

## SERMON VI.

## THE CONFESSION OF THOMAS.

JOHN, xx. 28.

“ MY LORD, AND MY GOD.”

THE Sun of righteousness rose, like the natural sun, early but slowly, gradually scattering the darkness and the clouds. First the grave of Christ was seen to be open ; then it was seen to be empty ; and then the grave-clothes were found lying, carefully wrapt up, denoting that the illustrious prisoner had neither been taken away by violence, nor gone out hastily or by flight. First, an angel announced his resurrection, and then he showed himself alive. First he appeared to one of his disciples, next to two of them, and lastly to them all. In this chapter, we have an account of the first appearance which he made to his disciples collectively. They had already received a message from him by Mary Magdalene ; one of their number had also seen him ; but still they doubted. Now, he not only appeared in the midst of them, and spoke to them, but he showed them his hands and his side, the former bearing the mark of the nails by which he had been fixed to the cross, and the latter the scar of the spear by which he was pierced. And now all the doubts of those present were dissipated. “ Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”

But one of their number, Thomas, called in the Greek Didymus, was absent during this interview. On his arrival, his brethren informed him that they had seen the Lord. One would have thought that the concurring testimony of so many would have commanded his belief. But he remained incredulous ; and expressed his unbelief in very strong terms,—“ Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and

put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Next Lord's day, the disciples being assembled, and Thomas with them, Jesus appeared in the midst of them, and having saluted them, desired the faithless apostle to take the satisfaction which he had required. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." This was irresistible; and Thomas cried out in a transport, "My Lord, and my God!"

The great secret, my brethren, of profiting by ordinances, is to wait on them in the faith of Christ's spiritual presence in them, according to his promise, "Lo, I am with you alway:" and our assembling together at this time will be for the better and not for the worse, if the words read shall be blessed for correcting our unbelief and strengthening our faith. Let us then, in dependence on the Spirit who testifies of Christ,

I. Make a few observations from the text in its connexion.

II. Open up the import of the exclamation.

I. 1. The text in its connexion leads me to observe, that our Lord Jesus put peculiar honour on the first day of the week. On that day he rose from the dead; and by that very act it was distinguished from all the other days. As God rested from all his works in creation on the seventh, so did Christ rest from his works in redemption, and declare them complete, by rising from the grave on the first day. On this day he appeared to the women, to Peter, to the two disciples travelling to Emaus, and to the ten apostles. The evangelist is very particular in naming the day; for though it had been mentioned before, he does not satisfy himself with saying, "Now the same day in the evening," but adds, "being the first day of the week." On the ensuing first day he renewed his visit. And it was on the same day of the week, that the Spirit descended on the apostles. These acts were sufficient to dedicate that portion of time to a sacred use; for divine authority having already set apart one day in seven, there was

no necessity for such an express appointment in transferring the Sabbath from one day of the week to another. The analogy between the works of creation and redemption, as recognised in Scripture,—the reason of the thing,—the example of Christ and his apostles,—and the name given to that day by the Spirit of God, constitute an ample warrant for our faith in keeping it holy to the Lord, as the Christian Sabbath, and for our expecting his spiritual presence on it. There is no superstition in looking for a special blessing on the first day of the week. There is a hallowing influence in the thought, “This is the LORD’S DAY;”—“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save *now*, I beseech thee, O Lord! I beseech thee, send *now* prosperity.” The highest attainment on this side heaven, is to be “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”

2. It is good to be found in the meetings of the disciples of Christ, especially on his own day. It was when the disciples were assembled, that Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said “Peace be unto you,” and, breathing on them, said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” In like manner, on the day of Pentecost, “they were all with one accord in one place,” and were all filled with the Holy Spirit. In consequence of Thomas being absent when his brethren convened on the first Lord’s day, he missed a meeting with Christ, and remained in a state of painful suspense, or rather positive unbelief, so far as the great fact of the resurrection was concerned. And it was not until he was found with his brethren on the following Sabbath, that he obtained relief and a cure. The fearers of the Lord have always felt a desire after, and a delight in, public ordinances. The Lord loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob; and accordingly “thither the tribes went up to Israel’s testimony, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.” And a special promise is attached to Christian assemblies, however small: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Every true worshipper has the promise of Christ’s presence; but “two are better than one, and a threefold cord is not easily broken.” If a number of per-

sons should be invited to an entertainment by a great man, though he should not make his appearance at the time of their assembling, yet, on comparing their cards of invitation, they would be confirmed in their expectation of seeing him. We do not know what a loss we sustain by carelessly or unnecessarily absenting ourselves from public ordinances, even for a single diet. Perhaps Thomas was with his brethren in the forenoon, but he was absent in the afternoon of the day, when the Lord came among them.

3. Remark, again, that however genuine the experience of others may be, and whatever advantages may be derived from their report of what they have seen and felt, yet these will not supply the room of personal observation and experience. The disciples no doubt acquainted their absent brother with all that they had seen and heard—what Jesus said to them, and what he showed them—but it produced no effect. One glance of an object, or a slight tasting of it, will give us more satisfactory acquaintance with it than the most minute and lengthened description. “O taste and see that God is good.” The greatest prejudices have sometimes fled at the hearing of a single sermon—a single sentence. “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” said Nathanael. “Philip saith unto him, come and see.” Jesus had only to say, “When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.”—“Rabbi! thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” “Come,” said the woman of Samaria, “see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”—“Now,” said her countrymen, “we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” Reported sermons, and notes of sermons, are generally insipid; like dry crusts, they would require a keen appetite. We may recollect the words, but perhaps the feeling with which we heard them is gone, or greatly abated. “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” It is easy to repeat words; not so easy to impart feelings.

4. Let us observe that unbelief is very unreasonable and

extravagant in its demands. How strikingly do we see this exemplified in the conduct of this disciple! He had a sufficiency of evidence already in the testimony of his brethren, whom he knew to be honest men, well acquainted with their Master, and not more prepossessed with the hope of seeing him alive again than he himself was. And then he was not called to rest his faith on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God; for the resurrection of Christ on the third day had been testified beforehand by the Prophets and by Jesus himself. If not contented with this testimony, one would have thought that all he required would have been to see his Master with his own eyes and talk with him. But no, this would not satisfy him. Well, suppose thou shouldst see the print of the nails on his hands, will that do? No; "I must put my finger into them." Is that all? No; "I must thrust my hand into his side, else I will not believe." Never, sure, was there any thing so near to total and wilful unbelief as this! And had it pleased Infinite Wisdom, that these memorials of humiliation should have been laid aside, had the Saviour not chosen to bear the marks of the nails and the spear on his resurrection body, where, Thomas, would have been thy faith, and where thy salvation? Here, as in a mirror, you may see the unreasonableness of infidelity in every age. Its demands increase as they are answered; its objections resemble the heads of the fabled monster, which were no sooner cut off than others, as hideous as the former, rose in their place. What a salvation did God work at the Red Sea! But they no sooner wanted water, than they murmured. Behold, He clave the rock, and the waters gushed out; "but can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?"—"If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be?"—"What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe thee?"—"If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." O! how like is the language of the friends of Christ sometimes to that of his enemies! How stumbling to weak disciples! how hardening to the ungodly!

5. Observe that the Saviour is very condescending, as well

as forgiving, in curing unbelief. It was prophesied of him, "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench;" and often did he verify this part of his character in his treatment of the weak and dejected. But here is a case which does not seem to come under that rule. Here is a proud, conceited, obstinate disciple, who thinks himself strong, and despises his brethren as silly and credulous men. But the strength of men is weakness in the sight of God, and our Lord pitied him in his fancied elevation. He knew how to mortify his pride by curing his unbelief. He had much to forgive all his disciples. They had forsaken him in the hour of his trial; they had forgotten the words that he had spoken unto them while he was yet with them. And how does he resent this? He puts them to shame by kindness and condescension—by doubling his favours to them. While they continued with him in his temptations, he only called them "friends;" but now "he is not ashamed to call them brethren." "Go to my brethren, and say, I ascend unto my Father and your Father." But the grace of our Lord was conspicuous in the case of Thomas. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors; but Christ accommodates himself to the foolish fancy and wayward humour of this disciple; suffers himself to be prescribed to; grants the demand made on him in all its extent; bares his wounds, and exposes them to be raked and roughly handled, to heal an inveterate and morbid incredulity. "This is not the manner of man, O, Lord!" And so it was felt by the humbled and convicted disciple, when he exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God."

6. Observe finally, that there is sometimes a very sudden change effected in the minds and exercise of erring and undutiful Christians. Sometimes it is gradual. While they are musing or listening to the word of God, the fire begins to burn, and gradually increases until it bursts into a flame which cannot be contained, as in the case of the disciples on the road to Emaus. At other times it breaks forth all at once, as in the case of Thomas. In a moment all his doubts had fled, and the triumph of faith was proclaimed in the exclamation which he uttered, "My Lord, and my God."

II. Let us open up the import of the exclamation. And in doing so, it is not enough to consider the import of the words ; we ought to enter into the feelings of the speaker, and thus to make them our own, and, as it were, light our torch at his flame. It was not any single sentiment or feeling, such as faith, or love, or joy, which actuated the apostle at this moment ; but a mixed emotion, in which various feelings were blended together, and heightened each other. Let us analyze the complex emotion.

1. The exclamation is expressive of the fullest and most satisfying persuasion. Thomas is no longer faithless but believing. He is now fully persuaded of what he formerly doubted and disbelieved. Conviction has flashed on his mind. The evidence is irresistible and overwhelming. Not the shadow of a doubt remains. ‘ It is the Lord himself, and not another. This is no spectre or phantom—there is no imposition or illusion here.’ All his brethren could not formerly persuade Thomas that his Master was risen ; but the whole world could not now have persuaded him that he was in his grave.

And thus it is when the Spirit of Christ opens the understandings of men to understand the Scriptures, which then bring their own evidence along with them, and produce a clear, lively, and unhesitating conviction of their truth, and of the certainty of the things contained in them. Those who formerly disbelieved or stood in doubt, cry out, “ Now we believe—we believe and are sure.” They cavil no more, they contradict no more, they enquire no more. They acquiesce in and set their seal to what God reveals, are so satisfied of its truth that they can venture their all, for time and eternity, upon it ; and although their knowledge may be but slender and imperfect compared with that of others, yet their faith is strong and adhesive, like that of the female martyr, who said, ‘ I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can die for him.’ And this persuasion is most satisfying to the soul. A state of unbelief is to all, but especially to the Christian who has once tasted the peace of believing, a state of bondage and oppression. To be in suspense is to be in pain ; to be in suspense as to any thing on which our happiness depends, is to be in agony. When once

persuaded, the believer feels as if a millstone had been lifted off his heart. He breathes freely, he speaks boldly. "I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted." "We that have believed, do enter into rest."

2. It is expressive of ingenuous shame and deep contrition. Thomas was convinced that he had been "faithless," and this was now no trivial or excusable thing in his eye. The same word, and the same symbols, which conveyed the evidence of the resurrection and presence of his Master to his understanding, carried a sharp rebuke to his heart. 'Fool that I was, and slow of heart to believe! How many proofs had I of his power—of his divinity! Did he not rebuke my unbelief at the grave of Lazarus? Having seen him raise others, why should it have appeared a thing incredible that he should rise himself? Did I not hear him say, "The Son of man must be killed, and rise on the third day? I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." I have erred, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.' This was exercise pleasing to Christ, and which he took care to excite and to cherish, by upbraiding him because of his unbelief, in the mortifying, but salutary language, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

There is the closest connexion between the exercises of Christian belief and godly sorrow. No sooner is the eye of faith opened and fixed upon a pierced Redeemer, than it is to be seen glistening with the tear of repentance. The Spirit reproves the world of sin, because they believe not on Christ. Though there were nothing which a believer had to acknowledge but his unbelief, it would be sufficient to cover him with the blush of confusion. If you never felt shame and compunction for your former unbelief, you have reason to fear you have not yet believed. The well-affected believer feels at resisting the lowest evidence of the truth;—not only at making God a liar, but at giving the lie to his fellow-creatures. "I said in my haste, all MEN are liars." Instead of pleading ignorance as an excuse, looking upon error as innocent, or pronouncing unbelief involuntary, he is ready to acknowledge that his igno-



rance, and error, and unbelief, proceeded from the depravity of his heart, creating prejudices against the truth, or making him careless and indifferent about it ;—from his pride, presumption, earthliness, selfishness, sluggishness,—from his forgetfulness of, and aversion to divine things, and enmity to the character of God, as exhibited both in the law and in the gospel. A recovered believer is at once confounded and humbled in looking back on his criminal and inexcusable behaviour—and even on his doubts, his perplexities, his ignorant mistakes, and hasty misconstructions of the word and works of God. “ So foolish was I and ignorant ; I was as a beast before thee.” “ Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.”

3. It is expressive of clear and enlarged views of the character of Christ. It is erroneous to say, as some have said, that the disciples of Christ, during his personal ministry, did not believe his divinity. There is abundant proof to the contrary. “ The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “ He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.” He taught them that he and his Father are one ; and that he who had seen him had seen the Father ; and to the disciple speaking in our text, he said, “ If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and henceforth ye know him and have seen him.” “ Thou,” said Peter in the name of the rest, “ art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Their knowledge of this, however, as well as other truths, was then less clear, and was sometimes overclouded. The veil of his humiliation and sufferings hid the splendour of his deity, and rendered it difficult for them to apprehend it distinctly and steadily. But he was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. He rose as the sun emerges from a dark cloud, or rather a fearful eclipse, and in his own light they saw him clearly to be—“ the Word which was from the beginning, which was with God, and which was God.” Accordingly, Thomas not only recognised him as

his Lord or Master, but as his Divine Master—" My Lord, and my GOD."

Faith is knowledge, and all true and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is gained by believing the testimony of God. But faith may be increased, both intensively and extensively. There is not only a deep or firm conviction of what was hesitatingly believed, but there is also a more enlarged view of the objects believed. This last is commonly called Christian knowledge, and we are exhorted to add it to faith. " I know whom I have believed." Besides " the full assurance of faith," there is what the apostle calls " the full assurance of understanding." When a Christian has his faith restored and reinvigorated, it is commonly accompanied with an enlargement of his knowledge. The very proofs which are necessary to restore our confidence in a friend, after we had suffered it to be shaken, furnish us with new and additional information of his character. We know him better than ever. When Christ stretched out his hands, and bared his side to the view of his disciples, he shed a flood of light as to his real character upon the opened mind of Thomas. ' What is this ? This is none other but the grace, the condescension, and kindness of God !' — " my God !"

4. It is expressive of warm affection. The appellations are endearing and tender. Not like, " Lord, is it I ?" or that of Thomas on a former occasion, " Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ?" That was like a cold, though respectful address to a stranger or wayfaring man. Some have supposed from the language of Thomas about the death of Lazarus, and during our Lord's valedictory discourse, that he was " a man of rough, morose temper, and apt to speak peevishly." I should rather be inclined to think that he was naturally of a warm, affectionate disposition, and open withal, though somewhat suspicious and fearful. There was love to Christ in the heart of this disciple, during his most gloomy and sullen mood of incredulity ; and though it may appear paradoxical, it is true that, if he had loved Jesus less, he would not have been so incredulous as to his resurrection, or at least would not have expressed his feeling so strongly.

The common proverb indeed says, "what we wish, we easily believe." But a wish is one thing, and a desire is another. The objects of vulgar credulity are generally matters which engage the fancy rather than the heart. When, however, we have lost any object on which our affections are much set, and in which our happiness is bound up, it is not so easy to believe its restoration. When the patriarch's sons returned and told him, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt," "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." He thought it too good news to be true. Similar to this was Thomas's state of mind. 'Do not mock me, my brethren. Ask me not to believe it; I would not believe my own eyes; for I would be afraid that my heart had misled them.' And this suggests a difference between the infidelity of unrenewed persons, and the fits of incredulity into which genuine Christians fall. The former may be traced to hatred against the truth, or settled indifference to it; the latter are consistent with love to the truth, which may be discerned through the doubts and objections of a saint, as the sun may be discerned through a cloud. As there was a great difference between Peter's denying, and Judas's betraying of his master, so between the behaviour of Thomas in disbelieving the resurrection of Christ, and the conduct of the Jews who contradicted and blasphemed. I say not this to excuse unbelief or even doubting in any. There is always culpable ignorance and weakness in such exercise; and there is sometimes not a little pride and obstinacy. "Be not faithless, but believing."

Though there may be love, genuine love to Christ, where there is partial unbelief and darkness and fear, yet these feelings have always a tendency to weaken its influence. Love exists: but it exists, not by them, but in spite of them. It exists like fire under ashes, and when they are blown away, it manifests itself, kindles, and blazes forth. What is altogether unknown or discredited cannot excite our love, and what is indistinctly perceived, and imperfectly believed, will excite it but feebly.

There is much selfishness in our regret for departed friends,

and our felt loss makes our love to them appear greater to our minds than it really is. But when a lost friend is restored, and we again embrace him, our selfishness as well as our regret is swallowed up in the overflowings of disinterested affection. There was something in the feelings of Thomas at this moment resembling the love of the blessed in heaven, which alone can fully answer the description of the beloved disciple. "There is no fear in love; for perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

"Faith worketh by love." There are, too, in the manifestations by which the Christian is recovered from his incredulity, such proofs, on the part of the Redeemer, of goodness, faithfulness, forbearance, forgiveness, condescension, and tender compassion, as cannot fail to melt the heart and add gratitude to affection. 'My Lord, and my God, how much hast thou done and suffered for me, since we last parted, ingrate and faithless that I am! What are these wounds in thy hands? Ah! those with which thou wast wounded in the house of thy friends—wounded *by me!* This is thy body, broken for me. By thy stripes I am healed.' Thus Thomas loved much, because he was forgiven much.

5. It is expressive of heartfelt joy. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." And what had hindered our disciple from sympathizing with them, and sharing of their pleasurable emotions? Nothing but his unbelief. They had all reason for joy when they saw him again. The report of his resurrection was like a new gospel to them—glad tidings of great joy. The doctrine of his decease was transfigured before them! What they could not formerly bear to think of, was now all their salvation, all their desire, and all their gloriation. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The offence of the cross has ceased, and been changed into attraction. "He was delivered for our offences, and he has been raised again for our justification." The height to which our joy rises upon any reverse, is in proportion to the depth of our previous grief and dejection; and in this respect, that of Thomas must have been

very great, in consequence of the strength of his former doubts, and the duration of his suspense. That which strengthens faith, exhilarates the heart. "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And there is sometimes a tumult of joy which needs to be allayed, and causes a conflict with faith, like opposing tides in a frith. "They believed not for joy: Then he said to them again, Peace be unto you!" Compose yourselves, as if he had said, and listen to the commission and instructions which I have to give you.

6. It is expressive of homage and adoration. This is implied in the name which the disciples gave to him commonly, The Lord; but it is more decidedly expressed in the appellations in our text, "My Lord, and my God." It is said of the women to whom he first appeared, that "they held him by the feet and worshipped him." We are not told that this was the posture in which Thomas made his confession, but we can scarcely doubt that it was. At any rate, no bodily attitude could express adoration so strongly as the exclamation which burst from his lips, as soon as the scales of unbelief fell from his eyes.

It is not by an act of subjection or allegiance to Christ as a King, that a sinner is justified: faith in him as a priest is the justifying act; but if the first gracious act is believing, the second is an act of obeisance and dedication, and both may be expressed by the same words, and these the first words which proceed from the opened lips of a converted sinner, or a recovered saint. "I am the Lord's." "Truly, Lord, I am thy servant."

7. It is expressive of an appropriating claim. I mention this last, because it is interwoven with, and runs through all the feelings we have been describing. What would it have availed our disciple to be persuaded that Jesus had risen, had he not looked on him as his Redeemer? Conceive for a moment, the horror which Judas, if he had been alive, must have felt at the sight of the print of the nails and the scar! It was the relation in which Thomas stood to him that deepened his shame, as it did that of Ezra: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God." This imparted an unction to

all the new discoveries which he had obtained of the glory of Christ—"the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, *my Lord*." This was at once the cause and the token of his love to Christ. He loved him because he was his Lord, and he called him his Lord because he loved him. There is the *my* of love, as well as of faith, and this accented both his joy and his adoration. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

The inferences that might be drawn from this subject are many ; let the following suffice :

1. See a proof of the divinity of Christ. The indirect proofs of this doctrine, incidentally occurring in Scripture, are not of the least convincing and satisfying nature, and of these the one before us is not the least striking. It is but a poor evasion of the enemies of this doctrine, to say that our text is the language of ecstasy, and not to be understood in a strict sense. Christ surely was calm and composed, but instead of correcting and guarding the language, he sanctioned it. "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed"—and thou hast done well, though tardily—"blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Believed what? Just what Thomas had confessed him to be—his God.

2. The subject furnishes a proof of the divine authority of the gospel. The doctrine of Christ's resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith, whether it be considered in relation to the truth of Christianity, or to the reality and perfection of the atonement. "If Christ be not risen," says the apostle, "then we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ ;" yea, Christ himself would have been a deceiver or deceived, for he gave this out as the sign of his being the Messiah, that he should rise on the third day. And, in like manner, if Christ is not risen, "our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins." On both these accounts the Scripture is full and explicit in its statements of the evidence on which this truth rests. Of the external and direct evidences, the apostle gives a summary in 1 Cor. xv. 5-8. But there are certain circumstances, specified in the evangelical records, tending strongly

to corroborate the testimony of the witnesses of the resurrection, one of the chief of which is their backwardness and aversion to believe the fact; showing that they were neither impostors, nor of that disposition of mind which would have exposed them to be the dupes of deception, by listening to idle reports, or mistaking a phantom for the reality. Of this we have, besides other instances in this chapter, a striking illustration in the case of Thomas. And in all this we see the manifold wisdom of God, in bringing good out of evil, and overruling the infirmities and faults of good men, for the illustration of his own glory, and the strengthening of the faith of his people.

3. Let us see the great value and use of faith. It is the mainspring of Christian activity. It sets the whole soul in motion toward Christ and God. Until faith is produced, or revived, all the affections are locked up, or lie dormant. It enlarges the understanding, it melts the heart into godly sorrow, warms it into love, and elevates it into joy and adoration. Without faith it is impossible to please God, to improve Christ, to enjoy ordinances, or discharge aright any duty. To the incredulous disciple, every molehill is a mountain. All things are possible and easy to him that believeth.—Precious faith! Some think that we dwell too much on this grace in our discourses; and when we appeal to the Scriptures as the pattern which we follow, they feel disposed to bring the same charge against the writings of the evangelists and apostles. They do not reflect that faith is the eye of the soul, which takes in all the glories of the spiritual world, and sheds their influence over the mind. Talk to a man born blind of the ravishment which you derive by looking on a beautiful landscape, he can form no idea how a simple movement of those eyeballs, which never imparted to him a single pleasurable emotion, can produce such effects; but let his eyes be opened, all will be light and life without and within. Thomas believes and recognises God his Saviour, and rejoices in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. The subject affords matter of reproof. We are astonished at the incredulity of this disciple; in reading the account

of his behaviour we feel offended; we redden with indignation at his infidel avowal, and are apt to think that there was a waste of condescension on the part of our Lord in acceding to the presumptuous demand with which it was accompanied. But are we better than he? Are we among the blessed ones, who have not seen and yet have believed? Have we not reason to blush for ourselves when we reflect how slow of heart to believe we have been? Are we even yet prepared to join in the believing exclamation of the recovered disciple, now when our Lord is giving us, in the ordinance of the supper, confirmations to our faith similar to that with which Thomas was favoured; and when he is saying to us, "Behold my hands and my side—the emblems of my death, and the evidences of my resurrection—and be not faithless, but believing"—are we ready to say with this disciple, "My Lord, and my God?"

In fine, my brethren, let us see what it is that renders ordinances effectual—the presence of Christ in them, and the manifestation which he makes of himself through them. The disciples could do nothing towards casting the evil spirit of unbelief out of their brother. It was when Christ was present in the assembly, to speak and to present the symbol, that the cure was effected. O be earnest for this! We have his own promise to plead, "Lo I am with you alway!" And if this day our unbelief is cured, our distressing doubts dissipated, our darkness removed, our heart enlarged, and our mouth opened to make the confession of Thomas, it will be a proof that Christ's presence has been with us—it will afford good evidence of our being benefited by his ordinances—and it will furnish matter for the delightful reflection in future, "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord and my God."