure not to go to a naked God; for so he is 'a consuming fire,' but go to him in the mediation of him whom he loves, 'and in whom his soul delighteth.'

And shall God love him and delight in him, and shall not our soul delight in Christ? This therefore should stir up our affections to Christ, to be faithful in our conjugal affection as the spouse of Christ, to say, 'My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's,' Cant. 2:16. Christ calls his church, 'My love and my dove,' Cant. 6:9. Does Christ delight in us, and God delight in Christ, and shall not we delight in Christ that delights in us, and in whom God delights? In I Cor. 16:22, the apostle is bold to pronounce a bitter curse, 'Anathema Maranatha,' upon him that loves not the Lord Christ Jesus, a most bitter curse. When Christ shall become a servant to do our work for us, to suffer for us, to bear the burden of our sins upon the tree, to become our husband, to bestow his riches upon us, to raise us to the same condition with himself, and withal to be such, a one as God has chosen out to love and delight in as the best object of his love, and most capable of it, and for us not to solace and delight ourselves in him that God delights in, when God delights in him for our sake. God loves and delights in him for the work of salvation and redemption by his blood, and shall not we love and embrace him for his love which is for our good? What good has God by it but only the glory of his mercy, in saving our souls through Christ? Therefore if God

love him for the good he does to us, much more should we love him for the fruit of it that we receive ourselves.

It should shame us therefore when we find dulness and coldness upon us, that we can hear of anything better than of Christ; and arguments concerning Christ are cold to us. Alas! Where is our love, and joy, and delight; and when we can make no better but a carnal use of the incarnation and other benefits by Christ? We should therefore desire God to shed the love of Christ into our hearts more and more, that we may feel in our souls the love that he bears to us, and may love God and Christ again, for that that he has done for us.

Hence we have also a ground of estimation of Christians to be excellent persons. Does God value poor sinful souls so much as to give Christ for them to become a Saviour? Does he delight in Christ for giving himself for them? And shall not we love one another whom God and Christ so loves?

But if God love and delight in those that are in Christ, with the same love and delight that he has in him, how shall I know that I am in Christ, and that God thus delights in me?

Briefly, a man may know that he is in Christ, if he find the Spirit of Christ in him; for the same Spirit when Christ took our nature, that sanctified that blessed mass whereof he was made, when there was a union between him and the second person, the same Spirit sanctifies our souls and bodies. There is one Spirit in the head and in the members. Therefore if we find the Spirit of Christ in us, we are in Christ and he in us. Now this Spirit is renewing, 'Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature,' 2 Cor. 5:17; all is new, 'old things are done away,' the old manner of language, the old disposition, old affections, old company, all old things are past, all is new; and if a man be a new creature, he has right and title to 'the new heaven and new earth,' 2 Pet. 3:13. Let us examine the work of grace in us. If there be no change in us we have no present interest in Christ. We have to do with him because he is still wooing us to be in him, but as yet we have no title to him.

The very beholding of Christ is a transforming sight. The Spirit that makes us new creatures, and stirs us up to behold this servant, it is a transforming beholding. If we look upon him with the eye of faith, it will make us like Christ; for the gospel is a mirror, and such a mirror, that when we look into it, and see ourselves interested in it, we are changed from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3:18. A man cannot look upon the love of God and of Christ in the gospel, but it will change him to be like God and Christ. For how can we see Christ, and God in Christ, but we shall see how God hates sin, and this will transform us to hate it as God does, who hated it so that it could not be expiated but with the blood of Christ, God-man. So, seeing the holiness of God in it, it will transform us to be

holy. When we see the love of God in the gospel, and the love of Christ giving himself for us, this will transform us to love God. When we see the humility and obedience of Christ, when we look on Christ as God's chosen servant in all this, and as our surety and head, it transforms us to the like humility and obedience. Those that find not their dispositions in some comfortable measure wrought to this blessed transformation, they have not yet those eyes that the Holy Ghost requires here. 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen. my beloved in whom my soul delighteth.'

I will put my Spirit upon him. —Now we come to the qualification of Christ for his calling, in these words, I will put my Spirit upon him—that is, I will clothe him with my Spirit, I will put it, as it were, upon him as a garment.

Now there were divers degrees of Christ's receiving the Spirit at several times. For he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost did sanctify that blessed mass whereof his body was framed in the womb of the virgin, he was quickened in the womb in his conception by the Holy Ghost, and he was graced by the Holy Ghost, and led by the Spirit in all things before his baptism. But afterward, when he came to set upon his office, to be the prophet and priest and king of his church, that great office of saving mankind, which he did not solemnly set upon till he was thirty years old, then God poured upon him a special portion of the Spirit, answerable to that great calling, then the Spirit lighted upon him, Matt. 3:16. Christ was ordained to his office by the greatest authority that ever any was ordained from the beginning of the world. For at his baptism, when he was ordained and set apart to his office, there was the Father from heaven uttered an audible voice, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. 3:17; and there was Christ, the party baptized and installed into that great office; then there was the Holy Ghost, in the form and shape of a dove. It being a matter of the greatest consequence that ever was in the world, greater than the creation, it was fit it should be done with the greatest authority; and so it was, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost being present at the admission of Christ into his office. This is especially here intended, though the other be included, I will put my Spirit upon him that is, I will anoint him, as it is in Isa. 61:1, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,' says Christ, 'because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the prison for them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord'—that is, the year of jubilee, for that was a type of Christ, to preach the gospel deliverance to all that are in captivity, servitude, and thralldom under Satan and sin. This was accomplished when Christ, at his baptism, entered upon his office. God put his Spirit upon him, to set him apart, to ordain him, and to equip him with abundance of grace for the work; for there are these three things especially meant by putting the Spirit upon him, separation or setting apart, and ordaining, and enriching with the gifts of the Spirit.

When any one is called to a great place, there is a setting apart from others, and an ordaining to that particular, and an equipping. If it be a calling of God, he equips where he ordains always.

It may be objected, Christ was God himself; he had the Spirit, and gives the Spirit; therefore, how could the Spirit be put upon him?

I answer, Christ is both God and man. Christ, as God, gives the Spirit to his human nature; so he communicates his Spirit. The Spirit is his Spirit as well as the Father's. The Spirit proceeds from them both. Christ, as man, receives the Spirit. God the Father and the Son put the Spirit upon the manhood of Christ; so Christ both gives and receives the Spirit in diverse respects. As God, he gives and sends the Spirit. The spiration and breathing of the Spirit is from him as well as from the Father, but as man he received the Spirit.

And this is the reason of it: next under the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Christ the Mediator, was to be the spring and original of all comfort and good. Therefore, Christ's nature must not only be sanctified and ordained by the Spirit; but he must receive the Spirit to enrich it, for whatsoever is wrought in the creature is by the Spirit. Whatsoever Christ did as man, he did by the Spirit. Christ's human nature, therefore, must be sanctified, and have the Spirit put upon it. God the Father, the first person in Trinity, and God the Son, the second, they work not immediately, but by the Holy Ghost, the third person. Therefore, whatsoever is wrought upon the creature, it comes from the Holy Ghost immediately. So Christ received the Holy Ghost as sent from the Father and the Son. Now as the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, so he works from the Father and the Son. He sanctifies and purifieth, and does all from the Father and the Son, and knits us to the Father and the Son; to the Son first, and then to the Father. Therefore it is said, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,' 2 Cor. 13:14; because all the communion we have with God is by the Holy Ghost. All the communion that Christ as man had with God was by the Holy Ghost; and all the communion that God has with us, and we with God, is by the Holy Ghost: for the Spirit is the bond of union between Christ and us, and between God and us. God communicates himself to us by his Spirit, and we communicate with God by his Spirit. God does all in us by his Spirit, and we do all back again to God by the Spirit. Because Christ, as a head, as the second Adam, was to be the root of all that are saved, as the first Adam was the root of all that are damned, he was therefore to receive the Spirit, and to have it put upon him in a more excellent and rich manner: for we must know that all things are first in Christ, and then in us.

God chose him first, and then he chose us. God singled him out to be the Saviour, the second Adam, and he calls us in Christ.

God justified Christ from our sins, being our surety, taking our sins upon him. We are justified, because he by his resurrection quit himself from the guilt of our sins, as having paid the debt.

Christ is the first fruits of them that rise again, I Cor. 15:20. We rise again because he is risen. Christ first ascended; we ascend in Christ. Christ is first loved; we are loved in the Beloved. Christ is first blessed; we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ, Eph. 1:8. So, whatsoever is in us, we have it at the second hand. We have the Spirit in us, but he is first in Christ; God has put the Spirit in Christ, as the spring, as the second Adam, as a public person, that should receive the Spirit for us all. He is first in all things; Christ must have the pre-eminence. He has the pre-eminence in all, both before time, in time, and after time, in election, in whatsoever is done here in this world, and in glorification. All is first in Christ, and then in us. He is the elder brother.

We must understand this, to give Christ his due honour and respect, and to know whence we have all we have. Therefore the Spirit is said here, first, to be 'put upon Christ.' We have not the Holy Ghost immediately from God, but we have him as sanctifying Christ first, and then us; and whatsoever the Holy Ghost does in us, he does the same in Christ first, and he does it in us because in Christ. Therefore, in John 16:14,15, Christ says, He shall take of mine. Whatsoever the Holy Ghost works in us, he takes of Christ first. How is that?

Thus: the Holy Ghost comforts us with reasons from Christ. He died, and has reconciled us to God; therefore, now God is at peace with thee. Here the Holy Ghost takes a ground of comfort from the death of Christ. When the Holy Ghost would raise a man up to holiness of life, he tells him, Christ thy Saviour and head is quickened, and is now in heaven, therefore we ought to rise to holiness of life. If the Holy Ghost be to work either comfort or grace, or anything, he not only does the same thing that he did first in Christ, but he does it in us by reasons from Christ, by grounds fetched from Christ. The Holy Ghost tells our souls that God loves Christ first, and he loves us in Christ, and that we are those that God gave Christ for, that we are those that Christ makes intercession for in heaven. The Holy Ghost witnesses to us the love of the Father and the Son, and so he fetches from Christ whatsoever he works.

And hence the work of the Holy Ghost is distinguished from illusions and delusions, that are nothing but frantic conceits of comfort that are groundless. The Holy Ghost fetches all from Christ in his working and comfort, and he makes Christ the pattern of all; for whatsoever is in Christ, the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Christ, works in us as it is in Christ. Therefore, in John 1:13, it is said, 'of

his fulness we receive grace for grace'—that is, grace answerable to his grace. There are three things that we receive answerable to Christ by the Spirit.

We receive grace—that is, the favour of God answerable to the favour God shows his Son. He loves his Son, he is graciously disposed to him, and he loves us.

So grace habitual. We have grace in us answerable to the grace in Christ. We have love answerable to his love, patience answerable to his patience, obedience and humility answerable to that in Christ. The Spirit works a conformity to Christ in all things.

Likewise, in the third place, the Spirit assures us of the same privileges that issue from grace. Christ is a Son; the Spirit tells us we are sons. Christ is an heir; the Spirit tells us we are heirs with Christ. Christ is the king of heaven and earth; the Spirit tells us that we are kings, that his riches are ours. Thus we have 'grace for grace,' both favour and grace in us, and privileges issuing from grace, we have all as they are in Christ. Even as in the first Adam we receive of his emptiness, curse for curse, ill for ill; for his blindness and rebellion we are answerable; we are born as he was after his fall: so in the second Adam, by his Spirit, we receive grace for grace.

Hence issues this, that our state now in Christ is far more excellent than our state in Adam was.

How does it spring hence?

Thus, Christ is God-man. His nature was sanctified by the Spirit; he was a more excellent person, he gives and sends the Spirit. Adam was only a mere man, and therefore his goodness could not be so derived to his posterity; for, however the Holy Ghost was in Adam, yet the Holy Ghost did not so fill him, he was not so in him as in Christ. The Holy Ghost is in Christ in a more excellent manner; for Christ being equal with God, he gave the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost comes from Christ as God. Now the second Adam being a more excellent person, we being in Christ the second Adam, we are in a more excellent, and in a more safe estate; we have a better keeper of our happiness than Adam. He being a mere man, he could not keep his own happiness, but lost himself and all his posterity. Though he were created after the image of God, yet being but a mere man, he showed himself to be a man—that is, a changeable creature; but Christ being God and man, having his nature sanctified by the Spirit, now our happiness is in a better keeping, for our grace has a better spring. The grace and sanctification we have, it is not in our own keeping, it distils into us answerable to our necessities; but the spring is inexhaustable, it never fails, the spring is in Christ. So the favour

that God bears us, it is not first in us, but it is first in Christ; God loves him, and then he loves us; he gives him the Spirit, and us in him. Now, Christ is the keeper both of the love of God towards us and the grace of God; and whatsoever is good he keeps all for us, he receives all for himself and for us; he receives not only the Spirit for himself, but he receives it as Mediator, as head: for 'we all of his fulness receive grace for grace.' He receives it as a fountain to diffuse it, I say. This shows us our happy and blessed condition in Jesus Christ, that now the grace and love of God and our happiness, and the grace whereby we are sanctified and fitted for it, it is not in our own keeping originally, but in our head Christ Jesus.

These be comfortable considerations, and, indeed, the life and soul of a Christian's life and comfort. If we conceive them aright, they will quicken us to obedience, and we shall know what the gospel is. To come to make some use of it.

I might observe this, that none should take that office upon them to which they are not called of God, nor qualified by his Spirit, especially ministers, because Christ did not set upon his office, till the Spirit was put upon him. The Spirit must enable us and fit us for everything. But I leave that, and come to that which concerns us all.

First, then, has God put the Spirit upon Christ, as the evangelist says in John 3:34, 'He whom God has sent'-that is Christ—he speaks the word of God: for God gives him not the Spirit by measure.' God does not stand measuring grace out to Christ, but he pours it out upon him, full measure, running over, because he receives it not for himself alone, but for us. We receive the Spirit by measure, Eph. 4:7, 'according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' Christ gives us all a measure of sanctifying knowledge and of every grace, till we 'grow to be a perfect man in Christ,' Eph. 4:13. Therefore it is called the 'first fruits of the Spirit,' Rom. 8:23, as much as shall fit us for heaven, and grace sufficient, though it be not that measure we shall have hereafter, or that we would have here. Christ had a full measure, the fulness of a fountain, diffusive, not only abundance for himself, but redundance, and overflowing for the good of others; he being the head of the church, not only a head of eminence, but of influence to bestow and convey all grace in him to all his members, proportionable to the service of every member. Therefore he received not the Spirit according to measure—that is, sparingly—but it was showered upon him; he was filled and clothed with the Holy Ghost.

Is it so? Let us labour, then, to see where to have supply in all our wants. We have a full treasury to go to. All treasure is hid in Christ for us. What a comfort is this in anything we lack! If we lack the favour of God, go to his beloved Christ,

desire God to love us in his beloved, and to accept us in his gracious Son, in him whom he has made his servant, and anointed with his Spirit for that purpose.

If we lack particular graces, go to the well-head Christ, consider of Christ now filled for us, as it was in Aaron. The oil that was poured on Aaron's head ran down to his beard, and to the skirts of his clothing, Psa. 133:2, the meanest parts of his garment were bedewed with that oil: so the graces of God's Spirit poured upon our head Christ, our Aaron, our High Priest, run down upon us, upon all ranks of Christians, even upon the skirts, the weakest and lowest Christians. Every one has grace for grace; we all partake of the oil and anointing of our spiritual Aaron, our High Priest. If we lack anything, therefore, let us go to him. I can do all, says St Paul, in Christ that strengthens me, Philip. 4:13. Go to him for patience, for comfort, for everything, because God has put his Spirit upon him, to supply all our deficiencies; he has the oil of gladness above his fellows, Psa. 45:7; but for his fellows he has the oil of grace more than any, but it is not only for him, but for us all. Therefore, let us have comfortable meditations of the fulness of Christ, and make use of it, all this is for me. In Col. 2:9, St Paul sets it out, 'in him the fulness of the Godhead dwells personally;' for that is meant by somatikwV, and it follows after, 'in him we are complete.' Wherefore is all the fulness that is in him? to show that in him we are complete. So, in I John 5:20, 21, to show how the spirits of the apostles agree, 'we know that the Son of God is come in the flesh, and has given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is true God and eternal life.' Christ is true God and eternal life for us all; for our comfort, 'we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, &c. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' How does this depend upon the other? Thus;

Will you go to idols, stocks and stones, devices of men's brain, for supply of grace and comfort? Christ, whom God has sent, he is come into the world; he is God and eternal life. 'God has given eternal life, and this life is in his Son,' I John 5:11; therefore why should you go to idols?

What is the ground of popish idolatries and abominations? They conceive not aright of the fulness of Christ, wherefore he was ordained, and sent of God; for if they did, they would not go to idols and saints, and leave Christ. Therefore let us make this use of it, go out of Christ for nothing. If we want favour, go not to saints, if we want instruction, go; not to traditions of men. He is a prophet wise enough, and a priest full enough to make us accepted of God. If we lack any grace, he is a king able enough, rich enough, and strong enough to subdue all our rebellions in us, and he will in time by his Spirit overcome all, 'Stronger is he that is in us than he that is in the world,' I John 4:4. The spirit in the world, the devil and devilish-minded men, they are not so strong as the Spirit of Christ; for by little and little the Spirit of Christ will subdue all. Christ is a king, go not out of

him therefore for anything. 'Babes, keep yourselves from idols,' I John 5:21. You may well enough, you know whom to go to.

Therefore let us shame ourselves. Is there such a store-house of comfort and grace every way in Christ? Why are we so weak and comfortless? Why are we so dejected as if we had not such a rich husband? All our husband's riches are ours for our good, we receive of it in our measure, why do we not go to the fountain and make use of it? Why, in the midst of abundance, are we poor and beggarly? Here we may see the misery of the world. Christ is a prophet to teach us the way to heaven, but how few be there that will be directed by him 'Christ is a king to subdue all our spiritual and worst enemies, to subdue those enemies that kings tremble at, to subdue death, to subdue the fear of judgment and the wrath of God, and yet how few will come under his government! 'Christ is the light of the world,' John 9:5, yet how few follow him! Christ is the way, yet how few tread in his steps! Christ is our wisdom and our riches, yet how few go to him to fetch any riches, but content themselves with the transitory things of this life! Men live as if Christ were nothing, or did nothing concern them, as if he were a person abstracted from them, as if he were not a head or husband, as if he had received the Spirit only for himself and not for them, whereas all that is in Christ is for us. I beseech you therefore let us learn to know Christ better, and to make use of him.

Again, if Christ has 'the Spirit put upon him for us all,' then in our daily slips and errors make this use, to offer Christ to God with this argument. Take an argument from God himself to bind him. God will be bound with his own arguments. We cannot bind him with ours, but let us go to him and say, Lord, though I be thus and thus sinful, yet for Christ Jesus' sake thy servant, whom thou lovest and hast put thy Spirit upon him to be a priest, and to make intercession for me, for his sake pardon, for his sake accept. Make use of God's consecration of Christ by the Spirit to God himself, and bind him with his own mediator, and with his own priest of his own ordaining. Thou canst not, Lord, refuse a Saviour and mediator of thine own, sanctified by thine own Spirit, whom thou hast set apart, and ordained and qualified every way for this purpose. Let us go to God in the name of this mediator Jesus Christ every day, and this is to make a good use of this, that God has 'put his Spirit upon him.'

But to make a use of trial, how shall we know that this comfort belongs to us, that Christ has the Spirit put upon him for us or no, whether he be ordained a king, priest, and prophet for us? That which I said before will give light to this. We must partake of the same Spirit that Christ has, or else we are none of his members. As we partake of his name, so we must also of his anointing. Thereupon we are called Christians, because we partake of the anointing and Spirit of Christ, and if we have the Spirit of Christ, it will work the same in us as it did in Christ, it will convince us of our own ill, of our rebellions, and cursed

estate, and it will convince us likewise of the good we have in him. And then, he is a Spirit of union, to knit us to Christ, and make us one with him, and thereupon to quicken us, to lead us, and guide us, and to dwell in us continually, to stir up prayers and supplications in us, to make us cry familiarly to God as to a Father, to comfort and support us in all our wants and miseries, as he did Christ, 'to help our infirmities,' as the apostle at large, in Rom. 8:20, sets down the excellent office of the Holy Ghost, what he does in those that are Christ's. Let us therefore examine ourselves, what the Spirit does in us, if Christ be set apart to redeem us as a priest. Surely all his offices go together. He does by the same Spirit rule us, Rev. 1:5, 'He has washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests.' Whosoever he washes in his blood he makes him a king and a priest, he makes him by the power of his Spirit able to rule over his base corruptions. We may know then, whether we have benefit by Christ by his Spirit, not only by the Spirit witnessing that we are the sons of God, but by some arguments whereby the Spirit may witness without delusion. For though the Spirit of Christ tells us that we are Christ's, yet the proof must be from guiding and leading, and comforting and conforming us to Jesus Christ, in making us kings and prophets, enlightening our understandings to know his will, and conforming us to be like him. The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of power and strength. It will enable us to perform duties above nature, to overcome ourselves and injuries, it will make us to lack and to abound, it will make us able to live and to die, as it enabled Christ to do things that another man could not do. So a Christian can do that, and suffer that that another man cannot do and suffer, because he has the Spirit of Christ.

At the least, whosoever has the Spirit of Christ, he shall find that Spirit in him striving against that which is contrary, and by little and little getting ground. Where there is no conflict, there is no Spirit of Christ at all. I will not be large in the point, only I speak this by way of trial, to know whether we have the Spirit of Christ in us or no. If not, we have nothing to do with Christ; for Christ saves us not as he is out of us only. Christ was to do something of himself that we have no share in, only the good of it is ours. He was to redeem us by his blood, to be a sacrifice. The title to heaven and salvation was wrought by Christ out of us. But there is somewhat that he does not only for us, but he works in us by his Spirit, that is, the fitting of us for that he has given us title to, and the applying Of that that he has done for us. Whosoever therefore has any benefit by Christ, he has the Spirit to apply that to himself and to fit and qualify him to be a member of such a head, and an heir of such a kingdom. Whosoever Christ works anything for, he does also work in them. There is a Spirit of application, and that Spirit of application, if it be true, it is a Spirit of sanctification and renovation fitting us every way for our, condition.

Let us not abuse ourselves, as the world commonly does, concerning Christ. They think God is merciful, and Christ is a Saviour. It is true, but what has he

wrought in thee by his Spirit? Hast thou the Spirit of Christ? Or 'else thou art none of his,' Rom. 8:9. Wherever Christ is, he goes with his Spirit to teach us to apply what Christ has done for us, and to fit us to be like him. Therefore, let those that live in any sins against conscience, think it a diabolical illusion to think God and Christ is merciful. Aye, but where is the work of the Spirit? All the hope thou hast is only that thou art not in hell as yet, [only] for the time to come; but for the present I dare not say thou hast anything to do with Christ, when there is nothing of the Spirit in thee. The Spirit of Christ conforms the spouse to be like the husband, and the members to be like the head. Therefore, beg of Christ that he would anoint himself king in our hearts, and prophet and priest in our hearts, to do that that he did, to know his will as a prophet, to rule in us as a king, and to stir up prayers in us as a priest, to do in some proportion that that he does, though it be in never so little a measure, for we receive it in measure, but Christ beyond measure. We must labour for so much as may manifest to us the truth of our estate in Christ, that we are not dead but living branches.

But how or by what means does Christ give his Spirit to us? This Spirit that is so necessary for us, it is given by the ministry of the gospel, which is the ministry of the Spirit. 'Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith preached?' Gal. 3:2. When the love of God in Christ, and the benefits by Christ, are laid open in the preaching of the gospel to us, God gives his holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Now God in Christ would save us by a triumphant and abundant love and mercy, and the Spirit of God never goes but where there is a magnifying of the love and mercy of God in Christ; therefore the ministry of the gospel, which only discovers the amity and love of God to mankind, being now reconciled in Christ, it is accompanied with the Spirit, to assure us of our part and portion in those benefits, for the Spirit is the fruit of God's love as well as Christ. Christ is the first gift, and the Spirit is the second, therefore that part of the word that reveals God's exceeding love to mankind, leaving angels when they were fallen, in their cursed estate, and yet giving his Son to become man, and 'a curse for us:' the revealing of this love and mercy of God, and of his Son Christ to us, is joined with the Spirit. For by the Spirit we see our cursed estate without the love and mercy of God in Christ, and likewise we are convinced of the love of God in Christ, and thereupon we love God in return, and trust to his mercy, and out of love to him perform all cheerful obedience. Whatsoever we do else, if it be not stirred by the Spirit, apprehending the love of God in Christ, it is but morality. A man shall never go to heaven except by such a disposition and frame and temper of soul as is wrought by the Holy Ghost, persuading the soul first of the love and favour of God in Christ. What are all our performances if they be not out of love to God? And how shall we love God except we be persuaded that he loves us first? Therefore the gospel breeds love in us to God, and has the Spirit together with it, working a blessed frame of sanctification, whereby we are disposed to every good duty. Therefore if we would have the Spirit of God, let us attend upon the sweet promises of salvation, upon the

doctrine of Christ; for together with the knowledge of these things, the Holy Ghost slides and insinuates and infuses himself into our souls.

Therefore the ministers of the gospel should be much in laying open the riches of God in Christ. In unfolding Christ, all other things will follow, as St Paul in Titus 2:11,12) 'The grace of God has shined, has appeared gloriously, teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily and soberly in this present world.' Where the grace and love of God is persuaded and shed into the soul, all will follow.

What is the reason that former times were called dark times (and so they were), the times of popery a dark age? Christ was veiled, the gospel was veiled, there was no preaching of salvation by Christ alone, people were sent to stocks and stones, and to saints, and instead of the word, they were sent to legends and such things. Christ was obscured, thereupon they were dark ages. Those ages wherein the Spirit of God is most, is where Christ is most preached, and people are best always where there is most Spirit; and they are most joyful and comfortable and holy, where Christ is truly laid open to the hearts of people. The preaching of mere morality, if men be not careful to open Christ, to know how salvation is wrought by Christ, and how all good comes by Christ, it will never make a man perfectly good and fit him for heaven. It may make a man reform many abuses, like a philosopher, which has its reward and respect amongst men, but nothing to give comfort at the hour of death and the day of judgment. Only that whereby the Spirit is conveyed, is the knowledge and preaching of Christ in his state and offices.

And he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.—After Christ was fully prepared, as he was prepared with the Spirit of God, and with a commission from heaven, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, having this high commission, and gifts for it by the Spirit, he falls upon his office presently. We are never fit for anything till we have the Spirit, and when we have the Spirit it is active and vigorous and working. 'He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.'

He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.—These words set down the mild and sweet and amiable manner of Christ's carriage upon earth. Here, in his first coming to work the great work of our redemption, he did not carry the matter in an outward glorious manner, in pomp; but he would have his miracles concealed oftentimes and himself hidden. His Godhead was hid under the veil of his manhood. He could not have wrought our salvation otherwise. If the devil and the world had known Christ to be as he was, they would never have made those attempts against him. Therefore, considering he had such a dispensation to work our salvation as a king, priest, and prophet, he would not cry and contend and strive, he would not come with any great noise.

Now, here is an opposition to the giving of the law, and likewise to the coming and carriage of civil princes. You know when the law was given all the mount was on fire, and the earth thereabout quaked and trembled, and the people fled. They could not endure to hear the voice of God speaking in the mount; there was such a terrible smoke and fire, they were all afraid. Thus came Moses. Now, did Christ come as Moses? Was the gospel delivered by Christ as the law was, in terrors and fears? Oh, no. Christ came not in such a terrible manner, in thunder and lightning; but the gospel, it came sweetly. A dove, a mild creature, lit upon the head of Christ when he was baptized, to show his mild manner of carriage; and he came with blessing in his mouth in his first sermon of all: Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,' Matt. 5:8,4,6. The law came with curses: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them ' Gal. 3:10. Christ came in another manner; the gospel was delivered in a mild, sweet manner. Christ, as an ambassador, came sweetly to entreat and beseech. There is a crying, indeed, but it is a crying out of love and entreaty, not a shouting in a terrible manner as was at the giving of the law, no, nor as at the coming of other civil princes into a city, with shouting and noise of trumpets, with pomp, and state, and great attendants. Christ came not into the world to execute his kingdom and office in such pomp and noise as it is said of Agrippa, Acts 25:23, 'He came with great pomp.' So worldly princes carry things thus, and it is needful in some sort. People must have shows and pomp; the outward man must have outward things to astonish it withal. It is a policy in state so to do. But Christ came in another manner. He came not to make men quake and tremble that came to speak and deal with him. He came not with clamour and fierceness; for who would have come to Christ then? But he came in a mild, and sweet, and amiable manner. We see a little before the text (ver. 16), upon occasion of the inference of these words, he commands and charges them that they should not reveal him and make him known. When he had done a good work he would not have it known.

Now, there are three things especially insinuated in this description,

He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street.' That Christ should not be outwardly glorious to publish his own excellency, nor contentious; he should not cry nor quarrel, nor he should not be clamorous, if he had any wrong, to be all on fire presently, but he should be as a meek lamb, he should make no noise, he should not come in vainglory or clamour, &c.

But here we must know that Christ was a wise discerner of the fitness of times; for sometimes he would have things published, sometimes he would not; sometimes he would be known, sometimes he would not. Christ, in his second coming, shall come all in majesty and glory with his angels, and all the earth

shall appear before him; but now his wisdom told him, now he came to save the world as a prophet, priest, and king, to work man's salvation, that he must hide and conceal himself; and so he ordered all his courses by discretion. Every sacrifice must be salted with salt, everything should be seasoned with the salt of discretion. This is the steward of all our actions, to know what is fit. Christ knew it was fittest to conceal himself now at this time.

Now, by Christ's example we should learn this, not to be vainglorious, not to make a great noise. You have some, if they do anything that is good, presently all the world must know it. This was not Christ's disposition. It is a disposition that is hardly wrought out of man's heart without an exceeding great measure of the Spirit of God; for we see good men have been given this way. David would number the people, that it might be known what a great monarch he was, what a great number of people he had, 2 Sam. 24. He was a good man, yet vainglorious. He smarted for it. So good Hezekiah. Ambassadors were sent to him from the king of Babylon, and that they should know that Hezekiah was no beggarly prince, out must come the vessels of the temple and all his treasures, to show what a rich king the king of Judah was, 2 Kings 20:13, et seq. His vainglory cost him all his riches, as the prophet told him. So the disciples. Before they received a great measure of the Spirit, how vainglorious were they! They contended for the higher place; therefore they advise Christ to go up to Jerusalem, that he might be known. As Jehu said to Jonadab, 'Come up and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,' 2 Kings 10:16, he accounts it nothing unless it be seen. So flesh and blood. If there be anything done that is good, all the world must know it presently. Christ charged them that no noise should be made, but that they should conceal him.

What should we learn hence?

To be of Christ's disposition, that is, to have no more care of the knowledge of things than the light of the things themselves will discover, to do works of light, and if the things themselves will break forth to men's eyes and they must see our light shine, then let them, and imitate our good works; but for us to blazon them abroad ourselves, it is not the spirit of Christ.

Let us labour to have humility of spirit, that that may grow up with us in all our performances, that all things that we speak and do may savour of a spirit of humility, that we may seek the glory of God in all things more than our own.

And let us commit the fame and credit of what we are or do to God. He will take care of that. Let us take care to be and to do as we should, and then for noise and report, let it be good or ill as God will send it. We know oftentimes it falls out that that which is precious in man's eye is abominable in God's. If we seek to be in the mouths of men, to dwell in the talk and speech of men, God will abhor us,

and at the hour of death it will not comfort us what men speak or know of us, but sound comfort must be from our own conscience and the judgment of God. Therefore, let us labour to be good in secret. Christians should be as minerals, rich in the depth of the earth. That which is least seen is his riches. We should have our treasure deep. For the disclosure of it we should be ready when we are called to it, and for all other accidental things, let them fall out as God in his wisdom sees good. So let us look through good report and bad report to heaven; let us do the duties that are pleasing to God and our own conscience, and God will be careful enough to get us applause. Was it not sufficient for Abel, that though there was no great notice taken what faith he had, and how good a man he was, yet that God knew it and revealed it? God sees our sincerity and the truth of our hearts, and the graces of our inward man, he sees all these, and he values us by these, as he did Abel. As for outward things there may be a great deal of deceit in them, and the more a man grows in grace, the less he cares for them. As much reputation as is fit for a man will follow him in being and doing what he should. God will look to that. Therefore we should not set up sails to our own meditations, that unless we be carried with the wind of applause, to be becalmed and not go a whit forward; but we should be carried with the Spirit of God and with a holy desire to serve God, and our brethren, and to do all the good we can, and never care for the speeches of the world, as St Paul says of himself: 'I care not what ye judge of me, I care not what the world judgeth, I care not for man's judgment,' I Cor. 4:3. This is man's day. We should, from the example of Christ, labour to subdue this infirmity which we are sick of naturally. Christ concealed himself till he saw a fitter time. We shall have glory enough, and be known enough to devils, to angels, and men ere long. Therefore, as Christ lived a hidden life, that is, he was not known what he was, that so he might work our salvation, so let us be content to be hidden men. A true Christian is hidden to the world till the time of manifestation comes. When the time came, Christ then gloriously revealed what he was; so it shall be revealed what we are. In the mean time, let us be careful to do our duty that may please the Spirit of God, and satisfy our own conscience, and leave all the rest to God. Let us meditate, in the fear of God, upon these directions for the guidance of our lives in this particular.