

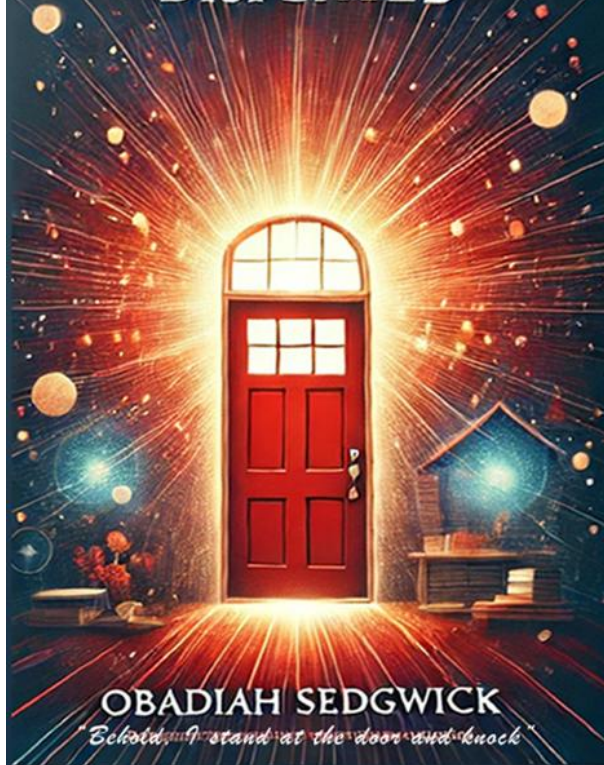
THE RICHES OF GRACE DISPLAYED



OBADIAH SEDGWICK

Behold, I stand at the door and knock

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GRACE
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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My sincere apologies in advance where such errors occur. As the Puritan Edward Leigh once said "If thou findest faults and Errata in the book, let love cover them, for to err (as the Satirist saith) is the sad privilege of mortality, and he (of all men) erreth most, who challengeth a privilege from error." Also, the symbol <H&G>, when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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PREF. To the Christian Reader.

Christian Reader,

It hath pleased the most wise disposer of all things, by bodily infirmity, to render me unable to be serviceable to his glory and the good of his Church, in my public Ministry: And though I did account it one of the greatest happiness under heaven, that God was pleased to use me in so honorable a service, yet through mercy, I have learned to be willing to submit to the good pleasure of God herein, and to say with David, If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. God hath no need of any for his service, neither may we prescribe unto him in what way he will be honored by us. If therefore God shall be pleased to make me further useful to the Church of Christ, in publishing of anything that I have preached: In this I shall rejoice, only let me desire thee to take heed of imperfect notes and false copies that may be injuriously published under my name to the public prejudice; I find that Paul was necessitated to subscribe the salutation in the close of all his

Epistles, with his own hand to be the sign in every Epistle, to characterize his own writings from counterfeits, or such as by forgery should be fathered upon him. A wicked practice which was successively continued by men of corrupt minds, in divers Ages after the Apostles times; neither am I altogether secure from such attempts, having lately had experience of the daring boldness of one to enter that as his copy under my name, the very title whereof carries in it a manifest building again of that which we have destroyed; yea, if others should not go so far, yet the publishing of broken and imperfect notes, may bring no small prejudice, not only to the Author, but also to the Church of God; which is the more to be feared, because it is grown so common a practice for mercenary men, who look no higher than their own private gain, to claim so great an interest in the publishing of their imperfect copies, as that the Author himself, or those entrusted by him, shall not be consulted withal for the review or correcting of them; The preventing of such abuses I shall carefully endeavor, both by myself whilst I remain in this Tabernacle, and what I may after my dissolution, by entrusting some godly friends and brethren with the perusal of my notes, that such only may be published as shall be found most useful for public benefit and edification. I have now prepared for thee this little Manual, in which there is discovered so much of the flowing's and rich emanations of that fullness of grace that is in Christ, as that whatsoever the workmanship of it may be, yet the matter of it is such, as cannot but find acceptance, especially with those who have had so much experience of the riches of that grace, as that they cannot but earnestly desire to feel more of it; if in this or any other of my notes I may be instrumental for the Churches good, let God have the glory, and myself thy earnest prayers, who am,

Thine in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Obadiah Sedgwick.

SERMON I.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.

These words contain in them three parts.

1. The gracious behavior of Christ towards poor sinners; where you have,
 1. The matter of it: twofold,
 1. He stands at the door.
 2. He knocks at the door.
 2. The wonder of it (Behold, I stand, &c.)
2. The dutiful behavior of sinners, delivered by way of supposition or condition.
 1. If any man hear my voice.
 2. And if any man open the door, both these may be amplified by,
 1. The conjunction of the duties, Hear and open; Not hear only.

2. The indefiniteness of the subject, If any man, no sinner is excluded by Christ, but he who excludes himself.

3. The comfortable event upon this hearing and opening. Expressed in three particulars,

1. Christ will come in to him.
2. He will sup with him.
3. And such a person shall sup, or feast with Christ.

Before I insist on any Proposition, two things must be touched, viz.

1. The Explication of the words, which are all along metaphorical.
2. The resolution of a scruple or two.

For the Explication: These questions must be unfolded.

[*Quest.*] What door is in this place meant.

[*Sol.*] A door (properly) is an entering into, and a passage out of a house, such was the door at which Peter knocked, Acts 12:13.

But Metaphorically. It is applied, sometimes,

1. To Christ, Joh. 10:1. I am the door. Heaven is our Palace, Christ Jesus is the door, his merits are the key to open it.

2. To the Gospel, Acts 14:27. God hath opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles: By the Gospel there is a mutual passage made for Christ to enter into us, and for us to enter into Christ.

3. To the heart of man: As in this place: Now this door is in different respects, an open door, and a shut door.

In respect of sin and Satan, This door still stands open; sinful lusts freely come out, and sinful suggestions freely come in at it.

But in respect of Christ and Grace, It is a shut door locked up by ignorance, and barred up by hardness, and infidelity: so that consider any

man in his mere natural condition, Christ is not within him, but without him: He is not a guest, but a stranger, the door is shut against Christ.

[*Quest.*] 2. What is meant by Christ's standing at this door, and knocking?

[*Sol.*] I answer, Three things are meant by them.

1. Christ's willingness to do a sinner good; to have entrance, to be admitted. Christ is a thousand times more willing to come to thee, then thou art to come to Christ: He is at the door before e're you think of him.

2. Christ's earnest desire, his active pains with a sinful soul. He doth not only come to the door, but knocks at the door, so that oftentimes he breaks open the door; coming and calling will not be heard, and therefore he knocks.

3. Christ's patient expectation of a sinners opening. He doth not come and go away presently; Nor ask, and go away presently; nor call, and go away presently; no, nor knock, and go away presently; But he stands and knocks: His standing at the door notes his continuing patience, and his continuing study of our salvation; his knocking, notes his earnest importunity.

[*Quest.*] 3. What the knocking at the door implies.

[*Sol.*] In the general, it is some preventing, previous, evangelical, and potent work of Christ towards and upon a sinner, making way for his gracious entrance, and admission into to the soul.

It is a work wherein Christ stands alone; a beginning work, and a work towards and upon a sinner. God (saith one) works many things in us, without us, in which we are only patients, and with us, in which we are made agents.

The will is made good, and joins with God, being first joined to him, but this knocking whatsoever it be, it is none of ours, it is Christ's work, his work upon us and within us.

In particular Christ knocks, either,

1. *Revelando*, by preaching and publishing the accomplishment of our salvation by himself, and the capacity and possibility of any sinner's interest in it, and also the methods and ways for the sinner partake thereof.

2. *Vocando*, by offering this acquired or purchased salvation upon the most gracious terms, even such as nothing can hinder the sinner from it, but his own stubbornness and carelessness.

3. *Irradiando*, by letting fall so much light as to see, both the divine beauty of it, and the sinner's necessity to accept of it. You know who and whence I am, said Christ unto the Pharisees.

4. *Inspirando*; by conveying some things which work upon the will of a sinner, to desire and embrace this Christ and his salvation.

5. *Increpando*, by threatening the sinning soul if it will withstand, if it will not be gathered, if it will not open: you shall die in your sins, the wrath of God will abide on you. Your house shall be left desolate.

6. *Immutando*, which Austin calls, *vocationem Altissimam*, and Driedo calls *suasionem exaltissimam*; In this there is not only the *Immission* of a good thought, but also the *Immutation* of a bad and rebellious will; the Divine mercy in and by this, hath so touched and affected the will of a sinner, that he now comes to himself with compunction and displeasure, and flies unto that grace of God in Christ, which a little before he minded not, or contemned.

[*Quest.*] 4. What is meant by hearing his voice, and opening of the door?

[*Sol.*] I conceive three things also in this.

1. A listening to what Christ speaks, and offers to treat with us about.

2. A belief of him in what he speaks, with an approbation of himself and offer.

3. A consent of the will, yielding to let Christ come into the heart, and to give him a real welcome.

Now to the scruples.

[*Case*] 1. Whether these words do not set up the liberty and power of a natural will, that it is able of itself to open the door to Christ.

[*Sol.*] I answer: No, the words are Metaphorical, and their scope keeps only this Analogy, That as when a door is shut, if a man will have entry, there must be knocking by the one party, and opening by the other party; so if we will be saved by Christ, as there must be a knocking on Christ's part, so there must be opening of the heart on our part.

2. But to give a further answer, know that this and the like Exhortations,

1. Are instances of our duty, not testimonies of our self-ability, they show what we should do, not what we can do.

2. Are conveyances of strength, not cognizance's of our own power. Christ by commanding us to do, helps us to do. Evangelical Exhortations are a power, as well as a letter. And they are *verba operativa*, as well as *praeceptiva*.

3. Are Items for our prayers, not hints of our sufficiency, God commands such things as we cannot do, that we might know what to ask of him. Austin said well: God's Commands exceed our strength, because we should pray to him whose strength exceeds his commands.

And therefore the same Father sums up all exactly, Oh man, in the Command know what thou oughtest to do; in the Reproof know that it is through thy own fault thou canst not do it; in Prayer know whether thou receivest strength to perform.

4. Are platforms of our conjunction, not evidences of our inclination: (that is) They do not show what the will of man can do of itself, but rather what

is done when the soul and Christ come to be united (namely) that he is willing to enter, and we are willing to admit, to receive, to entertain him.

[*Case*] 2. Whether there be a universal and sufficient grace afforded to all, because, here it is said, If any, &c.

[*Sol.*] I will not canvas this difficulty in this Auditory, only in a word thus.

1. There is a Universality,

Of proposition: this in some sense granted.

Of collation: this is denied.

2. There is a sufficiency so as to leave men inexcusable, and there is a sufficiency to conversion, this latter only to a few, the former is more general.

3. If you speak of all men absolutely, that have been, are, or shall be in the world, the Proposition is denied.

If you speak of all in the evangelical world (that is) to whom the Gospel is preached, It is granted that the tender is indefinitely universal, and enough is offered if men did accept of it.

There are five propositions principally observable out of the text.

1. That Christ is exceeding willing to come in to sinners and to save them.

2. That Jesus Christ waits long upon sinners and earnestly labors with them for entrance.

3. That the door of the heart must be opened to Christ, and then he will enter in.

4. That whatsoever any sinners condition hath been and is, yet if he open to Christ, Christ will be his.

5. If the soul will give entrance to Christ, there shall ensue a sweet communion 'twixt it and Christ.

Observation 1. That Jesus Christ is exceeding ready and willing to come in to sinners and to save them, Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

There are five things in the Text, and from the precedent part of this Epistle to the Church of Laodicea, which plainly demonstrate the truth of the proposition.

1. If you observe first the quality of the persons, at whose doors Christ did stand and knock.

1. They were a mere formal people, there was little or no power of godliness at all in them (ver. 15. Thou art neither hot nor cold,) A company of mere hypocrites, or at least of formal professors.

2. They were a proudly conceited people (ver. 17. Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.)

3. They were (in respect of all spirituals) a most destitute people: not a doot of goodness, nor any one rag of grace; nor good in any one part, (ver. 19. Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They could bring nothing at all to Christ, there was not any one thing considerable in them; nay, everything which might raise distaste and disregard.) And all this miserable condition, was the more miserable, because they were thus miserable and knew it not.

4. They were so provokingly sinful, that Christ's stomach had much ado to bear with them. He could hardly forbear to spew them out of his mouth, (ver. 16.)

Yet at their doors does Christ stand and knock, He begs at the door of beggars, mercy begs to misery, happiness begs to wretchedness, riches begs to poverty, light begs to blindness, and all sufficiency begs to nakedness, and beseeches those poor and miserable sinners to take gold from him,

those naked sinners to take raiment from him, and those blind sinners to take ointment from him, (ver. 18.)

2. If you consider the motions of Christ towards them.

1. In the order of motion: one would think that the poor should have come to the rich man's door, and the sick man have come or sent for the Physician; but behold! Here the rich man comes to the poor man's door, and the Physician comes to the sick man's house. They came not first to Christ, but Christ came first to them. Christ came not only to save, but also to seek that which was last: Christ prevents sinners with his kindness, and with their salvation.

2. In the degrees of motion, he comes to the door, and then he calls at the door: (ver. 18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire) and then he stands; (He doth not take every silence, nor every neglect of offer for an answer) and then he knocks at the door by some louder and stronger operation of his spirit, and all this is, that they would once hearken and open the door unto him, that he might enter.

3. If you consider the easiness of the terms upon which he would be theirs, as low as possibly could be; do but open the door and I will enter, and I will be yours. You know that in an ordinary way there can be no entering in till the doors be opened: Christ stands upon nothing with a sinner but this—open thy heart to let me in, and to receive me, or he stands on no more than needs must.

4. If you consider the indefiniteness of his desire, (If any man will hear and open the door, I will come in unto him:) as if he had said, I will not stand upon former miscarriages, not upon former hypocrisy, pride, blindness, baseness, wretchedness, I will not decline you because of such and such sins, I know that some of you have been more vile then others, but

I will pass by all in every one of you. Even the greatest sinner amongst you, shall enjoy the sweetest Savior; If he will but open the door, let him but give me entrance, and I will give him salvation.

5. If you consider the sweetness of his persuading and alluring Arguments: (let me but come in, and I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me.) Zacchaeus did let in Christ, and salvation came thereby unto him: Christ will be a feast wheresoever he comes: If we let him in by faith, he will bring all spiritual life and peace and comfort with him: Christ shall come one day to Judge, but now he comes to save sinners. Besides this evidence from the Text, there are divers other things which testify that Christ is exceeding willing to come in and save sinners. As,

1. His Actions, and passions for sinners.

1. He took his life to bring us life, led his life, to lead us unto life, laid down his life to save our souls.

2. He came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15.

3. And laid down his life for his sheep, Joh. 10:15. Offered himself to do and suffer for us, Lo I come, Heb. 10:6,7.

4. Nay was straitened till it was done, Luk. 12:50. How am I straitened till it be accomplished: As if he had said, O sinners, I am come into the world for your sakes! I have endured the reproaches of men, the scourging's of men, the Anger of God, for your sakes I hung on the Cross for you, I bled out my soul for you, I laid in the grave for you, I rose again for you.

2. His professions, I came to seek that which was lost. The whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick: How often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathereth her chicken, &c?

3. His invitations, Isa. 55:1. Ho, everyone that thirsts, let him come, Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, Mat. 11:28. Whosoever will,

let him take the water of life freely, Rev. 22:17.

4. His expostulations: why will you not come to me? Why will you die? Yea, and his forcings of sinners, compel them to come to the wedding.

5. His acceptations: never did any sinner open to him but he entered into him; Never did any sinner come to him, but he accepted of him, Joh. 6:37. Him that comes unto me, I will in no wise reject.

There is a rejection,

1. Negative, in passing by.

2. Positive, in hating: neither of these for them that come to Christ: There are two Negatives in the Greek, I will not, not reject him, to take off all fears and disputes.

6. His compassions towards sinners, and that both to those,

1. That have still shut the door: He wept over Jerusalem, because she would not know the day of her visitation.

2. And to those that have opened the door unto him: How he ran to meet the lost child, and fell on his neck and kissed him; gives him not one harsh word: He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.

7. His frequent knockings at the door, and all of them to get us to open the door unto him: He knocks at every door of man.

1. At the ear of man that first wicket; by the preaching of the Word.

2. At the fore-door, the mind of man; by enlightening it to see its vile and lost condition without him.

3. At the Chamber-door, the conscience of man by strong troubles and despair of self-deliverance.

4. At the closet-door, the will and affections of man, by notable excitations to stand out no longer, but to yield and to receive him: Hearken unto me, and your souls shall live.

Or as Viega, or Pareus, &c. on this place; He knocks at the door by the Law, by the Cross, by light shining in the Gospel, by Councils, by the breathing, and aid of the Spirit.

8. His patient expectation; if answer be not presently given, yet he doth repeat his strokes, nay, though denial be many times given, yet he assays sinners again and again, waits after three years, one year more, on the fig-tree; stretches out his hand to a gainsaying people, (that is) to them that have said him nay, and that all the day long, Rom. 10:21, and of Jerusalem, he saith, How often would I have gathered thee, Mat. 23:37.

How many Sermons by one Minister to woo us to open our hearts to Christ? And when he is dead or gone, how many more by another? He hath stood at our doors more than one day or night, more than one week or two, more than one year or two, more than one twenty years or two. Would he do thus if he were not willing to come in and save us?

9. His rhetorical and soul-drawing Arguments: Partly,

1. Privative, ye shall not perish if ye will open to him.
2. Positive, ye shall have ever lasting life if you will open to him, Joh. 3:15,16, the words are doubled, whosoever believeth in him, he shall not perish he shall not perish, but he shall have everlasting life. Your sins (you fear) will damn you, but open to me and I will be your surety, I will undertake to satisfy God for them, and will assuredly deliver you from his wrath, and from damnation.

Your sins (you fear) will shut heaven against you: O fear it not: open the heart to receive me, and my blood shall open heaven to receive you.

10. His gracious Articles, he requires no more but open the door unto me.

1. He doth not say, If I find desert in you, then I will enter: O no, he hath entered into the most undeserving hearts: That woman in Joh. 4:7, &c. was

a very undeserving creature, In respect of worship, she was an ignorant and superstitious person, ver. 22. In respect of morals she was a common whore, ver. 18. In respect of present disposition she was an hard hearted wretch, she would not give Christ so much as a cup of cold water, ver. 9, nay a mocking sinner; almost at every word that Christ spake, and yet Christ stood not upon any of these.

And so for Paul, he was a blasphemer, he was injurious, he was a persecutor, &c.

2. Nor doth he say, if I find any holiness or comeliness in you, then I will enter, Ezek. 6:8. When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, Behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Ver. 6. When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live, yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live: O note, Live, live, live, and this was when thou wast in thy blood, in thy blood, in thy blood. All the condition that Christ stands on, is this, do but come, do but open to me, do but receive me.

And he is willing to work in you this condition too, for he hath appointed the Ministry of the Gospel upon hearing to be a word of faith, Rom. 10:17, yea, he did open the door in Lydia upon the hearing of Paul, Acts 16:14.

11. The opening of the door unto him, makes Christ,

1. Exceeding joyful: when the lost child came back; what rejoicing was there? It was meet (said his father, Luk. 15:32.) that we should make merry and be glad, For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.

2. Exceeding thankful, See Mat. 11:25. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast revealed these things unto babes: as if he had said, O my Father, this is such a mercy as my heart cannot contain itself, I must needs acknowledge this, &c.

[*Quest.*] But why should Christ be thus willing to enter into the hearts of sinners, and to save them?

[*Sol.*] The Reasons briefly are these. Because,

1. Not only that Philanthropy in him above all other creatures, His bowels of mercy and compassion.

2. Not only his perfection of obedience to his Fathers Will, whose Will he came down from heaven to do, Joh. 6:38. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who hath the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, ver. 40.

3. But also it is the very end of his Mediatorship: The conjunction of the divine and human nature in his person, was to conjoin us and God, to declare the name of his Father and his love. The qualifications of him with the grace of union, and with the grace of unction, was to perfect our Redemption and Salvation. Joh. 17:4. I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

4. It is the glory of Christ to do this, Joh. 17:10. All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. He glorifies all his attributes by it, of mercy, and kindness, and truth, and power.

He glorifier all his Offices by it: His Priestly Office, in that he is able to save to the utmost, Heb. 7:2,25,26.

His Prophetical office, that he can reveal the way of salvation, not only to the ears, but hearts of sinners. And his Regal office, that he can open the doors and come in as a King of glory, Psal. 24.

2 Cor. 8:23. If any inquire of Titus or our brethren, they are the Messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ. Believing and converted and saved sinners, they are the glory of Christ as so many lame diseased men cured, are the glory of a Physician.

[*Use 1.*] The first use shall be of reproof unto all such who do shut the doors against Jesus Christ, against a willing Christ, a saving Christ, a Christ that stands and knocks, who stand out and will not hearken to his calls, nor open to his knocks; they are guilty of the greatest sin in the world; they despise the greatest, the kindest, yea, the only salvation of their souls. This is as if a sick man should bolt the doors against his Physician; or as if a traitor should bar the door against his Princes pardon. O think of this you who have had Christ knocking at your doors so many years and would not open, the time is coming that you (like those foolish Virgins) shall knock at his door too and he will not open to you.

Hearken to this, you who can open your doors to every sinful temptation, to every sinful lust, to every call of the world, but have never opened your doors to let in Jesus Christ.

You shall have your will a while, and God will have his Will on you after a while: He will break open the doors of your consciences, and he will set open the doors of Hell for those sinners who will set open the doors for sin, but will shut their doors against Christ; the sick man doth deservedly perish who refuseth both the Physician and medicine too: why yellest thou in hell O damned soul? Was there not a Christ offered to thee on earth to save thee?

[*Use 2.*] For sensible and broken-hearted sinners, and lost in their own eyes, my exhortation is to you, Strive to believe that Jesus Christ is willing to enter into your hearts, and shut the doors no longer against him: but get

thy heart opened that Christ may enter in to wipe off those tears, to answer those doubts, to cleanse that house; to purify and pacify that troubled conscience of yours.

O remember! It is Jesus Christ,

1. Who did set mercy at liberty: without a Christ thou canst not expect the least mercy; by Jesus Christ thou mayest hope for the greatest mercy: Justice is satisfied, and now the mercy seat stands open: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief, said Paul, 1 Tim. 1:15.

2. Who must set conscience at liberty: The house will be full of trouble, till Christ comes in: As in Jairus house there was nothing but weeping till Christ came in and raised his daughter: Those in Act. 2:39, and he in Acts 16:39. There was nothing but pricking's and trembling's, till faith opened the door for Christ to come in, and then presently there was rejoicings by them all, the golden key of the Gospel must open that which was shut up by the iron key of the Law.

O strive to believe that Christ is willing to save a broken sinner: and to help you in this consider four things,

1. The door of a broken heart is the great door at which Christ knocks. He calls to such a sinner by name, come unto me: Behold he calls thee: open thy door for a broken Savior, O thou broken hearted sinner! Let me but come in, and I have oil to supple those sores of yours, and I have balm to cure those wounds of yours, and I have blood, and merits, and mercies to answer for those sins of yours; and I have a spirit to cleanse and beautify that soul of yours, you cannot need the thing which I have not, nor desire the good which I will not freely give unto you.

2. Jesus Christ hath broken through many of your doors already, to find you out and to get within you: He hath broken through the door of your ignorance, and through the door of yourself-conceitedness, and through the door of your consciences, there is but one door left, the door of your will; If you be but willing to take him, he stands upon no more.

3. The more able you are to believe that Christ is willing to enter your hearts, the more willing your hearts will be to open unto Christ.

The truth is, all that the troubled soul urgeth (if it be strictly observed) is the questioning of Christ's willingness to save it; All those objections of greatness of sinning's, of want of deeper humbling's, and want of holiness, of long resistances, of the variety of sinning's, of utter unworthiness, &c. Arise from this suspicion, Christ is not willing to save sinners: these are reasons (we think) that Christ will not save us.

Now why doest thou stick at this? For,

If he be willing to save any, it is to save sinners, and he never saved any but a sinner, who, because a sinner, was therefore unworthy: Must not Christ save because we deserve not to be saved? Must not he be merciful because we be sinful? Ah Lord, who then should be saved?

Hath he not saved the greatest of sinners! The crucified thief, the blaspheming Paul, the unclean Magdaline, the bloody Manasseh, the Sodomitical Corinthians, the Christ-killing Jews.

4. Lastly, know that all his anger is not against swearers and liars, and adulterers, assuredly his greatest displeasure is against unbelievers: This sin dishonors and grieves him more than all other sinning's.

[*Quest.*] But who can help it! Can we open the door?

[*Sol.*] No, nor must you yet shut the door! There are four doors if thou didst stand at more often, strength would come to open the door of thy

heart, viz.

1. The door of the blood of Christ; look upon it more, it speaks good and great things for a broken sinner.

2. The door of God's free, and full, and everlasting Covenant, study it better.

3. The door of the preaching of the Gospel, attend it oftener.

4. The door of heaven, by continual praying and waiting O never, never cease begging, O Lord, O Lord, Thou that callest, make me to hear, Thou that knockest make me to open, nay do thou by thine own spirit open my doors that the King of glory may come in.

SERMON II.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The readiness and willingness of Christ to come in to a sinner's heart, and save him (of which you heard much in a former Sermon) is particularly declared by two things in the Text, viz.

His patient expectation, (I stand at the door.)

His vehement solicitation, (and knock.)

I shall wrap them both up in one proposition, which is this,

That Jesus Christ waits long upon sinners, and earnestly labors with them for entrance or admission (he stands at the door and knocks.)

Thirty years did Christ in person wait upon the Jews, and preached, and wrought miracles. Forty years did he by his Spirit wait upon them in the Wilderness, and testified unto them by signs and wonders. One hundred and twenty years did he by the preaching of Noah and others wait upon the

world and did strive with them. These one thousand six hundred years hath he waited upon the Gentiles, that the fullness of them may come in. These eighty years (well near) hath he waited upon England. Twenty years (sometimes) he waits upon one sinner. Forty years upon another sinner. These sixty years hath he waited upon us. How often hath he said to us, as to the Church in Cant. 5:2. Upon to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

Mat. 23:37. How often would I have gathered thy children, &c. Rom. 10:21. All the day long he stretched forth his hand to a rebellious and gain-saying people. Mat. 22:2. A marriage feast is prepared. Ver. 2. Servants are sent forth to bid men to the wedding: And then servants are sent forth to call them that were bidden. Ver. 4. Then he sends forth other servants to acquaint them that all was ready.

What do these passages hold forth, but the great love of Christ, the long expectation of Christ, the earnest importunity of Christ with sinners to come and be happily conjoined with him.

But I shall more fully demonstrate the truth of the assertion by some particulars.

1. Christ gives not sinners over though they have given him no answer at all: when they have been drowsy and sleepy, lying careless in the bed of ignorance, and security, (not at all minding the dignity of his person, nor heavenliness of his voice, nor excellency of his salvation, nor tender of his grace,) yet still hath he stood at their doors and knocked: He hath called the louder, and knocked the harder, perhaps by some affliction or cross to awaken them, and make them to hear and open. Rom. 13:11. It is high time to awake out of sleep. Ver. 12. The day is far spent, the night is at hand, &c.

2. Christ hath continued knocking, and calling, although sinners have made light of his invitations; As they in the Parable, who did prefer their Oxen and Farms before the Feast: yea, although sinners have expressed an extreme backwardness, yet hath Christ followed them, and put them forward, as in the other Parable, he sent other servants, Mat. 22:4. He hath renewed his motion.

3. Christ hath continued at the door of sinners when they have made dilatory answers, would have put him off with excuses and delays, as if he would take no denial.

Austin delayed in his youth, yet Christ followed and overcame him. Cant. 5:2. Open to me, &c. Ver. 3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on: I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them. Ver. 4. Yet for all this Christ did put in his hand by the hole of the door. How often hath Christ overcome a sinner in his Age, who would not hearken unto him in his youth.

4. He hath not gone away from the door of sinners although they have given him harsh and somewhat churlish answers. Cant. 5:9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved? Chap. 6:13. What will ye see in the Shulamite? Joh. 1:46. Can any good come out of Nazareth? So Nathaniel replies to Philip; and after this comes Christ and bespeaks Nathaniel, ver. 48,49.

Joh. 4:9. Then saith the woman of Samaria, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? Yet Christ goes on with his discourse, and offers to her the water of life who churlishly denied him a little ordinary water to drink.

5. Nay, he hath not given over sinners, although they have been so far from opening to him, that they have opened their mouths against him, by reviling him, and lift up their hands against him to persecute and kill him.

When the Pharisees went about to kill him, yet even then he stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink, Joh. 7:25,27.

6. Yea, though sinners have actually imbrued their hands in the murdering of his Messengers, nay, of himself, yet hath he stood at their doors knocking.

1. Of his Messengers, though they kill the servants, yet he sent his Son to the husbandmen.

Mat. 23:37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thy children, &c.

2. Of himself.

Acts 2:36. Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ: yet to these doth Christ (in his Apostle Peter) preach and begs of them to repent and to save themselves, and assures them by promise of pardon if they would come in, see ver. 38,39,40.

7. Observe the multiplicity of his calls without and motions within. How often hath he been thrusting in at the Port or Haven of a sinner's heart, and then you must confess that he waits and labors much to get into a sinners soul. As to the Jews of old he preached to them, wrought miracles, prayed for them on the cross, afterwards sent Apostles to them. As Moses to the Israelites, Exod. 4:8. If they will not believe thee, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

If you could know all the prayers, which a faithful Minister (whom Christ sets over you) puts up every day to heaven for you, and all his tears, beside his cares and studies. If you could number all the Sermons which have been preached unto you, (such a day of the week, every Lord's Day) and the

thousands of Exhortations, not to stand out against Christ, not to refuse his salvation, to be persuaded to give way to Jesus Christ.

If (beside all these) it were possible for you to fetch back and present to your own eyes, the millions of internal motions, in the space of many years, the number of those secret parleys, and touches of Jesus Christ at your hearts: You would then say, Christ indeed hath stood at your doors and knocked; And perhaps be ashamed that you have held out Christ so long. If a beggar should stand at your doors but one day, for one penny, men would cry shame on you! And yet thou hast held out Christ these twenty years standing at thy door. Christ hath stood at thy doors, with commands in one hand, and with entreaties in another hand, he hath stood at thy doors with promises in his mouth, and with tears in his eyes; he hath stood at thy door with heaven in his fingers, and sorrow in his soul; with arms of mercy to clasp thee, if thou openest; with floods of compassion to bewail thee, if thou refusest.

8. Consider how strongly he follows his suite? If easier knockings will not prevail, he knocks so that all the house rings of him. He steps from other doors to that of the conscience, and (*volens nolens*) in despite of the sinner breaks it open, and sets that to calling and knocking too. As the servants of Pharaoh, knowest thou not that all Egypt is destroyed, Let the people go? Moses cries out, and all his servants cry to him; so Christ cries out, and conscience cries out; doth conscience speak, and hack, and smite, and wound, and distress the sinner, and print hell on him: And wilt thou hold out? Wilt thou not yet part with thy sins? Wilt thou not yet open to Christ? As in Acts 2. Peter preached, ver. 36, and conscience preached, ver. 37.

And when conscience knocks at the door, believe me, all the soul will be awakened, and be in an uproar; the memory will fetch up all former

sinning's, the judgment will see the wrath by them, and the heart will feel the burden of them, and amongst all other sins, these, of keeping Christ at the door, will lie most at the door.

O brethren, if Christ might open our door with the Golden Key of his Mercy, it were best for us, but rather than he will lose a sinner, he will break open the door with the iron bar of the Law: if men will not open, he will compel them (ere he hath done with them) to set open all their gates unto him.

9. Lastly, observe one thing more, that many times he never gives over knocking, till he hath not only knocked down the sinner, but knocked him also quite off from all other hopes, and helps within himself, and without himself, that he must either certainly perish, or else be constrained to open unto Christ. When Christ knocks thus at a sinner's door for entrance, the sinner thinks of several courses, ere ever he will open to him.

Sometimes he thinks to outthink these knocks of Christ, by engaging his mind with much worldly employment: But this puts not off the knockings of Christ.

Sometimes he thinks to forget the sins represented to him, but then perhaps more sins come up knocking afresh.

Sometimes he thinks that a few prayers shall be the answer given to still all these knockings of conscience, but they shall not do it: The poor wretch must know that there is something else in this knocking, besides the confession of his sins and prayer for pardon.

Sometimes he thinks that hearing of Godly Ministers shall quiet all these knockings, nor will Christ be put off so, for as he would have his Ministers to be heard, so (ultimately) he must have the door opened, for himself to be received.

Sometimes he thinks to help all, by surveying the rich mercy of God, and his gracious promises; but neither shall these stick on the soul, unless it will stoop and come down and open the door and submit to receive Jesus Christ himself, in whom all the promises of God are Yea, and Amen: so that neither word, nor prayer, nor duty, nor promise, nor mercy, nor free grace, shall help until we receive Christ.

[*Quest.*] But now you may demand the reasons, why Christ should thus wait and thus knock at a sinner's door for entrance.

[*Sol.*] The causes are these of a double sort, some,

1. On Christ's part.

2. On the sinner's part.

1. On Christ's part.

1. Christ is God, and because he is God, he is therefore merciful, willing to show mercy to sinners in misery, and unwilling to destroy them: How shall I give thee up O Ephraim. He is longsuffering: God is a longsuffering God, and so is Christ; He is a much-suffering Christ, and a longsuffering Christ. 2 Pet. 3:9. The Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

It is the greatness of mercy to be willing to pity or pardon sinners, and it is the greatness of goodness, to offer help unto them; And it is the greatness of patience to wait long upon them.

2. Christ knows the price of a soul; though the sinner knows it not; He knows, that a soul cost the shedding of his blood, and could never have been ransomed without it: And therefore Christ will wait and work to get a soul: If he were at cost to offer up his soul to redeem our souls, he stands not upon some pains to apply that redemption unto our souls. Isa. 55:3. Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live.

3. He knows the sad consequences which will befall the soul that will not open to him. For instance, the soul will be lost, and the consequence of this is very sad in regard of,

(1) The fullness of misery; the punishment of loss; such a soul shall never see God and the punishment of sense; the wrath of God shall abide on that soul. See Joh. 3:36. The loss of the soul is a great loss, no loss like this loss.

(2) The hideousness of misery, Joh. 3:19. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light: Infidelity is a sin that binds on all our sins, such a sinner is condemned by the mercy-seat, as well as by the judgment-seat.

(3.) The inevitability of all this: There being no name under heaven given amongst men whereby they must be saved, Acts 4:12. The only plaster, the only Physician, the only Mediator, the only Savior is Christ.

(4.) He knows our necessities and the excellency of his own salvation. Though we think to be and do well enough without Christ, as the Laodiceans thought themselves rich and increased, and to stand in need of nothing, yet he knows that we are blind, and poor, and miserable, and naked: that we perish without him, are lost without him, are damned without him.

Again, he knows that himself is the proper good, the chiefest good, the fittest good, the happiest good to a sinner's soul, that the knowing of him,

1. Is the knowing of the things which concern our peace.

2. Is eternal life.

5. He knows whereof we are made, he knows our conditions, and dispositions to be such, as a short and light work, will not do the work with us. Exod. 32:9. I have seen this people; and behold it is a stiff-necked people. Acts 7:51. Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye

do always resist the holy Ghost. Ezek. 2:3. And he said unto him, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious Nation. Ver. 4. They are impudent children and stiff-hearted.

2. On the sinner's part.

There are three things which Christ fore-knows in a sinner, and therefore he stands and knocks.

1. The deep sleep into which he is fallen: there is a spirit of slumber, a drowsiness of conscience seized on him, and much must be done ere this drowsy sinner will open his eyes or ears.

2. The thick ignorance and blindness in him: Who is the Lord saith Pharaoh? I know not the Lord: Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

3. The strange resistance in a sinful heart, it will hold out against Christ to the last, and will never yield till it be overpowered with the Almighty operations of his spirit: As he in the story held the ship with his hands and teeth.

[*Use 1.*] Doth Christ so importunately knock, and so patiently wait? Then be informed,

1. Of the pride and stubbornness, and rebellion which lie in the will of sinful man: The Pelagians of old, and the Arminians of late, talk much of the sovereignty, and virginity, and liberty of man's will; What ship-wreck it alone, hath escaped in the fall of man, and of the sufficiency of a moral suasion, to man's conversion, as if God needed to do no more to save us, then devil doth to damn us. Yea, and you shall find the hearts of ignorant people generally leavened with this proud error, though we know not so much as others, and fall short of them in ability, yet we have as good a will

as the best. O poor sinner, if thy will be so good, why hast thou held out Christ all this while? Why doest thou not open the door to Christ? No, no! Of all the faculties in thy soul, Thy will is the worst; Here lies thy greatest misery and hell, thou wilt not come to Christ, thou wilt not be gathered, thou wilt not (with Babylon) be healed, thou wilt not part with thy sins for a saving Christ.

2. Of the just cause of a sinner's damnation: It is of and from himself: never lay it on God's decrees, or want of means and helps. What could I have done more for my vineyard, &c? Isa. 5. So what could Christ do more? He calls, and cries, and knocks, and entreats, and waits, and weeps, and yet you will not accept of him, nor of salvation by him.

Thou must thank thyself for all thy miseries; Thou wilt confess one day I might have had mercy; I was offered Christ and grace, I felt him knocking by his spirit, but I slighted him, grieved him, rejected him, and now it is just with God to shut the door of mercy against me, as it happened to that King who stayed to drink a cup of water, but lost his Kingdom by it.

[Use 2.] The second Use which I will make of this point shall be for Humiliation of us this day. That Jesus Christ hath stood at our doors so long, and knocked, and yet we have not opened unto him.

For this let me speak three things,

1. The evidence which may be given in against us.
2. The causes why we deal thus with Christ of which we may be ashamed.
3. The peculiar aggravations of this.
 1. The evidence to prove this inditement against us.
 1. The Gospel, which you have heard so long a time, challenges you this day; where is the Christ which I have so clearly revealed, so freely offered,

so strictly commanded you to receive, so seriously beseeched you to let in: whose doors have been set open, since this door hath been set open, &c?

2. The Ministers of the Gospel come in against you: Lord Jesus say they, we have been Ambassadors sent from thee, and we have preached thee to our people; We have told them that thou art the Son of God, the Prince of peace, the Lord of glory, the Physician of souls, the Savior of sinners; that thou camest to seek that which is lost, that thou wouldest have all the ends of the earth to look after thee; That it is the duty of sinners to open their hearts, and to give up all their house unto thee; that they shall perish, if they keep thee out; that they shall live forever, if they will let thee in. We have told them how able thou art, and willing to answer for their sins, to make their peace, to clothe them with righteousness; But Lord, who hath believed our report? We are (after all) slighted, despised, grieved, vexed, reproached, opposed. O cries out one Minister with tears, I have lived amongst a people and preached to them these twenty years, and I hardly see one man in all my Parish looking towards Christ; O cries out another, my heart is almost broken to see the desperate spirits of my people, they cast dung into the face of Christ, and trample him (in his Ordinances) under their feet.

3. The consciences of men, testify against them that they will not let in any power of Jesus Christ; any saving virtue of Christ. O saith conscience, thou settest open thy door and lettest in such company as Christ will never endure; And when Christ speaks, thou turnest away thine ears; and when his Spirit treats, thou quenchest his motions, grievest him, resistest him, and usually offerest despite unto him.

2. The Causes of this, are either,

1. The ignorant confidence in the minds of men. All this while they see not any need of opening unto Jesus Christ, they hear that the souls of men

are lost, but what that means they know not; For their parts, they thank God they are as well as ever they were in their lives, and hope to be saved as well as the best.

From hence is it that they prize not the wells of salvation, discern not the height, and depth, and breadth of the love of God towards us in Christ; make nothing of the pearl, and slight the bread of life, &c.

2. If any light breaks in upon the mind, yet the judgment of the sinner likes not Christ's conditions: what, saith he, and must I

Hazard all my estate now, be willing on a sudden to let all (that I and mine have taken pains for) go?

Nay, must I hazard mine own life too, (the dearest of all outward comforts,) yea, and in the meantime submit to such truths as will crush down all my profits, and to such ways as will cashier all my sins; must I become a fool to be wise, deny myself and trust in another?

Nay verily, if Christ thinks that I want Reason, and know not what is good for one; or sees not when I am well, if he will not come in and take part with the world, and with an infirmity too, and with a little liberty, I must be pardoned if I keep house alone.

O Christians, there are three chains which hold the sinner that he will not open the door to Christ.

1. The chain of sinful pleasures, this held the young man, Eccl. 11:9.
2. The chain of sinful profits, this held the young man in the Gospel.
3. The chain of self-ease. These will hold thee till thou art bound up in chains of everlasting darkness, unless God be the more merciful to thee.

These are the things which make men either totally to stand out, or only Hypocritically (in a fit) to pretend that they will open unto Christ; the love

of a sin makes them shut the door again, and so doth the love of the world, and the love of their ease, and liberty and respects, &c.

3. The proud and irrational perverseness of the will, this is many times a special cause why Christ is made to stand long and knock.

Either men will not (after all) be persuaded: Though their judgments be disarmed of all carnal cavils and objections, though they be convinced of that infinite happiness in Jesus Christ, yet they cannot abide the holiness of Christ, they will not hearken: As they answered in the Parable we will not come, ye will not come to me, ye would not, &c.

Or they will capitulate with Christ, to enter in their way and manner, unto which Christ will never yield: For instance, they will open and receive Christ,

If they may find some holy change in their hearts first, or,

If they might find some worthiness in themselves, or,

If they might have some Assurance that their sins were pardoned, and they stood in favor with God, and were in Covenant, or,

If they might have him come in just at that time as they please, in the desires of mercy, or,

If they might have such measures of his grace and love.

O Christian, what doest thou mean to make and impose articles on thy Christ, who alone is to propose articles unto thee; why doest thou require that of, and in thyself, which Christ (when he comes at first to enter the soul) never required of it. These are after works, and not previous conditions, thy work is only to open the door, and it is then Christ's work to furnish the house; let him but in, and let him alone to bring with him mercy to thee, grace to sanctify, assurance to comfort and ease thee.

3. The humbling aggravations from all this,

1. The incomparable absurdity and indignity; why doest thou make Christ thus to stand and wait at thy door? Wouldst thou deal so with thy friend? What man amongst you, if his friend came to the door and was importunate, would he not arise and open the door? As Christ spake.

Or with a beggar, who knocks and is importunate: would ye not rise and open and give him an alms? Will you open the doors to a beggar, and not to a Savior? To one who may receive an alms of bounty from you, and not to a Christ from whom yourselves may receive the alms of everlasting mercy?

Or with thy dog, that stands without and cries to come in: Ah Lord, will you open your doors to a dog, and not to Christ!

Or with the devil, who no sooner calls, but you hear, he is opened unto before he knocks: will you open the door to let in hell, and will you not open the door to let in heaven? Will you open the door to sin and death, and not to Christ and life? Can you show a more base disesteem of Jesus Christ. Why, what is Christ? And what is the Son of God? And what would you have that you deal thus unworthily with him, and shut him out of your doors?

Whether you hold out Christ by, 1. Ignorance. 2. Or by incomppliance. 3. Or by diffidence, 4. Or by impenitence, yet you and Christ are still asunder, you are Christless, and evangelical offers, though excellent, yet are transient.

2. The desperate hazard you run; in the midst of all evangelical knockings; what if death should knock at your doors before you have opened to Christ? Where are you then? Your doors have been shut against Christ, and heaven doors will be shut against your souls.

Or what if Christ will go away from thy door, and never stand there, or knock there any longer? It was one of the greatest mercies that ever God

showed to thee, that Jesus Christ would condescend to come, and stand, and knock at thy doors, and it will prove the heaviest judgment that ever befell sinners; if he utterly departs from thee because thou wilt not open thy doors unto him.

3. Your holding out Christ thus long will cost you dear, though at length you do open to him, as it will cost you hell if you never open to him. You that keep Christ (thus long) out of his own purchase, and out of his own possession (for thy soul by right is Christ's) perhaps thou shalt have Christ, but thou shalt set at a great fine for it, it will cost thee dear; for thy sins and this sin of all the rest will set hard and close on thy conscience, that thou hast stood out so long with thy Christ.

[*Use 3.*] Doth Christ wait long and knock often at our doors before we give him entrance? Then let not us think it strange if we wait long, and knock often at the doors of heaven, (either for ourselves or for the land) before God opens to us.

Beloved! The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and wise too in the proportionate retributions of sinners: we may see our sins in the very judgments and dealings of God. The time was that we would not hear the voice of Christ, and now he will not hear the voice of our prayers. We have shut out his Son, and he shuts out our suits; we have made Christ to wait long, and we now are made to expect long. We did not arise to the knockings of Christ, and he will not now arise to the knockings and calls of our distresses. We think it much that God comes not down all this while to deliver us from the blood of war; and God hath thought it much that we would not come down to open the doors, and to accept of the blood of his Son. We have made our God and Christ to wait upon us with spiritual deliverances; Is it not righteous that we should wait upon him for temporal

deliverances? O that we could stop our mouths, and silence and check our impatient and murmuring hearts this day! Remember, saith God, how ye have dealt with my Christ, with my Spirit, with my Gospel, with my Offers of grace and salvation.

Confess it, and be ashamed and humbled this day, that you have dealt thus with your God, and with your Savior; It is not that the Lord's ear is heavy, nor is it that his hand is shortened! That he hears not and delivers not all this while! But it is to recompense unto us our own ways, Because when he called, we would not hear, therefore when calamities be upon us, we shall call upon him and not be answered.

[*Use 4.*] The next Use shall be of Exhortation, to persuade you to let in Christ, and not to close the door against him any longer; but as the Apostle spake, Today whiles it is called today, hearken to his voice, Heb. 3:7, and to know in the day of your visitation the things which concern your peace: O what a mercy is it for Christ to come and wait upon us.

Consider,

1. Your withstanding's of Christ are unspeakably dangerous; you lost your souls once by Adams willfulness, will you lose them the second time by your own? Every refusal of Christ is (if mercy relieve us not) a new destruction of the soul. A contempt of Christ, a crucifying of Christ afresh, a cruel murdering of our own souls.

2. All shall be pardoned, if yet you will hearken and open to him, mercy can pardon sins against mercy, and Christ can pardon sins against Christ: former refusals are no prejudice to future invitations, and offers of grace; If we be humbled and they be accepted.

Acts 3:17. And now brethren, I would that through ignorance you did it, as did also your Rulers.

Ver. 19. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

3. What would a damned soul give for one opportunity more? What would a dying man give for one day more? What cuts his soul more than his delaying and slighting of Christ? Soul-opportunities, and Christ-opportunities are precious, more worth then all the world: mercy is in them, grace, glory, eternity is in them: The whole earth hangs on a point, and so doth heaven on an inch of opportunity.

[*Quest.*] But what must be done?

[*Sol.*] Get, 1. Knowledge of your sinful condition, and exigencies, and necessities.

2. Knowledge of the worth and singularity of Christ to a sinner's condition, Joh. 4:10. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me drink. Thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

[*Use 5.*] The last Use shall be of Exhortation and encouragement to distressed and laden Consciences: Behold yet Christ stands at thy door and knocks, why doest thou not open unto him? Why art thou afraid of a gracious Savior? Why yet holdest thou him at the door with thy unbelieving disputes and doubts?

O that God would set thee at liberty; O that God would this day overpower thy heart; O that Jesus Christ who hath made all ready to feast and welcome thy drooping heart, would by his Spirit command off thy fetters, command on his strength, that thou wouldest open thy doors, and give one welcome to thy Savior!

He is worthy to come in, though thou be not worthy to receive him. Once say, O blessed Christ! The door is open, and such as I am, is thine; if thou

wilt have all my heart, all is thine, welcome O Christ, and welcome O blessed Spirit of Christ, and welcome thou Covenant of Grace, and welcome thou free mercy of God, and welcome all the excellencies of Christ, and welcome all the Laws of Christ, and welcome all you conditions of Christ.

Blessed Christ; Take the best Roome I have! Set up thyself and abide in my Judgment, as the most excellent Treasure; In my will, as the most excellent happiness; In my affections, as the only love, desire, joy, hope, and confidence of my poor soul.

Thou holdest me at the door, thou diddest not stand on my worthiness, nor except against me for my sinfulness! O dear Christ; Take me a poor miserable sinner, and make me another, a holy, and well-pleasing creature! I can bring nothing to thee, but I will expect all from thee! I will trust on thy blood for pardon, on thy merits for acceptance, on thy Spirit for holiness, on thy compassions for comforts, on thyself, thyself alone for salvation, on thy faithfulness and fullness for all. And is it so saith Christ? And doest thou so, saith Christ? Well, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven, I will, be thou clean: Grace, Mercy and Peace enter into this poor soul forever.

SERMON III.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

You have heard already out of these words, the gracious behavior of Christ towards sinners, viz. his singular readiness, his earnest importunity, and his patient expectations to enter into their hearts and save them (Behold I stand at the door and knock.)

I am now to discover the dutiful behavior of sinners towards Christ (If any man hear my words and open the doors, I will come into him, &c.)

The words (you see) are expressed in a hypothetical, or conditional form, If any man, &c. to note unto us,

That something must be done on our part, as well as something on Christ's part; though Christ be willing to save a sinner, yet he will not save him against his will. 'It is true, this willingness to open unto Christ is not a natural, but a supernatural effect, it is *voluntas mota, nay mutata*, (as Austin

rightly speaks) yet it must be, or else there can be no conversion, no salvation of us.

Again, they are expressed in an indefinite way as well as conditional: Not if this or that man; but if any man, &c. To note,

That there is a latitude, a full latitude in the offer of Christ and grace: No sinner (under the Gospel) is excluded by Christ, but by himself. Although the Application of Christ be definite and particular, yet the proclamation is indefinite and general: Favors (say the Lawyers,) *sunt ampliandi*.

Now the condition of Christ's entrance, is only this, If any man hear my voice and open the door: The hearing answers to his counseling, in ver. 18, and the opening answers to his knocking in ver. 20. Both of them united make up (if I mistake not) that which we call believing, which comes by hearing, and is in itself the ear of the soul to hearken, and the key of the soul to open unto Christ: But of this more anon; In the meantime there are two very remarkable propositions from the Text.

1. That the door of a sinner's heart ought to open unto Christ's calling and knocking.

2. That whatsoever the former condition of any sinner hath been, and whatsoever his present condition is, yet if he opens to Christ, Christ will be his.

That the door of a sinner's heart ought to open unto Christ calling and knocking.

Before I explicate this proposition, let me premise a distinction or two.

1. You must distinguish 'twixt *officium* and *principium*: I do not say that the sinner can open his door to Christ but that he ought to open it: the ability is one thing, the duty is another.

2. Although it be true, that in conversion, the sinner doth actually open the door to Christ, yet you must distinguish 'twixt what he doth *virtute innata*, and what he doth *virtute illata*: by a power of his own, and by a power given unto him: the former we deny, the latter we grant.

These things being premised I shall now discuss three particulars.

1. What door of a sinner that is which must be opened.
2. What the opening of that door is, and how far it extends.
3. Why that door must be opened, since Christ is able by his omnipotency to come into the soul of a sinner without his opening.

[*Quest.*] 1. What door of a sinner that is which must be opened unto Christ calling and knocking?

[*Sol.*] The door in the general is the whole soul of man: The soul of man is the house in which Christ desires to dwell: And it is the door too thorough which Christ intends to enter, although some other Lord hath got possession, yet the soul belongs only to Christ, as by right of creation, (for he made it) so also by right of Redemption, (for he hath bought and purchased it.)

But principally there are two noble faculties of the soul, which (I humbly conceive) make up this door.

1. The judgment of a sinner: at this part of the door stands the Gospel, in the truth of it, (this is a true saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15.)

2. The will of a sinner: at this part of the door stands the Gospel, in the goodness of it. This is a true saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (this is for the understanding) and is worthy of all acceptance, (here is goodness,) and properly respects the will of a sinner. So that whatsoever the Gospel holds forth concerning Christ, It presents all of it to

these doors, and these two faculties may and can reach (either by way of perceiving in the understanding, or by way of receiving in the will) the whole sum of Evangelical salvation.

And in truth, all the commerce or trading (if I may so speak) which Christ hath with a sinner, or that a sinner hath with Christ, is originally and primarily at these doors.

[*Quest.*] 2. But the next question is more difficult, What the opening of the door is, and how far it extends?

[*Sol.*] I answer by parts.

1. In respect of the understanding and judgment of a sinner, the door is opening when three things are wrought.

1. An evangelical apprehension, not only of our necessity of Jesus Christ, but also of his excellency, designation, qualification, sufficiency, and willingness to save sinners.

When so much spiritual light is let in, as that a sinner discerns Christ to be a Savior, that God hath set him forth, and sent him to be so, and that he hath accomplished the full work of our Redemption, and that a sinner is capable of him and it; yea and the soul gives credence hereto: Now the key (if I may so express myself) is put into the door.

2. A singular appreciation of this Jesus Christ, so that now he stands as it were in his glory and beauty before the eyes of a poor sinner, like the Sun dazzling and drowning all the Stars. Not self-confidence, nor creature-comfort, nor help, nor hope do move him: Yea the soul counts all but dross and dung in comparison of Christ, Phil. 3.

And Christ alone is esteemed by the poor humbled sinner, as the superlative excellency, the chiefest of ten thousands, the royal signet of divine love, the only desirable of my soul, the peculiar remedy of my

misery, the absolute center of my everlasting blessedness, and the most attractive Adamant or Load-stone of all my affections.

Now when this is stamped and formed in the soul, then not only the key is put into the door, but also the door is (as it were) unlocked to Christ.

3. A comfortable subjection unto the authority and sovereignty of Christ, in respect of his Person, and Laws, and ways, and conditions.

The soul lets fall all proud cavils, reasonings, disputes, exceptions, and quarrels, and now professeth itself to be fully satisfied, resolved and cleared, about Christ and all concerning Christ; It assents, and saith, This is that glorious, gracious, blessed Christ, whom I judge, and acknowledge to be worthy of all credence, of all reverence, of all acceptance of all affiance, of all obedience: And all his Laws, and Rules to be a most holy, spiritual, righteous, and good will, infinitely pure, justly sovereign, only saving.

Yea, and that there is no condition which he propounds, whether active or passive, but it is most equal to submit unto it: Happy is the man who may enjoy him, upon any, upon all his gracious and soul-saving terms: Christ with any loss, is gain, enough, yea upon the cross he is a Savior good enough.

And when this is done, then the door is not only unlocked, but the hand also is upon the door, even ready to set it open to Christ.

2. In respect of the will, and here (in a word) the door is opened, when by faith the will is changed and inclined to a right election, and acceptance of Christ.

When it is not only invited, but also changed, not only touched, but drawn, not only mollified, but also persuaded, or as Saint Augustine spake, When of unwilling it is made willing, and being freed by grace, it becomes now free to open to Christ.

For the better understanding of this, know, that when the will of a sinner opens to Christ.

1. It comes off to Christ determinately or completely: the Schoolmen do rightly observe that there are two sorts of inclinations in the will.

Some are imperfect and incomplete, as (*vota & velleitates*) wishing's and woulding's, to which the will is partly willing, and partly unwilling: It is divided, it hangs upon an indifferent balance, Arguments of either side do poise it with an equal strength: The soul fees reason to respect and open to Christ, and yet it is tottered with reasons, not yet, or not so fully, to give way unto him.

Some are perfect and complete as (*volitiones*) the peremptory bents of the will, wherein the person (as one sufficiently cleared and resolved, and biassed) comes off fully, without any ifs or ands; The scale hath sufficient in it to weigh it down, the sinner sees so much of the excellency of Jesus Christ, and of his suitableness, that he cries out, O Lord! Give me Christ, I must have Christ, I will have Christ; I will stand upon nothing so that I may have Christ; farewell sin, farewell myself; Take the world who will; let me have Christ, my mind is satisfied, my heart is resolved and fixed, I know my need of Christ; I know the worth of Christ, I have heard his call, I like his articles, I prize his person, he is the end and desire of my soul; Christ is willing to save me, and I (O Lord) I am most willing to receive and serve him.

2. It comes off to Christ freely and electively: There is (to our conceit and apprehension) a twofold opening of the will to Christ.

One arising from the mere urgency of an anguished conscience, which may make a man willing to subscribe to any course (for the present.) As in a storm, the Mariner is willing to cast out all his lading to preserve himself,

so a sinner may be willing to give up all, and to give way to Christ in the tempest of a vexing and tormenting conscience, to procure a little ease and calmness; All which springs only from self-love, and looks upon Christ, not so directly as one to make peace with God; but reflexively as one to make peace and ease in the conscience. And this exigence being once removed, the heart of a sinner (having served its turn of Christ) expels Christ, and closeth up itself against him: Like the Athenians and others, who made use of brave Commanders, when an enemy brake in and endangered their Cities, but being once secured, they grew weary, picked a quarrel and banished them.

Another arising from the efficacy of saving faith, which when it opens the will to Christ, it inclines and raiseth it to him from Arguments to be found in Christ alone; It sees reason enough in Christ to make us willing to open unto Christ; Namely such a perfection of goodness, and excellency, and suitableness, that if there were no conscience to trouble me, Nay if there were no heaven to crown me, yet the beauty of Christ alone hath won my heart, he alone is object and motive too.

As there is sweetness enough in the honey itself, to invite a man to eat it; so in Christ alone, to open to him and to have union with him.

3. It comes off with indefinite closure, both in respect of itself, and in respect of Christ.

1. In respect of itself: O Lord Christ, I lay down all that I am at thy feet, I am no longer mine own, but thine, I expect nothing, I reserve nothing, my whole soul, body, state, honor, liberty, ability, life are thine. I do not insist on any lust to be spared; I do not desire any worldly thing to be exempted; I do not crave any further time to be granted, Take the house, take the key, take my heart, take present possession of all.

2. In respect of Christ: I close with thee, and with all concerning thee, with thy person (O that I had union with it!) with thy graces, (O that I had communion with them!) with thy righteousness (it is my only confidence,) with thy will (it is my only guide,) with thy services (they are my liberty,) with thy promises (they are my ability,) with thy sufferings (they are my glory,) with thy rewards (they are my eternal felicity.) Thou art a goodness better than all prosperity; thou art a comfortableness sufficient in all adversity; Heaven is not heaven without thee, and misery is heaven enough with thee.

4. When the door of the will rightly opens to Christ, It comes off with the concomitant attendance of the whole soul: the whole soul stands open to look on Christ, to admire Christ, to welcome Christ. The memory stands open and remembers the excellent things which it hath heard of Christ. The mind stands open, and contemplates (even with astonishment) the royal glories in Christ, the surpassing love of Christ, the merciful compassion of Christ, the great redemption and full salvation by Christ. Yea all the affections open themselves and come forth (as it were) to let in and welcome Christ. Love comes forth and saith, welcome Christ, thou art the bridegroom of my soul. Desire comes forth, and saith welcome Christ, thou art the satisfaction of my soul. Delight comes forth, and saith welcome Christ, thou art the paradise of my soul. Hope comes forth, and saith welcome Christ, thou hast been the long looked for of my soul. Joy comes forth, and saith, welcome Christ, thou art the center and rest of my soul. Grief comes forth, and saith welcome Christ, I am offended and exceedingly troubled, because I have dealt so unkindly with a gracious Christ. Anger comes forth, and saith, welcome Christ, I am vexed at the very heart, that for poor and base things I should all this while keep out my

blessed Christ. Hatred comes forth, and saith, welcome Christ, I protest I will never have any peace, nor yield service, but will do my best to destroy all these sinful Lusts, the enemies of Christ. And fear comes forth and saith, welcome Christ; I owe thee all reverence, and will watch the soul that it shall never willingly grieve Christ more. And zeal comes forth and saith, welcome Christ, I will do the more for thee, because I have done so much against thee: I am resolved to do anything for thee, who hast done everything for me: thou didst not spare thy blood to save my soul, and I will not spare my life to serve thine honor: And now (sirs) when the soul is thus formed and framed by faith, (when the judgment thus comes off to Christ, and the will thus comes off to Christ) then is the door (at which Christ hath knocked) truly and fully opened.

[*Quest.*] 3. Why that door must be opened to Christ, when Christ is able by his omnipotency (without our opening) to enter into the heart of any sinner?

[*Sol.*] That you may have a more clear and distinct resolution of this enquiry, premise a few things with me.

1. In matters of this nature, it is not safe to insist on the absolute power of Christ, but we must rather respect his ordinate power, if I may so express myself; Christ is (in respect of his absolute power) as able to damn us as to save us; to throw us into hell, as well as draw us up to heaven.

2. Although the door must be opened, yet this is done by virtue of an omnipotent act from Christ too.

There are three things wherein Christ declares his Almighty power.

First, the creation of the world.

Secondly, the conversion of sinners.

Thirdly, the resurrection of the dead. To quicken a dead sinner, to make him a believer, declares as great power as to give a new being.

3. Yet thirdly, Christ will not so act his omnipotency in a sinner's conversion, as to exclude the heart of a sinner from opening to him, but will make the heart of a sinner willing to open to him; Because,

1. Christ intends in this work a conjugal union 'twixt himself and the soul of a sinner, unto which a mutual consent of will is requisite.

To some other kinds of union, this is not necessary, but unto a match or marriage it is: Christ's Will, and our will reciprocally meeting make it up.

I do confess that all the offers of Christ are precious, and declare unspeakable readiness or willingness on his part, but there must be also consent, and an acceptance on our part, or else no saving will come to us. For it is not salvation only purchased, or only offered, which actually saves a sinner, it must be salvation also embraced and accepted, &c.

2. Christ in this converting work, principally aims at the glorifying of his grace and rich love, and mercy, and therefore he carries it on by such ways, and steps wherein the soul may take notice of them. When he did create man, this he did without any more ado, by a sole word of power, which then he intended to magnify. But when he converts a sinner, now he orders every act and passage, so that the sinner shall subscribe all the glory to his free grace and great love. Now he must see his lost condition without Christ, now he must see the travels and sufferings of Christ, to redeem and save him; now he must see the tender care of Christ, and vehement desire to bestow himself, and purchase on him; Now he must see the glories and riches of Christ, to persuade and draw him; Now he must see the free bounty of Christ, in insisting on no condition but this, open unto me, and be

but willing to let me in. Now he must see, that nothing in himself can be salvation unto him; the heart must open to Christ, or else it must perish.

3. Christ will have the sinner to esteem him a most valuable object, and to let him in as one that is worthy: Meer power (whether we will or no) may set up itself, whether we think the person worthy or not; But Christ will come in rather upon choice; His worth shall make as much way for him as his power, the sinner shall say, it is better to let in Christ, then to keep out Christ.

4. The work is done if this door be opened; Christ stands upon no more.

Nothing is done by us, if the will comes no off to Christ: All the knowledge which a man hath, and all the troubles which a man feels, and all the duties which a man performs, and all the good words which a man speaks, they are all as nothing, they alter not the condition; The condition is still Christless till the will opens to let in Christ: But all comes off, the work is done if the will comes off and opens to Christ; Christ hath got what he would have, he hath got the strong castle, he hath now won all; for all the soul stands or falls with the will, holds out or comes in with the will. The whole man is at the obedience of his will and if that be now at the obedience of Christ, Christ hath got all.

[*Use 1.*] Should the door of a sinner's heart open to the voice and knocking of Christ? Let us reflect then on ourselves, and seriously search whether our hearts be set open unto him; Are you yet made willing to entertain Christ.

Beloved, be pleased to consider a few things.

1. You have had many callings, many offers, many knockings at the door from Christ: partly,

By the aspiration of the world; O how many commands? How many entreaties? How many invitations? How many promises?

By the inspiration of the Spirit; O how much illumination? How many convictions? How many motions and excitations?

Now what are become of those golden drops? Of those celestial breaths, of those almost persuasions, of those unanswerable demonstrations of eternal life by Christ, of eternal life without Christ? Thou hast been awakened by them, why didst thou not rise? Thou didst rise out of thy bed, why didst not thou step down to the door? Thou didst step down to the door, why didst not thou open? Why didst thou step back from thy convictions, from thy resolutions?

2. Christ is worthy, is most worthy of admission: Sirs, is Jesus Christ a considerable object in your eyes or not? Is there any worth at all or value in him? Is there more worth in a saving Christ, then in a damning lust? Can anything stand in competition with him, either for intrinsical perfection, or for respective perfection to your souls? Is the creature (that specious, short, transient, empty nothing) fit to be let in, and set up in the heart? Is sin (that vile, inglorious, God-dishonoring, and soul-damning hell) fit to be let in and set up in the heart? Shall that which is the least of good, (the world) and that which is the greatest of evil (sin) lie in the chamber and Christ (the center of happiness) still be thrust out to lie in the manger?

3. Many hearts are as yet shut against Christ: they are not opened to him; what think you of such, whose ears are not open to Christ? You read of some in Scripture, who refused to hear, yea, and stopped their ears lest they should hear; and too many there are amongst us who decline the hearing of the Word, &c. Is it likely the heart is open, when the ear is not open? What think you of such who profess a dislike of Christ? We will not

have this man to reign over us, spake they in the Gospel; and the Apostle relates of some, that they could not abide wholesome doctrine, and of others, by Luke, that spake against the way too of Christ, He came amongst his own, and his own received him not, said John. Yea Christ himself delivered it of the Jews, ye will not come unto me that ye might have life, Joh. 5:40. What think you of such who prefer other things before Christ? The honor of men, as they in John, the profits of the world, and pleasures, as they in the Parable: Esau preferred a mess of pottage before his birth-right: the Jews preferred Barabbas a thief before Christ, &c.

4. It is a difficult thing to make a sinner willing to open his heart to Christ. There is so much ignorance to be removed out of the mind. There is so much resistance against the truth, and way of salvation to be removed out of the judgment; there is so much confidence in our own abilities and righteousness; there is so much pride and stomach, to lie at the door of another, and there to beg, and there to depend for an alms of free mercy; there is so much unbelief, whether Christ can save, or whether Christ will save; so many reasonings, so many fears, besides the natural oppositions of the will of a sinner to the commands of Christ, and the holiness of Christ, and the conditions of Christ, that it is of all things under heaven, the most difficult to be willing to open to Christ.

O how many Sermons! How many strokes in afflictions? How many lashes in conscience? How many condescension's of mercy? How many operations of the spirit of God ere the sinner will step and stoop to open unto Christ? The Prodigal was well-nigh famished, ere he would return to his Fathers house; and the sinner is made to lie a while in hell, before he can be made willing to accept of heaven.

5. Many think that their wills are opened to receive Christ, and yet they are stuttered, or else not truly opened. They like to hear a Minister preaching of Christ, especially such a Minister; O Sirs, it is not the excellency of Christ which draws you, it is only the elegancy of the servants which affect you. It was not Christ, but the loaves, which made the multitude to flock so much: The child loves the painted book, but cares not for the printed lesson: You like the phrases, we speak (your ears are open) but you regard not the precepts which we deliver from Christ to you, (your hearts are not open.) Their hearts are open to a glorified Christ but not to a crucified Christ; when Hosanna was sung, then all the multitude follow Christ, but when crucifying was cried, then they all forsook him. They are willing to open to Christ, so that they may be open to sin too; this is like an Inn-keepers door, which is open to every passenger: Or if willing only and altogether for Christ, this is only in case of extremity upon a racking conscience, or upon a dying bed.

[*Quest.*] How then may we know that our hearts have been, or are rightly opened to let in Jesus Christ.

[*Sol.*] This may be known (as I conceive) three ways, 1. By the causes. 2. By the concomitants. 3. By the consequents of opening.

1. By the causes.

1. The right opening of the heart ariseth from the word, this is the key of the Spirit of Christ, by which he opens a sinner's heart.

The word in the legal part is a key which shuts up a sinner, Gal. 3:23, and in the evangelical part, it is a key which opens the heart of a sinner; there it is said in, Isa. 61:1, to open the prison to them that are bound. When it hath convinced a person of his sinful and lost estate, and killed and broken him,

in respect of wrath and self-confidence, then it proceeds to revive him, and raise him by the possibilities, and hopes of mercy and salvation in Christ.

And this it doth three ways.

1. *Proponendo*; both by revealing (*objecta credibilia*) the matter and manner of a sinner's salvation, (God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, Joh. 3:16.) and by inviting the sinner to come and accept of him and his salvation; If any man thirst, let him come unto me, Joh. 7:37.

2. *Imponendo*; by commanding sinners to come unto Christ, 1 Joh. 3:23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. This is called a bidding of people to a marriage, Mat. 22:3.

3. *Apponendo*, by promising that Christ will not reject such a coming soul, Joh 6:37, nor deal harshly with it, Mat. 12:20, not break the bruised reed; But will lovingly embrace it, Mat. 11:28. Come unto me and I will give you rest, yea, and secure it from hell, and assure it of heaven, Joh. 3:16.

2. The right opening of the heart ariseth from faith: this (in Scripture) is called, the coming grace, and the receiving grace, and the opening grace, when the Lord gives faith to the heart this is an eye to see all the revelations of the Gospel, this is an ear to hear all the commands of the Gospel, this is an hand to clasp all the promises of the Gospel, and to set the door wide open to Jesus Christ. O sinner, saith faith, here is mercy to be had, and here is salvation to be had, and Christ to be had, and all for thee? Thou gavest up thy condition as desperate, but be of good cheer, I see a Savior, I see a satisfaction, I see a deliverance, God is willing to be reconciled to thee; Christ hath born thy sins, made thy peace, offers himself to thee, entreats thee, commands thee, assures thee of salvation if thou comest to him. O

cries out a heart awaked by faith, O Christ I bless thee, O Christ I come unto thee; Thou art worthy of all acceptation; my heart is ready, the door is open O Christ, and welcome O Christ too, &c.

2. By the Concomitants.

1. The whole body (if I may speak improperly) of the will is opened to Christ, when the heart is rightly opened.

The Schoolmen report unto us divers motions and abilities in the will, which give me leave to make use of to my purpose, they tell us in the will of man there is,

1. Election, which is a pre-acceptation of a good before an evil, or of one good before another.

2. Consent, which is a complying of the will with the judgment in a good propounded, and apprehended, and approved.

3. Intention, which is a tendency, or an extending of the will in the use of means for the assecution of a good represented and desired.

4. Imperium, or command, which is a secret authority it hath to do dispose all the faculties of the soul to move according to its bent.

5. Fruition, which is a delightful acquiescence in a good possessed. All this appears in the heart which is rightly opened unto Christ. The Will,

1. Makes choice of Christ, above all, and before all: Sin is vile, and the world is empty; there is none in heaven that the soul prefers to Christ, or on earth that it desires in comparison of Christ: Christ is best, best of all.

2. Consents to Christ, subscribes to Christ: Christ hath not one will, and the soul another: What Christ commands is good, what he likes is best.

3. Extends the soul to all the means of attaining Christ; It will pray for Christ, inquire for Christ, hear for Christ, wait for Christ, weep for Christ.

4. Commands all the man to give up to Christ: every room in the house, every faculty in the soul; it will set up Christ in our contemplation, in our judgments, in our affections, in our speeches, in our studies, in our lives.

5. The fruition of Christ is most sweet and pleasant: I have enough, said Jacob, Joseph is yet alive: The Merchant who sold all for the pearl, and bought it, rejoiced in his pearl: Christ alone is Portion, and Lands, and Houses, and Father, and Mother, and Sister, and Brother, and Profit, and Pleasure, and Comfort, and Happiness enough to the soul that opens unto Christ.

2. A whole Christ is opened unto: O brethren, as Christ, so everything in and about Christ, is precious: His salvation is precious, his doctrine is precious, his way is precious, his redemption is precious, his righteousness is precious, his holiness is precious, his blood is precious, his will is precious. His Priestly office is precious, and so is his Prophetical office, and so is his Kingly office: Reigning with Christ is precious, and so is suffering for Christ; Gaining by Christ is precious, and so is losing for Christ; Receiving from Christ is precious, and so is doing for Christ; The comforting virtue of Christ is precious, and so is his mortifying virtue, and so is his healing virtue, and so is his guiding or leading virtue. A half Christ was never ordained to be a Savior, the whole Lamb was a sacrifice; and a whole Christ is a sinner's salvation.

3. The heart is opened unto Christ only: If you have a fore-door for Christ, and a back-door to open unto sin, you will deceive and lose your souls. A heart, and a heart is ever a false heart: the young man in the Gospel was willing to have Christ, but then he must have his possessions too: Some of the Jews would have had Christ, but then they must have the praise of men too. O no, one heaven cannot hold too Sons; one heart can hold but one

Christ only, or no Christ at all; Christ and grace it may hold (many pearls may be upon one string) but Christ and sin it cannot hold, (light and darkness have no communion.) The heart of man is just fit for Christ: There is so much in Christ as will take up a whole heart. There is not a room or corner to be spared for any lust. And in truth, a whole love is little enough for Christ, a whole desire, a whole delight, a whole hope, a whole joy, a whole confidence, all little enough for Christ; Christ can fill them all: the box of ointment was little enough for the feet of Christ, &c.

3. By the Consequents.

But these will more aptly fall in, in the subsequent part of the text, unto which I will refer them.

[*Use 2.*] I should now proceed to a use of Exhortation, to stand it out no longer, but presently to open unto Christ, and then to a use of Direction, what course we should take so that our hearts may be opened.

But I will first handle the other Proposition which I mentioned at the beginning, and refer these two Uses to the closure of it.

SERMON IV.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

You have heard already (out of these words) the gracious behavior of Christ towards sinners, and something of the dutiful behavior of sinners towards Christ, viz. (that they ought to hear and open to him.)

I now proceed to handle the indefiniteness of personal admittance with a little relation also to Christ's further insurance (If any man open, &c. I will come in to him.)

O Sirs, read over the words again; are they not like the year of Jubilee, in which any servant might (if he would) have his freedom? When Christ was betrayed upon his speech, one Disciple an answers, Is it I? And another, Is it I? But when Christ offers himself and salvation to us, there is no cause for such a reply, doth he mean me, or thee, or another? O no, herein is a haven

open to any ship; a Savior ready to entertain any sinner: (If any man hear my voice, I will come in to him.)

Whence observe.

That whatsoever the former condition of any sinner hath been, and whatsoever his present condition is; yet if he will open unto Christ, Christ will be his.

These Laodiceans (of whom the text expressly speaks) they were poor, and blind, and naked, and wretched, and miserable, yet for none of these doth Christ except against them; Though they had no riches of worthiness, no eyes of knowledge, no garment of righteousness; yea, though they were so wretched, and miserable, that they had no ability to buy these, but stood before his eyes as mere, impotent, undiscerning objects, yet he calls to them, and offers himself to them, to all of them, to everyone, he excepts not a man; but if any man will, &c.

In Luk. 14:21. The Master of the house said to servant, go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the City, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; Here's not a man of quality, of any dignity, of any self-sufficiency, but a company of indigent, impotent, deformed, wounded sinners; yet these are by Christ invited and welcome, Isa. 55:1. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy milk and honey without money, and without price.

There is in Christ, water to cleanse, milk to nourish, bread to strengthen, Honey to comfort, a full good for a sinner, all good for a sinner: And the sinner is called upon to come, yea, the second time to come; yea, the third time to come. And the sinner is every sinner; Ho, everyone that thirsteth, every sinner who feels his want, and sees his need, and desire Christ.

[*Obj.*] But what if he hath no desire, nothing to lay down?

[*Sol.*] Why let him come (and he that hath no money, come.)

[*Obj.*] But something else at least must be brought.

[*Sol.*] No (buy milk, and honey without money, and without price,) as if he should say, I sell for nothing, I was sold for a price, but I sell myself without price. Thirst, and come, be but willing to open, to take, and all is yours. Parallel to this are those two other places in Joh. 7:37. Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. Rev. 22:17. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

For the further confirmation of this point, I will demonstrate two things,

1. The *ὅτι*: That it is a divine truth.

2. The *Διότι*: Why it is so.

1. The *quod sit*, that it is a truth.

Which I think will appear if five things can be proved.

1. Though the person hath been very sinful.

2. Though the sinner be not able to make satisfaction.

3. Though his humbling's be very small.

4. Though his worthiness be none at all.

5. Though holiness be altogether wanting, yet if he will open to Christ, Christ will be his.

1. Though the person hath been very sinful, yet if he will open his heart to Christ, Christ will be his. Sin may be considered two ways either,

Absolutely, in respect of its filth and guilt.

Relatively, in respect of affection and service: I confess that former sinfulness resolutely affected, and bound up with the chief desire, and complacency of the will, is utterly offensive and incompatible with Christ;

neither will or can he heart of a person, (thus considered) open to Christ, nor will Christ (with such a corival) step into the heart.

Nevertheless sin absolutely considered (as defiling and transgressing) makes not the person, neither incapable of Christ, or un suitable to Christ.

A sick person is a proper subject for a Physician, (the whole need not the Physician, but the sick;) a sinner is as proper a subject for a Savior; For this is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15. Take sin how you please, either as it is a Transgression against the Law, when the Law hath shut and bound up and condemned a transgressor; the Sun can scatter all the clouds, that Ocean swallow up mountains; the Gospel can release and set him free: God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, Rom. 3:25, (the Gospel is a sufficient remedy against Law.)

Or as it is a transgression against the Gospel: if yet the heart open to Christ, Christ will not reject it. Mat. 12:31. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Ver. 32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of men, it shall be forgiven him: Not only sins against God in his holiness, but also against Christ, (here called the Son of man) upon repentance and believing, shall be forgiven. Manasseh sinned against the Law, and upon repentance was accepted. Paul sinned against the Gospel, and yet upon his believing was received unto mercy, 1 Tim. 1:16. It is possible for a sinner, who hath refused and opposed Christ, yet to be humbled for these, and to accept of Christ. There is a double refusal of the offer of Christ.

One is total and final, which is fixed in a peculiar malice, and a permanent obstinacy against Christ; this is hopeless: 'It is not sins absolutely against

the Gospel which excludes, but impenitency's.

Another is total but temporary, this ariseth either from ignorance or inadvertency which Christ doth pity, and it doth not infallibly hinder a second and further offer: Nor yet an opening and closure with Christ.

Acts 3:17. And now brethren, I would that through ignorance ye did it as did also your Rulers. Ver. 19. Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. Acts 4:4. Many of them which heard the Word believed, and the number of the men were about five thousand.

2. Though the sinner be not able of himself to make the least satisfaction to divine justice for his sins committed, yet if he will open unto Christ, Christ will be his. It is most true, that God must be satisfied, or else he will not be reconciled: Though he be ready to show mercy, yet he is very tender of the glory of his Justice; we owe unto him obedience as such creatures, and satisfaction as sinners. But now mark if your hearts be willing to open to Christ, you shall not be rejected, although you can make no satisfaction at all. Upon me be thy curse my Son (said Rebecca to Jacob) only obey my voice, Gen. 27:13. So saith Christ to a sinner, upon me be thy curse (I was made a curse for thee, Gal. 3:13.) only obey my voice, only open thy heart unto me. If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account, said Paul to Philemon concerning Onesimus, Phil. ver. 18. So saith Christ to the sinner, whatsoever thou owest to my Father (for perfect obedience) and wherein soever thou hast wronged my Father, (in thy perfect disobedience,) put all on mine account; I will be thy surety, at my hands let God require them: I was made sin for thee, that thou mightest be made righteous, only open to me, and all my satisfaction shall be thine.

3. Though his humbling's be very small, yet if he will open to Christ, Christ will be his. It is true, that humbling's (for ought I know) are a

necessary antecedent before the opening of the heart to Christ. The stinging Serpent was felt before the healing Serpent was looked on: The ground is plowed before it is sown; The breaking hammer of the Law strikes the conscience, before the golden key of the Gospel opens the will. But as Christ enters not after the greatest humbling's in conscience, if the will opens not to him, so he will enter into the least humbling's in the soul, if the will therefore opens to receive him.

Humbling's may be considered two ways.

1. Intensively, for high degrees.
2. Congruously, in order to a succeeding work, as they occasion a sinner to cast out his provoking lusts, and to be willing to let in a saving Christ. And when this is attained (whether by more or by lesser strokes,) Christ's feet are stepping into the soul presently.

May I speak a strange truth; If it were possible for a soul to be willing to be open unto Christ, without any one lash or touch of antecedent trouble, or bruising, Jesus Christ would forthwith close with it.

If the iron would bow and be pliable without fire or stroke, the impression might, and would be made upon it immediately.

If the wood did cleave without a stroke, it were well enough, or if it doth with one stroke, that without the addition of anymore sufficeth.

If there accompanies such an efficacy, the least sense of sin, and the lowest smiting for sin, that the will is truly turned off from it, and turned up to Christ, it is enough; though thou troublest thyself with more, yet Christ expects no more, the door is open and he will enter. Lydia 's heart was touched, and presently opened: The Jews were wounded, and cried out, What shall we do? Upon hearing the first part of Peters Sermon, and were opened to receive Christ, and they enjoyed him, upon the hearing of the

next part of the Sermon at the same time. In one night the Jailor shuts up the Apostles in prison, and lets them out of prison again; shuts his heart against Christ, and hath his heart opened to Christ, the same hour trembling, believing, rejoicing.

4. Though his worthiness be none at all, yet if his heart will open to Christ, Christ will be his. I am not worthy, said the Centurion to Christ, that thou shouldest come under the roof of my house. He acknowledged Christ to be worthy, and he confesseth himself not worthy; Though Christ did not enter into the door of his house, yet he entered into the door of his heart; A worthy Christ entered into the soul of an unworthy Centurion, because his heart did prize Christ, because his heart was willing to receive Christ. The Prodigal child was willing to come to his Fathers house again? Did he plead his good behavior, did he plead his worthiness? O no, I am not worthy (saith he) to be called thy Son; and yet because that door of his heart was opened, the door of his fathers affection was also opened; He fell on his neck and embraced him, and received him joyfully, Luk. 15:21.

There is a twofold worthiness.

One is Legal or Personal: O if you look for this, if you stand upon this, you will never open the door to Christ: The full soul despiseth the honey comb, the self-justifying Pharisee went home unjustified: you must be lost in your own eyes, you must be nothing in your own eyes, you must be poor in Spirit, you must see your lives, and hopes, and helps to lie in the hands of mere mercy, or else you will never open to Christ, and Christ will never enter into you.

Another is Evangelical or objective. As the Father once spake: *Domine! Merita measunt misericordia tua*: so must the sinner say, O blessed Christ, my worthiness is only in thy worthiness. Although I am not worthy that

thou shouldest enter into my heart, yet thou art worthy that my heart should be opened unto thee. This is the worthiness, and none other but this that Christ insists upon.

5. Though holiness be altogether wanting, yet if the sinner will open unto Christ, Christ will be his. I do confess that if Christ stood with a sinner upon these terms, holy you must be, and holy you must make yourself to be ere I will close with you; I must see every room furnished with grace before I will come in to you, then I am confident that no flesh living shall be saved: For it is as impossible for a sinner to sanctify and renew himself, as it is for a dead man to quicken himself. But Christ stands not on that, he knows that the sinner is an empty cask, that no good dwells in him, that he lies in his blood, that all his beautifying ornaments are from above, all to be found and taken out of his ward-robe; That it is his work to refine, and sanctify, as well as to pardon and justify, all that the humble soul must bring, is to open; as the beggar needs bring nothing but a hand to receive; and for holiness, which thou complainest is wanting, the opening soul must expect that from Christ; who brings this to the sinner, not the sinner to Christ.

By all which it evidently appears that nothing shall hinder the sinner, any sinner, if he be once willing to open to Christ.

2. The Curtesy.

[*Quest.*] Why is it that Christ deals thus? That any sinner (whatsoever his condition and course hath been) may yet have him, if he will but open unto him.

[*Sol.*] The Reasons are these.

1. Christ is made ours only by believing: This is that which immediately, and fully draws up the match 'twixt a soul and Christ, and faith excludes no sinner: If any sinner can believe he shall have Christ. Indeed if Christ did

offer himself to be ours upon the legal condition of inherent perfection; (habitual and actual) then every precedent transgression, and every present defect or want of rectitude, would have rendered us incapable of his person and union. The Law receives no sinner to mercy. But because he tenders himself only upon believing, now no sinner is pre-judged, the way is open and free to anyone. Christ doth not deal with us at all (in this opening work) but as absolute sinners; nor doth faith (herein) deal with Christ, but as with an absolute Savior: He knows that we are cast by the Law, and therefore addresses himself to us in the way of the New Covenant, which requires nothing in the world from us, but only believe, only come, only open to me. The least sinner cannot have Christ any other way, and the greatest sinner may enjoy him upon these terms.

2. Christ doth come to the soul in a gracious way upon free, not upon mercenary terms: I will love them freely, so the Prophet, Hos. 14:4. Being justified freely, so the Apostle, Rom. 3:24. He is ours for his own sake, not ours for our own sake. Now where a benefit is collated in a gracious way, according to the latitude of that graciousness, there is an indefinite access opened to persons. Suppose a Prince proclaims that if any offender will but come to him, he shall have pardon and promotion: Or a rich man, if any poor man will come to my house, he shall have an alms, why! No offender needs to dispute, doth the King mean me? Nor needs any poor man to except, surely he means not me? If thou be a poor man, the alms is as free, and as ready, and as sure for thee as any one that cometh: So when Christ is to be bestowed, he is a rich alms amongst a company of poor sinners; He saith to one, come and I will be thine, and to another come, and to everyone come, if thou be a poor needy sinner, come, drink of the waters of life freely; sinfulness is no exception, for I bestow myself on none but sinners:

It is an exception to meriting, but not to receiving: Though the poor man must not challenge, yet he must open his hand.

3. Jesus Christ comes to the soul as an all-sufficiency, and therefore he looks not to find anything in us, and needs nothing from us, but will bring all with himself to us: He comes to a sinner, as an agent to give, not as a patient to receive, as the Sun to the world, to enlighten, not to be enlightened; As a founder to lay a building, not as a buyer to survey and find out a building; as a fountain to supply us with good, not as a cistern to take any good from us: When he comes to the soul, he comes to create a new work in it: (therefore are we said to be created in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2:10, and in him to be new creatures, 2 Cor. 5:17.) now in Creation, the thing created was nothing before it was created: The first creature was the mere effect of God's power, and the new creature is the mere effect of God's mercy. When he comes to any sinner, he comes as a Physician to a sick man: In the sick man there are nothing but corrupt humors, but aches, and fainting's, and groanings, and impotencies, It is the Physician who brings all the healing salves, and medicines, and recoveries. In a word, when man to except, surely he means not me? If thou be a poor man, the alms is as free, and as ready, and as sure for thee as any one that cometh: So when Christ is to be bestowed, he is a rich alms amongst a company of poor sinners; He saith to one, come and I will be thine, and to another come, and to everyone come, if thou be a poor needy sinner, come, drink of the waters of life freely; sinfulness is no exception, for I bestow myself on none but sinners: It is an exception to meriting, but not to receiving: Though the poor man must not challenge, yet he must open his hand. In a word, when Christ comes to us, he comes as life to a dead man, as pardon to a condemned man, as finding to a lost man; as riches to a poor man, as pity to a miserable

man, as help to a diseased man. To give, to give all, to give himself, to give his blood, to give his Spirit, to give his righteousness, to give his peace. To give us heaven, to give us all which must fit us for heaven; now any sinner (being in these conditions) may come.

4. Christ will keep a proportion 'twixt the Application of Redemption, and the Work of our Redemption. When Christ was to perform the work of man's Redemption, he stood alone in his own excellencies, and in his own perfections, and in his own worthiness. He did not stand before God, (then) with any man's great birth, or with any man's great parts, nor with any man's graces: Indeed he took upon him our sins, but there was no holiness of ours, which he could or did bear: All our sins were charged on, and he alone went through the work of satisfaction for them, and without any concurrent dignity of ours, did he accomplish our redemption and reconciliation. And thus doth he carry himself towards us, in the Application of that Redemption: he will stand alone in this also; He beholds nothing but sins, but wants, but miseries, he sees nothing in one sinner more than in another, and therefore stands upon nothing with any of them, but let anyone open the door and I will come in unto him.

5. Lastly, He thus indefinitely tenders himself insisting on nothing, but letting of him in, that no sinner might despair, nor yet glory in anything but in Christ.

If his offers were restrained to some kind of sinners, then the rest must perish without hope. And if anything besides the opening of the door did conduce as invitation of him, then the poor sinner would soon be a proud sinner: He would bless his own worthiness as much, if not more, than Christ's goodness.

[*Use 1.*] The first Use shall be of encouragement to every brokenhearted and trembling soul, who fears he is the person against whom Christ only takes exception. Many are apt to plead thus against themselves.

[*Obj.*] Others may be received to mercy, but not I; others may be clasped by Christ, but he will have none of me; he will enter in at the door of anyone else, into my soul (O I fear) he will never enter.

[*Sol.*] To these I would address a few words, much like those of God to his people in, Isa. 40:27. Why sayest thou oh Jacob, and speakest O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. So say I to you, why have you such hard thoughts of a good Christ; what is he? What hath he said? What hath he done unto you? What occasion have you to be so jealous in questioning of his intentions and respects unto you? Why will you dispute his willingness to save you; when you must confess his readiness to suffer and die for you? Why do you cavil at his intention to enter, when your hearts have felt so many of his knockings to open; did he die for thy soul in earnest, and thinkest thou that now he knocks in jest? Are not his commands serious, and all his promises faithful? Why will you distinguish yourselves from Christ, when Christ hath not distinguished you from himself? If Christ doth not except against you, why will you except against him or yourselves?

Saint Augustine in his troubles of spirit, thought he heard a voice saying. *Tolle & Lege, Tolle & Lege*; Take up and read, take up and read; He thereupon took up his Bible and read, and the place he lighted on was Rom. 13:11-14 ver., on which he seriously mused and was converted. I would say the like to you, Take up the Bible and read; read this one passage of the Text, read it again, and consider seriously of it, (If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him.) There is enough in them (if

God will breath his blessing) to answer all thy fears, to remove all thy doubts, to take off all thy exceptions, to incline thy heart to open, to assure thy heart of Christ's present intention to come in to thee.

[*Obj.*] Will you say, that Christ will not at all have to do with a sinner?

[*Sol.*] Read the Text, He stands and knocks at their doors, and for this end, to come in.

[*Obj.*] Will you say, he intends that for other sinners, but not for you?

[*Sol.*] Read the Text again, If any man open, I will come in to him: If you be not out of the number of sinners, you are not out of the reach of the duty, nor out of the compass of his promise.

[*Obj.*] Will you say, if we had opened when he knocked, then indeed he would have entered?

[*Sol.*] Read the text again, Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open, &c The hope of entering is not over while the door is opening, and the time of opening is not past whilst the season of knocking doth continue.

[*Obj.*] Will you say (what will you say) If I had any goodness in myself, any worthiness in myself?

[*Sol.*] What then? Then you would open, nay, then you would not open to Christ; Had you anything of your own to live upon, you would never live upon Christ? Nay then you could not open to Christ, for he will come in only to the empty soul: But peruse the text, If any man will open, I will come in: He looks for no more, but open the door and I am thine; if you will believe Christ at his word, opening is all that he expects.

O that God would set thee at liberty? O that one word of his omnipotency would command thy heart to believe and open.

O that, as the Spirit said come, and the Bride said come; so Christ (this day) would say unto thee, come; and thy heart could say, O Christ I come: As Christ saith, open, so thy heart would answer, O Christ, I open to thee: Since thou doest not except against my sinfulness, since thou wilt pass by all my unworthiness since thou assurest me of thy preciousness and of thy fullness, I am overcome, I yield, I come, I open to thee, have pity on me the miserablest sinner one earth; Thou wilt find me a wicked creature, O make me a new and holy creature; I can bring guilt, O Christ bring pardon with thee; I shall bring misery, but O Christ, bring thou mercy, I shall bring wants, but do thou bring fullness; I take thy person, O be thou my Redeemer; I take thy merits, O let them be my satisfaction; I take thy righteousness, O let it be my clothing; I take thy Spirit, O let it be my cleansing; I take thee at thy promise, O let it be faithfulness unto me.

Is it so saith Christ? Doest thou open thy heart indeed unto me? Well, be of good cheer, thou never heardest a quarter of that goodness, which I will do for thee; I am thine O poor soul; thy sins (which are many) are forgiven; thy heart which was so polluted shall be cleansed; Grace, mercy, peace, strength, every good, enter ye, and dwell in this believing soul forever.

[*Use 2.*] The next Use shall be for exhortation to every one of us to stand out no longer, but to set open our hearts that Christ may come in unto us.

Consider,

1. The amplitude of Christ's goodness towards us: There is not a sinner this day in this place, but Jesus Christ saith unto him, if thou wilt hear and open, I will come in unto thee, and be thine, I know well enough what thou hast been, and what thou hast done, I know thou hast been a blasphemer, or a whore-monger, or a drunkard, or a thief, or a Sabbath-breaker, or a scorner, or a hard-hearted ignorant wretch; yet at thy door I stand this day,

and knock, I will receive thee unto mercy, I will forgive thee all these sins, I will accept, I will heal, I will save thy soul, if thou wilt open thy heart this day unto me and let me in. O Brethren, for Christ his sake refuse not Christ, do not reject, nor neglect so great salvation, so ample a salvation, so every soul inviting a salvation.

2. The necessity you have of Jesus Christ; Give me children, or else I die, said Rachel: Give me Christ or else I perish forever: Can you be saved without Christ? And if you cannot be saved without Christ, and you may have a Christ but for opening of the door, then while it is called today hear and open to him; If the door of grace should be shut because the door of thy heart will not be opened, thou art shut up forever.

3. The inexcusableness of thy soul, if yet thou wilt harden thy heart and not open. Why, what wilt thou? What canst thou plead for thyself at the day of judgment? Wilt thou say, the Gospel never offered me Christ? Why, thou hast heard this day that it saith, If any man will hear and open, &c.

Wilt thou say? I would have opened my heart had it not been for the love of one sin, or the love of a little earth, and ease, and liberty, and safety, and honors, or to please some friends and company: O how will men and Angels hiss at thee? This is a person who for a lusts sake forsook his mercies, who for a little vanity rejected his own salvation. O how wilt thou curse thyself, that for nothing, for that which is worse than nothing; thou hast put off Christ and his salvation. And therefore Men, Fathers and Brethren hearken unto me, as Moses once to the Israelites, so do I propound this day unto you, blessing and cursing, life and death; salvation if you will open to Christ, and damnation if you will refuse Christ. O choose not cursing but blessing, choose not death but life, choose not hell but heaven, choose not sin but Christ, although you have formerly slighted, if yet you

will regard; though you have formerly contemned, if yet you will prize; though you have formerly resisted, if yet you will yield, if yet you will consent, if yet you will become willing to open unto Christ, Christ will be yours, Mercy will be yours, and Salvation will be yours.

[*Use 3.*] The last Use shall be for direction: for me thinks some soul is touched and wrought upon this day, and secretly cries out, O what shall we do? What course may we take, that our hearts may be made willing to open unto Christ, and to let him in.

The helpful directions which I would prescribe, are these:

1. The mind must be opened if ever you would get your wills to be opened: I may here aptly make use of that scholastical distinction of *necessitas consequentiae*, and of *necessitas consequentis*: Although there be not a necessity of consequence, that if the mind be enlightened, then the will is opened, yet there is a necessity of consequent, for the will cannot be opened, unless the mind be first enlightened. For there is neither any particular object, for the will to tend to, nor any motive to affect and draw the will, till light discovers and apprehends them: Now this light or knowledge in the mind, which is representative and affective, must be twofold.

Reflexive, that you are sinful and lost, and stand in need of mercy and salvation, more than the most pining beggar doth of a bit of bread to save his life.

Direct, That Jesus Christ is by God the Father set forth to be a Savior, and that this is a goodness suitable to your condition, and possible for your fruition. A sense of misery, and then an apprehension of a good every way helpful, and of which one may be capable, is necessarily apt to draw and incline the will: If there were a good, but then it is of another kind, and

answered not my necessity; or if it did answer my necessity, but then there were an impossibility for me to obtain it. It would not stir the will at all; Therefore strive for such a knowledge as discovers your souls to be lost, and only reparable by Jesus Christ, Joh. 4:10. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, &c.

2. The judgment must be opened, if you would have your wills opened: A light merely apprehensive, is nothing so working on the will, as that which is discursive: A sudden carrying of a candle through the room enables us not to so full a survey as if you stood a while with it and seriously beheld the objects: A double work of judgment is necessary to affect the will to Christ.

One is considerative, which is a serious and full weighing of the souls condition as wanting Christ, or as enjoying of him; I am but a dead man if I refuse Christ; If I embrace him, I am blessed, in the one scale is eternal misery, in the other scale is eternal felicity, upon the turning of either, is the turning of my soul, my precious soul. If I will not open to Christ upon his own conditions, my soul is lost, (O my soul, what loss is the loss of a soul?) If my heart be willing to open, my soul is saved; (O the mercy, the grace, the peace, the life, the heaven in that one word!)

Suppose I keep my sins and hold fast the world, and let go the offer of Christ, where is the gain, what is the safety, whence is the comfort by this, what will be the issue? Suppose I open to Christ, and let go my sins, and part with the world, what is my loss? Where is my diminution? Can happiness impoverish me? Can all sufficiency be loss to me? Can salvation distress me? If I be not a sinner, why do I talk of a Savior? If I be, why do I not receive an offered Savior? If I be a sinner, do not I need a Savior? If it be a tender mercy to offer, is it more than a wise duty to embrace him? If

my body were drowning, I would catch hold of a rock; If my soul be sinking, why should I not lay hold of a Christ? I may perish if I will, (O but who would perish willfully? Who would perish at all?) &c.

Another is Argumentative, which consists in a divine reasoning, either disproving the objections of the soul against a closing with Christ, or enforcing and edging those arguments drawn from free grace, from Christ, from the New Covenant, which tends to incline the will unto him: There be many fears, and doubts, and jealousies, rolling (especially) in a convinced and humbled spirit, questioning sometimes Christ's sufficiency, or else his intention and willingness; sometimes our own capacity, by reason of greatness of sinning, or peculiarity of former refusals, all which you should do well to get resolved and cleared, that so you may see the way standing open, and free for such a sinner (as you judge yourself to be) to come in, and be embraced by Christ.

3. Faith must be obtained if ever you would get your hearts opened; for when all Arguments are answered, yet the will, will not come off without a supernatural quality to enable and draw it: There must be a new quality in the will, as well as a new light in the mind; for the will cannot execute a supernatural act, without a supernatural qualification. When you put another bias on the Bowle, this will draw it another way; what is the reason one needle starts up to the pole-star, and another doth not? One is touched with the Load-stone, and the other is not, *Surgunt indocti* (saith Saint Augustine) *& capiunt coelum*, &c. the unlearned rise up and take heaven, and many that are learned do not: poor people (in respect of parts as well as in respect of estate) receive the Gospel, and the wise men of the world slight it. Surely the reason is this, because God gives knowledge only to the one, but he

gives faith to the other; nothing can see the worth of Christ, nor bow the will unto him but faith.

4. The Gospel must be heard, for this can work that faith which opens the will, *Fidas ex auditu*, Rom. 10:17. Lydia heard Paul preaching, and the Lord opened her heart, Acts 16:14, so did the Jailor in the same chapter, and his heart was opened.

5. Lastly, importunate prayer must be used: the Gospel (we say) is the key of the Spirit, and prayer (we say) is the key of heaven; and truly if it can open the ears of a God, it may quickly serve to open the heart of a sinner. The heart of a man is the best present to offer to God, and it is the fittest object for him to work upon. O pray to the heart-maker to be the heart-opener: He works in us (saith the Apostle, Phil. 2:13.) to will and to do; O pray to him who hath the key of David, and opens, and no man shuts, that your hearts may be opened to Christ, and never shut against him more.

SERMON V.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

There are three things in this text observable about Christ.

1. His gracious assaying of a sinner's heart (Behold) I stand at the door and knock.
2. His gracious conveying of himself in to the opening soul (if any man open the door, I will come in to him.)
3. His gracious displaying of his goodness (upon that entrance) to the opening person (and will sup with him, and he with me.)

I have finished the first of these, and am now to proceed to the disquisition of the two latter, whereof the one seems to set forth a possession and union, and the other seems to set forth an expression or communion which an opening soul hath with Christ.

The words have little or no difficulty in them, yet if you please take a short paraphrase upon them.

[I] That is Jesus Christ, not as man only, nor as God only, but as Mediator.

[Will come in to him] a peremptory expression. He doth not say I will shun him, or I will expostulate with him for his neglects, nor yet will I only come to him, (whiles he treats with a sinner, he comes unto him) but I will come in to him. The door can no sooner be open, but Christ comes in immediately, and indeed mercy is quicker in entering, then misery is in opening.

[And will sup with him and he with me] Christ is pleased often to set forth his communion with the soul under the notion of a feast, and of a Supper: The confirmation of exceeding mercies hath been with a Supper: That of the Passover in the Old Testament, and that of our Sacrament in the New Testament; but certainly the meaning is that Christ hath some choice, sweet, admirable mercies and delights to impart or communicate to the soul which opens and receives him.

From all this I shall insist only on two propositions.

1. That Jesus Christ comes in and takes possession of the soul which opens to him (I will come in to him.)

2. That there is an admirable and sweet communion 'twixt Christ and the soul possessed of Christ, (I will sup with him and he with me.)

That Jesus Christ comes into the soul which opens unto him, or takes possession of an opening soul.

There is a fourfold coming of Christ.

1. Personal: this was for redemption: A coming for sinners.

2. Judicial, this shall be for retribution: a coming against sinners.

3. Evangelical; this is for vocation: a coming unto sinners.

4. Spiritual, this is for Application: a coming into sinners.

There is a twofold Application of Christ.

1. One is Active, and in this the soul comes to Christ.

2. Another is passive, and in this Christ comes to the soul: which exactly to express, doth exceed my capacity.

The Scripture calls it sometimes,

His apprehending of us, Phil. 3:12. If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

His forming of himself in us, Gal. 4:19. Till Christ be formed in you.

His being or abiding in us, Joh. 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

His dwelling in us, Eph. 3:17. Christ dwells in your hearts by faith.

But because the coming in of Christ is restrained to the Metaphor of a King; or Master, coming in to possess and dwell in a house or Mansion opened or yielded up unto him.

I shall therefore keep close to that, and for the unfolding of it insist a little on three particulars.

1. What it is for Christ to possess himself of the soul.

2. What the properties and adjuncts of this possession are.

3. The reasons why he takes possession of that soul that opens to him.

1. What it is for Christ to take possession of the soul.

In answer to this, consider certain premises before the opening of Christ's taking possession.

1. God (at first) made man a goodly creature, and righteous, and as he severed Paradise for his habitation, so he reserved man (above all other creatures) for his own possession.

2. Man quickly dispossessed himself of that condition by sin, and stood now (*qua talis*) as an outlawry and rejected person.

3. Christ Jesus was immediately promised as the author of life and salvation, and passed under Covenant, and Types, and at length in the fullness of time was incarnated, and as a Mediator and Redeemer, perfectly wrought out Reconciliation and Redemption.

4. The Gospel makes publication if this, and indefinitely tenders Jesus Christ to sinners, and by vocation calls them to Christ, and the participation of salvation by him.

5. This vocation to some is ineffectual, to others it is efficacious: To them (who from faith given) and thereby answer, or obey, or accept, or open to the call of Christ, it is effectual.

6. When this faith is wrought, then immediately and simultaneously ensues a union 'twixt Christ and the believer.

7. Which union is a spiritual relation 'twixt Christ and a believing soul, and a most intimate, close, mystical, and inseparable conjunction 'twixt them: Expressed in Scripture by that of Head and Member, of Husband and Wife, of a Foundation and Living-stone built thereupon: of the Vine and Branches, &c.

8. In this union believers are by the Spirit of Christ immediately knit to him, and by him to God, so that (in a mystical respect) they become one with him and with the Father, and partakes of all the good in and by Jesus Christ, which flows from him as the head from the members.

Christ in respect of himself is one that possesseth all good, and upon this union a communication thereof doth ensue.

9. The form of this union is a mystical compaction or co-augmentation by those admirable joints of the Spirit and Faith, Eph. 4:16. And is severally phrased in Scripture.

As Christ stands under the relation of a Head, and we of members, It is called incorporation.

As Christ hath the relation of a foundation, and we of a building, it is called an inedification.

As Christ stands in the relation of a husband, and we of a wife, it is called a dispensation and marriage.

As Christ stands in relation of a vine, and we of branches, It is called an incision or implantation.

As Christ stands in relation of a Lord or Master, and we of a house and family; It is called (especially on his part) an entrance, possession and inhabitation.

These things being premised, for answer to the question we must know, that there is a double possession that Christ hath of souls.

1. *Possessio juris*: a possession of Right or Title, by which he may lay claim unto them, which he may justly do.

1. *Jure autoritatis*: for all of them are the fruit of his power, the workmanship of his hand in Creation.

2. *Jure pretii*: for he hath laid down a price, and hath ransomed, or purchased them by his death.

3. *Jure donationis*: for all of them are given unto him for subjection and rule.

2. *Possessio Gratiae*: A possession of grace, or a gracious possession, in which he doth not only claim but take possession, or enters as a possessor: of this I am now to speak, and it comprehends five things in it.

1. A Sovereign seizure, when he comes in as a possessor; he doth in a way of propriety set up his Title in the soul: As if he should say, now this soul is mine: It is no longer sins, no longer the worlds, no longer the devils, no

longer its own, but mine, and only mine, I am the Lord and husband of it. As in all contracts there results an exclusive propriety. Ezek. 16:8. When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, Behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Or as Psal. 132:13. The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. Ver. 14. This is my rest forever, here will I dwell.

Hence those relative and impropriating expressions, as my love, my dove, my undefiled, Cant. 5:2. As a husband can say, this woman is mine, &c.

The wife cannot be more the husbands, nor a house more the owners, nor a member more the heads, nor a branch more the vines then the opening soul is Christ's.

Which is therefore said to be knit unto him, Eph. 4, and to be joined, or glued unto him, 1 Cor. 6:17, and to be married unto him for an eternity, Hos. 2.

And he is said to own us as a Master owns a servant, Rom. 6, as a husband owns a wife, as a Lord owns a house, as the head owns the members, as the Lord once owned the Temple. So then Christ comes into the soul by way of possession, when he doth interest himself in such a peculiar way of union, and propriety, that he saith, this soul is mine, and the soul may reciprocally answer, this Christ is mine, as the Church in Cant. 6:3.

2. A distinguishing furniture, when Christ takes possession of a soul, there is not only a relation of propriety, but there is also a communication of quality: The Spirit of Christ actuates the whole soul with grace. As to make Christ (in himself a Mediator) there was not only the grace of union, by which he was God and man; but also the grace of unction, by which he was

adorned and qualified to the work of Mediator. So is it when Christ takes possession of a poor soul, he doth apply himself to it, not only in a way of affection, (wishing well to it) not only in a way of consent (I do yield myself unto it) not only in a way of union (I take this soul as mine, and will own it as my own self) not only in a way of promise, (I will bestow some good upon it) but also in a way of unction (that is) he doth set up himself in this his possession; He doth qualify, he doth sanctify, he doth beautify every room of the soul with the graces of his blessed Spirit: As when the Lord entered into the Temple which Solomon built, he then filled the same with his glory, 1 King. 8:11. So when Jesus Christ enters into a soul, he fills that soul with the glory of his grace, with his influence as well as with his presence. When the first Adam enters into us, he enters as a contagion, and as death; so when the second Adam enters into us, he enters into us as a renovation and life. Therefore is Christ said to be formed in us, Gal. 4:19. The Papist talk of the figure of Christ's body sticking in the garments, &c. that's a vanity, but this is a truth: that Christ doth form himself in the soul of a believer, he forms himself in us, by conforming us unto himself, implanting in us all holy graces, which 1. Alter. 2. Enable. 3. Dispose and incline; as if he should say, this heart shall love sin no more, it shall be enflamed with love to me; this heart shall trust vanity no more, it shall trust on me; this tongue shall blaspheme no more, it shall praise me; this person shall be a slay no more, he shall be a servant unto me. Behold (O soul) thou art become mine, and I must now adorn thee to be a delightful Mansion for myself, therefore we are said to be new creatures, and his workmanship, and to put on Christ.

Blindness, vanity, folly, pride be gone: come in knowledge, wisdom, soundness of judgment, truth, regard of me and it; come in and possess the

upper room of this soul, the mind. Unwillingness, stoutness, rebellion, hardness, hypocrisy be gone; come in pliability, softness, tenderness, sincerity, readiness, compliance with my will, dependence on myself, come in and possess the royal chamber of the soul the will: Irregularity, vileness, inordinateness be gone: Come in purity, order, quickness, come in and possess the lower room of the soul, the affections. All ye graces of my Spirit, be ye set up in the inward rooms, and spread, and act in the outward rooms of the life, in all spiritualness of behavior towards God and man, &c.

3. A sweet gubernation: for Christ possesseth the soul as a Lord possesseth his Mansion, to do what he pleaseth, and to rule after his own will in it: and therefore he is called the Lord of his Temple: And the householder, who employs and sets every servant his work, having first given unto them several talents. He must have and hath the command and disposal of the soul. As the Centurion said, to one servant go, and he went, do this, and he did it, come and he came, Mat. 8. So saith Christ to the soul which he takes possession of; I will have you sometimes to abound, and then you must be thankful, and sometimes to want, and then you must be contented: now I will have you to do for me with your graces, or with your estates, and you must then be ready to do: and another time, now I will have you to suffer for me in your Name, in your comforts, in your possessions, in your liberties, perhaps in your lives, and you must then be willing to forsake all for me. Sometimes your lusts will be commanding, but do not hearken to them; sometimes Satan will be tempting, but do not yield to him; sometimes your carnal friends will be trying of you, but do not regard them; you are none of theirs, nor none of your own; you are my possession, and therefore must be only at my disposal.

4. A watchful provision, when a man takes possession of house, or household, or lands, he is thereupon engaged to take care and charge over all: He must Till the ground, and manure it, and mend it, and keep it in heart; and he must keep and repair the house, if it be sinking, and he must maintain the servants with all necessaries of food and raiment; he must look to them when they be well, and when they be sick; just so doth Christ, when he takes possession of a soul, he takes upon him the full care of that soul, he will be a sufficiency unto it,

By preserving the graces given unto it.

By adding suitable degrees, and helps of grace for greater and further services.

By repairing and recovering a fallen or sinking soul. There is a rich storehouse in Christ, for the soul which he possesseth: He will give renewing grace, and justifying grace, and then he will keep that grace given; And he will yet add more grace and help.

And if the soul be drawn aside, and falls, he will not lose it, he will seek after it, he will find it again, and recover it again.

5. A sure protection: when one hath possession, it behooves him to keep possession, he is to defray all the rents or dues wherewith that possession is charged; and he is to answer and take off all claims and titles made against his right of possession. Go to my Master, saith the servant; to my husband, saith the wife; So doth Jesus Christ, when he enters and takes possession of the soul. This soul (saith Christ) is mine, I own it, I will provide for it; plead for it or against it who will or can, I will answer him, I will answer for it, I will stand 'twixt it and all pleas, 'twixt it and all claims 'twixt it and all hazards, I will, take all upon me, and as long as I am Christ, and as far as

my blood will go, or my intercession will go, or my merits can go, or my Spirit can go, I will maintain and defend mine own.

Joh. 17:12. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.

Joh. 10:27. My sheep hear my voice, &c. Ver. 28. And I give unto them eternal life, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Rom. 8:38. Neither life, nor death, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Ver. 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. 8:34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, &c. As if he should say, come who will, and do your utmost, yet I will be possessor and Savior still. Satan stands out, and saith, this soul belongs to me, I have had possession of it a long time; too long, saith Christ, a deceiver and usurper as thou art, but I have crushed and bruised thy power; Come thou out and never enter into this soul more.

Sin stands out, and saith, this soul hath been my habitation from the first, but Christ casts out the bondwoman with her child, and saith, thy possession is but an encroachment: This soul was mine by Creation first of all, and now is mine again by purchase, and therefore sin get you gone, Never shalt thou have royal possession in any soul that belongs to me. And when the soul sometimes reports sad tidings, that divine justice calls upon it for arrearages, well, saith Christ, let me alone; I was thy surety, all is discharged, I have satisfied all: I am thy propitiation, fear thou not, all is well 'twixt thee and my Father, I am his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased.

So that (summarily) then Christ doth come in and take possession of the soul, when he doth unite himself to the soul, or seizeth on it as his own, and then purifies and enables it for his service and use, and then erects his power and rule in it and over it, and undertakes for it, for full provisions and protection.

[*Quest.*] 2. What the properties and adjuncts of this possession are?

[*Sol.*] 1. The possessing is real: it is not a fixious notion formed only by a wild imagination, for the door of the heart is a real thing, and the knocking at the door is a real motion and offer, and the opening of the door is a real dilatation of the soul to embrace Christ; so likewise is his coming in, it is a real entrance and taking possession of the soul, a real owning and interesting, &c.

2. Yet it is spiritual, you must not be so weak to imagine that the person of Christ comes now into our hearts, as once into sinners' houses, O no, a corporal possession cannot be, and it alone were fruitless. But Christ takes possession of the soul, (being a spirit) by his Spirit; and therefore as in one place Christ is said to dwell in us, Eph. 3:17, so in another place the Spirit is said to dwell in us, Joh. 14:17, and as he is said to be in us, so his Spirit is said to be in us: He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, *ibid.* It is his Spirit which applies him to us, and it is his Spirit which worketh in us (by way of efficiency) the graces we enjoy, and it is the Spirit of Christ who ruleth in us, &c.

3. It is powerful; all that Christ doth about the soul, either for entrance or maintenance, is carried with exceeding power when he is taking possession, he doth dispossess the strong man in the house, and with a greater strength of power rescues and delivers; as the Israelites were brought out of the house of bondage by an Almighty arm: When he possesseth the soul,

(possessed by himself) with his grace, he communicates these by an exceeding power; no power less than Almightyness, less than that which raised Christ from the dead, is requisite to quicken a dead sinner.

And the preservation of grace received is likewise a work of power: The same Sun which begets the light must preserve the light: We are kept by the power of God unto salvation.

4. It is eternal: till you can quench the love of Christ, till you can reverse the seals of Christ, till you can crush the power of Christ, (which never can be done) Christ who hath taken possession will keep it. If you had possession of Christ, and Christ had no possession of you, then some danger, but ye hold Christ, and Christ holds you, &c.

[*Quest.*] 3. Why Christ enters and takes possession, and will dwell in any soul that opens to him?

[*Sol.*] I answer:

1. You have his promise for it in the text, and Christ was never yet worse than his word.

2. He will not be behind hand in his goodness to any: If he offers himself when the door is shut, he will not stand off when the door is opened. If he pursues us flying, he will not shun us yielding; if he allures us whiles unwilling, he will surely embrace us being willing.

3. It is himself who makes the heart willing to open, and for this end, that himself might enter: There is no more required on our parts; I am willing saith Christ to enter, are you willing to let me in? If your will concurs with him, the work is done: nothing but the sinner's unwillingness hath kept him out all this while.

4. When the heart comes to open, it is now sufficiently conditioned and fitted for all that Christ intends to work in it: For,

1. It is now willing to part with all for Christ.
2. It is now willing to resign up all to Christ.
3. It is now willing to take all from Christ.
4. It is now willing to be disposed in all by Christ.
5. When the soul comes to opening terms, it stands in the extremist need of Christ: Never did a wounded, gored body stand in more need of plasters, nor a diseased body stand in more need of medicines, nor a tortured body stand in more need of ease, nor a starved hungry body stand in more need of bread, nor a pursued body stand in more need of help, nor an accused body stand in more need of defense, nor a fainting body stand in more need of cordials, then the humbled and opening soul doth stand in need of Christ: Now Christ will come and help in a needful time: He will not be wanting to a soul in such a condition.

[*Use 1.*] Doth Christ come in and take possession of the soul which opens to him? I beseech you earnestly to survey your estate; wisely and seriously consider to whom you do belong; who or what it is that owns you and hath possession of you There was a great contention once amongst some Nations about Homer (an excellent Poet) they severally pleaded their interest in him. And truly so it is about the soul of man, many lay claim unto it, sin doth, the world doth, Satan doth, Christ doth.

The soul of man is not a waste piece of ground, nor is it a desolate habitation, someone or other hath possession of it: if Christ hath not, be sure that an enemy of Christ, and of the soul, hath the possession: Hath Christ possession, or hath he not? O Sirs, Meditate a while of this description, vanity possesseth my mind, iniquity possesseth my heart, vexation possessed my life, but Christ never yet possessed my soul.

Life is come into my body, and sin is come into my soul, and the Law is come into my conscience, and the Gospel is come unto my ear: and strivings are come into my Spirit, and honors are come upon my Name, and riches are come upon my Trade, and friends are come in to my society, but Christ, but Jesus Christ is not yet come into my house.

Nay, yet again, a sword is come to waste us, famine is like to come to pine us, death will surely come to remove us, and judgment, the judgment of God will come to condemn us, and if Christ be not come in to save us, what will become of our Christless souls? Therefore try and examine yourselves, prove yourselves whether Christ be in you, 2 Cor. 13:5.

He hath called upon you by his Word, but is he come in? He hath offered himself to you by his Ministers, but is he come in? He hath knocked at your doors by the strivings of his Spirit, but is he come in? Ye have been almost persuaded to open, but is he come in? You think that you have opened unto him, but is he come in? You think that he is come in and hath taken possession, but is he so indeed?

O friends, the soul may be lost by fancy, as well as by obstinacy, by self-delusion as soon as by self-rebellion: what a bitter thing will this prove? I thought myself to be Christ's possession, but was deceived, and now am hells portion.

[*Quest.*] But you will say, how may one know that Christ is come, and hath taken possession of the soul indeed.

[*Sol.*] It may be evidenced.

1. By his affecting excellency.
2. By his virtual efficacy.
3. By his exciting authority.
4. By our importuning insatiability.

First, by his affecting excellency: O sirs, before Christ comes in, much of the excellency of Christ appeared to the soul by way of invitation, but when he is come to the soul, more of his excellency now appears by way of fruition: Apprehension may much affect us, but fruition and experience doth much more affect us: Now the soul sees indeed a wonderful Redeemer, a wonderful love, a wonderful satisfaction, a wonderful happiness. As the Queen of Sheba, when she saw Solomon in his glory, her spirit failed; or as Simeon, when he got Christ in his arms, Now let me depart, mine eyes have seen thy salvation; or as Jacob when he saw Joseph, now let me die; or as David, return to thy rest O my soul, for, &c. Psal. 116.

The soul which is possessed of Christ, adores, admires, cries out, I am satisfied, I have enough; the pearl is found, the chiefest of ten thousand is mine: As the Sun darkens all the Stars; all is as nothing to Christ: Now I have love, joy, friends, lands and all in Christ.

This is the Christ that I looked for, that I longed for; I see, and find in him the great love of God; the exact beauty of holiness; a full redemption; God reconciled; a spring of life; worth to satisfy judgment; worthiness to satisfy my will; sweetness to satisfy my affections; happiness to satisfy my whole soul; now I am abundantly paid for all my prayers, pains, &c.

Secondly, by his virtual efficacy: Christ is not an empty notion, but a quick agent: and when he comes into a soul, virtue from him comes into the soul too: Christ and his Spirit come together, and dwell together, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. In Mal. 3:1, you read a promise of his coming into a prepared soul. Ver. 3. And then of the work which he doth when he is come (He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.)

A refiner or purifier useth the fire to melt the metal, and to separate the dross and rust from it, and so makes it pure, and beautiful, and useful.

The soul of a man is a corrupt vessel, and when Christ comes in to it, he doth by his Spirit, (which is compared to fire) cleanse and purify it, make it holy, delightful, and serviceable, stamps his own image upon it: Now you shall be able to love your God, to hate your sin, to overcome the world, to pray, to mourn, to trust, to wait, to be meek, lowly, contemned, &c.

3. By his exceeding authority: when Christ takes possession, he doth immediately set up his Throne, and rule in the heart: He rules all, and rules alone, and the soul is willingly obediential. He pulls down all authority contrary to himself: as that last Monarchy in Daniel crushed all the rest.

He hath possession who hath an acknowledged and consented dominion over your souls; His servants ye are whom ye obey, Rom. 6. O how doth this discover multitudes to be none of Christ's possession? Some they will not have him to rule at all: Others like the Mother about the child, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it; a sinful lust must rule, and a worldly lust shall rule, and Christ (if he please) shall then rule too; but would you be half saved? Surely where Christ indeed takes possession, Christ alone is set up, and the whole soul comes freely under subjection. None but Christ, none but Christ, said the Martyr: I will know none but Christ, love none but Christ, serve none but Christ; the will of a believer comes up to the will of its Savior.

4. By our importunate insatiability; If Christ hath taken possession of the soul, that soul would have more possession of Christ: O I have not yet attained, I have not yet enough of Christ. O saith Paul, that I may apprehend as I am apprehended, Phil. 3. Such a soul would have all to fall into the hands of Christ, and to be more and more possessed by Christ: Lord, here's

yet much ignorance, O possess my mind more with thy light. Lord, here are many doubts and fears, O possess my judgment more with thy evidencing and comforting grace: Lord, here is much backwardness and dullness, O possess my will more with thy quickening grace: Lord, here is much weakness and failings, O possess my heart more with thy strengthening grace.

[*Use 2.*] If upon search any of you do discern Christ's possessing presence, rise up and bless God, go home and rejoice in your portion: It was a great matter for Christ to come into a man's house: It is more for him to come into a man's heart.

When Zacchaeus opened his doors to Christ, This day (said Christ) is salvation come into thy house: O Christian, if Christ be come into thy soul, the King of glory, the Prince of peace, the Lord of life is come into thy soul; it is more than for a King to come to a poor man's house.

I know not where to begin, or where to end, or in what phrase to set forth thy blessed condition.

1. All that makes for heaven is thine; the person of a Savior, that's thine; the price of Redemption, that's thine; the peace of Reconciliation, that's thine; the release in Justification, that's thine; the privilege of Adoption, that's thine; the spring of Sanctification, that's thine; the promise of Consolation, that's thine; the hope of Salvation, that also is thine.

1 Cor. 3:21. All things are yours. Ver. 22. Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. Ver. 23. And ye are Christ's.

2. All that may make thee up in all conditions, Christ will be that unto thee; do losses befall thee for Christ? Christ will make them up: He alone will be better to thee than all the world; what thou lovest in the world, thou

shalt find in him. Arnulphus cried out on his death-bed, O Christ, How true art thou in thy promises? How true art thou in thy promises? How true art thou in thy promises? They about him asked what he meant thereby; O saith he, Christ promised, that if any forsook wife and children, and house, and friends for his sake, he should receive a hundred-fold in this world. This saith he hath my Savior verified to me, for I will not part with the love of Christ, and the joy I find in my Christ for a thousand worlds.

Doth exile, imprisonment, any hardship befall thee for Christ? Christ will make up all; Thou mayest be forced from thy possessions, but Christ will not be severed from his possession: When Paul was bound at Jerusalem, Christ was with him; when he was thrown into the Castle, Christ was with him; when he was at sea, Christ was with him; when he was chained at Rome, Christ also was with him.

Let men and devils do their utmost, Christ will own, Christ will stick to, Christ will comfort, Christ will help, Christ will save his possession What shall I say more? Doth anything trouble thy soul? What is it? Is it the remaining power of sin? It shall not have dominion over thee, saith Christ: Is it violent temptation? I will bruise Satan under thy feet, saith Christ: Is it want of more grace? I will sanctify you throughout, saith Christ: Is it want of comfort? I will send the Comforter, saith Christ: Is it want of strength? My grace shall be sufficient for thee, saith Christ: Art thou troubled for thy sinning's? I will answer for them, saith Christ: Doest thou fear perseverance? I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

[*Use 3.*] Doth Christ take possession of an opening soul? The instructions thence are these,

1. Then you great rich learned persons, prize and esteem a little better of godly and believing persons: The Emperor kissed the hollow of Paphnutius

his eye, which he lost for Christ: Much more are we to honor Christ himself in whomsoever we find him. A real Christian is no less than the Temple of God, and possession of Christ: Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:3. And let men take heed of injuring Christ's possession you; I injure him, &c.

2. Then (Christians) remember whose you are, and to whom you owe all: you are Christ's, all that belongs to you is Christ's: your graces, your parts, your faculties, your estates, your honors, your lives, your bodies, your souls, all Christ's: let none meddle with Christ's possession: But let Christ command his own, and do what he will with his own; He hath more right to you and yours, than you yourselves: If he call for his own, let him have it. If he saith, I will now use your greatness, use your wealth, use your strength, use your souls, use your bodies; Lord say, we are thine, thine we are, thy servants we are, thy purchase, thy possession, altogether at thy disposal.

3. Do not part with Christ when once he hath gotten possession. The King of Persia casts some beams of Honor upon Hermisda, and clothed him suitable to his noble condition, but all was to take him off from Christ, but discerning it, he rents them from his back; what shall I forsake and deny my Christ for these, &c? Nazianzen relates of some Christian soldiers commanded by Julian to throw some Frankincense into the fire, as if it were to his honor, and they had their reward. But when they saw the deceit: They run to him, throw him his money again, crying out, we are Christians, we are Christians.

O Sirs, keep possession of Christ, and let Christ take possession of you. If thou thrust Christ out of your doors, resolve upon it, that he will thrust your souls out of heaven.

SERMON VI.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

I am come to the evening and close of the Text; It goes off with as satisfying and delightful a farewell, as Christ can make, or as heart can desire, (I will sup with him, and he with me.)

When your hearts and sin do close, guilt ensues and terrifies the conscience; It kisseth us at the entrance of our service, but stabs us at the parting, for a recompense. But when our hearts and Christ do close, though the preparation be difficult, yet the fruition is sweet and happy.

The Text sets it forth by the Metaphor of a Supper, wherein there is, 1. Liberality of provision. 2. Courtesy of entertainment. 3. Sweetness of society, and 4. Familiarity of intercourse, an exchange of kindnesses and delights 'twixt the Master and the Guests.

The result of all amounts to this one proposition.

That there is a sweet and excellent communion 'twixt Christ and the soul possessed by Christ: (I will sup with him and he with me.)

For the opening of this, consider that communion (in general) is the immediate consequent (if not effect) of union. And it is distinguished according to the nature and condition of objects united, with a respect also to their use and end.

Hence that division of communion into,

1. Natural, as is that of the head and members.
2. Political, as is that of King and subjects.
3. Spiritual, as is this of Christ and his Church.

This spiritual communion respects either,

1. *Regnatores*, the Angels and glorified souls in heaven, both which are united to Christ as their head, whether by way of conformity only, or by way of influence too, I will not now discuss because the proposition intends it not.

2. *Viatores*, those that walk by faith here on earth, 'twixt Christ and them there is a singular communion, as may appear.

1. By express phrases in Scripture, besides the book of the Canticles, 1 Joh. 1:3. Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1:9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. Isa. 25:6. A feast of fat things, a feast of wines, of fat things, full of marrow, of wines on the Lees well refined.

2. By the Parable of the wedding feast, Mat. 22:2, and of the entertainment of the Prodigal son, Luk. 15.

3. By such relations as carry communion in their bosoms, as of a head and body, of an husband and wife, of a foundation and building, of root and branch, the head hath communion with the body by influence, the husband

with the wife by love and consent, the foundation with the building by support and strength, the root with the branches by leaf and sap: Thus it is 'twixt Christ and Believers.

4. By such actions as import communion, viz.

1. Cohabitation, He dwells in us, and with us by his Spirit.
2. Consociation, he eats and drinks with us in the Sacrament.
3. Conversation, he speaks and confers with us in his Word.

For the clearer opening of the assertion, I will discuss these particulars.

1. Wherein this communion doth consist.
2. What the extent of it is.
3. Why Christ hath communion, &c.
4. Then the useful Application.

[*Quest.*] 1. Wherein this communion doth consist.

[*Sol.*] It doth consist in a reciprocal expression 'twixt Christ and believers. Like Jacob's ladder, the Angels ascending and descending. There are mutual passages between them both.

Something Christ imparts to them, and something they impart to Christ: It is a hand mutually opening and clasping.

It includes, 1. An exceeding mutual love: Two hearts respectively inflamed one to another, and enfolded one within another.

Christ lets out his love unto believers, he loves them as if they were his servants, (but that is too little.) He loves them as if they were his friends (ye are my friends, Joh. 15.) He loves them as if they were his children (I and the children God hath given me, Heb. 2:13.) Nay he loves them as if they were his Spouse, Hos. 2. Nay yet more, he loves them as if they were bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; he loves them as himself, Eph. 5:30, nay yet more, he loves them more than his own life (which he parted with for

their sakes) and in some respect more than his own glory (which he veiled a while for their salvation.)

And believers let out their love to Christ, Simon, lovest thou me more than these? Lord, saith he, thou knowest that I love thee. O blessed Christ (saith Bernard) I love thee, *plusquam mea* (more then all lands) *plusquam meos* (more then all friends) *plusquam me* (more than all myself.)

So that here is the first branch of communion 'twixt Christ and believers, viz. mutual love; ye are my beloved, and my friends, saith Christ, and this is my beloved, and this is my friend, saith the Church, Cant. 5:16, 1 Pet. 1:8. Whom having not seen, ye love him whom my soul loveth, Cant. 3:1.

2. It includes a singularly mutual complacence or delight.

1. Christ delights in believers: he delights,

1. In their persons: Thou shalt be called Hephzibah and Beulah for the Lord delighteth in thee, Isa. 62:4,5. He delights in them as a bridegroom in his newly married bride. And Zeph. 3:17. He will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. When God created the world, he delighted in his own workmanship; and so doth Christ delight in a believer his new Creation, as the birth of his own power and mercy, and as his glory on earth.

2. In their graces: which are as it were the face and image of Christ in the soul: A believing soul is the reflex of Christ, and their graces are compared in Cant. 4, to the smell of ointment, ver. 10, to the chief spices, ver. 14, to pleasant fruit, ver. 13, to a fountain of gardens, ver. 15.

3. In their services, which are therefore styled mountains of myrrh, and hills of Frankincense, Cant. 4:6. A little Myrrh and Frankincense is sweet and pleasing, what is a hill or mountain of them? Ver. 10. The smell of thine ointments is better than all spices. Ver. 11. Thy lips, O my Spouse drop as

the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. When Noah prayed and offered a burnt offering, the Lord smelled a sweet savor, Gen. 8:20,21. When the Philippians exercised acts of mercy, they were as odors of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

When David offered up his broken heart, this was a delightful sacrifice: A broken and a contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise, Psal. 51:17. Christ delights in their tears, in their sighs, in their praying's (though weak,) in their hearings, in their trusting's, in their praising's.

2. And believers delight in Christ, Cant. 2:3. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. They delight,

1. In the glories of his person: As the chiefest of ten thousand; none like to him, or to be compared with him, Joh. 1:14. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. In the wonder and mirror of his Redemption, admiring at the height, and depth, and breadth of his love to die for them.

3. In all the methods of his presence: the voice of him in his Word, O how sweet? (One day in thy Courts is better than a thousand, Psal. 84:10, the disclosure of himself in the Sacrament; O how precious? (now the believing and loving soul rejoiceth with joy unspeakable, 1 Pet. 1:8.) The answer from him of our seeking, O what a satisfaction? (Return to thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, Psal 116:7.)

3. It includes a mutual benevolence: In a rational and friendly communion, each party studies and wisheth good to each other.

So doth Christ unto believers: He wisheth much good to his enemies; to them who reject communion with him; (How often would I have gathered you? And, Father forgive them;) what good then doth he wish and will to

his friends? There is not only a fullness of goodness in Christ, but also fullness of willingness in Christ to do good to his members when he was on earth, He instructed and prayed for them; and longed with a great desire to die for them, and was earnest when they die, they might be with him, and, Behold his glory, Joh. 17:24.

And now he is in heaven, he is an Advocate for them, appears in their suit and cause; he is an Intercessor, He ever lives to make intercession for us, Rom. 8:34.

And so do believers unto Christ, though they cannot wish any good to Christ as to one that is indigent by way of addition, yet they do wish good unto him, as to one who is glorious by way of publication: They wish, will and desire the enlargement of his dominion in their own hearts and others: The honoring of his Gospel, that it may be believed and received; prosperity to the cause and servants of Christ, (pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee) and to all his Ordinances.

4. Lastly, it includes a mutual beneficence, or a mutual communication of good, Christ communicates good unto believers, and they (in their way) communicate good unto Christ, speak, and do, and live to him, and pay their all to his glory.

Christ communicates good unto believers; In Zach. 4:2, you read of a Candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and seven Lamps, and seven pipes. And then ver. 3, of two Olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. The golden Candlestick is the Church, the seven Lamps are the several graces of it; the Olive trees are the abundant supplies of his grace; and the seven Pipes the manifold ways by which Christ deriveth good.

Now the good which Christ communicates to believers, is twofold.

1. Congruous, which respects the militant condition, *Bonum Honestum*.

2. Glorious, which respects the triumphant condition, *Bonum Jucundum*.

1. The congruous good which respects this life, is first, fundamental, in,

1. Justification, wherein he bestows his blood upon believers for the remission of all their sins, and so to exempt them from condemnation. (Rev. 1:5. That loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.) And his righteousness upon them (we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5:21.) and so to present them capable and fit for salvation.

2. Adoption, when he makes them the Sons of God, (Gal. 4:4. God sent forth his Son, ver. 5. To redeem us that we might receive the Adoption of Sons;) so that Believers by Jesus Christ attain to the dignity of being the Sons of God, Joh. 11:12. And thereupon heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ, Rom. 8:17. Their Savior becomes their brother, Heb. 2:10-13. And their God becomes their Father.

3. Sanctification, wherein he gives fellowship to them in the graces of his Spirit, renewing and changing them by the infusion of divine qualities, 1 Cor. 6:17. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 2 Pet. 1:4. He makes us partakers of the divine nature: As God took of the Spirit in Moses, and imparted some of it on the Elders of Israel, or as Jonathan (who loved David as his own soul, 1 Sam. 18:3.) stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle, ver. 4. So doth Jesus Christ, he doth power out of his Spirit upon believers; imparts not only the garment of righteousness to justify them, but also his very Spirit of grace to be a sword and a girdle unto them; a sword to slay their sins, and a girdle to bind and strengthen them for his service. Therefore are believers said to have communion in his death,

Phil. 3:10, and to be planted in the likeness of his death and resurrection, Rom. 6:5.

4. Preservation, These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them: As the Sun gives light, and keeps it; one hand to give another to hold, as Christ himself went on with his own work of redemption, never ceasing till he had finished it and ascended to glory: so doth he in his work of Believers; He is the Author and finisher of faith, a spring of eternal life. The Author of it to them that obey him.

2. Accidental, he kisseth them with a lip of peace, salutes them with joy unspeakable; seals them with the signet of his own Spirit; puts sugar into their wine.

2. The glorious good which respects another life is beyond all expression and conception: It is called a Kingdom, a crown of life, a crown of righteousness that shall be given, 2 Tim. 4:8. Paradise, an exceedingly exceeding weight of glory. This also will Christ impart to believers, He will give them (besides all they meet with here of grace, of peace, of joy, of help, &c.) hereafter eternal life, and they shall be where he is, not only to behold his glory, but to be glorified with him, they shall enter into their Masters joy.

[*Quest.*] 2. What the extent of this communion is 'twixt Christ and believers?

[*Sol.*] The question may be understood, either of the extent, 1. Of number; Or 2. of quantity; Or 3. of duration; and accordingly, I shall unfold the question in three particulars.

1. The extent of Christ's communion with believers is for number universal: Believers are some of them strong: Abraham was strong in faith, he was the Father of the faithful; and some of them are weak, I believe,

Lord help my unbelief, said the father of the child: some are ripe and well grown; others are new born babes and very tender, all are included; union is as large as opening, and communion is as large as union.

Christ hath communion with them all, ye are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3:28, and all of them have communion with Christ: The Head hath a conjunction with, and an influence into the little Toe as well as into the strong Arm: and the root (in the virtue of it) extends to the weakest branch as well as to the strongest Limb of the tree.

2. The extent of Christ's communion with believers is radically and substantially equal for quantity; I confess in respect of degrees (for some part of this communion) and in respect of some acts, and in respect of some feeling or sense, the communion is unequal and different; for some have a greater measure of holiness, of strength, of joy, of evidence then others have; but yet the radical and substantial part of this communion is equal and alike: A full Reconciliation, Redemption, Sanctification, Remission: Christ is alike Redeemer to all believers, and their Justification and Adoption are alike; and the seed of Sanctification is alike, and the fruition of God in glory (essentially considered) is alike: Though one star exceeds another in magnitude, yet both are alike seated in the heavenly Orb, and though one member be larger in the body then another, yet everyone hath an equal conjunction with the head. Christ doth not clasp believers with a different spirit, nor do they clasp Christ with a different faith; his relation to them is one for the nature of it, and their love to him is all one for the truth of it.

3. The extent of Christ's communion with believers in respect of duration is eternal, or is continued to eternity It admits of no intercision in this life, nor of any cessation in that other life; for Christ hath an infinite goodness to communicate to them, which they cannot take in but by an infiniteness of

time: His treasures can never be spent upon them; He hath glory for them to an eternity, and they have a love to bestow upon him, which will spend itself, and yet last forever and ever.

[*Quest.*] 3. Why hath Christ such a communion with Believers.

[*Sol.*] The Reasons may be these:

1. Communication is the principal end of all about Christ; it is the end of his union, the end of his offices, and the end of his works.

1. It is the end of all his unions. There is a twofold union.

One is personal, the union of natures in his person, and that was for this end, viz. to make him a fit and able Mediator and Redeemer for us: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, Isa. 9.

Another is mystical, the union of himself with believers, as a head with his members; and this is for the Application of all his benefits and virtues also unto us: He becomes one with us, for this very end, that partaking of himself, we might partake of all good by him.

2. And the end of all his offices, viz.

His Office,

1. Regal, to rule us.

2. Prophetical, to teach and guide us.

3. Priestly, to expiate our, sin.

3. And the end of his great works.

1. He died to pay our debts.

2. Rose to give us the acquittance and discharge.

3. Ascended, to give us gifts.

4. Sits at God's right hand to appear for us.

5. Intercedes, to complete and apply all for us.

2. Jesus Christ is ordained to invest believers with as good, nay with a better estate than men had in Adam. He is to repair their lost condition; he is to atone them with God, and to fit them for a glorious fruition of him; but this cannot be without a manifold communication of good unto them: Of necessity he must impart unto them the virtue of his blood for this, and the power of his Spirit for this, and the arm of his all sufficiency and strength for this.

Eph. 5:25. Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it. Ver. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it. Ver. 27. And that he might present it to himself glorious.

Our union with Christ is called a Marriage, will Christ bring no portion with himself?

Divines do think that there was a necessity to impart some of his virtues for confirmation unto the Elect Angels: And then surely much more must be imparted to sinful men for their Reconciliation and Reparation.

3. All the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ (that is) they are to be fulfilled and made good to believers: I say all the promises which are rich veins, and full veins, the store-houses of all mercy, and grace, and good; These are to be made good unto us by Christ: Not only in a way of stability, but likewise in a way of efficacy which could never be without a communication of the good things promised unto believers; Christ hath the key of all these in his hands.

These therefore are in his dispose, he is the Master to dispense them to his family, the household of faith.

4. Jesus Christ is filled with goodness in himself, and with love also to his members who are believers.

Now although all goodness (*ex natura rei*) be diffusive of itself, yet is it most communicating when either it is seated in a relation, or engraven in an affection. A good father will impart more good than a good man; a loving husband will do more good than a mere husband: The goodness in Christ is a goodness both ways: It is a goodness in relation, (that is) in one who stands to believers as an head doth to its members; and a goodness in affection, (that is) in one who loves believers above all the people in the world; and certainly love is bountiful: it is an easy key to open, and a liberal hand to bestow.

Fifthly, What should Christ do with himself, and with all his benefits? God at the first contented not himself (if I may so speak) with himself, and therefore created man to communicate some of his goodness to him. And when Christ redeemed man, he contents not himself with the perfecting of the work of redemption, but he must communicate the virtue and fruit of it unto men; unless we will say he lived in vain, or died in vain, or rose in vain; he died not for himself, nor rose for himself.

But who shall partake of this purchased good? Shall enemies, or friends? Shall they enjoy it who will not enjoy him? Shall they enjoy sweetness of his communion who shut their doors and hearts against him, and abhor the union of his person? O no, we cannot sup together if we will not come together. But as he wrote upon his book, *mihi & meis* this book is for me and for my friends, or as we write in our Leases, for us and our heirs; so saith Christ of all his goodness, this is for me and my members; this is for me and believers; I may look on others, but I will live with them; I may speak to others, but I will sup with them; others may have a call from me, but these only shall have communion with me.

6. Believers have much work lying upon them for Christ, active and passive, ordinary and extraordinary, none of which can be done without communication from Christ. Christ's works and Christ's help are parallel: The hand can do nothing for the head, but by an influence imparted to it from the head; Without me ye can do nothing, Joh. 15:5.

7. All the good we do is done by the strength of communion.

The nerves or ligaments of union import this; For,

On Christ's part it is the Spirit, which is compared to fire and water (that are diffusive and spreading) and to ointment (the unction of the Spirit) which spreads its savor, and to light which is diffusive.

On our part it is faith: and faith is a,

1. Depending eye.
2. Drawing mouth.
3. Receiving hand.

8. He glorifies himself in it: His glory as Mediator is enlarged by giving grace to his members, by filling them with more grace, he fills himself with more glory: Though the glory of his person be full, yet the glory of his office of Mediatorship, and of headship to his Church, this hath another additional fullness of glory from the good and happiness of his members.

All the useful Application which I intend at this time to make, shall be reduced unto,

1. Consolation.
2. Exhortation, partly to persons,
 1. In this communion,
 1. Hold it fast.
 2. Improve it.
 2. As yet out of this communion, by all means get into it.

[*Use 1.*] The first Use shall be for comfort to all believing persons, to all whose hearts have been opened to let in Christ, twixt whom and them there is this high and glorious communion.

You have enough, and unless you were in heaven itself, you cannot have more: As David spake of the sword of Goliath, none like that, the same I affirm of communion with Christ, none like this: It surpasseth all communions in the world in six respects.

1. For dignity, there is a communion 'twixt a sinner and lust, (this is of all the basest) There is a communion 'twixt man and the creatures, (this is of all the poorest:) A fellowship with sin makes up perfect misery; a fellowship with the world makes up perfect vanity.

But the communion 'twixt Christ and a Believer is truly solid, and unspeakably eminent: The Son of God with the sons of God; the chiefest in heaven with the chiefest in earth; the most excellent agents in heaven and earth, by the most excellent means the Spirit and Faith.

This fellowship is more than Angelical: It is a divine fellowship with the whole Trinity, Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, saith Saint John. The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you, saith Saint Paul.

2. For commodity, the things imparted in this communion, any one of them, nay the least of them, is of more value and benefit then all the world.

There was more in the kiss which a Prince gave to one, then in a cup of gold which he gave to another: The Philosophers hold that the lowest degree of life, exceeds the highest degree of inanimate perfection: A living dog is better than a dead lion; a living fly doth (in this) overmatch all the stars.

The blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the love of Christ, the graces communicated from Christ, the lowest spark of any of them, doth

elevate the soul, and adds more perfection of good then all the good which can be drawn out of all the creatures in the world. The least good, in *genere moris*, out-weighs all the good in *genere fortunae*: and the least good, in *genere spiritualis* (or *Gratiae*) is of more value and consequence then all other good whatsoever; one pearl is better than a million of stones, or a mountain of dirt.

3. For privilege, were you clothed with all the moral abilities whereof nature is capable; were you endowed with all the confluences of the earth to the utmost receptions or extensions of sensual imaginations and desires, yet by none of these are you brought in a nearness of relation to God, or any jot advantaged for any spiritual interests, or enfranchised thereby with any soul-helping liberties; still you are foreigners and strangers, and stand at distance with God, you cannot call God Father yet, till communion with Christ be enjoyed; and when this is enjoyed, your privileges (immediately) become wonderful.

Now you may look on God and say, Thou art my portion. Now you may go to God and say, Thou art my Father: Now you may behold the love of God, and say, this is my treasure; and the Covenant of God, and say, this is my storehouse; and the providence of God, and say, this is my Shield: Now you may look on Christ, and say, This is my Redeemer, he is mine, and I am his: He lives in me, and I live in him; He dwells with me, and I dwell with him; He sups with me, and I feed on him; His blood is my refuge, and my heart is his Mansion; He doth graciously traffic in my heart by his Spirit, and I can as freely traffic with heaven by his intercession.

4. For pleasure: One day in God's house was more to David then a thousand elsewhere, Psal. 84:10.

One day's communion with Christ (did I say one days? Nay one hours, nay one minutes communion with Christ) is of more true satisfaction, and soul-delighting pleasures, then all the bathes and rivers of Joy in the world.

Saint Augustine delivers a high request to God; O Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation, That one word, O I will run to hear it: Hide not thy face from me, Let me die so I may see thy favor. Moses was a while with God upon the mount, (and what a heaven was it for him to see God; and converse with him?) Peter was a while with Christ upon the Mount, (O what a satiety was it to him) to be with his Christ in that glimpse of excellent glory? And to hear that heavenly voice, This is my beloved Son, 2 Pet. 1:19, well might Peter say, it is good to be here.

Why Sirs, who can describe unto you the sweetness of this communion? I never Meditate, but I meet with Christ? What a blessed contemplation is this? I never hear, but I meet with Christ, what a blessed hour is this? I never receive of the Sacrament, but I meet with Christ (O what a blessed feast is this?)

I never bow my soul in prayer, but I meet with Christ; when I go and hear, I hear his voice; when I go and pray, he hears my voice, (O what a heaven is this?).

I commend that speech of Bernard, if the soul can speak its of Christ, I never come to thee, but by thee; I never come from thee without thee.

5. For sufficiency: show us the Father (said Philip) and it sufficeth; Hast thou communion with Christ? It is sufficient, let thy condition for other things be what it may be.

You know the answer of the King of France to the Herald of him of Spain, who varnished his Master with many empty titles of being King of Naples,

King of the Indies, &c. He only proclaimed himself King of France; as if that alone weighed down all the rest.

O ye believers, there is so much in this one communion with Christ, as answers to all other communions; nay, as infinitely overtops them: One man hath communion with profits, but he hath no pleasure; another sucks at the flower of pleasure, but he hath no profit; one outward good or other is still wanting: and if all were enjoyed, there were not enough to satisfy the vast soul of man. But communion with Christ brings sufficiency with it: There is (if I may so phrase it) an aggregation of all good in Christ, for the parts of satisfying good, and likewise an intension of all good for the degrees of it.

There is mercy enough in Christ to pardon, holiness enough in Christ to heal, peace enough in Christ to quiet, joy enough in Christ to refresh, dignity enough in Christ to honor, wisdom enough in Christ to direct, readiness enough in Christ to help, strength enough in Christ to uphold, goodness enough in Christ to bless thy soul, happiness enough in Christ to save and crown thy soul.

Let our condition be never so great, it is but a hell without Christ, let it be never so flat, it is heaven sufficient if we enjoy Christ.

Who can say he wants nothing, who wants Christ? Who can say he wants anything, who wants not a Christ.

6. For duration: all other communions are in hazard, and receive their period. The communion 'twixt man and wife, hath this inscription upon it, yours for life; The communion 'twixt a man and his friend hath this subscription to it, yours till death; the communion that a man hath with the creatures, hath this motto on it, yours till trouble; the communion that a man hath with the pleasures of sin, hath this character on it, yours till conscience awakes, or at least, till hell follows; the communion that Adam had with

God in Paradise, had this Epitaph on it, yours till temptation. Either that moth of death, or that wave of trouble, or that flash in conscience, or that decreed period to all creatures crack asunder all these communions, and in a moment make their graves: so that we do many times scarce taste the sweetness of them in fruition, before we are swallowed up with bitterness for the loss of them. But the communion 'twixt Christ and the believer is begun in mercy, is maintained by infiniteness, and prolonged to eternity; our life will end, and the world will end, and time will end, but this communion shall never end.

Nay, (and contrary to all other communions which like wine is quickest at the first drawing) the longer that this communion holds, the sweeter and the fuller, and the purer it becomes: In this life you (by reason thereof) partake of glorious and unspeakable good from Christ, but all is little to what he reserves for another world. All in this life is but as the first fruits, the harvest is to come but as the earnest penny, the full reward is to come; but as the contract, the marriage is to come.

After a few days you shall come to an immediate and perfect communion, not at second hand, by means, not by tokens, not by droppings, not by mixtures, but by a glorious and absolute fullness by complete fruition and vision.

Christ will let out his strength of holiness and glory upon you, and you shall let out the strength of love to Christ, you shall enjoy him to the utmost capacity of fruition, and you shall love him with the utmost possibility of affection forever and ever. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; this is that admirable and blessed communion which is and shall be 'twixt Christ and all believers.

SERMON VII.

Rev. 3:20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The next Use shall be of Instruction to such persons, who upon good grounds find themselves to have communion with Christ and Christ with them: Their dignity (I confess) is great, so the duty (thereupon) is manifold.

1. Walk with cheerful thankfulness: Two sights are very incongruous, one is, a wicked man inflamed with joys, another is, a good man almost drowned in tears. 1 Sam. 1:8. Hanna (said Elkanah) why weepest thou? And why is thy heart grieved? Am I not better to thee than ten sons?

So say I to thee, a believer, why doest thou walk with so many habitual cares in thy head, and with so many continual fears in thy breast, hast thou not communion with Christ?

[*Obj.*] Perhaps thou hast but little of the world, yet even at the lowest thou hast communion with Christ.

[*Sol.*] And should not the shining of the Sun satisfy thee, though all the candles were put out? If thou hadst nothing but a naked Christ, thou hadst as much as happiness comes to. How many have quitted all to enjoy Christ alone, and have rejoiced too? Why then shouldest thou be troubled, who at once hast as much of earth as is necessary, and as much of Christ too as will make thee blessed? Remember him who sold all for the pearl, and forsook all for Christ. A little with contentment is great gain, what then should a little, nay anything be with Christ.

When a fit of sadness (once) surprised Caesar, he struck himself on the breast, saying, *Cogita te Caesarem esse?* Why man art thou not Caesar? So when melancholy thoughts about external possessions surprise thy mind, rouse up thyself, *Cogita te Christianum esse?* Remember, and say, am I not a Christian? Have I not communion with Christ? And cannot communion with him eke out that little portion of other things: It was wont to make the prison a Palace, the flames of martyrdom a bed of roses? Why should it not be able to make thy bit of bread a feast, and thy cup of water sweeter than wine itself?

[*Obj.*] Or perhaps it is but little which Christ as yet hath imparted to thee of himself, (little grace, little assurance, little joy.)

[*Sol.*] O friend, let that little be never so little, if it be *aliquid Christi*, it is great in worth, though small in bulk. A little issuing from communion with him is the fruit of highest love, and the pledge of fullest glory. The ring of gold is little, but it with a pearl is very much: A little grace with a full Christ is a condition very high: If the Christian were truly humble and wise who had the prizing of it; nothing is little which drops from Christ; the least ray of gold is precious.

For my part I judge that wife abundantly estated whose husband is so: O Christian be contented, be thankful, be cheerful; Consider,

1. The least which comes from Christ is enough to save thee, and should not then the much which comes from him be enough to comfort thee.

2. Where Christ communicates a little, there he will communicate more, 'tis a gift, not a portion: There are showers which gush out of a cloud, but they quickly cease, they grow less and less: There are drops which distil out of a fountain, and they still increase: Thou hast no sooner received one degree of grace, but Christ is ready to add another. Methinks the child should suck quietly, when, although it takes not in the whole breast at once, yet the milk is spinning out to renew a further drought after the former is gone down.

3. Christ imparts not alike to all, nor all at once to any: He so gives, as that still he reserves more to give: I fear our condition would not be sure, were there not some good still in Christ's hand to bestow, communion would cease if communication did cease.

It is an unspeakable comfort to me, that Christ is mine, no man ever enjoyed him, but he shall enjoy more from him: I bless his goodness for the former, I will wait on his wisdom for the latter.

2. Live like those who have communion with Christ: Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream an image whose head was of gold, but the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, Dan. 2:32,33. Truly that Christian is but in a dream who fancies a golden communion, and yet wallows in a wicked conversation: If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, 1 Joh. 1:6. The forty four thousand with the Lamb had his Fathers name written in their foreheads.

In communion there is always similitude and conformity, and this is twofold in a Christian to that in Christ.

1. Of holiness: when the grace of Christ appears but doctrinally, it teaches us to live holily, Tit. 2:12, much more when it appears effectually in communication from Christ. Surely they are much mistaken who can exalt the Gospel, and despise the Law; who can magnify the merit of Christ, and withal contemn the Spirit of Christ: As if a good Christ and a good life were inconsistent, or as if the blood of Christ purchased this unhappy favor for us to live licentiously: will you shame your head and deny that Christ that bought you? Is this a Christ communication? Is this to show the virtues of him who hath called you? Brethren, be not deceived, God is not mocked: An evil conversation is incompliable with the learning of Christ in truth, Eph. 4:21,22. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idols? 2 Cor. 6:16,17. Some would reconcile our Religion and Popery; and you would reconcile heaven and hell.

2. Of communicativeness: all the good which Christ imparts to us, is for to make us good, and for to enable us to do good: If you kindle a fire, it is to give warmth; If you give your steward money, it is to lay it out: All the stars (they say) have light from the Sun, but then their light imparts itself again by influence to bodies sub-celestial, you must do more than others. Thou hast received knowledge from Christ, this candle should give light to others, as well as to thyself. Thou hast received grace from Christ: this ointment should heat the souls of others as well as his own soul: thou hast received mercy and comfort from Christ, this cordial should be let out to bind up and sustain the drooping hearts of others, as well as thine own.

Christ hath showed pity to thee, surely it is, that thou shouldest show pity to others: He forgives thee, shouldest not thou forgive thy brother? When you were wandering, he sought after you; when you were ignorant, he instructed you; when you were untoward, he yet bare with you; when you humbled your souls, he cheered you; when you yielded to him, he presently embraced you; O how often hath he bound up your wounded souls? How often hath he raised up your fallen feet, you have lived upon his blood, upon his Spirit, upon his love, upon his bounty all your days.

Let the same mind be in you which is in your Christ. O when shall the soul of a child, of a wife, of a servant, of a friend, of a neighbor, cry out, and say, I bless God for such a Father, for such a Husband, &c.

3. Improve your communion with Christ, Heb. 4:14, seeing that we have a great High Priest, ver. 16. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Sirs, there is a double condition of the soul, one is of distance, I never found a Christ; O then be wise to strive to get him.

The other is of presence, I enjoy a Christ, O then be wise to make use of him; When I want bread, then I must look out for it, when I possess bread, then I must feed on it.

Consider three things to set on this,

1. Though your relation be excellent, yet your condition is indigent. No Christian hath so little of Christ, but he hath matter for praise: And no Christian hath so much from Christ, but he hath matter still left for prayer. Every day we find it a great work to do a little work, much patience to bear a little cross, much strength to conquer a little temptation, much faith to answer one doubt, much love to eat out one lust, much zeal to act one piece

of service. As our receipts are more than our deserts, so our wants are much larger than our receipts.

2. There is a fullness in Christ, and that with respect to your wants; compare any part of good in him with any part of want in yourselves, it hath in it three qualities.

1. Suitableness: Mercy to answer misery, Holiness to answer sin, Peace to answer trouble, strength to answer weakness, &c.

2. Fullness: remission of sins lies in his blood as in a perfect merit and discharge: Holiness lies in his natures as an original and infinite spring.

3. Willingness to impart this to you; I know the great scruple still lies about this, but in truth the imparting will of Christ is unutterable; can love, invitation, union, donations assure you of this, he bids us come and eat abundantly.

I will not expatiate in this, only if you consider,

1. That gracious design in God to draw up some to a glorious and eternal communion with himself.

2. The voluntary contract 'twixt him and Christ to effect this.

3. All that for which Christ engageth himself to believers as well as unto God his and their Father.

4. All his cost already upon them which would be lost without further communicating; you must confess his wonderful willingness, unless you would imagine that either God should miss of his design, or Christ is willing to lose all his pains.

3. You yourselves have all the kinds of improving of Christ attending you: For you have,

1. Improving interests, cares, and communion, he is yours, and therefore will do you good: He hath done you good, and therefore will do you more

good.

2. Improving principles: Faith and love: He is the fountain, and faith is the vessel, given purposely unto you still to draw out of his fullness.

3. Improving Ordinances, the word and Sacrament: They are bread set out on purpose to feed you: They are the arms of Christ spread on purpose to strengthen you; they are the pipes of Christ, laid out on purpose to convey more of Christ unto you.

Therefore O thou feeble and complaining soul, who hast communion with Christ; consider thyself and thy condition often; and say, what need I yet from Christ? Wherein do I fall short? What is it that I want? What may Christ yet do for me?

And then stir up faith to act in Christ, to go to Christ, to beg of Christ, to draw from Christ more faith, more love, more humility, more patience, more fruitfulness, more faithfulness, more strength, more assurance, more joy, &c.

Say thus, a friend will do for a friend; a husband will do for his wife; a head will do for a member: A Christ, surely a Christ will do for a believer. If he gives himself, he will give all other things; if he hath given his blood for me already: if he will give me glory hereafter, surely he will give me a dram of grace more, and a drop of comfort more.

[*Use 3.*] Is there such an excellent and sweet communion between Christ and the soul possessed by Christ? O then sadly and seriously search whether you have a share in this communion.

There are three sorts of people in the world.

Some of them have no communion at all with Christ: they are strangers to the Common-wealth of Israel.

Some of them have a communion of profession, a moral, a visible communion: Have we not heard thee preaching in our Synagogue? Have we not eat and drank in thy presence? But this is not sufficient.

Some of them have a communion of possession and profession both. Have any of you this communion with Christ?

[*Quest.*] How may that be discerned?

[*Sol.*] I conjecture it may be evidenced three ways;

1. By preparations.
2. By formal concomitants.
3. By resulting effects.

1. By preparations.
Are you fitted for such a communion as this the person who wanted a wedding garment, was pulled out as unmeet for a wedding feast: Christ will not have communion with every person. Sirs, whatsoever we may dispute of a fitness for union, yet assuredly there must be a fitness for communion with Christ for communion implies a state of fitness.

Four things ever precede the state of communion.

1. Contrition of heart: A broken heart and a broken Christ will live together, but a hardened heart, and a gracious Christ cannot. A heart merely humbled is a legal heart (that is) fit for the Law to deal with.

A broken heart is a Gospel heart fit for Christ to have communion with.

Isa. 66:2. I will look to him who is of a contrite Spirit.

Isa. 57:15. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite spirit to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isa. 62:1. The Lord hath anointed me, and sent me to bind up the broken hearted. Mat. 12:20. A bruised reed he shall not break.

This is the heart which Christ invites to come to him and promiseth to give it ease and rest, Mat. 11:28.

This is the heart that Christ, 1. Pitieth. 2. Inviteth. 3. Cherisheth. 4. Delighteth in. 5. Bindeth up.

2. Poverty of spirit: A poor Christian and a rich Christian, they have fellowship; but a full Christian; a proud Christian and a full and a lowly Christian have none: an empty vessel is fit to be brought to the fountain to be filled. Luk. 14:34. He fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away.

This heart, 1. Needeth. 2. Prizeth. 3. Seeketh. 4. Relieth. 5. Waiteth. 6. Findeth Christ.

When the great feast was made, the communion was not 'twixt the great ones, the rich ones and Christ, but 'twixt the blind, and maimed, and poor, and Christ. They would not come, but these would. This is the heart that Christ seeketh. 2. Esteemeth 3. Converseth with. 4. Imparteth himself unto.

He who holds communion with his own worth, will hold no communion with Christ's worthiness: If you can live without Christ, you will dwell without Christ. The rivers run not upon the mountains (the lofty mountains) they run in the low and humble valleys: Christ holds communion with none but such as see their need of him, and are content to be altogether beholding unto him for all their supplies.

3. Discommunion with sin: Naturally every man is engaged to his lusts; And therefore the Scripture calls sin an husband, and a Lord, and a lover: and the sinner is said to make a covenant and an agreement with it. I will give unto you so much profit, and so much delight, saith sin, and I will give unto thee all my heart, and love, and strength, and service saith the sinner.

But this communion must be broken up, or else be confident, you have no communion with Christ.

Psal. 45:10. Forget thine own people, and thy Fathers house. Ver. 11. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, &c. There is such a contrariety 'twixt these two objects (Sin and Christ) and there is such an impossibility of inclination in the heart, to embrace and converse with these two at once, that of necessity you must (as Christ spake of the world and of God) either hate the one, and love the other, or else hold to the one, and despise the other, Mat. 6:24. Christ did lie in a Manger, but never lived in a dunghill.

Communion, the center of it, is love (and therefore it is shadowed by Solomon's chariot, the midst whereof was paved with love, Cant. 3:10.) your communion is where your love is, but you cannot hold Christ and sin in the same affection.

Mezentius the tyrant, tied a dead body and a living man together. This was a destructive torment, it was not a communicating favor: They might die together but not live, &c. A heart dead in the love of sin, and a Christ the author of life, there can be no comfortable, nay nor real Communion 'twixt them.

I have read of a diseased person, who was in danger to lose his fight, and his Physician prescribed him to take heed of some lewd courses: What said he? Cannot I enjoy my sight and my delight too? Why then, *vale lumen Amicum*: I fear it is thus with too many: Communion with Christ is sweet, but may I not enjoy this and the world too? Now the young man goes away, then *vale lumen amicum*: And may I not continue my delight in sin, and a delightful communion with Christ? Why then, farewell Christ.

4. *Insitien*, or Implantation into Christ: for communion ever supposeth a relation: As difference, so distance too is opposite to communion. If you cut

off a limb from the tree, the root hath no further communion with it, because union ceaseth, which is the foundation of communion. If you put a stick upon the tree, it receives no influence at all from the root, because it is only a naked opposition, without any union at all. But if you graft a science on a stock, this will grow, this receives sap and life, because here is a union: And so it is 'twixt Christ and us; there must be a relation 'twixt him and you, an union 'twixt him and you, or else a communion is impossible. Paul therefore desires first to be found in him, and then he strives to find something from him: It is in Phil. 3:8. That I may win Christ. Ver. 9. And be found in him: And then follows ver. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering.

2. By the formal concomitants.

There are four properties of a Christ and a soul-communion.

1. It is spiritual: In Exod. 26:6, you read of one Tabernacle, and of several curtains, which were coupled together with taches, and those taches were all of gold. The communion with Christ, and his with us, as it is most high so it is most precious; and the most precious communion is that which is most holy and spiritual. It is a precious blood which Christ imparts in communion, it is a precious love, &c. They are precious fruits of his spirit, &c. They are spiritual blessings in heavenly places, &c. And e contra, they are precious and spiritual things which Christ looks for from you: Not a carnal, but a spiritual love to him; Not common, or dead, but living and spiritual sacrifices and services, spiritual praying, spiritual reading, &c.

This communion is holy,

1. Causally, because wrought by the holy Spirit.
2. Objectively, It is between an holy Christ, and an holy people.
3. Virtually: the effects and fruits of either side are holy.

4. Actually, Christ holds communion with us through holy Ordinances, and we with him by holy duties.

2. It is a close and immediate communion; my meaning is, that nothing lies between the heart and Christ. They say of the love of friendship, it is the knitting of soul with soul, so that the soul loving lives in the soul loved. If a stone lies twixt the scion and the stock, there is no communion. And truly so it is in this communion, Christ and the soul are drawn so near together, that they seem to be but one soul; Christ lives in the soul, and the soul lives in Christ: As they report of the heart of Ignatius, the Name of Jesus was engraven upon it: sure I am, the nature and power of Christ are engraven upon the hearts of them who have communion with him.

What doth Paul desire to know? None but Christ: In whom doth the desire to be found? In none but Christ; whom doth he strive to magnify? None but Christ: Open his heart, and see whether you find not Christ written in every affection of him: His love, on whom was it? It is on Christ: The love of Christ constrained him, 2 Cor. 5:14. His hope; on whom was it? It is on Christ, Phil. 3:20. We look for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. His long desire: after what was it? That I may be with Christ, Phil. 1:23. His joy and rejoicing, in what? In whom was it? It was in Christ, Gal. 6:14. God forbid that I should glory (in anything) save in the cross of Christ.

3. It is a full and satisfying communion: It was a choice expression of Paulinus, when one told him that the Goths had sacked Nola, and plundered all from him: Domine (saith he) *ubi sunt omnia mea tu scis*; where my all is, thou who art all in all, doest know.

A deluded Christian is never satisfied with Christ alone: The Pharisee, he must have his own righteousness too: The hypocrite, he must have his own delight: The young man he must have all his wealth too: Let him pretend

what he pleaseth, apply himself to an open communion with Christ as oft as he pleaseth, yet there is something else besides Christ, which he must have.

Zonaras relates of a Prince of the Barbarians who being brought captive to Rome, and released by Claudius viewed the stately structure of that City, and then brake out thus, Why? This is wonderful, that you who enjoy such stately palaces should so molest yourselves to obtain our poor cottages.

But it is otherwise with him, who hath a true communion with Christ, Christ doth bound his soul, and is a fullness to his soul: A fullness as well as a fitness.

Psal. 17:15. When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. And truly, besides this, that Christ is happiness, (and therefore fullness) there is another thing considerable, that every relation includes satisfaction and contentment: The child hath enough in one father; the wife hath enough in one husband; the members have enough in one head; and the Christian finds enough in one Christ: Righteousness enough to justify his person, blood enough to expiate his sins; grace enough to cleanse his heart; peace enough to appease his conscience; joy enough to satisfy his soul.

4. It is an inflaming communion, that is, it is such an alluring communion, that the more you find of it, the more you thirst for it; as the tasting of honey draws you to the eating of honey; So a little experimental communion with Christ winds in the soul with greater desire of more communion with him. Phil. 3:10. Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ. Ver. 13. I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before, &c.

There is a vast difference 'twixt a design which a person hath upon Christ, and a communion which one hath with Christ. A design on Christ is a mercenary complying with Christ for some particular good, and this being obtained, that person hath enough of Christ: If I meet with a commodity in the market, I have that which I looked for, and so wholly quit the Market; If I have an arm broken, I send for the Surgeon, and he sets the bone, and it being closed, I have no further communion with him. And so many a person, he would have a protection from hell by Christ, and then he is satisfied; he would have his tormenting conscience allayed by Christ, and then he hath done with Christ: But in communion with Christ that soul is fixed on Christ; for Christ as my universal good, and therefore riseth still more and more after Christ: Lord, evermore give us this bread: every receipt from Christ begets an higher degree of love and desire unto Christ: as every drop of oil adds more light and life (as it were) to the Lamp.

3. By the effects resulting upon this communion, which I will only mention at this time.

1. Your affections will answer Christ's affections: *Amicorum (we say) est idem velle & idem nolle*: you will delight in what, and in whom Christ doth delight, and you will hate what Christ doth hate; friends will and nill the same things.

2. You will prize the meeting places of Christ: If Christ be dear to you, his Ordinances will be precious to you; you meet him by praying, and he meets you by speaking: if the person be pleasing, his presence is so too.

3. Your obedience will be ready and cheerful: Let a man speak to his seat, it stirs not: but let the Head speak to the hand it moves, for here is communion.

The last use shall be of Exhortation to all who are out of communion with Christ: do not rest thus, but use all the means of heaven, that you may come into this communion.

Two things (if rightly considered) will I trust, move you to hearken unto this counsel.

1. The unspeakable misery of a person out of it; And here I know not how to begin: If a non-communication with the Church of God be so direful a curse, that Cain cries out, (thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Earth, and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the Earth, and everyone that finds me will slay me, Gen. 4:14.) O then what is a non-communication with Jesus Christ! Luther doth profess, That he would not be in heaven, if God were not there; and he could be content to be in Hell, if God were there But where should he be willing to be, who is nowhere with Christ? If he lives, he lives without Christ; if he dies, he dies not unto Christ: I may say of him as Christ of Judas, It had been better for that man that he had never been born.

Three things makes up this man's sad condition.

1. His best portion is but poor and cursed: All the Earth was cursed upon man's fall: This (perhaps) thou hast, and no more but this: When thou hast summoned up all thy pleasures, and when thou hast cast up all thy riches, the result is only this, the portion of my cup is a little cursed vanity; I have but earth, and no longer then whilst on the earth. The Beauty, which is put on with the garment, and put off with the garment is only in the garment, not in him that wears the garment: And so the happiness which is put on with our life, and put off with our life is not at a happiness for us, because it is only in the enjoyment of the creature. Unhappy is that man, who hath no

world but this world; whose bread is only that of carefulness, and whose water is only that of bitterness.

2. All the good in Christ is sealed from him: It is to him as if Christ had never lived, and never died for sinners: His condition is much like that of the damned devils, who are eternal sinners, and eternal strangers: Thus it is with him, his communion is ever with sin, but never, never shall it be with Christ.

The blood of Christ shall never make his peace: The merit of Christ shall never procure his pardon: The grace of Christ shall never purge his filthiness: whatsoever good another may attain, it is nothing to him: He hath no portion in Christ, and therefore shall have no benefit by Christ: none at all.

3. He stands alone in all his soul-accounts, as she spake in another case, and I, whether shall I cause my shame to go? 2 Sam. 13:13.

So is it with this indicted and arraigned sinner, whether shall I cause my guilt to go? Who shall answer for all these sins, which God and conscience charge upon me?

Thou callest upon mercy, mercy; O mercy pity me, and pardon me; why? Saith mercy, If I find thee in Christ, I will do it; for I cross no sinners' debts but with the blood of Christ. Thou sayest, O Christ help me, O answer for these sins; but saith Christ, if thou wouldest have closed with my person, I would have answered for thy sins: But when I knocked at thy door thou didst shut me out, thou wouldst none of me; how canst thou expect the benefit of the office of a Surety and Advocate, who didst refuse the kindness of a Savior? And now divine Justice seizeth on this soul; This is my prisoner, mercy will not bail him, and Christ will not plead for him: Go thou accursed soul into everlasting fire. Thou rejectest communion with the

Son of God, and therefore take thou communion with damned souls and devils in Hell.

2. Consider, there is yet a possibility of attaining to this communion; though many are entered already into communion with Christ, yet more may be admitted: this supper of communion doth last as long as thy life and the Gospel last; as long as the invitation doth last.

I beseech you consider why hath Christ laid open the nature and excellency of this communion but to persuade and draw your souls into it?

A prize is put into your hands: you have an opportunity, you have all the means which can show you the way how to fall into this communion, and by which God doth work on the souls of sinners for it, &c.

And now brethren, have I finished my work on this Text, a Theme of as sweet mercy as ever sinner heard.

The Savior of sinners knocking at the door of sinners; A Savior begging of that sinner to be saved: Have you opened your doors, or have you not? Will you open them to Christ, or will you not? Will you let in Christ and close with him, or will you not? Will you accept of communion with him, or will you not?

FINIS.