

# Sermons of Ralph Erskine



## **4. The Sum of the Gospel or God in Christ**



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*“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”  
Matthew 3:17.*

This chapter shows us two things principally: 1. The rising of the morning-star, John the Baptist, to prepare the way for Christ’s appearing. 2. The more glorious rising and shining of the Sun of righteousness himself, particularly in Christ’s baptism. Here is an objection John makes against baptizing Jesus, when he came to him to be baptized: “But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” (verses 13-14). Here is Christ’s over-ruling objection, insisting upon the being baptized of him, and giving the reason of it; “And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,” (verse 15). We have here the solemnity of the baptism; and here is from heaven a special display of heavenly glory, both to encourage Christ in his undertaking, now when entering upon his work, his public ministry, and to encourage us to receive him, in and through whom the heavens are opened to us. And hereupon we have,

First, a messenger from heaven, and then a voice; “He saw the Spirit descending like a dove,” (verse 16). If there must be a bodily appearance, it must not be that of a man; for the being seen in fashion as a man, was peculiar to the second person: none, therefore, more fit than the shape of one of the fowls of heaven, and of all fowls, none so significant as the dove. Why? The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like Spirit; not a silly dove, without heart; but an innocent dove, without gall, and harmless, inoffensive. The dove was the fowl offered in sacrifice; and Christ, by the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God. The tidings of the falling of the flood was brought by the dove, with an olive branch in her mouth: fitly, therefore, is the glad tidings of peace with God brought by the Spirit as a dove, by the voice of the turtle heard in our land; by which the Chaldee Paraphrase understand the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, we have a voice from Heaven. As the Holy Ghost manifests himself in the likeness of a dove; so God, the Father, by a voice; and it is a voice that brings the best news that ever was heard, and that ever came from God to earth: for it speaks plainly forth God's favour to Christ, and then to us in him.

1. It speaks forth God's favour to Christ Jesus our Lord; "This is my beloved Son." This expresseth both his relation and affection.

(1). It expresseth the relation he stands in to him; He is my Son. Christ is his Father's Son by eternal generation; thus, as God, he is co-equal with the Father, begotten of him before all worlds: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," (Col. 1:15); as man, he is the Son of God, by supernatural conception, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. Also, he is the Son of God by special designation to the work and office of Redeemer; he is sanctified, sealed, and sent upon this errand, brought up with the Father for it, and appointed to it.

(2). It expresseth the affection the Father hath for him, "This is my beloved Son;" he is his dear Son, the Son of his love, (Col. 1:13). He had lain in his bosom from eternity, (John 1:18); was always his delight, (Prov. 8:30). But particularly as Mediator, and in undertaking the work of man's redemption, he was his beloved Son; his Elect, in whom his soul delighteth, (Isa. 41:1). "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again, (John 10:17). The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand," (John 3: 35). Surely thus we may know and admire how he loved us, and the like of us, that he hath not withheld his Son, his only Son, his Isaac whom he loved, but gave him up a sacrifice for our sins; and therefore he loved him, because he laid down his life for us. Therefore,

2. Observe God's favour to us in him. He is my beloved Son, not only with whom, but IN whom I am well-pleased. Not only well-pleased with all that are in him, and unite to him by faith; but, being in him, I am well-pleased, and declare myself well-pleased and satisfied.

The word signifies somewhat else than that love, affection, and

delight in Christ, in the former clause. The word here (which cannot be typed) though it be a Greek word importing approbation and affection; yet it hath its signification, not from the Greek, but from the Hebrew; for this verse is taken from Isaiah 42:1: “Mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth;” which, though it be rendered, as here, by the seventy interpreters, yet properly it signifies to be appeased, pacified, reconciled; and so it is not only in whom I delight, and am well-pleased for thyself; but also, in whom I am quieted, and satisfied with all these that belong to thee. This is the sum of the gospel, as it is expressed, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,” (1 Cor. 5:19). Out of Christ he is a consuming fire; but in Christ he is a reconciled God; he offering himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us unto God.

From the words we observed two doctrinal propositions. The first was that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is the beloved of the Father, the object of his highest love, delight, and esteem. This doctrine being formerly (This first doctrine was handled in several stated discourses before the sacrament), spoken to, at considerable length, I proceed now to the second, viz: —

**Doctrine: That God is in Christ and in him alone a well-pleased and pacified God.**

For proving and illustrating of this doctrine, see these parallel texts: Isaiah 42:1, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,” compared with Matthew 12:18, “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my Beloved in whom my soul is well-pleased.” Isaiah 49:3, “Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” John 13:31, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Matthew 17:5, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him.” 2 Corinthians 5:19, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself:”

The method we lay down, for the further prosecuting of this subject, through divine assistance, shall be as follows: —

I. We shall speak of God’s being in Christ.

II. Inquire how God is in Christ.

III. Show that in Christ he is well-pleased.

IV. Make application of the whole subject.

**I. We are to speak of God's being in Christ.** For understanding this, we may consider, First, what God is out of Christ. Secondly, What God is in Christ.

First, what God is out of Christ to the sinner. Why he is an offended, a threatening, a dishonoured, and a distant God.

1. God out of Christ is to a sinner an angry God; "God judgeth the righteous; God is angry with the wicked every day," (Psa. 7:11); or, it may be read, "God is the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE; God is angry with the wicked every day;" because he is a righteous judge, therefore he cannot but be displeased, offended, and angry with them; and, oh! but the wrath and anger of God is a terrible matter. "Who knows the power of his wrath?" When it begins to burn, it burns to the lowest hell.

2. God out of Christ is a threatening God; his anger manifests itself in threatenings and curses; "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he hath ordained his arrows," (Psa. 7:12-13), for taking vengeance; and his threatenings are not bare words; but as God in Christ gives a being to his words of grace; so God, out of Christ, gives a being to his words of wrath, saying, as it is, "See now that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, &c." (Deut. 32:39-41). God, out of Christ, is a God whose mouth is full of curses and threatenings, and whose hand is full of terrible vengeance for executing the threatening: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them," (Gal. 3:10).

3. A God out of Christ is a dishonoured God; and this is the reason why he is an angry God and a threatening God, because he is a dishonoured God; for, “Sin being a transgression of God’s law,” (1 John iii. 4); his authority is contemned, his wisdom slighted, his power vilipended (depreciated), his holiness baffled, his justice enraged, and all his glorious attributes abused and affronted.

4. God out of Christ is a distant God: sin having set God and man at variance, and at a distance from one another; therefore men are said to be afar off, (Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:13, 17). Not in respect of any local distance: for God is everywhere; but in point of moral distance. We are far from the image of God, far from the favour of God, far from the knowledge of God, far from the love of God, far from the life of God, being alienate therefrom, through the ignorance that is in us, (Eph. 4:18); and from any relation to God, except that of a vindictive judge, and an avenger of sin, a consuming fire, ready to break out every moment in everlasting flames; between which, and the Christless sinner, there is nothing but the weak, tender thread of life, which the least spark of that fire of God’s wrath can burn and break, and then he falls into the depth of endless and irremediless torment. Thus you have a short account what God out of Christ is.

Secondly, we may consider what God is in Christ: Why?

1. God in Christ is a reconciled God, whose anger is appeased and quenched by the blood of his eternal Son, offering up himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God; upon which account he proclaims here, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And sends ministers to proclaim the word of reconciliation, viz., “That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them,” (2 Cor. 5:19).

2. As a God out of Christ is a threatening God, so a God in Christ is a promising God. The covenant of promise being sealed and confirmed by the death and blood of Christ, which covenant is therefore called the New Testament in his blood, (1 Cor. 11:25).

And the condition of all the promises being so well fulfilled, the price of them being so well paid, they come to us in the dispensation of the gospel freely and absolutely, to be received without money, and without price, because the money and price is already paid down to the full, in the liquid gold of the blood of the God-man; that being freely received, we may wait with assured hope till they be fully, accomplished, because, “All the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God,” (2 Cor. 1:20).

3. A God in Christ is a glorified God: as God out of Christ to a sinner is a God abused and dishonoured; for God in Christ is a God glorified and honoured; Christ having fulfilled, yea, magnified the law, (Isa. 42:21); he hath brought in everlasting righteousness; made restitution of all that honour to God and his perfections that sin took away; “Then I restored that which I took not away,” (Psa. 69:4). And Christ testifies this: “I have glorified thee on earth,” even on earth, where thou wast dishonoured: Why? “I have finished the work thou gavest me to do;” (John 17:4). God in Christ is a God not only whose mercy is magnified, but also whose truth is vindicated, whose holiness is celebrated, whose justice is satisfied, whose wisdom and power, and other attributes, are made more conspicuous in redemption-work, than ever they were in making heaven and earth; and a God in whom we may look for salvation through Christ to the honour, the highest honour and glory of all his excellencies.

4. A God in Christ is a nearly approaching God, a nearly related God. In Christ, he comes near graciously, saying, “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory,” (Isa. 46:13). And he comes near relatively, saying, “I will be thy God, and thou shalt be my people:” and that upon account of Christ’s approaching to God in our room, as our array [advocate]; “Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?” (Jer. 30:21). Hence the near relation is promised; “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God,” (verse 22). And this near approach and relation of God to us in Christ is an everlasting

nearness, and hence we have him saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” (Heb. 13:5); and the church saying, “This God is our God, for ever and ever; and he will be our guide even unto death,” (Psa. 48:14). Thus much for what God is in Christ.

**II. The second thing proposed, was, To show how God is in Christ.** For clearing this, we may consider; First, what it is of God, that is in Christ. Secondly, how, and in what manner God was and is in Christ. Thirdly, what of Christ God is in.

First, what it is of God that is in Christ. I shall confine myself to these two comprehensive things, namely, 1. All the persons of the Godhead are in Christ. 2 All the fullnesses of the Godhead is in Christ. And here is a subject for deep momentous thoughts and considerations.

1. All the persons of the Godhead are in Christ; I mean, God the Father is in Christ; God the Son is in Christ; God the Holy Ghost is in Christ; one God, in three persons is in Christ.

(1). God the Father is in Christ; “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,” (John 14:10). And verse 11, “Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” And hence he is called the way to the Father, (verse 6). And there is no coming to the Father but in him, because the Father is in him; that is, even the first person of the glorious Trinity: and yet not excluding his being the way to the other persons of the glorious Trinity: therefore,

(2). God the Son is in Christ: as God the Son is Christ; so God the Son is in Christ: that is to say, God the Son, considered as the second person of the glorious Trinity, is in Christ, considered as Mediator between God and man. The divine person of the Son is as inaccessible to us, as the divine person of the Father; and we need a mediator between him and us, as he is God, as well as between the Father and us; for, as there is an essential Oneness between him and the father; “I and my Father are one,” (John. 10:30): so there is a personal equality; “Being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God,” (Phil. 2:6). Therefore his infinite holiness and justice must be satisfied, as



well as the Father's, by the doing and dying of Christ, as Mediator, otherwise we could never have access to God; Christ the Son, being God co-equal and co-essential with the Father: and hence, Christ, as Mediator, is the way to himself: as God, as well as he, is the way to the Father; because he is the way to God: "Christ having once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," (1 Pet. 3:18). "By him we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God," (1 Pet. 1:21). And hence, as Saviour, God-man; and Mediator, between God and man, he calls us to come to himself, as God; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else," (Isa. 45:22). As Mediator, he is the means by whom; and as God, he is the end, to whom we come. Here you see it is necessary we understand and distinguish between Christ, considered essentially, as to his divine nature, and as he is one with the Father; and personally, as to his divine person, and as he is equal with the Father; and economically, as to his divine office of Mediator, and as he is God's Servant in the work of our redemption: servant to himself, as well as to the Father, while he came to fulfil his own law, and satisfy his own justice, being in this service considered as a middle person between God and man, and that contra-distinct from his being the middle person between the Father and the Holy Ghost: therefore,

(3). God the Holy Ghost is in Christ. The third person of the glorious Trinity; proceeding from the Father and the Son, he also is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, (2 Cor. 5:20); for he is one God with the Father and the Son: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;" and these three are one, (1 John 5:7). When I say the Holy Ghost is in Christ, I mean not here the super-eminent unction of the Spirit, that is so much spoken of in scripture, his being anointed with the Spirit above measure, to qualify him for his mediatorial office; but I mean that the Holy Ghost, who is one God with the Father and the Son, is in Christ, reconciled in Christ, satisfied in Christ, appeased in Christ, as well as the Father and the Son; for, God is one; and it is God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that was offended

by sin; and it is this God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is reconciled, through the mediation and satisfaction of Christ; so that if this reconciliation had not been made, we could have approached to none of the persons of the glorious Trinity with acceptance; but now access is made to all alike, because access is made to God, or to the divine nature, which is the same in all the three persons.

Well, when you consider what of God is in Christ, remember that all the persons of the Godhead are in Christ; and let this rectify their misapprehensions, who have dreamed that Christ is Mediator between God and us; whereas, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is, that ONE God between whom and us Christ is Mediator. When we address ourselves to God, through Christ, for example, in prayer, most usually we do, and should pitch upon the Father by name, being the first person in order of subsistence; but we are to beware of thinking, that he alone is prayed unto, and none of the rest of the persons; or whatever of the three persons we have occasion to name, think not that he alone, and none other, is prayed unto, excluding the rest; for this would not be a worshipping the true God, who is one as to essence, and three as to persons, or personal subsistence. We cannot look aright to one person without eyeing the others: for, “He that sees the Son, seeth the Father;” and he that sees the Father and the Son, sees the Holy Ghost; for the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, and the Holy Ghost in both. The object of worship is ONE, viz., Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; and the object of faith is one, namely, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in and through Christ. It is a mental error to worship first one person and then another, as the Popish and Prelatical forms seem to lead unto: “Lord have mercy on us; Christ have mercy on us,” &c.; as if there were divers objects of worship. We are to beware of worshipping God, as if they were distinct objects of worship, otherwise we worship not the true God. The proper object is not God and Christ as two; but God in Christ, and so the object is one.

2. As all the persons of the Godhead are in Christ, so all the fullness of the Godhead is in him: “In him dwelleth all the

fullness of the Godhead bodily,” (Col. 2:9). I shall here mention a threefold fullness, viz., A fullness of divinity, a fullness of sufficiency, a fullness of efficiency.

(1). A fullness of divinity, or of the Godhead; and all the fullness of the Godhead. God’s gifts and graces are found in others; but the Godhead itself is to be found in Christ; and not a partial, but all the fullness of the Godhead, and that bodily; that is, really, substantially, or personally. The Son is the same individual nature with the Father; and Arians must answer for their blasphemy, who would rob Christ of the honour of his Deity, seeing there is but one Deity, one Divinity, one Essence, between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

(2). He hath a fullness of sufficiency, besides his natural fullness as God: “It pleased the Father, that in him (as Mediator) all fullness should dwell,” (Col. 1:19). As Joseph filled the granaries of Egypt with corn: Why? because not only Egypt, but all the nations roundabout were to be supplied with corn in time of famine; so it pleased God that in Christ should all fullness dwell, that all Jews and Gentiles might come to him for grace; all must go through the hand of Joseph to his people. The sea is full of water, because it is to convey water to all the rivers. The sun is full of light, because it conveys light to all the world; so Christ is full of grace; because he is to be the conveyer of grace: “He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.” And there is, therefore, this fullness of sufficiency in Christ, because there is in him a fullness of divinity. The human nature, being personally united with the Godhead, must partake of all grace; and it is necessary he should have a fullness of sufficiency, because of his threefold office; hence, as a Prophet, he hath a fullness of wisdom; as a Priest, a fullness of righteousness; and as a King, a fullness of power. Therefore,

(3). He hath a fullness of efficiency; such a filling fullness, wherewith all believers are filled, which is his righteousness; “The fullness of him that filleth all in all,” (Eph. 1:23). In all believers, Christ fills all the faculties of their souls; the understanding, with light; the will, with liberty; the heart with life; and every member of Christ’s body is filled according to its measure; “The measure

of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” (Eph. 4:13). All have not alike measure; one is full as an arm, another is full as a finger; yet every one hath the fullness of a member; and all put together, make up the fullness of Christ-mystical. In a word, all God’s blessings are in Christ, all his consolations, attributes, and promises are in him; of which more afterwards.

Secondly, we may consider how and in what manner God was and is in Christ.

1. God was in Christ in the counsel of peace, federally; making a covenant with his chosen; preparing a remedy from all eternity against that ruin he foresaw man would run into, (Psa. 89:3). Hence the grace of the new covenant is said to be given before the world began, (2 Tim. 1:9).

2. God was in Christ in the promise representatively; “The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent,” (Gen. 15). As he was represented by the seed of the woman, so by the seed of Abraham in the promise: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” (Gen. 22:18). Now, to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one: “And in thy seed, which is Christ,” (Gal. 3:16).

3. God was in Christ, in the ceremonial law, typically; the paschal lamb, typified the lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, (John 1:29). The ark of the covenant, typified Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. The blood of the sin-offering, typified the blood of Christ, that cleanseth from all sin.

4. God was in Christ, in his incarnation, actually and perfectly according to both natures of God and man, in one person; then the promise was performed, when it was said, “Unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,” (Luke 2:11).

5. God was in Christ, in his mediatorial office, obediently; and that both in the active obedience of his life, and passive obedience at his death; for, he came to do the will of him that sent him; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, (Phil. 2:10).

6. God was in Christ, in his resurrection, victoriously; for then he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, (2 Tim. 1:10). “Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,” (Heb. 2:14).

7. God was in Christ, in his ascension, triumphantly: for, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them,” (Psa. 68:18). And, having received gifts for men, he gave gifts unto men, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ, (Eph. 4:12).

8. God is in Christ, in his kingdom, gloriously; he being now crowned with glory and honour; “Because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him name above every name,” (Heb. 2:10. &c., Phil. 2:9-11). Thus you may understand in what respect God is in Christ.

Thirdly, it may be enquired, what of Christ, God is in.

1. God is in the human nature of Christ: “The Word was made flesh;” and, “God is manifested in the flesh,” (John 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:16). This is the special way wherein God is in Christ by a hypostatical union, he being God-man in one person. His human nature is God’s temple, where he dwells; his mercy-seat, where he abides; his throne, where he reigns graciously and gloriously; and, Oh! what good news is it, God is in our nature; God is in our flesh!

2. God is in the mediatorial offices of Christ; every office of Christ is an habitation of God; the wisdom of God, is in his prophetic office; the righteousness of God is in his priestly office; the power of God, is in his kingly office; therefore he is called, “The power of God, and the wisdom of God, and the righteousness of God.” Hence,

3. God is in the name of Christ; and there is not a name that Christ hath, but if we could believingly view it, we would find God in it. Is his name Immanuel? God is there, as a God with us.

Is his name Jesus? God is there, as a Saviour for us. Is his name Christ? God is there, anointing him to save sinners. And, because God is in his name, therefore, “His name is as ointment poured forth,” (Song 1:3).

4. God is in the Church of Christ; therefore her name is called Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there, (Ezek. 48:35). In the invisible church, God is in every member of Christ; in every friend and follower of Christ; and the more they follow the steps of Christ, the more of God is to be seen in and about them. — And when they have much of Christ in them, then it is sometimes observable by on-lookers, “That God is in them of a truth,” (1 Cor. 14:25).

5. God is in the treasure of Christ; “In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” (Col. 2:3). All the treasures of grace and glory, all the treasures of light and life, and spiritual blessings which he hath purchased, God is in them all; yea, God himself is the sum total of the treasure that is in him.

6. God is in the cross of Christ, in the worst as well as the best of Christ; and hence the apostle glories in the cross of Christ, (Gal. 6:14); and his people glory in tribulation, (Rom. 5:3). When he orders a rod, a cross, a trial to his people, God is in it; hence the fiery trial doth but purge away their dross. A reconciled God is in the cross of Christ; and hence it is made so light and easy, so sweet and portable, so beneficial and profitable, that it comes to be among the best of their blessings: “It was good for me that I was afflicted. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teaches out of thy law.” The cup may be bitter to flesh and blood, but there is no death in the cup; nay, God is in it, his blessing is in it, and his Spirit is in it, if it be the cross of Christ.

7. God is in the work of Christ; not only in his work of creation and providence whereof Christ is the author and upholder, is God to be seen in his infinite power and wisdom, but especially in his works of grace and redemption. God is in his work that he works for us. As God was in all his miracles, so in his doing and dying on earth, and in his pleading and interceding in heaven, God is in

these works of his: “They are the doings of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.” God is in his work that he works in us, when he comes to convince and convert sinners, and draw them to himself; O Sirs, the finger of God is in it; then is the arm of God revealed, (Isa. 53:1).

8. God is in the word of the gospel of Christ. When Christ is offered in this gospel, God is offered in him; when Christ is revealed, God is revealed in him. And, O! when the gospel revelation is effectual, then it is the very power of God to salvation, (Rom. 1:16). Thus there are some outward visible things, wherein you may see and discern the invisible God, if they be the things of Christ, such as the gospel of Christ, the preached word, the outward dispensation of the gospel, and the written word; say not, God is far off, if the word be nigh you, even in your heart and mouth, (Rom. 10:18).

9. God is in the heart of Christ; why, the love of God is in his heart, and the law of God is in his heart; “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;” or, as it is in the Hebrew, It is in the midst of my bowels, (Psa. 11:8). As Christ lies in the Father’s bosom; so the Father lies as it were in his bosom, in the midst of his bowels. If you could look into the heart of Christ, you would see nothing but God, the love of the law of God there, the glory of God.

10. God is in the hands of Christ; as God is in the heart of Christ, insomuch that he is the greatest lover of God; so God is in the hand of Christ, insomuch that he is the only giver of God? What is the great gift of the new covenant? Why, God himself is the great gift, according to that promise, “I will be thy God.” Who is the giver of such a great gift? Who but Christ, into whose hand all things are given and all the new covenant goods and blessings, even he whom God hath given to be the covenant of the people. It is strange, and yet true, Christ is the great gift of God, and God is the great gift of Christ; God gives Christ to us, and then Christ gives God to us. He gives God, and he gives himself, and he gives his Spirit: and he comes with all these gifts in his hand and

presents and prefers them to us freely, under the notion of living waters: “Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely,” (Rev 22:17). Thus you may have some view how God is in Christ.

**III. The third thing proposed was to show that in Christ alone God is a well-pleased God.** This will appear, if you consider, First, what God hath done with respect to Christ himself. Secondly, what he doth for his people, in him.

First, we may consider what he hath done with respect to Christ himself.

1. He hath solemnly proclaimed his approbation of his person and undertaking from heaven, three several times, with an audible voice, namely, at his baptism, transfiguration, and passion: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” Agreeable to which is that open proclamation, “Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth,” (Isa. 42:1).

2. He hath released him from the prison of the grave, in which, as our surety, he was detained for a time: “He was taken from prison and from judgment,” says the prophet, (Isa. 53:8). He was taken from thence by a public sentence; which was an undoubted argument, that the debt, for which he was thrown in prison, was fully paid; and the Lord was well pleased with the ransom. Hence it is very observable, that the resurrection of Christ is ascribed unto God, as reconciled; the God of Peace is said to bring again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the Sheep, (Heb. 13:20).

3 The authority, and power, and honour, wherewith our Surety is invested, as a reward of his hard work, is an evidence that God is well-pleased in him.

Question: What reward hath he conferred on him?

Answer: (1). He hath set him at his own right hand in the highest heavens: “Looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God,” (Heb. 12:2). The



martyr Stephen, in his dying words, (Acts 7:56), says, that he saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Had he been shut out of his Father's presence, it had been a sign that anger still lodged in his breast, both against the Cautioner and the principal; but his being readmitted into that glory which he had with the Father before the world began, is an evidence that he is well pleased in him.

(2). He honours him with a complete victory over all his enemies. He makes all the powers of hell to be prostrate at his feet; "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," (Psa. 110:1). "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," (Phil. 2: 9-10) &c. When man sinned, God delivered the power of death unto the devil, as his executioner; but he found such a sweet savour in the righteousness of the Surety, that he wrests the keys of death out of the devil's hand, and delivers them into the hand of our Redeemer. Hence Christ proclaims it as good news to all his friends; "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death," (Rev. 1:17).

(3). He not only makes him victorious over all the powers of hell, but, as Mediator, invests him with a precedence over all the angels in heaven; "And every name that can be named, either in this world, or the world that is to come. Being made so much better than the angels, as by inheritance he hath obtained a more excellent name than they," (Heb. 1:4). And in the 6th verse, when he brings in his first-begotten into the world, he says, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Doth not this say, that God is well-pleased in him.

(4). He hath clothed him with all judicative authority, and constitutes him the sole Judge of the world: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained," (Acts 17:31).

Secondly, we may consider what he doth for his people, these for whom Christ is Surety; and from thence it will appear, that

God is well-pleased in him.

1. In him, and for his sake, he pardons all their sins; “Whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins,” (Rom. 3:25).

2. In him, and for his sake, he hears their prayers; “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, out of the angel’s hand,” (Rev. 8:3-4). This is the incense that renders them acceptable unto God, and without which they would be an abomination.

3. In him, and for his sake, he admits them into communion and fellowship with himself: “By the blood of Jesus we have access to the holy of holies,” &c., Heb. 10:19-22).

4. In him, and for his sake, they have adoption, with all the privileges that attend it: “In the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,” (Gal. 4:4-5).

5. In him, and for his sake, they have access to glory at last. The righteousness of Christ removes the bar that bolts heaven’s gates against us, which was sin, (Heb. 2:10 and 5:9); there, says the apostle, “Christ was made perfect through suffering, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory.” Now, from these things it is clear that God is well-pleased in Christ.

**IV. The fourth thing proposed was, To make application, and it may be applied.**

First, by way of information. Is God in Christ? Then let us see God here; for here is the glass wherein we may see all the divine glory: in Christ we may see God in all his attributes and fullness; in all his saving offices and relations to us; in all his graces, and in all his blessings.

1. In Christ we may see God in all his attributes and fullness: there is nothing that the Father hath, except his personality, but the Son, as Mediator, hath: "All things that the Father hath are mine," (John 6:15); all things that God hath, they belong to the Mediator, also the God-man. Here then is an ocean where you and I may dive forever, and never reach to the bottom. In him we may see the wisdom of God. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. 2:3). Poor foolish sinner, who hast no wisdom, knowledge, or understanding, here is a treasure for you, Christ the wisdom of God, (1 Cor. 1:30). In him we may see all the power of God: "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God," (1 Cor. 1:24). Poor weakling, that can do nothing, here is a bargain for you to lay hold upon: It is he that can work in you, both to will and to do; and make his "people willing in the day of his power," (Psa. 110:3). You are not called to come to Christ, but by the power of Christ, which is the power of God; you are to receive him, who can give you power to receive him; and as an absolute weakling to take hold of his strength, and look to his power, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth. In him we may see all the holiness of God; he is said to be made of God to us sanctification; and surely here is an immense fountain of sanctity, the infinite holiness of God. O poor, vile polluted sinner, that hast lost the image of God by the fall of the first Adam, and the deficiency of his holiness; here is a better Head and Husband for you, in whom is all the fullness of divine holiness, that ye may be complete in him. In him we may see all the justice of God, and all the righteousness of God; we may see justice satisfied in him, by his mediatorial righteousness; for, the Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake; yea, he that is the righteousness of God is made unto us righteousness, (1 Cor. 1:30). And O wonderful word! "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. 5:21). O guilty, guilty sinner, here is a joyful sound in your ears; "He that hath ears to hear let him hear;" you may, in Christ, be more righteousness in God's sight, than ever you was guilty in his sight;

yea, you may be the very righteousness of God in him; you may not only be justified, but find God to be just in justifying you; because the justice of God is in him, and it is satisfied in him, magnified in him, glorified in him. In him we may see all the mercy of God: all the infinite love, pity, and compassion of God is in him, in his heart: what is Christ, but the love of God wrapped up in the garments of flesh and blood? “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” (John 4:9-10). And Jude, (verse 21), “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” How? “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.” O poor miserable sinner, would you wish to find mercy in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day? Know there is no mercy to be expected from God out of Christ; and unless you look to his mercy as in Christ; for he will never show mercy to the prejudice of his justice and it is only in Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and embrace each other. In him we may see all the faithfulness and truth of God: “My mercy and my faithfulness shall be with him,” (Psa. 89:24). I have observed (as I formerly noticed upon another discourse), between thirty and forty places of scripture, where mercy and truth, mercy and faithfulness, are joined together; and here you see they are joined together in Christ. In him the mercy and love of God vents to the honour of divine truth pledged, even in all the threatenings of the law, as well as divine truth pledged in all the promises of the gospel, because in him all the threatenings and curses of the law have spent their force, (Gal. 3:13), “And in him are all the promises Yea and Amen, to the glory of God,” (2 Cor. 1:20). He is the way and the truth; truth itself, the God of truth, the truth of God. O perfidious, faithless, unfaithful, and treacherous sinner, that hath many times lied to the God of truth, would you have your falsehood all done away, and swallowed up in the truth and veracity of God, and your salvation secured, notwithstanding of your falsehood, fickleness, and instability? Here is a pillar on which you may stand firm and fixed amidst all changes, whether in your outward lot or inward frame:

“For all flesh is grass, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.” The truth of God stands unalterably the same. Again, in him we may see all the authority of God; “My name is in him,” (Exod. 23:21). O! poor lost sinner, when Christ in his gospel comes to seek and save that which was lost; say not, “By what authority doth he these things?” He is the Sent and Sealed of God; and he hath all the authority that God can give him; and if you ask, By what authority we, poor sinful mortal worms like yourselves, do offer him, and all his riches to you? Indeed, we could have no authority, if he had not said, “Go preach the gospel to every creature: and lo I am with you to the end of the world.” In a word, in him we may see all the fullness of God; “It pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell,” (Col. 1:19). In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily: not only all the attributes of God, but all the fullness of all the divine attributes; not only the wisdom of God, but all the fullness of divine wisdom; not only the power of God, but all the fullness of divine power; not only the holiness of God, but all the fullness of divine holiness; not only the justice and righteousness of God, but all the fullness of divine righteousness; not only the mercy of God, but all the fullness of divine mercy; not only the truth and faithfulness of God, but all the fullness of divine faithfulness; not only the authority of God, but all the fullness of divine authority: not only is God in him, but all the fullness of the Godhead. O poor, empty sinner, here is unsearchable riches, a bottomless well of everlasting salvation and consolation for you.

2. In Christ we see God in all his saving offices. You know the Father hath anointed him to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King: O Sirs, what employment will you put in his hand? It is he, as a Prophet, who says, “They shall be all taught of God;” look to him for the promised teaching. It is he, as a Priest, who says, upon the ground of the sacrifice he hath offered, “I, even I, am he that pardoneth thine iniquity for my own name’s sake;” look to him for remission in his blood. It is he, as a king, who says, “I will subdue your iniquities; sin shall not have dominion over you.” O ignorant sinner, will you find in your heart to refuse such a

Prophet as Christ is? “Who teacheth like him?” O guilty sinner, will you refuse such a High-Priest as this? such a sacrifice as this is? O enslaved sinner, will you refuse the help of such a King and Conqueror as this? If there be none of these offices to be dispensed with, then take hold of him in them all.

3. In Christ we may see God as he is clothed with all relations that can contribute to the happiness of a sinner. What friend or relation do you want, O sinner! Want you a father to pity you? Behold, here you have an everlasting Father; for that is his name, (Isa. 9:6), and, “In him the fatherless find mercy.” Want you a mother to be tender to you? Behold, here motherless children may have their losses made up; When father and mother forsake you, here is one to take you up, (Psa. 27:10). He is one that can be a thousand times better to you than father and mother, and manifests more love than the tenderest mother that ever was; “Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, she may forget: yet will I not forget thee,” (Isa. 49:15), Want you a husband! O! what would you think to be married with the heir of all things? Why, if the ear of faith be opened, you may hear him saying, “Thy maker is thy Husband,” (Isa. 54:5). And again, “I will betroth thee unto me for ever,” (Hosea 2:19). If you say, Oh! how will it be consistent with the justice of God, for him to marry such a black bride? Why, he says, “I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness.” If you say, How will it be consistent with the wisdom, mercy, truth, and faithfulness of God, to betroth the like of me? He says, “I will betroth thee unto me in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.” Thou shalt know God in Christ, who can betroth thee to himself, and yet be infinitely just and wise, and merciful, and faithful in doing so; because mercy and truth have met together in Christ, the glorious Bridegroom; they strike up a match together, and embrace each other, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Christ and you. Want you a proper match then, O sinner, or a meet [suitable] help, poor bankrupt, run in such arrears to the law and justice of God? Is not he that hath unsearchable riches a fit

match for you? Poor, dying creature that will be food for worms in a little, here is a living head for you, that can make you live forever. O mortal worm, here is an immortal husband for you. Poor, changeable creature, here is an unchangeable match for you, Christ, "The same yesterday, today, and for ever." Want you a lover? Are you an outcast, that reckons yourself despised by all the world, insomuch that none cares for you, nor loves you? Behold an infinitely loving and lovely Jesus tendering his love to you, saying, I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely, (Hosea 14:4). And he is seeking your conjugal love, saying, "My son, give me thy heart." Want you a leader through the dark and difficult steps of your way; a guide, a director, and counsellor, in whatsoever affair you have upon your hand, wherein you need to be directed? O Sirs, here is the wonderful counsellor, who says, "I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight," (Isa. 42:16). Want you a shepherd to feed you? Or a captain to fight your battles for you? Want you a physician, when in sickness, to heal you? Want you a refiner and purifier, when you are in the furnace, to purge away your dross? Behold a God in Christ hath all the happy relations you can desire.

4. In Christ we see God in all his graces. This is a great part of the glory of the only begotten of the Father, that he is full of grace and truth, (John 1:14). And, "Out of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace," (verse 16). "Grace is poured into his lips," (Psa. 40:2); and, I hope, he is pouring grace from his lips by his word among some of you this day. The Spirit of the Lord is upon him, for he hath anointed him; he is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; anointed with the Spirit of all grace. Want you grace to believe? Behold it is in him, as he is the author of faith. Want you grace to repent? Behold it is in him, as a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance. Do you want grace to pray? It is he that hath the Spirit of prayer to give, (Zech. 12:10). Do you want grace to communicate aright; grace to mortify sin; grace to bear the cross; grace to resist temptation; grace to do and

suffer? It is he that hath all grace to give, and who says, “My grace shall be sufficient for you.” Hence, his people are called to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

5. In Christ we may see God in all his blessings which he hath to give. He is the Lord-Dispenser of temporal blessings; for, “The earth is his, and the fullness thereof;” the Lord-Dispenser of spiritual blessings; for heaven is his, and the fullness thereof; the Lord-Dispenser of eternal blessings; for eternal life is in him, “He is the true God, and eternal life.” It was promised of him, that men should be blessed in him; and accordingly he is sent to bless us: “God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities,” (Acts 3:26). I might here enumerate many particular blessings. — The blessing of illumination is in him, for, “He is the light to lighten the Gentiles;” the blessing of conversation is in him, for he says, “When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me: the blessing of justification is in him; for, “We are justified freely by his grace;” the blessing of reconciliation with God is in him; for, it is he that makes peace by the blood of his cross; the blessing of sanctification is in him; for, “He is made of God to us sanctification;” the blessing of acceptation with God is in him; for, “We are accepted in the Beloved:” the blessing of access to God is him; for, “By him we have boldness and access, with confidence through faith of him;” the blessing of consolation is in him; for, “He is the consolation of Israel:” the blessing of a happy death is in him; for, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord;” the blessing of a happy resurrection is in him; for, “He is the resurrection and the life;” the blessing of a happy sentence at the great day is in him, and at his disposal; for, “All judgment is committed unto him;” and it is he that will say to the wicked, “Depart from me, ye cursed;” and to the righteous, “Come ye blessed of my Father;” the blessing of eternal glorification is in him; for, as he is the glory of the higher house, so he says, “Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory; and so shall they ever be with the Lord.” Can you tell me any spiritual blessing that is



not in him? No; “We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places only in Christ,” (Eph. 1:3). And now, after all, what think you of him? Have you no heart to join hand with such a well-furnished Saviour, “In whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily?” If you have no heart to such a good bargain, this is very sad; but, because it is a day of glad tidings, I will tell you, among all other things, that all hearts are in his hand, and it is his prerogative to open the locked heart. It is easy with him to create a clean heart, to melt the hard heart, to fix the wandering heart, to cleanse the filthy heart, to elevate the drooping heart, to conquer the stubborn heart, to quicken the dead heart, to draw the backward heart, as we formerly observed, in another discourse; and if anything draw your heart to him, it will be the revelation of his grace and fullness; and of God’s being in him, and in him a well-pleased God.

