
The King Held In The Galleries

by Rev. Ebenezer Erskine

"The king is held in the galleries" Canticles 7:5

Our Blessed Lord Jesus, who is represented under the picture of a Bridegroom in this book, from the fourth verse of the preceding chapter, O breaks out in commendation of his spouse and bride, expressing the love of his heart toward her in many warm and heart-felt expressions; and his discourse is continued to the 10th verse of this chapter; where we find him overflowing in commendation of his church in several particulars. He commends her from her spiritual birth and pedigree, calling her *a prince's daughter*, ver. 1. The saints of God are royally descended; by their second birth they are sprung of "the Ancient of days;" "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Again; he commends her for the beauty of holiness shining in her walk and conversation: "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!" Holiness is the attire of the bride of Christ; "She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints." But time will not allow me to explain the several particulars of her commendation. The words of my text are an abrupt sentence; in which he expresses the wonderful complacency which he took in her society, and the overpowering influence that her faith and his faithfulness, his love, and her loveliness, had to make him stay and abide in her company: *The King is held in the galleries*. In which words we may notice these particulars: —

1. Christ's character and office; he is a person of royal dignity, no less than a king, and *the King* by way of eminency. The church of God acknowledges no other king but Christ; for it is he whom God the Father has *set to rule upon the holy hill of Zion*: and it is a manifest usurpation of Christ's prerogative, for pope, prelate, or potentate, to usurp a sovereignty and headship over the church of Christ; an indignity which he will not suffer to pass without suitable punishment. He here claims himself to be the King of Zion, and will maintain the dignity of his crown against all that

dare invade it. 2. In these words we have the place of converse between Christ and his blessed spouse and bride; it is in *the galleries*. It is the same word in the original which we have, Cant. 1:17: "The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters, or galleries, of fir." Where, by *galleries*, in both places, according to the judicious Durham, we are to understand the ordinances of the gospel, in which Christ and his people to tryst and keep company one with another. Why gospel ordinances are thus signified, I may show more particularly afterwards. 3. We have the sweet constraint that this royal Bridegroom was under to tarry in the galleries with his spouse: he here owns that he was *held*, or *bound*, as the word signifies, *in the galleries*. Her faith and love laid him under a voluntary arrest to tarry with her; like the disciples going to Emmaus, Luke 24:29: "She constrained him to abide with her." An expression much like this we have, Cant. 3:4. After a weary night of desertion, and much wearisome inquiry, she at length meets her beloved, and therupon she cries out, "I held him, and would not let him go."

OBSERVE, "That Christ, the blessed King of Zion, condescends sometimes to be held and detained by his people in the galleries of gospel ordinances. *The King is held in the galleries.*"

- I. I will give some account of this royal King.
- II. Of the galleries of the King.
- III. Of this holding of the King in the galleries.
- IV. Apply.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to *give some account of this royal King*. But alas! "Who can declare his generation?" All I shall do, is only 1. To prove that he is a King. 2. That he is *the King* by way of eminence and excellence.

First, that he is a King, appears from these particulars: —

1. From the Father's designation and ordination. From all eternity the Father designed and ordained this dignity for him as our Mediator: for I do not now speak of his natural and essential, but of his dispensatory or mediatory kingdom: "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," Psal.

2:6; and Psal. 89:27: "I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."

2. It appears from the prophecies that went of him before his actual manifestation in our nature. It was prophesied that the sceptre of Judah should terminate in him, Gen. 49:10; that he should succeed David, and sit upon the throne, Luke 1:32, 33, compared with Psal. 132:11: "The Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;" Is. 9:6; and "the government shall be upon his shoulder."

3. It appears from the types and shadows that prefigured him. He was typified by Melchizedek, who is called "the King of righteousness, *and* the King of peace." He was typified by David, and frequently called by the name of David in the psalms and prophets: Hos. 3:5: "The children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king." He was typified by Solomon, and by his name he is commonly called in this book of the Song.

4. It appears from the princely titles that are given him in scripture. He is called "the Prince of peace, the King of righteousness, and the King of kings and Lord of lords;" and it is God the Father's will, that "every one should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord."

5. It appears from the princely prerogatives and royalties that are assigned him by his Father. He has anointed him to be King with an incomparable oil, even "with the oil of gladness; I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him," Psal. 89:20. He has installed him in the government with the solemnity of an open proclamation from heaven, by "the voice which came from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." He has put a sceptre of righteousness, and a rod of iron, in his hand, by which he is enabled to defend his subjects, destroy his enemies, and "break them in pieces as a potter's vessel." He has given him ambassadors to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom: "He gave some, apostles: and some, prophets: and some, evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." He has given him vast territories, even "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession: his dominion reaches from sea to sea, and from

the river to the ends of the earth." It extends not only to the outward, but likewise to the inward man. He has a legislative authority, he can make and explain, and abrogate laws at his pleasure. And when his laws are broken, he has the power of acquitting or condemning committed to him: "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Thus, you see he is a King.

Secondly, As he is a King, so he is *the King* by way of eminence and excellence. And this will be abundantly clear, if we consider,

1. That he is *the King eternal*, 1 Tim. 1:17: "the everlasting Father," or, "the Father of eternity," Is. 9:6. Other kings are but of yesterday, mere upstarts, and, like a gourd, their glory withers in a night. But here is a King that is "from everlasting to everlasting," the true "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." Mic. 5:2. This "ruler in Israel, his goings forth were from of old, from everlasting." And his throne is so firmly established, that it shall stand through all periods of time, yea, through the endless years of eternity: Psal. 45:6: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

2. He is called *the King immortal*, 1 Tim. 1:17. In the last chapter of the same epistle, "He only hath immortality." The potentates of the earth are but kings of clay; they and their thrones have their "foundations in the dust, and to dust they shall return." Death, the king of terrors, has raised his trophies of victory over the most renowned potentates: they who made the world to tremble with their sword, have been at last vanquished by death. But here is a King that never dies. It is true, death did once, by his own consent, obtain a seeming victory over him; but in that victory *death* itself was *plagued*, and the *grave destroyed*, Hos 13:14. Yea, "it was not possible that he should be held in the bonds of death:" no, he vanquished death in his own territories, and returned carrying the spoil of his enemy along with him, making open proclamation of the victory which he had gained to all his friends for their encouragement: Rev. 1:18: "I am he that was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death."

3. He is *the King invisible*. Some eastern princes were seldom seen by their subjects, to beget the greater reverence and estimation among their subjects. But this was only an affectation of grandeur. Christ, the King of Zion, is indeed visible to the eye of faith by the saints militant, and

visible to the eye of sense by the saints triumphant; however, the thousand thousandth part of his divine glory can never be seen or searched out by any created understanding; for "he dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see," 1 Tim. 6:16. He is an unseen and unknown Christ by the greatest part of the world, as to his worth and excellency. And as to his corporeal presence, he is invisible by us in this state of mortality: for *the heaven must contain him*, "until the times of restitution of all things;" and then, indeed, "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

4. He is *the only blessed and happy King*, 1 Tim. 6:15: "the blessed and only Potentate." The crowns of other princes have their thorns, which make them to sit uneasy upon their heads; and the toil and trouble of government is sometimes so great, that the very beggar on the dunghill is happier in some respects than the king upon the throne. But Zion's King is in every respect happy and blessed. He is the darling of heaven and earth, the delight of his Father, and "the Desire of all nations." His crown does not totter, his subjects do not rebel; he is happy in them, and they in him: "Men shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed."

5. He is *the absolute and universal King*. His kingdom is universal in respect of all persons; the highest potentate, as well as the meanest beggar, are the subjects of his empire. This is his royal "name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. 19:16. Whenever he will, he casts the mighty out of their seats, and advances them of low degree; sets the beggar on the throne, and causes the king to sit on the dunghill: "He cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth." Again; his government is universal in respect of all places. We read of several potentates who have grasped at universal monarchy: but never any of them attained it, though, indeed, they extended their dominions far and wide. But here is a King whose empire reaches to heaven, earth, and hell. Again; it is universal in respect of all times: "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

I might tell you farther, to illustrate the eminency of this King, that he is the *King of glory*, the *almighty King*, the *King of saints*, the *King of nations*. But from what has been said, we may see that he is a King of incomparable excellence, and what an honour it is to be with him, and to holy him in the galleries. But I go on to,

II. The *second* thing proposed, which was to *spea*k a little of the galleries in which this royal King trysts and keeps company with his people. We read, Song 1:4, of the chambers of the King; and, chap. 2:4, of the King's banqueting-house, or cellars of wine, into which the spouse had been brought: the same is called here the galleries of the King. That is to say, these ordinances in which the Lord Jesus reveals himself to his people in the house of their pilgrimage. Here I only, 1. Mention a few of these galleries. 2. Inquire why ordinances are compared to galleries.

First, I will only mention these few galleries.

1. There is the secret gallery of meditation, in which David found God's "loving kindness to be better than life," and had his "soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness."

2. There is the gallery of prayer, in which Jacob wrestled with the angel of the covenant, and, like a prince, prevailed for the blessing.

3. There is a gallery of reading of the scriptures, in which the Ethiopian eunuch got such a discovery of the promised Messiah, as made him "go on his way rejoicing."

4. There is a gallery of Christian converse about soul-matters; in which the disciples going to Emmaus had such a meetin gwith Christ, as made "their hearts burn within them."

5. There is the gallery of preaching, or of hearing of the word preached; "by the foolishness of which God saveth them that believed." Here it was that Lydia's heart was opened. And,

6. The sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's supper, are galleries in which Zion's King displays his glory before his people. The last of these is, by way of eminence, called *the communion*; not only because in it the people of God have communion one with another, but because in it they have "fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ."

Secondly, As to the second thing here, why are these ordinances compared to galleries? I answer,

1. Galleries are magnificent apartments of royal and stately buildings. So there is a divine magnificence in the ordinances of the

gospel, when countenanced with the presence of the great Master of assemblies. It is true, they appear mean and contemptible in the eyes of a profane world, who are strangers to the power of godliness; but the man "who has his senses *spiritually* exercised to discern good and evil," sees a divine greatness and magnificence in them, suitable to the state and royalty of "the Prince of the kings of the earth." And when the man is admitted to see the power and glory of God in them, he cannot but agree with Jacob, saying, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven," Gen. 28:17.

2. Galleries are lightsome and pleasant apartments. O how pleasant and lightsome are ordinances to a gracious soul! Let a child of God be where he will, he reckons it but "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," if he be not admitted to the galleries of ordinances, Psal. 63:1, 2. See how the same holy man expresses his delight in ordinances, Psal. 84:1: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" I am sure this will be the language of every soul that has been in the galleries with the King this day.

3. Galleries are places of walk and converse, as is plain from Ezek. 41:15. When a king, or great man designs to be familiar with his friend, he will take a turn with him in the galleries. So it is in gospel-ordinances that Christ walks, and converses with his people. Here it is that he gives them audience, allows them to be free and familiar with him, draws aside the veil, communicates the secrets of his covenant, and mysteries of his kingdom, which are hid from the wise and prudent of the world.

4. Galleries are places of public feasting and entertainment of friends. So it is in the mount of gospel-ordinances that the Lord has provided for his people, "a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Here it is that Christ says to his people, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Thus, I have given you some account of the galleries of the King.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, to *speak* of the *holding* of the *King in the galleries*; which is what I had principally in view. And here I will show what this holding of Christ supposes and implies, both on the believer's part and on Christ's part.

First, What does it suppose and imply on the believer's part?

1. It necessarily supposes a meeting with Christ in the galleries; for no person can hold that which they never had. To you that never knew what it was to enjoy communion with Christ in his ordinances, this doctrine is a hidden mystery.

2. It supposes a high esteem of Christ, a love to, and liking of his company. We are at no pains to hold those for whose company we care not; but when we are pressing with a friend to stay with us, it says that we value his company. Sirs, there are various opinions about Christ among the hearers of the gospel. The profane world look upon him as a severe and tyrannical master, and therefore "they will not have this man to reign over them." They say unto the Almighty, "Depart from us." Again; carnal, lukewarm professors, "see no form nor comeliness in him, why he should be desired:" and therefore they are ready to say with the daughters of Jerusalem, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" They cannot see any engaging excellency in the King of Zion. But it is otherwise with the believer: the glory and beauty of Christ darken all created excellency in his eye; his language is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He is the apple-tree among the trees of the wood; the standard-bearer among ten thousand.

3. On the believer's part, this holding of Christ supposes a fear of losing him, or of being deprived of his company. The soul that has met with Christ, is afraid of a parting. It is true, the believer has no ground to fear the loss of Christ's real and gracious presence; for the union between Christ and him is indissoluble; that promise can never fail, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." But as for his conscious and comfortable presence, they both may, and frequently do lose it; the child of light many times walks in darkness. Now, it is the loss of this presence of Christ that the soul fears, when it is concerned to hold or bind the King in the galleries. Neither is this a fear of despondency, but a fear of activity and diligence.

4. It supposes a seeming willingness in Christ to withdraw from his people after their sweetest enjoyments. Many times Christ's carriage in his dispensations towards his people seems to have a language much like that to Jacob, when he said to him, *Let me go*; or like his carriage towards the

two disciples going to Emmaus, he made as if he would leave their company, and go on in his way. And his carriage seems to have this language, especially when he challenges them for bad treatment they have formerly given him, when he lets loose the tempter to buffet them after signal warnings, or when he tries them with sharp troubles and afflictions, in all these cases he seems as it were to be turning about the face of his throne from them.

5. It implies a holy solicitude, and earnest desire of soul, to have his presence continued. When Christ is hiding, there is nothing the believer desires more than his return: "O that I knew where I might find him!" And when they have found him, there is nothing they desire more than to keep his company, or that he would not be any more to them "as a stranger, or way-faring man." O says the soul, when it gets a meeting with the Lord Jesus, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts," Cant. 1:13. As if she had said, 'If he will stay with me, I will deny him nothing I can afford; I will entertain him with the highest evidences of cordial affection.'

6. It implies an ardent breathing of soul after more and more nearness to Christ and farther discoveries of him. There is not such a high discovery of Christ attainable in this life, but there is always a step beyond it. The believer would always have more of Christ, Cant. 2:5. The spouse there is brought into the banqueting-house, and allowed to feast and feed liberally upon the Redeemer's love, and to sit down under his displayed banner: and yet at that very instant she cries out, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." As if he had said, 'Let me lie down among these comforts; let me roll myself perpetually among the blessed apples of the tree of life.' They who have got so much of Christ as to be tired of his company, never knew what his presence was.

7. It implies a firm resolution not to part with his company: "I held him," says the spouse, "and would not let him go," Song, 3:4. The like we see in Jacob, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" that is, I am resolved, that thou and I shall not part, cost what it will.

8. It implies a cleaving or attaching oneself to Christ with the whole strength and vigour of the soul.

Quest. How, or in what does the soul put forth its strength in cleaving to Christ? I answer, it does it by these three especially.

1st, By the lively exercise of faith. Hence faith is called a laying hold of Christ, and a cleaving to him, as Barnabas exhorts the Christians at Antioch to "cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart." The poor soul says to Christ in this case, as Ruth did to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." An instance of this cleaving to Christ we have in the Canaanitish woman; she, as it were, clasps about him, and will by no means let go her hold, notwithstanding all repulses.

2^{dly}, The soul binds or holds Christ in the galleries by sincere and ardent love. Love is a very uniting affection; by this one soul cleaves to another. As Shechem's soul did cleave to Dinah, and Jonathan's to David; so by love the soul cleaves to Christ: and this is a cord that cannot be easily broken; Cant. 8:7: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." See for this also, Rom. 8:35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" &c.

3^{dly}, The soul cleaves to Christ by fervent and ardent prayer, Jacob held the Angel of the covenant, and would not let him go: Hos. 12:3, 4: "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: for he wept and made supplication unto him. –The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" has a strange prevalence with Christ; it offers a holy kind of violence to him; and so binds him in the galleries that he cannot depart. Thus, you see what it implies on the believer's part.

Secondly, What does it imply on Christ's part, *The King is held in the galleries?*

1. It implies amazing grace and condescension toward the work of his own hands: "He humbleth himself," even when he "beholds the things that are in heaven:" much more when he bows the heavens, and walks with his people in the galleries of ordinances; and yet more when he is held by them in the galleries. This is such strange condescension, that Solomon, the greatest of kings, and the wisest of men, wondered at it; and wise men do not wonder at trifles: "Will God," saith he, "in very deed dwell with men on the earth?"

2. It implies Christ's great delight in the society of his people. He loves to be among them; where two or three of them are met in his name, he will be in the midst of them: "He rejoiced," from all eternity, "in the habitable part of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men," Prov. 8:31.

3. It implies, that there are certain cords which have a constraining power, to retain him in his people's company: and they must be strong cords, indeed, with which Omnipotence is bound. I mention two or three.

1st, He is bound by the cord of his own faithfulness, which he has pledged in the promise. He has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and he will not deny his word, "his covenant he will not break." This was the prevailing argument with which Moses detained him in the camp of Israel, when he was threatening utterly to consume that wicked people, Exod. 32:10, 13: "Let me alone," saith the Lord to Moses, "that I may consume them. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven." He binds him with his own covenant, ratified with the solemnity of an oath.

2dly, He is bound in the galleries by the cord of his own love. As a compassionate mother cannot leave her child, when it cleaves to her, and clasps about her: so Christ's compassionate heart will not let him leave his people; his love to them surpasses the love of the most compassionate mother or tender-hearted parent: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me," Is. 49:15,16.

3dly, He is bound to them by the bond of marriage: "Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name: he has betrothed them to himself in righteousness, judgment, loving kindness, and mercies; and he rejoiceth over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride:" and because of this he will not, he cannot leave them.

IV. The *fourth* thing was, the *application* of the doctrine: and the *first* use is for information. Is it so that Zion's King is sometimes held in the galleries of gospel ordinances? Then,

1. See hence the happiness and dignity of the saints of God, beyond the rest of the world. We reckon that person highly honoured, who is admitted to the King's presence-chamber, and to walk with him in his galleries. "This honour have all the saints," either in a greater or less degree: Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." And therefore I may infer, that they are "the excellent ones in the earth, and more excellent than their neighbour. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable."

2. See hence why the saints put such a value and estimate on gospel-ordinances. David everywhere declares his esteem of them; "I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. He would "rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God, than dwell in the tents of sin." Why, what is the matter? The plain matter is this: they are the galleries where Zion's King doth walk, and manifest his glory to his subjects: Psal. 27:4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord." I pass other uses, and go to a

Second use of this doctrine, and that is by way of *trial* and *examination*. My friends, you have been in the galleries of the King of Zion; but that is not enough: and therefore let me ask, Have you been in the galleries with the King? And have you been holding the King in the galleries? There are many poor ignorant creatures, who, if they get a token, and win to a communion-table, think all is right and clear between God and them; like the harlot, Prov. 7:14: "Peace-offerings are with me; this day have I paid my vows" But, Oh, sirs, remember, folk may win in to the outer galleries of ordinances, and never win in to the inner gallery of communion with the Lord Jesus. For your trial as to this matter, I shall only propose a few questions to you.

Quest. 1. What did you hear in the galleries? What said the King to you? For, as I told you, the galleries of ordinances are the places of audience, where the King of Zion converses with his people. And readily, if he has spoken with you, you will remember what he said; for he "speaks as never man spake; he has the tongue of the learned, and his words are as goads, and as nails fastened in a sure place." The spouse, we find, had been in the chamber of presence, and in the banqueting-house; she tells that the King spake with her, and she remembers what he said, Cant.

2:10: "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." So then, did the King speak with you in the galleries? Did he speak a word of conviction, or a word of comfort, a word of peace, or a word of consolation? Or whatever it be. *Quest.* How shall I know that it was his voice, and not the voice of a stranger? *Ans.* The sheep of Christ have a natural instinct by which they know his voice; it has a different sound from the voice of a stranger; and if you be the sheep of Christ, you will know it better than I can tell you it by words, When he speaks, he makes the heart to burn; and you will be ready to say with the disciples, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us" in the galleries? His words have kindled a flame of love that "many waters cannot quench;" a flame of zeal for his glory; a flame of holy joy, so that you will be ready to say with David, "God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice." When he speaks, he makes the soul to speak, whose lips were formerly closed; for his voice "makes the lips of those that are asleep, to speak." If he has said, "Seek ye my face;" — your souls have echoed, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." If he has said, "Come;" thy soul has answered, "Behold, I come unto thee; for thou art the Lord my God." If he has spoken peace to you this day in the galleries, you will be concerned not to return again to folly; you have been made to say, with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Quest. 2. I ask, What did you see in the galleries? Many sights are to be seen in the galleries of ordinances and particularly of the Lord's supper. Here *the Lamb of God* is to be seen, "which taketh away the sin of the world;" and in a crucified Christ, who is evidently set forth in that ordinance, all the divine attributes and perfections shine with a greater lustre, than in the large volume of the creation. Here we might see the seemingly different claims of mercy and justice, with respect to fallen man, sweetly reconciled: the healing overture is, that the surety shall die in the room of the sinner; and thus justice shall be satisfied, and mercy for ever magnified. Here you might see the holiness and equity of God's nature sparkling in flames of wrath against him who "was made sin" for you; the sword awakened, even "against the man that is God's fellow," wounds and bruises him for your iniquities. There you might see the power of God spoiling principalities and powers, shaking the foundation of the devil's kingdom, and laying the foundation of a happy eternity for an elect world, in the death and blood of the eternal Son. In this ordinance you might have seen him writing his love in characters of blood; love

which has neither brim, bottom, nor boundaries. Here he was to be seen as the "Amen, the faithful and true witness," girt with the golden girdle of faithfulness, sealing the covenant, and confirming it with many. Now, I say, have you seen any thing of this? Are you saying, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father?" Did any of these divine rays of Zion's King break forth upon your soul? If so, then I am sure it has had something of a transforming efficacy with it; according to what we have, 2 Cor. 3:18: "All we 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." Jacob's cattle, you know, by the very working of fancy in the conception, by beholding the pilled rods, brought forth their young speckled and spotted. Now, if fancy could work such a resemblance, what must the eye of faith do, when it beholds the glory of God in the face of Christ, who is "the express image of his person?" John 1:14, 16: "The word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." It is remarkable, that by beholding his glory, we receive grace for grace. As the wax receives letter for letter from the seal, or as the child receives limb for limb from the parent; so, by beholding Christ, we receive grace for grace from him: so as there is never a grace in Christ, when it is seen by faith, but it works something of a parallel grace on the soul. So then, try yourselves by this, and you may know whether you have been indeed in the galleries with the King.

Quest 3. I ask, What have you tasted in the galleries? For, as you heard, galleries are for feasting and entertainment of friends. Now, did the King say to you, or is he yet saying it, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved?" Did he make you to "eat of the fatness of his house," and to "drink of the rivers of his pleasures?" "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," then I am sure you will, "as new-born babes, desire and thirst after the sincere milk of the word:" you will be saying, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples;" let me have more and more of this delicious fare. If you have been feasted with the King in the galleries, the world, and all the pleasures of it, will be as nothing in your eye, in comparison of Christ and the intimations of his love. O, says David, when his soul was "satisfied as with marrow and fatness," "Thy loving kindness is better than life," and all the comforts of life; they are but loss and dung when laid in the balance with him. If you have been

feasting in the galleries, you will be desirous that others may share of the meal you have gotten; and, with David, be ready to say, "O taste and see that God is good." You will proclaim the praises of his goodness, as you have occasion, to them that fear him: "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." And readily it will be the desire of your soul to abide in his presence, and to dwell, as it were, in the galleries of ordinances. O! "It is good for us to be here! Let us build tabernacles here," said Peter, on the mount of transfiguration. That will be the language of thy soul, Psal. 27:4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." So much for a use of trial.

Use *third* may be in a short word directed to two or three sorts of persons. 1. To you who know nothing of this doctrine, never met with the King in the galleries. 2. To you who have had a comfortable meeting with him. 3. To those who perhaps are complaining, "I sought him, but I found him not."

First, To you who never yet knew what it was to have a meeting with Zion's King in the galleries of gospel-ordinances; and perhaps, Gallio-like, you "care for none of these things." To you I shall only say,

1. Your condition is truly sad and lamentable, beyond expression or imagination. You are "aliens to Israel's commonwealth, strangers to the covenant of promise, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world. You are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" under the curse of God, and condemnation of the law, and absolute power of Satan, "who rules in the children of disobedience." You are lying within the sea-mark of God's wrath; and if you die in this condition, you will drink the dregs of the cup of his indignation through all eternity.

2. If you have in this case adventured to the galleries of a communion-table, you have run a very dreadful risk. You have adventured to the King's presence without his warrant, and without the wedding-garment of imputed righteousness, or of inherent holiness; and therefore have run the risk of being bound, hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness: you have been "eating and drinking judgment" to your own souls, and are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." And therefore,

3. For the Lord's sake, let me beseech you to repent of your wickedness. Flee out of your lost and miserable condition, flee to "the horns of the altar." We declare to you, that there is yet "hope in Israel concerning" you. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," Is. 55:7.

Secondly, A *second* sort of persons are those who have this day had a meeting with Zion's King in the galleries of ordinances. I shall only offer a word of exhortation to you, and of advice.

I. A word of exhortation. Have you met with the King in the galleries? O then be exhorted to hold him, and bind him in the galleries; take him with you from the more open and solemn galleries of public ordinances, to the more private and secret galleries of prayer, meditation, conference, and the like: follow the spouse's practice when she found him; "she held him, and would not let him go, until she had brought him into her mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived her." To engage you to hold him, take these motives:

Mot. 1. Consider his invaluable worth and excellency: The tongues of angels, let be of men, do but falter and stammer when they speak of him. His worth is best known by the character he gives of himself in his word. View him absolutely in himself; he is "the only begotten or the Father, the mighty God, the Prince of peace." View him comparatively; he is "fairer than the children of men, as the apple tree among the trees of the wood; the standard-bearer among ten thousand." View him in his relations; he is thy *Head*, thy *Husband*, thy *Friend*, thy *Father*, thy *elder Brother*, thy *Surety*, *Shepherd*, and *Redeemer*; and, in a word, he is *all and in all*. And should not this make you to hold him?

Mot. 2. Consider, that thy happiness, believer, lies in the enjoyment of him. What is it, do you think, that constitutes the happiness of heaven through eternity? It is Christ's presence, a Mediator, the King of Zion, manifesting his heart-charming beauty to saints and angels through eternity. And what is it that raises the poor soul to the very suburbs of glory while in the wilderness? It is Christ manifesting himself in a sensible way to the soul: O this, this it is that fills the soul with "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory!" The advantages that attend his presence with the soul are great and glorious. A cabinet of counsel attends his presence: he

brings light with him; and no wonder, for he is "the Sun of righteousness:" "the veil and face of the covering" is rent when Christ comes, and darkness is turned into light. His presence has a mighty influence upon the believer's work in the wilderness; the believer then "rides upon the high places of the earth, and is fed with the heritage of Jacob;" he runs swiftly "like the chariots of Amminadib." His presence inspires with courage and strength: it makes "the feeble soul as David, and David as the angel of God; it gives power to the faint, and increases strength to them that have no might." The soldier fights with courage when his captain is at hand. The poor believer is not afraid to encounter the king of terrors himself, when he is holding Christ in the arms of faith: Psal. 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." So, let this encourage you to hold him.

Mot. 3. Consider at what a high price this privilege was purchased for thee. Before Christ could pay thy soul a visit in the galleries, he behoved to swim a river and ocean of blood, to tread the wine-press of his Father's wrath. Justice had rolled insuperable mountains in his way, and these mountains he must pass, and make as a plain, before he could show himself in the galleries to thy soul. Does not this oblige you to entertain him, and give him welcome when come?

Mot. 4. If you let go your holds of him and suffer him to depart, it may cost you a high price before you get another meeting with him. It is true, "his kindness shall never depart from thee, the covenant of his peace shall never be removed." His gracious presence can never be lost; but his quickening, comforting, strengthening, and upholding presence may be lost: and even this may be of very dreadful consequence. As his presence is a heaven upon earth, so sometimes a hell upon earth follows his absence. Job, through his hiding, is made to "go mourning without the sun;" yea, to such a pass is he brought, through the frowns of God's countenance, that he is made to cry, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." And see to what a pass Heman is brought under desertion, Psal. 88:6,7: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me; and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves." And again, ver. 15: "While I suffer

thy terrors I am distracted." Let all these considerations, and many others I might name, quicken your diligence in holding the King in the galleries.

2. I come to offer you a few counsels, in order to your holding the King in the galleries, and maintaining his presence with you.

1st, See that you keep his lodging clean, and beware of the practice of the spouse after she had obtained a meeting with Christ, Cant. 3:5: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." Particularly, there are two or three evils that you would carefully guard against. Beware of security. If you were paying a visit to your relation, you would think him tired of your company, if he would fall asleep beside you. Has Christ paid a visit to thy soul, and wilt thou fall asleep in his very presence and company? This is very provoking to the Lord Jesus. Cant. 5:3: the spouse there entertains Christ's visit with sloth; "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" But what comes of it? Christ withdrew, ver. 6: "I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." Beware of turning proud of your attainments. Pride of gifts, pride of grace, pride of attainments, is what Christ cannot abide with: he "gives grace to the humble, but he resisteth the proud, and beholdeth them afar off." Beware of worldly-mindedness or suffering your hearts to go out immoderately after the things of time; for this is displeasing to the Lord, and intercepts the light of his countenance; Is. 57:17: "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth. The friendship of this world is enmity with God." Beware of unbelief, the root of all other evils, and particularly the root and source of distance and estrangement between Christ and the soul; for "an evil heart of unbelief *causes* to depart from the living God." In a word, keep a strict watch and guard against every thing that may defile the lodging of Christ in thy soul. Under the law, God appointed porters to keep watch at the doors of the temple, that nothing might enter in to defile that house which was the dwelling-place of his name. Thy soul and body is the temple in which Christ dwells by his Holy Spirit: and therefore guard against every thing that may defile it, and provoke him to depart; for "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are," I Cor. 3:17.

2dly, if you would hold the King in the galleries, it is necessary that grace be kept in lively exercise; for these are the spikenard and spices that send forth a pleasant smell in his nostrils. Let faith be kept in exercise; let this eye be continually on him: he is exceedingly taken with the looks of faith: Cant. 4:9: "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." Keep the fire of love burning upon the altar of thy heart; for Christ loves to dwell in a warm heart: 1 John 4:16: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Maintain a holy and evangelical tenderness and melting of heart for sin; for "the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." And let hope be kept up in opposition to a sinking despondency. Christ does not love to see his friends drooping in his company: No, no; "he takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

3dly, If you would have Christ staying with you in the galleries. you must put much work in his hand; for Christ does not love to stay where he gets no work. Hast thou any strong corruption to be subdued? Tell him of it; for this is one part of his work, to subdue the iniquities of his people. Hast thou no sin to be pardoned, the guilt of which has many times stared thee in the face? Tell him of it; for "his name is Jesus, because he saves his people from their sin." Hast thou no need to be supplied? Tell him of it; for there is all fulness in him, fulness of merit and Spirit, fulness of grace and truth: he has a liberal heart, and he devises liberal things. Hast thou no doubts or difficulties to be resolved: Tell him your doubts; for he is "an Interpreter among a thousand." Employ him not only for yourselves, but for others. Employ him for your mother church; entreat him to come unto your "mother's house, and to the chambers of her that conceived" you; that he would break these heavy yokes that are wreathed about her neck at this day; that he may "build up the walls of his Jerusalem, make her a peaceable habitation, and the praise of the whole earth;" that he may "take the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines," I mean, such teachers and preachers as are troubling the peace of the church, and obstructing the progress of the gospel, with their new-fangled opinions. But I must not dwell on this.

Thirdly, A *third* sort of persons I proposed to speak to, were these who are perhaps complaining; that they have been attending in the galleries of ordinances, and particularly at a communion-table; yet they

cannot say, dare not say, that they were privileged to see the King's face. Alas! May some poor soul be saying, I thought to have got a meeting with Zion's King, but hitherto I have missed my errand: "The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me; and I, whither shall I go?" *Answer.* I shall only suggest a word of encouragement and advice to such of the Lord's people as may be in this case.

1. A word of encouragement.

1st, Then, do not think thy case unprecedented. Poor soul, what thinkest thou of David, Asaph, Heman, yea, of Christ himself?

2dly, Although Zion's King may bide himself for a little, yet he will not always hide, "lest the spirits should fail before him:" Psal. 30:4, 5: "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment: in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Is. 54:7, 8: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

3dly, Perhaps the King has been in the galleries with thy soul, when yet thou wast not aware that it was he. He was with Jacob at Bethel, and he "wist it not;" he was with the disciples going to Emmaus, and yet they mistook him. *Quest.* How shall I know whether the King has been in the galleries with my soul? For answer,

(1.) Art thou mourning and sorrowing over thy apparent loss? Does it grieve thee at the very heart to think, that thou shouldst be at Jerusalem, and not see the King's face; at the King's table, and not have the King's company? If this be real matter of exercise to thee, thou dost not lack his gracious presence, though thou art not aware; for "he is ever nigh unto them that are of a broken heart." Christ is at Mary's hand when she is drowned in tears for the absence of his company, and saying, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

(2.) Hast thou got a greater understanding of thine own emptiness, poverty, and nakedness? and is thy soul abased and laid in the dust on this account? This says, Christ has been present; for he comes in a work of humiliation, as well as in a work of consolation. Perhaps the devil is condemning, the law is condemning, conscience is condemning thee, and

thou art condemning thyself as fast as any: be not discouraged Christ is not far away, Psal. 109:31: "He stands at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

(3.) Art thou justifying the Lord, and laying the blame of thy punishment upon thyself, as David, Psal. 22:1,2,3: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest me not? and in the night-season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

(4.) Is thy hunger and thirst after Christ increased by thy apprehended want of his gracious presence? This says that he has been really present, for his blessing is upon thee: Matth. 5:6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." And know for thy comfort, that "he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with good things."

(5.) Art thou resolved to wait on him and keep his way, although he hide his face and withdraw his perceptible presence? Christ has not been altogether a stranger; no, "he is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him; and is really nigh unto all that call upon him in truth."

2. A word of advice, and only in so many words.

1st, Give not way to despondency; argue against it, as David, Psal. 42:5: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

2^{dly}, See that you justify God, and beware of charging him foolishly. See what was David's practice, (and herein he was a type of Christ himself,) Psal. 22. He is under hidings, ver. 1: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me," &c. What follows? ver. 3: "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

3^{dly}, Trust in a hiding God, as Job did: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," Job 13:15. This the Lord calls his people to under darkness, Is. 1. 10: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

4thly, and *lastly*, Wait on him in the galleries of ordinances; hang about the posts of his door. And when you do not find him in public, seek him in private, and in the retired galleries of secret prayer, meditation, and conference: and go a little farther, like the spouse, above and beyond all duties and ordinances, to himself: "He is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." The spouse did so, and at length she found him whom her soul loved: Cant. 3:4: "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." The Lord bless his word.