The Work of Christ
In Connection With
The Revival of Religion:
His Atonement, Righteousness,
And Intercession

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LECTURE II.


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"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."—ISAIAH, lxi, 10.

In the glory of God displayed in the first creation, and the formation of man after the Divine image, were laid the foundations of that high and sacred communion between God and the creature to which is given the name of Religion. But by man's apostasy and breach of covenant, this glorious foundation was overthrown. For, in righteous displeasure, the Most High withdrew from man the tokens of his favour and the communications of his love; and man was robbed of that purity and excellence which fitted him for communion with God. In this state of things, there can be among men no such thing as true religion. The light of nature, the voice of reason, the power of conscience, are only the ruins of former greatness: and while they remain to attest the sinfulness of men, and to establish against them a charge of guilt, they never can restore the goodly fabric which has been by sin destroyed. But He who is the fountain of life and salvation, and who ever reigns in absolute sovereignty, has been pleased to establish a new foundation, on which he may enter into friendly intercourse with the fallen children of men. He has accordingly provided for a fresh manifestation of his glory, suited to the fallen condition of men, and their restoration to his forfeited favour and lost image, whereby they may be fitted to know and serve and en-
joy him. The development of this marvellous scheme, and the application of its provisions for the salvation of sinners, are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and men. In this capacity, and to give effect to the designs of Infinite Wisdom, he came into the world; and, by his obedience unto death, procured eternal redemption for all them that obey him. He now lives and reigns a Priest upon his throne, to carry forward to its actual consummation the work which the Father hath given him to do." Now, in proportion as the power of the exalted Redeemer is displayed, in the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the consequent conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, does the cause of true religion prevail. But for the mediation of Christ, there had been no religion now amongst men; and hence every revival that takes place must bear a very close and important relation to him and to his work. For, in the words of the text, the Father having made the “soul of Messiah an offering for sin,” the Messiah, in every revival of religion, “sees his seed, prolongs his days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in his hands.”

The subject of this evening’s lecture naturally divides itself into two parts:—First, the work of Christ; and Secondly, the connection of that work with a revival of religion.

We have in the First place to consider the work of Christ. But before we enter upon the direct consideration of this point, it is needful to advert very briefly to the person of Him by whom that work is performed. In some cases a work derives all its value from its own nature; and therefore it is of no moment by whom it has been produced. In the present instance, however, while the work itself is most glorious, it derives its chief value from the dignity of the person by whom it is accomplished.

The Lord Christ is in himself a Divine person, being the Son of God, of the same substance with the Father, and equal to him in power and glory. But according to the arrangements of the eternal covenant, and for carrying its designs into effect, He, in the fulness of time, assumed human nature into personal union with
tue of bringing sinners to himself that they may be saved. To them therefore who labour and are heavy-laden, not only under a sense of their sin and misery, but also under a conviction of the hardness and rebellion of their hearts, the Lord Christ is a most suitable Saviour. For the very doctrine of free and sovereign grace, which is a stumbling-block to the world and to mere professors of religion, is a doctrine exactly suited to those who feel that they have destroyed themselves. The glory of the gospel of Christ is, that salvation belongeth to the Lord, not only in its design and purchase, but also in its application. And but for this, no flesh would be saved. For leave men to themselves and they will manifest the same inveterate hostility to the Gospel which they do to the Law. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" by their faith any more than by their obedience. The Spirit must quicken, for the flesh profits nothing. Now let sinners ready to perish hear the gracious voice that is addressed to them, "The Spirit and the Bride say Come, and let him that heareth say Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely." Amen.

himself. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 In his person as God-man he is possessed of all possible perfections—divine and human. In his Divine nature he is infinitely glorious; and in his human nature he is adorned with every grace of which it is susceptible: "He is altogether lovely." 2 By appointment of the Father he is constituted Mediator of the new covenant, and has all its arrangements and promises committed unto him that he may carry them into effect: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 3 In this capacity he stands in a peculiarly close relation to the redeemed, being their head in covenant; fulfilling all their obligations, and securing and dispensing to them all saving benefits. For such is the nature of the relation between Christ and his people, that whatever is done by him as Surety, is regarded as done by them: "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 4

In the work which we are about to consider, Christ is especially to be viewed as acting in the capacity of a Priest. For although we may not separate his prophetic and kingly offices from this, nor from any part of his mediatorial work, yet it is evident from the testimony of Scripture and the nature of the case, that a greater prominence is due to his priestly office. To this office he is solemnly set apart by the oath of the Father: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." 5 For it he is qualified by the unction of the Holy Ghost, symbolically represented by the holy oil used under the law: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." 6 To this office and to the work connected with it, he cheerfully consecrated himself in his zeal for the Father's name, and his love for his chosen people: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." 7

1 1 Tim. iii, 16. 2 Sor. v, 16. 3 1 Tim. ii, 5. 4 2 Cor. v, 21. 5 Psalm cxv, 4. 6 Isaiah, xi, 1, 2. 7 John, xvii, 19.
We may now look into the several parts of the work that is performed by this glorious person. And, first, let us advert to his atonement. To understand this part of the work of Christ, it must be borne in mind, that the people for whom he acted lay under the penalty of the Divine law. For having, in the person of their first parent and federal representative, broken covenant with God, they were justly condemned to die the death, even to endure the infinite wrath of God. For such is the deeply malignant nature of sin that it opposes itself to the Divine Majesty with the full power of the subject in which it resides; and therefore justice requires, that up to the full measure of the creature's capacity for suffering it, he shall be visited with the wrath of God: “The soul that sinneth it shall die.”

“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

Now we hold it as a self-evident truth, founded upon the absolute and immutable perfection of the Divine nature, that sin must be visited with condign punishment. To impugn this principle is to sweep away the principal foundation on which rests the necessity of atonement. And yet it may be argued, that just as in human governments an offender may be pardoned without the ends of justice being damaged; so sin may be allowed to pass with impunity, and the throne of God remain glorious and sure. To make this supposed case fairly parallel with that of the Divine government, it must be maintained, that all offenders may be pardoned, and yet justice hold its proper place, and exert its due control over the subject. For it is for the pardon of sin, not for any particular form of sin, without an atonement, that the argument is proposed. If any objection be taken to this view, it may at once be obviated by the consideration, that while, in relation to human law, there is a vast difference between one crime and another; in the view of the Divine law the distinction between one sin and another sinks into nothing as compared with the enormity of any one—even the least offence. The distance between the greatest and the least guilty of lost souls may be measured; but the distance

Ezek. xviii, 4.  
* Gal. iii, 10. 

God and the heirs of eternal life. Be exhorted to examine whether you have any scriptural claim to be ranked with this singular people. And if you have, then walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Meditate on the work of Christ that your souls may prosper and be in health; and that, living yourselves, you may seek that others may be quickened and brought to Christ. But if not, then be exhorted to cast in your lot with the people of God, and “esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt.”

3. How fearful is the condition of those who reject Christ. The guilt of the first apostacy lies upon them; and that is sufficient to fill them with terror and dismay. But there is superadded to that the more tremendous guilt of despising the second Adam, and setting at nought the covenant ratified by his precious blood. Now who can conceive the misery that awaits gospel despisers in being exposed to the wrath of the Lamb of God? O be exhorted to flee from this terrible judgment, and seek refuge, by faith of the Spirit’s operation, in him who is “a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.” One thing is needful for life; one thing is needful for the hour of death; one thing is needful for the solemn hour of the judgment day; one thing is needful for long, long eternity: And that is an interest in Christ by the awakening, converting, and regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

4. We may finally remark, how ample and how rich is the encouragement given to sinners to seek Christ and salvation in him. He is all-sufficient to save from the lowest depths of guilt and corruption and wickedness. No sin is so heinous but his blood may expiate it; no guilt so aggravated but his righteousness may cover it; no depravity so strong but his grace may subdue it: “He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” And if it be pleaded by any that they are blind and cannot see his glory—helpless and cannot accept his mercy: Even for this case there is provision made in Christ. He is lifted up that he may draw men unto him. He possesses the rare vir-
of Christ with the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; with prayer, secret, social, and public; with fasting—a duty which has ever been owned of God as a mean of promoting a revival; and with other means of grace; but we must forbear. In reviewing the ground over which we have traveled, and marking the close and vital connection which the work of Christ bears with the revival of religion in all the views in which it can be contemplated, we are reminded of the words which the exalted Redeemer spake to his servant in Patmos, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."

The practical reflections suggested by the subject before us are so many that it is necessary though difficult to make a selection. In the first place we are called to contemplate and admire the glory of Christ. In every view that has been taken of his work he appears exceedingly glorious. He is glorious in himself, in his Godhead, and in his manhood, and in the union of both in his Person. He is glorious in his office of Mediator—the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. He is glorious in his atonement, his righteousness, and intercession. He is glorious in his grace and truth, his person and love, his cause and salvation. Now it is for us to enquire whether he be glorious in our estimation, and whether, like the apostle, "we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord;" for what will it avail to us that he is in all his characters and relations so precious, if by us he be accounted "a root out of a dry ground, having neither form nor comeliness wherefore he should be desired"?

2. We see how truly noble and excellent are the true people of God. By the world indeed they are despised and reproached; but that is because they do not know their character nor appreciate their worth: "The world knoweth us not because it knew him not." But truly excellent are they as the objects of God's everlasting love, the member's of Christ's mystical body, the temples of the Holy Ghost, the purchase of atoning blood, the partakers of imputed righteousness, the children of

between the least guilty and a sinless being is infinite. And therefore if pardon is to be dispensed out of mere compassion, one is as much the object of compassion as another. Or if one is to be pardoned because he is less guilty, all may be pardoned, because the difference between one and another is of little account. Now we have only to put the case in this light to show, that even human government could not be maintained if every offence were pardoned, because it would be equivalent to the dissolution of government altogether, and a permission to every man to do what is right in his own eyes. But, besides, it ought to be remembered that the immediate design of human governments and of the punishments which they inflict, is to promote the interests of civil society. These may not at all be endangered by the occasional extension of mercy to offenders. But the grand design of the Divine government, that on which all others are suspended, and to which they are subordinated, is the glory of God. Now the whole tenor of Scripture proves, that to secure this end in the pardon of any one offence, atonement is indispensable. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

But next to the glory of the Divine name is the salvation of sinners: And atonement is not less necessary to accomplish this object. In support of this position we appeal to all who, by the Spirit of God, have been awakened to a true sense of the evil of sin and the glory of the Divine character. To them it is no longer a matter of idle speculation or of doubtful disputation, but a question of life or death, whether sin may be pardoned. And if so—in what way. They now see that God is the only portion of their souls; but it is God the enemy of sin and its righteous avenger. While others are reckless what becomes of the Divine character, provided only they obtain their own selfish purposes, truly awakened souls feel that if God be not glorified in the condemnation of sin they are undone for ever. Let it not be said this is an argument which is perfectly nugatory, because it cannot be appreciated except by those who are interested in the question; for if men will clearly understand and rightly estimate the doctrines of the word of God, they must come under the influence
of the principles which it lays down. And until that is the case we must decline their judgment as altogether incompetent: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The remarks now made serve to illustrate the occasion and necessity of atonement. But, after all, the most simple and conclusive argument which can be adduced on this point, is the fact, that atonement has been made; for it were a daring impeachment of his wisdom to say, that God gave up his Son to the accursed death of the cross, if such a sacrifice had not been absolutely necessary to the salvation of sinners. We said that the Lord Christ was duly called to the priestly office,—"For no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God: as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." He was thus prepared to offer up the sacrifice in which atonement was to be made. Now the sacrifice was none other than himself. To say that it was the human nature of Christ is not good theology, nor in accordance with the language of Scripture. For the human nature never professed any distinct personality of its own; but from the first moment of its production ever subsisted in union with the person of the Son of God. We apprehend it is more correct to say, that the sacrifice by which atonement was made was Christ in his human nature: "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree"—"When he had by himself purged our sins"—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." We shall not dwell on the immaculate purity and absolute perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, having virtually spoken to that point in the remarks that were made upon his person: Neither shall we dwell on the sufferings which he endured in the course of his eventful life, being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but shall at once pass to the last and crowning part of his sufferings, in which he eminently offered up himself a sacrifice for sin. Let it not be forgotten, that against God sin had been commit-

the one exposes to view the destructive error, while the other gilds it over with the appearance of evangelical doctrine. But it is not in connection with such a ministry that a revival of religion will take place. The work of Christ must be held forth in all its beauty and amplitude and fulness; and salvation, by absolutely free and sovereign grace, must be proclaimed, flowing from the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; and thus may a revival be had, but not till then: "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them which believe, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." By this criterion are ministers to be tried: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world." Let men have ordination handed down to them in an unbroken chain from the apostles; let them have all the learning which schools and colleges can give, and all the skill in ecclesiastical law which church courts require; let them be ever so accomplished in all the arts of pulpit oratory, if they do not faithfully preach Christ crucified they are not to be received: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be anathema."

To the ministers of Christ is committed the key of discipline: And this also hath respect to the work of Christ. For it is not every one that is to be admitted to the privileges of the Christian church; nor is it all who happen to be of age, of good character, and of competent knowledge; nor is it all who may be esteemed by blind and carnal men disciples of Christ; but those who give evidence, such evidence as may be judged of by a spiritually-minded man, that they are the subjects of the work of grace which we have endeavoured to describe, as lying at the root of all true knowledge of Christ and saving interest in him. And when this is the case, carnal professors will be ashamed, and hypocrites, like chaff, will be driven from the church. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

We might illustrate the connection of the work
word of God may be entirely forgotten. But no sooner is there a shaking among the dry bones, and sinners are constrained to enquire what they must do to be saved, than the Scriptures are read, especially as setting forth Him who is given to be a covenant to the people, that he may be for salvation to the ends of the earth. The people of God too are constrained to search the Scriptures, that they may see the glory and hear the voice of Him whom their souls love. They labour to fulfill the apostle’s command, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”

I remark, in the Fifth and last place, that the work of Christ is connected with Divine ordinances, by means of which a revival of religion is maintained and promoted. And of these the first in importance is the Gospel ministry. To the work of Christ we owe the very existence of this excellent and powerful mean of grace. To the ministers of Christ are committed the keys of doctrine and discipline. By the key of doctrine I mean the preaching of the word. But what is, at least what ought to be the subject of their preaching? let one of the most gifted and useful of ministers answer: “I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” In many cases the ministry of the word is conducted in such a way that one would imagine men had resolved to exclude this glorious theme from their discourse. An exposition of the duties of human life, an exhortation to the practice of virtue, an advice to be patient under trouble, intermingled with some dry allusions to the example of Christ, and a flattering but awfully delusive assurance that if men are only attentive to these things the rewards of heaven await them; that is all the gospel which many preachers give to their people. But others contrive to amuse them with a form of sound words, and to maintain all the appearance of evangelical preaching, while in reality they administer the most deadly poison to their hearers. For where is the mighty difference between saying that a man is to be saved by works, and preaching that he is to be saved through Christ by a faith of his own production? The only difference is, that

1 See Ephesians, iv, 7–13.
is to make a practical mockery of the law. But, say some, man's condition is altered; his powers are corrupted; his will is perverted; and his whole nature is enslaved: And therefore a lower standard of obedience must be fixed than when he was possessed of perfect rectitude. But how, I ask, did man's condition come to be thus altered? Was it not by his sin—a sin which justly exposes him to punishment? Now, to punish him for failing to discharge a lawful debt, and at the same time to diminish the amount of the debt, is altogether unjust. To reduce the demands of the law one jot or tittle is so far to take away the ground of punishment: “For where no law is, there is no transgression.” And the amount of transgression depends on the amount of obedience required by the law.

But another serious consequence will follow upon the attempt to bring down the requirements of the law of God to the level of man's capacities in his fallen state. The law, it is admitted, originally required perfect obedience. Now this demand was just. To say otherwise is to impeach the rectitude of the Divine Lawgiver. But on what did the justice of it rest? evidently on the claim which God has upon his intelligent creatures. He requires that they shall “love him with all their heart and soul and strength and mind.” And he is entitled to this, primarily, on account of the infinite moral perfection of his nature. Let the law, however, be changed; it cannot be changed for the better; for it was before perfectly just: it must therefore be changed for the worse, and become unjust. And is it to be gravely maintained, that the righteous Governor of the world can enjoin upon his creatures a law that is unjust, and require that they shall love him with less than all their heart and soul and strength? Let the thought perish from our minds: and for the glory of the Divine name, whatever may happen to us, let his law be preserved in all its integrity and force. “The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”

With this resolution agrees the experience of every true believer. He sees that in the government of God there is no neutrality—that men must be either saints or sinners, righteous or wicked, justified or condemned, able: “He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.”

The description which in the same chapter he gives of the work of the Comforter, finely illustrates this point. He convinces of sin, but how? because they believe not on Christ. He convinces of righteousness, because Christ went to the Father, and the Church sees him no more. He convinces of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, namely, in the triumphs of the cross of Christ.

I must go on, however, to notice, in the Fourth place, the connection of the work of Christ with the instrument employed in the revival of religion: And that is the whole word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Now, to show that this instrument is closely connected with the work of Christ, we might remind you that it is represented as the word of Christ; and hence the apostle Peter, speaking of the great salvation declared in the Gospel, says, “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.” But, passing from this, we observe that the work of Christ is the grand subject of the revelation made in holy Scripture. The introduction to the Book of Revelation might, without the least impropriety, be put before the whole Bible, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him.” In conversing with the Jews at a time when not a page of the New Testament was traced, our Lord exhorted them to “Search the Scriptures, for,” he says, “in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” And talking to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, “he began at Moses and all the Prophets, and expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

In a declining state of the church this view of the

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1 John, xvi, 13—15.
in a state of favour or under the curse. The capital error into which others fall arises from their ignorance of God, their indifference to His glory, and their selfishly consulting some fancied safety of their own. By this means they are led to dream of the possibility of having a mere negative goodness; and a consequent freedom from liability to punishment; at the very time they are conscious they have no good claim to eternal life. But those who are divinely taught, and spiritually enlightened, are convinced there is no middle position which they can occupy. And as they feel their need of a sufficient atonement to satisfy for their breach of the law, so they feel their need of a perfect righteousness, to meet the claims of its precept. In these circumstances, the doctrine of Christ’s imputed righteousness is to them most precious: and, like the apostle, “they count all things but loss that they may win Christ, and be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” The essential dignity of the person of Christ placed him above all law; and this lies at the foundation of his righteousness, and indeed of his whole work. For had he been a creature, no matter how high in rank, and excellent in nature, and vast in powers, he must have been obliged by that law, from which no creature can plead exemption, to employ all his powers in the service of the Creator: and when he had done all, he should have done no more than it was his duty to do. But Christ being a Divine person, and superior therefore to all law, he was competent to do for others what he needed not to do for himself. He accordingly assumed the nature of men, whose debt he was to pay. He placed himself under the law, according to which that debt was exacted; and in a human nature that was perfectly pure, and adorned with the beauties of holiness: and throughout a life of difficulty and trial, he fulfilled every demand which the law had upon his people. He thus became “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, pure shall glory.”
The righteousness of Christ, be it remarked, is a Surety righteousness; by which we mean, that it is performed by him as the representative in covenant of all who believe in his name. It is therefore as truly theirs now in the sight of God, and on their conversion in actual possession, as though it had been wrought out by themselves: “We are the righteousness of God in him.” The righteousness of Christ is a Divine righteousness. The person who wrought it out is a Divine person. For, though the obedience was rendered and could be rendered only in the human nature, yet it was not the obedience of the human nature, but the obedience of God manifest in the flesh. “This is the name by which he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.” The righteousness of Christ is an everlasting righteousness. The righteousness of Adam was most excellent of its kind; but it was soon lost, and lost too beyond the possibility of recovery; for we get nothing by our connection with him but guilt, corruption, and death. But the righteousness of Christ, as it is divinely excellent, is also of endless duration; and therefore no condemnation can ever be passed upon those who appear before God in it. “He brought in everlasting righteousness.”

3. We now come to the last part of the work of Christ which falls to be considered, namely his Intercession; and, as before, we may advert first of all to the occasion of it. Let it be steadily borne in mind, that the great end of the work of Christ is the manifestation of the Divine glory as a basis of true religion. Now it seemed good to the wisdom of God, in his counsels of peace, to ordain that the blessings secured by the blood and righteousness of Christ should be obtained by his intercession. By this mean is brought to view the all-sufficiency of the glorious three-one God for the salvation of sinners. “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” We see another occasion for the intercession of Christ, in the fact that he is the grand model after which every believer is fashioned. And it is the will of God, and accordant

Daniel, ix. 24.

connected with a revival.
the Head of a singular community; and in all that happened to him, his people were virtually included. The conformity which they acquire to him, therefore, is just the development of what was wrapt up in his personal history. The favour they have with God is the favour that he has; the sufferings they meet with are his sufferings—only in their case they are not penal as they were in His; the righteousness they wear is the righteousness which he wrought out; the grace they possess is the grace that is in Him; the glory they shall enjoy is His glory. In the contemplation of this wondrous truth, the manifestation it affords of Divine wisdom and love, the interest which it throws around the whole Christian scheme, and the security and honour and stability it yields to the Christian life, may we not exclaim, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,” &c.  

We have contemplated the work of Christ in relation to the object of the Christian religion, and the qualifications involved in the apprehension of the object. We now call your attention, in the third place, to the connection of the work of Christ with the Divine agency by which this glorious object is revealed and apprehended. The agency is none other than the Spirit of the living God, who, equally with the Father and the Son, is to be loved, adored, and served by all in heaven and on the earth. To Him is committed and by Him is graciously undertaken the work of giving effect to the love of the Father and the grace of the Son—in the actual redemption of the church from sin and ruin, and her exaltation to holiness and bliss; this is “the pure river of water of life” which John in vision beheld, “clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”  

In further illustration of this subject I remark, that the mission of the Holy Spirit to the church proceeds from the work of Christ. We must doubtless refer this arrangement to the constitution of the eternal covenant: a constitution, however, which is manifestly designed to bring to view the personal relations of the

with the relation in which they stand to him, that men should ask the blessings of his love and salvation. The Lord Christ, therefore, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, asks the blessings promised in covenant to him as Mediator: “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son,” &c.  

But in the intercession of Christ we see also a very gracious condescension to the weakness and helplessness of sinners. For how were they to be assured that his atonement and righteousness had been accepted, had he not in his Mediatorial capacity ascended into heaven, entered into the Divine presence, and continued to maintain an acceptable ministry at the right hand of God? But further, how were they to obtain the blessings of the covenant, if there were not one to intercede on their behalf? The brethren of Joseph knew there was corn in Egypt—they were assured of Pharaoh’s good disposition towards them; and yet the greatness of the king, their being strangers from another country, and their own humble condition, all rendered it most desirable, if not absolutely necessary, that they should have one to speak for them. In like manner, sinners may know that there is an all-sufficiency in God to supply their wants—they may be assured that He is graciously disposed towards them; and yet his infinite majesty, and their own meanness—their vileness as sinners, and their insignificance as creatures, all call for an intercessor who may go between the great God and his unworthy creatures. “The Lord,” accordingly, “raised up Jesus from the dead, and gave him glory; that our faith and hope might be in God.”  

In further remarking on the intercession of Christ, we may advert, 1st. To the place where it is carried on. It is heaven, the place where the Divine glory is peculiarly manifested; “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, (which are the figures of the true,) but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” The Lord Christ, having finished the work given him to do, by obeying the law even unto death, was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven. By this wonderful event it was proclaimed
in the most impressive and satisfactory manner, that the justice of God was satisfied, that the law was magnified and made honourable. He had drawn near to the fire of Divine wrath, with the sins of the church laid upon him, and all her legal obligations imputed unto him. He had descended to the dust of death under the hand of the Father, exacting from him what was due by sinners; and therefore, to be released from the prison of the grave, to appear again on the earth, and to rise to the highest heavens, was an unequivocal and conclusive testimony to the perfection of his work. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

But as he entered into heaven, in token of the complete and acceptable nature of his work of obedience unto death, so to maintain this evidence, he will continue there till the consummation of all things: "Whom the heaven must receive untill the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." The high priest, under the Levitical economy, having made his solemn entry into the holy of holies, was obliged to return; because, through the imperfection of the sacrifices that were offered, they had to be repeated year after year: "But Christ having come, a high priest of good things to come—having by his one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified," and having entered into the heavenly sanctuary, and sat down on the right hand of God, will continue there till, by the ministrations of the Spirit, his people are gathered unto himself. The opinion is indeed very prevalent, that Christ will appear at Jerusalem or some where else on the commencement of the Millennium, and reign with his saints in visible glory a thousand years. But this opinion, while it receives no countenance from the testimony of Scripture rightly understood, wars against the very foundations of the Christian faith. The Lord Christ cannot, in his human nature, be in more than one place at one time. In heaven, we maintain, is the place where his intercession is conducted; and therefore to say that he leaves that holy place, is to set aside his intercession, and to obscure, we shall see him as he is;" "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his throne."

But though conformity to Christ be thus universal in its extent, we must not forget that it is slow and gradual in its progress. The Christian life is compared to natural life, in which there is childhood, manhood, and old age. And it were as unwise for a child to complain that he is not a full-grown man as for a young convert to complain that he is not an experienced believer. The growth of this conformity is subject to many checks, and even backslidings. The children of Israel now advanced towards Canaan, again they stood still, and sometimes they retrograded. And in like manner, true believers sometimes go on their way rejoicing, sometimes they "are in heaviness through manifold temptations," and sometimes they are "carnal, and walk like men." But amidst the severe trials to which they are subjected, the eminent perils to which they are exposed, and the painful conflicts which they are obliged to maintain, they hold on their way. For He who has called them to his kingdom and glory leads them by the right way, that they may go to the city of habitation. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

We need hardly remark, that, in this feature of it also, a revival of religion stands closely connected with the work of Christ. In that work is the glorious model exhibited after which his people are to be formed. And it were well for them to remember that as He was, so are they in this present world. By the contemplation of the glory of Christ as it shines in his work, in the exercise of faith, are they to be gradually transformed into the likeness of their Head: "We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But that work contains the foundation on which conformity to Christ proceeds. He lived and suffered and died as a public person—the Father of a numerous offspring—
have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." By this principle, also, must we test all pretension to a revival of religion; for if there be no growing conformity to Christ in the people of God, and no beginnings of conformity to him in others, where shall we find traces of a revival? A person endued with great spiritual sagacity, indeed, may see symptoms of a coming season of refreshing while it is yet afar off. He may, like the servant of the prophet, descry the cloud of heavenly blessing though not larger than a man's hand. But just as the thirsty soil is not refreshed, nor the trees of the fields revived, nor the flowers of the earth beautified, until a shower of rain actually fall, so it is not until the Spirit be poured from on high that the wilderness and the solitary place is made glad for it, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. But when that is the case, one of the most prominent features of the work is the conformity to Christ which it produces. A revival took place on Pentecost; and the Jewish rulers took knowledge of the apostles that they had been with Jesus. The work of the Lord prospered in Antioch, and there disciples were first called Christians, that is, persons like to Christ. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as he walked."

The conformity to Christ of which we speak must be universal; that is, extending to our whole condition in time and eternity, and to all the relations in which we stand to God and our fellow-men, and to all the principles and faculties of our nature. We must be conformed to him in life: "Because I live, ye shall live also;" "Our life is hid with Christ in God"—in righteousness: "We are the righteousness of God in him"—in strength: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"—in spirit: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ"—in suffering: "I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ;" "Let him take up his cross and follow me"—in conversation: "Leaving us an example that we should follow his steps"—in victory over enemies: "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us"—in eternal glory: "He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body;" "When he appears, we shall be like him; for yea, sweep away the evidence which the Divine Redeemer himself hath supplied of the completeness of his righteousness: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." The evidence on which the Comforter convinces men that Christ's righteousness is sufficient for their justification is, that He has gone to the Father. But the continued sufficiency of this evidence depends on his continuing with the Father; and therefore he tells his disciples that they should see him no more; that is, till his righteousness had been imputed to all his people, and he "come again to receive them to himself, that where He is there they may be also."

2. We may next advert to the ground of Christ's intercession; and this is his most perfect oblation, and glorious righteousness. Hence the beloved disciple, in a vision of the heavenly temple, "saw in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb, as it had been slain." And our Lord himself, addressing his Father, said, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify me with thine ownself."

3. We may notice, thirdly, the prevalence of Christ's intercession; and this is founded on the all-sufficiency of Godhead. The Father is able to give whatsoever Christ may ask; for, "with Him is the fountain of life." It is founded on the faithfulness of the Father. He hath promised in covenant to give to Christ what he asks: "Thou hast given him his heart's desire; and hast not withholden the request of his lips." It is founded, as we have before stated, on the completeness of his work. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins."

4. The intercession of Christ is continual. The occasion which calls for it is not peculiar to any age or condition of the church, but is coextensive with its duration in the present world. And hence the Scripture distinctly instructs us that Christ "ever liveth to make intercession for his people." But here too the opinions of Millenarians are at variance with the doc-
trine of the word of God. They, indeed, believe that the personal presence and reign of Christ will give a mighty impulse to His cause—that it will hasten the overthrow of his enemies, and serve to extend and prosper his church. But how are such expectations to be reconciled, I do not say with Scripture testimonies, fairly interpreted, but with the very foundation of the Christian scheme? The whole work of Christ on the earth, or what is called his finished work, points to and terminates in his glory within the veil, part of which glory is his intercession. By that intercession is his work made effectual unto the mission of the Spirit, and his operation in gathering, building up, sanctifying, and comforting the church. The intercession of Christ is, so to speak, the golden link which connects the work of Christ for the church and the work of Christ in the church. And the state in which it is carried forward may be said to hold a middle place between the humiliation of his first advent and the glory of the second. We have endeavoured to show that there is an inseparable connection between that state and the intercession that is maintained by Christ in it; and therefore to suppose, as Millennials do, that he will leave the right hand of God, is to suppose that his intercession ceases; and if his intercession cease, the mission of the Comforter is suspended; and the church, instead of rising in beauty and splendour and power, sinks at once into the gloom and silence of spiritual death. How different is the doctrine of the word of God! “When he had by himself purged our sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of God—from thenceforth expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool.”

In the holy of holies he is, and always will be, to appear on behalf of his people. Not like the Jewish high priest, with their names graven on a breastplate of gold and precious stones; but with their names, their cause, their interests, on his heart of ineffable tenderness and love. He will there make mention of them before his Father; plead their cause against all opposition; obtain for them “mercy to pardon and grace to help in time of need.” And now, looking back on the particulars of his work consummated in his prevalent and continual

wheat. He gets individuals to profess great concern, to be constant in their attendance upon means, and to assume the aspect of really decided Christians, at the very time they are secretly living in sin and resisting the Spirit of grace. By these means, he hopes to throw discredit upon the entire subject of religion, and thus to deter men from having anything to do with it. Now how is this subtle and powerful adversary to be resisted and overcome? By communion with Christ. “He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.” He won this victory as the head of his redeemed. And they by faith are called to enter into his triumphs; and, “taking to them the whole armour of God, to stand in the evil day.” “The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”

1 Revelation, xii, 10.

We might go on to show, that it is by faith in the work of Christ that those who are fitted for receiving the revelation of Divine glory are delivered from the world: “this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith”—from the power and dominion of indwelling sin: “sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace”—from the fears, and in due time from the bitterness of death: “Oh grave, where is thy victory? Oh death, where is thy sting! The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” But time forbids us to dwell on these interesting topics.

5. We therefore hasten to observe, in the last place, under this head, that to fit men for the revelation of God in Christ to their souls there is required conformity to Christ. By this principle must we test the pretensions of men to the possession of the grace which we have illustrated under the former heads. “For whom God foreknew he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” And therefore “if any man
delighting in the law of God after the inward man, he can add, “so then with my mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

3. A third fruit of communion with Christ by faith is deliverance from every enemy. The original apostacy, as it exposed men to the wrath of God, so it reduced them to the most abject slavery. And in this servitude they continue till the Son of God break their chains, and set them at liberty: “If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” In a declining state of religion, spiritual bondage is little felt or feared. The great adversary of God and man is then comparatively quiet; for he sees everything turned to the advancement of his kingdom. But the moment the symptoms of a revival of religion appear, he is awake, and stirs up all his might to hinder or mar it. “The Devil hath come down, having great wrath, because he knows his time is short,” is a description which applies to every instance of real progress in the work of the Lord. He assails the children of God with the most violent temptations; for he knows that the revival must begin with them; and he hopes, by striking at its source, to cut it off altogether. The apostles were to be the instruments of the revival on the day of Pentecost; and what do we read? “Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” We argue, that the Lord designs to do good to our Sion, from the very fact that the church is in being sifted; and so violently is the process carried on that some of our people seem scarcely able to keep their ground. For, “when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.”

He does not, however, confine his assaults to the people of God. He attacks those who have been awakened to some concern about their souls, and labours to persuade them that there is time enough to seek salvation. And when this device fails he insinuates that it is now too late, for they have sinned away the day of grace, and now there remains for them nothing “but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation.” He seeks also to bring the whole question of religion into contempt, by sowing tares among the intercession, we may say, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

We now come to consider, in the Second place, the connection which subsists between the work of Christ, and the revival of religion. The foundation and source of all religion is the one living and true God, manifested in Christ Jesus—“this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” The truth of this proposition holds, whether we look at the object which in religion is embraced; the principles which are exercised; or the influence by which the whole is animated and controlled. In the world, indeed, there are gods many and lords many; for men in their natural state fashion their idols according to their own corrupt humour and selfish interests. But these are “lying vanities—things which cannot profit; they that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them.” To the church however, that is, to all who are the subjects of vital godliness, there is only one glorious object of worship; one medium through which he is known and loved and served; and one Spirit by whom the revelation of God in Christ is made effectual to salvation: “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. By whom we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

The same glorious Being, manifested through the same wonderful medium, is the spring of the principles that go to make up real religion. “He is the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift.” In themselves corrupt and fallen, men have indeed a propension to seek after and depend upon some superior; for absolute independence is as alien from the feelings as it is incongruous to the nature of creatures. But such is their blindness and depravity, that they embrace every phantom which happens to fall in with the schemes and desires of the present moment, and live in utter indifference to the glory,
and opposition to the will of the living God; “there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” But He, who is himself the object of all religion, in the riches of his mercy, delivers men out of this degenerate state; renews them after his own image; and thus prepares them for embracing himself as at once their chief good, the object of their supreme veneration, the beginning and the ending of all things. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ the Saviour.”

The remarks now made serve to open to us some leading views of the connection which subsists between the work of Christ and a revival of religion. But to enter a little into detail, it may be observed, in the First place, that in every revival of religion there must be a manifestation to the soul of the object of religion. Now we have said, that this is the one living and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He must be revealed in his being and perfections. In this we see the primary foundation of all religious worship, “he that cometh to God must believe that He is.” Now, in order that he may be known, it is necessary that he manifest himself: For, in his own nature “he dwelleth in light that is unapproachable,” and therefore, “who by searching can find out God?” But it is in the person and work of Christ, and there only, that he reveals himself to sinners of mankind. The heavens indeed declare his glory, the firmament showeth his handywork, and on all his works he hath left the traces of his eternal power and Godhead: But that revelation is made to intelligent creatures, simply considered as such: And, by reason of their depravity, is in nowise suited to sinners, except to leave them without excuse, and to shut them up to condemnation. The law of God also makes known his glory, for being an expression of his will, and his will being in harmony with his perfections, it is a transcript of his character. But that revelation is adapted to those who have not transgressed its precepts; and by them alone can it be received and acknowledged. In the human

now he understands the language of the apostle, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. A second fruit of communion with Christ in his work is the sanctification of the soul. The effect of a revival of religion is to discover to men, that as they are guilty and ready to perish, so they are altogether corrupt and unprofitable. The ideas of their own virtue and strength, in which they gloried, are now dissipated; and a painful conviction is produced in their minds, that “every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil and that continually.” To persons in this state it is not enough that you assure them of safety; they require spiritual health and purity. For such are their apprehensions of the Divine character, that they feel they are not fit to serve him in the flesh, in which they know there is no good—“The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” To remedy this sore evil, men may try a variety of expedients; but if they know the grace of God in truth, they will find they are all insufficient. But in the work of Christ, provision is made for the mortification of sin: “For our old man is crucified together with Christ; that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

The work of Christ, however, is efficacious, not only for the mortification of sin, but also for the production of true holiness. The soul under its influence is transformed into the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness: “And have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” The whole life is brought into subjection to the will of God. The corruptions of the heart, combined with the temptations of Satan, do oppose many obstacles to the work of grace, and cause the believer to cry out, in the bitterness of his soul, “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” But through faith he can say, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And
sees that when Christ died for sin, he died for it: "I am crucified with Christ." He seeks communion with Christ in his righteousness; for by faith he sees that when Christ obeyed the law, he obeyed it; and when he rose from the dead, he rose: "We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life." This is a great mystery, which carnal wisdom derides and despises; and which, in a low state of religion, is obscured or perverted. But when the Spirit is poured out from on high, when interest in Christ is sought and obtained, and when faith, upheld and guided by Him who is its author, looks into the constitution of the new covenant, it sees its reality and glory causing the believer to exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

1. The fruit of this communion with Christ in his finished work, is the full and irrevocable pardon of all sin and a valid title to eternal life. In a dead state of the church, men are content with vague hopes of forgiveness; and affect to wonder at the presumption of those who speak of their being reconciled to God by the death of his Son. But when religion is revived, and the work of Christ applied; then the soul is so burdened with a sense of guilt, so oppressed with the fears of wrath, and so distressed with a conviction of alienation from God, that nothing will do but immediate and full restoration to the favour of God, and good hope of eternal life. Nor until this is obtained is there any progress made in real religion. For so long as the conscience is harassed with the accusation of guilt, there will be a disposition to flee from God, not to come near unto him,—like the brethren of Joseph, who trembled at the recognition of him because they were reminded of their offence against him. But when the work of Christ is revealed as wrought for poor sinners, and is seen to yield entire satisfaction to the justice and law of God; and when the sinner obtains by faith an interest in it; then the righteousness of Christ is seen to be a believer's righteousness: and coming near to God, in the garment of his elder Brother, he is accepted and blessed. And family, however, there is no mere man of this description—"there is none righteous, no, not one." And hence, like their first parents, men, instead of being attracted to the Creator, flee from his presence and hide themselves among the vanities of the world. But in the work of Christ, the glorious God makes himself known. To set forth this precious truth in significant types was one design of the tabernacle and temple of old; for there the Lord said he would put his name. "In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel." To come therefore to any right knowledge of his being and character, as the only object of religious homage; it is indispensible that men turn to the work of Christ; for "no man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." And how doth he declare him? in his prophetic office by his doctrine—"this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all;"

In his kingly office by his royal majesty and grace and power—"he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;"

In his priestly office, the foundation of the other two, and the centre of his whole work—"I have glorified thee in the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

2. The true God must be revealed in his grace and love to sinners. This now enters as an essential element into the foundation of true religion. "He that cometh to God, must believe—not only that he is, but that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And this is necessary, because it is as the God of salvation that sinners are required to worship him. And it is in that view only they ever will be brought to worship him. But it is in the work of Christ, and in it only, that God has been pleased to reveal himself in this character. And hence he promised to meet with his people Israel, and graciously to talk with them from off the mercy-seat; a most expressive symbol of Christ crucified. It was while Moses stood in the cleft of the rock that Jehovah passed by and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and slow to wrath, abundant in
mercy and goodness and truth." We may talk about the mercy of God as an essential attribute of his nature, and flatter ourselves that he will not deal very hardly with us for our sins. But as God hath nowhere manifested his glory, as the God of saving sovereign mercy, but in the cross of Christ; so in vain do we expect ever to see him in any other quarter. "Herein is the love of God manifested, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

3. The true God must be revealed in his counsels and will towards sinners of mankind. It belongs to him not only to reveal the object of worship, but also to prescribe the kind of worship which he will receive, and the manner in which it is to be rendered. To deny this is to plunge at once into all the darkness and absurdity of will-worship; and to subject ourselves to the inevitable doom of those who offer strange fire upon his altar. But nowhere except in the work of Christ hath God made known his will in this matter. To Adam, indeed, in his state of innocence, the law was a sufficient guide, because it was suited to an unfallen creature. But the law has become weak through the flesh, or corrupt nature of man; so that, let it demand what it will, nothing that is acceptable to God is rendered. The work of Christ, however, opens to our view the rich provision of the second covenant, as exactly and fully adapted to the condition of sinners. And thence we learn what is the kind of worship which God will accept, and how it is to be offered. The sum of what might be advanced on this head is contained in the following words: "We are of the true circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Now, brethren, how very important in this first view is the connection which obtains between the work of Christ and a revival of religion. The first impulse towards such an interesting event must come from God; on the first movement that is made may we trace the steps of his glorious majesty; "for who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed to him again; for of him are all things?" The silence of death prevailed in Paradise after the fall of our first parents; and that such multitudes claiming this kind of interest as in the church of Rome? and yet that church is so degenerate as to be no better than a synagogue of Satan. The church prospers—religion is revived when, as on the day of Pentecost, multitudes are pricked in their hearts, and cry out, Men and brethren, what shall we do? and when, through the operation of the Spirit bringing them to Christ, they obtain actual interest in him and in all the blessings of his grace: "He that believeth shall be saved."

But without the work of Christ no interest can be obtained in him. He intercedes on behalf of sinners for this end. He pleads his blood and righteousness as the ground on which it shall be extended to them; and by an exhibition and application of his work to their souls do they actually come into the possession of it: "For our gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance."

4. To fit men for apprehending the revelation of Divine glory in Christ, they must have communion with Christ: By which we mean, the acting, out of one's interest in Christ, unto the enjoyment of all the blessings of his purchased redemption. The life which the soul receives in the day of its espousals is a spiritual and active life; and it manifests its nature in all the graces which belong to the Christian character. Now the work of Christ is the grand point of attraction to these graces; and in it they find at once the food which nourishes and the objects which exercise them. The chief of these graces, and that on which all the others depend, is faith. And it is so just because it has more immediately to do with Christ as he is proposed and commended in the light of Divine testimony: "By grace are ye saved, through faith"—"By faith we stand"—"We walk by faith"—"The just shall live by faith"—"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Now when religion is revived, this principle is invigorated in the true people of God, and implanted in many who before were entire strangers to it. When this is the case, a believer seeks communion with Christ in his work: he seeks it in his atonement. For, viewing his union to Christ, and interest in him by faith, he
be made of the church continually, not a believer will be revived, not a sinner will be converted, until the Intercessor on high express his will that so it shall be. And how is it that Christ possesses this mighty, this marvelous influence? it is because he fulfilled all righteousness and poured out his soul unto death: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed”—“He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.”

3. To fit men for the revelation of the glory of God in Christ, it is indispensable that they have an interest in Christ. In one sense it may be said that all to whom the gospel is preached have interest in him, inasmuch as he is freely offered to them, and they are invited to accept of Him. The enemy indeed labours to persuade sinners when first awakened that their guilt is too great, their hearts too wicked, and their lives too abominable, for Christ to receive them. But this is false: For, since the gospel is preached to sinners, and to sinners considered as such,—that is, having nothing in them but sin, all are as free to embrace it as they are to receive a letter that is addressed to them. A saving interest in Christ, however, no man hath until, by faith, of Divine operation, he is united unto Him in the manner already described: “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new.”

Now it is when believers realise their interest in Christ in a clear and decisive way that religion flourishes in their souls. It was well with the Church when she could say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am his.” For then they see that Christ and they are one; that their guilt and corruption and misery may be rolled over on Christ that he may take it away; and that Christ’s life, righteousness, grace, and salvation, may be appropriated as theirs. It is also when numbers are daily obtaining interest in Christ by faith that religion is extended. We may imagine that a revival has taken place when churches are multiplied, ministers are increased, and people are flocking to ask admission to spiritual privileges. But all that may be, and religion be on the decline or extinguished altogether. Where will you find silence had continued until now it had not been broken by the gracious voice of Him who announced, that “the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the Serpent.” The bondage and oppression of Israel in Egypt had never been terminated, far less succeeded by the refreshing season of the Exodus, if the God of Abraham had not remembered his covenant, and graciously visited his people. The heart-stirring and solemn scene of Pentecost had never been witnessed at Jerusalem but not the Lord taken to him his great power, bowed his heavens and come down, stirred up the apostles and their brethren to pray; and, in answer to prayer, poured forth that Spirit, by whom multitudes were awakened from spiritual death. In vain do we expect a revival of religion in our day and in our land, unless the Lord shall be pleased to appear in his glory, and make himself known to his own people for their refreshment, and to sinners for their conversion. The beginning of a revival is never seen till the voice from the temple goes forth, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”

I observe, in the Second place, that in any revival of religion there must be subjects capable of apprehending and acknowledging the object thus revealed. We remarked in the outset of the lecture, that religion consists in the communion which a creature holds with the Creator. Now to this communion it is necessary that God be manifested: and this, we have endeavoured to demonstrate, is done in the work of Christ. But not less necessary is it that the object so manifested be known and loved, otherwise there can be no communion. To unfold this part of our subject, we remark,

1. The primary foundation of all personal religion is laid in the federal union of the soul with Christ. We have already stated, that the original source of the principles which constitute true religion is the Three-one Jehovah, “of whom and through whom and to whom are all things, to whom be glory.” Now, in communicating of his fulness to mankind, it hath pleased him to deal with them in the way of covenant; and on the principle that one should represent the many. He accordingly entered into covenant with Adam, and thus
laid the foundation of natural religion. But that covenant being violated, this foundation is removed; and now to trust to natural religion is to build upon a volcano, which will one day burst with awful fury, and involve all within its range in eternal ruin. In his sovereign wisdom and love, however, God was pleased to frame a new and better covenant; and constituted his own Son, who in the fulness of time became man, the representative of a people chosen in him to salvation: and thus did he lay the foundation of the Christian religion, the only system which now deserves the sacred name of religion. The Lord Christ, in his love for sinners, and zeal for the glory of Godhead, cheerfully accepted the appointment; and in the counsels of peace, or covenant of grace, sustained the character of representative of his people. The union of the church to this glorious head in covenant is the foundation of all practical religion, and the grand source of its revival, progress, and final consummation. Now can we look into this amazing mystery of Divine love, this inscrutable device of Infinite Wisdom, and not exclaim with the apostle, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

The union of which we speak constitutes the original spring of all revival of religion. For to those only that are embraced in covenant, and partakers of that union, will such a revival extend its healthful influence. The people of the world may live in the same neighborhood, they may belong to the same family, they may worship in the same church, but, like Gideon’s fleece, the members of Christ will be drenched, whilst the rest are left dry. Oh, how solemn is this truth! How does it lay in the dust the pride of man, and stop the mouths of all who glory; for “He will be gracious to whom he will be gracious.” But observe the connection between this union and the work of Christ. The Father chose a people, and gifted them to the Son. The Son accepted them, guilty and polluted and ruined; and engaged to redeem them by his precious blood. In this wonderful transaction lay those deep foundations of religion, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

“Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

2. To fit a man for receiving and acknowledging the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, there must be vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ. The federal union is from eternity,—it is immutable and everlasting. The names of his seed “are written in the Lamb’s book of life;” and none can ever be erased from it, none can be added unto it. But this profound mystery is hid from all flesh, even from its favoured objects, until the day of Christ’s power. In that day he, by his Spirit, apprehends the soul dead in trespasses and sins; and communicates a new nature, implants a principle of spiritual life; and thus disposes and enables the soul to apprehend Him as he is offered in the gospel. The very nature of a covenant, and the principle of representation, require that an actual union shall be formed between the head and the members of the body with which the covenant is made. By natural birth, accordingly, the successive generations of men become actually connected with the first Adam, and in him with the covenant made with him. In like manner, it is by spiritual birth, and by an act of faith consequent upon it, that any of the children of men become actually united unto Christ, and in him become connected with the covenant of grace: “Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Now the work of Christ is the immediate source of this connection. It is not formed but at his instance in his intercession. For whether we regard the intercession of Christ in general, or view it in detail, we must perceive that upon it is suspended all which takes place in the church: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one.” In this we see the first active movement in a revival of religion. Be it that prayer should be made; and that uniformly it has been made by the church for this end,—Whence comes the Spirit by which they are stirred up to this holy exercise and guided in it but from the intercession of the High Priest within the veil? But though prayer