



The Sword of Justice Awakened against God's Fellow

Part One



Ralph Erskine

The Sword of Justice Awakened against God's Fellow

Part One

Ralph Erskine

“Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts” Zechariah 13:7.

This text, sirs, is a very wonderful one; as ever a poor mortal man preached upon; for in it there is a cloud, a black cloud, a cloud of divine wrath and vengeance, a bloody cloud, the cloud of Christ's bloody passion, which we are to celebrate the memorials of this day; but, like the cloud that led Israel in the wilderness though it had a black side towards Christ, yet it has a bright and light side towards all the Israel of God; for this cloud of blood distils in a sweet shower of blessings unto poor sinners: there is a light in this cloud wherein we may see God, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

This verse presents us with a clear prediction of the sufferings of Christ; and the disposition of his disciples thereupon: “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones:” which our Lord expressly applies to himself, and his disciples, (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27). So that we need not stand to inquire, of whom the prophet here, or rather, of whom God here speaks; for the words of our text are the words of God the Father, giving orders and commission to the sword of his justice, to awake against his Son, when he had undertaken to become our surety. More particularly in the words you may notice these three things: —

1. A solemn call and summons given to God's vengeance, or vindictive justice, to rendezvous its forces, and march forth in battle array, in all circumstances of terror: “Awake, O sword.”

2. The party against whom this dreadful battle is proclaimed, this terrible sword is brandished; must it not be against sinners? nay, but the sinner's surety: “against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow:” not against the sheep, but the shepherd; not against a shepherd simply; but against my shepherd; not against mankind, but a man; not against a man simply, a mere man, but “the man that is my fellow;” mine equal.

3. By whose orders, or at whose instance this summons to the bloody battle is given; why, it is the Lord of Hosts that says it: it is he that gives the commission, and orders the sword to be drawn.

Now, the summons is very awful, “Awake, O sword, against him;” if he will be a surety, he must be a sacrifice; if he will be a sacrifice he must be slain: for, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” It is not a charge to a rod to correct him but to a sword to slay him; for Messiah the Prince must be cut off, though not for himself, (Dan. 9:26). It is not the sword of war to which he gives this charge, that he may die in the bed of honour; but the sword of justice, that he may die as a criminal upon an ignominious tree. This sword must awake against him; it must not rest, cannot be quiet nor satisfied, till it be drunk in his heart’s blood. It is not called upon to awake and fright him, but to awake and smite him. Not with a lazy, drowsy blow, but an awakened one; even a horrible, terrible blow.

The party against whom the sword is called to awake is very glorious; the description of him here is very magnificent; “Awake against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow;” described in his office, my Shepherd; in his person, God-man, MY Fellow. Men thrust him through as a foolish shepherd, and God thrust him through as the good shepherd, as his own shepherd, the shepherd of his own flock, that he might purchase the flock of God with his own blood. As mediator he is God’s shepherd, who undertook to feed the flock, and to lay down his life for his sheep: and against the man that is my fellow; or, the man my fellow; the man who is God as well as man, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God.

Finally, the party giving these orders to incensed justice to awake against him is as wonderful; the Lord of Hosts; that JEHOVAH that has all the hosts of heaven, earth, and hell at his call; the Lord of hosts; that is, JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, essentially considered, giving a commission to infinite justice to awake against the second Person of the Godhead, considered as Surety and Mediator, God-man.

Now, from the words thus shortly opened, we might observe many doctrines, but I confine myself to this one namely;

Observation: That by special orders from JEHOVAH, the great God of Hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice. “Awake O sword.”

When nothing among the creatures could be found to deliver the soul of the sinner, from going down to the pit, God himself found a ransom; he found an atonement, (Job 23:24), by setting forth Christ to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, — that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, (Rom. 3:25, 26). We sinful creatures, both ministers and people, should all have fallen a sacrifice to the sword of God’s wrath and vengeance forever, because of our sins; but behold he finds a ransom; he sets forth Christ to be the propitiation. Whenever he is set forth, the sword falls upon him, and awakes against him who was the shepherd, that the sheep might escape.

I might here premise many useful particulars presupposed in this doctrine, namely, That it supposes a covenant of works broken, and so justice enraged against men: a covenant of redemption made; a counsel of peace between JEHOVAH and Christ, for man’s relief and, which I reckon much the same with the former, a covenant of grace established in Christ; he engaging to fulfil the condition of the covenant of works, which we had broken; to obey the law, which we had transgressed; to satisfy the justice, which we had offended, to bear the wrath, which we had incurred; whereupon the sword of the Lord awakes against him, and all the squadrons of enraged fury march forth against him, with infinite horror and terror; “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd.” — But omitting all that might be supposed, and presupposed to this doctrine, I shall endeavour to confine myself as closely as possible to the several parts of the text and doctrine, by prosecuting it in the following method; namely,

I. To inquire into the Character of the person against whom this sword doth awake.

II. The nature and quality of this sword that did awake against him.

III. How this sword did awake against him; by showing what may be imported in this expression, “Awake, O sword.”

IV. What special hand the Lord JEHOVAH, the Lord of Hosts, had

in ordering or calling of this sword to awake against this glorious person.

V. The Reasons of the doctrine, why the Lord of Hosts ordered the sword of justice to awake against his Shepherd, and the man that is his Fellow.

VI. Draw some Inferences for the application of the whole, in a suitableness to the work of the day.

I. Who is this that the sword of justice must awake against?

The character of the person is very great and glorious, in the words of our text, “My shepherd, the man that is my fellow;” that is, in short, God-man Mediator; for, being here described in his person and office, I shall touch a little at both in the following order:

First, his divine nature, as God’s fellow. Secondly, his human nature, “the man that is my fellow.” Thirdly, the conjunction of both these in one person, “The man that is my fellow.” Fourthly, his mediatorial office, “my shepherd.”

First, *consider this account we have of his divine nature*; “My FELLOW, saith the Lord of hosts.” Let Arians and Socinians blaspheme this wonderful person, here is an article of our creed, that Christ is God’s fellow, God’s equal, “Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God;” and therefore he himself says, (John 10:30). “I and my father are one.” But here consider, 1. Wherein he is God’s fellow: and, 2. Why, as our Redeemer, it behoved him to be God’s fellow?

1. *Wherein, or in what respect. is he God’s fellow?* I answer, He is God’s fellow, not as he is Mediator, taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming the Father’s servant in the work of our redemption; but he is God’s fellow in these six respects.

(1). He is God’s fellow in point of nature and essence; Christ is God essentially, as well as the Father, and the Holy Ghost, though personally distinct from both; for, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were incarnate, or took on our nature, but Christ the second person of the glorious Trinity: who, though personally distinct yet is essentially one with the Father and Spirit, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John 1:1): And it is sure there is but one God, “Hear, O

Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord, one JEHOVAH,” (Deut. 6:4). In Christ our Redeemer “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” (Col. 2:9). “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); and in the last but one verse of that chapter, “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life,” (1 John 5:20).

(2). He is God’s fellow in point of property; even in all his essential properties, which is much the same with the former. Is God omnipotent? so is Christ; he is the wonderful counsellor, the mighty God. Is God omnipresent? so is Christ; “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Is God omniscient? so is Christ; “Thou that knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee,” says Peter. Is God unchangeable? so is Christ; “The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Is God eternal? so is Christ; “Before Abraham was, I am:” He is the King eternal, immortal, the only wise God, He is God’s fellow in all these respects.

(3). He is God’s fellow in point of will and consent; what the Father wills, Christ wills; hence it was his meat and drink to do his Father’s will, who sent him; “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” It is true, as man, he had a will distinct from his will as God, and so diverse from the Father’s will; though yet this did act still in subordination to the will of God: hence when the bitter cup is put to his mouth, he prays, “O my Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done:” yet, as God, his will is one and the same with the Father’s will.

(4). He is God’s fellow in point of work: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” (John 5:17). — Christ’s works are not only like unto the Father’s but the same in substance, as flowing from one and the same essence and power; for, What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise, (John 5:19). He acts not as an instrument subordinate; but, as there is an unity in the work, so also in the manner of it; by the same power, wisdom, liberty, and authority; only the order of operation being observed and we find all the works proper to God, ascribed to Christ; as creation, “All things were made by him:” Preservation, “Upholding

all things by the word of his power:” Redemption: the donation of the Spirit; raising himself from the dead; the institution of ordinances and officers in his church; and the judging the world in all these he is God’s fellow.

(5). He is God’s fellow in point of honour and worship: all men are to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; they are to believe in him, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me,” (John 14:1); they are to hope and trust in him, “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.” If once his wrath begin to burn, “blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

(6). He is God’s fellow in point of happiness and felicity, “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen,” (Rom. 9:5). As he was blessed and happy from all eternity in his Father’s bosom, being ever by him, and brought up with him, and being daily his delight; rejoicing always before him, and rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights with the sons of men, (Prov. 8:30, 31); So he ever was and will be blessed with him. It is true, there was a time when the Son of God was humbled; when this God, blessed forever, became a curse for us; but notwithstanding, his essential glory was never diminished; as God, he was as happy and blessed on the cross, and in the grave, as ever he was. — Well, thus, as God, is he every way God’s fellow. O! how fearfully was he humbled! God’s fellow, and yet a babe, a servant, a sufferer, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice. The governor of all becomes a subject: should an emperor become a fly, it would not be such a humiliation. O! how sadly was the world mistaken about Christ, that took him to be a base fellow, a pitiful fellow! but little did they know that he was God’s fellow. O! how glorious is the love of Christ to sinners! God’s fellow receiving the stroke of the sword of divine justice in their room.

2. *Why he behoved to be God’s fellow that was our Redeemer?*

It was necessary that our Redeemer should be God’s fellow.

(1). In regard of Merit: his obedience to the death could not be sufficient to satisfy the law and the lawgiver; to be a full ransom, and a full price of redemption, if it had not been truly and properly meritorious; and this it could not be, if he had not been God’s equal

as well as man. Our sins were an infinite evil, and God's justice required infinite satisfaction: now, there could be no satisfaction of infinite value, but by a person of infinite value; and there is no such person but God: and therefore our Redeemer must be God's equal, otherwise he should not give the satisfaction required.

(2). In regard to power; our Redeemer must be such an one as could go through all the difficulties that lay in the way of redemption, triumphing over all opposition from God, men, and devils, from heaven, earth, and hell. The weakest of these were too strong for human nature; therefore that our Redeemer might overcome death, bind the strong man, break down the gates of hell, cut in sunder the bar of sin, he must be God as well as man, even God's equal, God's fellow. And that he might be able for the application, as well as the impetration of man's redemption, not only able to save to the uttermost, all them that come to God through him, but able to draw poor stubborn souls to himself, by his own power, and make them willing.

(3). Our Redeemer must be God's fellow in regard of the dignity of the work: his honour and dignity, in being a Redeemer and a Mediator between God and men, was too great for any creature, supposing any creature had been able for it; this crown of glory was not fitting for any mere creature's head. An office of dignity, on an unworthy person is most unsuitable: this dignity was so great, that even Christ himself, though God's equal, might not take it upon him, till he was called to it of God, (Heb. 5:4, 5).

(4). Our Redeemer must be God's fellow, in regard of the covenant of grace, which was the ground work and foundation of all: since our Redeemer was to make a covenant with God for us, it was necessary that he should be with God at the making of it, and know the depths of God's counsel in it, and perfectly know for whom he was to satisfy, and upon what condition. Now, this covenant being as ancient as eternity; and seeing God should have our Redeemer by him, to conclude the covenant and bargain with him, who of all the creatures were capable of this? who, of all the creatures, have known the mind of the Lord, and being his counsellor have taught him? God might have said to all the creatures, as to Job, in another case, (Job 38:4), — "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Where were you

when the plot of redemption was laid? when the names of my redeemed ones were put in the book of life? But our Redeemer was then by him, (Prov. 8:30). He becomes our everlasting Father; begetting us, with the Father in the womb of eternal election.

(5). Our Redeemer must be God's fellow in regard of the place he was to have in the covenant, with respect to God: who among all mere creatures was fit to have all power in heaven and in earth committed to him? Power to bequeath such blessings as peace, pardon, reconciliation, justification, and eternal life; power by his blood to confirm and establish all the promises of the covenant? Christ Jesus did, through the eternal Spirit (that is, his godhead), offer up himself, without spot to God; and then the apostle infers, for this cause, he is the Mediator of the New Testament: yea, Christ was to be Surety of this Testament: surety for God to us, to make out all the blessings and promises of the covenant to us; and surety for us to God, to satisfy law and justice in our room; what creature was able to do this? or if any creature should be supposed to be able, was it fit that God should put such a trust in any creature? No.

(6). Our Redeemer must be God's fellow in regard of the place he was to have with respect to us: our Redeemer must be the object of our faith and love; what creature in heaven or in earth, could be a sufficient prop and foundation for our faith? Had any mere creature undertaken to be our Redeemer, we could never fully have depended upon him, but would always been afraid he had miscarried therefore it was requisite to quiet our fears, that our Redeemer should be God's fellow, He is God, therefore fear not, (Isa. 35:4), our hearts could never have been at full rest otherwise. I remember, when Israel were going through the wilderness, they were to meet with much opposition; God promises to send an angel with them; it is said, All the people mourned for "these evil tidings," that God himself would not go up; yea, Moses himself was fearful of the mismanagement of a mere angel; therefore says Moses, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence," (Exod. 33:2, 3, 4, 15). And again, "Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send?" (verse 12). They thought his sending of an angel was as good as his sending none at all. Thus, you see, people's fears would never be quieted by the government of an angel, though one of them was able to destroy a whole host in one

night: even so, our hearts could never be at rest, though God sent an angel for our deliverance! therefore God sent his own Son, his Fellow, that we might fully trust him, and depend upon him; that we might place all our satisfaction in him, as a full portion, go as to seek no further. — Thus you see, he is God’s fellow; and why, as our Redeemer, he behoved to be so.

Secondly, *consider the account we have of his Human Nature*, “The MAN that is my Fellow.” Here I would shew you, 1. What kind of a man Christ became? 2. Why our Redeemer behoved to be a man?

1. *What kind of a man he became?* Why, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh. — He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.” More particularly,

(1). He was a poor man; a man very poor and mean in outward respects: poor in his birth; he was not born of a queen, nor laid in a palace; but born of a poor virgin, and laid in a manger: He was poor in his life; several people ministered to him of their substance yea, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.” Let not poor people quarrel at their lot; Christ, God’s equal, was a poor man.

(2). He was a distressed man; “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief:” a man of the same infirmities with us, except sinful ones: “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest,” (Heb. 2:17); and, He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” (Heb. 4:15). He was hungry, thirsty, weary, tempted, afflicted, and every way distressed. Let no distressed person think it strange that they are so, since God’s fellow was a distressed man.

(3). He was a true man; he had a true body and a reasonable soul: his body was nailed to the tree; they pierced his hands and his feet: his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. As man he went through all the ages of men; first he was conceived; then he was a babe; next a youth; and at last, came to the perfect stature of a man. But,

(4). He was a good man, an holy man; immaculate was the conception of the holy child Jesus: we come defiled into the world, but Christ brought no sin into the world with him; and all the devils could not make him sin; for, “The prince of this world could find nothing in him,” either of original or actual sin: “He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; but was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” Never was there such an holy man upon earth, (see Heb. 5:7); He “was heard, in that he feared;” or, he was heard for his piety and holiness. Since Adam fell never was there a man but this, that was heard and accepted of God for his own piety and holiness.

(5). He was a wise man, the wisest man that ever was: Solomon was very wise, but behold, a wiser than Solomon is here. He answered the learned doctors, to their amazement, when he was twelve years old: Yea, all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers, (Luke 2:47). And sometimes asked questions to which no man was able to answer a word, nor durst ask him any more questions, (Matt. 22:46), and no wonder, for he was the power of God, and the wisdom of God; and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: and hence he revealed the glorious truths that were before concealed. He was a wise man, indeed. Yet,

(6). He was a mortal man as we are, and he actually died as we must; he was put to a painful and shameful death; and his cursed death, which yet we may call his blessed death, we are to commemorate this day. This man fell a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice; the shepherd was smitten and slain, for he was a mortal man; “if it be lawful to call him a man,” as Josephus, a Jew, said. For,

In a word, he is a wonderful man; to all eternity his name shall be called wonderful, (Isa. 9:6). This wonderful man is our peacemaker with God; “This man shall be THE peace when the Assyrian cometh into our land.” This wonderful man is our only covert from the furious storm of divine wrath: “A man shall be an hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest.” But,

2. *Why must our Redeemer be a man?* Why, for the following reasons.

(1). He must be a man in regard to the transaction between the Father and the Son. Not only was God's truth engaged in the promise, that the seed of the woman should be sent; that to us a child should be born, to us a Son given, and that a virgin should bring forth a son, and call his name Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature; and not only was God, in his infinite wisdom, resolved in the weakness of our nature, to perfect his own strength, and get the greater glory; and that as "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many should be made righteous." But also, it being agreed between the Father and the Son, in the covenant of redemption, or grace, that the Son should offer up a sacrifice for us; it was also agreed that there must be somewhat to offer, (Heb. 8:3). Somewhat of greater value than all the world; for nothing could be a sufficient sacrifice for the expiation of sin. If Christ had not been man, he could have had nothing to offer up as a sacrifice to God; God himself provided a sacrifice, as he did a ram in the room of Isaac: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; a body hast thou prepared me." This body, this sacrifice, was provided in the counsel of peace; and being thus provided, Christ comes cheerfully to offer it, "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God."

(2). He must be a man in regard of us; he would not have redeemed us, if according to the law, the right of redemption had not belonged to him as our kinsman, (Lev. 25:25); and being man, he is fit to communicate to us the things of God in such a way, as we are capable to receive. If God should appear to us immediately in his terrible glory, we should be afraid of him, as Israel were, and run away from him; and hide ourselves, as Adam did: yea, thus we have a merciful high priest, that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. As man he had experience of our afflictions; are we sorrowful? so was he — "sorrowful, even unto death:" are we grieved? he was acquainted with grief: are we in poverty? so was he: are we smitten? so was he: are we deserted? so was he; having a natural sibness to us, being bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

(3). He must be a man in regard of justice: justice required that the same nature that sinned should be punished for sin, and make satisfaction for sin. God said, "The soul that sinneth shall die:" now, die we must, either in our own persons, or in our surety in our

own nature. If any angel had fulfilled the law, what had that been to us? if any angel had suffered God's wrath, what had that been to us, to man? Though God allowed the change, or commutation of persons, yet not the commutation of natures; the same nature that sinned must suffer.

(4). He must be a man in respect of the devil; the devil conquered man, and man must conquer the devil: Satan must be foiled by the same nature that was foiled by him; "The seed of the woman must bruise the head of the serpent. For this cause, therefore, the Son of God was manifested in our flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

(5). He must be a man in regard of sin, which must be cured by the contrary antidote. Our sin was pride, (Gen. 3:5): being but men we desired to be gods; therefore the cure is by humility, wherefore God becomes man. Man broke the law, and man must keep the law: by our sin we transgressed the boundaries of God's law; Christ, therefore, is made of a woman, made under the law. Sin defaced the glory of God, therefore he who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, becomes of no reputation; and comes in the form of a servant. Sin is a Deicide, striking at the being of God, seeking his life; therefore he that had a life equal with God's, laid down his life, for the satisfaction of this wrong. "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow."

(6). He must be a man in regard of passability or sufferings; "Without suffering or shedding of blood, there was no remission." He that will save us then must die for us, and shed his blood for us; which he could not do, had he been merely God; "For God is a Spirit." He becomes man, that he may be in case to enter the lists with justice: justice could not get at him with one stroke: but as soon as he was man, then, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." But why could not the sword of justice awake against him till he was man? Why, as God, sin could not get hold of him; and so justice could not get a hold of him for sin: the law could not challenge him; the curse could not reach him: but whenever he becomes man, our surety, then they all flee about him; and compass him about like bulls of Bashan. As he becomes a man for us, he becomes sin for us; and then he lay open to the curse; and justice took him by the throat; the sword awaked.

When Christ saw the dreadful sword of wrath, that was to be thrust through his heart, indeed it put the man to his knees, “Father, let this cup pass from me;” the human nature trembled, and sweat great drops of blood, in his proleptic agony: However, the man was God as well as man; and therefore he wrestled through. This might lead me,

Thirdly, *to show you the need of his being both God and man in one person*: “The man God’s Fellow.” The cause of God and the cause of man is referred to Christ; therefore he partakes of both natures, that he may be faithful to God, and merciful to man: a fit Mediator between God and man, to lay his hand upon both parties, while he partakes of both natures. — Our Redeemer must be both subject to the law, and fulfil the law meritoriously: now, if he had not been man, he could not be subject to the law; and if he had not been God, he could not have merited by fulfilling the law: but now, being God-man by his obedience, he hath magnified the law and made it honourable. — Our Redeemer was to give his soul an offering for sin: now, if he had not been man, he could not have had a soul to offer; if he had not been God, his soul could not have upheld itself; but must have died when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: but now, his divine nature did support his human body, and his human soul, under the weight of that burden which would have crushed a world of men and angels. — Our Redeemer must both suffer and satisfy: now, if he had not been man, he could not have suffered; and if he had not been God, he could not have given satisfaction by his sufferings; but, being God-man, his sufferings are dignified with infinite value and virtue. — Our Redeemer must both die for us, and conquer death: now, if he had not been man, he could not have died; and if he had not been God, he could not have destroyed death, conquered death: but now, “He is declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead.” There is the man that is God’s fellow. But, now,

Fourthly, *consider the account we have of his mediatory office*, “My shepherd.” Here you may have a little view, 1. How he comes to be called a shepherd. And, 2. How the Lord of hosts comes to call him his shepherd; “My shepherd.”

1. *Then, how is he called a shepherd.* This will appear by noticing a few scriptures wherein he is so designated. He is called the shepherd of Israel, (Psa. 80:1). He is called the shepherd of souls, — “For ye were like sheep going astray; but are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls,” (1 Pet. 2:25). He is called the good shepherd, “I am the good shepherd,” (John 10:11). O but it sets him well to commend himself! — “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” He is called the great shepherd, “Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect,” (Heb. 13:20, 21) &c. He is called the chief shepherd, “When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away,” (1 Pet. 5:4). He has all the qualities of a good and a great shepherd. Does a shepherd take care to provide for his flock and feed them? so does Christ; “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” (Psa. 23:1). He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,” (Isa. 40:11). He feeds them with the bread of life. Does a shepherd water his flock? so does Christ; he gives them not only meat for their nourishment, but drink for the refreshment of his weary flock; even the water of life, that flows from below the throne, through the conduit of the gospel; by which I understand the Spirit, that well of water springing up to everlasting life; and the influences of his grace, by which he strengthens, purifies, and comforts his people. — Does a shepherd lead his flock to convenient pastures? so does Christ; “Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.” He leads them to green pastures, and beside the still waters of gospel- ordinances and promises; and these pastures are sweeter to them than honey or the honeycomb. — Does the shepherd hear his distressed flock? so does Christ; his name is, “JEHOVAH-ROPHI, I am the Lord that healeth thee.” Is there any here that are poor diseased sheep, plagued with atheism, unbelief, enmity, and pride? plagued with a backsliding heart? what think you of that shepherd that says, — “I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely.” Does the shepherd seek out the lost sheep till he finds it? so does Christ; “He came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Does the shepherd take special care of the poor tender sheep, that is so far behind that

it can hardly follow the flock? so does Christ; “He gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.” — Does the shepherd prevent the straying of the sheep, and bring back such as go astray? so does Christ; he prevents their total apostasy, according to his covenant, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,” (Jer. 32:40). Hence comes it, that his sheep never go back into perdition, “Though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,” (Psa. 37:24). Hence comes their recoveries after falls, because this shepherd gathers and brings back his straying sheep. See a sweet scripture to this purpose, (Ezek. 34:11, 12, 13, 16, 23; compared particularly with verse 16). As this may be a sweet word to poor sheep, that have nothing, and see they have nothing; no good, no grace, no faith, no love, no repentance, no good qualifications of their own, nothing to recommend them to God, but their want and necessity; and to the weak sheep, that finds he can do nothing, he cannot pray, cannot believe, cannot mourn, cannot communicate, and therefore sees an absolute need of Christ to be their righteousness and strength; so it may be an awakening word to the fat and strong sheep; these that are fat and full in themselves, and think they are increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; they have a good heart to God; they are not so ill, they think, as some persons; and those that are strong, they think they can pray, and hear, and believe, and communicate well enough; what should hinder them? whereas the poor and weak will be fed with mercy; the fat and the strong, will be fed with judgment. Let the poor weak sheep, though sensible of great strayings, yet conceive hope; this shepherd seeks that which was lost, and brings again that which was driven away. Was you driven away with a cheek-wind; driven away by the devil; driven away from your shepherd by temptation and powerful corruption? Why, yet he brings again that which was driven away. — Does a shepherd defend his flock from troubles, and such as would make a prey of them? so does Christ; when grievous wolves, whether in church or state, would destroy the poor sheep, whether in their persons or principles; yet upon all the glory there shall be a defence: and no

weapon formed against them shall prosper: for, “There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel.” — Does a shepherd know all the sheep of his flock, by his own mark upon them? so does Christ; “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.” As his sheep hear and know his voice from the voice of a stranger, so he knows them and calls his own sheep by name, (John 10:3). But,

2. *How does the Lord of hosts come to call him His shepherd?* “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd.” Why, he is God the Father’s shepherd in several respects; which I touch at only in a word.

(1). He is God’s shepherd, because God made him so; he has the Father’s commission for this effect, — “Him hath God the Father sealed,” (John 6:27) — Christ was appointed and authorized; he was elected for this effect; “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” He transacted with him for this effect; “I have made a covenant with my chosen.” He formally called him to this employment, and set him up to be a shepherd, “I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; he shall be their shepherd,” (Ezek. 34:23). He qualified him for this work, by a super-eminent [Eminent in a superior degree] unction; “I have put my spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”

(2). He is God’s shepherd, because God gave him the sheep, “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” (John 17:6): thine they were by election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. This donation of the sheep to Christ is begun in election, and accomplished in effectual vocation; “All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.”

(3). He is God’s shepherd, because God recommends all his sheep to his special care, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing,” (John 6:39). God has given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession. All whom he chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodges as a trust in the hands of Christ: he gave him the charge of the sheep, and his instructions are, not only to lose none, no not the

least of them, the weakest of them; but to lose nothing, and as he will lose none, no person; so he will lose nothing, no part of the person; neither soul nor body.

(4). He is God's shepherd: Why? God appointed him to lay down his life for his sheep, "I lay down my life for the sheep." "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father," (John 10:15, 18). Christ suffered death, not only voluntarily, but in a way of subjection to his Father, that so the merit of his death might be every way full and acceptable to the Father. And so again,

(5). He is God's shepherd, because God approves of his undertaking and work, as his shepherd, and loves him for this very reason, (John 10:17). He approves of his doing and dying: his soul is delighted in his shepherd; "Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." He openly declares his affection in him. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake."

(6). In a word he is God's shepherd, because God the Father and Christ are equally concerned in keeping the sheep, (John 10:27, 30). The Father does so entrust Christ with the sheep, as yet he casts not off the care of them; they are in the Father's hands as well as Christ's: "He and his Father are one;" though personally distinct, yet essentially one. The man that is God's fellow, in this has fellowship with the Father, that the Father's sheep are his sheep; and his sheep are the Father's sheep: and they are equally concerned and engaged in keeping the sheep; only Christ as mediator, is engaged for them as the Father's servant and commissioner; My shepherd. — Now, thus much concerning the character of the person whom the sword of the Lord of Hosts must awake against: and? O if we had a view, by a saving faith, of this glorious one, God's shepherd, the man that is his fellow, God-man mediator, we could say no less than that he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousands. The white and red of his infinitely fair face would charm and allure us. Now,

II. The second thing, what for a sword must awake against this man? Why, in general, it is the sword of God's awful justice; which is metamorphically called a sword, because of its terrible

piercing, wounding, killing nature. Now the strokes of this sword, are either mediate or immediate. (1). Mediate, by the hands of men; particularly the sword of the civil magistrate: Or, (2). Immediate, by the hands of God himself, without the intervention of such outward means. Now, the sword of justice, that awaked against Christ, and smote the shepherd, is to be considered in both these respects; for his suffering, as our surety, by the stroke of justice's sword, was both external upon his body, and internal upon his soul.

(1). There was his external sufferings in his body: and herein justice did strike more mediately by the hand of man, and especially in his severest bodily sufferings, justice did employ and make use of the sword of the civil magistrate. Magistrates have the sword of civil power and authority put into their hands, and they ought not to bear the sword in vain: they are a power which God has ordained, and armed with the sword for the punishment of malefactors; though this be the right use of the magistrate's sword, yet sometimes the magistrate makes unjust use of it; as in this case, when the civil government, Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together against the holy child Jesus, (Acts 4:27). But whatever injustice was therein, on man's part, yet on God's part, impartial justice did therein act, while it did thereby bring about the death and sufferings of the surety, which the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done, (Acts 4:28).

(2). There were his internal sufferings in his soul; and herein justice did strike more immediately; for, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for sin," (Isa. 53:10): Thus the sword of justice was such as pierced both his soul and body. This two-edged sword was edged with the violence of earth, and with the fury of heaven; it was edged with the curse of the law, and with the wrath of God. But more particularly, what for a sword is this? O rouse up your ears and hearts to hear and consider what for a sword it was that awaked the man that is God's fellow!

1. It is a broad sword; so broad that it covers all mankind, and hangs over all Christless sinners, who would all have fallen a sacrifice to it, unless Christ had come between them and it. When

this sword did awake against Christ, he found it as broad as the curse denounced against mankind, upon the back of our fall in Adam, which you may read, that you may the better understand what the man that is God's fellow underwent, when he substituted himself in our room, and undertook to suffer the punishment due for our sins, the curse pronounced against Adam, and in him against all his posterity, and which, in all the parts of it, lighted upon Christ; you read of it generally, — “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;” or, dying, thou shalt die, (Gen. 2:17); and more particularly, — “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” (Gen. 3:17, 18, and 19). Where you see the curse has three parts. (1). The frailties and infirmities that human nature was subject to after the fall. (2). The calamities incident to man's life; “Thou shalt eat thy meat with the sweat of thy brows thorns and thistles shall the ground bring forth.” (3). Death; “Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return:” which has in it the death of the soul as well as the body. Here is an abridgment of all the curses of the Bible; and this broad sword must awake against the man that is God's fellow, and our surety, for this curse in all its parts seized upon him.

(1). The first was the frailties and infirmities of human nature, a part of the curse: this seized upon Christ at his incarnation; for his body was of the dust like ours, subject to the like infirmities with ours; he took not on him our nature in its prime and glory, but after broken and shattered with the *fall*, He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” (Rom. 8:3).

(2). As to the calamities and miseries that attended man's life, this part of the curse seized on him also; he ate his bread with the sweat of his brows, when he followed the calling of an handicraftsman; and after he entered into his public ministry, he travelled from place to place, watched whole nights in prayer; and thus might be said truly to eat his bread with the sweat of his brows. As for other calamities never one met with more; the world denied him a lodging; the fig-tree denied him figs; he was

blasphemed by his enemies, betrayed by one of his disciples, and forsaken by them all.

(3). As for the death threatened in the curse; when dying, he died indeed; for the sword did run through his body and soul at once, when he endured the curse, and despised the shame; his body was sore tortured, and his soul was sore amazed, and very heavy, (Mark 14:33). His bodily sufferings were extremely great, as you may see from the evangelists; and yet as nothing in comparison of his soul-sufferings, while he endured the wrath of God immediately upon his soul. — Here was a broad sword indeed, as broad and extensive as all the curses of the law, all the wrath that the elect deserved for their sin; for God designed not to pass one of their sins, without a satisfaction made to justice, but to sue the cautioner for them all: O but he needed a broad back that could bear the shock of such a broad sword! Well, so he had; for he was God as well as man; “Awake, O sword! against the man, my fellow.”

2. It is a long sword: if we may so call it, infinite in length, from the point to the hilt of the sword; it is as long as eternity; and this makes the punishment of the damned eternal, because the sword of divine wrath, that pierces them, is so long, that it never can reach to the hilt, in such finite worms as they are. The duration of the wrath and the curse is eternal: because the sinner, being a mere creature, cannot at one shock meet with the infinite wrath of God, and satisfy justice at once; therefore God supports the poor damned creature for ever under wrath; because it cannot, being finite, satisfy infinite justice: but one shepherd, being God-man, the man God’s fellow; and therefore being of infinite worth and value, of infinite strength and power, was able to satisfy justice, and bear all at once, that which the elect could never have borne. Yet he met with the essentials of that which sin deserves, viz. death and the curse; the hiding of his Father’s face, and the suspending and keeping back of that consolation, which, by virtue of the personal union, flowed from the Godhead to the manhood; and also, hath the actual sense and feeling of the wrath of God; the awakened sword of the justice of God actually smiting him: so that, though men wondered how he could be dead so soon, not knowing what strokes to infinite justice he met with yet these strokes lighting

upon the like of him, the man God's fellow, was equivalent to the eternal punishments and torments of the damned.

3. It is a bloody and insatiable sword: this sword of justice was not satisfied with the blood of Sodom and Gomorrah; it was not satisfied with the blood of the old world; it was not satisfied with the blood of bulls, goats, and all the legal sacrifices of old; yea, the blood of the whole creation cannot give it satisfaction, though it were bathed therein; without the shedding of more blood, better blood, there is no remission, no satisfaction to justice, no real satisfaction with God; no salvation of the sinner; therefore, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow;" till it be drunk with the blood of this man, it never gets a satisfying draught of blood. Well then, says this man, "Lo, I come!" let justice take a full draught of my blood: well, "Awake, O sword!" let the blood of this man, my fellow, be shed; shed at his circumcision, shed in the garden, shed in his being crowned with thorns, shed in his being scourged, shed in his crucifying well, thus the blood of God's fellow was shed. What say you now, O sword of justice, are you pleased? Are you satisfied with blood? Yes, I have got my fill of blood; "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased:" I am pleased and satisfied to the full with his obedience to the death; I have got all the satisfaction I wanted from my shepherd, and I have no more to demand of him, or his sheep either. O glory to God, that ever this bloody and insatiable sword did awake against one that could give it blood enough, satisfaction enough; and yet,

4. It is a dreadful, terrible, flaming, and devouring sword: so it is represented, (Gen. 3:24), where it is said "Cherubims were placed, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." The least flame of this sword of justice is enough to burn up the whole creation; and, O! how terrible will this sword be forever to them that live and die in a Christless state! The dreadfulness of this sword is nowhere to be seen so lively as in its awaking against the man that was God's fellow: his human nature trembled at the sight of it; "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" (John 12:27). He saw the dreadful storm coming, the black cloud arising, and so much wrath in it, that he knew not how to express himself. There he cries out, "My soul is exceeding

sorrowful, even unto death,” (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34). We never hear of one groan from Christ for all his bloody sufferings; when crowned with thorns, scourged, and laid on the cross; “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:” but on the first entrance of his soul sufferings, he fell a lamenting, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful:” the original words are most emphatic, “He was begirt with sorrow;” he was plunged over head and ears in the wrath of God: all the faculties and powers of his soul were begirt with sorrow; He “began to be sore amazed,” (Mark 14:33). The word signifies the greatest extremity of amazement, and such as makes a man’s hair stand, and his flesh creep; and it is added, “He was very heavy:” if we consult the derivation of the word, it signifies, a sinking of spirit; his heart was like wax melted at the sight of that terrible wrath. But the evangelist Luke has yet a stronger expression, — “Being in an agony, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground:” “Being in an agony, engaged in a combat,” as the Greek word signifies: he had before combated with principalities and powers in the wilderness; but now he is combating with the Father’s wrath. He was in agony, and swate great drops of blood: all sweats arise from weakness and pressures of nature; therefore a crying sweat is a cold sweat; but never one, but Christ, swate a bloody sweat; and great drops of blood, in such abundance, that it came through his garments, and fell to the ground: and this was all but the first onset, a little skirmish before the main battle; for the main fight was to be on Mount Calvary, after they trailed him to the cross; then, on a sudden, the curtain of heaven is drawn, the sun loses his light; he was now combating with all the powers of hell and darkness, and therefore the field he was to fight in was dark. The punishment of loss and sense both was due to us for sin, he therefore suffered both: the punishment of loss, for all comfort now fails Christ; angels appeared before strengthening him; but now not an angel dares peep out of heaven for his comfort; yea, now his God fails him, in respect of his comfortable presence: formerly his heart failed him, in some respects, but now his God; which makes him cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Never was there such a cry in heaven or earth, before or since; yea, now he suffered the punishment of sense also due to us; for now all the

wrath of God was poured down immediately upon his soul: all the sluices of divine fury were opened, and all the waves and billows of his vengeance passed over him. “Darkness was over all the earth:” all things hushed into silence, that Christ might, without interruption, grapple with his Father’s wrath, until he cried, “It is finished, and gave up the ghost.” What think you of this dreadful sword that awaked against our surety, the man God’s fellow, when he was to expiate our sins?

5. It is a bright sword, a clear, a glittering sword: there is no spot of rust or stain upon this sword; no; the sword is spotless. Justice, holy justice: there is no unrighteousness with God. As there is no drop of unrighteousness in the cup of the damned, who are all damned by an act of holy justice; so there was no drop of injustice in the cup of wrath, which Christ, as surety, drank up to the bottom. Christ had said of old, “Lo! I come:” I come to be cautioner, and enter myself in the room of poor sinners, to pay their debt: justice, indeed, could not have required our debt of him, if he had not undertaken it; but having entered himself cautioner for our debt, he became liable to the payment of it: hence, when Christ saw the sword, and was crying, “Father, save me from this hour,” he immediately corrected himself with a BUT; “BUT for this cause came I unto this hour,” (John 12:27). And in the beginning of the twenty-second Psalm, which you know is one of the most clear prophecies of Christ’s sufferings, after he had cried out, “My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” (verse 1). Which is not the expression of any quarrelling complaint or discouragement, but of sinless nature, when arraigned before the tribunal of God, affected with the horror of divine wrath, and not being able easily to endure that there should be a cloud between God and him; I say, after these words he adds — “But thou art holy,” (verse 3). He cannot complain of injustice: Thou art just and holy in exacting all the debt at my hand, which I became surety for; I have all the sins of the elect to answer for; and therefore I justify thee, O Father, in giving me this stroke of thy awakened sword: “Thou art holy: Thou art clear when Thou judgest.” — It is a clear, bright, spotless, and holy sword.

6. It is a Living sword: do you think that God is speaking to a

piece of cold iron, when he says, “Awake, O sword?” Nay, this sword is God himself, the living God: God’s justice is God himself, a just God. Of this living sword you read, — “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” (Heb. 10:31). They that fall into hell, they fall into the hands of the living God; and there they are an everlasting sacrifice to this ever-living sword. Christ when he came to satisfy justice, he fell into the hands of this living God; and if he had not been God’s equal, God’s fellow, he could never have got out of his hands again. If this sword be a living sword, even the living God, O but it must be a great and strong sword, as the sword of God is called, (Isa. 27:1). It takes the strength of God to wield it; and so he does here, “Awake, O sword.” It takes the strength of God to bear the blow of it, and so it is here; “Awake, against the man that is my fellow.” One blow of it given to the angels and seraphims, would have brought them all down from the battlements of heaven to the bottom of hell. “Awake O sword;” God is here speaking to himself; as if he had said, Let me arise in my armour of vengeance and fury, and fall upon my shepherd, the man that is my fellow: it is a living sword that can awake itself. Thus you see what for a sword it is that awakes against Christ. O to see and believe this truth this day!

III. The third thing was to show, in what manner this sword did awake against Christ, and what is imported in the phrase, “Awake, O sword.” How the sword did awake against Christ has been partly declared already in the account of the sword itself: however it may a little further appear, in the support of this wonderful call, “Awake, O sword,” &c.

1. It imports, as if the sword had been sleeping, and now must awake against him: Christ having no sin of his own to answer for, the sword of justice had nothing to lay to his charge; and so was sleeping, as it were, with respect to him, having nothing to say against him, being the infinitely holy God, in himself, until once he made the bargain with his Father, to become our surety and cautioner; and whenever he became sin for us, and took on him our debt, then justice had a right to pursue him; and therefore, “Awake, O sword.”

2. “Awake, O sword,” it imports, that not only while the counsel

of peace was held between the Father and the Son, did justice delay the execution, though Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in the decree and counsel of God, but that after this glorious transaction, the sword deigned against the Son of God, had long slumbered; the sword had slumbered above four thousand years after Adam's fall; the Lamb was not slain all that time, felt only in dark typical representations of his death; but now, he must be actually slain; therefore, "Awake, O sword." God was now speaking of the day of Christ, the gospel day in the first verse of the chapter, where our text lies, saying, "In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness:" Now how shall this fountain be opened? Why, the sword of justice must pierce the side and the heart of the Son of God, and so open a fountain of cleansing blood; therefore, when the decree breaks forth, he says, "Awake, O sword."

3. "Awake, O sword;" it imports, that the sword of justice did not rashly smite the man that is God's fellow: a man in his sleep, or half-sleeping, may give a rash unadvised stroke to his fellow; but before God gave the stroke to the man that is his fellow, he did awake his justice, as it were, out of sleep, and proceeded upon the maturest deliberation: "Awake, O sword." It was no unadvised stroke that Christ got by the sword of justice; it was the fruit of a glorious transaction; neither did the sword strike him without a warrant, by particular orders from the judge of all: It was warranted to brandish itself against him; "Awake, O sword."

4. It imports, that justice was lively and vigorous in executing the vengeance due upon our surety for our sin: Justice did not give him a sleepy, lazy, drowsy blow: but a strong, lively, awakened blow: as it is said, in another case, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord," (Isa. 51:9); so, Awake, O sword, put on strength. Well, justice arises, as it were, like one out of sleep, puts on its clothes of vengeance, and armour of power, rallies its forces, goes forth with warlike robes, and attacks the man that is God's fellow with all its force; and acts, like itself, with impartial equity, without sparing our surety, because of his quality, — God spared not his own Son, (Rom. 8:32): "Awake, O sword."

5. “Awake, O sword,” it imports the great concern and earnestness that was in God’s heart to have his justice satisfied: O sword “Awake, O sword.” God speaks here with affectionate concern: “O sword! O justice! thou must be honoured, glorified, and satisfied, one way or other; and seeing I have proposed to my eternal Son to bear the stroke of vengeance in the room of elect sinners; and seeing he has undertaken it, my very heart is set upon the accomplishment of this glorious work; my justice is one of the pearls of my crown; I will not shew mercy to the detriment of my justice. A sacrifice I must have, a sacrifice I will have; therefore, Awake, O sword.”

6. I think it imports, not only God’s concern to have his justice satisfied this way, but his great delight in the satisfaction; “Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow.” With what infinite pleasure and satisfaction does the sword of justice give the bloody stroke to this glorious person? “It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief,” (Isa. 53:10). Why, how is this consistent with the ineffable love he had to his eternally beloved? Yes, most consistent: for the Father loved the Son in dying, and for dying; — “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” (John 10:17). He loved his Son for this very act of obedience which he yielded to him: Christ’s obedience to the death was the highest and most acceptable worship and service to God, that ever was, or ever will be; it is a sacrifice of such a sweet smell that it drowned the stink of all the sins of an elect world; a sacrifice more pleasing to God than all their sins were displeasing: and therefore, with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, he says, “Awake, O sword.” This leads me to —

IV. The fourth thing proposed, What special hand JEHOVAH the Lord of hosts had in making this awful sword to awake against this glorious person? “Awake, O sword, — saith the Lord of hosts.” It was the Lord of hosts, the eternal Father of this eternal Son, that mustered the hosts of vengeance against him, and had the main and principal hand in Christ’s sufferings, which we are to commemorate this day. JEHOVAH’S hand was supreme in this business; and that in these four respects.

1. It was JEHOVAH, the Lord of hosts, that determined all

beforehand, and agreed with his Son for that effect. It was concluded in the counsel of God what he should suffer, what should be the price that JEHOVAH would have, and the sacrifice he would accept of from his hands. It was not the Jews, nor the scribes and Pharisees, nor Pilate, but principally it was the Lord's doing, and the accomplishment of his eternal counsel, — "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done," (Acts 4:27, 28). In all they were doing they did nothing, but what was carved out before in the eternal counsel of God: and therefore says Peter, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," (Acts 2:23).

2. As he, the great JEHOVAH, the Lord of hosts, determined, that the sword should awake against him, so he prepared the subject capable to receive the stroke of justice's sword; "A body hast thou prepared me," (Heb. 10:5). He gave him a nature, a soul and body capable of suffering: the stroke of justice fell only upon the man Christ, upon his human nature; though the dignity of his divine person, did infinitely enhance the merit of his sufferings; yet his divine person, his divine nature was never reached, nor reachable, by the sword of justice; the eternal word was intangible and incapable of suffering, till the word was made flesh. Now, this flesh, this human nature, he prepared.

3. It was JEHOVAH, the Lord of hosts, that ordered and overruled all his sufferings, when it came to the execution of his ancient decree. He who governs all the counsels, thoughts, and actions of men, did, in a special manner, govern and overrule the sufferings of the mediator. Though wicked men were following their own designs, and were stirred and acted by the devil, who is said to have put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ; yet God had the ordering of all, who should betray him; what death he should die; how he should be pierced; and yet not a bone of him broken.

4. It was JEHOVAH, the Lord of hosts, that had an active hand in reaching the stroke to Christ: he was the chief party that pursued Christ with the sword of justice in his hand: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief." It was he that was exacting the

elect's debt of him; and therefore Christ looked over Pilate and Herod, and all the wicked instruments used in this work, as of no consideration in this matter; he looked over them to the Lord JEHOVAH his Father, and says to the chief of them, Pilate, (that cowardly, self-condemned judge), "Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above." It was this interest that his Father had in his sufferings that made him say, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). His Father pursued him as a cautioner in our room; and to his Father he cries when the sword is running through his heart; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He spared not his own Son, when he cried, but would have him drink out the bitter cup to the bottom: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd." The message comes from him, and he gave the sword a charge, and orders it to smite him; it was this more than the whips, the thorns, the nails, the spear, that made him cry out. Another and a higher hand brought his soul to more bitterness, than all the sufferings he endured from men. — Thus his soul was crucified more than his body; and his heart had sharper nails to pierce it than his hands and feet.

The first of two booklets.

