

PSALM 22

The Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, testifies in this psalm, as clearly and fully as any where in all the Old Testament, “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:11); of him, no doubt, David here speaks, and not of himself, or any other man. Much of it is expressly applied to Christ in the New Testament, all of it may be applied to him, and some of it must be understood of him only. The providences of God concerning David were so very extraordinary that we may suppose there were some wise and good men who then could not but look upon him as a figure of him that was to come. But the composition of his psalms especially, in which he found himself wonderfully carried out by the spirit of prophecy far beyond his own thought and intention, was (we may suppose) an abundant satisfaction to himself that he was not only a father of the Messiah, but a figure of him. In this psalm he speaks,

I. Of the humiliation of Christ (v. 1-21), where David, as a type of Christ, complains of the very calamitous condition he was in upon many accounts.

1. He complains, and mixes comforts with his complaints; he complains (v. 1, 2), but comforts himself (v. 3-5), complains again (v. 6-8), but comforts himself again, (v. 9, 10).

2. He complains, and mixes prayers with his complaints; he complains of the power and rage of his enemies (v. 12, 13, 16, 18), of his own bodily weakness and decay (v. 14, 15, 17); but prays that God would not be far from him (v. 11, 19), that he would save and deliver him (v. 19-21).

II. Of the exaltation of Christ, that his undertaking should be for the glory of God (v. 22-25), for the salvation and joy of his people (v. 26-29), and for the perpetuating of his own kingdom (v. 30, 31). In singing this psalm we must keep our thoughts fixed upon Christ, and be so affected with his sufferings as to experience the fellowship of them, and so affected with his grace as to experience the power and influence of it.

PSALM 22:1-10

SORROWFUL COMPLAINTS

To the chief musician upon Ajeleth Shahar. A psalm of David.

Some think they find Christ in the title of this psalm, upon *Ajeleth Shahar* — *The hind of the morning*. Christ is as the swift hind upon the mountains of spices (²¹⁸⁴Song of Solomon 8:14), as the loving hind and the pleasant roe, to all believers (²¹⁵⁹Proverbs 5:19); he giveth goodly words like Naphtali, who is compared to a *hind let loose*, (⁰⁴²¹Genesis 49:21. He is the hind of the morning, marked out by the counsels of God from eternity, to be run down by those dogs that compassed him, v. 16. But others think it denotes only the tune to which the psalm was set. In these verses we have,

I. A sad complaint of God's withdrawals, v. 1, 2.

1. This may be applied to David, or any other child of God, in the want of the tokens of his favour, pressed with the burden of his displeasure, roaring under it, as one overwhelmed with grief and terror, crying earnestly for relief, and, in this case, apprehending himself forsaken of God, unhelped, unheard, yet calling him, again and again, "*My God,*" and continuing to cry day and night to him and earnestly desiring his gracious returns. Note,

(1.) Spiritual desertions are the saints' sorest afflictions; when their evidences are clouded, divine consolations suspended, their communion with God interrupted, and the terrors of God set in array against them, how sad are their spirits, and how sapless all their comforts!

(2.) Even their complaint of these burdens is a good sign of spiritual life and spiritual senses exercised. To cry out, "*My God, why am I sick? Why am I poor?*" would give cause to suspect discontent and worldliness. But, *Why has though forsaken me?* is the language of a heart binding up its happiness in God's favour.

(3.) When we are lamenting God's withdrawals, yet still we must call him our God, and continue to call upon him as ours. When we want the faith of assurance we must live by a faith of adherence. "*However it be, yet God is good, and he is mine; though he slay me, yet I trust in him; though he do*

not answer me immediately, I will continue praying and waiting; though he be silent, I will not be silent.”

2. But it must be applied to Christ: for, in the first words of this complaint, he poured out his soul before God when he was upon the cross (^{<174>}Matthew 27:46); probably he proceeded to the following words, and, some think, repeated the whole psalm, if not aloud (because they cavilled at the first words), yet to himself. Note,

(1.) Christ, in his sufferings, cried earnestly to his Father for his favour and presence with him. He cried *in the day-time*, upon the cross, *and in the night-season*, when he was in agony in the garden. *He offered up strong crying and tears to him that was able to save him*, and with some fear too, ^{<387>}Hebrews 5:7.

(2.) Yet God forsook him, was far from helping him, and did not hear him, and it was this that he complained of more than all his sufferings. God delivered him into the hands of his enemies; it was by his determinate counsel that he was crucified and slain, and he did not give in sensible comforts. But, Christ having made himself sin for us, in conformity thereunto the Father laid him under the present impressions of his wrath and displeasure against sin. *It pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief*, ^{<250>}Isaiah 53:10. But even then he kept fast hold of his relation to his Father as his God, by whom he was now employed, whom he was now serving, and with whom he should shortly be glorified.

II. Encouragement taken, in reference hereunto, v. 3-5. Though God did not hear him, did not help him, yet, 1. He will think well of God: “*But thou art holy*, not unjust, untrue, nor unkind, in any of thy dispensations. Though thou dost not immediately come in to the relief of thy afflicted people, yet though lovest them, art true to thy covenant with them, and dost not countenance the iniquity of their persecutors, ^{<313>}Habakkuk 1:13. And, as thou art infinitely pure and upright thyself, so thou delightest in the services of thy upright people: *Thou inhabitest the praises of Israel*; thou art pleased to manifest thy glory, and grace, and special presence with thy people, in the sanctuary, where they attend thee with their praises. There thou art always ready to receive their homage, and of the tabernacle of meeting thou hast said, *This is my rest for ever*.” This bespeaks God’s wonderful condescension to his faithful worshippers — (that, though he is attended with the praises of angels, yet he is pleased to inhabit the praises

of Israel), and it may comfort us in all our complaints — that, though God seem, for a while, to turn a deaf ear to them, yet he is so well pleased with his people's praises that he will, in due time, give them cause to change their note: *Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him*. Our Lord Jesus, in his sufferings, had an eye to the holiness of God, to preserve and advance the honour of that, and of his grace in inhabiting the praises of Israel notwithstanding the iniquities of their holy things.

2. He will take comfort from the experiences which the saints in former ages had of the benefit of faith and prayer (v. 4, 5): "*Our fathers trusted in thee, cried unto thee, and thou didst deliver them; therefore thou wilt, in due time, deliver me, for never any that hoped in thee were made ashamed of their hope, never any that sought thee sought thee in vain. And thou art still the same in thyself and the same to thy people that ever thou wast. They were our fathers, and thy people are beloved for the fathers' sake,*" ^{<5128}Romans 11:28. The entail of the covenant is designed for the support of the seed of the faithful. He that was our fathers' God must be ours, and will therefore be ours. Our Lord Jesus, in his sufferings, supported himself with this — that all the fathers who were types of him in his sufferings, Noah, Joseph, David, Jonah, and others, were in due time delivered and were types of his exaltation too; therefore he knew that *he also should not be confounded,* ^{<2807}Isaiah 50:7.

III. The complaint renewed of another grievance, and that is the contempt and reproach of men. This complaint is by no means so bitter as that before of God's withdrawings; but, as that touches a gracious soul, so this a generous soul, in a very tender part, v. 6-8. Our fathers were honoured, the patriarchs in their day, first or last, appeared great in the eye of the world, Abraham, Moses, David; but Christ is *a worm, and no man*. It was great condescension that he became man, a step downwards, which is, and will be, the wonder of angels; yet, as if it were too much, too great, to be a man, he becomes a worm, and no man. He was *Adam — a mean man, and Enosh — a man of sorrows, but lo Ish — not a considerable man:* for he took upon him the form of a servant, and *his visage was marred more than any man's,* ^{<2524}Isaiah 52:14. Man, at the best, is a worm; but he became *a worm, and no man*. If he had not made himself a worm, he could not have been trampled upon as he was. The word signifies such a worm as was used in dyeing scarlet or purple, whence some make it an allusion to his bloody sufferings. See what abuses were put upon him.

1. He was reproached as a bad man, as a blasphemer, a sabbath-breaker, a wine-bibber, a false prophet, an enemy to Caesar, a confederate with the prince of the devils.

2. He was despised of the people as a mean contemptible man, not worth taking notice of, his country in no repute, his relations poor mechanics, his followers none of the rulers, or the Pharisees, but the mob.

3. He was ridiculed as a foolish man, and one that not only deceived others, but himself too. Those that saw him hanging on the cross laughed him to scorn. So far were they from pitying him, or concerning themselves for him, that they added to his afflictions, with all the gestures and expressions of insolence upbraiding him with his fall. They make mouths at him, make merry over him, and make a jest of his sufferings: *They shoot out the lip, they shake their head*, saying, This was he that said *he trusted God would deliver him; now let him deliver him*. David was sometimes taunted for his confidence in God; but in the sufferings of Christ this was literally and exactly fulfilled. Those very gestures were used by those that reviled him (⁴¹⁷³Matthew 27:39); they wagged their heads, nay, and so far did their malice make them forget themselves that they used the very words (v. 43), *He trusted in God; let him deliver him*. Our Lord Jesus, having undertaken to satisfy for the dishonour we had done to God by our sins, did it by submitting to the lowest possible instance of ignominy and disgrace.

IV. Encouragement taken as to this also (v. 9, 10): Men despise me, *but thou art he that took me out of the womb*. David and other good men have often, for direction to us, encouraged themselves with this, that God was not only the *God of their fathers*, as before (v. 4), but the God of their infancy, who began by times to take care of them, as soon as they had a being, and therefore, they hope, will never cast them off. He that did so well for us in that helpless useless state will not leave us when he has reared us and nursed us up into some capacity of serving him. See the early instances of God's providential care for us,

1. In the birth: *He took us also out of the womb*, else we had died there, or been stifled in the birth. Every man's particular time begins with this pregnant proof of God's providence, as time, in general, began with the creation, that pregnant proof of his being.

2. At the breast: “*Then didst thou make me hope;*” that is, “thou didst that for me, in providing sustenance for me and protecting me from the dangers to which I was exposed, which encourages me to hope in thee all my days.” The blessings of the breasts, as they crown the blessings of the womb, so they are earnest of the blessings of our whole lives; surely he that fed us then will never starve us, ^{<812>}Job 3:12.

3. In our early dedication to him: *I was cast upon thee from the womb*, which perhaps refers to his circumcision on the eighth day; he was then by his parents committed and given up to God as his God in covenant; for circumcision was a seal of the covenant; and this encouraged him to trust in God. Those have reason to think themselves safe who were so soon, so solemnly, *gathered under the wings of the divine majesty*.

4. In the experience we have had of God's goodness to us all along ever since, drawn out in a constant uninterrupted series of preservations and supplies: *Thou art my God*, providing me and watching over me for good, *from my mother's belly*, that is, from my coming into the world unto this day. And if, as soon as we became capable of exercising reason, we put our confidence in God and committed ourselves and our way to him, we need not doubt but he will always remember the *kindness of our youth and the love of our espousals*, ^{<812>}Jeremiah 2:2. This is applicable to our Lord Jesus, over whose incarnation and birth the divine Providence watched with a peculiar care, when he was born in a stable, laid in a manger, and immediately exposed to the malice of Herod, and forced to flee into Egypt. *When he was a child God loved him and called him thence* (^{<811>}Hosea 11:1), and the remembrance of this comforted him in his sufferings. Men reproached him, and discouraged his confidence in God; but God had honoured him and encouraged his confidence in him.

^{<121>}PSALM 22:11-21

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE MESSIAH

In these verses we have Christ suffering and Christ praying, by which we are directed to look for crosses and to look up to God under them.

I. Here is Christ suffering. David indeed was often in trouble, and beset with enemies; but many of the particulars here specified are such as were

never true of David, and therefore must be appropriated to Christ in the depth of his humiliation.

1. He is here deserted by his friends: *Trouble* and distress are *near*, and *there is none to help*, none to uphold, v. 11. He trod the wine-press alone; for all his disciples forsook him and fled. It is God's honour to help when all other helps and succours fail.

2. He is here insulted and surrounded by his enemies, such as were of a higher rank, who for their strength and fury, are compared to bulls, *strong bulls of Bashan* (v. 12), fat and fed to the full, haughty and sour; such were the chief priests and elders that persecuted Christ; and others of a lower rank, who are compared to dogs (v. 16), filthy and greedy, and unwearied in running him down. There was an assembly of the wicked plotting against him (v. 16); for the chief priests sat in council, to consult of ways and means to take Christ. These enemies were numerous and unanimous: "Many, and those of different and clashing interests among themselves, as Herod and Pilate, have agreed to compass me. They have carried their plot far, and seem to have gained their point, for they have *beset me round*, v. 12. They have enclosed me, v. 16. They are formidable and threatening (v. 13): *They gaped upon me with their mouths*, to show me that they would swallow me up; and this with as much strength and fierceness as a roaring ravening lion leaps upon his prey."

3. He is here crucified. The very manner of his death is described, though never in use among the Jews: *They pierced my hands and my feet* (v. 16), which were nailed to the accursed tree, and the whole body left so to hang, the effect of which must needs be the most exquisite pain and torture. There is no one passage in all the Old Testament which the Jews have so industriously corrupted as this, because it is such an eminent prediction of the death of Christ and was so exactly fulfilled.

4. He is here dying (v. 14, 15), dying in pain and anguish, because he was to satisfy for sin, which brought in pain, and for which we must otherwise have lain in everlasting anguish. Here is,

(1.) The dissolution of the whole frame of his body: *I am poured out like water*, weak as water, and yielding to the power of death, emptying himself of all the supports of his human nature.

(2.) The dislocation of his bones. Care was taken that not one of them should be broken (⁴⁸⁸⁶John 19:36), but they were all out of joint by the violent stretching of his body upon the cross as upon a rack. Or it may denote the fear that seized him in his agony in the garden, when he began to be sore amazed, the effect of which perhaps was (as sometimes it has been of great fear, ²⁷⁸⁶Daniel 5:6), that the *joints of his loins were loosed and his knees smote one against another*. His bones were put out of joint that he might put the whole creation into joint again, which sin had put out of joint, and might make our broken bones to rejoice.

(3.) The colligation of his spirits: *My heart is like wax*, melted to receive the impressions of God's wrath against the sins he undertook to satisfy for, melting away like the vitals of a dying man; and, as this satisfied for the hardness of our hearts, so the consideration of it should help to soften them. When Job speaks of his inward trouble he says, *The Almighty makes my heart soft*, ⁸²³⁶Job 23:16, and see ⁴⁸⁸²Psalms 58:2.

(4.) The failing of his natural force: *My strength is dried up*; so that he became parched and brittle like a potsherd, the radical moisture being wasted by the fire of divine wrath preying upon his spirits. Who then can stand before God's anger? Or who knows the power of it? *If this was done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

(5.) The clamminess of his mouth, a usual symptom of approaching death: *My tongue cleaveth to my jaws*; this was fulfilled both in his thirst upon the cross (⁴⁸⁸⁵John 19:28) and in his silence under his sufferings; for, *as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*, nor objected against any thing done to him.

(6.) His giving up the ghost: "*Thou hast brought me to the dust of death; I am just ready to drop into the grave;*" for nothing less would satisfy divine justice. The life of the sinner was forfeited, and therefore the life of the sacrifice must be the ransom for it. The sentence of death passed upon Adam was thus expressed: *Unto dust thou shalt return*. And therefore Christ, having an eye to that sentence in his obedience to death, here uses a similar expression: *Thou hast brought me to the dust of death*.

5. He was stripped. The shame of nakedness was the immediate consequence of sin; and therefore our Lord Jesus was stripped of his clothes, when he was crucified, that he might clothe us with the robe of his

righteousness, and that the shame of our nakedness might not appear. Now here we are told,

(1.) How his body looked when it was thus stripped: *I may tell all my bones*, v. 17. His blessed body was lean and emaciated with labour, grief, and fasting, during the whole course of his ministry, which made him look as if he was nearly 50 years old when he was yet but 33, as we find, ~~887~~John 8:57. His wrinkles now witnessed for him that he was far from being what was called, *a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber*. Or his bones might be numbered, because his body was distended upon the cross, which made it easy to count his ribs. *They look and stare upon me*, that is, my bones do, being distorted, and having no flesh to cover them, as Job says (Job16:8), *My leanness, rising up in me, beareth witness to my face*. Or “the standers by, the passers by, are amazed to see my bones start out thus; and, instead of pitying me, are pleased even with such a rueful spectacle.”

(2.) What they did with his clothes, which they took from him (v. 18): *They parted my garments among them*, to every soldier a part, and *upon my vesture*, the seamless coat, *do they cast lots*. This very circumstance was exactly fulfilled, ~~887~~John 19:23, 24. And though it was no great instance of Christ's suffering, yet it is a great instance of the fulfilling of the scripture in him. *Thus it was written, and therefore thus it behoved Christ to suffer*. Let this therefore confirm our faith in him as the true Messiah, and inflame our love to him as the best of friends, who loved us and suffered all this for us.

II. Here is Christ praying, and with that supporting himself under the burden of his sufferings. Christ, in his agony, prayed earnestly, prayed that the cup might pass from him. When the prince of this world with his terrors set upon him, *gaped upon him as a roaring lion*, he fell upon the ground and prayed. And of that David's praying here was a type. He calls God his *strength*, v. 19. When we cannot rejoice in God as our song, yet let us stay ourselves upon him as our strength, and take the comfort of spiritual supports when we cannot come at spiritual delights. He prays,

1. That God would be with him, and not set himself at a distance from him: *Be not thou far from me* (v. 11), and again, v. 19. “Whoever stands aloof from my sore, Lord, do not thou.” The nearness of trouble should quicken us to draw near to God and then we may hope that he will draw near to us.

2. That he would help him and make haste to help him, help him to bear up under his troubles, that he might not fail nor be discouraged, that he might neither shrink from his undertaking nor sink under it. And the Father *heard him in that he feared* (^{<887>}Hebrews 5:7) and enabled him to go through with his work.

3. That he would deliver him and save him, v. 20, 21.

(1.) Observe what the jewel is which he is in care for, “The safety of my soul, my darling; let that be redeemed from the power of the grave, ^{<905>}Psalm 49:15. Father, into thy hands I commit that, to be conveyed safely to paradise.” The psalmist here calls his soul his *darling*, his *only one* (so the word is): “*My soul is my only one*. I have but one soul to take care of, and therefore the greater is my shame if I neglect it and the greater will the loss be if I let it perish. Being my only one, it ought to be my darling, for the eternal welfare of which I ought to be deeply concerned. I do not use my soul as my darling, unless I take care to preserve it from every thing that would hurt it and to provide all necessaries for it, and be entirely tender of its welfare.”

(2.) Observe what the danger is from which he prays to be delivered, *from the sword*, the flaming sword of divine wrath, which turns every way. This he dreaded more than any thing, ^{<1024>}Genesis 3:24. God's anger was the wormwood and the gall in the bitter cup that was put into his hands. “O deliver my soul from that. Lord, though I lose my life, let me not lose thy love. Save me from *the power of the dog*, and *from the lion's mouth*.” This seems to be meant of Satan, that old enemy who bruised the heel of the seed of the woman, the prince of this world, with whom he was to engage in close combat and whom he saw coming, ^{<1140>}John 14:30. “Lord, save me from being overpowered by his terrors.” He pleads, “Thou hast formerly *heard me from the horns of the unicorn*,” that is, “saved me from him in answer to my prayer.” This may refer to the victory Christ had obtained over Satan and his temptations (Matthew 4), when the devil left him for a season (^{<1143>}Luke 4:13), but now returned in another manner to attack him with his terrors. “Lord, thou gavest me the victory then, give it me now, that I may spoil principalities and powers, and *cast out the prince of this world*.” Has God delivered us *from the horns of the unicorn*, that we be not tossed? Let that encourage us to hope that we shall be delivered from the lion's mouth, that we be not torn. He that has delivered doth and will deliver. This prayer of Christ, no doubt, was answered, for the Father

heard him always. And, though he did not deliver him from death, yet he suffered him not to see corruption, but, the third day, raised him out of the dust of death, which was a greater instance of God's favour to him than if he had helped him down from the cross; for that would have hindered his undertaking, whereas his resurrection crowned it.

In singing this we should meditate on the sufferings and resurrection of Christ till we experience in our own souls the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

PSALM 22:22-31

THE MESSIAH'S TRIUMPHS

The same that began the psalm complaining, who was no other than Christ in his humiliation, ends it here triumphing, and it can be no other than Christ in his exaltation. And, as the first words of the complaint were used by Christ himself upon the cross, so the first words of the triumph are expressly applied to him (^{<312>}Hebrews 2:12) and are made his own words: *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.* The certain prospect which Christ had of the joy set before him not only gave him a satisfactory answer to his prayers, but turned his complaints into praises; he saw of the travail of his soul, and was well satisfied, witness that triumphant word wherewith he breathed his last: *It is finished.*

Five things are here spoken of, the view of which were the satisfaction and triumph of Christ in his sufferings: —

I. That he should have a church in the world, and that those that were given him from eternity should, in the fulness of time, be gathered in to him. This is implied here; that he should *see his seed*, ^{<330>}Isaiah 53:10. It pleased him to think,

1. That by the declaring of God's name, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel in its plainness and purity, many should be effectually called to him and to God by him. And for this end ministers should be employed to publish this doctrine to the world, and they should be much his

messengers and his voice that their doing it should be accounted his doing it; their word is his, and by them he declares God's name.

2. That those who are thus called in should be brought into a very near and dear relation to him as his brethren; for he is not only not ashamed, but greatly well pleased, to call them so; not the believing Jews only, his countrymen, but those of the Gentiles also who became fellow-heirs and of the same body, ^{<801>}Hebrews 2:11. Christ is our elder brother, who takes care of us, and makes provision for us, and expects that our desire should be towards him and that we should be willing he should rule over us.

3. That these brethren should be incorporated into a congregation, a great congregation; such is the universal church, the whole family that is named from him, unto which all the *children of God that were scattered abroad are collected*, and in which they are united (^{<815>}John 11:52, ^{<810>}Ephesians 1:10), and that they should also be incorporated into smaller societies, members of that great body, many religious assemblies for divine worship, on which the face of Christianity should appear and in which the interests of it should be supported and advanced.

4. That these should be accounted the seed of Jacob and Israel (v. 23), that on them, though Gentiles, the blessing of Abraham might come (^{<814>}Galatians 3:14), and to them might pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenant, and the service of God, as much as ever they did to *Israel according to the flesh*, ^{<811>}Romans 9:4, ^{<810>}Hebrews 8:10. The gospel church is called *the Israel of God*, ^{<816>}Galatians 6:16.

II. That God should be greatly honoured and glorified in him by that church. His Father's glory was that which he had in his eye throughout his whole undertaking (^{<814>}John 17:4), particularly in his sufferings, which he entered upon with this solemn request, *Father, glorify thy name*, ^{<817>}John 12:27, 28. He foresees with pleasure,

1. That God would be glorified by the church that should be gathered to him, and that for this end they should be called and gathered in that they might be unto God *for a name and a praise*. Christ by his ministers will declare God's name to his brethren, as God's mouth to them, and then by them, as the mouth of the congregation to God, will God's name be praised. All that fear the Lord will praise him (v. 23), even every Israelite indeed. See ^{<818>}Psalms 118:2-4; 135:19, 20. The business of Christians, particularly in their solemn religious assemblies, is to praise and glorify

God with a holy awe and reverence of his majesty, and therefore those that are here called upon to praise God are called upon to fear him.

2. That God would be glorified in the Redeemer and in his undertaking. *Therefore* Christ is said to *praise God in the church*, not only because he is the Master of the assemblies in which God is praised, and the Mediator of all the praises that are offered up to God, but because he is the matter of the church's praise. See ~~408~~ Ephesians 3:21. All our praises must centre in the work of redemption and a great deal of reason we have to be thankful,

(1.) That Jesus Christ was owned by his Father in his undertaking, notwithstanding the apprehension he was sometimes under that his Father had forsaken him. (v. 24): *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted* one (that is, of the suffering Redeemer), but has graciously accepted it as a full satisfaction for sin, and a valuable consideration on which to ground the grant of eternal life to all believers. Though it was offered for us poor sinners, he did not despise nor abhor him that offered it for our sakes; no did he turn his face from him that offered it, as Saul was angry with his own son because he interceded for David, whom he looked upon as his enemy. But when he cried unto him, when his blood cried for peace and pardon for us, he heard him. This, as it is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. Those who have thought their prayers slighted and unheard, if they continue to pray and wait, will find they have not sought in vain.

(2.) That he himself will go on with his undertaking and complete it. Christ says, *I will pay my vows*, v. 25. Having engaged to bring many sons to glory, he will perform his engagement to the utmost, and will lose none.

III. That all humble gracious souls should have a full satisfaction and happiness in him, v. 26. It comforted the Lord Jesus in his sufferings that in and through him all true believers should have everlasting consolation.

1. The poor in spirit shall be rich in blessings, spiritual blessings; the hungry shall be filled with good things. Christ's sacrifice being accepted, the saints shall feast upon the sacrifice, as, under the law, upon the peace-offerings, and so partake of the altar: *The meek shall eat and be satisfied*, eat of the bread of life, feed with an appetite upon the doctrine of Christ's mediation, which is meat and drink to the soul that knows its own nature and case. Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness in Christ shall

have all they can desire to satisfy them and make them easy, and shall not labour, as they have done, for that which satisfies not.

2. Those that are much in praying shall be much in thanksgiving: *Those shall praise the Lord that seek him*, because through Christ they are sure of finding him, in the hopes of which they have reason to praise him even while they are seeking him, and the more earnest they are in seeking him the more will their hearts be enlarged in his praises when they have found him.

3. The souls that are devoted to him shall be for ever happy with him: *“Your heart shall live for ever.* Yours that are meek, that are satisfied in Christ, that continue to seek God; what ever becomes of your bodies, *your hearts shall live for ever;* the graces and comforts you have shall be perfected in everlasting life. Christ has said, *Because I live, you shall live also,* (^{<614>}John 14:19); and therefore that life shall be as sure and as long as his.”

IV. That the church of Christ, and with it the kingdom of God among men, should extend itself to all the corners of the earth and should take in all sorts of people.

1. That it should reach far (v. 27, 28), that, whereas the Jews had long been the only professing people of God, now all the ends of the world should come into the church, and, the partition-wall being taken down, the Gentiles should be taken in. It is here prophesied,

(1.) That they should be converted: *They shall remember, and turn to the Lord.* Note, Serious reflection is the first step, and a good step it is towards true conversion. We must consider and turn. The prodigal came first to himself, and then to his father.

(2.) That then they should be admitted into communion with God and with the assemblies that serve him; *They shall worship before thee, for in every place incense shall be offered to God,* (^{<3011>}Malachi 1:11; ^{<2623>}Isaiah 66:23. Those that turn to God will make conscience of worshipping before him. And good reason there is why all the kindreds of nations should do homage to God, for (v. 28) *the kingdom is the Lord's;* his, and his only, is the universal monarchy.

[1.] The kingdom of nature is the Lord Jehovah's, and his providence rules among the nations, and upon that account we are bound to worship him;

so that the design of the Christian religion is to revive natural religion and its principles and laws. Christ died to bring us to God, the God that made us, from whom we had revolted, and to reduce us to our native allegiance.

[2.] The kingdom of grace is the Lord Christ's, and he, as Mediator, is appointed governor among the nations, head over all things to his church. Let every tongue therefore confess that he is Lord.

2. That it should include many of different ranks, v. 29. High and low, rich and poor, bond and free, meet in Christ.

(1.) Christ shall have the homage of many of the great ones. *Those that are fat upon the earth*, that live in pomp and power, *shall eat and worship*; even those that fare deliciously, when they have eaten and are full, shall bless the Lord their God for their plenty and prosperity.

(2.) The poor also shall receive his gospel: *Those that go down to the dust*, that sit in the dust (^{497E}Psalm 113:7), that can scarcely keep life and soul together, *shall bow before him*, before the Lord Jesus, who reckons it his honour to be the poor man's King (^{497D}Psalm 72:12) and whose protection does, in a special manner, draw their allegiance. Or this may be understood in general of dying men, whether poor or rich. See then what is our condition — we are going down to the dust to which we are sentenced and where shortly we must make our bed. Nor can we keep alive our own souls; we cannot secure our own natural life long, nor can we be the authors of our own spiritual and eternal life. It is therefore our great interest, as well as duty, to bow before the Lord Jesus, to give up ourselves to him to be his subjects and worshippers; for this is the only way, and it is a sure way, to secure our happiness when we go down to the dust. Seeing we cannot keep alive our own souls, it is our wisdom, by an obedient faith, to commit our souls to Jesus Christ, who is able to save them and keep them alive for ever.

V. That the church of Christ, and with it the kingdom of God among men, should continue to the end, through all the ages of time. Mankind is kept up in a succession of generations; so that there is always a generation passing away and a generation coming up. Now, as Christ shall have honour from that which is passing away and leaving the world (v. 29, *those that go down to the dust shall bow before him*, and it is good to die bowing before Christ; *blessed are the dead who thus die in the Lord*), so

he shall have honour from that which is rising up, and setting out, in the world, v. 30. Observe,

1. Their application to Christ: *A seed shall serve him*, shall keep up the solemn worship of him and profess and practice obedience to him as their Master and Lord. Note, God will have a church in the world to the end of time; and, in order to that, there shall be a succession of professing Christians and gospel ministers from generation to generation. *A seed shall serve him*; there shall be a remnant, more or less, to whom shall pertain the service of God and to whom God will give grace to serve him, — perhaps not the seed of the same persons, for grace does not run in a blood (he does not say *their* seed, but *a* seed), — perhaps but few, yet enough to preserve the entail.

2. Christ's acknowledgment of them: *They shall be accounted to him for a generation*; he will be the same to them that he was to those who went before them; his kindness to his friends shall not die with them, but shall be drawn out to their heirs and successors, and instead of the fathers shall be the children, whom all shall acknowledge to be a *seed that the Lord hath blessed*, ²⁶¹⁰ Isaiah 61:9; 65:23. The generation of the righteous God will graciously own as his treasure, his children.

3. Their agency for him (v. 31): *they shall come*, shall rise up in their day, not only to keep up the virtue of the generation that is past, and to do the work of their own generation, but to serve the honour of Christ and the welfare of souls in the generations to come; they shall transmit to them the gospel of Christ (that sacred deposit) pure and entire, even to a people that shall be born hereafter; to them they shall declare two things: —

(1.) That there is an everlasting righteousness, which Jesus Christ has brought in. This righteousness of his, and not any of our own, they shall declare to be the foundation of all our hopes and the fountain of all our joys. See Romans 1. 16, 17.

(2.) That the work of our redemption by Christ is the Lord's own doing (⁴⁸²³ Psalm 118:23) and no contrivance of ours. We must declare to our children that God has done this; it is his wisdom in a mystery; it is his arm revealed.

In singing this we must triumph in the name of Christ as above every name, must give him honour ourselves, rejoice in the honours others do

him, and in the assurance we have that there shall be a people praising him on earth when we are praising him in heaven.